

**SUCCESS IN DIVERSITY:
CULTURE, KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING
IN ETHNICALLY DIVERSE CLASSROOMS**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
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October, 2000



ABSTRACT

The thesis is a longitudinal, critical ethnographic study of interaction in ethnically diverse classrooms. It tracks the mainstream school experiences of a small group of successful bilingual learners from Year 3 to Year 6. It examines the structural and contextual factors which influence children's success in learning. A model of concentric layers of interaction is proposed to illustrate the children's intersecting experiences in school, home and community. Analysis of chosen samples of teacher-teacher, teacher-child and child-child talk in classrooms using a critical discourse framework indicates the importance of talk for children's learning, and the need for models of language and learning to underpin pedagogies which reflect the complexities of the children's experience.

A key element of the theoretical stance and methodology is the attempt to valorise the viewpoints of all participants in the classroom and other contexts. The use of semi-structured interviews and other forms of data collection elicited evidence of these from the children's teachers and their parents in home contexts. These are analysed using the same frameworks as those suggested above. The findings are positioned in the historical and political contexts from which they arise and to which they contribute. The contradictions and tensions inherent in the various contexts are thus revealed.

The study reveals a very complex picture of interaction in ethnically diverse classrooms with children and teachers involved in mutual negotiation and culture-creating to construct curriculum knowledge, as well as what it means to be a pupil. The conclusions of the thesis argue for the urgent need to take such evidence into account when developing policy and curricula for primary children's learning and the education of teachers. It questions the adequacy of current centrally-developed models to prepare both teachers and learners to become full participants in a genuinely diverse, multicultural society.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks go to my supervisor, Professor Eve Gregory, for her exemplary tutorial support and personal warmth, and also the model of scholarship and academic inspiration in her own teaching and writing. Thanks also to the inter-collegiate research group, established by Eve and hosted by Merle Mahon at University College, whose regular meetings have given me vital access to a community of scholars and, unfailingly, much to think about on the long journey home.

Next, thanks to Barry Miller, Head of Department, Teacher Education at Bradford College for his support and his belief in the importance of professional development and research in difficult times. Similarly, thanks for the friendship and generous support, in so many ways, of my colleagues in the Language and Literature strand and for their abiding belief in the importance of success in diversity.

Many thanks also to the children, their parents and their teachers, whose words appear in the thesis, and who gave me so much of their time and their trust; particularly Jenny Prudom, Julie Waterhouse, Sehrish Mirza, Shahida Mirza, Sannah Hussain, Rashida Hussain, Bilal Butt, Sabiha Butt, Shabnam Hussain, Rehamat Bibi and Kramat Hussain.

Last, but certainly not least, thanks to my family: to my children, Moi and Feimatta, for having the energy, courage and imagination to seek success in diversity and to my husband, Peter Pool, for his endless patience and superb proof-reading skills. Thanks also to Feimatta for checking the bibliography.

This thesis is dedicated to all the students and teachers in Sierra Leone from whom I learned so much in the 1970s and 1980s, and whose lives have sorely changed since those optimistic days.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION: AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL EXCERPTS FROM
THE LIFE OF A LEARNER

*To be nobody-but-yourself – in a world which is
doing its best, night and day, to make you
everybody else – means to fight the hardest battle
which any human can fight; and never stop
fighting.*

(e.e. cummings, cited in Ayers, 1995, p. 35)

1.1 Positioning the self in the research

My contact with formal education began in 1956 when, at the age of 4³/₄, I started attending a tiny primary school with about 30 pupils in rural Northumberland. The school had two rooms and two teachers, Miss Steele for 'the big ones' and Mrs. Atkinson for 'the little ones'. It took pupils up to 14 years old, apart from those who passed the 11+, from a wide catchment area, as there was no other school for quite a distance. The playground was adjacent to a farmyard, and the games field was often overrun with cows. It was part of a close community. I was one of a family of four children who all attended in due sequence. There was another family of four and several pairs of siblings. Some children were cousins to each other. Most came from families who had lived in the area for a long time, sometimes generations, on farms or in tied cottages as workers on a large estate. My family were relative newcomers along with a few others who lived, like us, in a tiny development of houses about a mile from the school. We 'new' children walked to and from school together every

day, and spent a lot of our free time wandering about the fields and woods nearby.

One day, a new child came to school. She fascinated me. She was tiny with sharp, delicate features, soft brown hair and a slightly dark complexion. Her dress was very different from our sensible, hardwearing home-made clothing. It was made of gauzy, brightly-coloured material with intricate stitching and detail. Most amazing of all to me, she wore tiny gold rings through her ears. Her name was Wanda. When her mother came to collect her, I heard Wanda talking to her in a strange language, and I was perplexed. I think it was Polish. It was probably the first time I had heard anyone speaking a language which was not English. After a short time, Wanda left the school. I have no idea why she suddenly appeared in our little community and then equally suddenly disappeared. Perhaps it was something to do with the aftermath of the war. For me, she offered a tantalising impression of strangeness and otherness. I don't think Miss Steele liked it very much.

Life at school went on in a secure, orderly routine. Christmas plays and parents' days and the rest were always well attended – if your parents did not turn up, Miss Steele wanted to know why. We laboured over neat handwriting and intricate embroidery. We read Shakespeare and sang English and Scottish folk songs in four parts. We had our own plots to cultivate in the school garden. We investigated the botany of the tiny copse at the back of the school, carefully pressing and labelling the specimens. Once a year in

autumn, the school hosted the 'Apple Show', where gardeners showed off their prize produce, mothers exhibited lovingly made jams, cakes and breads, and the children's artwork, best handwriting and handwork (sewing from the girls and woodwork from the boys) were on display. The climax of the day was the races, run on a makeshift track in the farmer's field, organised by the fathers. The whole school community was a tightly knit group. We all knew that we belonged. We knew what was expected of us and, equally importantly, what to expect of others. Although they took place over 40 years ago, I look back on my primary school days with pleasure, nostalgia and a sense of something like loss.

I have been a teacher for 27 years. The children I taught during my PGCE (Primary) course in Aberdeen in 1972 will now be in their thirties. I wonder if any of them remember anything about me. As a young, newly qualified teacher, I went to work in Sierra Leone, West Africa, where I subsequently stayed for 14 years. I found it quite difficult at first. I could not understand some of what the students said or interpret their body language. Their variety of English sounded strange to me. They, in contrast, were experts at engaging with varieties of English from all over the world. In the college where I first worked, there were teachers from Britain, America, Canada, India and other parts of Africa. If the students did not understand me, they were too polite to say so. My difficulty was not just with the way they spoke English. I had to become accustomed to a different 'register' of non-verbal communication where gestures had different cultural meanings: avoiding someone's gaze, for instance,

was not insolence or a sign of guilt, but polite respect to a person of higher status.

Eventually, I think I became a successful teacher in Sierra Leone. The children I taught English, French or History to 'O' or 'A' level were attentive and sometimes passed their exams. Most of the students I taught as a teacher trainer passed their exams and went on to useful employment as primary teachers. The classrooms, both in school and college, were extremely poorly resourced (often, even, without adequate desks and seating) and teaching methods were very formal and restricted. Despite this, there was a powerful and abiding faith in the importance of education, especially of learning English. A small minority reached enviable standards. Classrooms, as a reflection of society, were genuinely multilingual. Children often spoke two or three languages before beginning school, then learned the creole *lingua franca*, Krio, alongside the standard variety of English which was necessary for formal communication and educational success.

The schools, like my own primary school, were very much part of the village or town community. There was a strong recognition of the authority of the teacher who, although not very well paid or otherwise materially powerful, was generally regarded with respect in the community. Not everything was positive to western eyes. There was, for example, a strong reliance on corporal punishment which I found, at times, distressing. I once reported some unruly boys to the deputy headmaster of the school, and then had to witness a sickening display of violence and humiliation which led me never to report a

child again. Working in such contexts encouraged me to become interested in the ways in which 'cultures of learning' are established, maintained and developed in classrooms, and how language either facilitates or impedes this.

1.2 Contradictions in classrooms

When I returned to England in 1987, I began work as a Section 11 teacher in a middle school in West Yorkshire. The vast majority of the children were of Pakistani heritage and had Mirpuri Punjabi as their first language. After my time in West Africa, I was surprised by many of the attitudes and practices I encountered. Children were discouraged from using their home languages in the classroom by their (mostly monolingual) teachers, who believed strongly that this would impair their learning English. By the age of nine, the children had tacitly learnt that it was inappropriate and unacceptable to speak or write any language but English in school, even though many of them had relatively low proficiency in spoken and written English compared with their home languages and could not really express all they wanted to say. Measured standards in most curriculum subjects were very low. Many children did not seem to make academic progress between Year 5 and Year 8. 'Their' problems were the cause for much genuine concern both on the part of teachers in the school and the advisory service in the LEA, and much effort was spent in trying to think of ways of making up for 'their' deficits.

Yet the children were alert and lively, interested in and knowledgeable about the world around them, and very aware of and interested in languages. They could discuss their home cultures and languages openly and perceptively. They had sophisticated awareness of language and cultural diversity. Several children spotted immediately that I spoke differently from other staff because I came from outside Yorkshire, and even that I pronounced certain words in a similar way to another teacher who, indeed, turned out to come from the same part of the country as I did. Some of the children and I had interesting discussions about accent and dialect and, later, about language diversity.

After a few years, I moved on to a job in teacher training in the local college. This has given me the opportunity to observe teaching and learning in many different classrooms, both in schools involved in our courses and in other countries, as part of projects run by our department. A few years ago, I took a group of students to Islamabad, Pakistan, to do some teaching in English medium primary schools. I was amazed by the superficial differences in organisation and ambience of classrooms between there and the schools I had become used to in Yorkshire. In Islamabad, children from the age of 6 or 7 sit at desks in rows in classrooms almost devoid of wall displays or resources, copying down notes from the blackboard and reading aloud from their textbooks after the teacher. Their concentration appears limitless and classroom discipline is impeccable. They produce pages of neat handwriting and correct exercises in English spelling, grammar and punctuation. In Yorkshire, children of Pakistani

heritage of the same age are thought to find it difficult to sit still for more than five minutes at a time. Teachers think they are unable to listen to instructions and worry about offering them work which might be too demanding or fail to hold their interest. Teaching resources are relatively plentiful. Classroom and corridor walls are covered in bright, attractive displays.

These differences seem to reflect polarised views of what constitutes an effective learning environment. By 'effective', I do not mean 'better' in any absolute sense. In order for either environment to be effective in promoting learning, it is essential, it seems to me, that the teachers and learners who inhabit them believe in the value of what is going on. What interests me is the vast differences in 'classroom culture' the two settings seem to illustrate, the assumptions they embody about what teachers do and what learners do, and how the two groups of key players in the game of school understand each other's actions. It seemed to me that in some of the Pakistani primary classrooms I visited, the effectiveness came about because the teacher (usually a woman) and her pupils had clear shared understandings about how things should be done and what to expect of each other. These expectations, to a 'western' observer, might be based on dubious pedagogic principles, but that did not matter. The participants' belief in their effectiveness made them work. In contrast, in many ethnically diverse classrooms in Britain, both teachers and pupils appear to be confused about what is going on. The teachers are struggling to implement a curriculum which they do not control and which does not seem to fit into the context in which they are

working. The children, often, do not appear to recognise the events that are taking place as 'teaching' and are not sure how to respond as pupils. This confusion must be even stronger for those who are also pupils in one of the many community schools where, sometimes for two or three hours a day, they are learning to read and write a totally different script for totally different purposes in very different ways.

As well as watching other people teach, I also teach different groups of students on primary teacher training courses. Most of the students are women. A good proportion of them are multilingual, born in Britain to families originally from rural areas of north Pakistan. Most of them have completed their primary and secondary schooling in this country, and are often the first generation of women in their families to enter western education. They have interesting and sometimes disturbing stories to tell of their experiences as young learners in a system which does not recognise a large part of their language and cultural experience and knowledge. They are justly proud of the ways they have triumphed over adversity. Many of the 'monolingual' students are mature women who left school branded as failures, with negligible academic qualifications. Over and over again, in sessions with the students who have chosen to take Language and Literature as their specialism, issues to do with attitudes to language and identity arise. The students are keenly aware of how their own education has been affected (usually negatively) by the way they spoke or wrote. They value highly the opportunity they have been given for a second chance to learn and they understand, often because of painful personal experiences as

young learners, the crucial rôle that teachers play in children's success or failure in school.

When they begin their courses, many of our students have poor self-images as language users, images which have often been reinforced by experiences in school. They believe that they cannot write, they find it difficult to speak out in front of a group, they give up reading texts after a few pages if they find them difficult. With many, once they experience success, their self-confidence blossoms and they progress rapidly. This is because, in most cases, they are capable individuals who cope with all the demands of normal lives, often including bringing up children while studying or earning money to supplement the family income. When we discuss these issues and I encourage them to write about significant events which have happened to them as learners, they often talk and write about the power of language. They usually bring out the power it has to make them feel inadequate but, just occasionally, they describe the power it gives them to understand and communicate, to gain satisfaction and to learn.

1.3 What does it mean to be successful?

The contrasts I noticed between schools in Pakistan and Britain helped to shape my intuitions about the issues which need to be considered when trying to work out what creates 'successful' learning contexts. It is, of course, essential, to provide appropriate content, to think about classroom organisation and to provide resources

designed for the level and experience of the learners. But these are like the building blocks of the house, which have nothing in themselves to hold them together and give them shape. There needs to be something perhaps less tangible and, I suspect, even more crucial for effective learning to take place. At this stage, I describe it as the need to establish a 'shared culture' between teachers and learners, with language as the essential medium in which this can take place. More than ever, I have come to see that teaching cannot be a process of transferring knowledge from the 'teacher' to the 'taught', unless the 'taught' agree for it to be so.

One of the key factors which, from my initial reflections on the classrooms I have inhabited, seemed to mediate success is the extent to which links can be made between and across the various contexts which both the teachers and the learners inhabit, both in school and in the community. A sense of belonging seems essential, whether to a Northumbrian primary school, a West African village, or a Pakistani social network. All of these are small and enclosed communities. Perhaps one thing that is needed to replicate success is *to extend and deepen what we think of when we speak of a community* (Greene, 1993, p. 15). Delpit (1995) provides several heartrending examples of dysfunctional school communities, where home-school dissonances occur at various levels of teachers' and learners' experience, including the broader ones of school curriculum requirements and organisation as well as the deeper ones of individual attitudes. All result, in their different ways, in negative experiences in school for children, who are not *allowed to be themselves in a system designed for others*

(p. 45) in whatever form this may take. Her telling examples of the negative effects of ethnic and other forms of stereotyping on children's success in school (pp. 36-37) remind us of the crucial importance of positive personal relationships between teacher and learner as well as for the recognition and valorisation of difference and diversity within the system as a whole.

1.4 From the personal to the professional (and back again)

I have begun my investigation into classroom teaching and learning with edited highlights of my own life history, beginning with my own experiences as a young learner in a culturally very cohesive setting, and trying to follow a thread through some of the very different, at times unsettling, learning contexts I have subsequently experienced. Woods (1996, p. 1) gave me confidence to see how this was not *self-indulgent*, but an important way to begin to understand and define my research question, given the premise that *one often does research to discover more about oneself*. It also answers the call for critical inquiry into the notion of identity made by Hoffman (1998) and has parallels with her *cultural therapy* model of anthropological inquiry in education (p. 331). In investigating the tensions and contradictions of classroom interaction through my research, I have come to understand my own history and approaches to teaching much more fully. Ely and et al. (1997, pp. 32ff.) discuss the notion of *stance* in qualitative research, describing the *complex network of belief systems and positions embedding, superimposing and undergirding any research project*. This has clear implications for

decisions about the theoretical positioning and methodologies of such research, with the need to *move about among a variety of theoretical frameworks* (Ely et al. p. 256). I discuss these issues fully in Chapters Three, Four and Five.

Like Woods (1996, p. 6), I have come to conceptualise teaching as an art, as *expressive and emergent, intuitive and flexible, spontaneous and emotional*. An ethnographic approach with a symbolic interactionist dimension which *places emphasis on the rôle of the self and the hidden assumptions behind appearance* (p. 12) offers the most potential for researching and understanding the art of teaching and its obverse, learning. Exploring what individual teachers and learners bring to classrooms in terms of personal experiences, knowledge and viewpoints on the world is a vital aspect of this. An extended dimension, which links the personal with the social and thus resonates strongly with the models of language and learning which I have identified as most relevant for my research (see Chapter Four, section 4.2), is the need to see the influence of history on events as they unfold. For this reason, I have included in this thesis a social-historical account of the setting in which the research was carried out (Chapter Six).

1.5 Positioning the research and asking the right questions

I had three main reasons for choosing to position my study in an ethnically diverse, possibly multilingual setting, which are as follows:

- My own teaching experience, from choice, has all been in such settings;
- In such settings, language and language issues become even more influential than in so-called 'monocultural' settings;
- The need for more evidence of what happens in ethnically diverse classrooms in Britain is crucial, because of the history of underachievement among children from some ethnic minority groups.

A generally qualitative approach was personally more appealing than a quantitative study. It offered the potential for the illumination of rather complex questions. The starting point was a pilot ethnographic study into how teachers teach and children learn in one particular ethnically diverse context. The attempt to analyse the ways in which successful learning is negotiated in such a context is presented in Chapter Two. The following questions framed this initial study, and underpin the study as a whole:

- what factors contribute to a positive 'learning culture'?
- how do teachers establish this positive 'learning culture' in their classrooms?
- what rôles do children play in co-constructing this 'learning culture'?
- what is the importance of language in all of this?

CHAPTER TWO
STARTING POINTS IN RESEARCHING SUCCESSFUL TEACHING
AND LEARNING: EVIDENCE FROM A PILOT STUDY IN ONE
ETHNICALLY DIVERSE CLASSROOM

**2.1 Introduction: classroom talk as evidence for a
constructivist model of learning**

Typical primary classrooms are busy, sometimes confusing, places. Some children seem able to take advantage of the opportunities they offer to become successful learners, and others do not. When the participants have differing language and cultural backgrounds, the situation becomes more complex. A great deal of negotiation, mostly through talk, needs to take place between teachers and learners. Knowledge can more usefully be seen within this interactive environment as a *social entity* (Mercer, 1995, p. 66), than as a lifeless rock to be chipped away at. When effective processes of teaching and learning establish *shared understandings* and a *mutuality of perspective* (Edwards and Mercer, 1987, p. 1), the outcome is the kind of classroom context which enables children to become successful, independent learners.

Talk has been seen as the evidence for teaching and learning processes in many studies of classroom interaction. A brief overview of three will indicate the range, and the general theoretical frameworks considered most relevant in which to position the current study. Edwards and Furlong (1978) provide insights into the ways in which teachers control the language and so mediate the knowledge for learners. They conclude that the relationship between

learner and teacher is crucial: pupils learn to step into the *teacher's frame of reference* (p. 104) and adopt the teacher's meanings as a framework for their own understandings. Because they often observed two teachers working together in one classroom, they were able to begin to make explicit how teachers establish routines and set up patterns of learning through their talk. They also stressed the cumulative nature of school knowledge: *this morning's lesson topic has become this afternoon's common knowledge* (p. 128). In Edwards and Mercer's (1987) study of lessons with 8-10 year old children, classroom talk is seen as the medium in which teaching and learning take place, the material from which the learner constructs her meanings (p. 18), and also, at times, the knowledge to be learnt. In addition, for the researcher, talk is the vital evidence for *how* these things happen. Finally, Wells and Chang-Wells (1992), who provide examples of talk from multilingual classrooms which offers children the opportunity for *collaborative sense-making* (p. 28) with their peers, argue the need to see learning and teaching as social transaction, with talk as *the very essence of educational activity* (p. 26). Using transcripts of mainly child-child talk, they demonstrate how this occurs in the settings they observed.

Evidence reported from these, and many other similar studies, supports arguments for a constructivist view of learning, strongly socially situated in the language of specific classroom contexts and with teacher-pupil interaction as a key element in the process of knowledge construction (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). The Vygotskian model goes furthest to explain the realities of classrooms, as I have

experienced them, and to begin to identify those factors which mediate individual learners' success or failure in learning. Mercer (1994), arguing for a *unified science of human thought, language, culture and society*, reviews neo-Vygotskian theories of learning. He considers that such propositions as the following are axiomatic:

that meaningful discourse is necessarily context-dependent, and that knowledge is normally acquired and applied in specific cultural contexts.
(p. 94)

One of the most significant influences of Vygotsky's ideas has been on the way research into cognitive development is carried out and the findings analysed within a qualitative framework: joint activity and discourse are now seen as the main means of and evidence for such development. Naturalistic methodological paradigms are considered more appropriate than experimental ones for revealing how this development takes place. The current study is in this tradition.

2.2 A longitudinal, ethnographic approach to investigating classroom talk

This section introduces the broad theoretical starting points and analytic frameworks for the study. There are two subsections:

1. Context and continuity in classroom talk.
2. The nature of an ethnographic classroom study.

The first describes two theoretical dimensions of classroom interaction within a constructivist framework which I found illuminating at the start of the study, particularly from reading Edwards and Mercer (1987): the notions of 'context' and 'continuity'. These are fundamental to my theoretical and methodological approaches. However, as my own research progressed, I needed to move on from the ways in which Edwards and Mercer constructed them, as I explain in Chapter Four (section 4.3). The second section introduces and justifies ethnographic approaches for understanding the routines and patterns of daily life from the viewpoints of the different participants in classrooms. A key formative text for me in this respect was Heath (1983), which remained influential throughout the study. Heath's work, however, is positioned largely in community rather than specifically school contexts. An initial and abiding inspiration for considering classroom contexts from ethnographic viewpoints has been Mehan (1979), whose analytical frameworks are drawn on in this chapter. A full review of research into classrooms from ethnographic viewpoints is provided in Chapter Four, and a discussion of the methodological implications in Chapter Five.

2.2.1 Context and continuity in classroom talk

In different classrooms, in diverse ways, talk is *a means for people to think and learn together* (Mercer, 1995, p. 4). Teachers and learners need to negotiate and establish mutually supporting contexts, and only then can effective learning take place. The notions of 'context'

and 'continuity' (Edwards and Mercer, 1987; Mercer, Edwards and Maybin, 1988; Mercer, 1990; Mercer, 1995) are useful starting points for understanding the nature of talk as interaction in primary classrooms, and for indicating approaches to studying its nature and functions. Mercer (1990) provides a definition of the word 'context' which captures some of the meanings which it holds for me:

'Context' is then a mental, not a physical, phenomenon. It is the luggage, the caravan of shared rememberings which conversationalists carry with them because it is needed to sustain their talk. To add to the mix of metaphors, it is the invisible two-thirds of the iceberg which keeps the visible part, the talk, afloat. (pp. 31-32)

The metaphor of journeys, both across hot and mysterious deserts and into icy waters, captures the sense of the fluid, emergent qualities of the concept. Establishing and maintaining supportive learning contexts is not an easy task. Continuity is essential: *good teachers contextualise new experiences for children by relating them to past experiences* (Mercer, 1990, p. 32). Teachers and learners need to spend time together in order to get to know and understand each other. Effective learning, defined in the ways suggested, takes place if they are able to tune in to each other's meanings. The context grows and unfolds over each successive interaction. Mercer (1995) describes the development as follows:

The process of creating knowledge in classrooms is one in which, for it to be successful, themes must emerge and continue, explanations must be offered, accepted and revisited, and understanding must be consolidated. (p. 68)

As Doyle (1983, p. 181) reminds us, classes in schools have histories. Each 'conversation' between a teacher and a learner is a step on the journey they take together: *one stretch of the road from the history of their relationship into its future.* Maybin (1994, p. 136) uses the term *long conversations* to describe the kinds of talk in which the subtle interplay of deeply contextualised meanings between teacher and learner, which is so important for the construction of knowledge, can take place. In order to begin to understand and analyse how this happens, classroom talk needs to be sampled longitudinally, with successive observations seen as episodes in a continuing story rather than as isolated incidents.

The starting point I chose from which to gain a sense of how these *long conversations* operate was to focus on one class and become familiar with its regular routines and patterns of interaction. I planned to collect evidence of the different kinds of talk being transacted in this setting and analyse them to elicit the features which seemed to facilitate and support the processes of negotiation. Because I wanted to test out initial intuitions about the 'two-way' nature of the talk, I planned to pay significant attention to the ways in which children interacted with each other as well as with their teachers, an area of investigation which, as Edwards and Westgate (1994) point

out, has only recently begun to be developed. However, because of the relative technical ease in primary classrooms of collecting talk data from teachers compared to children, I began by collecting evidence of predominantly teacher talk. These early findings are reported in this chapter.

2.2.2 The nature of an ethnographic classroom study

Kamil, Langer and Shanahan (1985) suggest that an educational ethnography seeks to *understand the culture of the educational or learning process* by answering the following five questions:

1. *What is occurring?*
2. *How is it occurring?*
3. *How do the participants perceive the event?*
4. *What is required to participate as a member of that educational group?*
5. *What social and academic learning is taking place?*

(p. 73)

The importance of taking account of different participants' viewpoints is foregrounded here. The nature of the learning is conceptualised as *social* as well as *academic*, a product of social interactions. In these interactions, I suggest, is contained information for the researcher, which cannot be found elsewhere, about those factors which contribute to individual success or failure. The kinds of questions I was asking, my own intuitions and personal preferences as well as the phenomenological nature of an ethnographic enquiry meant that pre-determined frameworks for analysis were

inappropriate. So, too, were research methodologies which needed to be carried out in non-naturalistic settings. Essentially, I wanted to study *situated language use in one social setting* (Cazden, 1988, p. 3). My concern with identifying the factors which mediate success meant that my initial questions were very similar to Cazden's:

- *How do patterns of language use affect what counts as 'knowledge', and what occurs as learning?*
 - *How do these patterns affect the equality, or inequality, of students' educational opportunities?*
 - *What communicative competence do these patterns presume and/or foster?*
- (pp. 3-4)

I began the study with the intention of carrying out a *microethnography* within the four walls of a classroom. I soon realised, however, that *educational institutions* are only *segments of the whole* (Kamil et al. p. 73)¹⁹⁸⁵, and that, in order to begin to describe the full range of factors which affect classroom learning, I needed to study the interaction in related contexts. As May (1995, p. 3) argues, school ethnographies, rather than simply remaining *a reporting process*, need to take on a *problem orientation* approach, relating the detail of classroom life to political and structural issues. The whole research 'field', thus, became much broader than one classroom setting, and my study took on elements of a *macroethnography*. The differences between the two approaches are of extent rather than philosophy or purpose. Both seek to illuminate and possibly explain rather than to judge. Work at a macro level, encompassing as it does wider layers of interaction, is more likely to reveal causes of

disadvantage and failure, and indicate possible ways of eliminating them.

2.3 The research field

The purpose of this section is to provide contextual information about the 'field' in terms of the school which was the initial site for fieldwork, the participants in this setting and justifications for its being chosen. There are three subsections:

1. The school and its setting;
2. The classroom and the children;
3. Adults in the classroom.

2.3.1 The school and its setting

In the choice of school as a site for the initial observations, there were, essentially, only two criteria. First, in order to construct a participant observer rôle for myself which did not embody too many assumptions from other participants, I wanted a school where I was not previously known to the staff in my teacher training rôle as a tutor in the local college. Second, I wanted to work in a class which had an ethnically diverse mix of children, representing a range of first languages and cultural backgrounds. For reasons which are explained in Chapter Six, this is unusual in Bradford, where most schools are rather 'monocultural' in their intake.

The school chosen serves a settled and somewhat heterogeneous community, with families originating from Eastern Europe and Ireland as well as, more recently, from South Asia. The surroundings of the school are largely residential, with mainly private housing of a mixed nature, reflecting the diverse economic profiles of the inhabitants. Nearby, there is a big park with mature trees, open spaces and play areas. Because of its location at the top of a hill away from the canal, railway and flowing water at the bottom of the valley, this part of Bradford has never been the site of heavy industry, but the extensive view from the school across the valley and the city centre to the moors beyond is of factory chimneys, warehouses and all the other signs of a heavily industrial community.

When I began the study the school was a first school with a nursery unit, catering for children from 3-9 years. It was fairly small, with approximately 230 children on roll. There were seven classes (one reception and three each vertically grouped Years 1-2 and Years 3-4) and an adjoining nursery unit. Reception and Years 1 and 2 classes were housed in a single storey stone building dating from the early 1900s, along with the staffroom and offices and a large hall where lunches were eaten and PE, music and other lessons taught. The three Year 3-4 classes were in temporary classrooms which had stood in the playground for many years. The nursery occupied a fenced-off area within the school playground. It was a prefabricated building. During the two-year period in which I was visiting the school, it was demolished and the children and staff temporarily rehoused in buildings immediately across the road from the school.

From the outside, the school looked rather dark and forbidding, with grey stone walls and a sloping concrete playground, but inside it was bright and welcoming. The staff worked hard to develop a friendly atmosphere and encourage parental involvement. Parents were regularly invited in to jumble sales and social events, as well as to consult their children's teachers. There was a bilingual Home School Liaison Officer. The school was very much part of a local community, with a small catchment area. Some parents had themselves been pupils. Some of the staff lived locally and sent, or had sent, their own children there. The majority of the children progressed at the age of nine to the nearby middle school.

2.3.2 The classroom and the children

The class was housed in one of the temporary classrooms in the school playground, tucked away behind the nursery. There was a small patch of grass behind the classroom, bounded by a dense privet hedge which demarcated the school boundary. The main school building was about 50 metres away, past the nursery. Communication was maintained by telephone. Two parallel Year 3-4 classes housed in the other temporary classrooms combined to make up 'blue team'. The teachers worked as a team in planning the curriculum and organising resources, but the physical separation of the three classrooms meant that there was little opportunity in reality for the classes to work together.

The classroom was fairly small and somewhat congested. It had self-contained cloakroom and toilets. The room was organised, in the main, with resources round the edges and groups of tables in the centre, taking up most of the space. See Appendix 2.a (p. 439) for a plan of the layout. The children did not have regular places to sit, but occupied whichever seat was convenient for the work in hand. At times, a small group would choose to work in the cloakroom if they needed a quieter space. There was a large blackboard, part of which was used as a display board. Display areas were restricted because most of the wall space was taken up by windows, but displays were changed regularly and used very much as part of the teaching. The teachers also displayed photographs of the class's activities and information for parents in the cloakroom area. Children proudly pointed out their own work which had been put on display. There was a carpeted area surrounded by book racks, used frequently for class discussions and stories. Against the wall opposite the entrance, next to the emergency exit, there was an AppleMac computer on a trolley and a sink with art materials and a couple of easels. The children kept their personal possessions in trays and bags in the cloakroom. They went across to the main school to use the hall for PE, singing, assemblies and so forth. Sometimes, groups of children went to the staffroom to cook using the small cooker and microwave there. They clearly felt comfortable and safe in their classroom, and enjoyed having visitors. By the time they left the school at the end of Year 4, most of them had spent two years as pupils in it.

At the start of the study in January 1996, there were 27 children in the class: 15 in Year 3 and 12 in Year 4, aged 8-9 years old. My main personal reasons for choosing to work with this age group were that it interested me, and that there seemed to be very little work previously done with children at this stage of their education. The fact that it was a vertically-grouped class was opportune, and no doubt contributed to its *family* ambience (May, 1995, p. 7), which became significant in the findings. Because of the three tier system of education in operation in the LEA at the time of starting the study, there would be the opportunity to observe the children as they moved from first to middle school at 8+, which would make it possible to see whether and how the transition from one school to another affected the children's performances.

About half the children were monolingual English speakers. The bilingual children were predominantly Mirpuri Punjabi and/or Urdu speakers, with a small number having Pushto or Gujerati as their first language. For short intervals through the research period, children from travellers' families or the circuses which sometimes camped in the nearby park were members of the class. As in most multilingual classrooms in Britain, there was negligible use of other languages but English in the classroom. I also observed very little use of different languages in the playground and other parts of the school. In some ways, there is a case to be made for saying that English is the first language of most of the bilingual children in this school, rather than their 'mother tongues'. These issues are discussed further in Chapter Three (section 3.4.2).

The children appeared to get on well socially and to work well together. Girls were numerically in the majority, and boys and girls interrelated comfortably. There were little groups of 'friends', but hardly any of the tensions which can be apparent in classrooms: very little of the 'tale-telling' and squabbling over materials which can create problems. I heard the children being complimented several times by other staff in the school for their politeness, for example towards lunchtime supervisors and support staff. According to the school's assertive discipline policy, they collected a marble in a jar every time something really positive happened. This could be related to the learning, but was much more often related to good social or personal behaviour. When there were 20 marbles, the whole class had a treat, such as an extra playtime. In keeping with the school policy, there was also a pattern of individual rewards and sanctions, but this was not as visible in the ongoing life of the class or as openly discussed as the marble jar.

Some of the children lived near each other and were friends outside school, though for the children from South Asian backgrounds, social life was tightly locked into extended family networks. Many of the children had been in the school since Nursery or Reception and had younger siblings in other classes. They were known, usually by name, to other teachers, and would confidently set off on errands to other parts of the school. Some of them took turns to act as 'receptionists' at lunchtimes, sitting in the secretary's room next to the staffroom. They enjoyed this very much and saw it as a great privilege. Most of the

children were confident in talking with adults, even relative strangers, such as myself on my early visits to the school.

2.3.3 Adults in the classroom

The class was taught by two teachers, whom I call Sandra and Janet, on a job share basis. This allowed me the opportunity to observe two different (though similar) teaching styles. Both teachers were strongly committed to their work. They had both worked in the school for several years, but only arranged the job share a short time before I began my observations. Out of necessity, in their estimation, they talked to each other a lot about the children and the curriculum. They stressed the value of conversations, both for themselves in planning and evaluating what they did and for the children in strengthening their understandings of what they were learning. They spent a lot of time talking to each other, usually by telephone in the evenings, about the curriculum and about individual children's successes and problems. Much of the underlying thinking about the curriculum and the planning was thus made explicit, which in a class with only one teacher would not be the case to such a great extent. The teachers believed that this benefited their teaching, illustrating the value of a *partnership approach* (Bourne and McPake, 1991). It also generated valuable data from which to venture insights into the teachers' beliefs about their rôles in the classroom.

There were several other adults who came into the class from time to time to work with groups of children or individuals: a (monolingual)

Language Support teacher, who was part of Bradford's Section 11 project, and two classroom assistants were the most frequent visitors. A bilingual Language Support teacher also visited the class for one morning a week. She was normally asked to work with a group of children on a specific activity by the class teacher. I was a 'visitor' who sometimes took along interesting things (including a portable tape recorder) for them to see and talk about. One or two of the children asked me where I 'really' worked, or they told me that they had relatives connected with the college who knew me: the mother of one of the boys was a student on the B.Ed. Hons. course.

I sometimes sat and observed in the classroom, and the children saw me taking notes. They looked over my shoulder and tried to read what I was writing. Sometimes, they wrote their own comments alongside my notes. Occasionally, I took something related to the ongoing work of the team in to show the children, and the teachers asked me to talk to the whole class. At other times, I worked with individuals or groups of children, as directed by the teacher. In this situation, the tape recorder was usually running and I might also take notes of what was happening, usually saying to the children something like, "that's interesting, I'm going to write it down."

2.4 Analysis of talk in this classroom: the importance of collaboration

Classroom cultures are created and developed in complex ways, mostly intuitively and without overt planning on the part of

experienced teachers. Chapters Three and Four contain extensive discussion of this, and of ways the issues have been viewed in the literature. In the classroom where I did my initial fieldwork, collaborative talk was one of the means consciously employed by the teachers to negotiate the culture, and this was made explicit to the children. It was seen by both teachers as an important part of the children's learning experience. Whole class discussions with the teacher sitting on a low chair, facing the children on the carpet, were seen as an important way of facilitating collaborative talk, and took place frequently. As part of the arrangements for their jobshare, the teachers had a shared hour of liaison time on Wednesday afternoons. They used this time in the following way: Sandra was in charge of the class, Janet came to school and, with all the children on the carpet for about half of the hour, they had a three-way conversation about the work that had been done recently and their plans about what to do next. The children took an active part, answering questions and offering detail and comment about the work they had been doing since Janet was in school at the end of the previous week. They often provided information that she did not know, a somewhat unusual occurrence in most classrooms.

Mehan (1979, p. 77) discusses the importance of physical settings for marking the nature and purpose of different kinds of classroom behaviour. In this classroom, the location of the class conversations on the carpet was clearly indexical to the children of a way to behave. I audiotaped fourteen of these sessions. The tapes sound like scenes from a well rehearsed play. The children took the conversations very

seriously, participating by putting their hands up and waiting politely to be asked to speak. Much of the actual structuring and development of the talk was intuitive on the part of the teachers. When they read the transcripts and we discussed my analyses, they were surprised (and pleased) to see the extent of the organisation of the interaction. The focus was very much on class or group achievement, either ability based groups or other groups in which the children work.

Bruner (1996, p. 23) reports examples from schools of *mutual communities* where members of the group *help each other get the lay of the land and the hang of the job* through a division of labour and a taking on of clear rôles. He suggests that such practices have benefits for the learners' metacognition. Similarly, Wells and Chang-Wells (1992, p. 3) attest to the value of *sharing sessions* in primary classrooms. It is possible that similar advantages accrue to the Wednesday afternoon three-way conversations. It certainly is the case that, often, it is a child who is in the rôle of 'teacher' (even if only briefly) and there is a need for authentic negotiation between teacher and learner. It is also very unusual for children in primary classrooms to hear two adults talking to each other at length in the ways that the teachers do in these conversations. Usually, the adults present in a classroom have specific rôles which are mediated through the naturalised ideologies. They are expected to act in strongly hierarchically defined ways, with one clearly 'in charge'. The participation of both teachers on an equal power basis which took place in this classroom meant that the *negotiation* is much more strongly apparent than is usually the case.

In discussion with me, the teachers explained that they saw the three-way conversations as serving several purposes:

- they allowed the two teachers to communicate with each other;
- they informed Janet about what had been happening in the three days she had been away from the class;
- they were an opportunity for the children to talk about and explain what they had been doing and thus reinforce their learning;
- they gave messages to the children about which aspects of the curriculum are important.

2.4.1 Three extracts from one conversation

In this section, I analyse three extracts from one Wednesday afternoon three-way conversation, which took place in January 1997. I demonstrate the ways in which the teachers and children worked together to construct a classroom culture. Many of the children had been members of the class for almost 18 months at this point, and were very familiar with the dramaturgy of the conversations. They were expert actors in their respective rôles. I had been in the classroom working with a group of children for the hour or so prior to the conversation, then was an observer to the three way conversation. I made field notes and also tape recorded the whole afternoon session, which lasted in total about one and a half hours. The three-way conversation itself lasted about 30 minutes. It ranged over a variety of topics and included responses from 14 children out

of the 25 who were present. The support assistant who was present and I were included when it was suggested that the children sang their new song for us.

The extracts I have chosen provide evidence of some of the distinctive features of the ways the teachers and children *negotiate the world* to create joint cultures (Bruner, 1986, p. 126) in this particular classroom. The three main questions I had in mind when choosing these episodes from the whole conversation were:

1. What do the teachers see as important in classroom learning?
2. How do the teachers use language to interact with the children, to create a 'joint culture' of learning?
3. To what extent does the language used by the children reflect that used by the teachers?

The whole conversation can be seen as achieving the following main objectives in terms of the children's learning:

- validating and reinforcing subject knowledge;
- organising and managing different learning situations;
- making explicit the reasons for carrying out a particular task.

These three objectives clearly relate to Cazden's (1988, p. 3) three categories of classroom language of *curriculum*, *control* and *personal identity*, and, as she suggests, to *the tripartite core of all categorisations of language functions*:

- *the communication of propositional information;*
- *the establishment and maintenance of social relationships;*
- *the expression of the speaker's identity and attitudes.*

I suggest, then, that the teachers make explicit three key features of the classroom enterprise of learning in their talk:

1. What are we learning?
2. How are we learning it?
3. Why are we learning it?

These questions provide the framework for considering at this stage how the classroom culture develops. Each of the three examples from the conversation relates to one of them.

To analyse the three examples, I use a framework adapted from conversation analysis (Drew, 1990), which is explained fully in Chapter Five. I was initially drawn to conversation analysis because of the ways it could reveal how the speakers demonstrate mutuality, what Drew (p. 10) calls the *intersubjective understandings* in interaction. I consider this to be a crucial aspect of the construction of classroom cultures. I use terminology in my discussion taken from discourse analysis models (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). The notion of IRE sequences which they developed has been very influential in the analysis of classroom talk. My intention, however, is to move beyond the limitations of this model in attempting to elicit the social

functions of the language as well as its organisation. Moreover, as Cazden (1988, pp. 36-37) suggests, 'classic' discourse analysis does not account for the syntagmatic dimensions of lesson structure. Her postulation (pp. 110-111), that the 'E' element of IREs is not just about evaluation, but more about inducting the learner into a new way of *recontextualising* whatever is under discussion, contributing to a higher degree of *intersubjectivity* between speaker and listener, and so to the history of the communication in a wider context, is an important one in my theoretical and analytic framework.

Conventions used in the coding of transcripts are described in Appendix 2.b (p. 440).

2.4.1.i Extract One: What are we learning? New beginnings

Janet had begun some R.E. work with the children the previous week, related to the New Year and the way 'new beginnings' featured in their lives. This had then been continued with Sandra. As this extract begins, Sandra has just asked the children to explain to Janet what they had been doing since Janet had been in the class three days ago. Janet asks a general question to start the conversation going:

01 Janet: what did you *d-o* about *n-e-w*
beginnings?

Sandra: **Shaheen**

05 Shaheen: we had to .. *w-r-i-t-e* .. the *first thing we had*
to think of the title for the beginning things . then
we had to .. think of .. some things that
we wrote about .. after that we had to
work in twos with a book and write

10 Sandra: mmm ... we *c-h-o-s-e a n-e-w*
b-e-g-i-n-n-i-n-g a-n-d w-r-o-t-e about it
... so what **sort** of things did **people**
w-r-i-t-e .. a-b-o-u-t ... Rehana

15 Rehana: miss . *l-i-k-e* .. when we had a new baby
brother or sister . or .. when .. mm . a
wedding

Sandra: new *b-a-b-i-e-s* in the *h-o-u-s-e* . or a
w-e-d-d-i-n-g

Janet: **wedding . mm**

20 Sandra: **anything else** .. Tommy .. come on .
quickly .. have a little *t-h-i-n-k* .. and see
if you can think of another *n-e-w*
b-e-g-i-n-n-i-n-g . what about . **Andy** ...
what did *y-o-u* write about?

Andy: *m-o-v-i-n-g*

25 Sandra: **moving house** . that's another *n-e-w*
beginning . isn't it?.. Joe

Joe: a *b-i-r-t-h-d-a-y*



Sandra: *b-i-r-t-h-d-a-y-s* . we did write a little bit
about birthdays

30 Janet: that's right . isn't it?

Sandra: because that's the beginning of a n-e-w
y-e-a-r . isn't it . yes

Janet: oh . yes . that's r-i-g-h-t

Sandra: and that l-i-n-k-e-d in with having a
35 new baby didn't it .. er ... Noreen

Noreen: weddings

Janet: y-e-s .. we mentioned weddings

Sandra: yes .. we've mentioned weddings .. emm ..
Shabana

40 Shabana: driving lessons

Sandra: well . no . I *d-o-n'-t* ... *think that any of you*
wrote about that . but we did say that when
you *p-a-s-s-e-d* your *d-r-i-v-i-n-g t-e-s-t*

Janet: oh . yes

45 Sandra: it was .. a new beginning .. wasn't it .. yes

Janet: it's a *n-e-w* type of life . isn't it

Sandra: y-e-s

Janet: if .. you are a-b-l-e to .. get yourself about

Sandra: yes

50 Janet: yes . that's right . Shabana . well done

Sandra: but t-h-e-s-e children were writing about things that happened .. to **them**

Janet: yes . to them.

Sandra: so they can er .. Peter?

55 Peter: passing your driving *t-e-s-t*

Janet: *that's just what Shabana* said

Sandra: we'll have *o-n-e m-o-r-e*

Shaheen: miss .. the new year

Sandra: the new y-e-a-r

60 Janet: the new y-e-a-r .. *y-e-s-s* .. we talked a lot about that . didn't we . in the *f-i-r-s-t* .. few weeks that we were **back** . this *y-e-a-r* ... we talked about .. *t-h-i-n-k-i-n-g* about it being a *n-e-w y-e-a-r* and the **importance**

65 of .. *t-h-i-n-k-i-n-g* about what we wanted to *d-o* in the new year . how we wanted to *i-m-p-r-o-v-e* .. some of the things .. that we do at *s-c-h-o-o-l* .. *do you remember* .. I think *w-e-'v-e* .. nearly finished our book

70 as well .. so we can look at that

Sandra: *o-h* ... so is that .. em .. what Mrs.
Dobson's been making?

Janet: that's what Mrs. Dobson's making . yes

Sandra: l-o-v-e-l-y

75 Janet: she's just .. adding all the .. *s-h-e-e-t-s* that
the children have written out . so we'll
maybe get a chance

Sandra: super mmm

80 Janet: to look at that next week . when it's
f-i-n-i-s-h-e-d .. together

Sandra and Janet set up two patterns here, in exchanges which move beyond the Sinclair and Coulthard IRE model in ways similar to those suggested by Gibbons (1998, p. 111), in her model of *Student Initiates/Teacher Recasts*. The first one is to repeat what a child says in the 'E' slot of the exchange to reinforce its appropriacy in that context. Sandra does this four times (lines 18, 25, 28, 59). The final of these utterances, '*The New Year!*' is delivered with such an enthusiastic upward intonation that Shaheen can be left in no doubt at all that her suggestion has been accepted. When a child says something which does not meet the terms which Sandra has established as appropriate in the context, she does not repeat it (lines 41, 57), tactfully allowing the comment to 'disappear'. When a child's response has some potential for continuing Sandra's ideas, she rephrases it, selecting the features of the response which suit her

rephrases it, selecting the features of the response which suit her purposes. This can be seen as an IRE pattern of a very complex nature. Shaheen's first contribution and Sandra's feedback (lines 04-10) are interesting here. For Shaheen, the important point is not the knowledge content of the activity (which is perhaps what Janet is trying to elicit with her question at line 01, though this is not clear because of the use of the verb *do*), but the fact that the children had to engage in writing. Shaheen takes *What did you do...?* as an invitation to talk about the process of writing, from her viewpoint. Her words *the beginning things* suggest that she is actually rather unsure about what precisely they had to write about: it is the act of writing which is significant to her.

shaheen

indicates some of her *metacultural awareness* (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1991, p. 308) as to the importance of writing in the classroom and the ways the children were being inducted into going about it: *we had to think of the title; then we had to think of some things; we had to work in twos*. She answers what is possibly a 'what are we learning?' question in terms of 'how are we learning it?'. At lines 09-12, Sandra seems to be working this out: her slow repetition of what Shaheen has said followed by a re-phrasing of Janet's original question means that her response does not allow Shaheen's suggestion to 'disappear' as with later contributions from other children. Rather, she adjusts the direction of the conversation to accommodate Shaheen's concerns, as can be inferred from the fact that she mentions 'writing' several times subsequently (lines 12, 28, 42, 51) as if accommodating it into the activity of thinking about 'new beginnings' which the

children were engaged in. The 'E' slot of the IRE exchange is extended to achieve more than simply evaluating what Shaheen has said. Sandra uses it to negotiate through her talk what kind of activity writing is in this classroom. These examples of jointly constructing what counts as knowledge indicate how Janet and Sandra demonstrate Osborne's (1996) sixth and eighth assertions about valuing what children bring to the classroom and developing co-operation rather than competition through their responses.

The second pattern involves Sandra and Janet without the children. At four points at regular intervals in the extract, there are overlapping utterances (lines 30-34, 44-45, 53-54, 59-60), where Janet makes an affirming comment related to what Sandra has just said, but Sandra continues to hold the floor and the topic under discussion. The affirming comments do not add anything to the content of the talk or change its direction, but they are very much about the 'how' and 'why' of learning. They serve the important function in culture creating of showing the children that both teachers agree about what constitutes appropriate content in this particular context, and how to talk about it.

The digression about driving lessons (lines 40-53) is interesting. At first, Sandra appears to reject Shabana's contribution, but then she softens this by referring back to an earlier part of the discussion (not shown here) where it is clear that passing the driving test was mentioned. Janet then elaborates on this theme (lines 44-50), actually ending by affirming Shabana's contribution. In order to avoid

confusion through a possibly contradictory message, Sandra then goes on to add a new factor to the context (lines 51-52): the children were to write about things which had happened to them. Janet concurs with this (line 53), so there is overt agreement between the teachers at the end of the exchange on the appropriacy of the topic of driving lessons, despite what seemed to be diverging views earlier on. Moreover, Shabana, normally a quiet child who does not usually participate a great deal in whole-class discussions, has had her contribution validated, which was undoubtedly Sandra's intention in line 45. When Peter refers to the topic again, however, (line 55), Janet quickly gives him a clear message that it is now not an acceptable one. This is an example of the two teachers constructing together through their talk a framework for the children to operate within, while at the same time allowing their talk to be differentially influenced by the responses of individual children. Their understandings of each other's tacit thoughts, partly achieved, no doubt, through the sheer amount of time they spend talking together, seems to guide them throughout the conversation. Janet is happy to allow her view of the appropriacy of a particular piece of knowledge, i.e. that driving lessons are a 'new beginning', to be changed by Sandra through the introduction of a new condition, that the children were asked to choose events which had happened to them personally.

A tracking of pronoun usage through the extract indicates the changing views the teachers have of their rôles in relation to the content and activities of the 'new beginnings' topic, which they have jointly negotiated. Crapanzano (1986, p. 71) argues, in relation to

ethnographic discourse, that pronouns are more than grammatical noun substitutes: they indicate the speaker's (or writer's) *visibility* in the text – in this case, the activity being discussed in the classroom. Janet, the 'newcomer' to the class, begins by using *you* in line 01. At this point, she knows something of the work done on the 'new beginnings' topic (as becomes clear at lines 60-70), but needs to be inducted into the stage of development which the knowledge constructing process has reached. Sandra, Shaheen and Rehana all use *we* consistently (lines 04, 06, 07, 09, 13, 28). At line 37, Janet includes herself in the whole group, and subsequently refers back to part of the topic she has previously covered with the children (lines 60-70). Between lines 51-54, Janet and Sandra position themselves separately from the children with their use of *these children*, *them* and *they*. Janet does this again by referring to *the children* in line 76. She then immediately places herself with the children, referring to an activity that she will do with them in Sandra's absence. None of this seems to cause any confusion for the children, who follow the shifts in viewpoint effortlessly, and make numerous appropriate and relevant contributions to the conversation as they feel necessary.

2.4.1.ii Extract Two: How are we learning it? Doing PE

The class had a PE lesson in the hall with Sandra earlier in the afternoon. She described to Janet how well the children had worked to put the apparatus away after the lesson, and then awarded the class the 'marble in the jar' prize for their good behaviour. Sandra then initiated a conversation about putting the equipment away:

- 01 Sandra: who can *r-e-m-e-m-b-e-r* how long it took .. to put the apparatus *a-w-a-y* .. I actually *t-i-m-e-d* them . can you remember . Shafqat?
- 05 Shafqat: three o'clock
- Sandra: *t-h-r-e-e* ?
- Ch: three minutes
- Janet: *w-e-l-l d-o-n-e* . three **minutes**? .. goodness me . that's *v-e-r-y* quick .. isn't it?
- 10 Sandra: it's **very** quick .. I was **very** . very *i-m-p-r-e-s-s-e-d* .. we didn't get the **big frame** out . but we got everything **else** out
- Janet: and that . **takes** quite a while .. doesn't it .
- 15 to organise?
- Sandra: well it does . yes
- Janet: they've done *r-e-a-l-l-y* well
- Sandra: so we've ... they've got a few **ideas** about *w-h-y* we managed to do it so *q-u-i-c-k-l-y*
- 20 Janet: mmm
- Sandra: would you like to just .. tell .. Mrs. W. *w-h-y* .. we thought we had done it so *q-u-i-c-k-l-y*? ... yes . Bushra?

25 Bushra: miss . we . because we were .. sitting ..
nicely near the *w-a-l-l*

Sandra: right .. people were sitting *s-e-n-s-i-b-l-y* ..
so there was nobody in the *w-a-y* .
r-i-g-h-t

30 Janet: when children are trying to put apparatus
away . that's very sensible . isn't it?

Sandra: Harpreet?

Harpreet: people were listening

Sandra: people were *l-i-s-t-e-n-i-n-g*

Janet: *g-o-o-d*

35 Sandra: it *u-s-e-d* to **happen** .. that I had to tell
children .. *o-v-e-r* and *o-v-e-r* again .
but **today** .. they listened . and they did it
straight away

Janet: well *d-o-n-e*

40 Sandra: er ... Yasmin.

Yasmin: we sat *q-u-i-e-t-l-y*

Sandra: you sat *q-u-i-e-t-l-y* .. so that meant that
you **could** listen .. didn't it? .. Nahida

Nahida: miss . you didn't have to shout

45 Sandra: I didn't need to shout . because you were sitting quietly and *l-i-s-t-e-n-i-n-g* . yes ... er . Shabana

Shabana: miss we looked where we were going

50 Sandra: <whispered> you l-o-o-k-e-d where you were going .. yes

Janet: that's very i-m-p-o-r-t-a-n-t . isn't it . Noreen? ... it's very important to make sure you are *s-a-f-e* ... and you watch what you are *d-o-i-n-g*

55 Sandra: One more reason .. Qasar?

Qasar: miss .. when they were putting .. the apparatus away .. they were doing it sensibly

60 Sandra: they were doing it sensibly . they were *w-o-r-k-i-n-g t-o-g-e-t-h-e-r* . weren't they? . so that meant that .. everything was done .. **quite quickly** but it was done *s-a-f-e-l-y* .. very good

65 Janet: well that was r-e-a-l-l-y good . I certainly think that they *d-e-s-e-r-v-e* a stone in the jar for that . Miss P. so I wonder how many we've **got**

In the way she has emphasised the putting away of the PE apparatus, Sandra has established that is an important part of the lesson. The children are expected to do it, then articulate the ways in which they have done it. There are issues of safety which she wants to emphasise. The conversation has a clear pattern in which the two teachers and the children take on definite rôles. Sandra's rôle is to inform Janet about what happened, which she does with some evaluative comment (lines 02-03, 11-13, 18-19, 21-23, 35-38, 59-63). The use of pronouns is again quite marked: at several of these points (lines 03, 18, 37, 59), Sandra uses *they* or *them* to refer to the children, positioning herself as their advocate to Janet. Line 18 is particularly interesting: she seems to implicate herself in the action of clearing away while simultaneously standing aside to show Janet how well the children did it.

Janet's rôle is to affirm the action and the children's comments (lines 08-10, 14-15, 17, 29-30, 34, 39, 51-54, 64-67). This represents virtually all of what she says in this extract. The children's rôle is to provide the teachers with evidence that they have understood the message of *safety*, despite the fact that Sandra emphasises the notion of *speed* (e.g. lines 01-04, 11-12, 18-19, 23, 37-38, 62). The children all answer in terms of careful behaviour, intertextualising words and phrases, almost as formulae, which they no doubt have heard their teachers use at different times: *sitting nicely; listening; looking where we were going; doing it sensibly* and so on, even mirroring at times the speed and stress patterns of the teachers (lines 24-25, 41, 44). They use *we* consistently when offering their suggestions (lines 24, 41, 48) apart

from Qasar (lines 56-58). The reasons for his use of the third rather than the first person may be more to with his individual emotional needs (he is on the SEN register and identified as a child with quite severe behaviour problems) rather than with factors in the group as a whole.

Putting the PE equipment away is established as a collaborative activity, which everyone shares responsibility for. The ways in which it should be done are clearly established in the language used by Sandra and echoed by the children. Janet's closing remark about the stones in the jar, *I wonder how many we've got* (lines 66-67) establishes that the collecting of rewards for good behaviour is another collaborative exercise, even including the teachers. Someone was sent off to count the stones, and the result was proudly announced to the class a few minutes later, *19! So we just need one more, and then we'll get a class reward!*

2.4.1.iii Extract Three: Why are we learning it? A new song

During Sandra's time with the class, they have a weekly singing lesson with a peripatetic pianist, Mr. Saunders. This week, they have started learning a new song *do- a deer* (from *The Sound of Music*). Sandra invites them to tell Janet about the song.

01 Sandra: *w-h-y* did Mr *S-a-u-n-d-e-r-s* **think** . that
would be a good song for us to learn ..
because it was his idea .. *he had it already* there ..
f-o-r us .. he was very *h-e-l-p-f-u-l*

05 <....three children make different guesses, then... >

Janet: Gillian's had her hand up .. quite a long time

Sandra: G-i-l-l-i-a-n

10 Gillian: because it's different *w-a-y-s* of saying ... things

Sandra: *n-o* . no it's not .. different *w-a-y-s* of *s-a-y-i-n-g* things . *n-o* ... Bushra?

Bushra: it's in different *l-a-n-g-u-a-g-e-s*

Sandra: *n-o* .. it's not in different languages ..

15 Janet: it's a good idea . though . isn't it?..

Sandra: I was **just** saying last week .. that Mrs. James .. brought us that *o-l-d* Christmas card

Janet: that's beautiful . isn't it?

20 Sandra: because .. she knew that this class *l-i-k-e-d* .. to think about different *l-a-n-g-u-a-g-e-s*

Janet: right

25 Sandra: somebody sent the card to her .. but she thought that we might like to keep it in our *c-l-a-s-s-r-o-o-m*

Janet: yes . definitely . I saw that last week

Sandra: we are **interested** in different languages ..
 30 but that . er . that isn't why we are doing
 that song **Nahida**

Nahida: miss .. is it because .. it'll make us better
 singers?

Sandra: well . I'm sure it w-i-l-l

Janet: o-h .. m-m-m ...

35 Sandra: I'm sure it w-i-l-l

Janet: she's a-l-m-o-s-t on the right track .. isn't
she?

Sandra: m-m-m ... Anwar?

Anwar: miss . is it because .. it came from the
 40 Caribbean

Sandra: *n-o* .. it doesn't . but it would be nice if we
 could find a song from the Caribbean to
l-e-a-r-n . wouldn't it . Anwar . *we have*
been listening to some Caribbean music

45 Yasmin: yeah . miss . it were like .. a steel band

Sandra: a steel band . yes . we liked that ... in **fact** ..
 when you go for your dinner . I've been
 listening to it

Janet: oh yes <laughter from S. and J.>

50 Sandra: I'm enjoying that .

Janet: it's nice music . isn't it?

<more laughter from S. and J.> and <indecipherable>

Sandra: Suzanne

Suzanne: miss . because it's nice and joyable

55 Sandra: well it is a nice enjoyable song . isn't it .
Suzanne?

Anwar: miss . can we sing it?

Sandra: er . . that's not the *r-e-a-s-o-n* *though it is a*
nice enjoyable song .. it's because .. e-a-c-h of
60 *the .. different words .. each of the n-o-t-e-s*
gets h-i-g-h-e-r and h-i-g-h-e-r and
h-i-g-h-e-r

<several children join in, repeating 'higher' , slight
hubbub of noise>

65 Sandra: and . **hang on** . I think Nahida might
have got it now . Nahida .. what did you
say?

Nahida: miss . we were learning about .. about
p-i-t-c-h

- 70 Sandra: good girl
- Janet: well done
- Ch: p-i-t-c-h
- Sandra: yes . yes
- 75 Janet: they found that quite *s-t-r-a-n-g-e* last
time . that it was the same .. the same
w-o-r-d .. as a *f-o-o-t-b-a-l-l* p-i-t-c-h
- Sandra: oh . of course . yes
- Janet: but . I said . well . that would *h-e-l-p*
them to r-e-m-e-m-be-r it
- 80 Yasmin: <whispered> miss ... p-i-c-t-u-r-e
- Janet: because it's quite a difficult word to
remember . isn't it
- Sandra: O.K. so that's *o-u-r* new song

Sandra's initial question reinforces for the children the idea that they do things at school for particular purposes, and that the teachers know what these are, though the children may not. The children offer several reasons of their own for learning the song, which all have validity in terms of the kind of culture Sandra and Janet are trying to develop in the classroom. Gillian's comment (lines 09-10) comes from her intertextually mediated awareness of ways the children are encouraged to widen their vocabularies in different

activities. She uses a phrase, *different ways of saying*, which Sandra and Janet sometimes use in explaining and discussing vocabulary and word meaning with the children. Bushra's idea (line 13), which is strongly affirmed by Janet (line 15), though it is not 'the right answer' in this case, comes from her sense that 'different languages' are a valid topic for classroom discussion as, indeed, in this classroom they certainly are. Sandra immediately confirms this with the example of the Christmas card given to the class by another member of staff in the school, and with her definitive statement (line 28). Nahida offers a suggestion (lines 31-32) which reveals her understanding, it could almost be said, of the purpose for going to school at all (i.e. to 'be able to do things better'). Once again, Janet affirms her idea and hints at the 'official' reason for learning the song. Anwar's suggestion (lines 39-40) is appropriate because the class has been studying St. Lucia, and Suzanne's idea (line 54) mirrors Nahida's in its metacultural awareness of the reasons for which things can be done in schools.

The closing exchange, centred around the word 'pitch' (lines 67-83), is fascinating. Sandra's attempts using semantic cues (lines 58-62) to get the children to remember the word she had given them previously are eventually rewarded by Nahida's answer (lines 68-69). The reason for learning the song is finally shown and labelled, to the manifest satisfaction of the teachers (lines 70-71). Janet had commented to me a while previously that *Nahida always has the right words*. Janet continues the language awareness theme, introducing a lexical and phonological element, by mentioning football pitches (lines 74-76), overtly addressing Sandra (*we* for most of the rest of the extract

temporarily becomes *they* in lines 73 and 78), but obviously intending her comment to be heard by all the children. This is a device often used by the teachers with the intention, perhaps, of showing the children how events in the classroom are there to be discussed. Yasmin's whispered comment (line 80), unheard by either of the teachers, reveals that the word *pitch* has set her off along a train of thought very different from the one the teachers had in mind, providing her with phonological cue for the word *pitch*. Her analogy, however, raises potentially important questions about the semantic schema operating in her mind while the talk about football pitches has been going on around her.

I have presented through the analysis of these examples evidence of some of the features which Sandra and Janet consider to be important in classroom learning, demonstrated through their talk with the children. The analysis is partial and speculative, but I suggest it reveals the potential for discovering in classroom talk evidence about both teachers' and children's beliefs about what is important for effective learning, and ways in which each group negotiates with the other to construct a joint culture of learning. I have examined episodes where the teachers do most of the talking, and, ostensibly, take the dominant rôle, though it is not incontrovertible that they always do so. There is also considerable evidence at various points of ways in which the children appropriate their teachers' discourses. Through this, it is possible to begin to gain evidence of ways in which a 'culture of learning' is established. In Chapters Seven and Eight, I present fuller evidence of the children's talk in this classroom, the

ways in which it reflects that of the teachers and also moves away from teacher models and frameworks.

2.4.2 Longitudinal analysis of four conversations

In order to reveal more clearly the continuity (or intertextuality) of the discourse in the classroom, I analyse longitudinally in this section four consecutive examples of the three-way conversations between the two teachers and the children. There are two subsections:

1. Structure and content of the conversations;
2. Context and continuity in the conversations.

In the first, I describe the ways in which the conversations are structured by topic and content. In the second, I illustrate aspects of context and continuity across the four conversations through examining the organisation of topics. I have chosen a set of four conversations which took place over a period of six weeks, from September to November 1997, so that evidence for continuity in their content and structure can be tracked. I anticipated that, since they took place near the beginning of the school year, the processes of interaction would be more apparent in this set than in others. Ball (1980, p. 143) discusses the importance of *initial encounters* between teachers and children at the start of the school year when *relationships are being established and rules negotiated*. My expectation was that talk to emphasise these aspects of the classroom culture would predominate in these early conversations.

Several studies of classroom talk gave me starting points for considering and analysing classroom talk across rather than within lessons. Barnes (1976, ch. 1 pp. 11-33) argues that talk in a lesson is influenced and to some extent organised by a complex interplay of factors, from both within and across lessons, and also from contexts external to the lessons. He attempts a form of analysis (p. 64) which shows, not just the internal structure of classroom utterances, but *the relationship between the meanings of sentences spoken by different people*. Mehan's proposition of Topically Related Sets (1979, pp. 65-71) begins to account for broader aspects of structure than is possible within the IRE sequence, showing, as Cazden (1988) argues, that lesson organisation is more than a case of linked IREs. Mehan shows how the notion of TRSs helps to explain macro structure within a lesson by revealing the reflexive tying structures (1979, pp. 75-76) which connect the interactional sequences. There is the possibility that it can also help to track structures across lessons. In addition, the Santa Barbara Discourse Group (1992a, 1995) provide evidence in their analyses of different classroom contexts of the *intertextual nature of classroom life* (1992a, p. 31), revealed through research processes which intentionally set out to seek evidence of the viewpoints of the different participants in the classroom interactions, and of the cyclical, referential nature of classroom life. Westgate and Hughes (1997, p. 135) argue that it is analysis of the *linkage between moves over stretches of discourse* which helps to reveal how *meanings are jointly constructed by the participants as their talk-contexts evolve*.

2.4.2.i Structure and content of the conversations

I began my analysis by identifying the sequence of topics in each conversation. My category of 'topic' is similar in some respects to Mehan's category of *phase* (1979, p. 74), which he describes as a sequence of topical sets, but relates more closely to content than to function in the discourse. It also has parallels with Mehan's unit of analysis of the *event* (p. 75), which *moves the investigation to a social or interactional plane*, and is concerned with discourse as a dynamic process rather than simply as the phenomenon of language to be described. He suggests that the notion of the *event* can be used to identify links across considerable stretches of discourse in extended sequences.

Table 2.1 below shows the structure of the four conversations I have chosen to analyse.

NUMBER	DATE	DURATION	NO. OF TOPICS	TIME (in mins.)
1.	24.09.97	27 mins.	6	7; 5; 7; 4; 2; 2
2.	08.10.97	20 mins.	5	5; 8; 2; 3; 2
3.	29.10.97	16 mins.	8	2; 2; 1; 3; 2; 3; 2; 1
4.	05.11.97	27 mins.	9	9; 2; 2; 5; 1; 2; 1; 3; 2

Table 2.1 Structure of four classroom conversations

In Appendix 2.c (p. 442), I show the turns in the conversations which indicate the changes in topic and summarise the content.

Conversation no. 3 was shorter than the others because it took place in the school hall as building work in the nursery was making the classroom too noisy at the time. Time was taken in moving to and from the hall. During the conversation, Sandra took advantage of the extra space in the hall to allow the children to perform for Janet a dance which they had just learnt and she had not seen.

The boundaries of the topics were decided by identifying the points when a new kind of knowledge, i.e. 'what', 'how' or 'why' (according to the questions used for analysis in section 2.4.1), was introduced into the conversation. This was usually signalled by one of the teachers – Sandra, in the vast majority of cases, who was the 'resident' teacher. There are also examples, especially in the later conversations, where children nominate a new topic. It can be seen that there is quite a wide range of times spent on the topics, from 1 minute to 9 minutes. All of the topics of more than 5 minutes' length (apart from one, marked * on 05.11.97 in table 2.2) are linked to work about the local neighbourhood, which the teachers of blue team (the three Yr. 3/4 classes) had planned collaboratively. This work involved class walks to local places to collect information about the neighbourhood, as well as studying various images of the locality, such as maps, old photos, aerial photos and so on. The classroom activity and its related events in the locality were more like the *cycles of activity* described by the Santa Barbara Discourse Group (1992a, p. 32) than typical lessons.

Very little discussion of this activity took place in conversation 3, because of the constraints noted above.

Table 2.2 below shows the main content of the topics of longer than 5 minutes' duration in the conversations, and indicates their total duration as a proportion of the whole conversations.

NUMBER	TOPICS WITH A DURATION OF MORE THAN FIVE MINUTES
1.	a. 7 mins: walk to local cemetery b. 5 mins: showing sketches from walk c. 7 mins: Bradford connections
	PROPORTION OF TIME – 19 : 27 mins.
2.	a. 5 mins: traffic survey outside school b. 8 mins: journey of a letter (<i>a story I'd just read</i>)*
	PROPORTION OF TIME – 13 : 20 mins.
4.	a. 9 mins: walk to old school in neighbourhood b. 5 mins: firework safety
	PROPORTION OF TIME – 14 : 27 mins.

Table 2.2 Topics with a duration of more than five minutes as a proportion of the whole conversations.

It can be seen that, in these three conversations, a significant proportion of the time is spent in talk about knowledge in the first category: *what are we learning?* In this case, it is, largely, knowledge of a particular kind, constructed from the children's direct, personal experience. Moreover, it is elicited to a great extent from the environment immediate to the school, from which the teachers

subsequently draw more general themes and issues. This echoes in many respects Stenhouse's *process model* as reflected in the work of the teachers in New Zealand described by May (1995, p. 17). Through their participation in conversations about their locality, the children are learning that knowing can entail actively constructing knowledge from multi-sensory experiences. They are expected to articulate what they know. Because of the nature of the three-way conversations, they have a genuine purpose for this – to inform Janet of their current state of knowing so that she can continue with them to mediate the processes of negotiation of knowledge. The topics are clearly linked across the four conversations, and there is constant recursive reference in vocabulary choices as well as in content.

This brief analysis of the content and structure of the four consecutive three-way conversations shows how they can be regarded as cohesive parts of a larger whole, part of the ongoing journey in this classroom which teachers and learners are making together.

2.4.2.ii Context and continuity in the conversations

In this section, a longitudinal analysis of the organisation of the four conversations reveals some of the ways in which they operate as coherent discourse, rather than as separate, self-contained episodes. The occurrence of the three ways of knowing ('what', 'how, and 'why') can be tracked across the four conversations, showing how the reference to topic and to ways of knowing is recursive and reflexive (Mehan, 1979, pp. 75-77). The following table illustrates this.

NUMBER	TIME	CONTENT OF TOPICS
1.	a. 7 mins: b. 5 mins: c. 7 mins: d. 4 mins: e. 2 mins: f. 2 mins:	walk to local cemetery showing sketches from walk Bradford connections how to record traffic on a graph how to negotiate a topic how to do handwriting
2.	a. 5 mins: b. 8 mins: c. 2 mins: d. 3 mins: e. 2 mins:	traffic survey outside school journey of a letter English lessons playing a tune on recorders finding the owner of a lost earring
3.	a. 2 mins: b. 2 mins: c. 1 min: d. 3 mins: e. 2 mins: f. 3 mins: g. 2 mins: h. 1 min:	20 stones in the jar looking at old photos of the school arranging to do the dance how to do paired reading choosing a poem memories of Mrs. Dobson performing the dance organisation to return to classroom
4.	a. 9 mins: b. 2 mins: c. 2 mins: d. 5 mins: e. 1 min: f. 2 mins: g. 1 min: h. 3 mins: i. 2 mins:	walk to old school in neighbourhood looking at photos of locality how to negotiate a topic firework safety how to do handwriting how to do speech mark work how to negotiate a topic how to practise number bond work Bible story

Table 2.3 Topic links across the four conversations

'what' topics are shown in red;

'how' topics are shown in green;

'why' topics are shown in blue.

The total number of 28 topics are categorised as follows:

what are we learning?	10
how are we learning it?	11
why are we learning it?	7

Though no conclusions can be drawn from such a small sample, it is interesting that the 'what' and the 'how' are even, suggesting perhaps that there is a clear focus on *intelligent performance* (see Chapter 3, section 3.2.1.i) in this classroom. The distinction between the 'how' and the 'why' is, at times, subtle. The 'how' topics deal with ways of behaving in respect of the curriculum knowledge being negotiated, for example 'how to do handwriting' from conversation 1, or 'how to play a tune on the recorder' from conversation 2. They clearly include elements of how to behave towards others, such as the sharing of resources and so on, but the focus is on negotiating the knowledge which, in the case of the recorders example, is the correct playing of a tune. The 'why' topics, on the other hand, are much more obviously about relating to others in a social way, in order to develop and maintain a harmonious 'community' in the classroom.

Three of the seven 'why' topics are about 'how to negotiate a topic': part of what the children need to know in order to participate as a member of this group during conversation time. The two which take place in conversation 4 are interesting in this respect. In the first one, (4c), it is Sandra as the teacher who explains the need to choose a topic and the etiquette of choosing. In the second one, (4g), it is a child who points out to his classmate that going swimming is not an acceptable

topic for the conversation at this point, because *that's something that normally happens*, not a particular piece of work done during this particular week. As the school year progresses and the conversations continue, the children begin, through a combination of experiencing the rôle models of their teachers and engaging in the interaction, to appropriate the discourse and actively contribute to the joint construction of the classroom culture.

A comparison of topic (b) in conversation 1 and topic (b) in conversation 3 helps to illustrate the distinction between the 'how' and 'why' dimensions. In both, the children are invited to stand up and hold pictures for the rest of the class to see. In 1b, the focus is on the way to stand and to hold the book in order that other children might see the sketches, followed by discussion of the detail included in the sketches. In 3b, the emphasis is more to do with behaving politely towards and working with others, rather than with the content of the photos being studied. The children are being socially inducted into the acceptable ways of behaving as members of a group in this classroom. Several of the 'why' topics do not relate to curriculum knowledge at all. In 2e, Sandra is attempting to trace the owner of an earring which has been found in the classroom and which the children had thought might belong to Janet. Topic 3f is about the recent death of one of the school's support assistants. This event took up quite a lot of time in the school as a whole with the children being given the opportunity to write down their memories and make artifacts related to Mrs. Dobson, and to take part in a special whole-school assembly. One of the main messages of the 'why' topics

is clearly that, to belong in this class requires social (and cultural) as well as academic knowledge. This tracking of topics across the four conversations illustrates features of Mehan's (1979, p. 76) *interactional model* of classroom behaviour which recognises the reciprocal nature of the behaviour as well as its reflexivity and recursivity.

2.5 Key issues arising from the analysis

The episodes which have been analysed in this chapter begin to answer the questions I posed at the start of my study, in one particular classroom context. I have presented evidence for some of the ways in which two teachers collaboratively mediate knowledge and learning for the children in their class. In the regular three-way conversations they hold with the children, particularly in those instances where they talk to each other in their presence, Sandra and Janet construct a 'joint culture', not just concerning the transaction of knowledge, but embodying the individual and community values they consider important, such as sharing with each other, working together, taking care of each other's possessions, showing respect for death and so on. They demonstrate the positive models provided in the talk when two teachers engage in genuinely negotiated, purposeful discussion with children. Also, possibly without being aware of it, they begin to reveal the powerful cognitive benefits to be gained from making the processes of negotiation explicit in the kind of talk which provides for the children *the psychological benefit of the historical and contemporary experience of their culture* (Mercer, et al. 1999, p. 96).

The key issues arising from looking at the talk from teachers' viewpoints which have implications for my research are as follows:

- the talk in the classroom is a major part of the social interaction, creating a culture, not just a vehicle, for the 'learning';
- the teachers' own views, personal experiences, knowledge and values are pivotal in constructing and understanding this social interaction;
- a definition of what counts as knowledge in this classroom needs to include social as well as academic factors;
- the clearly differential treatment of individual children on the part of the teachers needs to be considered as a factor in individual children's success.

The evidence from the children is, at this stage, less well developed, though it is clear that they take active rôles in the interaction throughout. There is some evidence for the ways in which they may appropriate the teachers' ways of speaking and of organising discourse, as well as their purposes and intentions. In Chapter Eight, I provide and analyse evidence of the children working together without teacher direction in different group settings, which illustrates their active engagement more clearly.

The evidence presented in this chapter also raises questions to do with bilingualism, and with the language and cultural experiences

which the children are bringing to the classroom from their communities. All the 'bilingual' children in this classroom are of second or third generation immigrant heritage, living in settled communities in which the *myth of return* (Singh, 1994, p. 22) no longer has any real sway. They all seem (on the surface) to be fluent in English, although they come from a range of language and cultural backgrounds. It is easy to forget, at times, that many of the children are not native speakers of English. On the audiotapes, it is at times difficult to distinguish 'native speakers' from 'second language speakers'. There is virtually no evidence of other languages but English being used in the classroom, although, as the 'learning a new song' example illustrates, there is a positive attitude to other languages. This aspect of the children's experience clearly needs to be investigated, otherwise any conclusions drawn about the rôle of language in their learning will be incomplete. The key issues to be explored further in respect of the children are, then, as follows

- ways in which children use talk with each other to transact knowledge in the social contexts of the classroom;
- models of learning which take account of social and cultural factors;
- the models of language development and bilingualism which are most relevant to describe and explain the children's experiences and expertise;

- home and community influences on children's social and language behaviour in the classroom and for what counts as success.

2.6 Summary

In this chapter, I have described the theoretical and methodological starting points for the study in terms of the models of language, learning and approaches to research which seemed to offer the best possibilities for answering my questions about success in learning in ethnically diverse classrooms, and which most appropriately reflect my personal and professional viewpoints. I have provided evidence of the teacher-child interaction from one ethnically diverse primary classroom which both begins to frame the questions more clearly and to demonstrate the potential and relevance of the chosen theoretical and methodological frameworks for answering the questions satisfactorily. Lastly, I have indicated the issues arising from this pilot study which guided the shaping of the subsequent research, and which are addressed in subsequent chapters. A central issue which has emerged is of the need to understand classroom interaction as a set of processes which construct a culture from the resources brought by the participants, as well as those present within the classroom. This notion of intersecting layers of experience and interaction is examined in the next chapter and fully illuminated in the literature review which takes up the following two chapters.

PREFACE TO CHAPTERS THREE AND FOUR

3.A: The scope of the chapters

Bruner (1996, p. 28) reminds us that schools can never be considered as *culturally free-standing*. They are always at the mercy of the 'external' culture of society as a whole, which inevitably contributes to and influences the 'internal' culture of the school. He calls for the development, not just of individual classroom ethnographies, which provide valuable evidence about what goes on inside classrooms, but of an *anthropology of education* (p. 33) in order to understand better *the situatedness of education in the society at large* (p. 28). One of the main arguments in this thesis is that what happens inside classrooms which mediates learning cannot be understood without taking external influences into account. Chapters Three and Four, which form the literature review, then, examine ethnically diverse classrooms from both the outside and the inside.

Chapter Three contains a selective review of the external influences on classroom cultures. The issues are contextualised in three main themes where contestation has been strong and to where, it is argued, many of the tensions and contradictions revealed in the data presented in Chapters Seven and Eight can be traced. The first theme is 'knowledge'; specifically, what is meant by *legitimate knowledge* (Apple, 1993) and the ways in which it has come to be packaged in the current primary curriculum in Britain. This section draws on work done in both America and Europe. It provides a setting for the second theme, a review of the debates in Britain about what should be

included in a national 'language' curriculum for a multi-ethnic society. This necessarily touches on the wider and much-contested arguments about 'multicultural' and 'antiracist' education. It provides a context for the third theme, which is an account of the significant experiences and viewpoints which teachers and children, as members of contemporary British society, bring to their meetings in ethnically diverse classrooms.

In Chapter Four, I review the research which has been carried out on the internal cultures of ethnically diverse primary classrooms, foregrounding the ways in which talk has been featured and analysed in the processes of creating cultures. This chapter begins by discussing the theoretical models of knowledge, language and learning which best explain the findings of the research. The following two sections review research into classroom learning, beginning with the studies which view classrooms as sites for classical anthropological research into the experiences of 'the other' and ending with the current debates about what *effective* classrooms, to borrow the much used key word of the current influential conceptual frameworks (Teddlie and Reynolds, 2000), actually look like. Conteh (2000) describes the current viewpoints in classroom research as essentially reflecting a dichotomy between those who see successful learning as a 'product' of effective teaching and those who consider it essential to try to capture the complex processes of negotiation and collaborative culture creating which lead, perhaps, to a different kind of success in learning. Along the way, the subjectivities of all the participants in the game of school need to be taken into account.

The literature review is wide ranging and inter-disciplinary. My starting point was a question about success in ethnically diverse classrooms, with the intuition that language was a key element in mediating success. It has turned out to be language not as *an object of understanding* but rather *an instrument of action* (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 645), that is, *tool-mediated* human action where words are seen as one of the tools necessary for cultural development (Vygotsky, 1929; Merino et al., 1993, p. 264). Chapter Three, then, draws evidence from the fields of sociology, history, philosophy, cultural psychology, curriculum studies, cultural studies and makes a passing reference to media studies. Chapter Four draws mainly on anthropology, ethnography, cognition studies, sociolinguistics and discourse studies, and depends for some of its theoretical credibility on aspects of literary criticism.

Words on the page are always linear, and the linear account above of the scope of the chapters does not satisfactorily represent the ways in which the external and internal dimensions of classroom interaction intersect with and influence each other. To understand how the processes of negotiation operate, a model comprising four interrelated spheres of interaction is proposed. They can be represented two dimensionally as concentric layers with a dense network of two way inter-connections, as the following diagram illustrates:

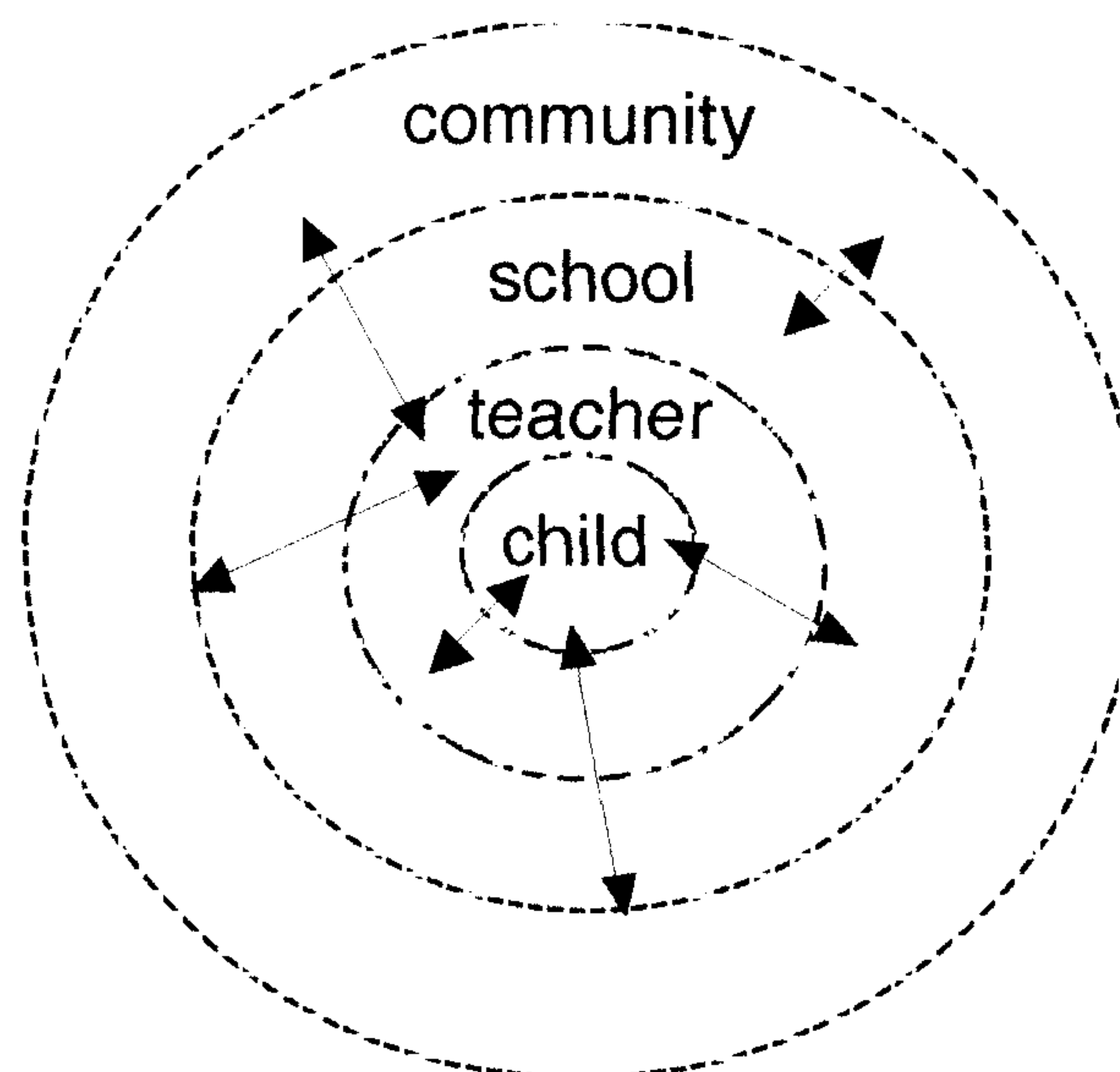


Figure 3.1 Layers of interaction in constructing classroom cultures

The layers are permeable and in dialectical relationship with each other. Within each of them, there are elements which operate on the layers above and below to influence and affect outcomes for the whole. We could continue the layering by including *national* and *international* rings, especially in considering issues of political and economic influence and ethnic and cultural diversity. I subsume factors from these dimensions, as appropriate to the question, into the *community* layer. To try to get an understanding of how children succeed as learners, we need to unpeel the layers without destroying the core.

The layers correspond closely to the four levels which Rist (1970, p. 412) suggests need to be taken into account in studying *variations in educational experience*, and to the three *inclusive sets of*

interactions or power relations which Cummins (1986, p. 19) suggests we must recognise if we want to *reverse the pattern of minority student failure*. Cummins (p. 20) goes on to describe the contradictory conclusions which are reached if we consider success or failure in the classroom in terms of language teaching programmes only without taking account of the social, political and cultural contexts in which they are positioned.

3.a Definitions of culture

What we need is an understanding of education as a process in which children are helped and guided into an active, creative participation in their culture. (Edwards and Mercer, 1987, p. 36)

Edwards and Mercer (1987) make the important point in several different ways in *Common knowledge* that nothing about the practices of teaching and learning is neutral. Their use of the word *culture* in the above quotation from their chapter called *An ideology of teaching* (pp. 32-41) reminds us that teaching, like any other social activity, is a culturally based pursuit, one which is structured and shaped by (often implicit and intuitively acknowledged) codes and patterns of behaviour. There is, however, a hidden assumption in the *their* reference which precedes the word *culture*. Into whose culture should children be helped and guided to participate actively and creatively? It is essential to attempt to analyse the elements of the *processes* of education from a perspective which acknowledges culture as a fluid, socially constructed phenomenon, a *verb* rather

than a noun (Street, 1993b), itself a process, to which all participants in the interaction contribute. Gee and Green (1998, p. 124) refer to it as *a cognitive map that is constantly being redrawn*. Nieto (1999a, pp. 49-60) lists and explains the following seven attributes of culture:

according to her view, it is:

- dynamic;
- multifaceted;
- embedded in context;
- influenced by social, economic and political factors;
- created and socially constructed;
- learned;
- dialectical.

There needs to be a constant recognition of the interplay of these elements of cultures as they operate in any episode of teaching and learning.

Williams (1976, p. 87) suggests that the word 'culture' is one of *the two or three most complicated* in the English language. Alasuutari (1995, pp. 25-26), referring to the Birmingham School, of which Williams was a key figure, calls it *collective subjectivity a way of life or outlook adopted by a community or a social class*. Cole (1996, pp. 143-145) adopts the metaphor of growing and tending which Williams postulates as the primary meaning of 'culture' and links it with another key word, 'context' (concentric circles, again, provide a visual metaphor: see Cole, p. 133). He develops an appealing image of a safe, protected environment where learning and development take

place and the young seedlings grow tall and strong. Clifford (1988), who also adopts the organic imagery with his lexical choices of *taking root, pollination, transplanting* (p. 15) and the resulting *hybrid* forms (p. 17), reminds us, however, that not all in the kindergarten is rosy, particularly when we address issues of cultural difference, ethnicity and identity. For him, *difference is no longer a stable, exotic otherness* (p. 14). Instead, the business of describing cultures is shot through with *power and rhetoric*. Similarly, Street (1993b, pp. 36-37) links culture to a concept of hegemony, which draws together, according to Williams (1976, p. 145) the spheres of economics, politics and culture. Stories of *complex encounters* can upset dearly held personal beliefs. The storyteller must have the stamina to maintain a *relentless self-ethnography* if she genuinely seeks to understand the 'other'.

Culture in ethnically diverse contexts is a complex, multi-faceted concept, intertwined with self- and other-constructed notions of identity. Hall, in Morley and Kuan-Hsing (1996), reminds us that while ethnicity is a *common, shared experience* (p. 447), we need to acknowledge the diversity of *black* experience, rather than conceptualising it in terms of undifferentiated sameness. In Hall and duGay, 1996, (pp. 1-7), Hall examines the concept of identity as a *process of becoming rather than being, of routes, rather than roots*, situated in debates about culture, language and history which have *enormous political significance*. Peirce, (1995, p. 12), points out how *inequitable relations of power* drastically reduce learners' abilities to claim *the right to speak* and so their *investment* (echoing Bourdieu, 1977) in learning and, ultimately, in mainstream culture as a whole.

Trueba (in Merino, et al., 1993, p. 260) spells out the dangerous consequences for a society which does not foster respect for its members' languages and cultures, particularly in instructional contexts.

Trueba (1989, pp. 36-40) demonstrates how all children acquire a *second culture* when they go to school. He goes on to describe the intimate connections between language, culture and cognition, suggesting that many aspects of school failure are *culturally* and not *cognitively* based (p. 68). Again, then, context (in this case, that of classrooms) is an important factor in a definition of culture. Collins and Green (1990, pp. 73 ff.) examine the specific cultural knowledge necessary for both teachers and learners to operate effectively in classrooms, and suggest as examples:

- *the meanings of words, objects and actions;*
- *understanding the norms and expectations for participating in the events which occur;*
- *establishing the rôles and relationships among group members;*
- *establishing the rights and obligations of group membership.*

They suggest that the culture in a classroom is co-constructed *through the everyday interactions of teacher and students over time*. The Santa Barbara Discourse Group (1992a, p. 31) have a similar metaphor of a class as *a cultural group that lives together in particular times and spaces*. They emphasise the notion of intertextuality both in the construction and understanding of classroom cultures. The list from

Collins and Green, while it reflects the predominance of language in the processes of culture creation, also supports to some extent Street's argument (1993b, pp. 38-39) that language and culture are not always as inextricably linked as some commentators would suggest.

Cole (in Woodhead, et al. 1998) argues for the crucial importance of *culturally organised activity* as a context for language learning, asserting that, indeed, language learning will not take place without such a cultural context. Oxford and Anderson (1995) provide a review of references to 'culture' in language learning and teaching, where learning is seen as transformation rather than transmission or transfer. They point out the need to conceptualise culture as a *process* rather than a *product* (p. 202) and suggest the metaphor of the *cultural iceberg* where the submerged aspects are those which most strongly influence learning, echoing notions of the *hidden curriculum* and its power. Byram and Risager (1999, p. 58) see teachers as having a rôle as *professional mediators* between learners and new languages and cultures. Though this notion runs the risk of constructing learning as teacher directed and learners as passive recipients, it points to important implications for teachers' understandings of culture in relation to both curriculum content and planning and organising learning.

The importance of dialogue between teachers and learners emerges from these accounts of culture in classroom contexts. Spindler and Spindler (1987, p. 5), in a comparative study of elementary schools in Germany and America, see the dialogue as *culturally constructed*, a

dialogue of *action, interaction and meaning*. Trueba et al. (1981, p. 6), referring to the importance of widening *cultural repertoires* in ethnically diverse classrooms, remind us that this notion needs to apply to the majority as well as the minority groups. It is a two-way process. We all need continuously to widen our cultural repertoires so that we do not end up developing yet another kind of compensatory education. Cummins (1986, p. 23) sees it as vital in *empowering* minority students that the cultures of home and school interact in dynamic ways, with parents and other community members collaborating as active participants in the ongoing life of the classroom. Moll (1992, p. 21) describes a *funds of knowledge* approach to bilingual education where community members bring their expertise in a range of activities to the classroom where it is *mobilised for academic purposes*, rather than remaining peripheral to the main enterprise. The essential links between social action, language and culture are again demonstrated, with learning emerging as a strongly socially-situated activity. Cole (1985, pp. 153-155) discusses culture in terms of *activity or human actions in the context of a system of social relationships and social life*, linking these ideas to the Vygotskian model of learning and the significance of the notion of the zone of proximal development where the individual and the social come together and *culture and cognition create each other*.

3.b A model of classroom cultures

Grounded in the conceptualisation of culture as a fluid, dynamic, socially determined and situated set of actions mediated largely, but not entirely by the tools of language that enable teachers and learners to get along together, I suggest that there are three broad factors which define and construct a model of 'classroom culture' and the rôle of language therein:

- classrooms are new cultural settings for all children;
- classrooms have rules for both teachers and learners;
- classrooms as cultural settings have languages which are distinctive.

These are factors which operate to make classrooms, in all their diverse manifestations, places with distinctive forms of culture. The evidence of teacher-child interactions presented in Chapter Two, arising from the analysis of specific classroom episodes, shows how they operate in culture creating in one setting. These factors are used to frame my review of the literature in the following two chapters.

3.B Classroom cultures and cultures of learning: placing difference in the centre

Säljö (1992, p. 53) reminds us of how *traditional* (i.e. western) interpretations of learning rest, in the main, on *a-cultural* conceptions of human thought and action, and that what we need is a

view of learning which takes account of the *complex, multicultural societies* in which we live. Ogbu (1990, p. 535) makes clear to those of us who are fortunate in not having to suffer in our education the consequences of *minority status*, the personal and social costs which can be incurred in making the adjustments necessary to *act white* which are often what is demanded of those members of *involuntary minorities* who make the decision to work towards academic success. Learning for them is certainly not a neutral matter. It is one which is deeply scored with social, ideological and sometimes personal risk. Säljö (1992) argues for the need to look at how learning is constructed by the different *actors* in the play, in order to question the traditional, naturalised, monocultural conception of human psychology and action which underpins much of western thinking and policy making about education and children's learning. Cole (1996) justifies the need for a discipline of *cultural psychology* which explains difference without turning it into deficit.

Foucault (1972) shows how members of institutions construct (albeit often unselfconsciously) their own definitions of their aims and intentions according to ideological, social and economic pressures and viewpoints, in order to meet everyday demands for the continuing existence of the institution. Walkerdine (1982, p. 132), basing her discussion on Foucault's model of how humans make sense of the contexts in which they have to operate, shows how historical and social dimensions need to be taken into account in understanding why people behave in different contexts in the ways they do. She uses the metaphor of *the game*, surely one of the

Metaphors we live by (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980), especially in conceptualising teaching and learning, to explain the ways children and adults do this in classrooms.

In Chapters Three and Four, I show how views of classroom cultures, both internal and external, have changed and developed over the past 60 years or so. In so doing, I show what has been learnt, and also what still needs to be addressed in the study of the ways teachers and learners negotiate meanings in classrooms. Any historical account is self-evidently linear, and the nature of writing means that the argument is invariably presented in a sequential way. However, the layering metaphor suggested by Walkerdine's model of learning (and offered in a different context at the beginning of this section with the different purpose of conceptualising the interconnections between the various elements of the question) is possibly a more useful one to hold in mind in trying to explain the way historical viewpoints and developments influence each other and the processes of interaction in classrooms.

CHAPTER THREE
FROM THE OUTSIDE: A SELECTIVE REVIEW OF EXTERNAL
FACTORS WHICH AFFECT CLASSROOM CULTURES

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I develop arguments for the need to take account of external factors when evaluating the success of teaching and learning processes inside the classroom. I review the evidence in the literature of three key factors, articulated below in the form of questions, which frame the main sections of the chapter:

1. What constitutes 'legitimate knowledge' for the primary classroom?
2. What do teachers bring to the classroom?
3. What do children bring to the classroom?

The first question is addressed by an account of the ways in which *legitimate knowledge* (Apple, 1993) is shaped from *ideological, political and economic spheres of activity* (Apple, 1982, p. 8) in society, constructed by forces often removed from education, but with vested interests in its control. An aspect of this, which I consider to be crucial for the mediation of success in ethnically diverse primary classrooms, is the way in which statutory curriculum requirements have been constructed centrally by the British system since 1988, and incrementally taken out of the control of practising teachers. This has had a profound influence on internal classroom cultures and consequently on what is perceived as successful learning in all schools, especially in ethnically diverse contexts.

The second and third questions recognise the need to take account of the subjectivities of all the participants in the classroom interactions which constitute the main data for the study, reported in Chapter Two and Chapter Eight. These questions are addressed by a review of the literature which discusses the ways in which cultures of teaching are constructed, and the significant experiences in family, community and other learning contexts which children bring to the classroom. I argue that these influence classroom negotiation and thus what I mean by successful learning.

3.2 What constitutes 'legitimate knowledge' for the primary classroom?

.... it is naive to think of the school curriculum as neutral knowledge. Rather, what counts as legitimate knowledge is the result of complex power relations among identifiable class, race, gender and religious groups. Thus education and power are terms of an indissoluble couplet.
(Apple, 1993, p. 46)

Thus, Apple makes explicit the connection between knowledge and power. The school curriculum is a site of contestation among those groups in society who have or seek access to the power to control it. What counts as knowledge in the curriculum is open to negotiation and constantly changing. Any discussion about knowledge and the curriculum needs to be contextualised in the political debates of the day. This section addresses these issues in relation to language in the primary curriculum. It is divided into three subsections:

- what is knowledge? Three contradictory views;
- how does knowledge become legitimate?
- the 'legitimate' language knowledge and its consequences for diversity and difference.

The first and third are further subdivided as appropriate, and as explained under the headings.

3.2.1 What is knowledge? Three contradictory views

Pring (1976, chapters 1-4) outlines three competing viewpoints which he suggests are influential in the debate about what counts as knowledge for the primary curriculum. These are:

- the philosophical view;
- the child-centred view;
- the socially situated view.

These are consonant with Stubbs' (1986, p. 78) categorisation of curricula into three main types; classical humanist, progressivist and reconstructionist. Each answers the question, 'What is knowledge?' in different ways. Each has contributed in lesser or greater ways to the construction of the primary school curriculum. In the following subsections, I show how each has influenced the view of *legitimate knowledge* for the primary classroom, embodied in the current National Curriculum.

3.2.1.i The philosophical view

The main premises for this view of knowledge are that education is essentially about the 'development of mind', that there are distinctive and analysable 'ways of knowing', and that what needs to be known can be organised through reification into discrete domains (Hirst, 1969; Pring, 1976, chapters 1 and 2). It has been conceptualised by Bernstein (1971, 1990) in the *collection code*, and has come to have increasing influence in the primary curriculum over recent years with *the secondary-oriented hegemony of the National Curriculum* (Alexander, 1995, p. 281) and its packaging into programmes of study comprising separate subjects. The description of these as academic *disciplines* (Pring, 1976, pp. 25-28) connotes both the naturalised logic of their organisation and the mental training they are believed to afford. The model is, essentially, élitist and self-referential. Those whose minds have been developed in the valorised ways have gained control; they have the right to decide the ways in which the 'undeveloped' need to be initiated into the knowledge which they themselves have valorised. Nieto (1996, p. 102) describes this as *education for powerlessness*; that is, for those who are outside the self-referential cycle. Freire's metaphor of education as *banking* (1972, p. 46) sums up the processes of teaching and learning which are considered best to achieve success.

I would like to interrogate one main dimension of this view of knowledge which has implications for my question, its criteria for success. A useful distinction often made between kinds of knowledge

(not only specifically related to curriculum development) is that of *knowing that* and *knowing how* (e.g. Pring, pp. 16-20; Heap, 1985; Brown, Collins and Duguid, 1989, and implied by Ball, 1995, p. 39). The 'philosophical' model of knowledge values the former more than the latter. Success, in the vast majority of cases, comprises the display of the valorised knowledge by the learner in formal, written tests rather than evidence of any kind of *intelligent performance*, indicating modified action on the part of the learner, (Heap, 1985, p. 245) which would demonstrate control of *knowing how*.

A demonstration of what could be taken as evidence of successful acquisition of 'knowing how' by a learner in a reading lesson, for example, is that, subsequently, she would be able to make independent and justified choices for her personal reading. Bereiter (1986, p. 66) suggests that the kind of reading comprehension lessons which are the focus of Heap's observations (i.e. the typical question and answer session based round a text) could not lead to such an outcome. But such lessons make claims to be successful. Their participants become literate within the terms in which they are operating. In the same way, if 11-year-olds who have been subjected to the National Literacy Strategy achieve better results in the KS2 SATs than those who *have not*, then the strategy will be deemed 'successful'. The system is self-referential and self-contained with self-fulfilling criteria for success. But I would question its claim to lead to the kind of successful learning that I illustrate in Chapter Two.

3.2.1.ii The child-centred view

The child-centred position, rooted in the work of (among others) Kilpatrick and Dewey, is so alien to the currently prevailing philosophy that I am persuaded that there must be some truth in it
(p. 2)

Pring's words, written in 1976, sound ironically relevant 25 years later, when the philosophies of Dewey (1938) and Kilpatrick (1918) and their translation into the 'progressive' primary practice of 'learning by doing' seem, if anything, even further removed from what counts for successful learning in most primary classrooms. Accounts from the 1970s, such as that by Mitchell (1970), and King (1978) of successful classroom practice within a progressive, child-centred ethos can sound somewhat flimsy when contrasted with the confident 'scientifically-based' writing of the school effectiveness research literature, now so influential at a national level on primary educational reform (e.g. Mortimore, et al., 1988; Slavin, et al., 1994; Beard, 1998, pp. 16-21, and Reynolds, 1998).

Alexander's account of the principles of progressive primary education (1995, pp. 275-288) points out the many inconsistencies and contradictions it embodied. It depended, largely, on inspirational individuals, despite the official sanction it was given by the Plowden Report (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967). Based on a Rousseau-esque vision of childhood innocence and of learning as a

completely natural process, it did not provide much support for dealing with the complex issues of social, economic and political disadvantage which have always been the daily concerns of most primary teachers. Despite its claims to be 'natural', progressivism was actually based on tightly constructed views of the world, including both the model of the learner and of the learning environment. The Piagetian model of the learner as a self-motivated individual discovering the world, almost, for herself, on which it was based was powerfully challenged by Donaldson (1978, 1992) and Edwards and Mercer (1987, pp. 166-170) who all emphasised the rôle of language and social interaction in psychological development and in learning. The *scaffolding* or *cognitive climbing frame* built by children with their *Vygotskian teacher* has come, through the research of Donaldson and others to be seen as a much more supportive learning environment than *the discovery sandpit of the Piagetian classroom* (Edwards and Mercer, p. 167).

Moreover, the metaphor of the garden (Alexander, 1995, p. 279) used so often to describe the progressive, child-centred learning environment, has connotations which are not all by any means 'natural'. Indeed, Alexander (1995, p. 13) stresses the importance of the notions of *order* and *authority* and even competition in the planning and construction of gardens. The meaning of the word 'garden' varies in time and space, as Ross's description of *curriculum gardening* (Ross, 2000, p. 7) illustrates. Gardens can be constructed in very diverse ways and always strongly reflect the cultural and social practices and beliefs of the gardener.

The principles of the child-centred view of knowledge are hardly represented in the present primary curriculum, but they should not be dismissed as offering nothing of value to the construction of successful learning in the primary classroom. The proposition that children must be seen as active participants in the processes of learning, and their viewpoints recognised, is explored in section 3:4 of this chapter. Detailed classroom observations, such as those by Rowland (1982), show the potential for learning which is unlocked when children are able to exercise genuine control, when they can become the *makers* rather than the *receivers* of knowledge (Barnes, 1976, p. 176). Gee (1994, pp. 346-349) argues for a pedagogy which is *beyond progressivism*, benefiting from the child-centred, constructivist model which underpins progressivist approaches, but also recognising the need to limit the *search space* (p. 347) available to the learner through appropriate instruction.

3.2.1.iii The socially situated view

Pring's third view of knowledge centres round the work of Young (1971) which was seminal in Britain for considering school curricula as politically motivated and socially organised, the forms of knowledge embodied therein as *constructed realities realised in particular institutional contexts* (p. 3) reflective of the changing ways in which knowledge is conceptualised in wider society. This can be illustrated by the shift in status of the category of knowledge labelled as 'science' (itself a contested term), which moved from having no

recognition as a valid school subject at the end of the nineteenth century to *reification ... as an essential element of the well-educated person at the end of the twentieth*. (Ross, 2000, p. 13).

For Young, the questions we ask about knowledge in the curriculum need to be widened: not only 'what is knowledge?', but how have the particular forms of knowledge in the curriculum come to be valorised, and who has decided that this should be so? Young's analysis arose from sociological concerns about inequalities in the British education system as a result of the class system, which he saw as leading to the *stratification* of the curriculum. The odds were stacked up against those children who did not share the social experiences of their teachers. The curriculum provided middle class children with a *hidden subsidy* (Bernstein, 1971, p. 57), while it inflicted *symbolic violence* (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977/1990) on those children who did not share the socio-economic backgrounds of their teachers. The notion of the *hidden curriculum*, reviewed and critiqued by Giroux (1981) grew from this perception.

Young, Bernstein and Bourdieu's linguistic and sociological analyses of knowledge and education were developed in European contexts. But it was Apple and Wexler (1978) in America who highlighted the value of their work for explaining school failure. Apple and Wexler argue that all three analyses are essentially political, despite the different lenses through which they look at school knowledge. The connecting thread is a concern with the ways institutions *deal with difference* (p. 37). Apple and Wexler (1978) declare the need for

collective understanding and action (p. 36) among researchers in different disciplines on school institutions and the causes of school failure.

However, while Apple (1976, 1979, 1982) pursues this theme extensively in America in the 1970s, it seems to disappear from the sociological agenda in England (but see Sharp and Green, 1975) and so the action for greater social justice in the education system advocated by Young has never fully materialised. Instead, the mainstream concerns in analysing school knowledge turned to the legitimisation of the curriculum as a field for study (Lawton, 1975; Stenhouse, 1975) and the historical development of the curriculum (Lawton, 1980). By 1982, Arnot and Whitty were appealing for greater recognition in Britain of the ideological effects of the curriculum on what happens in schools and a revitalised awareness of its potential to effect radical change and promote pluralism. They argue the need for classroom based research which takes time to *feel and hear the curriculum-in-use* (p. 101) in order properly to understand its effects.

The rôle of language in the construction of classroom knowledge is examined fully in Chapter Four, but its contributions to the socially situated view of knowledge need to be noted here. Barnes (1976) provides strong evidence for the ways in which children and teachers construct classroom knowledge through talk. Edwards and Furlong (1978), Edwards and Mercer (1987) and Wells and Chang-Wells (1992) show similar processes in studies in different contexts. In addition, Driver, et al. (1998) contend that forms of knowledge sometimes

considered non-negotiable (Shaw, 1973, p. 284) are actually open to negotiation through classroom interaction. They provide evidence for the ways in which knowledge in science is constructed through talk, emphasising its social nature and concluding that science learning is essentially *a process of enculturation rather than discovery* (p. 271). I argue for this viewpoint in my analysis of two science lessons in Chapter Eight, sections 8.2 and 8.3. Going further, Brown, Collins and Duguid (1989) see all learning and cognition as *fundamentally situated* (p. 32). They conclude that tasks in school need to provide *cognitive apprenticeship* (p. 37) in order to enculturate children into the authentic practices of the community, rather than merely *ersatz activity*.

3.2.2 How does knowledge become legitimate?

Ross (2000, p. 11) describes the processes of curriculum design as *a conscious selection of which culture shall be transmitted to the next generation*, hinting at the power held in the hands of those responsible for designing the National Curriculum. Lawton (1980) identifies the main protagonists in the power struggle around the curriculum as central government, LEAs and teachers, but suggests – prophetically – also that the *secret service* of the Inspectorate and, to a lesser degree, the Civil Service have strong influence (pp. 28-49). While rumours of conspiracy may abound in the processes of legitimating knowledge, Cox (1991, 1995) in his accounts of the development of the National Curriculum for English in the late 1980s, leaves the strong impression that, to a considerable extent,

muddle and misunderstanding prevailed, and self-interest was a strong motivating force. Significant decisions were frequently arbitrarily made by ill-informed individuals for, at times, seemingly trivial reasons.

There is, moreover, a strong sense from Cox's commentaries that the real power throughout all the debates actually rested with the media: *most politicians receive their information about English teaching from sources such as the Evening Standard,* (Cox 1995, p. 19). Bourne and Cameron (1995, p. 103) describe, for example, the media *furor* surrounding discussions about the rôle of grammar in the curriculum. It is, then, ironic that the rôle of media studies within the National Curriculum was contested throughout the whole process of its development, and that its final representation in the 1995 curriculum was considerably reduced from earlier proposals (Cox, 1995, pp. 182-184). This illustrates Ross's contention that the main ideological motivation for the National Curriculum, tied in with the 'new right' agendas of the 1980s, was backward looking and fearful of progress. Ball (1995, p. 39), labels it *curriculum as museum*. Ross (2000, p. 6) describes the 1989 version as a *dig-for-victory* curriculum, its main goal to address anxieties about the lack of basic skills in the work force. Cox (1995, pp 28-30) hints more strongly at the conspiracy theory by suggesting that *a small group of like-minded campaigners were able to take over the National Curriculum and, moreover, that they feared interpretation and analysis, and wanted obedient pupils to learn facts and obey authority.*

The *little England* (Cox, 1995, p. 76) ideology was also strong, illustrated by the debates about what should be included (and, more significantly, excluded) in terms of history, literature, art and music. Ross (2000, p. 150), suggests that the curriculum was being used *to invent a new form of national identity* in the face of the growing visibility of the different groups which make up British society: in essence, it was constructing an *imagined community* (Anderson, 1991). Tate's (1996) *Four big ideas* about the curriculum's rôle in the transmission of culture, imbued with anxiety about difference and diversity, define the *common culture* aspect of the curriculum as one of *uniformity* (Apple, 1996, p. 34). Bourne and Cameron (1995, p. 112) remind us of the central rôle of standard English for the notion of 'Englishness' implied in such a curriculum.

Apple (1993, p. 3) points out the negative effects of this model of legitimate knowledge for society as a whole, and particularly for children from ethnic minorities. It clearly does not reflect the contradictions and tensions experienced by those living in cities like Bradford and which underpin controversies like the 'Honeyford affair' of the mid-1980s (discussed in Chapter 6, section 6.4.2). Apple (1996, p. 33) suggests that, if there is a genuine motivation to use the curriculum as a means to promote social cohesion in the way that Tate implies, it needs to be a very different kind of curriculum from the one constructed in Britain:

In complex societies like our own, ones riven with differential power, the only kind of 'cohesion' that is possible is one in which we overtly recognise differences and inequalities. The curriculum then should not be presented as 'objective'. Rather, it must constantly 'subjectify' itself. That is, it must 'acknowledge its own roots' in the culture, history and other social interests out of which it arose.

In order to construct such a curriculum, the accepted definitions of knowledge need to be constantly re-examined and re-formulated. Apple (1993, pp. 123-124) suggests that, rather than the two kinds of knowledge identified above (section 3.2.1.i), there are actually three which need to be recognised in the curriculum: knowing 'that' and knowing 'how' need to be joined to 'knowing to', or being disposed to learn for one's own purposes. The combination of the three leads to *critical literacy* of the kind exemplified by McLeod (1986). His language work with ethnic minority and working class secondary pupils in London demonstrates the power and personal control which learners exercise over their learning when they can relate *literacy to their lives and language, their knowledge and their experience* (p. 39). Similarly, Sarup (1986, p. 38) calls for the kind of knowledge which will help learners to make sense of their own life worlds, not the *pre-packaged curricula* (p. 52) which he sees as an external means of exerting control. In discussing the rôle of literature in learning, Applebee (1996) identifies the need for the development of *knowledge-in-action*, characterised as participatory and dialogic, *gained through gradual immersion in new conversations rather than by standing alongside and being told them* (p. 123).

3.2.3 The 'legitimate' language knowledge and its consequences for diversity and difference

As Cox attests (1995), there were many battles fought in the development of the National Curriculum for English. His accounts of them illustrate the processes of formation of curriculum knowledge in a politically charged context. Bourne and Cameron, for example, (1995, pp. 104-105) trace the surprising but strong links consistently made in England between 'correct' language and social harmony. In this section, I have selected for discussion two contested issues which have particular bearing on the classroom experiences of ethnic minority children:

- supporting the English language learning of bilingual children;
- promoting a 'multicultural' ethos for all children.

3.2.3.i Supporting the English language learning of bilingual children

Taking its cue from the Swann report (DES, 1985), the National Curriculum clearly recognises that all children have an entitlement to learn English (Cox, 1991, pp. 95-96). One of the key aims is that, by the age of 16, all pupils will be able to use spoken and written standard English (Cox, 1991, p. 30). Diversity in terms of accent and dialect is explicitly recognised, though in a curiously impersonal way (Bourne and Cameron, 1995, p. 106) which fails to recognise its social

and political implications. It is, however, valorised (though somewhat ambivalently) in the references made to standard English (Cox, 1991, pp. 25-33). No such specific reference is made in the curriculum to children who may have two or more languages as well as a range of dialect features in their repertoire, and of ways in which bilingual children's learning of English in mainstream classrooms may be accomplished in different ways from that of monolingual children. A later circular from the National Curriculum Council offers some guidance and support (N.C.C. 1991), though it embodies a *transitional* (Corson, 1993, p. 81) model of bilingualism. This, as Corson contends, ultimately denies the bilingual learner the means to develop cognitively to her full potential, and opens the door to educational underachievement at a later stage (Baker, 1996, pp. 148-151).

Even at the time the National Curriculum was being developed, the research evidence for the positive benefits of supporting young learners' bilingualism was overwhelming (e.g. Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981; Rivera, 1984; Cummins, 1984; Fitzpatrick, 1987). Gregory (1994, pp. 151-161) reviews such research, and uses the evidence to justify four widely recognised key theoretical principles related to bilingual learning. She shows how the National Curriculum takes hardly any account of them, and suggests that:

It is beginning to look as if provision of the same curriculum might not be adequate to give children equal access to it. (p. 160)

Providing 'equality of opportunity' does not mean treating all children in the same way. Biggs and Edwards (1994), and Bhatti (1999), among others, attest to the unintentional harmful effects of this interpretation. The opportunity to embody in the curriculum the kinds of teaching approaches and strategies which would help to raise the standards achieved by bilingual learners was missed: it was possibly never even recognised. Savva (1990, p. 256) suggests that the 1989 curriculum recommendations were *not about how best to serve the interests as a whole of bilingual children but simply about teaching English as a second language*. Adams (1993, p. 51) points out that the early results of the testing of young bilingual learners according to National Curriculum requirements immediately began to show that they performed less well than their monolingual peers because their bilingual capability was not taken into account. Thompson (1999, pp. 35-36) suggests that this situation was not changed by the 1995 revision of the curriculum. She argues that because Britain (unlike other multilingual nations such as Canada, Wales and Australia) does not have an official language policy, it does not recognise the language capabilities of its citizens within its education system in a socially just way. Bourne (1989, p. 185) sees the lack of a national policy on language education in the immediate post-Swann period as seriously hampering the efforts of those LEAs which were inclined to promote bilingual development in their schools.

The reference to Wales made by Thompson is significant. From the start, the National Curriculum made a distinction between provision

for bilingual children in England and those in Wales (Cox, 1991, pp. 109-112). The aim in Wales was to achieve *a degree of bilingualism which represents a worthwhile educational achievement at the age of 11*. The fact that this did happen and had, moreover, no observable detrimental effect on children's performance in English was recorded by the Assessment and Performance Unit (Cox, 1991, p. 110). It is puzzling that this positive model of bilingualism was not generalised in the curriculum for all bilingual learners. Savva (1990), Adams (1993) and Thompson (1999) all raise the same question. Bourne (1989, p. 166, p. 192) concludes that parallels could indeed be drawn between multilingual contexts in Wales and in England, and implications for policy and practice shared. Bourne and Cameron (1995, p. 107) ascribe the policy differences finally adopted as *territorial and essentially right wing* (p. 108). They point out, also, how provision for bilinguals in Wales was premised *on the need to affect the monolingual majority as little as possible*. During the process of revision leading up to the 1995 version of the curriculum, the draft document included *modifications for certain pupils in Wales* (see Appendix 3.a, p. 453). These suggestions begin to represent a viable set of principles for supporting bilingualism and using it as a means to enhance the learning of English. They were removed from the final document, and specific guidance for teachers in Wales presented elsewhere.

There is extensive evidence for the potentially positive consequences of valorising different learning styles and language experiences (e.g. Heath, 1983; Oxford, 1994; Oxford and Anderson, 1995) in curriculum

and pedagogy. The failure to recognise the positive implications of emergent bilingualism for learning in the National Curriculum, then, is based on an implied deficit model. It continues to be reproduced in official documentation, including the National Literacy Strategy Framework for Teaching (DfEE, 1998b), where no overt recognition is given to the experiences the child brings to the classroom, including *the powerful and complex relationship between literacy and culture* (Hilton, 1998, p. 14). A video, for example, produced to demonstrate to teachers how the Literacy Hour should be organised (OfSTED, 1997) shows a multilingual classroom, with a bilingual assistant interpreting in a low voice alongside the white, (apparently) monolingual class teacher who is teaching phonics to the whole class in a directive manner. The accompanying booklet (p. 4) describes the assistant's rôle as to *interpret for the children when they meet a text for the first time*. There is no suggestion that she might support the children's bilingual development, for example by discussing interpretations of the text with them in their first language. A recent evaluation of the Literacy Hour (OfSTED, 1998, p.9) grouped emergent bilingual children alongside those with special educational needs. The old confusions about *language* needs and *learning* needs are thus perpetuated.

3.2.3.ii Promoting a multicultural ethos for all children

At the time that the National Curriculum was being developed, The Swann Report (DES, 1985) foregrounded the importance of education in redressing inequality. The *Education for all* discourse was

powerful. LEAs such as Bradford (City of Bradford, July 1987) were producing policy statements to develop multicultural approaches in their schools. Steiner-Khamsi, however, suggests (1990, p. 33) that, because most of the contenders in these debates were themselves monolingual, the significance of language issues was rarely fully recognised. At the same time, as Tomlinson (1993, p. 26) reports, 'new right' attacks on multiculturalism (e.g. Flew, 1984), reviewed by Gordon (1987), were gaining ground and had strong populist appeal. The 'Honeyford affair' in Bradford (see Chapter Six, section 6.4.2) is an example of this. Tomlinson recounts the events surrounding the short life of the multicultural task group set up to consider how such issues should be addressed in the curriculum, opining that, from the start, there was political antipathy to *any debate prefaced by 'multi' and 'anti'* (p. 22). The guidelines which the group produced were never published, on the dubious grounds that to do so would run *the risk of this vital work being seen as a separate and perhaps a side issue.* (p. 24). Moreover, Blair and Arnot (1993, p. 271) suggest that the political climate was made *more* hostile to anti-racist education through the National Curriculum, and that the curriculum's overall divisive effects were exacerbated by the failure to include representation from Black groups in the consultation processes (p. 261).

An examination of the curriculum for English illustrates the paucity of coverage of multicultural issues. While it is accepted that this does not necessarily have to be construed as negative (King, p. 3, in King and Reiss, 1993), it hardly creates a sense of urgency to make

multicultural education central to the work of the English classroom, as Adams (1993, p. 50) suggests was the case. Such coverage of multiculturalism as there is comes in references to language diversity, which is discussed in the previous section, and to literature. In the longest chapter in the book (1991, pp. 67-85), Cox devotes about a page and a half to literature in English from other countries and that written in Britain by writers from *other cultures* (pp. 73-74). He also implies (p. 98) that such texts are possibly more appropriately used in classes where there are pupils who themselves come from ethnic minorities, effectively distancing the relevance of the texts from the mainstream study of literature. They are thus safely isolated and contained. There is no recognition of the notion that a genuinely multicultural approach to literature would involve the kind of critical approaches suggested in section 3.2.2 and could be developed through the study of texts by authors from any culture (Hoggart, 1998). Such an approach would also require reference of a far more analytical nature to media education than that recommended (Cox, 1991, pp. 91-94; 1995, p. 167, MacCabe, 1998).

3.3 What do teachers bring to the classroom?

Following on from the discussion about knowledge in the National Curriculum for schools, I begin this section with an analysis of the recently introduced 'National Curriculum' for teachers (DfEE, 1998a). This is the 'legitimate knowledge' which newly qualified teachers are expected to take to classrooms. I then discuss how 'cultures of teaching' are constructed in primary schools from teachers'

viewpoints, both at a 'macro' and at a 'micro' level, showing how these are strongly influenced by personal as well as professional experience, how account needs to be taken of the structures in which they operate, and of the impact of the massive changes made to primary education over the last fifteen years. Finally, I review the evidence from research about teachers' responses to difference and diversity. There are three subsections:

- teacher training and teacher education: the lowest common denominator?
- researching the cultures of teaching;
- teachers' responses to difference and diversity.

The second and third are further subdivided, as explained under each heading.

3.3.1 Teacher training and teacher education: the lowest common denominator?

The *back to basics* debate in Britain, as in America (as discussed, for example, by Tharp and Gallimore, 1988, p. 1) *found its focus on teachers and teacher education*. A key factor identified in initiatives to raise standards in both contexts is the need to improve the quality of teaching. The curriculum for initial teacher training (DfEE, 1998a) encapsulates, in a long list of *standards for newly-qualified teachers*, the underlying models of teaching and learning and of subject knowledge regarded as necessary to raise standards in English schools. Essentially, the list contains the expected outcomes of effective teaching, the *product* rather than the *processes* of classroom practice.

Marshall (1998, p. 5), echoing Dewey in *Democracy and education* (1938), suggests that such a model leads to the development of passive *subjects* rather than active *citizens* in society. Education is constructed as essentially a linear process, the transmission of a given body of knowledge from teacher to learner. Passive school learners become passive teacher training students, who subsequently become passive teachers, waiting to be told what to do in the next externally constructed initiative. The self-referential cycle is complete.

The document's ideology of language matches that of education. Language is constructed as having fixed rules, definitions, labels and identifiable *common errors* which can be remediated by direct teaching. The content is presented as non-negotiable, to be unquestioningly accepted as *commonsense: natural*, rather than *naturalised* (Fairclough, 1989, p. 91). A brief example from Annex C, which outlines the knowledge about English required by newly qualified teachers, illustrates this. On page 42, the following appears in a list of seven disparate language features with the sub-heading *common pupils' errors in English*:

- vii. *difficulties with pronunciation for those not yet fluent in English e.g. 'asked' pronounced 'askid'*

An analysis of this statement illustrates Fairclough's arguments (1989, p. 39) about the ways discourse can *legitimise* or *delegitimise* power relations and marginalise groups. The notion of *errors* implies a 'correct' alternative. The example used is a common feature of the

speech of many emergent bilinguals in Britain, particularly those of Pakistani heritage. These learners are categorised here and elsewhere in the document (p. 41) as *not yet fluent in English*. Through being labelled in this way, there is the implication that the knowledge and experience they possess of other languages than English does not need to be seen as relevant in this context. The concern is only with fluency in English. The assumption that they have *difficulties with pronunciation* of English casts doubt on their capabilities in the language. The positioning of the word *difficulties* at the head of the phrase gives it prominence. The referent *those* leads to the implication that it is the speakers who are having the difficulties with pronunciation, but I would suggest that the real source of such difficulties lies elsewhere.

Marshall (1998, p. 6) questions how the TTA curriculum will help to raise standards. She describes it as *the idealisation of the average*, and as *aiming at the lowest common denominator*. She, thus, indicates a major problem with centrally-led initiatives to improve rapidly the quality of teaching. The political pressure to find manageable approaches for teachers to use to achieve quick results in their classrooms has led to a confusion of *simple* with *simplistic*. The current strategy of instructing teachers and trainee teachers what to do, where nothing appears to need questioning, rather than trying to provide them with the conceptual and analytic tools to make their own professional decisions may be effective in the short term, but it is storing up serious long term problems. It embodies a *training* rather than an *education* model of teacher development, which is

inadequate for preparing students to fulfil the rôle of a teacher in an ethnically diverse society.

3.3.2 Researching the cultures of teaching

In this section, I examine the different ways in which research into the 'sociology of teaching' has constructed the rôle of the primary teacher over the past 30 years or so. I select the literature which I consider best illuminates the viewpoints, concerns and problems of relevance to primary teachers in ethnically diverse classrooms during a time of massive externally-imposed change in the system. There are two subsections:

- constructing the cultures of teaching;
- primary teachers, change and professional power.

In the first, I argue that, in order to understand fully the 'problems' of learners from ethnic minorities in the mainstream system, research methods which expose the viewpoints of participants in the construction of school cultures and analytic sociological models which challenge *the complacency towards social democracy* (Gurnah, 1992, p. 88), questioning the structures on which the system is based, must be taken seriously. Their relevance for understanding mainstream teachers' responses to ethnic and other forms of diversity is then demonstrated. Secondly, I discuss primary teachers' responses to and participation in the changes which have taken place in their rôles in the education system over recent years with the increasing externalisation of loci of power, and the implications for the children they teach.

3.3.2.i Constructing the cultures of teaching

Lacey (1977), tracing the development of teaching as a graduate profession, conceptualises the processes of socialisation of teachers as the acquisition of the *culture* of the group of which they seek to be members. His work is in the vanguard of the 'new' approach to the sociology of education where *subjective meaning* is seen as *basic for an understanding of the social world* (Sharp and Green, 1975, p. 3). The viewpoints of the participants became an important part of the data sets. However, since most educational researchers, and indeed teachers, are from the ethnic majority, the viewpoints remain largely those of the majority. Gurnah (1992) analyses the damaging effects of this, describing the marginalising of minority viewpoints as spreading *layers of camouflage* (p. 96) over the issues. Woods (1980b), discussing the researching of teachers' rôles in schools, postulates five aspects of *teacher strategies* (his definition of which [p. 18] bears much resemblance to Doyle's [1983] *academic tasks*). These aspects, related to interactionist theory, are:

1. *The emphasis on the individual's input*
(Mead, 1934).
2. *Cultural influences ('a key to interpretation';*
Lacey, 1977).
3. *The presentation of 'front' (Goffman, 1971).*
4. *The importance of context and situation*
(e.g. Jackson, 1968, Hargreaves et al., 1976)
5. *The relation to structure and process*
(e.g. Willis, 1977).

They represent a layered model for research and analysis. It is the last, with its potential to *associate individual input with wider concerns* (Woods, 1980b, p. 27), which, I suggest, is of the greatest value for understanding the 'problems' of ethnically diverse classrooms. It enables us to contextualise the *detailed analytical conversations with black parents and young people* (Gurnah, 1992, p. 97) which are, as yet, not widely available in the literature, but which begin to illuminate how the inequalities they illustrate are embedded in the political structures and processes from which they arise.

McDermott (1987, p. 362), with scarcely veiled frustration, reviews the history of *justifications* for minority school failure and calls for a change in the way failure is viewed. He stresses the need to see it, not as *something that kids do*, but as *something done to them*. Similarly, D'Amato (1993, p. 204) points out that the 'failing' children are not *cultural dopes*, but often *ingenious and principled politicians* whose cultural experiences and values must be recognised in their schooling. Labov (1982), discusses the *two competing value systems in Black culture* in America (p. 167). He condemns most teachers' responses as merely being concerned to *stamp out the values which are oppositional to school culture*. No absolute reasons for failure have yet been substantiated, no cognitively based evidence revealed for minority children being behind other children when they start school. On the contrary, Labov describes the *enthusiasm* (p. 155) and positive indications of potential of African-American children in first grade, (p. 149; a finding matched by a contemporary study in London carried out by Blatchford, et al., 1985). Despite evidence such as this,

the differential labelling and treatment begin within days of starting school (Rist, 1970 pp. 424-425).

Labov's point (1982, p. 154) that, despite all, a few individuals from ethnic minorities do perform well within the system, needs attention. It has been interpreted by some commentators as a vindication for the system as it stands. Ogbu, however, takes a structural view. His analysis of the reasons why some minority students succeed while others fail leads him to a typology of minority groups based on their histories and their subsequent status and power relationships with the 'majority' (this is not a numerical term in this context) and a *caste* theory (1983, 1992, 1993; Ogbu and Simmons, 1998). Ogbu categorises 'minority' groups in America into three types:

1. *Autonomous*, e.g. the Amish, Jews and Mormons, who are 'successful'
2. *Immigrant*, e.g. Chinese, Koreans and Filipinos, who are 'voluntary' and so potentially successful
3. *Caste-like*, e.g. Black Americans, Native Indians, who are 'involuntary' and so potentially and generally unsuccessful

He provides examples of these groups achieving success in different national contexts (1992, p. 8) to argue that their 'failure' in America is not inevitable, but the result of *community forces* (1998, p. 157). These forces, products of historical and sociocultural adaptation, act as *boundaries* (Barth, 1969, p.15) to success. Ogbu's analysis has been criticised for being deterministic (e.g. Foley, 1991, p. 78), but Erickson (1987, p. 347), demonstrates how boundaries can be ameliorated into

borders, so overcoming this trap. The need is for teachers of minority ethnic pupils to have the tools to analyse their situations, develop awareness of hegemonic practices and work towards a critical or *culturally responsive pedagogy* (p. 354), a notion which is explored in Chapter Nine, section 9.2.3.

Most of the research cited so far on the links between political structure and minority failure comes from America: the suggestions for action likewise. There may be distinctive aspects of the American experience of diversity (for example, Atlantic slavery), which have made the development of these models more urgent and relevant in that context. There is no doubt also a causal connection between the more dynamic model of multiculturalism overtly related to racism and the ^{awareness of} need for critical pedagogy (May, 1999) which has developed in America as compared to Britain (see Nieto, 1996 and 1999a; De Gaetano, et al. 1998). Indeed, there is frustration in Britain from some sociologists about the limitations of multiculturalism, as it is constructed here, to effect any meaningful change (e.g. Troyna, 1984; Sarup, 1986; Mac an Ghail, 1988). But there is academic scepticism about the *social constructionist* approach to research and a demand that it should strive for value neutrality, rather than social change (Foster, et al., 1996, Hammersley, 2000). Such a stance is based, perhaps, more on an unwillingness to engage with the personal investment needed in understanding the complex links across personal, social and political issues that explain educational inequality than a real attempt to formulate alternative explanatory frameworks. These issues are further explored in Chapter Five

(section 5.2.3). It remains to be seen whether the most visible political action of recent years in relation to racism in Britain, the Macpherson Report, will change matters. Its wide definition of institutional racism (Blair and Gillborn, 1999) may have the potential to do so, but its implications for the education system need to be made much clearer (Pyke, 1999).

3.3.2.ii Primary teachers, change and professional power

Nias (1984, p. 278) points to the pre-National Curriculum lack of *professional socialisation* among primary teachers, describing their worlds at the time as individual rather than corporate. Both Acker (1990) and Alexander (1995) see this as an effect of the child-centred view of learning advocated by Plowden, which was recognised as an ideal, though never actually realised. Alongside this, Delamont (1987, p. 4) describes the *powerful rhetoric of abuse levelled at primary teachers*, the majority of whom, incidentally, are women (Alexander, 1995, p. 234). They are, indirectly, held responsible for virtually all the ills of society because of their supposed adherence to *progressive* methods.

The National Curriculum, positioned in these debates, is seen as a *constraint* on primary practice (Acker, 1990; Pollard, 1992; Woods, 1994; Alexander, 1995). Pollard (1992, p. 107) traces the changes in ideology in primary teaching, and the accompanying moves to external testing, entailed. There is, for example, a shift in power relations, especially those between teachers and parents: teachers are

now *producers* and parents *consumers* of the products of education. Alexander (1995, p. 261) describes the changes in teachers' *dilemmas* between 1986 and 1992, from the need for structure and predictability within the progressivist commitment to flexibility and choice, to the need to maintain individuality and professional autonomy within a prescriptive model of planning and assessment. The pressures are now identified as coming from outside the classroom rather than from within it. Galton et al. (1999, pp. 34-35) see this trend as contributing to the ways in which primary teachers think of their work: professional judgement is perceived as no longer required – teaching is at risk of becoming *merely a 'technical' activity*.

The shift from child-centred learning to teacher-directed teaching and external testing entailed in the introduction of the National Curriculum has meant that what counts as success has changed. Woods (1994, p. 257) describes how the teachers at one of his 'powerful' primary schools show their resistance to external testing and express pride in their children's *imaginative responses to unimaginative questions in national assessment, contrasting their emphasis on process and creative reasoning with the objective emphasis on ends in national assessment*. The change in what is viewed as success in primary practice is also illustrated by the growth in *school effectiveness research* (e.g. Sammons, 1995). Pedagogy has come to be seen as an *ostensibly value-free science* (Alexander, 1995, p. 304), rather than a joint negotiation between teacher and taught. There has been a weakening of the individual, personal relationships primary teachers have with their pupils. The children most likely to

succeed are those who can readily supply the required answers, not those whose experiences and knowledge may lead them in diverse directions. Though this has, perhaps, always been the case, it is now much more so. Slee, Weiner and Tomlinson (1998) point out the *narrowness* (p. 2) of the discourse in the 'school effectiveness' model of researching success in schools and its marginalising effects for a large number of pupils (p. 111).

3.3.3 Teachers' responses to difference and diversity

Following the consideration of the collective cultures of teachers within the system in the last section, this section reviews work which looks more closely at the personal values, attitudes and concerns of individual teachers, with particular reference to ethnically diverse contexts. The two subsections here are:

- ethnic majority teachers' viewpoints on 'difference';
- minority viewpoints: perceptions and subjectivities.

The first presents a review of the evidence for ethnic majority teachers' viewpoints on difference and diversity. The second takes account of an area of research which is, as yet, limited, but its potential importance for understanding the causes and effects of institutional racism is large, as Gurnah (1992) argues. The more the viewpoints of the 'minority' players in the game of school are articulated, the closer we will come to understanding, and ultimately changing, the cultures of schooling which lead to failure.

3.3.3.i Ethnic majority teachers' viewpoints on 'difference'

As suggested in the preface to this chapter (section 3.b), all children move into new cultural settings when they enter school for the first time. Minns (1997), through a set of individual case studies, demonstrates the range of cultural, religious and linguistic factors which need to be taken into account in constructing different kinds of knowledge for and with children from a typical range of cultural backgrounds in England as they move between home and school. This transition is fraught with complications and potential pitfalls. Florio and Shultz (1979) outline some of the dissonances between home and school, even in the most favoured of situations. Tizard and Hughes (1984) show that school does not always provide more advantageous learning opportunities for the child. Gregory (1993) tells the story of one child of Chinese heritage whose school and home experiences appeared to be irreconcilable.

The consequences of not learning 'the rules of the game' as soon as possible can be severe and longlasting. Like Rist (1970), Collins and Green (1992, p. 63) show how *constructed definitions* of *teacher* and *student* are established within the first few days of beginning school. The resulting categorising and naturalising of a child's 'ability' can have far reaching, and possibly negative, effects on their access to the curriculum. Gumperz (1986) demonstrates the ways in which judgements of ability adversely affect children from ethnic minorities or economically disadvantaged groups more than more advantaged

groups. He suggests that they constitute *a handicap which becomes increasingly difficult to overcome as the child moves through school* (p. 49), and questions the notion of *individual ability*, which a normative model of assessment embodies:

.... while learning is ultimately a matter of the child's individual ability, it is not that ability in absolute terms that is important but rather how it is displayed within the interactional environment of the classroom and how it is evaluated and judged in relation to the school system's assumptions.

The need to problematise the notion of 'individual ability' is corroborated by the evidence provided in studies such as those cited above (i.e. Tizard and Hughes, 1984; Gregory, 1993 and Minns, 1997), which reveal the vast differences in some individual children's learning behaviour in and out of school. Stubbs (1976, p. 103) contends that measures of 'ability' are themselves a *social dialogue constructed by teachers and testers*: pupils are judged according to whether they interact appropriately in the social situation of the test, not by any absolute standards of ability. Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) show how children's abilities, as evidenced by IQ tests, are clearly influenced by teachers' expectations. They also reveal the profound ways in which teachers' views of their pupils' ethnicities influence and can be influenced by their classroom performance. For example, when teachers were asked to rank photographs of Mexican-American children according to how 'American' they looked, the children thought to have higher IQs were consistently judged as looking more American. Work such as that by Keddie (1971) and Sharp and Green

(1975) in British contexts with their strongly class based cultures, draws similar conclusions and also shows how teachers' expectations lead them to mediate learning in different ways for different pupils. Teachers, clearly, get on best with those pupils whom they identify as most like themselves. This point, I would argue, is germane to successful learning.

It is only recently in Britain that qualitative research into the relevance of these issues for ethnically diverse contexts has been seen as a priority. Troyna (1991) demonstrates how the *culturally-loaded perceptions* of the teachers (p. 374) contribute to the underachievement of pupils of South Asian origin in a secondary school. Wright (1992) shows how teachers' attitudes can have profound effects on their assessments of the behaviour and ability of African-Caribbean and Asian heritage children. Bhatti (1999) concludes that the 'colour blind' approach (pp. 216-217), or treating all children as if they were *white middle-class boys* (p. 112), is manifestly inadequate (pp. 219-220). But recognition of difference can have ambivalent consequences. Both Anwar (1998, p. 37) and Bhatti (e.g. pp. 194-195) report institutionally racialised (and, incidentally, gendered) approaches to the question of pre-GCSE subject options, especially with regard to girls of South Asian origin. Teachers made assumptions and gave advice based on stereotypes of passivity (Gillborn and Gipps, 1996, p. 57-58) which did not take account of the complexity of the girls' lived experiences and of their aspirations.

The evidence for the need to valorise the out-of-school languages and cultural practices of pupils is slowly coming to light through research. Biggs and Edwards (1994) indicate some of the dangers if teachers ignore it. Moore (1993) discusses the need for teachers to be able to understand *linguistic diversity in the broadest sense* (p. 173) with reference to *genre, perception and form*, and to ask *genuine questions* (p. 181) of their pupils in order to develop full understandings of their pupils' experiences. Knight (1994, p. 111) talks about the need for teachers as well as pupils to develop *pragmatic biculturalism*. Gillborn and Gipps (1996, p.54) suggest that, for pupils from ethnic minorities:

.... one of the most important factors underlying academic achievement is the support and encouragement of knowledgeable and committed teachers

Osborne (1996, p.289) asserts that *culturally relevant* teachers of this kind do not need to come from the same ethnic minority groups as the children they teach, but that a knowledge and appreciation of their pupils' background is essential to a *culturally relevant pedagogy*, which Ladson-Billings (1992, p. 382) equates with the kind of *critical pedagogy* discussed in section 3.2.2.

3.3.3.ii Minority viewpoints: perceptions and subjectivities

While the viewpoints of members of minority groups involved in mainstream education have been expressed for many years (e.g. Dhondy, 1974; Gilroy, 1976; and Stone, Hall, Coard and Dhondy, all in

James and Jeffcoate, 1981; Stone, 1981), it is questionable whether their voices have been heard. If they had, perhaps present day debates on ethnicity and education would be much more informed and advanced than they are. The above, often contradictory (see Coard and Stone), texts indicate the complexities yet again. Focusing on the debate between 'progressive' and 'traditional' teaching methods, Delpit (1986, 1988) shows how the approaches of 'liberal' white teachers can be just as disabling as those of overt racists, constructing oppression out of *warmth, friendliness and concern* (1988, p. 296). Because it can be seen as a violation of liberal principles, there is often an unwillingness to confront the *cultures of power* (pp. 284-285) which construct and maintain inequality, with harmful outcomes: *to act as if power does not exist is to ensure that the power status quo remains the same* (p. 292). While she acknowledges that political change for diversity cannot be effected from 'the bottom up', Delpit calls for an *honesty* (p. 292) from the practitioners who would seek genuinely to support the learning of ethnic minority students and a recognition that their own actions can contribute to the problems. For the 'white liberals' in search of better understanding, the autobiographical texts of ethnic minority teachers (e.g. M. Foster, 1997; Rakhit, 1998) make salutary reading, as do the accounts of teachers who choose to place themselves in 'minority' positions in their work (e.g. Kohl, 1971; Paley, 1979).

The voices of ethnic minority teachers need to be heard more clearly. Despite a recognition of the contributions they can make to raising the achievements of ethnic minority pupils (e.g. Callender 1997 and

see Chapter 4, section 4.4.3), their presence in primary teaching is still very limited and patchy. An Office of National Statistics' survey reveals that the proportion of ethnic minority primary teachers in relation to the whole work force was 2.5% in 1999 (Spencer, 2000, p. 21). Moreover, Spencer shows the tendency for such teachers to be concentrated in schools with a high proportion of ethnic minority children:

... there's still this scenario that black teachers are good at teaching black children and only black children

There seem to be several significant factors which affect ethnic minority students' choices in making teaching their career. A report of a project undertaken by the Wolverhampton Race Equality Council Consortium (1999), which used ethnographic approaches to a limited extent, identified the importance of positive rôle models and attitudes from students' own school teachers, not necessarily those from ethnic minorities. Both Siraj-Blatchford (1991, p. 35) and Ghuman (1995, p. 99) identify fear of racism in all-white schools as a key factor. In addition, Ghuman (pp. 108-111) and Singh (1988) indicate how teaching is not considered of suitable status for academic high achievers in South Asian heritage communities. Ghuman (p. 123) also points to the lack of recognition on the part of predominantly white schools of the need to recruit ethnic minority teachers, and hence their difficulties in seeking promotion in such settings.

Study of the life histories of practising teachers from ethnic minorities, a recent ethnographic pursuit (e.g. Osler, 1997; Rakhit, 1998; Bhatti, 1999), offers great potential for understanding the views and experiences of ethnic minority teachers and, through this, the practical consequences of naturalised structural inequalities in education and in the wider society (Gumperz, 1986, p. 53).

3.4 What do children bring to the classroom?

In this section, I review the literature concerning three main aspects of children's experience:

- children's experiences of learning;
- children's knowledge and experiences of language;
- family experiences and influences

The first is subdivided into two, and focuses mainly on the research into informal and community-based learning contexts and learning in cross-cultural settings, identifying the ways in which these relate to mainstream classroom learning. The second considers the relevance of research into language socialisation and *social worlds* (Cook-Gumperz and Corsaro, 1986, p. 6) for understanding the experiences of young bilingual children. It also has two subdivisions. The third reviews research into the ways in which parents' and other family members' views and actions can affect and influence children's learning patterns.

3.4.1 Children's experiences of learning

All children take to school diverse experiences of learning and language from different contexts, including the home. While there are common factors and features, the distinctive experiences of ethnic minority children also need to be taken into account, along with the arguments of such theorists as Ogbu (1979), who have long suggested that children's competences are socially stratified, with white, middle-class socialisation patterns consistently accorded superior prestige and status. The subsections here review the literature on two main different kinds of learning:

- community-based learning contexts;
- learning in cross-cultural contexts.

The first reviews evidence about 'non-formal' learning including the kind the children in the study may have encountered. The second considers research into learning in different cultural contexts, and the possibilities it offers for a *cultural-ecological* (Ogbu and Simons, 1998 p. 158) model of learning.

3.4.1.i Community-based learning contexts

All children enter classrooms for the first time with experience of learning and of language in use. The work of Vygotsky (e.g. 1986) foregrounds the essentially social nature of learning. Commentators on the Vygotskian model, such as Meadows (1993) and Wertsch (1985), and related work such as that by Rogoff (1990) on the ways in

which children learn in informal situations and especially from each other, exemplify the concepts of scaffolding and apprenticeship in practice. Rogoff argues for the complementarity of biological and sociocultural aspects of development, pointing to the similarities in child behaviour in family and community contexts across geographic and ethnic settings. Analysis of classroom cultures in ethnically diverse contexts needs to take this into account, and can benefit from applying Rogoff's apprenticeship model to the more formal learning that takes place in classrooms. Wells and Chang-Wells (1992), for example, describe the process of becoming literate as a *cultural apprenticeship* (p. 31) and suggest that talk around text offers the potential for young learners to build upon and to go beyond what they have *inherited*. Rogoff cites a wide range of studies (e.g. Ellis and Rogoff, 1982; Damon, 1984) which show the mutuality of children's learning, the differences in their patterns of learning from those of adults, and how this can be used to advantage in the classroom. Rogoff's work has an anthropological grounding, so provides rich insights into the sociocultural issues, but we need to look elsewhere for the language dimension of children's community-based learning.

Thompson (1999, pp. 18-21) describes how the Mirpuri community in Britain *holds to the expectation of both personal and societal multilingualism as the norm*. Language learning is seen as a *necessity of everyday life*, not exclusively linked to formal education. Young children in this community characteristically have very rich, diverse, community-based experiences of language before they begin school which are very different from their monolingual, ethnic majority

peers. Saxena (1994) describes equally rich and diverse literacy learning contexts for Punjabi Hindus in Southall, and points out (pp. 105-110) how these have grown increasingly varied and complex over the years. Gregory (1994) and Rashid and Gregory (1997) report literacy learning in Bengali and Arabic by young Bangladeshi heritage children in homes and community schools in East London, indicating the sharp contrasts between the pedagogies involved and those of mainstream classes (1994a, p. 118). Bhatti (1999, p. 114) contrasts the attitudes of the secondary aged children she interviewed towards mainstream school and mosque school, *no messing about in the mosque you got into real trouble if you did not learn your lessons, not like school*

Much of this language and cultural experience and knowledge remains hidden to the mainstream teachers of ethnic minority pupils, in the same way as did the highly skilled and lively oral language of Black children in New York researched by Labov (1972a). The negative judgements made by teachers as to ethnic minority children's abilities (e.g. Grugeon and Woods, 1990; Wright, 1992; Bhatti, 1999) are indicative of their lack of awareness of the worlds of language and literacy which their pupils inhabit. Street (1994) discusses the need to redefine literacy in the light of this diversity of individual and community experiences, to recognise the *multiplicity of literacies* (p. 139) which exist and begin to reformulate mainstream educational practices in the light of our growing understandings of the diverse *cultural meanings and uses* (p. 149) which literacy represents to different groups within the community.

3.4.1.ii Learning in cross-cultural contexts

Consideration of studies into processes of teaching and learning in different cultural contexts helps to throw into relief some of the assumptions which underpin naturalised practices in mainstream western classrooms. For example, it is dangerous always to assume shared understandings across cultures about the rôle of talk in learning. The fact that talk has become recognised as valued data in research into teaching and learning is itself a culturally biased attitude. Gauvain (1998, p. 82) points out how dyadic interactions, which are a normal way of collecting oral data in research, are not a universal practice, but *a particular cultural response* to a situation. Stubbs (1974, p. 144), in a review of Cazden et al. (1972) points out how much British and American teachers take it for granted that *teaching is verbal explanation*, and so become blinkered to all the other forms which teaching and learning can take.

Talk is not always an acknowledged or even necessary aspect of the interactions between teachers and learners. John and Dumont (both in Cazden et al. 1972) discuss the mainstream American *miseducation* (p. 131) of the *silent Indian child* in reservation schools after their early learning in the community which is embedded in visual and tactile experiences. Cole, et al. (1971) show how the learning of traditional practices among the Kpelle in Liberia is very much an *extralinguistic process* (p. 39). As in West Africa as a whole, the ability to demonstrate *clever speech* is an important social

accomplishment among the Kpelle, but the business of teaching and learning is not dependent on it. Even becoming literate in non-formal situations is seen not to depend so much on language as could be expected: Scribner and Cole (1981) describe how the learning of the Vai script (an indigenous script used by people on the borders of Sierra Leone and Liberia) is carried out very much through watching and copying, not through the accepted modes of western schooling.

Scribner and Cole's work compares with that of Street in Iran (Street, 1984), where a range of culturally- and economically- oriented literacies is practised within cultural contexts parallel to those engaged in by the Vai. Street's *ideological* model of literacy (p.8) begins to conceptualise it as a practice strongly related to social and cultural action in similar ways to Scribner and Cole's social psychology conceptualises cognition. The general conclusions from research such as this about the learning of literacy in non-western settings are valuable for the study of cultural difference within mainstream western settings. 'Unschoolled' people consistently bring their knowledge of the real world to solve cognitive problems. This can result in attempts to solve the problems in unconventional ways, but does not indicate any lack in cognitive capacity or even genetic deficit, as has been concluded at times. In contrast, it could indicate active mental processing of a strongly creative nature.

There are many other examples of studies of community-based learning in cross-cultural contexts; Mead, 1973; Lave, 1977; Scollon and Scollon, 1984; Street, 1993a; Abreu, 1995. It is too easy to dismiss

this kind of research as dealing with the 'exotic', 'the other', and thus not relevant to British classroom contexts. This ignores the development of the body of research and theory building in cultural psychology (Cole and Bruner, 1971; Cole, Gay, Glick and Sharp, 1971; Cole and Scribner, 1974; Ogbu, 1981b; Cole, 1996), which places culture at the centre of understanding psychology and cognition. In this frame of reference, child rearing and learning practices need to be understood in a *cultural-ecological framework* (Ogbu and Simons, 1998, p. 158). Lave (1990, p. 322), postulating that it is often the urge *to manufacture a successful performance* rather than the quest for knowledge which drives learning, begins to construct a *syncretic* model of classroom learning. Successful learners employ strategies which their teachers have not taught them, and of which, moreover, teachers can be unaware. She concludes (p. 323) with a warning that pre-packaged curricula which prescribe methodology as well as content can only harm this dynamic process.

3.4.2 Children's knowledge and experiences of language

This section reviews research into two areas of children's language and cultural experience: the ways in which they construct their own *social worlds* (Cook-Gumperz and Corsaro, 1986, p. 6) through language, and the evidence for the cognitive and cultural effects of bilingualism. There are two subsections:

- children's social worlds, language and learning;
- bilingualism and its implications.

The first examines the evidence for the kinds of understandings of the ways in which social interactions are mediated through language, mainly oracy, which children bring to the classroom. The second gives a brief account of research into bilingualism, arguing the need for a model of bilingualism which encompasses more than just linguistic aspects of cognitive processing and behaviour. This is especially important when considering the experiences of most ethnic minority groups in Britain, such as those in the study, where young learners are mostly second or third generation British born.

3.4.2.i Children's social worlds, language and learning

From birth, children are part of inter-personal networks of communication and social understandings (Cook-Gumperz and Corsaro, 1986, pp. 5-10). Gee (1994, p. 336) describes how young children are *inserted* into social interactions, *as if they are carrying out their part. Words are the fundamental social reproductive agents.* A fully descriptive model of language learning, then – which Halliday (1993) argues is synonymous with learning – needs to incorporate social as well as linguistic development. Vygotsky (1929, p. 429) sums up the instrumentality of language in social action as follows:

The child's discovery of the functional importance of a word as a sign is similar to the discovery of the functional importance of a stick as a tool.

Cook-Gumperz and Corsaro (1986, p.1) use the term *language socialisation* to describe the *gradual development of children's discourse strategies and social skills across the entire period of childhood*. They conceptualise childhood as having its own cultural features and practices, rather than as simply a transitional period before adulthood with children seen as *defective adults* (Speier, 1976, p. 98). Children help to *shape their own learning experience by their interactive responses* (Cook-Gumperz and Corsaro, p. 7). The anthropological notion of *culture contact* (Speier, 1976, p. 99) is a useful one to bring to bear in studying children's social worlds removed from adult ideologies as to what counts as important in children's behaviour. Cook-Gumperz (1986) provides an overview and examples of an interpretive approach to language socialisation (pp. 37-64), showing how analysis of child discourse needs to develop its own distinctive models to take account of children's viewpoints and strategies.

Research which focuses on this area of experience in ethnic minority communities is generally lacking, but particular kinds of social worlds have been studied. A recent collection (Woodhead, Faulkner and Littlejohn, 1998) demonstrates the links between language, socialisation and culturally-organised activity in different contexts in the early years, and provides an overview of the main theoretical perspectives. Ervin-Tripp (1986, pp. 327-357) stresses the importance of most kinds of childhood play both for language learning and for socialisation. Using examples featuring cooperative partners and clearly defined activity structures, she shows how play can be

successfully accomplished by children who do not share a language. Most popular, incidentally, is the game of school. In a study of children's storytelling activities, Cook-Gumperz and Green (1984, p. 217) conclude by emphasising the need to view children as *constructors of reality* and to avoid an adult-centred focus which obstructs this view. Another valuable source of data for the understanding of children's active meaning making is exploited by Maybin (1991, 1994) in her studies of children's informal talk. This is an area of research which offers much potential for moving towards a fuller understanding of the conversational strategies children have at their disposal and of the importance of collaboration for these to be effective, as well as of the favoured topics. Maybin's examples show the ways in which a group of 8-10 year old girls *contest or subvert particular power relationships* (1991, p. 44), construct their own social practices (p. 45) and test out particular notions of gendered identity (p. 47).

The implications for schooling of these studies are great. Gumperz (1986, p. 51) calls for a better understanding of *the way in which language enters into the social environment of the school*, and points out how micro-ethnographic studies of classrooms illuminate the complex interactive processes at work which construct the contexts which guide and channel the behaviour. Chapter 4 (section 4.4) provides a detailed analysis of such research into language in classroom learning environments.

3.4.2.ii Bilingualism and its implications

Skutnabb-Kangas (1981), Baker (1988) and Romaine (1989) document the history of attitudes to bilingualism in different contexts and their educational implications. These have, in many cases, been damagingly negative. That this is the case is strange because research into the cognitive effects of bilingualism, (e.g. Leopold, 1939-1949; Peal and Lambert, 1962; Ianco-Worrall, 1972) has for a long time pointed, at times insistently, to positive effects for cognition and language processing. Bialystok and Cummins (1991) provide a review of the issues, indicating the political necessity for the insistence (p. 6). They show how the cognitive and psychological picture is undoubtedly complex and may not be totally clear, but certainly does not suggest negative implications. The research into these aspects of bilingualism provides valuable evidence for helping us to understand bilingual learners' worlds and their approaches to learning, but it is a partial, and at times contradictory, view (Cummins, 1991, pp. 161-162) when it comes to educational provision and achievement. It is significant that Bialystok and Cummins (1991, p. 226), at the end of a book which focuses on the linguistic and cognitive aspects of bilingualism, see the need to raise issues of *the status and power of particular groups, and societal rewards*.

Virtually all of the studies cited above concern bilinguals in relatively privileged socio-economic settings, where additive bilingualism is the valued outcome. There is little evidence of this nature for the positive effects of bilingualism in children of low socio-economic

status (but see Diaz and Klinger, p. 171 in Bialystok, 1991). Though interest in the social and cultural factors influencing language use in bilinguals goes back for up to thirty years (e.g. Giles and Saint-Jacques [eds.], 1979; Wardhaugh, 1986, pp. 99-110), the links between this and educational achievement are only now being clearly made.

Thompson (1999, pp. 50-54) discusses the relevance of LePage and Tabouret-Keller's (1985) model of bilingualism as *act of identity* to issues concerning the educational achievement of children in multilingual communities. Cummins (1996, p. 21) shows how the messages which culturally diverse students receive about identity from home and school are often contradictory and potentially disabling. Eisenhart and Graue (1993, p. 177) discuss the need to avoid settling for the *taken-for-granted markers of group membership*, and call for pedagogies which make learning and learners more *culturally compatible*.

Leung, Harris and Rampton (1997, p. 1) argue the need for an expanded notion of TESOL pedagogy which takes account of the *dynamic new ethnicities* (pp. 8-9) of both ethnic minority and majority children, exemplified in such vigorous social phenomena as *language crossing* (Rampton, 1995) and other *multiple identities of youth cultures* (Heath, 1995). LePage and Tabouret-Keller (1985, p. 243) provide copious evidence for the *complex and shifting set of relationships which exists between language, as it used but also as it is defined and forms of social organisation*. An adequate model of bilingualism for education, then, needs to place culture in all its complexity at the centre, particularly when considering the

experiences of children who are of second or third generation status, and the complexity of whose needs can be masked by a superficial fluency in English.

3.4.3 Family experiences and influences

The importance of positive links between home and school for children's successful school learning is well-referenced (e.g. Heath, 1983; Tizard and Hughes, 1984; Wells, 1986; Pollard, 1996). However, it is an area fraught with contradictions, partly because, as Tharp and Gallimore (1988) suggest (p. 272), *school means each speakers' own childhood days*, an idea which, perhaps, explains the attraction of the *back to basics* ideology for many parents. In Britain, A. Edwards and Knight (1997, p. 69) contend that the changes in parents' perceptions of their rôles brought about by such developments as the Parents' Charter and the publication of league tables, casting them as *consumers* rather than the collaborative partners constructed in the references cited above, can have a negative impact on teachers' professionalism. Pressure increases for narrowly defined success using easily understood approaches rather than those based on well considered, but more complex, pedagogies which attempt to address the complexities of life in typical primary classrooms.

Research into home-school links in ethnic minority contexts has focused mainly on literacy learning. It shows contradictions.

Goldenberg (1987, p. 176) concludes that parents *represent a vast potential resource in the effort to improve achievement among*

minority children. Edwards and Knight (p. 67) suggest, however, that the *deficit model* of the contributions of some parents still persists, and point out the negative effects of encouraging parental involvement on the part of schools if it becomes:

.... a vehicle for undermining the value systems of some social groups through implicit criticism of what these groups hold dear (p. 66)

Gibson's (1987) study of Punjabi Sikh farm families in California reveals the contradictions when cultural mores are not understood by teachers. Even though the Sikh children were academically more successful in many cases than Anglo children in the same schools, the teachers viewed this success ambivalently because the parents did not attend school functions. Gibson suggests (p. 268) that few teachers *seemed conscious that the Punjabi model of non-intervention worked equally well, perhaps better, at least in the Punjabi context.*

The evidence for the ways in which schools' literacy practices can be enhanced by teachers' positive attitudes towards home practices is extensive (e.g. Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Gregory, 1996; Minns, 1997). It is, however, not just a case of paying lip-service: Abreu, (1995) in a study which reports the links between home and school mathematics in Brazil, shows how the home knowledge needs to be valorised in the school context. Delgado-Gaitan's study of a Mexican-American community in America indicates the importance of teachers understanding home-based literacy activities in order to appreciate the *cultural knowledge* which children bring to school (p. 107). She

suggests (p. 84) three emic categories, similar to the ORIM framework used in work in Sheffield (Hirst, 1998, p. 416), which are indicative of success in early literacy, and which all highlight the need for effective dialogue. Tizard, Schofield and Hewison (1982) report on a project in Haringey which successfully involved non-English speaking and non-literate parents in assisting children's reading. Huss (1995, p. 772) shows how teachers underestimated the literacy learning capacities of 5-year old Pakistani-heritage children in northern England, and the relevance of the experiences they brought to school.

It is harder to find evidence of transfer of oral language practices from home to school. Heath's study (1982b) of questioning at home and school found evidence for different practices in the two contexts but very little positive transfer from home to school. Her conclusion, the need for a *two-way path* (p. 123), has implications for the ways in which home language practices need to be valorised by schools, and for teacher education. Moll (1992, p. 21), discussing broader issues than oral language, advocates a *funds of knowledge* approach to family and community involvement, building on what children, as members of interconnecting family networks, can already do. She describes a project where valuable knowledge which existed outside the classroom was *mobilised for academic purposes* (p. 23), and so made central to the learning, with positive outcomes.

Evidence for the ease of establishment and maintenance of effective communication between home and school is unpromising. Delgado-Gaitan's study shows strong parental support and aspirations, despite

schools reporting a lack of participation on the part of Mexican parents compared to Anglo parents (p. 121). Hirst, (1998) in a study of South Asian heritage families in Sheffield, found the same high aspirations among parents, but matched with very positive home-school collaboration (pp. 422-423). The difference may partly result from the age of the children: Hirst researched the pre-school and early years age range while Delgado-Gaitan's study covered the whole school age range. Bhatti (1999, pp. 110-112) reports some sense of positive interaction between home and primary school (though it seems to be very dependent on individual teachers), but a rapid falling away of any cooperative contact as children grew older. McIntyre, Bhatti and Fuller's study (1997) of secondary pupils found a vast divide between home and school, with students feeling the need to protect their parents from *the realities of school life* (p. 219) in the same way as students in Bhatti's (1999) study.

3.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have argued for the importance of taking account of external factors when considering classroom cultures. I have reviewed the evidence for these factors and their effects on ethnically diverse classrooms. First, I have shown how legitimate classroom knowledge, particularly in terms of the subject called English, is a politically, socially and culturally mediated phenomenon, rather than a neutral, monolithic artifact, and considered the implications of this for classroom practices. Second, I have reviewed research into the cultures of primary teachers and teaching, both from communal and

individual viewpoints. Finally, I have explored the range of cognitive, linguistic and social experiences, shaped by psychological, community and cultural influences, which children in general and children from ethnic minorities in particular bring to classrooms. I argue that these three dimensions of experience – legitimate knowledge, teachers' cultures and children's cultures – form the outer layers of interaction which contribute to the construction of the cultures of classrooms. The review reveals gaps in the literature. Some of these relate to and can be addressed by the findings of the study. These are:

- the impact on teachers working in ethnically diverse classrooms of externally driven reforms which influence forms of classroom knowledge and pedagogy;
- specific ways in which ethnic minority children construct their social worlds through talk;
- the significance of ethnic minority parents' experiences and views of schooling for the success of their children;
- specific ways in which social interaction and patterns of talk in the home may model processes of using talk relevant for the classroom.

CHAPTER FOUR
FROM THE INSIDE: A REVIEW OF RESEARCH INTO
LEARNING IN CLASSROOMS

4.1 Introduction: opening the *black box*

This chapter reviews the literature about theories of language and learning and the processes of teaching and learning, mediated through talk, inside classrooms. These are considered in the light of the models of knowledge in the curriculum, and of the cultures of teachers and of children presented Chapter Three. Thus, I open the *black box* (Mehan, 1982, p. 80). There are three main sections:

1. Knowing, language and talk;
2. The ethnography of classroom cultures;
3. Investigating talk in classrooms.

The first section considers the rôle of language, specifically talk, in the collaborative construction of classroom knowing by teachers and learners. It is further divided into two subsections. I use the word 'knowing' to distinguish the processes of constructing knowledge by the learner from the construction of knowledge in the curriculum described in Chapter Three (section 3.2). I theorise the models of knowing, learning and language which best explain the findings from the longitudinal study of interaction in ethnically diverse classrooms. Building on notions of communicative competence, I justify a model of classroom talk as discourse, both as providing the most relevant theoretical frameworks for understanding classroom interaction in general and as an explanation for the findings of this study.

Developing from this model of language as discourse, the second section reviews the literature on the study of classroom cultures from anthropological and ethnographic traditions and viewpoints, showing how these illuminate some of the processes of interaction which underpin successful learning, particularly in ethnically diverse settings, in ways which other theoretical viewpoints and research methodologies do not. This section is also further divided into two subsections.

The third section reviews the findings from research into the ways in which talk in classrooms has been characterised and analysed as operating to construct and mediate meanings. Based on the conceptualisation of classroom language as discourse in the ways in which it is developed in the first and second sections of this chapter, it examines the notions of context and intertextuality which underpin the research. By citing studies from similar contexts and with similar theoretical frameworks, it provides a context within which this thesis can be placed, seeing it thus as part of the growing body of evidence about the complex processes of meaning negotiation which mediate success for individual learners in ethnically diverse classrooms. It also highlights the gaps in current published work, and the need for further research in the field. The section has three subsections.

4.2 Knowing, language and talk

The main purpose of this section is to consider the models of 'knowing', learning and language which underpin the study. There are two subsections:

- a review of knowing, learning and language;
- communicative competence and discourse.

The first reviews the literature and discusses the most relevant ways of viewing 'knowing', language and learning for the study. It is divided into three parts. The second subsection foregrounds the significance of conceptualising language as discourse, grounded in the development of notions of communicative competence, to help us to understand and explain the forms and purposes of classroom interaction. It has two further subsections.

4.2.1 A review of knowing, learning and language

In order to clarify the separate elements which together constitute a model of learning and knowing, and the specific issues related to children learning in an additional language, the content of this section is subdivided into three, as follows:

- models of classroom knowing;
- language, development and learning;
- additional language acquisition and learning.

While the linear nature of written text means that the sections are presented sequentially, it is clear that the three dimensions are

recursively connected. Learning is the processes by which knowing is achieved. Knowing is a process rather than an artifact, as the use of the continuous verb rather than the noun form is intended to imply. It is the appropriation by the learner for herself of elements of the *legitimate knowledge*, and so can be regarded as the outcome of learning. However, learning as defined in this thesis, because of its interactive, dynamic nature and its connections to individual factors of cultural identity, personal experience and so on, is not confined to action related to this legitimate knowledge only. Children in school are learning a lot more than this. Language is both the tool, sharpened and refined through use, which the learner uses to achieve knowing and the main medium within which the knowledge is expressed. It is, then, part of both the learning and the knowing.

4.2.1.i Models of classroom knowing

The discussion of *legitimate knowledge* in Chapter 3 makes clear the controlling rôles played in its construction by hierarchically placed actors outside the classroom. Consequently, inside the classroom, knowledge and power interact. Hammersley (1990, pp. 27-52) provides evidence and an extensive discussion of the part played by question and answer in the construction of knowledge by learners in the classroom, showing the links between authority and knowledge which underpin typical classroom interactions, so that pupils:

.... are being socialised into a world in which knowledge is known by those 'in authority' and which can be learnt only by taking heed of 'authorities' (p. 51)

Similarly, D. Edwards (1990) presents a model of pupils, in *contextualised dialogues* (p. 55) with their teachers, being socialised into a *predetermined culture of educated knowledge* (p. 61). Edwards and Mercer (1987, chapter 6) contrast ritual knowledge (*knowing how*) and principled knowledge (*knowing that*), showing how teachers strive to promote autonomy by providing opportunities for their pupils to develop principled knowing through a 'discovery' process, but face the dilemma imposed by the curriculum of having to *inculcate knowledge while apparently eliciting it* (p. 125). Pupils, meanwhile, become adept at subverting principled knowledge into ritual knowledge for their own purposes.

Wells and Chang-Wells (1992) and Heras (1994), among others, stress the need for teachers to support the collaborative and cumulative construction of knowing in their pupils, despite the constraints of working within externally controlled curricula. The need is to promote *literate thinking* (Wells and Chang-Wells, p. 69) essential for the *construction of inner meaning* which, in this model, characterises successful learning. Children are not passive recipients: they bring their own theories to the problems and, through talk with peers, *engage in collaborative sense-making* (p. 28). A classroom where such processes occur becomes a *community of thinkers* (p. 93). As Heras (p. 276) phrases it, *members of the group have opportunities*

to engage with each other in and through the events of everyday life. Similarly, Barnes (1976), while strongly aware of *the conflict between the teacher's responsibility for control and his [sic] responsibility for learning* (p. 176), argues for children having the opportunity, through collaborative talk, to engage in the *active reshaping of knowledge* (p. 92), defined in similar ways to those by which I characterise it in Chapter Three (section 3.2). The main vehicle for this, he suggests, is learning and talking in small groups (chapter 3, pp. 34-78).

4.2.1.ii: Language, development and learning

.... mind is an extension of the hands and tools that you use and of the jobs to which you apply them.
(Bruner, 1996, p. 151)

The combination of Halliday's descriptions of language as *social semiotic* (1969, 1978) and Vygotsky's views of the socio-cognitive rôle of language in learning (1978, 1986) produces a model of language and learning which is able to explain the findings about classroom language referred to in the studies cited in section 4.2.1.i. Indeed, Halliday (1993), postulating that all learning is semiotic, goes some way to providing the model. Learning is socially and situationally constructed. Language is a tool for action and transformation, the chief means by which the child develops into a full member of her culture with the help of others. Defined by its uses, language is both the medium for and evidence of the processes of negotiation by which knowing is constructed. The emphases made by Vygotsky on the social nature of learning, for adults as well as children, is conceptualised in his notion of the *zone of proximal development*

(1986, p. 104), which entails a variety of uses (functions, in Halliday's terminology) of language, such as the various forms of *collaborative sense making* referred to above. These functions are *socially constituted and historically developed* (Hickman, 1985, p. 237), consonant with Halliday's notion of *text* (1978, p. 34). This indicates the need for a model of language which incorporates more than linguistic features in order to describe and explain classroom interaction in these terms. Such a model is discussed and developed in section 4.2.2.

While there is the need to note the cautions from Mercer (1994, p. 103 and 1995, pp. 96-97) that the ZPD is a concept largely developed in informal, one-to-one learning situations and so its application in whole class situations may be restricted, its implications for classroom practice are still many. Cummins' (1994) definition of ZPD as:

....the interpersonal space where minds meet and new understandings can arise through collaborative interaction and inquiry (p. 45)

foregrounds the importance of negotiation in the classroom, and the need in schools for the kind of *critical pedagogy* which has already been referred to (Chapter Three, section 3.2.2). For Tharp and Gallimore (1988), teaching consists of *assisting performance through the zone of proximal development* (p. 31). Good teachers make judgements *through the processes of intersubjectivity* (p. 88) as to when *assistance is appropriate, and when restraint is wise*. The practice of *scaffolding* observed by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) and articulated by Bruner (1985, pp. 24-25) is clearly implied here. The

conversations that take place between teacher and learner are surface evidence of the underlying processes.

There are some reservations, however, about the ways in which the notion of scaffolding has developed and is used in current discussions about pedagogy. Stone (1998, p. 156) emphasises the idea of *transfer* (or *handover*, as Edwards and Mercer, 1987, pp. 23-4 label it), and suggests (pp. 163-4) that *the interpersonal dimensions are* more central than were first conceptualised by Bruner. Mercer (1994, pp. 104-5) foregrounds the importance of *appropriation* on the part of the learner. Cole (1996, pp 183-187) emphasises the idea of prolepsis in culturally grounded notions of learning, where *cultural continuity* (defined as projecting *the past into the future*, p. 186), as distinct from social, is a strong factor in learning. Both teachers and learners view and mediate experiences through the lenses of their personal and cultural histories. All of these arguments suggest that the idea of scaffolding, as it is generally characterised, does not adequately encompass factors of co-construction and mutuality which, I argue, are central to learning. These factors, it is clear, will be significant in individual learners' differential access to the scaffolds available in any classroom and thus to their success.

4.2.1.iii Additional language acquisition and learning

In Chapter Three, section 3.4.2.ii, evidence is cited for the positive cognitive effects of bilingualism, when linked with appropriate social and cultural valorisation and pedagogical support. The implications of these contextual aspects of the processes of additional language

acquisition, however, are often not recognised or acted upon in helpful ways by those with responsibility for supporting the learning of emergent bilingual children. For example, the well known and much quoted BICS/CALP distinction, drawn and progressively refined by Cummins, links, as he has latterly made clear (1996, pp. 57-58), the *cognitive and contextual demands made by particular forms of communication*. It also (Cummins, 2000, p. 98) indicates the need for rich language experiences and collaborative learning for emergent bilingual learners.

The BICS/CALP distinction has been used as the basis of a useful framework for ensuring appropriate progression in planning for different curriculum subjects (Hall, 1995), relevant to both monolingual and bilingual pupils. But reservations have been voiced about its application and how the aspects of language competence it embodies are and can be assessed in school contexts where:

...the narrow school definitions of literacy practices [make] the whole endeavour of learning to read and write discontinuous with the sociolinguistic experiences of everyday life
(Martin-Jones and Romaine, 1986, p. 30)

Moore (1995, p. 227) shows how, in the over-simplified form in which it was believed that the BICS/CALP model implied that *everyday language and academic language* had to be kept totally separate, its application led to teachers in one setting developing a strategy of *linguistic rationing* (p. 180) within a language-led curriculum, despite the fact that their bilingual pupils showed

themselves to be capable of making sophisticated language choices in less formal conversations. This resulted in some very artificial syntactic constructions and bizarre lexical choices on the part of the teachers. In the mistaken belief that they were making things easier, the teachers Moore observed actually added to the difficulties by providing conceptually and cognitively diluted input with little contextual support.

McWilliam (1998, p. x) argues that all children's success in language and curriculum learning depends on *active involvement in building a complex network of linguistic meaning*. She postulates a model of semantic development which is linked to both cognition and cultural experience, and in which attention to connotation is central.

Connotative meaning is an aspect of language which has particular cultural resonance, and so needs particularly close attention in ethnically diverse classrooms. Stubbs (1995a) points out how combinations of very common words (*little girls* and *small boys*), as well as those which are *obviously ideologically loaded*, can encode culture and thus need to be regarded as connotative. Stubbs (1986, p.131) also, stresses the importance of understanding the range of connotative meaning for the full appreciation of literary texts.

Connotation is one of a variety of ways in which any language mediates meaning, but it is the one, as Graddol, Cheshire and Swann (1987, pp. 103-104) point out, which has the most to do with cultural, experiential and contextual knowledge. Gee and Green (1998, p. 123) introduce the notion of *cultural models* in relation to word meaning, which they describe as *story lines, families of connected images*

shared by people belonging to specific social or cultural groups. Again, it is clearly vital to see language as part of a dynamic social and cultural context.

To understand a language fully and to be able to use that language to learn, it is essential that the rôle of connotation in the ways in which it mediates meanings are understood. Wharton (1995, p. 3) asserts that *societies who have some history in common will have equivalent words rich in culturally shared connotation. Where teachers and learners do not have such shared histories, it is essential that the kinds of interaction constructed in the classroom enable the sharing to begin. McKeon (1994, p. 27) calls this milieu teaching. Conteh et al. (1995) and Conteh (1998) provide evidence from specific settings for the different ways in which skilled teachers can manage connotatively rich discourse in ethnically diverse classrooms, and so provide the kinds of interaction essential to successful additional language learning.*

Evidence in recent research is beginning to show the range of complex and subtle ways in which even very young emergent bilinguals use their additional languages when they have social and contextual support and strong affective investment (e.g. Cramer, and Long in Gregory, 1997; Cramer, 1999). Halliday hinted at this in 1969 when he suggested:

....the child's internal "model" of language is a highly complex one; and most adult notions of language fail to match up to it (p. 28)

and that, for many children, their problems with language in school arise because they are required to accept *a stereotype of language that is contrary to the insights he [sic] has gained from his own experience.*

Halliday is not referring exclusively to emergent bilingual children, but the implications for additional language acquisition are clear. Martin-Jones and Romaine end their paper (1986, p. 35) with an appeal for the avoidance of the *watering-down* of research findings into additional language acquisition (as has happened with both the BICS/CALP and the ZPD concepts) and for a more ethnographic approach to the evaluation of children's language proficiency (p. 36). This needs, I suggest, to be informed by a much more rounded and socio-economically informed model of the 'additional (or second) language learner' which goes beyond that developed by many commentators (e.g. Gardner and Macintyre, 1992, 1993) to describe the *complex social history and multiple desires* (Peirce, 1995, p. 9) in the experiences of many learners. Peirce calls for a model of additional language acquisition which embodies Bourdieu's concept of *investment* rather than that of personal *motivation* (pp. 16-17) in learning and, in so doing, begins to address issues of identity and power between language learners and target language speakers. Genesee (1994) and Cummins (1996) make a start on speculating on the implications and outcomes of such a model for teaching and learning.

4.2.2 Communicative competence and discourse

In this section, I develop arguments for the importance of conceptualising language as discourse in the study of classroom interaction. I first review the literature which traces the development of notions of communicative competence, essential for understanding and analysing the interweaving of action, social identity and cultural knowledge in language use to achieve specific purposes. This provides a context for appraising the value of a model of language as discourse for understanding classroom interaction, particularly in ethnically diverse contexts. There are, then, two subsections:

- communicative competence;
- language as discourse.

4.2.2.i Communicative competence

The genesis of the concept of communicative competence was in the study of language change. Gumperz, in Gumperz and Hymes (1972, p. 3), suggests that Bloomfield in 1933 was the first to begin to clarify the ways in which social factors affect language change with his idea *of an intervening level of human communication which mediates between linguistic and non-linguistic phenomena*. Gumperz traces the gestation of the concept through research in America and Britain into dialect and other aspects of language change and into language diversity in Africa and Asia. With the growing complexity and inherent contradictions in the data being amassed from all these

sources, it became increasingly clear that the questions which arose could not be answered *by mere descriptions of linguistic variables* (Gumperz, p. 14). As Gumperz shows (p. 15), what was needed was a theoretical model in which *the division between social and linguistic categories is obliterated* so that the interaction between social and language rules can be understood. From this follow socially constructed notions of language change, such as speech communities, speech events and linguistic repertoires, which *cut across diverse cases and modes of reporting, and get to basic relationships* (Hymes, 1972, p. 290).

Hymes (1972) was the first to articulate a view of what, in a tentative sense, communicative competence entailed. He explicitly stated its value for understanding *'the language problems of disadvantaged children'* (p. 269, quotation marks in original). He sees it, essentially, as a widening of the concept of competence (in the Chomskian sense) in relation to language in order to *account for the fact that a normal child acquires knowledge of sentences, not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate* (p. 277). He was one of the co-editors of a seminal collection which takes the notion of communicative competence (though does not explicitly define it) as fundamental for looking at children's language use in learning contexts (Cazden et al., 1972). In Hymes (1974, p. 75), he defines the idea in relation to the socialisation of the child as *the ability to participate in its society as not only a speaking, but also a communicating member*. Saville-Troike (1989) presents a full review of the development of the concept and its application to studying the norms of communicative conduct in

different communities, though not specifically in contexts of teaching and learning.

The implications of the notion of communicative competence for understanding educational 'failure' have been considered by various writers. A.D. Edwards (1980b), using Bourdieu's notions of cultural capital, emphasises the need to avoid treating speech and social interaction as separate entities. He concludes (p. 42) that for *disadvantaged groups*, merely extending their verbal repertoire will not necessarily extend their occupational prospects. Cook-Gumperz and Gumperz (1982, p. 19) consider the value of communicative competence as a *diagnostic* notion to explore the values in the teacher-pupil relationship and so facilitate an awareness of the ways in which *procedures of classroom practices within schools are part of an institutional system of educational policies and ideology* which are important factors in individual success or failure. Mehan (1982) shows how children need to *know how to display their knowledge* (p. 79) in order to earn teachers' recognition as effective learners and so gain the means to succeed. He terms this *interactional competence*, and shows how it is, essentially, an integration of form and content (1979, pp. 134-139). He also points out how teachers' expectations, and ultimately their judgements, of individual children are built up and worked out interactionally. Trueba et al. (1981, pp. 3-4), defining culture as *communication*, consider notions of cultural competence and cultural repertoire to be important in investigating the mismatches between home and school cultures and considering their implications for school success.

Saville-Troike (1984) takes the concept further. She concludes that communicative competence in social situations does not guarantee the same facility in academic settings, and suggests that all children need to develop *academic competence* in order to learn how to learn. On similar lines, Skutnabb-Kangas (1991, p. 332) introduces the dimension of *bicultural competence*, which she sees as necessary for a group to become linguistically and culturally competent in a new context. She considers an important aspect of this to be *metacultural awareness*, a concept which has strong bearings on the study of classroom cultures, particularly in considering the ways children are able to learn behaviours from teachers' implicit and tacit signals. Knight. (1994, pp. 101-111) emphasises the need for this to be two-way with her model of *pragmatic bilculturalism* in education. Peirce (1995) argues that models of communicative competence for the classroom need to show awareness of the *rights* to speak (and how to claim them) embodied in any interaction, within the classroom and beyond. His definition would include an understanding of the ways in which:

.... rules of language use are socially and historically constructed to support the interests of a dominant group within a given society. (p. 18)

4.2.2.ii Language as discourse

Clearly, in order to reveal, analyse and understand the socio-linguistic interaction involved in processes of communicative competence at work in the classroom, a model of language is necessary which is able to account for the range of ways in which

cultural meanings are conveyed within and across situations. As part of this, it will need, as relevant, to be able to take paralinguistic features into account. Gee's (1996, p. 90) definition of discourse: *connected stretches of language which hang together so as to make sense to some community of people* captures the links between language and social interaction. Halliday (1978, p. 37) defines *texts*, in a similar way, as a *semantic process, encoded in the lexico-grammatical system*, and (p. 39) as *an exchange of meanings in an interactive process*. Fairclough (1995, p. 4) reminds us of the *textural* qualities of texts, useful for considering the negotiation of meanings in classrooms. Stubbs (1983, pp. 9-10) traces the 'confusion' in the use of the two words *discourse* and *text*, suggesting that they are at times used with differences in emphasis, but not with any major theoretical distinction. Mishler (1972, p. 298) and Luke (1995, pp. 7-9) both suggest that they are in a hierarchical relationship. Luke's definitions of texts as *moments when language connected to other semiotic systems is used for symbolic exchange* (p. 13) and discourses as *recurrent statements and wordings across texts* (p. 15) capture the links between the two, and also indicate the importance of the concept of *intertextuality*, which he defines (p. 13) as *repeated and reiterated wordings, statements and themes that appear in different texts*, for understanding how texts and discourses operate.

Cazden (1988) takes the notion of discourse as *reconceptualisation* (pp. 110-117) as central to her analysis of classroom language. She argues for the need for greater recognition of the key range of functions of the E-slots in typical IRE sequences, indicating the

importance of viewing classroom talk as developing and operating longitudinally beyond the IRE, in ways I illustrate in Chapter Two (section 2.4.2). Since a main element of my analytic framework in this thesis uses a critical discourse analysis model, I use the word *discourse* rather than *text* to describe the oral language in naturally occurring conversations which forms the bulk of my data. It also conveys the dialogic quality of the language in contextualised negotiated conversations more vividly than the word *text*, an aspect of discourse similarly foregrounded by Fairclough (1995, p. 7).

Such a broad view of what counts as discourse clearly implies that its manifestations can be very heterogeneous (Fairclough, 1992b, p. 22). Discourses are a product of negotiation, but they are also a part of the processes of negotiation of meanings which are many and various according to context. Gee (1996, pp. 74-75), for example, in a discussion of the *guessing principle*, shows how even word meaning as an aspect of discourse is an unstable phenomenon. Fairclough (1992b, pp. 101ff.) underlines the importance of the concept of intertextuality in helping to reveal heterogeneities within discourses and, when combined with a theory of power, to understand how they are shaped by (and, in turn, shape) social structures and practices. He traces the origin of the term to Kristeva's (1986) accounts of Bakhtin's ideas of literary criticism, which first became available to western audiences in the 1950s. As Bloome (1992, p. 255) indicates, the ways in which the concept has subsequently been redefined, relocated and applied in linguistics and education are realigning the relationship of *social theory, social change and language*.

Bloome and Egan-Robertson (1993) and Floriani (1994) provide an extended discussion of intertextuality and *intercontextuality* (Floriani, p. 255), pointing to the need to see the text (academic) as both part of and product of the text (social) through which it is constructed. Intertextuality is itself a social construction in so far as it is recognised, acknowledged by and of social significance to the participants in each specific interaction. Indeed, with its identification of links across texts and discourses, intertextuality serves as an appropriate metaphor for the kind of active, connection-making processes of discovering about the world which are natural ways of learning to young children, but which many do not experience in school (Short, 1992, p. 314). This indicates the need for teaching and learning approaches which develop *discourse* rather than *method* classrooms (Young, 1992, pp. 87-88), and where the learner is a *developing fellow citizen of our one world*, rather than merely a *pedagogical object*.

4.3 The ethnography of classroom cultures

In this section, I review research into interaction, mediated through talk, in classrooms in ways which capture the mutuality of language and the contexts in which it is formed and to which it also contributes to forming. The value of such an ethnographic approach, which facilitates the study of the rules and patterns in the ongoing life of a particular context, mainly through studying the language from within which evidence of the ways language is used can be elicited, is

demonstrated. There are two subsections:

- classrooms, contexts, cultures and language;
- the rôle of language in constructing classroom cultures.

The first discusses the value of classroom ethnographies for gaining a full understanding of the contextually and culturally situated ways in which language is used in classrooms, and reviews the literature on the development of ethnographies of communication. The second examines the rôle of language within a classroom ethnography, considering ways in which it both contributes to the construction of classroom cultures and is in turn constructed by the specific cultures of different classrooms. Thus, it illustrates two dimensions of the model of classroom cultures postulated in the preface to Chapters Three and Four, and presents justifications for the methodology developed for the study, which is explained in Chapter Five. It is divided into two further subsections.

4.3.1 Classrooms, contexts, cultures and language

The earliest investigations which viewed classrooms as worthy of study as cultural/sociological settings (e.g. Waller, 1932) took classical anthropology as their theoretical and methodological models.

Researchers acted like anthropologists, visiting experts to the setting, outsiders who had come to study a distinctive form of cultural transmission in order to better understand how it operated as part of society as a whole. Education was thus conceptualised as a very static

phenomenon, with teachers and taught fulfilling their predetermined rôles. There was seen to be very little, if any, need for negotiation within the classroom. As Cole, Gay, Glick and Sharp (1971) indicate, schooling was seen, somewhat paradoxically, as a significant agent both in maintaining the norms of the society and in effecting social change. In the classical anthropological tradition, 'culture' was a 'thing' to be studied, not a dynamic, constantly changing process, as suggested in the preface to Chapters Three and Four (section 3.a). By the 1960s and 1970s, however, as anthropology was focusing its lens on urban industrial societies and moving more explicitly to viewing the study of 'reality' as *long events* (Gluckman, 1964, p. 159), the value of ethnographies for helping to understand social problems was coming to be recognised. This 'social anthropological' view was being taken up in research into education. Classrooms were coming to be seen as microcosms of society, reflecting all the social issues of the day (e.g. Jackson, 1968; Smith and Geoffrey, 1968; Walker, 1972, all studies from America, and Lacey, 1970, who was directly influenced by Gluckman). As Heath (1982a, p. 52) suggests, ethnographic studies were beginning to be considered as able to match the cultural processes of the community with those of the classroom.

Until recently, the majority of the 'ethnographic/educational' research work in Britain was done in secondary schools, (but see Sharp and Green, 1975; King, 1978) where most of the major political debates, such as the raising of the school leaving age and comprehensivisation, were centred (Lacey, 1970; Nash, 1973;

Hammersley and Woods, 1976; Stubbs, 1976; Stubbs and Delamont, 1976; Ball, 1981; Delamont, 1983). Issues of social class were generally seen as very significant, and gender was also quickly recognised as a factor to be taken into account in analysing classroom interaction. (e.g. Delamont). Ethnicity, however, was marginal to educational debates in Britain at this time: this was not the case in America. V. Edwards (1983), in her introductory chapters to one of the few books which addressed multiculturalism and multilingualism in Britain in the early 1980s, illustrates the uncertainties in relation to issues of difference and diversity in the British education system, and the lack of any clear policy. Since then, there has been some research in Britain into issues of ethnic diversity and education, but it has largely concerned the cultures of teaching and learning *external* to the classroom (see Chapter Three, section 3.3.3). Section 4.4.3 in this chapter reviews the research which has dealt with internal processes in ethnically diverse classrooms, and indicates some of the evidence that is missing in constructing a full understanding of ethnic minority failure.

4.3.2 The rôle of language in constructing classroom cultures

In this section, I amplify two aspects of the model of classroom cultures postulated in the preface to Chapters Three and Four in order to indicate what I consider to be important in studying the language of classroom interaction, and to provide a context within which to assess the studies of classroom interaction presented in section 4.4. There are two subsections:

- constructing the rules for classroom interaction;
- the distinctive languages of classrooms.

The first argues for a notion of rule-governed action which children new to classrooms need to learn in order to become 'pupils'. Teachers have rules to learn, too. In the light of this, the intention in the second section is to provide a broad framework for considering the ways in which talk is used in classrooms by teachers and learners, and ways it has been conceptualised which are relevant for the study.

4.3.2.i Constructing the rules for classroom interaction

Street and Street (1995), reporting a small-scale study of literacy practices carried out in home and school in a white, middle-class suburb of an American city, emphasise the need to conceptualise the processes as *social* (p. 87). They provide extensive examples of the things children had to learn in order to behave as pupils when they entered school. Green and Harker (1982), in a comparative study of two kindergarten teachers, show how children in school need to become ethnographers, learning how to 'read' the cues which will help them to understand and act within the three domains of classroom action (which match the questions used as a framework to analyse the classroom language in Chapter Two):

....they need to know what the nature of the activity (context) is, what thematic information is being exchanged, and what the social nature of the group is at any given moment (p. 214)

J. L. Green (1983, p. 184) discusses the notion of *context*, seeing it as *alive* in the interaction, and suggesting that children need to act as quasi-ethnographers to *crack the teacher's code*. Willes (1983) in a study of young monolingual children entering a nursery, describes ways in which teachers and children construct a discourse where teachers are setting up the 'rules of the game' and children, through active engagement in a range of tasks and situations, are clearly (and very quickly) learning a lot more than the legitimate knowledge. They are learning how to be 'pupils' in a context which is strongly rule-governed, though few of the rules are ever made explicit to them.

Mehan (1979) presents evidence of the ways in which, over a year, a teacher inducted her reception class, whose ethnic and social backgrounds she did not share, into the patterns of both learning and social behaviour she expected from them. Behaviour, both linguistic and non-linguistic, on her part which appeared to be inconsistent was actually conforming to complex patterns of intention and expected outcome. Her young pupils rapidly learned to identify and respond appropriately to its messages. Formulaic utterances quickly became established as requests for, at times, complex and subtle responses. The meanings of instructions, directions and so on were strongly contextualised in the developing fabric of the classroom interactions, often in a physical, multi-sensory way. This was all based on strong personal relationships between teacher and children. When a supply teacher took over in the classroom for a day, the children were

confused and disorientated and responded very differently from normal, even though the new teacher followed closely the plans and organisational patterns left by the permanent teacher.

The dialogic nature of the culture is illustrated in Mehan's study. Because the supply teacher did not do precisely what was expected, the children could not play their parts with any confidence. Teachers need to behave like teachers, or pupils cannot behave like pupils. Gannaway, (1976, p. 55), shows how pupils in a secondary school feel that teachers who cannot maintain discipline are violating an unspoken moral code. *Good teachers* are those who can keep order. Similarly, Furlong (1976, pp. 34-35), reports the kinds of judgements made by pupils of their teachers on a continuum from *strict* to *soft*. The pupils' judgements were also influenced by how well they perceived their teachers knew their subject.

Further examples of an extensive body of research evidence, both in ethnically diverse (e.g. Trueba et al. 1981; Philips, 1983; Cazden, 1988; Gregory, 1997) and 'monocultural' contexts (e.g. Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976; Woods, 1980b; Heap, 1985; Street and Street, 1995; Pollard, 1996) show the complexity of the issues surrounding children's initial engagements with the cultures of classrooms. Shultz and Florio (1979), for example, show how actions as well as words are important in the discourse. These studies illustrate in different ways how children are expected to learn two kinds of rules in order to become successful pupils:

1. What counts as 'learner-like' behaviour for a learner in pursuit of what is accepted as knowledge?
2. What counts as acceptable social behaviour for the learner in relation to other members of the class (including peers, teachers and other adults)?

While the need to learn 'the rules of the game' is the same for all children, for some, it demands more than becoming aware of rules and patterns of behaviour. They may be learning about this whole new way of communicating and behaving through the words and meanings of a language that is virtually unknown to them, and from an out-of-school experience of the world that has very little in common with, and may indeed be virtually unknown to, those who are mediating the new culture for them.

4.3.2.ii The distinctive languages of classrooms

Section 3.4 in Chapter Three shows how children actively create the social worlds in which they operate and from which they make sense of other 'realities'. Language both defines and reflects the child's culture. Cook-Gumperz (1986) and Cook-Gumperz and Corsaro (1986) examine the processes of schooling, particularly literacy, from social-cultural perspectives, showing how classroom language represents *a context-bound system of linguistic choices carrying social meaning*, and the ways in which both teachers and learners contribute to the patterns of discourse which create and maintain the classroom culture. Pollard (1985, 1996), Woods (1980a and 1980b) and Woods and Pollard (1988) show this active culture creating from the child's point

of view as well as the adult's in the world of the English primary school. As I demonstrate in Chapter Two, I see classroom language as one of the most fruitful sources of evidence for revealing the ways in which the culture is negotiated.

Just as children need to understand much more than the legitimate knowledge or the language of instruction in order to become successful learners, the model of language needed to underpin an analysis to illuminate the features of the three categories which Cazden (1988) identifies as framing classroom talk (see Chapter 2, section 2.4.1) must take into account more than the 'micro' linguistic features of lexis, phonology and syntax. Mishler (1972, pp. 297-298) discusses the need to analyse language at the levels of *word, phrase, text, discourse, and so on* to understand classroom interactions. Sealey (1996, Chapter 2, pp. 17-32) provides a useful summary of the ways in which the concept of *language as social practice* impinges on primary classrooms and helps us to understand what happens within classrooms. Her categorisation of the 'macro' elements of language as *language and society, language acquisition, language change and language varieties* (p. 28) points to those elements which need to be included in a comprehensive analytic framework for considering the distinctive languages of classrooms and how they function as *instruments of action*, to recycle Bourdieu's (1977) phrase.

The communicative competence which this implies is crucial when teachers and learners do not share common or similar language and cultural backgrounds. Culturally differentiated responses can be

misinterpreted. Harmful, negative attitudes can quickly be established by teachers towards learners, or vice versa. In the same way, teachers can be misled into making unrealistically positive judgements. Studies such as that by Fordham (1993), of Black girls in an American high school, in a setting where gender, as well as ethnicity, is a factor in the culture creating, demonstrate the complexity of the issues. The notion of *context* is clearly an important one here. Language, in the study of meaning negotiation, cannot be seen as an isolated, decontextualised phenomenon. It is very much part of a set of interwoven processes which together create the opportunities for learning. In the consideration of evidence from very young children, Walkerdine (1982), suggests that children's learning – possibly all learning (which she sees as being very strongly socially situated) – can be more usefully seen not as the progressive *disembedding* of language from context, as the influential Donaldson (1978) model constructs it, but as the growing confidence to handle language which is progressively *embedded* more deeply in ever more layered contexts, usually with growing complexity and increased self-reference. Mercer, Edwards and Maybin (1988, p. 127) have similar reservations about the 'disembedding' metaphor, but their view of context seems a rather narrow one. This point is discussed further in section 4.4.1 below.

Like Mercer et al. (p. 129), Walkerdine connects a notion of *discourse* to her model of context, pointing out how there are *distinct formats which are discursively quite different* (p. 150) in the classroom, for example those constructed as *pedagogic tasks* as compared with those

which achieve *practical tasks*. She postulates a view of the processes of learning as very strongly contextualised within the particular social situation, not as children *possessing underlying cognitive skills which have to be 'disembedded' from the context'* but as children becoming increasingly skilled:

.... in operating within a variety of discourses and learning that certain pedagogic discourses require information to be treated in particular ways. (p. 153)

This notion of discourses is also implied in Street's (1984, pp. 22 ff.) critique of the 'great divide' theories of orality and literacy, which have influenced ways in which different language practices have been judged. In developing a model of *ideological* rather than *autonomous* literacy, Street questions the dangerous conclusions drawn by studies such as that by Greenfield into unschooled Wolof children's cognitive processing. He makes the point that the judgements on which these conclusions rest are just as context-bound as their descriptions of the children's own thinking which they attack. He tellingly concludes himself that much 'academic' writing, such as that produced by Greenfield is *embedded, context-laden and ethnocentric* (p. 38) – in other words a particular kind of socially- and culturally-constructed discourse – while claiming to be detached and context-free.

4.4 Investigating talk in classrooms

The third and last section of this chapter reviews the findings from research into the ways in which talk in classrooms has been characterised and analysed as operating to construct and mediate meanings in classrooms. There are three subsections:

- talk and knowledge in classrooms;
- talk and culture in classrooms;
- multilingual and ethnically diverse classrooms.

The first reviews the influential research into classroom talk which was carried out in Britain, mainly in the late 1970s and 1980s, with the intention of identifying ways in which talk was the means by which the legitimate knowledge was constructed and mediated. The second reviews a connected set of studies which can be seen to have a wider purpose: to see, through the talk collected in classrooms, the evidence of creating cultures of teaching and learning, within which the construction of legitimate knowledge is a part. The ways in which the rôle of context, linked to intertextuality, in classroom interaction is defined and used in these different studies is foregrounded. The final section brings together research which has been done specifically to investigate cross-cultural issues of teaching and learning in ethnically diverse classrooms, and shows how issues of context, intertextuality and culture become crucial to understanding the fine detail of the collaborative processes of learning, which is where the differential aspects of individual success or failure are embedded.

4.4.1 Talk and knowledge in classrooms

In the 1980s, there was a rapidly growing legitimatisation of the rôle of talk, renamed 'oracy' to connect it to literacy and also numeracy (Dixon, 1988, p. 25) in learning at a national level. The assessment of oracy became part of GCSE syllabuses and attainment targets for speaking and listening appeared in the National Curriculum for English at all Key Stages. As MacLure (in the introduction to MacLure et al. 1988, p. 5) points out, however, there was still a sense that talk in the classroom had to conform to precise patterns and forms, which Westgate and Hughes (1997, p. 125) link to a growing political concern with the *outcomes*, rather than the *processes* of classroom action. Pupil's listening skills were being relegated to *limited and passive purposes*, and the contribution of their talk to classroom interactions was *prescriptively over-simplified*. Research such as that carried out by Bennett (1976) and Galton et al. (1980) which examined classroom talk using pre-designed and constraining interactional and discourse analysis frameworks for analysis (see Chapter Five, section 5.3.2.i) were partly responsible, judging 'teacher effectiveness' in relation to how far pupils could be kept 'on task', as defined by the teacher herself. Barnes' et al. (1969) studies of lessons in the first year of secondary school, for example, show how teachers use questions, largely, as a device to elicit displays of knowledge from pupils, and to control pupils' access to knowledge rather than as a genuine means to seek information. Westgate and Hughes (1997, pp. 126-128) show, in two contrasting samples of talk from early years' contexts, the qualitative differences between adult-child talk which limits pupils to

conforming closely to teacher prescriptions and talk which supports their *early development as communicators*.

Studies such as those by Barnes (1976); Edwards and Furlong (1978) and Edwards and Mercer (1987) can be seen as providing evidence of the second type of talk identified by Westgate and Hughes. They place emphasis on talk for the evidence it provides of the negotiation, between teacher and learner and between learners, of what counts as knowledge, grounded in constructivist models of learning (Bruner, 1986, 1996). Gibbons (1998) begins to explore the relevance of the model for ethnically diverse contexts. Such studies take the talk as the main data, collected without any presumptive linguistic analytic framework and then interrogated for what it reveals of the ways in which the participants interpreted the events which were taking place. The validity and generalisability of this subjectively based, qualitative approach to collecting and analysing data has been questioned (Stubbs and Robinson, 1979; Stubbs, 1986, pp. 233-235). Stubbs finds some of the claims made for *isolated, surface features of language as indicators of deep, general and highly abstract social-psychological categories* unrealistic. Indeed, Barnes himself is at pains to emphasise the subjectivity of his data and analysis (1976, p. 37). Reading such accounts, however, invokes a strong sense of what it must have felt like to have been present in the particular classrooms at the time the conversations recorded were taking place. As more such studies are carried out, they begin to validate each other. Wells and Chang-Wells (1992) suggest that the characteristic close analysis of specific classroom episodes can help to:

...arrive at principles of interaction that have quite general applicability, and ... throw more light on the question of how we learn through talk. (p. 33)

Primary classrooms have been revealed as complex arenas where talk is a major factor in the subtle processes of interaction (Rogers and Kutnick, 1990; Mercer, 1990, 1992). Most of the studies of this type examine teacher-pupil interaction. Research into talk among children with no teacher 'guidance' in the primary classroom is not extensive, no doubt because of the methodological complexity it entails, but it is an important area. Cazden (1988, pp. 123-135) discusses the importance of peer talk in the classroom for learning. Work done by T. Phillips (1985), extended by the National Oracy Project (Phillips, 1992, section 3) begins to reveal that, while it is certainly not an easy task to unravel the meanings and purposes in child-child interactions in the primary classroom, it is one that is well rewarded for the insights it offers, probably not available from other data. It provides indications both of how children perceive what is happening and of how to support and enhance their learning in ways which resonate with their understandings of what is going on. Analysis of groupwork in primary classrooms, both by Galton (1990) and Phillips (in Norman, 1992, pp. 148-155), shows the sophisticated ways in which children can negotiate within and benefit from this approach to classroom organisation, and of their active rôles in the interaction which are not captured by studies which focus on teacher talk.

All the references cited here are (apart from Gibbons, 1998), it seems, to work carried out in mainstream, predominantly monocultural settings, though in most accounts very little of such contextual detail is provided. They consider, I suggest, talk as the vehicle for the construction of learning, rather than as part of the culture of the classroom. They all focus, in different ways, on the construction of knowledge, mainly through teacher-directed action, rather than on the processes of learning through the social interaction of all the participants. This means that they do not go very far in explaining how each individual learner's access to that knowledge is differentially mediated by a range of factors inside each classroom. Many of these factors, brought there by teachers and learners themselves, relate to personal and cultural experiences, but others are a product of the structural forces operating in the wider society. The reason for this orientation towards 'knowledge' rather than 'learning' (or 'knowing' as defined in section 4.2 of this chapter) can be seen to lie in the ways the studies perceive the concepts of context and intertextuality. I consider these concepts to be crucial to understanding both how internal classroom cultures develop and change in an ongoing discourse between teacher and learner, and how life in classrooms is influenced by external structural forces and tensions, all affecting the engagements between teachers and learners. I explain and justify these viewpoints below with reference to Edwards and Mercer (1987).

For Edwards and Mercer, *context* seems to be embedded and developed almost entirely within the learning activity itself (e.g. 1987,

p. 63; pp. 87-88), and to be very much to do with the construction of knowledge rather than the the construction of the culture of the classroom, as I conceptualise it. Education is regarded as having its own *epistemological culture* (p. 161), and it is the teacher's rôle to induct pupils into that culture by *creating, through joint action and talk, a contextual framework for educational activities*. The participants, particularly the learners, do not seem to be expected to bring anything of their own to these activities. Edwards and Mercer do not use the word 'intertextuality', but imply some elements of the meaning and scope of the concept in their use of the word *continuity*, which they define as *the growth of contexts of shared understanding through time* (p. 82). They sum up the links between context and continuity as follows:

Continuity is a characteristic of context, being context as it develops through time in the process of joint talk and action. It exists as shared memory and intention, the concepts and assumptions that participants hold, of what they have done and said, of its significance, of what the interaction is all about and of where it is going. (p. 161)

There are, I suggest, many unquestioned assumptions here about the processes being described. The construction of *common knowledge* is seen as a neutral, relatively uncomplicated business for both learners and teachers. First, the notion of *sharing* appears to be presented as unproblematic, a uniform activity for both learners and teachers with no possibility of diverging views about what needs to be or might be shared, or how the sharing is done. *Shared memory*, surely, comes

from shared experiences. Between some teachers and learners, these are very limited and need to be negotiated. Second, it seems to be accepted that the participants have common assumptions about the nature of the interaction and its significance, though there is extensive evidence from cross-cultural research that this is not always the case. Third, there is assumed commonality about the intentions and outcomes of the action. There seems to be no recognition that the viewpoints of the participants may be divergent, or that the language used may hold different meanings for the different participants in the interactions. While the extensive examples of classroom interaction provided by Edwards and Mercer throughout their book do reveal the struggle and tension often involved in learning, their analyses usually account for this only in terms of cognition and what counts as knowledge. As such, they provide perceptive and valuable insights into the construction of knowledge in classrooms, but not really into the viewpoints of the participants, and their engagement with the interaction taking place, and so the possibilities for individual success or failure.

4.4.2 Talk and culture in classrooms

In order to understand the ways in which classroom interaction provides opportunities (or otherwise) for learning and so for success, it is necessary to look beyond a model of learning, mediated through language, simply as the construction of knowledge. A body of small-scale research studies from America, all carried out in ethnically diverse settings, begins to do this (Santa Barbara Discourse Group, 1992a, 1992b, 1995; Bloome and Egan-Robertson, 1993; Floriani, 1994;

Green and Dixon, 1994; Heras, 1994; Lin, 1994; Tuyay, Jennings and Dixon, 1995). The Santa Barbara Discourse Group describe themselves (Green and Dixon, 1994) as a *community* of scholars who are:

.... concerned with understanding how everyday life in classrooms is constructed by members through their interactions, verbal and other, and how these constructions influence what students have opportunities to access, accomplish, and thus 'learn' in schools (p. 231)

Their contribution to constructing the application of intertextuality for understanding classroom discourse has already been acknowledged (section 4.2.2.ii). Floriani (1994, p. 255) extends this with the concept of *intercontextuality*, linked to Fairclough's (1992b, pp. 80, 82) notion of *members' resources*, which he characterises as evidence of an individual's *mental map of the social order*. The texts of the classroom are conceptualised as part of the social and cultural contexts of the participants' experience and thus connected to power relationships in the wider society. Classroom talk is more than the conduit for neutral knowledge. In addition, it is both a *personal resource* and a *social process* (Tuyay et al. 1995, p. 76), shaped by the history of the group and also of its individual members. It is both the text and the text within the context together.

Lin (1994, p. 368) recalls Hymes' (1977) distinction between classroom studies which focus on the social life of the class, and those that focus on the language (see Chapter 5, section 5.3). The first looks at the language *of* the classroom and the second language *in* the classroom.

The studies discussed in the previous section, I suggest, do the latter. They are psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic, but they are not ethnographic. I argue that it is only through the study of the language *of the classroom, which is a focus on the language and discursive world constructed by members as they interact and affiliate over time* (Lin, p. 402) that we come to understand individual differences in learning processes, and the reasons for them. Heras (1994, p. 276) suggests that access to knowledge is related to the *opportunities which members of a group have and construct as they engage with each other in and through the events of everyday life within a classroom*. Learning is always a *socio-academic* process (Floriani, 1994, p. 242), developing literacy, for example, is a *social accomplishment* (Santa Barbara Discourse Group, 1992b). Access to such knowledge is closely aligned to social justice and access to power.

4.4.3 Multilingual and ethnically diverse classrooms

I argue in the previous section that, in order better to understand the forces at work in classroom settings, it is necessary to take account of the cultural and contextual influences and practices which go along with being a member of a group, and which affect both the individual learner's attitude to school and the school's attitude to the learner. Edwards and Westgate (1994, p. 132) suggest that ethnographic approaches to the study of classroom interaction are particularly appropriate for revealing the dissonances in the underlying rules by which participants use a supposed 'common language'. They are thus particularly appropriate for studying ethnically diverse classrooms,

especially where teachers and learners do not have shared cultural histories and similar home contexts. To date, very little of such detailed work has been done within classrooms in Britain. Much has been done in American contexts from the 1970s, largely grounded in a deficit model of ethnicity and culture. There is, however, a growing body of evidence which is beginning to try to explain some of the ways in which teacher-learner interaction is affected by issues of ethnicity without making assumptions of deficit (e.g. Labov, 1972a; Shuy, 1972; Cicourel et al., 1974; Mehan, 1979; Freedle, 1979; Wilkinson, 1982). Spindler (1982) presents case studies which illustrate the application of ethnographic methodologies to studies of classroom interaction, not all in multicultural contexts.

Two studies, in Trueba et al. (1981); one by Carrasco (pp. 153-177) and one by Mohatt and Erickson (pp. 105-119), break new ground, both in revealing the effects of ethnicity on teacher-pupil interaction and in researching such effects. Mohatt and Erickson revealed differences in the ways in which two teachers (one native American, one non-native) organised their classrooms for children's participation. There were ^{no} radical differences in teaching style or language use: the significance of their findings was in the subtle ways they noticed that the teacher who shared the same background of the children could key into and use the *cultural processes* of the children. Such evidence would not have been revealed without the close ethnographic observation and fine-grained analysis of the ensuing data which they undertook. Essential to this was a detailed insider knowledge, possessed by one of the researchers, of the cultural issues involved.

Similarly, studies such as those by Au (1980) of Hawaiian children and Philips (1983) of native American children show ways in which real-world knowledge affects classroom behaviour. They indicate the need to be more sensitive to the effects of out-of-school culturally based language practices on children's learning in formal classrooms. A study which presents teachers' viewpoints much more fully than pupils' (Foster, 1989) reveals the importance of culturally appropriate ways of speaking and acting also in the *performance* of teachers.

A dramatic demonstration of the need for and the effects of cultural consonance (though it remained well-hidden until she, a Black researcher, unearthed it) is discussed in Callender (1997). She analyses the ways in which Black teachers in England effectively weave cultural practices, especially patterns of language use, into their teaching which signal inclusion for their Black pupils. Her conclusions are similar to those of Carrasco (in Trueba et al., 1981), showing how the effectiveness of a child's learning is intimately bound up with the daily interaction of teacher and child. From the research point of view, Callender's and Carrasco's work is interesting for what it demonstrates of the importance of the shared subjectivities of teachers and researchers in classroom contexts: sympathetic collaboration between the two can lead to insights and understandings of the interaction which would not otherwise be available. This point is taken up in Chapter Five (section 5.2.3).

There are still very few genuinely ethnographic studies which provide a 'thick description' of the effects of the interplay of home

and school cultures in children's experiences of learning in mainstream classrooms. The best of these are positioned in culturally diverse contexts, and most of them to date are concerned with literacy rather than oracy, e.g. Heath, 1982b; Philips, 1983; Duranti, et al. 1995; Huss, 1995; Gregory, 1996; Minns, 1997; Hirst, 1998. Discontinuities between home and school are revealed in the classroom interaction, as well as cases where teachers' valorisation of the home knowledge had positive effects on children's school learning (e.g. Minns, Hirst). This an area which I consider could have significant implications for understanding the differential nature of success in ethnically diverse classrooms, and which I have given priority in my own research.

4.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have presented arguments for constructivist and socially situated theoretical models of language, learning and knowing to best explain the findings of the study. I have reviewed the literature which provides evidence for a model of language as discourse, and which justifies using ethnographic approaches for studying classroom interaction and the processes of culture creation. A range of studies of talk in classrooms has been evaluated. Those which conceptualise classroom processes as the construction of cultures of learning rather than more narrowly the construction of 'common knowledge' are considered to be more relevant for understanding the findings of the study, within the parameters of the theoretical orientations deemed most relevant. The need to take into account contextual factors, both within the classroom and in the wider society external to the classroom, is demonstrated.

Finally, a brief review of studies in ethnically diverse settings which begin to identify specific aspects of cultural processing in these settings, and their significance for children's success in learning, is carried out. This review helps to validate the findings of the present study. It also reveals the gaps in the published evidence which it can go some way towards addressing. These are:

- child-to-child interaction in classrooms; what influences it and what it reveals of children's views of learning processes and of what counts as knowledge;
- home and family influences on the detail of classroom language and interaction;
- children's responses to their changing experiences of classroom interaction over time and in different school contexts.

CHAPTER FIVE
 METHODOLOGY – ETHNOGRAPHY OF COMMUNICATION

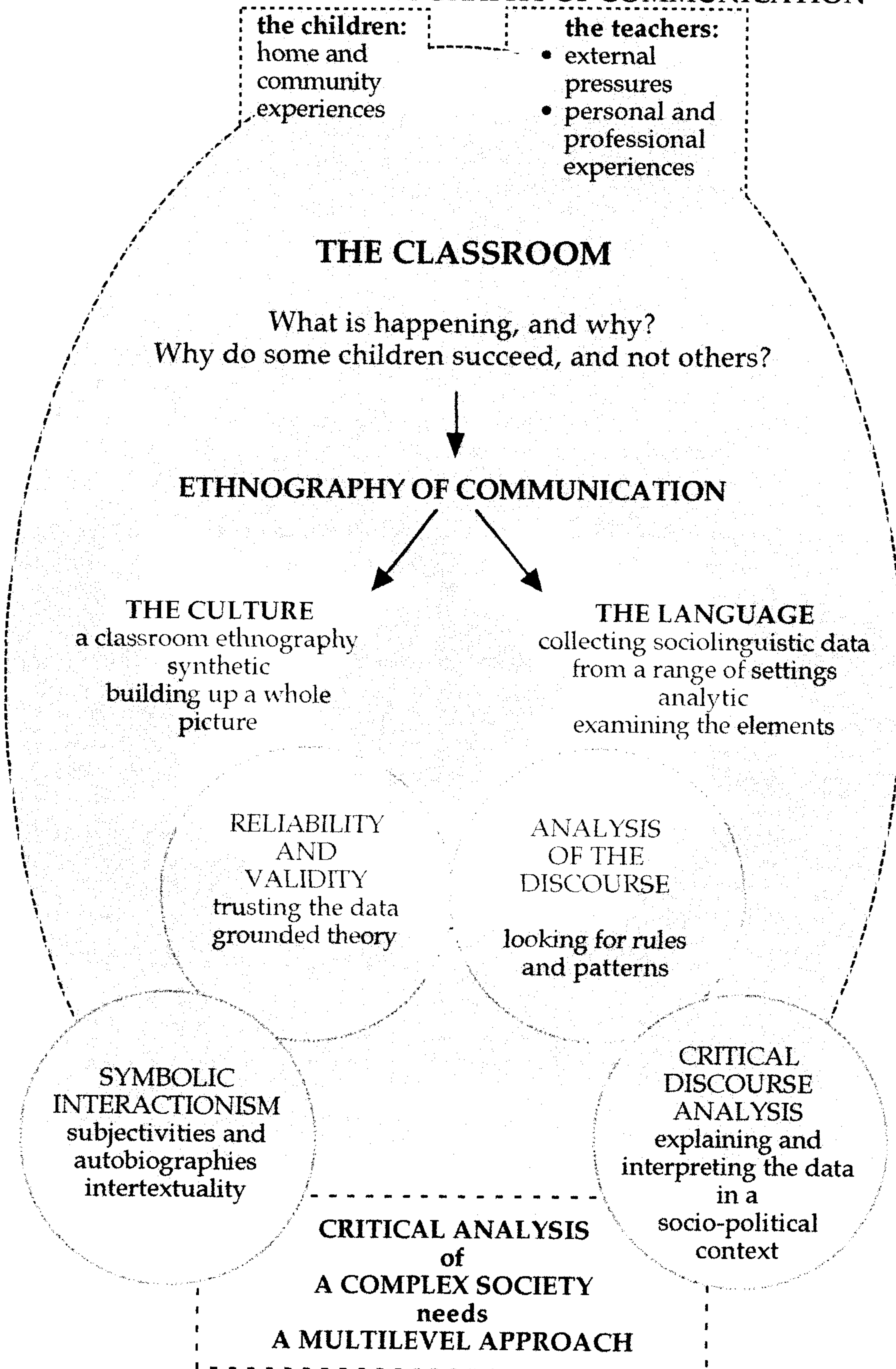


Figure 5.1 A mapping of the main methodological approaches

5.1 Introduction: ethnography of communication – the two main strands

The broad question which this study seeks to address is that of how some children succeed in becoming effective learners in ethnically diverse classroom settings, while others do not. From a methodological point of view, there are two key dimensions to this main question:

1. How are cultures of teaching and learning established and maintained in the classroom?
2. How do children gain access to the sets of processes which underpin culture creating in the classroom?

These restate the problem in different ways. They need to be explored reflexively and recursively, rather than as separate issues.

Saville-Troike (1989) defines an ethnography of communication as the study of *the norms of communicative conduct in different communities*. It reveals how language (among other resources) is used to mediate communicative events by looking closely at specific events which have been identified as significant from a richly described context. Floriani (1994, p. 260) and other members of the Santa Barbara Discourse Group (1992a, 1992b, 1995; Tuyay et al. 1995; Heras, 1994) develop between them a rounded set of arguments for the importance of collecting both ethnographic and sociolinguistic data in order to understand classroom interaction. Ethnography provides understanding of *life over time to identify patterns of participation*, while sociolinguistic analysis provides insights into

how the key events of this life are sociologically constructed by its members. These are the two main strands which an ethnography of communication weaves together. The language of the classroom, particularly the talk, is the main source of data for this approach. Figure 5:1 above shows some of the methodological features of each strand which, between them, illuminate different and interconnecting aspects of classroom interaction. They are presented in a circular, interlinking fashion, and it is the interplay between them which needs to be captured and analysed in order to understand the dynamics of the interaction between teacher, learner and what is learnt, and thus differential access to knowledge (see Chapter Four, section 4.4.2). I am constrained by the linear nature of written text to discuss them sequentially, but their interdependence and simultaneity within any particular interaction should be constantly borne in mind.

5.2 Classroom ethnography

In this section, I explain the left hand side of the diagram by providing a justification for using a methodology with an ethnographic perspective to answer my research questions. There are three subsections here:

1. General features of classroom ethnographies;
2. Reliability, validity and grounded theory;
3. Writing ethnographies: language, power and identity.

The first justifies the use of ethnography for the ways in which it can elicit data to answer questions which would be difficult to address by more quantitative approaches, although such approaches can reveal the issues which ethnography in turn can address. The two approaches are thus complementary. The second section discusses the theoretical frameworks and approaches to theorising which underpin ethnographies, and explains my personal stance in the research. It has two subsections. The third main section makes a case for placing the writing process within the methodology of an ethnography, as part of the process of understanding, analysing and shaping the data, and of the importance of recognising the viewpoints of the participants in this process. It has three subsections.

5.2.1 General features of classroom ethnographies

Gillborn and Gipps (1996) point out how qualitative approaches to research can help us to *understand the complex dynamics of teaching and learning* and explore the factors, often not revealed by quantitative findings, which underpin success or failure (as demonstrated by test and exam results), in classroom situations. They can also help, in a non-judgemental way, to understand attitudes and sensitivities, especially important where complex and deeply personal issues such as racism are involved. They are, thus, appropriate for researching issues to do with the achievement of ethnic minority children in school. Gillborn and Gipps point out (pp. 57-58) how it is often the effects of perception and stereotype which mediate the success or failure of ethnic minority children in school,

rather than any more tangible, quantifiable factors. In Mehan's (1982) view, the ethnographer's rôle is to seek out the 'how' (the rules and principles) not the 'why' (the causes) of differential access to learning in classrooms. Such knowledge is powerful. Hymes (1981, p. 57) considers ethnography as *essential to the success of bilingual education*, being the methodological approach *most compatible with a democratic way of life* in that it offers opportunities to analyse ways in which knowledge can be controlled by the *experts* at the expense of the powerless. These political claims for ethnography are clearly controversial, and are examined in section 5.2.3 of this chapter.

Lutz (1993, p. 108), using the famous phrase coined by Geertz (1973) defines ethnography as:

.... a holistic thick description of the interactive processes involving the discovery of important and recurring variables in the society as they relate to one another, under specific conditions, and as they affect or produce certain results and outcomes in the society.

The key words here for me are *holistic* and *discovery*. I am particularly concerned to develop inductively as full and rounded a picture as possible of a group of learners in an ethnically diverse setting. The notion of *thick description* influences this intention. Ely et al. (1997, p. 344) define it as *the ascertaining of multiple levels and kinds of meaning in a culture*. Referring to Denzin (1989), they suggest that there are four *constants* in every situation: *history, power, emotionality, knowledge*. These can be seen as useful guiding

themes for the selection of content for an ethnographic thick description of a classroom. Clearly, the approaches to observation in the classroom need to be designed in order to give access to the right kind of data (as far as possible, the naturalistic language of normal, everyday classroom events) within which these themes can be explored. The observer needs to become as much part of the community as she can, though this does not imply a static rôle, as Duranti (1997, pp. 100-101) suggests. The general framework of the methodology I have developed demonstrates the three features listed by Doyle (1981, p. 4) as common to research *directed to understanding the natural rhythms of classroom life*:

- *an emphasis on long-term observation and narrative accounts;*
- *a focus on viewing behaviour within a framework of surrounding events;*
- *a concern for the perspectives of the various participants in the interaction.*

Like all cultural settings, classrooms have their distinctive languages (Heath, 1982a, p. 39) and artifacts (p.40), which can be observed and examined using recognisable and reliable anthropological tools for analysis. But Heath is also aware of the limitations of what might be termed 'classical' ethnography derived from anthropology for studying classroom settings: two claims need to be interrogated – that of its being value-free, and its generalisability (p. 42). Like Heath, Wolcott (1975) cautions of the need to be aware of *underlying assumptions* and of the danger of the solitary ethnographer who finds it difficult to maintain appropriate detachment from the object

of study. Mehan (1981, p. 47) elegantly describes the stances ethnographers must take, contrasting the 'anthropological' ethnographer working in exotic settings in distant lands with the ethnographer in more 'local' settings:

The ethnographer working in a foreign land is attempting to make the strange familiar, while the ethnographer in local scenes must reverse the process and make the familiar strange in order to understand it

Duranti (1997, p. 85) highlights the *apparently contradictory qualities* of the participant observer's need to maintain objectivity while constructing an emic view of events. What is needed is not the attempt to develop some self-imposed kind of objectivity, which would be impossible to achieve, but a strong and clearly articulated awareness of the range of subjectivities which she brings to the situation and which are reflected in the responses of other members of the community. The methodological issues connected with this argument are returned to in the following section of this chapter.

Wolcott (1975, pp. 113-121) suggests criteria for conducting ethnographic research in schools, usefully reminding us of the need for *appropriacy* in the following four interconnected areas:

1. Formulating the problem to be studied;
2. The ethnographer's background and experience;
3. The conduct of the data collection;
4. The expectations for the outcomes of the study.

He captures the tentative, complex, multi-disciplinary nature of the approach which is a strength but could also become a failing: the invitation to *muddle about in the field* (p. 113), for example, could prove slightly nerve wracking for the faint-hearted. It chimes, however, with the caution offered by Ely et al. (1997, p. 237) of the dangers of entering the field with too narrow a focus. After selecting 'the field' for my study, I carried out weekly visits to the chosen classroom over a period of two years, a total of just over 50 visits overall. From the beginning, fieldnotes were taken and various written documents collected, but it was not until the seventh month that any audiotaping of the classroom talk was undertaken. Ultimately, this fairly long 'silent period' was probably beneficial in that, by the time audiotaping began, it was possible to be quite specific and selective about the kinds of situation which I anticipated would provide the most appropriate data. I had also by then developed a comfortable relationship with the other members of the classroom, so the threat represented by the presence of the tape recorder was much reduced. However, it was worrying at the initial stages when there was no clear focus and very little visible evidence for the time spent in the classroom.

As my observation in the classroom developed, it became clear to me that, in order to achieve a genuine *thick description* of the classroom and its members, it would be necessary to include in the ethnographic account information about the home and community contexts in which the children lived. Heath (1983) provides an excellent model for such an account. But, as Rosen (1985, p. 450) suggests, even she did

not totally succeed in providing in her wide ranging study the full, rich, multi-focused description which makes the reader feel that they are *on the scene* (Wolcott, 1975, pp. 124-125). Both Minns (1997) and Gregory (1997) present sets of ethnographic studies of young bilingual and bicultural children in different home and school settings. Many of these have the rich, deeply contextualised feel which Wolcott is advocating, possibly because they were written by researchers who themselves were experienced classroom practitioners and had worked for long periods in the settings they discussed. This point raises issues about relationships between researchers and teachers in classroom ethnography which is explored further in section 5.2.2.

Symbolic interactionist perspectives (Woods, 1996, pp. 73-77) within ethnographic frameworks offer ways of identifying the various *selves* (teachers, learners and researchers) and their rôles in the processes of classroom interaction. They have featured in the British research tradition since the 1970s (e.g. Nash, 1973; Delamont, 1983; Pollard, 1985). These three studies, in their different research contexts, demonstrate the complexity of the relationships between teachers, learners and what is taught, and reject the input-output, psychometric, *artificial* model of research which offers no explanation of the causal relationships which underpin and mediate any classroom interaction. The following can be regarded as significant ideas arising from their work, and as principles underpinning a symbolic interactionist approach within an ethnographic methodology:

- the classroom is a cultural system where the changing patterns of life are socially constructed over time;
- these patterns are constantly subject to negotiation and renegotiation;
- teachers' and learners' *social constructions* of classrooms are an important factor for how they behave in them;
- these subjective ideas are more important within the classroom dynamic than sociological 'realities'.

The list could be extended, but what is clearly emerging is the need for a methodology which allows the active participation and subjectivities of all the participants (teachers, learners, observers) to be recognised and which maps the links between them.

5.2.2 Reliability, validity and grounded theory

In this section, I consider approaches to theorising qualitative research in general and ethnographies in particular, arguing the need for theories which emerge and grow with the data rather than 'grand theory' to be proven or disproven, and for an approach to triangulation which takes account, as far as possible, of the subjectivities of all the participants. There are two subsections:

- theoretical reliability and validity;
- triangulation.

5.2.2.i Theoretical reliability and validity

A major controversy in the development of ethnography as a methodology in educational research has been with the strength of its theoretical bases. Cohen and Manion (1994, p. 39) provide a chart which summarises the key differences between the *normative* and *interpretive* approaches to the study of behaviour. They discuss the rôle of theory in both approaches, seeing the normative goal as the establishment of a *universal theory* to account for human behaviour, and theory in the interpretive paradigm as *sets of meanings which yield insight and understanding of people's behaviour which are as varied as the situations and contexts supporting them*. Ely et al. (1997, p. 230) draw a similar distinction between two kinds of theory: firstly, *overarching philosophical paradigms* and secondly, *theories that provide interpretive perspectives within and among various disciplines and cultural systems*. Anderson (1989, p. 254) uses the metaphor of a container to describe the theory into which the data are poured, its rigidity having distorting effects. Glaser and Strauss (1965, 1967), and Strauss (1987), were the first to conceptualise theory as *theorising*, a continually developing process and not a finished product. The theory is *grounded* in and emerges from within the data as a way of explaining it and linking it with similar contexts, rather than being an external explanation imposed on it. Glaser and Strauss argue that theory is formulated through the *continually intermeshed* processes of data collection, coding and analysis, and further substantiated by comparative analysis of similar groups in similar contexts. One of the strengths of this methodological approach is that

the resulting ethnologies (e.g. Osborne, 1996), because of their range and diversity, can yield valuable insights which inform practice in different classrooms and lead to the articulation of general principles for action.

Glaser and Strauss (1965, pp. 8-9) sum up a sane approach to the question of reliability in their suggestion that the ethnographer's aim is to produce an account which makes the reader feel *that he [sic] also had been in the field*. They stress the importance of trust between researcher and researched, an idea echoed and developed by Mishler (1990). Suggesting a similar dichotomy in research to that postulated by Cohen and Manion (1994) and Ely et al. (1997), but concluding that the two approaches are not as far apart as they first appear, Mishler compares and contrasts *experimental* and *inquiry-guided* modes of research, showing how they both ultimately rely on *trustworthiness* (p. 419), not just between researcher and researched, but also among *the relevant community of scientists* whose trust in each other is constructed through the development of shared discourses. His methodology for analysis of his own data (oral life histories of artist-craftsmen) is described briefly (p. 427) in a way which suggests strong parallels with my own: repeated listenings to tapes and readings of transcripts leading to the discovery of *parallel trajectories* and the selection of *representative cases*.

Mishler argues for *validation* rather than *validity*, a focus on the process of the research rather than results and outcomes. He offers a definition of validation:

.... the social construction of a discourse through which the results of a study come to be viewed as sufficiently trustworthy for other investigators to rely on in their own work. (p. 429)

Such a definition fits with the socially situated, constructivist models of language and learning which offer the best opportunities for the valorisation of diversity of experience among learners and hence for genuine education. It is extended in Lather's (1993, p. 675) framing of validity as *multiple, partial, endlessly deferred*. Her search is for a *methodology that 'comes clean' about how power shapes an inquiry* (p. 685). Her four suggested *transgressive validities*, through their insistence on different ways of including various kinds of member checks in the research process, are all aimed at generating *more interactive and contextual ways of knowing*, and, ultimately:

.... the development of counter-hegemonic practice in which dominant structures of classroom and organisational meaning are challenged
(Anderson, 1989, p. 254)

Scheurich (1997) sees the quest for objective validity as essentially a *search to combat 'the other'* (p. 85), and therefore fruitless. He identifies the need for a *difference approach* (p. 88), for a validity which is respectful of *the other* through facilitating dialogue and collaboration which *opens a space for the other to unfold its particularity* (p. 89) and so valorises the diversity.

Mishler presents three exemplars for *narrative research*, using both oral and written texts, which could all arguably be described as ethnographies of communication. He lists their significant features, underpinning the principles of transparency and continuing validation, and also providing a useful guide to the components of a trustworthy ethnographic account:

.... the display of the primary texts; the specification of the analytic categories and the distinctions in terms of discernible features of the texts; and theoretical interpretations focused on structures, that is, on relations among different categories, rather than on variables. (p. 437)

5.2.2.ii Triangulation

Cohen and Manion (1994, p. 241) point out both the importance and the difficulty of triangulation in qualitative, subjectively oriented research. They advocate one compelling mode of triangulating data, participant validation, where the researcher checks immediately with the teachers and learners in the classroom whether their views of an incident match her own. Cicourel et al. (1974, p. 4) devised the strategy of *indefinite triangulation* which involves comparing teachers' accounts after a lesson along with those of children present in the lesson. A similar, but slightly longer-term approach, respondent validation, is suggested by McCormick and James (1983, p. 191). The researcher invites the 'subjects' of the research to respond to her written analysis of events, records their reactions and reconstructs the writing accordingly. Carrasco (1981, p. 169) stresses the value of

teacher collaboration in classroom research with the teacher being able to offer insights on events which may not be available to the 'outside' researcher. The question of positioning as outsider or insider can be fraught. I found at times that my rôle as participant observer was a delicately balanced one, from the points of view of both teachers and learners. Corsaro (1981) provides an engaging account of his efforts to make himself *one of the family* in the nursery in which he conducted his research, and goes on to describe how he was careful to ensure that the children's perceptions of his rôle were different from those they had of the teachers and other adults in the setting, in the hope that he could capture behaviour from the children that they might otherwise suppress *for fear of negative reactions* (p. 130). Similarly, I worked to establish a slightly less 'teacherly' relationship with the children in the classrooms in the hope that this might lead to more open responses on their part. At times, this conflicted with the responsibilities of my rôle (perceived by the teachers and encouraged by me) as classroom 'helper' and the children's perceptions of how adults should behave and consequently risked chaos.

5.2.3 Writing ethnographies: language, power and identity

In this section, postulating that the writing is a self-revelatory process and part of the methodology, I foreground issues of self and identity within ethnographic research with a symbolic interactionist orientation. Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Alasuutari, 1995; and Woods, 1996 all emphasise the need for the continual intermeshing of the

processes of fieldwork and analysis in conducting ethnographic research. I suggest that the writing is a third strand. While the necessity of establishing and maintaining academic rigour remains central, there is a need to seek and construct forms of writing which reflect the complexities and intertextualities of the research process and the subjectivities of the participants. I address these methodological problems in the following three subsections:

- the power of the voice in the writing;
- the importance, and dangers, of recognising personal viewpoints;
- bias and 'neutrality' – the need for critical ethnographies

The first examines ways in which different forms of writing, all loosely categorised as 'autobiographical', can both mask and reveal the rôle of the different selves in social interaction. The second argues for the need for clearly articulating the subjectivities of all the participants throughout the whole ethnographic process, and particularly in the writing. The third examines issues of bias and neutrality within contexts where inequitable power distribution clearly influences the interaction and its outcomes.

5.2.3.i The power of the voice in the writing

The task of writing, seen as a key aspect of the methodology of an ethnography, becomes part of the cumulative processes of selection and analysis through which the researcher sifts her data finally to present to her audience those aspects of 'reality' which she considers

illuminate (but perhaps not answer) her questions. Ely et al. (1997) show how *writing helps us compose and represent meaning from data* (p. 7). Gitlin et al. (1989) describe writing as *the most pervasive fieldwork practice* (p. 240). Woods (1996, p. 67) points out how ethnographic accounts are sometimes criticised for being *merely* descriptive. He counters this by suggesting that it is more helpful to see the fieldwork and analysis of the data as an integrated process rather than two sequential stages of the research, both feeding simultaneously into the writing, which weaves the strands together and supports the *unriddling* (Alasuutari, 1995, p. 177-192). I suggest that the process of writing runs alongside, rather than after, the analysis and fieldwork. They all contribute to the construction of the description. The writing needs to begin early and speculatively, as a means to test out emergent ideas. The account finally produced is thus much richer than the word 'merely' can imply.

Woods (1996) asserts that ethnographic research does not start with a *blank page*. My questions, as I explain in Chapter One, emerged through many years of professional and personal experience in different classroom settings, during which my need to understand more fully the processes of teaching and learning in which I was engaged steadily grew, so that *the satisfaction of personal needs* (Peshkin, 1982, p. 55) has been a strong motivation throughout. This means that I see my own history, beliefs and attitudes as part of the data, which led to the decision to include autobiographical writing in the thesis. Peshkin (1982, p. 51) stresses the importance of self awareness for the ethnographer. Ely et al. (1997, p. 257) set themselves

to write *theoretical autobiographies* when they are working together to understand the rôle of theory in qualitative research. The power of autobiographical writing as a tool for developing self awareness became clear to me, not only through my own writing, but also through using it when working with teacher training students on issues of language, power and identity.

Autobiography offers possibilities for understanding the ways people behave and for the beliefs they hold, which are at times at odds with the stories being told on the surface (Woods, 1996, pp. 78-81).

Gumperz (1981, p. 4) points out how the autobiographical writings of teachers show that their views of what actually takes place in classrooms contrasts strongly with official descriptions of curricula and aims. In his compelling autobiography *Hunger of memory* (1981), Richard Rodriguez describes how he was denied the opportunity to develop his bilingual potential as a young child. He then sets out a strongly argued case against bilingual education. In doing so, he reveals between the lines of his text the overwhelming depth and intensity of his personal sadness and sense of loss. This turns out, in essence, to be the strongest possible argument *for* bilingual education. Having realised this power in being able to see the world through another's eyes in autobiographical texts, I encouraged the teachers in the first classroom to talk autobiographically in our discussions about their personal views on teaching and learning. Also, in the conversations with children's parents in their homes, I asked them about their own experiences in school (some of them went to school in Pakistan and some in

Britain), and of their arrival in Britain, where relevant. In all cases, it was very clear that the parents' experiences strongly influenced their aspirations for their children, as Chapter Seven (section 7.2.1) illustrates.

Ethnographic accounts need to take different forms in order to achieve their complex purposes within the *narrative realism* which Gitlin et al. (1989, p. 240) see as *the traditional form of ethnographic writing*. Ely et al. (1997, chapter 3) describe a range of these forms. Atkinson (1990) draws close analogies between the writing of ethnographic and of literary texts, showing how both, through a series of textual constructs, are engaged in *writing up* (p. 61) their topics in ways far beyond the implications of the naturalised meanings of this term in order to create *vraisemblance* (p. 63) which places the implied reader in the rôle of *first-hand witness* (p. 71). A *fully mature ethnography*, in the same way as a complex novel, poem or play, demands from its readers:

.... a reflexive awareness of its own writing, the possibilities and limits of its own language, and a principled exploration of its modes of representation.... (p. 180)

Chilcott (1987, p. 209), for whom ethnography is a *deliberate inquiry process guided by a point of view*, argues that ethnographic description should be subject to literary as well as methodological criticism. Ellis and Flaherty (1992), stress the need for accounts claiming to recognise subjectivities to *reflect human lived experience*,

and list different ways of producing and presenting texts, including *multivoiced narratives* and *poetry* (pp. 8-9). Brodkey (1987) attacks some of the traditional ethnographic syntactic devices such as the use of the 'ethnographic present' and the third person for the ways they can render a text *profoundly determinist*, and its 'subjects' as *powerless* (p. 72). She identifies the need for *critical narrators* who *interrupt their own stories* to make the narrative stance clear, and for co-authored texts which show different voices and responses to the stories being told.

5.2.3.ii The importance, and dangers, of recognising personal viewpoints

Objectivity is no more than the agreement of everybody in the room

This remark by Edward Boyle, Minister of Education from 1962-1964 and Vice-Chancellor of Leeds University from 1970-81, both encapsulates and partly answers the questions related to the problems of objectivity in classroom ethnography. I mention aspects of the relationship between the 'researcher' and the 'researched' in relation to triangulation in section 5.2.2.ii, and of the ambivalence of the participant observer's rôle leading to the blurring of the distinction between the two. In the previous section, I argue that autobiographical writing helps oneself and others to understand one's *multiple stances* (Ely et al., 1997, p. 349). It needs to be recognised that observers will inevitably bring their own *values and interests* to the task of classroom observation (Cameron, et al. 1994, p. 22), and, as Cameron et al. go on to argue, that this is a positive feature, at the

same time empowering and imbued with responsibility. The recognition of this is fairly recent (e.g. Heath, 1993, p. 264), despite the long standing application of symbolic interactionism to ethnography. Heath has to defend herself from criticisms of *Ways with words* raised by deCastell and Walker (1991), who document the frustrations of some of their teacher education students with what they perceive as the text's defeatist ending, which seems to contradict the promise of its inspirational main chapters. They suggest that part of the problem is that Heath's *own identity as ethnographer*' becomes *hidden* in the text under her rôles as parent, teacher and friend so that her shifting viewpoints are not immediately apparent or openly declared.

Sevigny (1981, p. 69) suggests that there are four possible *research stances* for the participant observer:

1. Complete participant;
2. Participant as observer;
3. Observer as participant;
4. Complete observer.

and that the kinds of data gathered will depend in part on the extent of participation along the continuum. The scope can be further extended by including other participants in the research in these dimensions, for example through the use of informal interview (which is discussed in section 5.3.1.ii), participant diaries, logs and so on. It is essential that everyone is aware of where they stand: Peshkin (1988), who, like Geertz (1973), sees much of ethnography as *confession* (p. 20) advocates a regular *subjectivity audit*, so that the

researcher is constantly aware of where the self and the subject are joined. He is all in favour of strong emotional commitment, but cautions against slipping into a judgemental persona, warning that:

.... striking back and reforming may be worthwhile endeavours, but they are at odds with the intentions of .. [the] .. research project (p.20)

I needed to heed this wise advice when considering my approaches to analysing some of the data reported in Chapter 7, section 7.2.2, in relation to the teachers' views on dissonance between home and school. I was concerned that my analysis was unjustifiably negative, and also that I had exposed issues which I needed to 'do something about'. The counsel offered by *a community with shared exemplars through which we confirm and validate our collective work* (Mishler, 1990, p. 423) led me to see that I was not in a position to reform, simply to report. I solicited (and gained) respondent validation from the teachers accordingly.

5.2.3.iii Bias and 'neutrality' – the need for critical ethnographies in complex societies

Just as there is no neutral education there is no neutral research (Lather, 1986, p. 67)

Lather encourages us to see research as a tool *to criticise and change the status quo*, but to be wary of our enthusiasms. Blair (1998, p. 14) suggests that to claim neutrality in educational research implies that analysing data is like *umpiring a game of cricket*, leading to the

formation of a *hegemonic research community*: you can become a member once you learn the rules. Controversies among British ethnographers in recent years have revolved around the rôle of research in effecting social change, and questions of bias and neutrality (e.g. P. Foster, 1993a, 1993b; Foster, Gomm and Hammersley, 1996; Connolly and Troyna, 1998; Hammersley, 2000) and their methodological implications. Foster, Gomm and Hammersley (1993, pp. 34-39) argue for a position of value neutrality on the part of the researcher, and the separation in some sense of *truth* and *political or practical implications* (p. 39). Hammersley (2000, pp. 134-141) argues strongly for an *analytic* approach to research, seeking only to push back the boundaries of knowledge, rather than a *critical* approach, geared towards social action. I see this as unviable, given the inextricable ways in which 'knowledge' is connected with power and control as I argue in Chapter Three, section 3.2. Foster himself could be said to demonstrate the hegemony of knowledge in the way in which he confers prestige on researchers' 'truths' over those of 'the researched' (1993a, p. 548; 1993b, p. 219).

My personal viewpoint is that research in education can contribute to change, albeit in the longer term. Change will be expedited through increased knowledge among the 'powerless' of the external causes of their condition. Cameron et al. (1994, p. 20) call this the *advocacy position*; the researcher works not *on* but *for* her subjects. The knowledge gained is empowering to the community and not just to the individual researcher or to the established authorities: something of what Hymes meant, perhaps, in his assertion that ethnography

supports a *democratic way of life* (section 5.2.1). Jordan and Yeoman (1995) support this line of thinking, reminding us of the antecedents of ethnography in the anthropology of colonial times with all its constructs and connotations of inequality. They argue for the need for a 'critical ethnography', particularly in relation to work in classrooms which aims to seek out the tensions and conflicts in a situation of inequality. To achieve this, they advocate a dissolving of the distinctions (as far as possible) between researcher and researched. Similarly, Anderson (1989, p. 260) sees the need for the *empowerment* of the subjects of research through the valorising of data such as life histories and oral narratives.

Ogbu (1981a) offers an example of a critical ethnography. Concerned by the underachievement of children from ethnic minorities, he investigated views of social reality in a black community in California. He was struck by the mixed messages the children received. On one hand, there was constant verbal encouragement from their parents to do well in school, on the other, their actual *texture of life* (p. 21), revealed through ethnographic description of their family contexts indicated that doing well in school did not lead anywhere. The same kind of confused signals came to the children from school where grades they were given always seemed to be at the same mediocre level despite the efforts they made and the quality of their work. His conclusion points to the need for what he calls a multilevel approach in school ethnography:

.... classroom events are built up by forces originating in other settings and ... how they influence classroom teaching and learning must be studied if we are ever to understand why a disproportionate number of minority children do poorly in school. (p. 23)

In the approach Ogbu is advocating, a starting principle is that all the participants in classroom interactions behave in the ways they do for reasons which need to be plotted (as far as possible) through the whole gamut of their experiences. The aim is to take into account in the analysis the ways in which historical, sociopolitical and economic forces influence what goes on in classrooms. Similarly, Carrington and Luke (1997), using Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital in relation to literacy, argue for the need to:

.... continually reappraise and critique the range and complexity of possible social fields that students may enter, and the local interrelationships between cultural, economic, social and symbolic capital in those particular fields (p. 108)

To construct classroom interaction as if it were self-contained, separated from and uninfluenced by events outside its four walls leads to an analysis which is uninformative in revealing the causes of children's success or failure. The notion of cultural capital helps to explain why it is that *only* changing classroom practice is of limited value in improving many children's educational opportunities. Literacy is only one particular example of a social practice

representing investment into only one part of the complex web of cultural, economic, social and symbolic capital needed for success in the education system as it is currently constructed. When we try to isolate and analyse the factors which contribute to school success or failure, the tools we use must enable us to probe and question the links between what is happening in the classroom and the surrounding and intersecting worlds which impinge on the teachers' and learners' experience.

5.3 The language in the context

In this section, I explain the right hand side of the diagram (figure 5.1): the ways in which the language generated in interaction can be collected and analysed to illuminate the processes underpinning successful learning in the classroom. There are three subsections:

1. Collecting sociolinguistic data: towards a framework for analysis;
2. Analysing the data;
3. Critical discourse analysis.

The first describes the different ways in which data were collected for the study, and the underpinning theoretical model implied in moving from ethnography to language to sociolinguistic analysis. It is divided into three parts. The second explains the range of approaches to analysis of classroom language which contributed to the frameworks developed and used in the study. It is subdivided into two. The third demonstrates the relevance to the thesis of applying a

model of critical discourse analysis to the language, which matches the intentions of a 'multilevel' approach to ethnography. It also has two subdivisions.

5.3.1 Collecting sociolinguistic data: towards a framework for analysis

In this section, I justify the links made between ethnography and linguistics, briefly describe the main modes of collecting data used in the study, and explain the process of turning the data into evidence through the development and application of appropriate analytic frameworks. There are three subsections:

- from anthropology to linguistics;
- collecting and shaping language as data;
- towards a framework for analysis.

5.3.1.i From anthropology to linguistics

Mehan (1974), in his description of classroom question and answer exchanges, demonstrates the ways in which new *ethnography of speaking* links ethnography and sociolinguistics methodologically. He shows how children need to look *elsewhere* besides the actual words of teachers' instructions in order to understand what is expected of them. He suggests (p. 87) that teachers' utterances are in fact *indexical expressions*, tied to the contexts in which they are used, and that, indeed, *reliance on contextual features to understand utterances is an integral feature of classroom learning*. His discussion of the meanings of teacher utterances which, he suggests, *change for*

the child as the lesson unfolds (p. 126), indicates the ways in which they need to be analysed from different viewpoints as part of an ongoing discourse:

This emergent sense of meaning defies a static description which presumes that the meaning of instructions is clear at the outset of an exchange and remains constant throughout; it requires a description which openly includes retrospective and prospective assignment, indefiniteness and indeterminacy as features of meaning. (p. 126)

Stubbs (1976, p. 84) makes the point that analyses of classroom talk need to go beyond commentary on detail to *make more comprehensive statements about how classroom talk works as a system of communication*. He suggests (1983, chapter 3) that an ethnography of communication is an appropriate way to do this because, as settings, classrooms *are highly organised in some rather obvious ways*. He also points out, however, the dangers of studying classrooms as they are such *familiar* (p. 42) places to most of us, so that we form *common stereotypes* of what is going on, which can be difficult to recognise. In the same way as studying the grammar of one's own language, classroom interaction can only be studied *from within* (p. 43). The need is to make explicit the intuitive understandings which participants have of what is going on. For Stubbs, the majority of classroom interaction is about *keeping in touch* (p. 63), but in very specific ways, which both *organise the transmission of knowledge and convey a conception of how knowledge can be transmitted* (p. 64). He is insistent that the analysis

of the talk should go beyond insightful observation of isolated chunks of data to *descriptions related to a coherent set of concepts* (1976, p. 78), indicating the need for the generating of theoretical and methodological frameworks which provide this scope.

5.3.1.ii Collecting and shaping language as data

Apart from collecting samples of naturalistic talk in various classrooms in ways described in Chapter Seven (section 7.1.1), my main mode of collecting oral language data was the use of various kinds of informal interview (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p. 271) in different settings, including groups of teachers at school, individual teachers at home, groups of children and parents at home. Fairclough (1992^b, p 227) describes how interviews are valuable ways to *enhance the corpus* and probe specific issues. Duranti (1997, pp. 104-105) points out, however, that interviews can be culturally inappropriate in some contexts. I was concerned about this in relation to visiting the parents at home, but found that, once initial contacts had been made, my presence was welcomed and no objections were raised to the use of a tape recorder. As a white, female researcher, my contact was predominantly with the mothers, but in one of the settings there was also extended contact with an uncle, the mother's brother and a close member of the family circle.

Cohen and Manion (1994, pp. 274-276) argue that issues of bias and reliability need to be closely considered in relation to interviews. Scheurich warns, however (1997, p. 67), that *all the juice of lived*

experience can be squeezed out of interview data if the interviewer maintains too strong a control over the context. He stresses the importance of *the interpretive moment* (p. 73), into which both interviewer and interviewee bring *considerable conscious and unconscious baggage*. My main purpose in using interviews was, indeed, to seek out evidence of bias and its effects on classroom interaction through an exposition of personal viewpoints, particularly related to the views of the teachers and the parents. In both cases, I was impressed, and at times unsettled, by the level of candour, and the depth and extent of personal involvement in the issues discussed. I found the interviews provided excellent triangulation both for the classroom data, and for the views of the parents in relation to those of the teachers, and vice versa.

The question of transcription of audiotaped data, particularly of conversations, needs to be related to methodology: Ochs (1979, p. 44) reminds us that *transcription is a selective process reflecting theoretical goals and definitions*. Interpretation and analysis begin as decisions are being made about how the oral text on the tape is to be turned into a written text on the page. Graddol et al. (1994) see this essentially as *an intuitive, impressionistic exercise* (p. 181), and warn against *the appearance of scientific objectivity* (pp. 182-187) through the over-rigid use of coding conventions. Whichever system is used, it depends on decisions made by the researcher which will necessarily be subjective to a greater or lesser extent. Graddol et al. provide examples of a range of ways of coding and laying out transcripts, showing how choices can be made to foreground different aspects of

the linguistic and paralinguistic features considered salient in the discourse. Non-verbal and contextual information can also be included as relevant. Fairclough (1992b, p. 229) points out how decisions about layout can also reflect the viewpoints of the analyst.

5.3.1.iii Towards a framework for analysis

In 1972, Cazden et al. published a set of readings whose explicit aim was to look at children's language use in a range of educational settings as a contribution to reducing the *conflict and confusion* so rife at the time in American schools. There had been sociological (indeed, 'micro-ethnographic') studies of classrooms before (e.g. Smith and Geoffrey, 1968) and research on children's language was a burgeoning field (e.g. Lyons and Wales, 1966; Fasold and Shuy, 1970). The innovation of the collection was to bring the two together, to shift the focus from analysing the linguistic structure of child language to exploring how children use language in particular social settings. So, the need for an interdisciplinary approach to the analysis of classroom language became clear.

The field has developed fast. By 1983, Green was able to produce a paper analysing and identifying patterns in the methodologies of at least ten studies which all focus on *teaching-learning processes as linguistic processes* (p. 180). She lists the three main disciplinary roots as linguistics, anthropology and sociology, and makes the simple but helpful point that it is important to be clear about which of these conceptual frameworks most closely relates to the initial research

questions, as it is from this that the methodology will follow. She uses Hymes' (1977) set of questions, which are aimed at discovering how language contributes to the development of social life, to shape the process of developing an analytic framework:

1. *What are the communicative means, verbal and other, by which this bit of social life is conducted and interpreted?*
2. *What is their mode of organisation from the standpoint of verbal repertoires or codes?*
3. *Can one speak of appropriate and inappropriate, better and worse, uses of these means?*
4. *How are the skills entailed by the means acquired, and to whom are they accessible?* (p. 188)

Question 1 makes the link with ethnography. Question 2 suggests the need for a two-level approach, beginning with the *top down* sequencing used, for example, by Erickson and Shultz (1981, p. 157) in their account of using videotaped data to seek evidence of the social organisation of interaction. A description of the *social life* which reveals the significant patterns and 'key' events is followed by identification of the kinds of linguistic and paralinguistic features which emerge as critical for achieving the intentions of the discourse. Once these are established, decisions can be made about the frameworks which will be most useful in categorising and describing the data linguistically and at which level. Question 3 then points to the need to go back to the data to compare in detail examples which have been identified as similar, looking for evidence of the same patterns and properties. The analytical framework is thus validated.

5.3.2 Analysing the data

This section reviews three linguistically based analytic frameworks, showing what they have contributed to the analysis of the data in the study and also where they fall short in relation to its aims. It is subdivided as follows:

- from interaction analysis to discourse analysis;
- conversation analysis.

5.3.2.i From interaction analysis to discourse analysis

Language is patterned and rule-governed at every level. Methods have been devised to analyse classroom language in clear and controlled ways. Two of the best known and most widely used are Flanders' interaction analysis categories (Flanders, 1970) and discourse analysis (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). Problems with Flanders' categories have been documented by various researchers (e.g. Walker and Adelman, 1975, 1976; Delamont 1976 and Mehan, 1981). The comments made in these critiques help to provide insights into the kinds of analytic tool which would actually be helpful in examining classroom language in a way which meets the needs of an ethnography of communication. Walker and Adelman find FIAC does not pick up the *local, immediate and personal meanings that are educationally most significant* (1975, p. 74), or take into account participants' contexts, within which they include intellectual and ideological factors as well as physical (p. 73). Because of its heavy focus on teacher talk and the way it takes no account of the internal

cultural milieu of the classroom, it does not recognise the strength of personal relationships which teachers have with children, often reflected in the particular *personal meanings* they can share for certain words (1976, p. 136). Delamont (1976, p. 104) maintains that FIAC only deals with public interaction and is inappropriate for use in primary classrooms. Mehan (1981, p. 37) notes FIAC's failure to address the connections between function and form in language and also the inter-relationship between verbal and non-verbal behaviour. This list highlights the need for analytic tools and frameworks which capture the internal patterning of the talk of all participants as a coherent whole within the particular context, with a model of context as fluid and collaboratively constructed.

Discourse analysis goes some way towards providing this. It foregrounds concepts of cohesion and coherence across turns both within a conversation and hierarchically across larger organisational features of a text so that we can begin to see the interaction as cooperatively produced. It has been used effectively in much research work in mainstream classrooms, notably Willes, (1983) and Edwards and Mercer (1987). These two studies, however, were carried out in what appear to be fairly formal settings. They do not address issues of language diversity or the relationships between the classroom and the wider community to any extent. The discourse analysis model is primarily a static, linguistically oriented one: the elements in the conversation are matched against an externally applied framework reminiscent of a well organised written text rather than a spoken conversation. As Edwards and Westgate (1994, p. 25) point out, the

model embodies a relatively fixed view of context, of a classroom where hierarchical relationships prevail, and the teacher does most of the talking. The interactions are seen from her viewpoints, goals and purposes. Many classrooms, undoubtedly, operate in this way and discourse analysis offers a useful tool to reveal how they work. But to use exclusively such a model imposes limitations on the data and masks other factors which may be present. For example, as Edwards (1980a, p. 240) points out, discourse analysis is unable to cope with conditions of 'participant equality' and so would not be effective in analysing child-child interactions.

5.3.2.ii Conversation analysis

Conversation analysis, which originated in sociology rather than linguistics, is an approach to analysing naturally occurring conversations. It offers scope to *discover how participants understand and respond to one another* (Drew, 1990, p. 1). With its focus on the ways in which turn taking is organised and agreed between participants (Sacks, et al. 1974), it is effective in highlighting the cohesive ties which hold the fabric of the conversation together and, with it, the speakers. The basic unit could be described as the *adjacency pair*, the sequencing of utterance and response, rather than separate turns in the discourse. Because, typically, a transcript prepared for conversation analysis will include many of the paralinguistic features of the talk, such as intonation, stress and pausing (Edwards and Westgate, 1994, pp. 65-68), it can be very

revealing of ways the speakers are demonstrating mutuality, the *intersubjective understandings* in interaction (Drew, p. 10).

Conversation analysis does not provide a set of pre-ordained categories. The analyst generates categories from within the data. This is an appropriate methodological approach for a study which is seeking to analyse ways in which a classroom culture is constructed interactively by the participants, rather than searching for evidence of a particular kind of talk. Essentially, as French (1990, p. 43) suggests, the decision about the kinds of categories to use is a matter of common sense *based on the analyst's competence as a cultural member* and thus her awareness of what is significant in order to be a member of that particular community. Furlong (1976), in a study of learner peer groups, also points out the need to avoid an *external analysis of interaction* (p. 26) because it often misses the point. She develops the notion of *interaction sets* to categorise the ways groups of pupils behave in order to indicate that they share an understanding of what is happening and are agreeing to act together in that way at that particular time – a significant but subtle set of communicative devices to capture. Scollon and Scollon (1984, pp. 179-182), in demonstrating the importance of listening and of face-to-face interaction in Athabaskan storytelling traditions, provide a strong example of the mutuality of spoken discourse in one particular social context. Hickmann, (1985, p. 237) shows the importance of interactive processes both in children's development and in the analysis of that development. Both studies present in their different ways methodological models for conversation analysis.

5.3.3 Critical discourse analysis

In this section, I describe the main features of an approach to analysing language which takes account of the social and structural forces which influence its intentions and outcomes, and to which it can contribute. There are two subsections:

- Fairclough's model: a multilevel approach to analysing language in social context;
- intertextuality.

The first gives a brief description of Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis and justifies its use as a methodology for helping to reveal the differential access to learning which occurs in ethnically diverse classrooms. The second explains the importance of the notion of intertextuality within a critical discourse analysis framework.

5.3.3.i Fairclough's model: a multilevel approach to analysing language in social context

My research aim of revealing the factors which mediate success in ethnically diverse classroom contexts means that a mode of analysis is required which goes beyond the language within its immediate settings. The discussion of language as discourse in Chapter Four (section 4.2.2) indicates the need for a model of linguistic analysis which is broadly-based and flexible, an analysis of *social languages* (Gee and Green, 1998, p. 142), not just of language per se. Fairclough's three-tier, interdisciplinary approach (1992b, pp. 225-226), to *critical*

discourse analysis makes transparent the relationships between discourses and the wider cultural and social structures which influence them. Its starting points are questions about social practice. Then follows a description of the formal properties of the text, followed by a consideration of the relationships between the text and its producers and finally the social forces and events which influence its production, a cycle from interpretation to description and back to interpretation again (1992, p. 231). Gee and Green (1998 pp. 140-141) offer a table showing a way of *intersecting the social building tasks with the language* in interaction, which can be used as guide to constructing a *logic-of-inquiry*. This builds on, and possibly answers some of the concerns about critical discourse analysis taking a too broadly based approach to language analysis (Luke, 1995, p. 11) but does not give as much scope for considering the structural issues as Fairclough's model (1989). Fairclough provides detailed sets of questions (pp. 232-238) for conducting an analysis, pointing out that only a small number would be used in any particular case.

At all levels, and particularly for spoken discourse, as Fairclough (1989) insists, the position of the analyst needs to be taken into account, so *interpretation* must be always recognised as part of the analytic framework:

There is a positivist tendency to regard language texts as 'objects' whose formal properties can be mechanically described without interpretation. But try as they may, analysts cannot prevent themselves engaging with human products in a human, and therefore interpretative way. (p. 27)

This is a factor, according to Gilbert (1992, p. 53) which helps to counteract slippage into *deterministic* and *mechanistic* applications of the framework. It also implies that there is always the possibility of different interpretations which, as Gilbert (p. 56) argues, is a strength.

Fairclough's project is a political one, to show how the processes of naturalisation work to suppress the inequalities in power relationships, turning selected discourses into a 'common sense' world which quickly becomes (apparently) solid and real (p. 107). The 'basic skills' discourse of the past few years provides many clear examples of this process. Luke (1995, p. 11) sees the *task* of CDA as showing *how broader formations of discourse and power are manifest in everyday, quotidian aspects of texts in use*. He presents (pp. 28-37) a discussion of a set of *school texts* which show critical discourse analysis at work and demonstrate how it can reveal:

.... the local tensions between some of the official discourses in teachers' guidelines, textbooks, administrative pronouncements, and so forth and the interpretation and mediation of difference in face-to-face classroom talk. (p. 28)

and so provide a model for the application of CDA to both spoken and written texts.

5.3.3.ii Intertextuality

The concept of intertextuality, which Fairclough encapsulates as *the insertion of history into a text* (1992a, p. 269), is taken up by Bloome and Egan-Robertson (1993, p. 309) as a tool to help illuminate the links between pupil-pupil as well as teacher-pupil spoken interactions in first grade reading and writing lessons. They see intertextuality as *a social construction, located in the social interactions that people have with each other* (p. 308). In a detailed analysis of a 15-minute lesson which involves a teacher-led discussion of a previously read story, Bloome and Egan-Robertson focus on three of the learners present to show how, using Fairclough's three-tier approach, the social construction of intertextuality within the lesson is illuminated. An important feature brought out by their analysis is the importance of the learners' active rôles in the construction of the lesson. It is only when the children recognise and acknowledge the teacher's attempts to establish an intertextual link that it becomes an active part of the fabric of the lesson. The teacher is shown making several attempts which are not so recognised and so remain ineffective. There is also evidence of the children's own intertextualities, different from those of the teacher and potentially subversive.

The relevance of the notion of intertextuality for studying individual access to classroom interaction is further developed through application to data from bilingual classrooms by members of the

Santa Barbara Discourse Group (Heras, 1994, Floriani, 1994). It is one of the threads which offers both a link between the synthesis of ethnography and the analysis of linguistics in understanding classroom interaction. It also offers a way to explore the links between the local events of the classroom and wider social, cultural and political contexts which influence them.

5.4 A multilevel approach to ethnography of communication in action: an analysis of selected data

In using a multilevel approach to analyse the data, an appropriate selection needs to be made from the range of approaches and analytic frameworks described above, depending on which part of the whole scene the data are drawn from and the analytic intentions. Talk collected in an informal, non-classroom situation, for example, will have different phonological, lexical and syntactic features from classroom talk, as well as different purposes and contextual features. It is thus necessary to include contextual information for each sample of data. The intention in this section is to illustrate how the methodology operates with one particular sample of the data. It is not meant to be seen as offering an analytic framework for *all* of the data, as the framework will need to change according to the specific factors related to each kind of data presented. There are two subsections:

1. The context;
2. The data: influences on children's opportunities in the classroom.

A section from a conversation which took place as part of an informal interview is presented and analysed. It needs to be remembered that the text is in turn part of a longer text. The participants are myself and one of the two teachers from the classroom described in Chapter Two. In that chapter, I demonstrate how the teachers' weekly three-way conversations with their class were shaped by their beliefs about the importance of talk in their rôles as members of a jobshare in the particular contexts in which they were working. I reveal, through their talk with the children, their understandings about what counts as knowledge and how one should behave as a learner. I also demonstrate how the conversations reveal strong intertextuality, which contributes to the collaborative construction of a particular kind of classroom culture. As well as demonstrating the methodology, the sample here serves to describe further the contexts for the teacher talk presented in Chapter Two. In doing so, it adds another layer to this description by providing evidence for the subjective viewpoints of one of the two teachers involved in the whole class conversation.

5.4.1 The context

After an extended period of observation in the classroom, (January 1996 – July 1997), I did not visit again for some months while I was undertaking observations in the middle schools to which the children had progressed and conducting home visits to the families of the small group of children on whom I had been focusing. I subsequently renewed contact with Sandra and Janet during the

summer holidays of 1998, invited them to read the material I had recently written and asked if they would be willing to take part in semi-structured interviews. The potential value of these had emerged with my growing awareness of the importance of autobiographical viewpoints in understanding classroom events. I explained to Sandra and Janet that I was interested in gaining some evidence of their responses to my writing and in their own viewpoints as to how they felt things were proceeding in their classroom. I stressed that I was not intending to focus in particular on the children I was following into middle school (who had in fact not been in their class for a whole academic year), but was interested in gaining evidence as to their general views on the class and the children they taught as a means to triangulate my data on the classroom interaction. I asked if they would be willing to do this separately, as I felt this would make it easier for me to find out about distinctive features of their opinions, and also add another layer of triangulation. I also thought this would give them more scope to talk freely. Both willingly agreed, and we arranged that each would come to my house on different occasions. Sandra came first, and Janet about two weeks later.

Prior to the interviews, I prepared a set of questions to guide the discussion. These were as follows:

1. Do you think my accounts match with your views of your 'real' classroom – if not, how do they differ?
2. What do you think are the strengths of your work in the classroom – what do you think you do well?

3. What concerns do you have about your work, e.g. what would you like to improve if you could?
4. What qualities do you think go to make 'a good teacher'?
5. What qualities do you think go to make 'a good learner'?
6. What qualities or factors do you think make it difficult for individual children to learn?
7. What effects do you think external requirements (National Curriculum, OfSTED, National Literacy Strategy, etc.) have on your teaching?

Before we began the conversation, Both Sandra and Janet read through the questions and my recently-produced written analyses of the science activities which took place in their class (see Chapter Eight, section 8.2). Both expressed interest in the sustained nature of the children's discussions I had recorded, and pointed out how they found such evidence of the children's learning very useful, though they did not have time to collect it for themselves. We did not refer directly to the questions once the conversation started and I had turned the tape recorder on, but I had them in mind while we were talking and introduced the themes they contained when necessary. Both conversations lasted for about 1¹/₂ hours. In general, they do not sound or read as interviews, but as informal conversations, though I do take the listener rôle more than would be the case if they were genuine, spontaneous conversations. At one point, Sandra (who is slightly more reticent than Janet) stopped in mid-flow and remarked that she had forgotten that the tape recorder was switched on. At the end of the interview, she asked me not to use a particular section, which she felt made personal references to staff in the school.

5.4.2 The data: influences on the children's opportunities in the classroom

My main purpose here is to demonstrate the methodology. I also take the opportunity, through the choice of particular data, to present evidence of some of the tensions and contradictions experienced by the teachers in their work to supplement that presented in Chapter Seven. I use a transcribed section from the taped conversation where Sandra is talking, in response to question 6 (see above), about the difficulties she thought children faced in their learning (though the question had not been asked directly orally). Her main topic at this point was 'problems from home'. One linguistic feature of the talk which struck me forcibly was the lexis – the words she chose to use to explain her concerns, which were revealed to be many.

Conventions used in coding the transcripts are given in Appendix 2.b (see p. 440).

01 Sandra: Increasing numbers of children who don't
seem to be able to **listen** ... as well .. listening
skills seem to be quite ... quite *poor* and
there's probably a lack of levels of maturity
05 as well .. which is *something to be said for those
with the behavioural problems* as well ...
increased children with special needs ... um
....

JC:
10 And is that something you've noticed
over the years?

Sandra: Mm .. **definitely** definitely it's ... getting worse .. definitely ... and *I suppose to some extent* um ... the level of the children who we've been getting into the class .. they're generally not functioning at the level that you would expect of children of that age and that's a **worry** especially when ... you're supposed to be preparing them for middle school .. you think well middle school are going to have these children and they will expect them to do *this this and this* and they *c-a-n-t* ... do that because they've come in at this level and you can't **possibly get them up to that level when they've come in at this level** you can only do your **best** and move them on from where they *a-r-e* ... but ... um ... I suppose that's a pressure to some extent .. that the children **a-r-e n-o-t** working at the level that .. would be expected

30 JC: Do you think that's because of ... um external factors?

Sandra: Um it's difficult .. I think we have had a *c-h-a-n-g-e* in the not the catchment area but the ... the *h-o-u-s-i-n-g* within the catchment area I think that might *h-a-v-e* ... some *e-f-f-e-c-t* ... on it um *children coming from perhaps different backgrounds* um we *s-e-e-m* to be getting more children <cough> who have been um..... you know .. who have some .. sort of difficulties or um .. with <*indecipherable*> or whatever ... um *I don't* um ... *it's difficult*

45 *for me to say really at this point ... um ... I
mean we..we've got ... I suppose we've got an
increasing number of Asian children .. as well ...
um ... with the l-a-n-g-u-a-g-e difficulties but
... it's not that it's it's not necessarily that I
don't think ... um ...*

50 JC: By the language difficulties, you mean
their comprehension of English

55 Sandra: The children *yeah Y-e-s ... but it's not
that so much I don't think as as ... um
more the sort of the beha-v-i-o-u-r-a-l
problems that they ... when they ... the
l-e-a-r-n-i-n-g difficulties other than than the
language difficulties*

Sandra was brought up and went to teacher training college in a rural area of Yorkshire. At the time of the interview, she had been at the school for nine years, her only teaching post since qualifying. We had had many conversations prior to this about the children's language and cultural backgrounds. She always declared a strong interest in this aspect of her work, and had a good knowledge of religious and cultural issues – RE was her main subject at college. In another section of the tape, she talked enthusiastically of her interest in 'different' religions and cultural practices and of what the children tell her of their home and community experiences (see Appendix 5.a, p. 454). She described how she looked for a job in Bradford because of her ambition to work in a 'multicultural' setting when she left college despite the opportunity to work in a *nice little village school*. At another point in the tape, however, she talked about *not enjoying*

her work recently as much as she did in the past. She seems to be finding it difficult to understand why she has recently experienced this change in her attitude to teaching.

In lines 01-08, she addresses the question of the difficulties faced by the children by suggesting four generalised failings in the children themselves: they can't listen, they lack maturity, they have behavioural difficulties and they have special needs – a somewhat daunting list, but none of it very specific, apart possibly from the first. The anxiety is summed up in a very general comment (lines 14-16). The lexis here is interesting and very different from that which Sandra uses to talk about the children at other points in the conversation (see Appendix 5.a, p. 454). It suggests a depersonalising of the children through the intertextualising of a kind of vague 'officialese' with her more personal comments, (e.g. *levels of maturity*, line 04; *behavioural problems*, line 06; *special needs*, line 07) in the discourse to categorise children who are *not functioning* as expected as they are not meeting the expected *levels*. The word *level* is repeated seven times in this short extract (lines 04, 13, 15, 22, 24, 25, 28). The connotative meaning of this word in educational discourse has changed greatly over the past ten years. It is now a much-used word which reflects strongly the current concerns with standards and measurable evidence of progress. It is, perhaps, linked for Sandra with the external pressure of providing quantifiable evidence of the children's attainment for the teachers who will receive them in middle school. It is as if, because of this necessity, Sandra is finding it

difficult to see the children as individuals, to enjoy their personalities and the diversity they bring – one of the most important personal reasons she suggested earlier in the conversation (see Appendix 5.a, p. 454) for going into teaching in the first place.

I urge her to think of reasons for the ‘lowering’ in levels of ability of the children she has perceived, and she struggles on, her own sense of the contradictory nature of her statements possibly reflected in the increase in pauses and the uneven quality of her delivery, especially throughout her third turn (lines 32-49). Logically speaking, some of her statements actually appear nonsensical; for example, she seems to imply in lines 33-35 that it is the housing in the catchment area which is changing, not the people who live there. Her assertion in lines 44-46, is surprising but understandable, surrounded as it is by *contextual cues* (Green and Wallat, 1981) which indicate confusion and anxiety. The children who give her great pleasure are now also the cause of her greatest professional concerns.

The manner in which the assertion is presented is significant. Sandra is normally a fairly quiet speaker, and the volume of her voice here drops so much that it becomes almost inaudible. Simultaneously, her delivery speeds up markedly. She makes the comment about *Asian children* (line 45) with the clear implication that this is *some sort of difficulties* (line 40) and so quickly that it is difficult to catch the actual words. She immediately begins to qualify her statement (line 46), so that, perhaps, she can distance herself from it, demonstrating clearly van Dijk’s (1999, p. 556) claims about the ways in which *negative talk*

about minority groups is hedged, mitigated, excused ... as part of the denial of racism discourse among majority groups.

It is too simplistic to suggest that Sandra is confused or muddled in her thinking, as the extract could be taken to indicate. She is a skilled teacher with a sensitive, thoughtful nature and a deep commitment to the children. In these statements, I suggest, she is revealing her anxiety about the abilities of the children in terms of their meeting externally imposed levels of performance, not ones she has been able to work out for herself, based on her knowledge of the children and experience of their capabilities. She is in an unenviable position, having been given the responsibility of providing evidence for something which it is perhaps impossible to demonstrate. She has no power to challenge this, indeed, in the current ideological climate, she (as a representative of the teaching profession) is likely to be blamed by some for failing to do the impossible.

In addition, there is probably very little in her training which has prepared her for this. Though she speaks enthusiastically earlier in the conversation (see Appendix 5.a, p. 454) about a section of her B.Ed. course called *Education in a multicultural society*, it is arguable that this has equipped her with a model of multiculturalism grounded in a more general model of culture as fixed and static and of multicultural identity as uncontroversial (see Hoffman, 1998, p. 333) which is inadequate to explain fully the contexts in which she is working, and thus unable to explain the complex contemporary pressures on some of the families of the children in her class. Caught

in this dilemma, with no other way to explain her growing difficulties, the only reason she can find to explain the situation is that, somehow, the children are *getting worse* (lines 11-12), resorting to the *blaming the victim* response (Cummins, 1996) which is so understandable, but counter-productive and destructive for all members of the community involved.

What emerges from the analysis of Sandra's autobiographical comments is a picture of a teacher who is, through no fault of her own, inadequately prepared or equipped for a challenging task, who has no support from a system which does not recognise the complexity of the issues she faces. As she deals with the children in her class on a day-to-day basis, Sandra has to find a way to 'make it work', which involves reconciling two conflicting sets of demands: meeting the complex language, social and cultural needs of the children, and producing the results in terms of targets imposed by externally derived, normative criteria. I have shown in Chapter Two how she, and her co-teacher, go a long way towards meeting the children's needs and providing the means for many of the children in their class to succeed, defined in the terms outlined in the chapter. But there is every reason to expect that, in terms of school league tables, OfSTED, and other evidence of 'success', they will continue to fail. Perhaps, as Trueba (1989), who bases his definition of success on the same theoretical bases used here, suggests, the solution to this is out of Sandra's hands:

If we assume, within this theoretical perspective, that all children normally succeed in learning it follows that failure in learning is “systemic”. It is not an individual failure, but a failure of the social system to provide the child with the opportunity for social intercourse. It is a social phenomenon understandable only in terms of its own historical, economic and political contexts (p. 19)

5.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have explained and justified the methodology developed to achieve the intentions of the study: a combination of ethnography with a symbolic interactionist perspective and conversation and critical discourse analysis. The ethnography reveals evidence of the social organisation of the contexts being studied, foregrounding the viewpoints of the participants. The linguistic analysis goes on to demonstrate the ways in which the language in the contexts reveals and reflects issues of power in the wider system and its effects. Through providing an example of the methodology in use with a sample of the data, I demonstrate its effectiveness and set up a model for the main exposition of the findings in Chapters Seven and Eight.

CHAPTER SIX
SETTING THE SCENE: A HISTORY OF 'DIFFERENCE' IN
BRADFORD – INTEGRATION, ACCOMMODATION AND
SEPARATISM

6.1 Introduction

This chapter serves as an introduction to Chapters Seven and Eight. It provides social-historical information to contextualise the main findings of the ethnographic study. Cohen and Manion (1994, pp. 44-45) attest to the value of historical research in understanding problems in education. The chapter draws on the *caste theory* of Ogbu (1983, 1993). This explanation of ethnic minority failure has been critiqued for its potential for determinism (Foley, 1991; Hoffman, 1998). However, its view that each different ethnic minority group's experience of historical assimilation is fundamental to future educational and economic success remains an important starting point in understanding differential achievement among minorities. The chapter, then, presents a historical account of those aspects of immigration, settlement and education in Bradford which have influenced the development of attitudes to ethnic diversity in schools, with particular reference to children from Pakistani heritage families. It illustrates the problems of responding to 'difference' in multi-ethnic settings through a brief account of the 'Honeyford affair', which drew national and international attention to Bradford in the 1980s and which, I argue, still has repercussions in education in the city.

6.2 The growth of 'difference' in Bradford

On a chilly Spring day in 1988, I walked out of Bradford Interchange station on my way to a job interview. It was my first visit to the city. I was somewhat apprehensive. Friends (who had never been to Yorkshire) had expressed concern when I said I had applied for a job there: Bradford had not had a good press in the 1980s. Memories of recent disasters, such as the fire which had destroyed the football stadium killing 50 people, were still fresh. News of Honeyford, a Bradford headteacher, and his writings in the *Salisbury Review* (e.g. Honeyford, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987) had reached as far as Sierra Leone, where I had been working until a few months earlier.

My first visual impressions of Bradford were not encouraging: solid, grey Victorian architecture, bleak streets, dark skies. I still felt homesick for the tropical sunshine and bright colours of West Africa. But there were two or three South Asian traders at the entrance to the station with collapsible stalls crammed with toys, plastic shoes, hair slides and other colourful miscellanea. They reminded me of the Fulla traders who were everywhere in Sierra Leone, ready to sell a single cigarette or ten sugar cubes wrapped in a twist of paper at any time of the day or night. The sight of the Bradford traders made me feel a little more cheerful. One of them, perhaps noticing my face relaxing as I walked past, smiled broadly at me.

*.... at once one of the most provincial and yet one of the most cosmopolitan of English provincial cities
.... Bradford was determinedly Yorkshire and provincial but some of its suburbs reached as far as Frankfurt or Leipzig. (Priestley, 1934, p. 124)*

So J. B. Priestley, a native of Bradford, wrote in 1895 at the end of a century which had seen the city's rapid growth, both in industry and as an international trading centre. The number of textile mills in the city grew from one in 1801 to 130 in 1851, when Bradford played a central rôle in the Great Exhibition (Wright and Jowitt, 1982, p. 245). The building of the Wool Exchange in 1864, where world prices for wool were set for a time, epitomised Bradford's importance for international commerce. These two strands of progress brought along with them very different groups of immigrants to the city. Irish families, escaping the extreme poverty and deprivation of their homeland, began to arrive in the early nineteenth century to work in the newly built mills, walking from the Liverpool docks with all their worldly belongings in carts. Wealthy traders, mostly of Jewish origin, began arriving from Germany at about the same time. They established a warehouse district in the centre of the town and quickly founded a Chamber of Commerce. Just as quickly, they took themselves away from the noise and squalor of the town centre to newly built mansions on the more salubrious slopes of the surrounding hills. They were a powerful influence on the cultural life and the development of education in the town. One of their community became Bradford's first Jewish mayor in 1864 (Halstead, 1988, p.5).

Almost a century later, during the second World War, men from India began arriving in Bradford and other cities in West Yorkshire looking for work in the textile mills and munitions factories. They were mostly seamen, directed inland from the ports of Hull, Liverpool and Middlesbrough (Murphy, 1987, p. 9). In the 1950s, their numbers were augmented by men from the Mirpur and Azad Kashmir regions of the new nation of Pakistan. They were economic migrants rather than refugees. Singh (1986, p. 28) describes an *emigration for self-advancement*. The building of the Mangla Dam in Mirpur by the British government which resulted in the loss of large tracts of farming land, and the tensions in the mountainous border regions of Azad Kashmir after partition with India were, however, no doubt influential factors in their decisions to leave Pakistan.

The pattern of settlement in Bradford was distinctive. The men usually arrived alone. Their intention was to earn money as quickly as possible, then return home to build houses for their families. They were welcomed into West Yorkshire cities like Bradford because of their willingness to work unpopular shifts in the mills and keep the new machines running for twenty-four hours a day. They performed the jobs that other workers were unwilling to do, usually for lower wages. They rented and eventually bought through self-help loan schemes the housing in the inner city wards which was often of poor quality and which earlier waves of immigrants were happy to leave for better accommodation in the suburbs. They quickly established communal support networks for cooking and other domestic needs, which meant that they hardly needed to mix with other groups in the

city. They worked alongside their compatriots on the unpopular shifts in the mills. They were generally not interested in the social or cultural events which took place in the city: indeed, many such practices must have been regarded as strange or suspect by Muslim men from remote, rural areas who had probably never visited any large city before setting off on their journeys to strange new worlds. As a result of becoming part of this self-sustaining community, many of them, despite living in Bradford for many years, did not learn to speak English. Though there were clearly advantages in the security and solidarity offered by such a tightly knit community, Singh (1994, p. 13) also points out that this concentration in the inner city led to a *vicious cycle of general deprivation* which has had long term effects. Hird (1968, p. 215), describes the living conditions, understating, no doubt, the hardships which were endured:

It has always been their custom, like that of various other eastern people, to live in herds, and what may appear to us grossly overcrowded conditions is quite a natural state of affairs for them, and incidentally and a matter of importance, it holds down living expenses

It was overwhelmingly a male community. Murphy (1987, p. 10) states that there were 3376 men and 81 women of South Asian origin in Bradford in 1961. As a group, these men contributed a great deal to the economy of the city. It has been argued (Cohen and Jenner, 1981) that their labour meant that the textile mills were able to remain productive for several years longer than would otherwise have been the case. Once the mills started closing down and the wages drying

up, it is possible that they would have returned to their families in Pakistan, or sought more lucrative employment in the burgeoning economies of the Middle East, but this did not happen. Singh (1994, p. 22) discusses the *myth of return* which haunts most migrant groups, and suggests that it is essentially a notion to ease the pain for the traveller of actually knowing that they will never return to the homeland. There is no doubt some validity in this in relation to the South Asian community in Bradford. It is difficult to believe that there was not (and still is not), at some level, a real desire to return. Extended family ties are culturally extremely important. Even today, sixty years after the first South Asian migrants arrived in Bradford and when the community is well into its third generation, strong links are maintained with relatives in Pakistan, remittances are still made and regular visits take place. The city of Mirpur, which has grown up along the edges of the vast lake created by the Mangla Dam, has been built largely with remittance money from expatriates. Numerous large buildings are proudly pointed out to the visitor which are owned by British Pakistanis currently living in cities in the north of England.

The main events which prevented many of the South Asian men from returning home and led to the influx of wives and children in the late 1960s and early 1970s were, paradoxically, actually intended to curtail immigration into Britain. The Immigration Acts of 1962 and 1971 caused many of the men to decide to discontinue their regular visits home, and bring their families to Britain instead. They feared that they could be permanently separated by legislation that was

introduced in a climate of fear and apprehension and of which the effects were unclear. Thus, just at the time when economic prospects were beginning to dwindle and the South Asian men were having to compete with the poorly qualified section of the white population for the few jobs available outside the mills, the community suddenly began to grow rapidly. Because of the arrival of so many women and children, its calls on the social services increased exponentially. Hird (1968, p. 216) reproduces figures which show that the number of Commonwealth (including Pakistan) immigrant children in school in Bradford increased from 962 to 4,686 between 1963 and 1968. Moreover, the children were concentrated in a small number of schools in three inner city wards. Undoubtedly, this sudden and very visible evidence of a large and growing ethnic minority community must have raised alarm in the minds of indigenous Bradfordians. Hird, who was a member of Bradford council from 1944-1968 and Mayor from 1951-52, expresses some of the confused uncertainty which existed at the time:

.... let us remember that neither Bradford nor Keighley nor any other place will have happy citizens if they become hopelessly choked with people whose way of life and habits are so much at variance from our own (p. 221)

His words echo those of contemporary national politicians who were operating in a much wider arena, but whose influence on the attitudes of people in Bradford at the time was no doubt strong. Despite the fact that successive groups of immigrants had previously been assimilated into Bradford over many years, the South Asian

group, who carried visible evidence of their difference around with them in their appearance, were not to be so easily integrated.

6.3 The development of education and ethnic diversity in Bradford

The history of education in Bradford in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reflects the twin Victorian ideals of Christian philanthropism and commercialism (Bradford Corporation, 1970).

W. E. Forster, the architect of the 1870 Act which introduced compulsory elementary education nationally, was M.P. for Bradford from 1861 to 1886 and the owner of a textile mill in the city. The ambivalence of Bradfordians towards educational reform, however, is apparent from this time: while Forster's 1870 Education Act was receiving acclaim in London, his constituents were passing an amendment to their annual vote of thanks expressing their disapproval of it (Bradford Corporation¹⁹⁷⁰, p. xiv). The members of the first Bradford School Board established as a result of the act were clearly of a commercial rather than an academic bent: nine out of the sixteen were involved in trade at various levels (Bradford Corporation, p. 2).

The first Board Schools were impressive buildings, much more lavish and expensive than those being built in other comparable areas of the country (Bradford Corporation¹⁹⁷⁰, p. 6). This inevitably led to criticism but also, perhaps, symbolised the seriousness with which education was viewed by those to whom its development had been entrusted. It has been suggested that:

.... set amongst mills and row upon row of back-to-back houses, these buildings served to illustrate and to emphasise a genuine pride in the job in hand, demonstrating that the task of educating all children was a task of importance, of distinction. (p. 6)

The extravagance of Yorkshire stone and Gothic architecture has been longlasting. Because of their situations in the inner city wards, their intake today is largely made up of third generation children of Pakistani heritage (Shepherd, 1987, p. 263). The nature of settlement in Bradford, along with the so-called phenomenon of 'white flight' (McElroy, 1985) meant that school populations very quickly became almost totally segregated after the 1960s. Halstead (1988, p. 231) reports that by 1965, twelve Bradford schools had 25% immigrant children, and by 1984 there were nineteen schools, all in three inner city wards, with over 70% of children from ethnic minorities on roll (p. 39). The trend has continued. Appendix 6.a (p. 457) provides population estimates for Bradford District and for 'Windyhill' Ward for the years between 1981 and 1996, in which the first school from which data were collected is situated. The figures indicate the proportional rises in numbers according to age and ethnicity. The increase in the numbers of children aged 5-15 in the South Asian group is particularly marked in 'Windyhill' whereas the total increase for the district in this age range is slight.

Such a rapid demographic change could not go unnoticed. The references to Hird (1968) quoted earlier indicate, albeit implicitly, the emotional impact of such changes. Bradford Council gradually

realised the need to take control of the situation. Specific issues which arose in relation to education were those such as single sex schooling, the observance of Islamic practices in terms of assemblies, uniforms, school dinners and other such ostensibly quite practical matters.

There were manifestly good intentions, but, according to Halstead (1988), a fairly *ad hoc*, pragmatic response which was largely at the level of coping with issues to do with daily practice in schools. What was needed, but did not seem to happen, were initiatives to promote a climate of open discussion at all levels which could have informed and modified attitudes and led to the development of principled policy to guide daily practice in the longer term. Instead, there was, essentially, a gap between theory and practice, between those who formulated policy and those who had to implement it.

The document *Towards education for all* (City of Bradford Metropolitan Council Directorate of Educational Services, 1987), which became a national reference point for all that was positive in multicultural education, was clearly the result of a great deal of collaborative effort on the part of the advisory teachers and Inspectors who composed it, but there seems to have been very little consultation with practising teachers, though there were extensive meetings with headteachers, union representatives and others. There were also working groups of teachers who produced valuable material related to different subjects. However, much of this was never published because of the changes in council policy effected by the Conservative majority in 1988 (Bradford *Telegraph and Argus*, October 4, 1988), so its effects in school were somewhat limited.

6.4 Responses to difference in education

In this section, I trace the history of responses to ethnic diversity in Bradford in the 1970s and 1980s, showing how there was growing divergence between the experiences and viewpoints of the children and those of their teachers, and a failure to address this at local level, which is matched by the failures to address multiculturalism in positive ways in the education system at national level (see Chapter Three, section 3.2.3). I provide an account of a particular controversy which arose in Bradford in the mid-1980s between a headteacher and the LEA which encapsulated many of the contradictions and tensions connected with life in schools at the time. I discuss the rôle of language in the development and outcomes of this controversy, and indicate what I consider are its consequences for my own research.

There are three subsections:

- the development of divergence in Bradford schools;
- coping with divergence: an account of the 'Honeyford affair';
- the significance of the 'Honeyford affair' for current responses to difference.

6.4.1 The development of divergence in Bradford schools

Effective response to 'difference' cannot avoid complexity and contradiction. Halstead (1988, pp. 47-54) traces the nature of Bradford Council's responses to the growth in numbers of children from ethnic minorities in their schools, related to models of

integrationism, accommodation and separatism. For example, the policy of bussing, introduced in 1964, was intended to aid assimilation and create *cultural bridges* through schooling. Unfortunately, the traffic was only travelling one way, the bridge was only ever half built. The policy was terminated in 1979 (p. 234), partly as a result of pressure from Asian community groups (Foster-Carter, 1987, p. 44).

The first immigrant language centre was opened in 1965 (Halstead, p. 231), with the intention of preparing children to cope with the demands of mainstream schools into which they would be transferred as soon as their proficiency in English was adequate. However it has been argued that the centres exacerbated an ethos of separatism, despite the authorities' anxieties to avoid this. Their staged closure from the early 1980s was certainly presented as an attempt to promote a more integrationist ethos than had been developed through the period of their existence. Halstead argues that this policy was a response to the Swann Report, (DES, 1985), but it is possibly more accurate to see it as part of a more general trend towards mainstreaming in Bradford which had begun with the end of bussing in 1979. This was articulated in different ways: for example, job descriptions for the numerous language support posts created at the time in the mainstream schools which accepted the children from the closing centres stressed the aim of *the integration of all children's learning within the mainstream education environment* (City of Bradford, 1988). The range of duties specified for these posts exemplify an excellent model of language, learning and bilingual development, and stress its relevance for all children in the schools concerned, not

just the small numbers coming from the centres. Sadly, this model was never translated into practice as the posts were not supported by resources or organisational infrastructure. Indeed, in October 1988, after a Conservative landslide victory in council elections, the whole budget for this part of the Authority's education policy, among others, was summarily terminated during one council meeting (*Bradford Telegraph and Argus*, October 4, 1988).

While these struggles with policy were occupying the attentions of those working in the system at a 'macro' level, teachers within the inner city schools were experiencing diversity on a day-to-day basis in very different ways. As well as high proportions of children of South Asian heritage, there were a very small number of qualified teachers from the ethnic minorities in these schools. Halstead (1988, p. 52) reports that there were 86 altogether in the Authority's 300 schools (2% of the teaching force) in 1986. Table 6.i shows the current position.

Chinese	Caribbean	Black African	Indian	Pakistani	Bangla-Delhi	TOTAL
3	6	7	80	188	3	287

Table 6.i Numbers of qualified teachers from ethnic minorities in Bradford schools (source: *Bradford Employee Survey, 1998-99*)

With the total number of qualified teachers in the district standing at 4470, qualified minority ethnic teachers now represent just over 5% of the total of teachers in Bradford. While this indicates a doubling of the proportion since 1986, it is still minimal in an authority where

more than 40% of the children of school age are from ethnic minorities. Thus, teachers and children still come from different worlds in almost every respect. Bourdieu's (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990) concept of *habitus*, defined by Carrington and Luke (1997, p. 101) as *distinctive class, culture-based and engendered ways of 'seeing', 'being', 'occupying space' and participating in history* can help to explain the difficulties in communication which were and still are the daily experience of both teachers and learners.

Shepherd (1987) sees the cultural and linguistic divide between teachers and their pupils as contributing strongly to *the accomplishment of worlds as diverging* (p. 275) which he considers one of the main underlying causes of the underachievement of children from ethnic minorities who are receiving their schooling in settings such as those which Bradford's inner city schools offer. His ethnographic study of 28 teachers in one middle school and the accompanying sociological analysis lead him to the conclusion that it is the lack of any co-constructed discourses to describe the contexts they paradoxically 'share' which is so harmful in the failures of communication between teachers and learners:

.... where there is an inadequate basic stock of intersubjectively shared meaning relations in the semantic and syntactic fields of the communicators, and which are not available in a 'mother tongue', and where the members of differing societies are each equipped with general social typifications in the subjective stocks of knowledge which exhibit varying degrees of congruity and divergence, the

communicating individuals may enter into sense explications and sense apprehensions the incompleteness of which is unknowable to the communicators (p. 275)

The apparent intractableness of the problem is summed up in the way Shepherd describes the gaps in communication as *unknowable* to both sets of participants in the interaction. In his article, he quotes extensively from the interview data he collected from the teachers. The extent of negative reference to the children, their families and their cultural backgrounds is marked. The children are rarely referred to as individuals, but as a largely undifferentiated mass, often labelled 'these children'. The following are typical:

Very few of the parents are interested in education at all (p. 266)

.... the girls don't show as much interest in academic work (p. 268)

.... I have a class and I'm teaching them, and I know sixty per cent won't know what I'm talking about (p. 268)

....with things as they stand now there's no solution. You're banging your head against a brick wall all the time (p. 269)

They are typical, not only of the teachers which Shepherd studied, but of teachers in such schools in general. To apply Bourdieu's ideas again, for the teachers (and, indeed for society at large), the children's

out-of-school experiences have no *cultural capital*. The knowledge and skills which the children do possess (for example, literacy in Urdu) have no value for their teachers because they do not relate to the *social hierarchies* and *economies of exchange* of mainstream society: they are not recognised as a valid currency with which to purchase academic success.

6.4.2 Coping with divergence: an account of the ‘Honeyford affair’

The incidents which took place between 1984-1986 and which became known as the ‘Honeyford affair’ illustrate many of the tensions and contradictions which Shepherd reveals in his study. They show how attempts to overcome barriers on a personal and local level are thwarted by forces operating in wider sociopolitical fields. At its climax, the controversy which Honeyford generated attracted international attention, the support of key Conservative politicians including the Prime Minister of the day, Margaret Thatcher, and was the subject of an adjournment debate in the House of Commons (van Dijk, 1993). Honeyford was headteacher of a large, inner city middle school in Bradford from 1980 until his enforced retirement in December 1985. A full account and chronology of the affair is provided by Halstead (1988 pp. 231-284). The discussion presented here focuses on the rôle of language in the events and draws out its long term significance for the education of ethnic minority children in Bradford. The incidents which constituted ‘the affair’ were not particularly physically violent, compared with some of the events

happening in other ethnically diverse cities in England at around the same time. Instead, like the burning of Rushdie's *Satanic verses* which took place in the centre of Bradford in 1989 (see Bowen, 1992), they were more a battle of words, ideas and symbolic actions.

The controversy was sparked off and fuelled by a series of articles written by Honeyford, partly in response to the initiatives begun by Bradford LEA described in section 6.3, but beginning before he took up his post in Bradford. They were published mainly by the *Salisbury Review* (e.g. Honeyford, 1984, 1986, 1987), a journal closely associated with the 'new right'. Language played a crucial rôle in the development and playing out of the controversy, whether in the simplistic, emotionally loaded tones of the articles which were often quoted out of context or mis-translated into Urdu (Halstead, 1988, pp. 68, 69) or in the discourses of the various school governors' and council meetings organised to try to resolve the issues. These often degenerated from properly constituted discussions into shouting matches.

Honeyford had worked as an English teacher and part-time University tutor for many years in the Manchester area before his appointment in Bradford. He already had publications to his name, arising from his academic interests in language and educational psychology. Before 1980, however, there was no hint of the virulent opposition to multicultural education which was to emerge in his *Salisbury Review* articles. There were signs, however, that, like many teachers with similar working-class origins, strong personal

commitment and powerful ambition, he resented what he considered to be undue interference in his professional autonomy by LEA advisers and 'bureaucrats'. His views on education were in tune with the 'new right' ideologies which were to underpin the radical educational reforms of the 1980s (see Chapter Three, section 3.2.3). In his writing, Honeyford (e.g. 1986) makes constant reference to the rôle of education, which he sees as to promote the best of 'British' cultural values, articulated in terms such as the following:

.... this country is a unique nation with great achievements in learning, the arts, science, literature, the military arts and diplomacy we have played a leading rôle in the establishment of parliamentary democracy and the rule of law the English are a people of a distinctive character ... the need ... to respect, cherish and be properly proud of one's national origin and identity (p. 11)

The implication here is that 'British culture' is fixed and static, a set of products which can be identified, packaged, labelled and preserved. As argued in Chapter 3, section 3.2.3, it is, essentially, the model which underpins the National Curriculum and which has been defended at different times over recent years by influential figures such as Tate, chief executive of SCAA (Tate, 1996, cited in Honeyford, 1998). Along with this view of culture goes the belief that it is the rôle of the school to help safeguard and nurture its products, in order to maintain a sense of national identity and social cohesion.

The main force undermining this vision of stability and apparently effortless cultural transmission, according to Honeyford, is the cultural relativism which he sees as the main preoccupation of the 'multicultural lobby'. He attacks Bradford Council at every opportunity as representative of this and the willing servant of 'government quangoes' such as the Commission for Racial Equality:

...whose basic function appears to be the replacing of the notion of a distinctive and long-established English culture with some sort of officially sponsored cultural pluralism.

(Honeyford, 1986, p. 11)

His descriptions of the ways in which he perceived that Bradford LEA was forcing compliance to its model of multiculturalism, such as that suggested in the following quotation, imply a confidence, power and efficiency on the part of the authority which is not borne out by evidence of its workings at the time. It was actually struggling to understand and provide for the needs of its very diverse communities. Moreover, if it had been an accurate representation of the approach being taken, it would surely have not achieved the multicultural aim of creating a harmonious, open, tolerant society:

Bradford has created a powerful multiculturalism bureaucracy. And it is increasingly committed to using its schools not to effect integration, and to promote amongst all pupils – whatever their race and colour – loyalty to a national ideal, but rather to develop some sort of 'multicultural identity'. Now this latter idea appears to have no attachment to

history, tradition, natural development or actual, common experience – in other words, no attachment to those things which give the concept 'culture' real, human meaning. It takes its force rather from a bureaucratic attempt to impose culture from above, an attempt to wipe clean the slate of history and re-invent culture in accordance with official dictat. Such official multiculturalism is not only offensively authoritarian; it is also impractical and misguided. (p. 11)

The above exemplifies Honeyford's use of language in discussing what he means by culture (a word which he never explicitly defines). Phrases such as *attachment to history; loyalty to a national ideal; natural development; common experience; real human meaning* and so on imply a sense of shared experience and values among the members of a given population. However, the experiences and values they embody for Honeyford are totally alien and largely irrelevant to many people living in Bradford's divided streets. Words such as *history; nation; experience*, even *human* mean very different things from different viewpoints and when mediated through different personal experiences.

Bradford Council was actually, at the time of Honeyford's appointment, beginning to learn this in its negotiations with the city's ethnic minorities, whose growing confidence to make their demands known was being revealed through such groups as the Bradford Muslim Parents' Association, founded in 1974. Attempting to define and establish a workable policy of accommodating diversity,

the council's Policy Unit in 1981 published *Turning point*, an introduction to a race relations policy statement, which had the stated aim of creating, mainly through educational practices, a society:

.... in which there is co-operative and peaceful living together based on mutual respect for differences. (Halstead, p. 49)

It laid down a twelve-point plan intended to allow various practical concessions to ethnic minorities such as the provision of *halal* meat in schools, and to increase understanding of and respect for minority cultures through such initiatives as the development of an inter-faith RE syllabus and support for the teaching of South Asian languages.

Again, it could be argued that the good intentions embodied in the policy, though welcomed in the main by minority groups, did not meet the daily realities of inner city life. Moreover, they must certainly have added to the discomfort of many teachers, left largely unsupported to make what practical sense of them they could. As Halstead (p. 50) points out, *such a policy inevitably made demands on the indigenous population, who, circumstances permitting, voted with their feet.* The reduction in numbers of white children in inner city schools was rapid through the early 1980s. In Honeyford's own school, the proportion of children on roll from ethnic minorities rose from 49% to about 95% during the five years he was headteacher (Halstead, p. 237). This phenomenon of 'white flight' and the subsequent ghettoisation of inner city schools is possibly one of the strongest contributory factors to the underachievement of children

from ethnic minorities in Bradford, but its complex and contradictory causes and effects have never been adequately analysed and addressed.

The Honeyford affair, as has already been stated, was the topic of a House of Commons speech, made in April 1985 by Marcus Fox, Conservative MP for Shipley, an adjoining constituency to Bradford. Van Dijk (1993) analyses parts of this speech in an article which illustrates the ways in which the use of critical discourse analysis can reveal patterns of power, dominance and social inequality. Specifically in this case, he shows how racism is reproduced through parliamentary discourse. By highlighting the way Fox manipulates a notion of 'freedom of speech', Van Dijk demonstrates how:

.... more or less 'moderate' discourse may nevertheless enact white group power while at the same time manipulating the public mind in such a way that ethnocentric or racist policies can be legitimated. (p. 280)

By suggesting that Honeyford has been denied freedom of speech, a key element in the model of 'British' culture which underpins the whole debate, Fox is, in effect, denying that very freedom to his opponents. A quotation from the opening of the speech illustrates the ways in which the politician delegitimises the viewpoints of Honeyford's opponents and thus silences their voices:

This matter has become a national issue – not from Mr. Honeyford’s choice. Its consequences go beyond the issue of race relations or, indeed, of education. They strike at the very root of our democracy and what we cherish in this House above all – the freedom of speech. One man writing an article in a small-circulation publication has brought down a holocaust on his head. To my mind, this was a breath of fresh air in the polluted area of race relations..... (p. 269)

There is much that can be said about this language and its harmful effects on any ongoing debate about multiculturalism through the use of such connotatively loaded words as *holocaust* and *polluted*. As van Dijk shows in his full critical discourse analysis (pp. 270-279), Fox’s assertions could only be made with impunity by someone in his position, and in the setting in which he made them. They are breathtaking in their inaccuracy and negative stereotyping. Yet, they are fairly typical of the right wing political discourse of the time, reported freely in the mass media. Honeyford was invited to write articles for the *Daily Mail*, which he did, after his retirement, while the voices of his opponents were hardly heard in the mainstream media at all.

Further on in the speech, Fox calls Honeyford’s opponents *Marxists* and *Trots*, and suggests that they do not belong to *the silent majority of decent people*, so are hence somehow to be excluded from ‘normal’ society. Though Honeyford himself recoiled with horror at the suggestion (Halstead, p. 125), sentiments like this, voiced in different

contexts, add fuel to the repatriation arguments of such groups as the National Front. As such, they do injustice to the members of society who most need the opportunity to have their voices heard, their contributions validated and their interests protected, and so represent a violation of the freedom of speech which Fox claims to defend. As Foster-Carter (1987, p. 46) reminds us, echoing a Bradford councillor of South Asian heritage, freedom of speech *demands respecting the rights and freedom of others and not inciting hatred between fellow human beings*. Fox's speech represents a cynical and irresponsible attempt on his part to take advantage of a complex, confused and emotionally charged situation for personal and political ends. It is an example of the avoidance to engage in reasoned dialogue which was a key feature of the whole affair.

6.4.3 The significance of the 'Honeyford affair' for current responses to difference

In this concluding section to the chapter, I indicate only the points which I consider to have relevance for the findings and analysis in Chapters Seven and Eight. The main focus is the factors which affect children's success in ethnically diverse classrooms, not the consequences of the Honeyford affair for individuals. I acknowledge, and do not wish to negate or belittle the significance and long term effects of the affair for the children, their families their teachers and other education professionals who were directly involved in it.

A major social trend in Bradford over recent years is a growth in separatism, and the Honeyford affair contributed to this. It brought into the open the issues which caused friction but which had previously been hidden. Singh (1994, p. 14) talks about moves towards greater traditionalism and militancy among the South Asian communities in Bradford and of the increased politicisation of the late 1980s and 1990s. One specific consequence for education has been the greater segregation of the different communities and so of schools. Genuinely ethnically diverse schools are very rare in Bradford. Moreover, in recent years, there has been a strong demand for denominational schools, which are seen as offering higher standards of education, as well as a single sex setting. Competition for places in Roman Catholic schools for Muslim girls, for example, is fierce. Similarly, the fee paying Muslim Girls' College, opened in 1983, has become very popular and is about to gain voluntary aided status. Many South Asian parents, anxious about their children's prospects in inner city middle and upper schools, see the need to invest in private schooling. This concern is discussed further in Chapter Seven.

In terms of language, besides the freedom of speech issue, one of the other main contradictions of the affair is the way in which the term *racist* was used and the effects of the consequent confusions on discussions about multiculturalism. Though accused of racism, Honeyford constantly denied the charge, which he describes as a *failure of the human spirit and odious* (Halstead, p. 137), a typical response to the charge of racism in *élite discourse* (van Dijk, 1999).

Honeyford, however, clearly had strong commitment to the children in his school and, moreover, genuine respect for some aspects of South Asian culture. No doubt he was appalled, confused and hurt by the force of the reaction to him. Such confusions are part of the whole debate about multiculturalism, but they need to be addressed, not glossed over. The struggle to find a language to represent complex and sensitive meanings should be continuous. Halstead devotes a chapter to defining and discussing racism (pp. 137-166), wryly stating at one point that *virtually any action or state of affairs could be described as racist*. Williams (1976, pp. 248-50) traces the cultural history of the word *racial*, indicating how its meanings have evolved from references to biological difference to include connections with social and political thought. He shows how when *different kinds of variation are made to stand for or imply each other* the effects are confusing and *the necessary language of the .. recognition of human diversity* becomes distorted and overlaid with negative connotations.

Thus, perhaps the saddest effect of the affair where, ironically, freedom of speech was such a central issue, is the way it contributed to a closing down of discussion and dialogue about multicultural and anti-racist issues in the Bradford context. Foster-Carter (1987, p. 55), indeed, suggests that it had a national effect on moves to enhance equality of opportunity, with LEAs made reluctant to take on unions and other groups because of the problems which Bradford LEA faced. The confusions and misunderstandings which fuelled the controversy remain unresolved. The subsequent hesitance to engage in discussion is heightened by the lack of attention given to difference

and diversity in current national educational ideologies. The initiatives to raise standards which are the preoccupation of policy and practice at all levels have at their core a homogenising model of language and learning, and indeed of education as a whole. This denial of difference is probably the greatest contributing factor to the continuing underachievement of children whose distinctive knowledge and experiences need to be made central to their education in order for them to succeed.

6.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have described the historical contexts of immigration and settlement of the South Asian community in Bradford. I argue that these contribute in different ways to the external factors, as presented in Chapter Three, which influence what happens in classrooms. They thus illuminate much of the data from the outer layers of interaction presented in Chapter Seven, particularly in relation to the teachers' views. Through a brief analysis of one particular set of incidents which occurred in the mid-1980s and which are a still remembered and significant part of Bradford's 'multicultural history', I demonstrate the complexity of coping with difference and diversity on a daily basis, the important rôle of language in such events, and the need for, and current lack of, a meaningful debate which recognises the complexity and contradictions and the nature and extent of personal investment in such issues.

CHAPTER SEVEN
FACTORS WHICH AFFECT SUCCESSFUL LEARNING IN
ETHNICALLY DIVERSE CLASSROOMS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE
FINDINGS FROM THE OUTER LAYERS OF INTERACTION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter illustrates some of the factors external to the classroom which, I argue, support or hinder successful learning in ethnically diverse settings. In Chapter Two, successful learning is defined and exemplified as the capability to negotiate through talk the processes of interaction which take place between children and their teachers in the joint construction of 'classroom culture'. The model of classroom cultures which underpins this conception of learning is discussed in the preface to Chapters Three and Four. The idea of concentric layers of interaction and experience in dialectical relationship with each other is suggested to encapsulate the nature of the processes of negotiation involved in culture creating and classroom learning. This model is used as a framework in this chapter and the next to organise the data which illustrate what I postulate as the key factors influencing success in learning.

7.1.1 Data collection and analysis

After I had made several visits to the first school classroom, I began to direct my observations towards a small group of bilingual children who had struck me as articulate and confident and who their teachers identified as 'successful learners'. For the purposes of the study, the

definition of success has been kept broad. Despite their young age (8 years old), they seemed to have the successful bilinguals' confidence and facility with language identified by research reported by, for example, Bialystok (1991) and Cummins (1996). They coped easily with most of the cognitive demands of the work in the class, had well developed reading skills and generally produced writing of a higher standard than most of the other children. They were very interested in me and what I was doing in the class, and often plied me with questions about my work, my job, my family and so on. Though they were perhaps not the easiest children to manage, the teachers agreed that those I had identified could be described as successful.

I began to hold informal lunchtime conversations with these children. My initial purposes were rather general: to get to know them as individuals and to gain some idea of the ways they used English and possibly other languages in different contexts. All the children happened to be of Pakistani Muslim heritage, and to speak Urdu or Mirpuri Punjabi as their first language. We conversed about a range of topics, mainly suggested by the children. They were clearly very keen to talk about their homes and families. One of the children, Rehana, had recently been on a visit to Pakistan, and she enthusiastically told stories of her experiences, bringing into school artifacts the family had brought back and a list her father wrote out for me of the places they had visited, which we located on a map.

The data used in this chapter all relate to this group of children, gathered from three different settings:

1. The children's home and community settings;
2. Conversations with some of the teachers who taught the children in first or middle school;
3. Conversations with the children in informal settings.

At least three visits were made to the homes of each of the four children. The first was at the point of transition from first to middle school, the second after the children had been in middle school for a year and the third after the second year of middle school (or private preparatory school in one case). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with some of the teachers in all of the schools visited, individually or in groups. Maintaining contact with the teachers in the middle schools became increasingly difficult after 1998 as the schools began a process of reorganisation from a three-tier to a two-tier system, and many teachers left. One middle school is scheduled to be closed and the second transformed into a 11-18 secondary school by 2001.

Altogether, more than 70 hours of audio-taped data in these contexts external to the classroom were collected, along with extensive field notes and some documentary evidence. Only a small sample of the data can be presented in this chapter in order to illuminate the arguments developed. The examples of classroom talk between adults and children presented in Chapter Two set up a model of analysing interaction using linguistic analysis within an ethnographic methodology, which is explained and illustrated in Chapter Five. Paralinguistic features, mainly prosody, are shown to be significant in

this process. The contradictions experienced by the participants are revealed by placing the talk within the context of an education system which operates under strongly normative and centralising ideologies. The problematic aspects of the notion of success, as it is illustrated in Chapter Two, are revealed in two ways:

1. By illustrating some of the contradictions and oppositional forces embedded in the aspirations of the parents for their children's future success in terms of academic qualifications;
2. By demonstrating some of these oppositional forces at work as expressed in the views of some of the children's teachers.

Where relevant, transcripts are presented in the text, with longer transcripts provided in the appendices. The conventions used for coding the transcripts are explained in Appendix 2.b, p. 440. Examples of the kind of ethnographic field notes made are given in Appendix 7.a, p. 458.

7.2 The outer layers: the community and the school

The findings are presented in three main sections:

1. Language, culture, contradictions and resistance in the experiences of the parents;
2. Language, culture, contradictions and resistance in the experiences of the teachers in the schools;
3. 'Pragmatic biculturalism' in the children's home and community experiences.

The first section provides an ethnographic description of the home and community settings. The evidence for this is taken from the conversations which were recorded with the parents. It is divided into four subsections. The second section presents a sample from the first school and from one of the middle schools of the views of the teachers concerning the issues they face in working in ethnically diverse classrooms. It has three subsections. The third section provides examples of the language, social and cultural experiences of the children.

7.2.1 Language, culture, contradictions and resistance in the experiences of the parents

There are four subsections here:

- family contexts;
- attitudes to education;
- attitudes towards heritage languages and cultural practices;
- a 'good education'.

The first provides an ethnographic description of the family contexts indicating what emerge from the data as significant attitudes to education. They also show how the contexts provide a model for the joint construction of culture through talk. The second illustrates the factors which emerge from the parents' narratives considered to be significant for school success. The third presents evidence of the parents' attitudes towards language and cultural maintenance, which

was clearly a strong theme in all four home settings. Finally, the fourth section gives an indication of the contradictions embedded in the parents' experiences through an analysis of the views of one of the mothers concerning her son's experiences in different schools and her search for 'a good education' for him.

7.2.1.i Family contexts

All the parents, apart from one, of the group of four children who formed the focus for the longitudinal study, can be described as second generation Pakistani heritage. They are the children of the men who formed the first distinct South Asian heritage community in Bradford, as described in Chapter Six, section 6.3. Most of the parents were born in Pakistan to the mothers who stayed behind while the fathers were working in Britain and making regular visits to the homeland. They in turn came to Britain at a very young age with their mothers as part of the wave of immigration of families to Bradford in the 1960s. Thus, they were the first generation of children to grow up in this specific British Asian context. The exception, Rehana's mother, lived as a young bride and mother in Pakistan for a few years. She came to England with her two oldest children (now aged 26 and 23 years) as infants. All the parents, apart from Rehana's mother, speak English to high degrees of fluency. Some of them attended the same first and middle schools as their children. Table 7.i below describes the four children's family contexts at the time of my first visits in 1997.

CHILD	PARENTS	SIBLINGS	HOUSING
Yasmin (F)	Mother – housewife Father – butcher (family business)	3 younger sisters; 2, 4, 6, years	Privately-owned Terraced 5 bedrooms 8 occupants
Anwar (M)	Mother – teacher Father – accountant	2 older brothers; 11, 12 years	Privately-owned Terraced 3 bedrooms 5 occupants
Nahida (F)	Mother – housewife Father – unemployed	2 younger sisters; 3, 6 years 1 younger brother 5 years	Privately-owned Terraced 3 bedrooms 6 occupants
Rehana (F)	Mother – housewife Father – trader and taxi driver	4 older sisters; 13, 15, 17, 23 years 2 older brothers; 26, 20 years (oldest brother married with 2 children, all living in family home)	Privately-owned Terraced 5 bedrooms 12 occupants

Table 7.i Family contexts of the children in the study

There is ample evidence from the parents' achievements to provide positive rôle models for their children of success in the British education system: Anwar's mother, who arrived from Pakistan with her mother and five siblings as a young child, is a qualified teacher.

All her siblings (there were ultimately seven) have achieved similar success as lawyers, doctors, accountants and teachers. Yasmin's mother completed BTEC qualifications prior to her marriage at the age of 19. Though she has never held a salaried job, she keeps the books and accounts for the family businesses. Nahida's mother, whose husband is disabled, is from a diplomatic family. Her siblings live in various parts of the country and hold down professional posts. Her younger brother, who lives nearby, is a computer systems analyst married to a doctor. Rehana's family demonstrates less evidence of formal qualifications than the others; one of her brothers holds a GNVQ. Her brothers and father work as taxi drivers and run a take-away business, and her older sister worked in a factory until her recent marriage.

In all the families, links with relatives in Pakistan are strong, but Rehana's is the only family where they are maintained by extended visits of the whole family 'home', rather than short visits to England by relatives, which is the more typical pattern. Her father has built a large house in his natal district of Mirpur. The whole family spent two years there when Rehana was a small child, with the consequence that the older siblings missed extensive periods of English schooling and the opportunity to gain formal qualifications. There does not seem to be quite the same parental pressure for Rehana to succeed in school as for the other children in the study, though she is bright, articulate and always earns positive reports from her teachers. This could perhaps partly be a result of her being the youngest child in a large family.

All the children live in extended family households (with close relatives nearby, if not in the same house), within a short radius of the first school. The field notes made of the first visit to Yasmin's house (see Appendix 7.a, p. 458) illustrate the impression which I quickly formed of community closeness and benign control over individual behaviour. In all the households, there was a sense of order, and a clear expectation of decorous, polite behaviour on the part of all the occupants towards each other and to visitors, to which the children readily conformed. The regular network of social contacts in which all the families are strongly engaged consist almost entirely of relatives, some of them living in other cities but maintaining close contact through 'phone calls. Although three of the four children in the study live in adjacent streets, they do not visit each other or play together out of school. Their playmates tend to be siblings and cousins rather than neighbours.

In all the families, interaction between the sexes is clearly demarcated, and differing expectations of boys and girls are evident. In Yasmin's extended family, for example, the children are not allowed to watch television as a rule, but boys are able to watch football with their fathers and uncles. The anxiety in Yasmin's family about her having a male guardian at middle school (Appendix 7.a, p. 458) illustrates a concern to socialise boys and girls differently: as Yasmin's mother said, *We like to keep our boys and girls separate*. Because of my gender, it was to be expected that I would have more contact with the mothers than the fathers: in one household, on one of my visits, I sat

in one room and talked with the mother and children while the father sat in another room with male relatives. In another of the households, I did not meet the father on any of my visits.

Decisions about the children's education, along with most other aspects of family concern, are not made by the parents in isolation, as is illustrated in the field notes of the first visit to Yasmin's family (Appendix 7.a, p. 458). Both Anwar's and Nahida's mothers depend heavily on their brothers (one an accountant and one a computer systems analyst), who both live nearby, for advice and practical support. This pattern is the case for other members of the family besides the children. The pronoun 'we' is used continually through all the parents' narratives to describe joint decisions and regular family practices, such as visits from relatives, watching television, preparing and eating meals. Yasmin's aunt (who lives in the family household) had gained a place at Southampton University to study Law, but this was not acceptable to the family. Yasmin's mother describes the way a transfer was arranged to Leeds, so that the aunt could live at home:

.... she started crying because they wouldn't give her a place at University in Leeds and she didn't want to go out to Southampton because that was too far away ... so we actually finally got her a place in Leeds which is quite near where we are, only 20 minutes away we didn't want her so far away ... we don't want to leave her on her own there

While their mother was narrating this, Yasmin and her younger sister, Arifa, sat beside her on the settee, nodding and smiling. On a subsequent visit about a year later, I noticed a large framed photograph of the aunt in her graduation gown on the sitting room wall.

The incident is indicative of the family contexts as warm, close communities where there is mutual support and it is expected that members will abide by unspoken rules which usually entail placing the needs of the group before those of the individual. Anwar's mother sums up the importance of family ties: *The foundation is your family if that is weak, you're gone* Against this background, matters of common concern are extensively and openly discussed. Thus, the children experience talk in their home contexts as a channel through which decisions are jointly made and as a medium for the collaborative construction of the culture of the family. I suggest that this could provide a model for the ways in which talk can be a medium for the negotiation of meanings, and that the children's home experiences of this nature can influence the ways in which they participate in conversations in the classroom. The extracts presented from the conversations between teachers and children in Chapter Two have the same collaborative qualities, as do the conversations among the children engaged in the small-group science activities in Chapter Eight, section 8.2.

7.2.1.ii Attitudes to education

In all four family contexts, there are clearly high parental aspirations for the children, interest in what they are doing in school and support for them in carrying out school-related projects. There is an acknowledgement (and, as has already been demonstrated, plenty of evidence) of the importance of gaining qualifications through western education for future success. There is the belief that success in school is achieved through hard work, rather than individual ability, a finding matched by Gibson (1987, p. 267) in a study of Punjabi Sikh immigrants in California. Educational attainment is seen as leading to good careers, and the opportunity to 'be somebody'. This does not, in essence, seem to be influenced by gender, though – of course – there is the need to be aware that, in addressing their views to me, a white, female researcher, the mothers may have felt the need to say what they thought I hoped to hear. Nahida's mother demonstrated, perhaps, the strongest aspirations of all the parents on behalf of their child. She clearly associated academic success with social status:

*.... I really like her to go in top group, so, you know
... once you are in top group, you can ... easy to
you know, you meet nice people nice things
around you and she can be better off I'd like
her to be somebody, you know*

Similarly, Yasmin's mother, who has four daughters, articulated the importance for girls of gaining qualifications before they considered marriage:

You've got to fix it in their minds that they have to get their education ... that's the most important thing in their life nobody can take that away from them they've got to achieve something, then we can decide....

These findings match those reported by Hirst (1998, p. 422) from a similar cultural context. They contradict the stereotypical view of parents of Pakistani heritage often held by teachers, as indicated by Shepherd (1987) and discussed in Chapter Six (section 6.4.1), that such parents are not interested in education, especially for girls. Similarly, Nieto (1999b, p. 196) attests to the *tremendous faith* placed in education by ethnic minority parents, even in the least promising of circumstances.

The importance of such factors in children's learning is emphasised by Pollard (1996, pp. 305-309). His study focused on white, largely middle class social contexts. It illustrated the ease with which shared understandings between teachers and parents could be developed in such settings, and the beneficial effects of these on children's learning. Sharp and Green's (1975) findings, from a mainly white working class context, were very different. In their study of 'progressive' primary education, they found, in contrast with Pollard, very negative views on the part of the teachers towards the parents and problems in communication between the two groups which had a detrimental effect on the children's learning. They discuss (pp. 198-199) the importance of parents *complying* with teachers' views of what should happen in classrooms, of the need for them to be able to cue into the

teachers' system of relevancies and to play the rôle of *good parent* according to the teacher's definitions. They see it very much as a question of power: if the teachers, who have *more powerful purchase on the situation* (p. 214) form negative judgements about the parents, this will adversely affect the expectations they have about their children's learning potential. It seems, then, that if parents do not come up to teachers' expectations, it is very hard for their children to do so. The only parent in the study who reported any difficulties in communication between herself and school was Anwar's mother, who was herself a qualified teacher. She felt, essentially, that there was no dialogue, something she said she *yearned for*. She could find no opportunity for conversation with the teachers and felt ignored. The two teachers in the Year 3/4 class, in turn, while they were very positive about their relationships with parents generally, confessed to finding her a little difficult to talk to. Perhaps part of the difficulty, which is discussed more fully in the next section, is that Anwar's mother did not meet the teachers' expectations of a 'good' Asian parent.

Apart from Anwar's mother, all the families felt that they enjoyed positive relationships with their children's teachers and schools. In turn, perhaps seeing me as some kind of representative of the school, they welcomed my interest in their children, and were happy to answer my questions, having been assured that it would benefit their children. They wanted to be reassured by me that their children were 'doing well' in school. Issues surrounding parental choice worried them. All the parents sought my advice and opinions about local

schools, and listened carefully to my comments. The decisions about which middle schools to send their children to seemed to have been made for most of the families on the grounds of proximity (because the children were regarded as too young to travel far from home), and familiarity: *we know the people going there* (Nahida's father). Anwar's mother was the only one who expressed her reasons for choice of middle school in terms of 'quality'. Anwar went on to a different middle school from the other three children in the study because his mother considered it better. His brothers had also attended there, though they had since moved on to a private school. Anwar had already changed schools several times, as is described in section 7.2.1.iv below. The question of school choice became a very important one for the families as their children reached the end of Year 6, at the time when the closing of middle schools was being carried out as part of Bradford's re-organisation policy.

7. 2.1.iii Attitudes towards heritage languages and cultural practices

In all the families, there was strong motivation to maintain heritage languages, culture and religion alongside the need to achieve success in western terms. All four children could read and write Urdu, learnt in community schools and practised in the home. All were also learning the Koran in Arabic at various mosques. While there were only very limited opportunities for the children to use languages other than English in school, there was an awareness on the part of their first school teachers of the need to recognise the importance of home and community literacy practices as part of their whole

experience of literacy. The evidence in the literature for the importance of this view as a factor in school success is given in Chapter Three, section 3.4. In one of my lunch-time conversations with the children in first school, we talked about reading and writing in different languages, and the children taped themselves reading a text in Urdu. An analysis of part of this conversation is included in section 7.2.3 below. When I told their teachers about this, they expressed great interest in it, praised the children involved and invited the rest of the class to listen to the tape during the three-way conversation that afternoon.

The first school teachers seem to perceive that a positive attitude to first language literacy will benefit literacy learning in English. For the parents, on the other hand, the practices of reading and writing Urdu and reading the Koran are associated more strongly with retaining acceptable standards of behaviour. Politeness to and respect for others were frequently cited as important prerequisites in their children's behaviour, and were seen as being enhanced by an awareness of their cultural heritage and traditions. Anwar's mother, Parveen, described how she was forbidden as a child by her father to speak English in the home. Her parents, newcomers to Britain in the 1960s, felt the need to be strict with their children because of the negative influences of the social mores in the surrounding environment. Her mother clearly connected the maintenance of their home language with the maintenance of their culture, and resisted the pressure to move to English. As Parveen expressed it: *they thought the language was going to take away their culture*. This anxiety is echoed by most of the

parents in Parveen's own generation in their comments about contemporary western television: Yasmin's mother, in particular was very concerned about the *foul language* transmitted in mainstream programmes and would not allow her children to watch them.

Attitudes to language use and maintenance between generations are complex. Parveen explains how she feels she is at *an advantage* because she is a fluent bilingual, and regrets the fact that her sons are not as fluent in Urdu as she would like them to be. Her parents never learned to speak English, and so her children have to speak Urdu to their grandparents. She considers her sons' *mother tongue* to be English because they *think, speak and everything in English*. Her son, Anwar, thinks it would be *a bit strange* to speak Urdu rather than English to his brothers. Despite her acceptance of the situation, Parveen regrets their lack of fluency in Urdu, and describes how knowledge of the language would make things easier for them because, *in effect, they have to fit into two cultures*, which she and her brothers and sisters also had to do. Forbidden to speak English at home and denied the opportunity to use her first language in school, Parveen's own acquisition of English was not easy: she talks about being *zipped up in school* because she *did not dare* speak her first language, until eventually English overtook Urdu in her competence.

Parveen's ability to reflect upon the links between home and school and the importance of bilingualism to individual self-confidence clearly stem from personal experience, no doubt enhanced by her

experiences during her teacher training course and from working as a bilingual teacher in ethnically diverse classrooms. This combination has led her to understand the importance of the kind of pragmatic *biculturalism* advocated by Knight (1994) for both teachers and children, and which the children in the study display in their facility in moving between the diverse worlds of home and school, as illustrated in section 7.2.3. However, as a parent anxious to seek good schools for her children, Parveen faces the complexities and contradictions created by a system which does not value such facility, which defines success in very narrow terms, and offers little consolation for those who fail by the terms it imposes. The compromises she feels the need to make are illustrated in the following section.

7.2.1.iv A 'good education'

Through presenting extracts from my first taped conversation with Anwar's mother and discussing them using a conversation analysis/critical discourse analysis framework, I illustrate the contradictions experienced by the parent of an ethnic minority child in satisfying her need to secure a 'good education' for her son. The whole conversation from which the following extracts are taken lasted about two hours and took place in Parveen's house during the summer vacation of 1998. Coincidentally, she had just completed her third year on a B.Ed (Hons.) course at this time. Anwar was present through most of the conversation. He sat silently throughout, only speaking to answer direct questions from his mother or myself.

Extract One – finding the right school

I asked Parveen why she had chosen a particular middle school for Anwar. This led her into narrating Anwar's experiences of attending several different first schools, and her hopes that he would be able to attend a private school like his brothers. He had already passed the entrance exam for the local private grammar school, but the family could not afford the fees. Anwar began his schooling at a first school near his home, which had a very high percentage of ethnic minority children on roll. Parveen quickly removed him from this school because she felt that his ability to read was not being recognised. He then began to attend a primary school with very few ethnic minority children (which I call Leafylane), along with his brothers and cousins. However, a different set of problems arose in this context.

01 Parveen: ... education-wise .. we thought we'd .. take
them out because I've **been** into these
schools where they were and I was **not** happy
myself with what they were doing with my
05 children because I taught them **reading** at
home I went through the schemes
etcetera .. so by .. three or four they were
reading books .. so when I got to school ... I
actually *w-i-t-n-e-s-s-e-d* this .. you know
10 .. there was .. there ... my son was sitting
there that's the reason why we went ...
took them to Leafylane .. you see .. and the
education was much **better** there .. it were a
higher standard and because there was a lot
15 of ... you know **white** children rather
than *A-s-i-a-n-s*

(short section omitted, then Parveen describes the experience in the first school, prior to the move to Leafylane)

20 Parveen: .. I mean they were I actually saw this ..
you know .. *when I was waiting outside in the*
cloakroom .. they were saying . this is the door
.. this is the so ... ah I was **r-e-a-l-l-y hurt** ..
um . you know .. he was just sitting there
25 bored ... so..... when I tried to **tell** them that
he **knows** how to **read** .. I don't think they
were **interested** .. and that **really** hurt as well
.. you know.. and I thought well .. you're
supposed to be negotiating with the parents
30 and the teachers and I was **not** happy
when they were just ... and they just sort of
ignored me .. and I thought .. well ...

(short section omitted)

Parveen: and ... er ... I was *r-e-a-l-l-y* upset you know ..
35 *you feel as if you've put **hard work** into it .. and they*
*going to sort of **maintain** and carry it forward* .. well ..
obviously they've got to **differentiate** .. but
he was just sitting there in that class .. I felt
so sorry for him .. he was sitting .. and I
40 thought he was just wasting his *t-i-m-e*
and my brother didn't send them to any of
these schools ... he lives in Bradford as well ..
but he's he's sent his to *G-o-l-d-c-r-e-s-t*
....p-r-i-v-a-t-e s-c-h-o-o-l .. so they've had
45 the **basic foundation**, but he's got **five**
children .. and he was paying a lot out .. two

.. three of them he sent there .. but after that
.. they found the school in Leafylane .. and
he thought .. well .. it's near .. rather than
50 going into actual Leeds .. and because **he'd**
found that .. I thought... well ... I wasn't
happy with my schools in Bradford .. so
that's why I transferred them over there
but we had a **bit** of problems with the
55 headmaster as well .. he was a bit racist
and that .. with one or two teachers and that
.. I complained to them to Leeds authority
because they were through there ... and you
know you know from there .. the
60 council .. they sent some people ... a man
over anyway to have a word with him ...
they **realised** that there was nothing up there
that was sort of ...just .. bilingual or anything
representing other ... you know ... other
65 cultures and things ... so I **think** they've
started to do that after the man came over.....
but there was a lot of **racism** within the
children as well .. he says .. well you can't
stop that .. you know ..*r-e-a-l-l-y r-a-c-i-s-t*
70 comments.. the man, his **father** ... I thought
well no wonder the son's got it .. you know
.....

At the beginning of this extract, Parveen is describing her unhappiness at the fact that her pre-school efforts to teach Anwar to read were not recognised by the school he first attended. In respondent validation, she spoke of her *yearning* for a dialogue with the school, which was never fulfilled. She describes her feelings at seeing him sitting with the rest of the class repeating simple

sentences in English (lines 22-24). She uses emotionally loaded terms several times (e.g. lines 03-04, 27, 30, 34) to express her dissatisfaction with the school. There is the implication in the language she uses that she feels personally attacked by the problems she perceives in the school provision. There is the assumption that the educational provision from a private school is superior (lines 43-45); which, ironically, echoes the links drawn by Honeyford (discussed in Chapter Six, section 6.4.2) with 'British' culture and quality education.

There is also the implication that 'good' schools are those with a lower proportion of 'Asian' children (lines 15-16). In respondent validation, Parveen confirmed that this was her belief. This was an attitude expressed by other parents in the study. On the face of it, it appears inconsistent with Parveen's beliefs about the importance of maintaining heritage culture and language which, as section 7.2.1.iii shows, she is able to articulate powerfully. She now seems to be denying her children's and her own identity in the criteria she uses to assess the educational standards of the schools. From another viewpoint, however, this is a very sensible response to the situation. If the evidence from performance league tables is taken as the evidence of quality (as it is in OfSTED inspections and in virtually all media coverage), Parveen is quite right to draw the conclusion that schools with a low proportion of ethnic minority children are 'better' schools. Schools and LEAs with high proportions of ethnic minority children regularly appear low in the tables, and so are judged to be 'worse' than other schools. A similar conclusion was offered as a commonsense notion by Honeyford (1988, pp. 211-239). Foster-Carter

(1987, p. 47) suggests that *the plight of white children* in schools with a high proportion of ethnic minority pupils was one of the *core points* of his whole argument. Honeyford assumed, as many others have done, that standards would inevitably drop as the numbers of children speaking English as a second language in a school increased.

So Parveen, her anxieties exacerbated by the apparently off-hand response of the teachers to them (lines 26-31), does the best she can for her children and seeks another school. However, the problem is not solved, as at the next school, they encounter what Parveen explicitly describes as racism (line 55). The man *from the council*, who is called in to address these issues, seems to see the problem as a failure on the part of the school to acknowledge language and cultural diversity (lines 62-66), and the way to solve it as putting up displays. Again, there appears to be a contradiction here: Parveen has just implied that, in her list of criteria for a 'good school', recognition of diversity would not figure highly. In respondent validation she confirmed both this and her opinion that the council's response was inadequate. Perhaps her comments here are only a prologue to the real problem, which seems to be introduced in line 67. This statement serves to introduce a long narrative (see Appendix 7.b, p. 460) which describes the endemic racism of the community surrounding Leafylane, demonstrated in the behaviour of Anwar's classmates and their parents, a deep-seated problem hardly to be satisfactorily addressed by multicultural displays which acknowledge language diversity.

Extract Two – an incident at Windyhill

After the experience at Leafylane, Anwar and his brothers moved to Windyhill, the school which subsequently became the focus for the ethnographic study. Parveen describes an incident where, again, she feels her rights as a parent are rebuffed by the teacher:

01 Parveen: because . **again** in **Windyhill** which
one ... Mrs Scott . she were just *s-o r-u-d-e* to
me .. it were the **reason** I took them to
that school .. it was Mrs.**Wilson** .. I think ..
05 she was the headmistress there before
Mrs. Morrison .. but apparently Mrs.
Morrison was on *l-e-a-v-e* .. so there was
really **nobody** there .. because of her back
problems so she wasn't around .. and
10 erm .. I think it was *A-n-w-a-r* .. which one
..... I went in and said told her that he could
read .. so because I *thought obviously you've got to*
negotiate and tell her beforehand . you know .
because .. and she just turned round and she
15 goes .. I am I the **teacher** .. or are **you**?

JC: oh .. dear <laughs> ..

Parveen: you know I don't know what
comments she made

20 JC: so this was when you so which year was
he in then?

Parveen: I don't know whether it was **him** or
<indecipherable> .. I don't think he was in
actually no ... it was **Asif** or **Iftikhar**

25 I'd gone in for **them** and told her you know
and she just .. well .. she just .. said am I the
teacher or you? and she just looked at me
like that I just *f-e-l-t* like ... I wanted a **hole**
.. you know ... to just take me in I thought
.. you know .. just look at the way she just
30 answered me back .. she was **very**
<*indecipherable*> she was trying to
say you're **nothing** ...

JC: well . it's defensiveness . though ...

Parveen: and that **really** ... that **really** put me off ... so
35 **that's** the reason I **thought** .. *r-i-g-h-t* .. and I
already think they're not doing anything
a-n-y-w-a-y ... I thought . right I'll move
them to Leafylane and so and I didn't
find r-a-c-i-s-m in there .. I'm not talking
40 about racism .. it was just her attitude
towards **me** .. and I thought if **that's her**
attitude .. what's she going to do for *m-y*
s-o-n? And there was no headmistress to
complain to or anything .. but I did go in to
45 Miss Gibson .. oh I think
<*indecipherable*> ... tears just came *I was*
so upset that she could have said that to me .. she said a
few other things as well and I was **shocked** .. and
after that ... you know . I don't know if you
50 **notice** . but I never go into that school ...

Again, her response to the teacher's comment is clearly deeply-felt (lines 27-32, 48-50) and shows that it was personally wounding. The teacher's words *am I the teacher or you?* (line 15) indicate a rigid

demarcating of rôles and boundaries which illustrate Sharp and Green's (1975) assertion of teachers' needs to set the agenda and for parents to comply with their expectations. Moreover, not only is Parveen a parent, but she is an ethnic minority parent. She is, perhaps, welcome to help out at school at social events and on trips, but she is not expected to have knowledge and opinions about pedagogy. The situation is compounded by the fact that Parveen, at the time the incident took place, was engaged in training as a teacher. The low numbers of teachers from ethnic minorities in Bradford is discussed in Chapter Six (section 6.4.1). The numbers of female ethnic minority teachers are even lower. There are, however, many classroom assistants and support assistants from ethnic minorities in schools (as is the case at Windyhill), their rôles clearly subservient to classroom teachers in the school hierarchy. Ethnic minority teachers and students on teaching practice, particularly female ones, often talk about being mistaken for 'helpers' in the classroom, and the pejorative attitudes about status which this perception implies.

Parveen's analysis of the incident illuminates her sense of self in the context (lines 39-43). She does not define it as a *racist* incident, but sees the teacher's attack on her as rather more personal (line 32), and thus, potentially, more wounding. In respondent validation, she agreed with this view and described the teacher's response as *undermining* of her. In making this judgement, she is possibly responding to contextual cues she perceived within the actual interaction as to the teacher's attitude to her. She has no hesitation, on the other hand, in defining what went on at Leafylane as racist.

Perhaps she was more sharply faced with her ethnic 'difference' there than a sense of personal dissonance. Again, she confirmed this in respondent validation, and described herself as being *the other* at Leafylane, the one who was *multicultural* while all the other members of the school were not. In the ostensibly monocultural school setting, Parveen was clear about her outsider rôle. She did not, and did not want to, belong in this community. She wanted to claim no more from it than a 'good' education for her sons. At Windyhill, however, her position is different. The school is part of a very diverse community, of which Parveen is herself a member. She lives near the school. The teacher in question had worked there for many years and had no doubt developed intuitively ways of communicating with parents and children from a range of social and cultural contexts. In this context, Parveen perhaps interprets the response as making her feel personally excluded from a community of which she feels she is a rightful member. Her differing responses to the two incidents also reveal the ways in which external contextual factors impinge on what happens in classrooms. At Leafylane, Parveen hoped for no more than a 'good' education for her sons. This was not possible because of the ways community attitudes invaded the classroom and excluded them. At Windyhill, Parveen herself expected to be included in discussions about her son's education, partly because of her status as a member of the community, and her sense of exclusion was hurtful.

To date, at the end of Year 6, Anwar has attended five or six different schools. He is currently attending a private preparatory school along with one of his brothers, where the pedagogy is formal and the

recognition of language and cultural diversity very limited. Parveen is happy with his current situation, believing that the school is clear about its aims and goals. Her confidence in the private school system matches findings reported by Nieto (1999a, pp. 17-18) as to the success of African American pupils in Catholic schools in America. Again, there are ironic echoes of Honeyford here: Parveen is happy that Anwar's current school will provide him with the kind of 'good education' which she considers he needs to succeed. The rest she can do at home.

Parveen remains strongly motivated and proactive in seeking a good education for Anwar. She is acutely aware, both because of her personal experience and because she is a bilingual teacher from an ethnic minority, of the complexity of the issues involved in education for ethnic minority children. If Anwar continues to succeed in school, his mother's ability to analyse the problems and contradictions presented by the system and to make her own choices will be a strong contributing factor.

7.2.2 Language, culture, contradictions and resistance in the experience of the teachers in the schools

Chapter Three section 3.3. presents a review of the literature which addresses questions of teachers' rôles in children's success in school. Points raised there are illuminated by examples given in this section. Data from the conversations with the teachers are used to illustrate factors which mediate success for the children they teach in ethnically

diverse settings. In Chapter Five, section 5.4, an extract from the conversation with Sandra (one of the first school teachers) is used to demonstrate the ethnographic and linguistic frameworks being used to analyse the data. It also highlights some of the contradictions experienced by teachers working in ethnically diverse classroom settings within a homogeneous and centralised system. The issues it raises are illustrated and discussed further in this section. There are three subsections:

- jointly constructing success: the importance of collaboration;
- making the transition: different models of success;
- home-school dissonance in the views of the middle school teachers.

The first presents data from the conversations with the two first school teachers of the class which all the children attended, the second provides a brief description of the different learning contexts which the children entered in middle school, and the third presents samples of the data from one of the middle schools, reflecting the views of some of the teachers whose classes three of the children attended after leaving first school.

7.2.2.i Jointly constructing success: the importance of collaboration

A distinctive feature of the first school classroom which was the main site for the ethnographic study was that there were two teachers voluntarily working on a jobshare basis. One of the teachers, Janet,

points out in an informal interview the benefits of this for herself professionally, as she came back into teaching after a long interval. She talks about the essentially solitary nature of teaching, *you're not with other people a lot ... you're just thrown into a job and you're there, and you're teaching ... yourself*. In contrast, she describes how she and Sandra work together in the classroom, have regular and very extensive conversations about their teaching, are able to *give each other backup* and affirm each other's judgements. They use their liaison time of about an hour each week to converse with the class about their work, reviewing what has been done and discussing what is to be done next. As demonstrated in Chapter Two, this means that the processes of negotiation through talk are made very explicit in this classroom, providing a model for the children of how to engage in this kind of oral interaction. Both Janet and Sandra assert that they consider this an important aspect of the experiences they provide for the children. Sandra mentions the value for the children in *hearing two adults talking*, which provides a *rôle model for talking*, just as *you would like them to see you sitting reading*. Janet points out how it provides opportunities for the children to have authentic purposes for their talk, as they need to inform her about things which she genuinely does not know:

I really don't know what they've done some of the time ... I mean ... I might 've got a gist 'cos I .. you know . I know what's happening at the beginning of the week with like general .. a general idea and I ... and then Sandra's a general idea of what I'll be doing at the end of the week .. but I do .. you know you do genuinely go in there and not know exactly

what they've done .. I mean sometimes I don't understand ... some of the things that they've done .. and I've got to say well .. can you explain that a bit more 'cos I'm not quite sure what you mean .. and it's not .. I'm not just saying that ...

This section of the conversation continues, (see Appendix 7.c, p. 463), with a discussion between Janet and myself about the value for the children in their having to explain things to her. While I try to move the conversation towards what I perceive are the specifically linguistic and cognitive advantages (such as having real purposes for their talk), for her, the main benefits seem to be affective, in that it makes the children *feel important*. This emphasis on the social and affective rather than cognitive aspects of the classroom situation is a feature of both teachers' narratives. They clearly regard the nurturing of these aspects of the children's experience as an important part of their rôles. Both continually stress the importance of developing positive relationships with the children. When asked about what qualities they consider important for children who are successful learners, both list personal and social factors such as an ability to cooperate, self-confidence and a willingness to listen, rather than more directly academically-oriented qualities.

Both teachers clearly enjoy the time they spend with the children. In a long section of her narrative (see Appendix 5.a, p. 454), Sandra discusses the reasons why she likes to work at the school, almost entirely in terms of the personal relationships that she is able to build up with the children, and the way she values and enjoys them as

individuals. She talks about the children in very positive ways, clearly seeing them as personalities with interesting experiences to share. This enthusiasm is obviously very personal and self-motivated, but she also relates it to experiences she had as part of her initial training (Appendix 5.a, p. 454, lines 28-36). During this section of the conversation, it is noticeable that her voice becomes quite animated and excited, in contrast with the somewhat muted tone of much of the rest of her speech.

The powerful nature of Sandra's personal commitment to the demands of her job is also apparent when I encourage her to reflect on issues concerned with having to work to externally-mediated criteria for success such as the National Curriculum and the Literacy Strategy. An extended extract is given here, as it illustrates some of the contradictions which Sandra experiences in her work, particularly her discomfort in having to operate in the classroom in a way that appears to offer no opportunity for negotiation:

01 Sandra: on the other hand .. not .. that it's *t-o-o*
restrictive . but I think sometimes that it's
not necessarily appropriate for the children ..
especially that it's all levelled .. and you've
05 children who are supposed to be working
towards level 3 or level 2 .. or one child
should have achieved this and that at a
certain age ... and I find that .. is .. is .. it's
quite difficult really because at times you feel
10 you're teaching something because you
have to teach it .. at this **stage** and it's not
necessarily .. relevant to the children ... em

... sometimes the vocabulary .. particularly
for the children with .. you know ... English
15 as a second language . is **so** complicated that
they're not *u-n-d-e-r-s-t-a-n-d-i-n-g* it ..
because there are so many **words** they are not
understanding that they're not getting the
gist of it .. because most of it is .. is .. are
20 **words** that they don't understand ... and yet
that is the vocabulary that they are supposed
to do at that time ... and you've got to **show**
that you have done it ... got to have evidence
that you've done it .. and a **lot** of it ... we **talk**
25 to them about something and get them to
write about it and to do whatever and it
goes in the file ... and you **really** think .. you
know .. I've **done** that for the sake of **doing** it
.. for the sake of having some evidence that
30 I've **done** it .. and I know that the children
haven't really understood it .. em .. they're
certainly not going to be able to remember it
in three weeks because they haven't really
understood it now ... but you've got to **do** it
35 ... and you can see that there's something
that would be **much . much** better ... that
they could be doing ... you know ... and it
might be something that they should have
done when they were five or whatever . but
40 it's much more relevant to them .. at this
stage ... I mean .. **some** of the things that we
had to do .. and particularly . I think . you
find this in science .. but in other areas as
well .. they're **just** not ready for it ... em ..
45 and you've got to show that you've covered
it ... I mean . obviously . if the child's only

50 working at level one . and . you know .
you're **doing** the level one work .. but ..
things like science .. you know . if you've got
a year 3 . 4 class and year 4 is actually on the
level .. you **are** supposed to be teaching these
certain things .. em .. and it's so **hard** for
them sometimes .. I mean sometimes you
feel like saying .. look . I'm sorry I'm doing
55 this . but I've got to do it <laughs>

Throughout this extract, tension is very apparent. The children may not understand the work they are doing, but there is no choice (lines 09-11, 22-24, 34-37). Sandra clearly feels very constrained by the way she interprets the requirements of the curriculum (lines 04, 09-11, 21-23, 34-36), and is painfully aware of its inappropriateness for the children (lines 03, 11-16, 27-31, 37-41). Despite the fact that she says she does not consider the curriculum restrictive (line 01), she seems to intertextualise a very limited, prescriptive model of it: children *should have achieved* certain targets at certain ages, there is a very precise vocabulary which they need to understand (lines 13-21), which creates problems for children learning English as an additional language, there needs to be *evidence that you've done it*, there is, essentially, no room for negotiation in the way the curriculum is 'delivered' (to continue the metaphor).

While it may be argued that this is not a model which necessarily represents the curriculum in its entirety for her, it is clear that, in Sandra's case, she is articulating a firmly held belief, arising, in her own estimation, from a lack of confidence in the subject knowledge

involved. She chooses science to illustrate her argument, a subject which primary teachers are often anxious about but which she and Janet both appear to teach effectively, as evidence in Chapter Eight, section 8.2 demonstrates. The problem is, arguably, deeper, in that she does not 'own' the curriculum in any sense. The review of the literature on 'legitimate knowledge' in Chapter Three, section 3.2, highlights the disempowering consequences of a curriculum (and implied pedagogy) where teachers have no real control over content or assessment. The concerns Sandra expresses here illustrate the effects of this disempowerment on one teacher.

7.2.2.ii Making the transition: different models of success

An immediate impression of the middle schools to which the children moved at the end of Year 4 was of their vast differences in size and organisation from the first school. They were more than twice as large, each with about 500 children on roll rather than the 230 of the first school. They felt even bigger. In organisation, they were closer to secondary than primary schools. Both of the middle schools, like the first school, and unusual for Bradford schools, were ethnically fairly diverse. The proportion of Pakistani heritage to other children in both schools was about 1:2. There were also small numbers of children of Indian and Bangladeshi heritage in both schools. The children wore uniform: girls were allowed to wear *shalwar kameez* in school colours. They were set in ability groups for many subjects on entry to school. There was extensive subject teaching. In middle school 1, from which the data presented here

come, in Year 5, the children were taught by ten different teachers, and in Year 6 by twelve.

While in both middle schools there was a positive and friendly atmosphere, there was much more formality than in the first school in the ways the children interacted with their teachers, walked around the building and behaved in the interstices between lessons. There was a lot less organised talk as part of groupwork between children during lessons. Most classroom talk was from teacher to whole class. These changes were no doubt a result of the children's maturation, the nature of the school buildings and the physical layout of the classrooms (which were all much bigger than the first school classroom and usually had desks or tables in rows facing a whiteboard at the front) but they were also, perhaps, symptomatic of a difference in the attitudes of the teachers towards what counted as success, imposed on them by the demands for achieving specific targets in the KS2 tests in English, Maths and Science. The following section provides a description of some of the middle school teachers' views and attitudes towards the children and their home and community experiences.

7.2.2.iii Home-school dissonance in the views of the middle school teachers

I conducted a semi-structured interview with a group of four teachers from middle school 1 in the school staff room immediately after school one afternoon in October 1999. This was ten months after my

most recent visit to observe the children in their classrooms (see table 8.i). It had proved difficult to organise the interview because of the school's re-organisation and other factors: a visit arranged for the end of the summer term had been cancelled and finally re-scheduled for October. I was concerned about the time lapse (by the time of the interview, the children had been in Year 7 for almost a term), but pleased by the positive response and interest which the teachers showed when I was eventually able to visit. They clearly remembered and knew the children well, and were very happy to give me their time.

When arranging the interview with the deputy headteacher, I asked for any Year 5 or 6 teachers who were willing to volunteer to take part. I explained that I was interested in finding out their views on the specific group of children (Nahida, Yasmin and Rehana), and on the teachers' own work generally in the contexts in which they were teaching. In the event, four women teachers volunteered; May, Avril, Hazel and June. May was the Design and Technology teacher and taught virtually all classes in the school. The other three worked more concentratedly in Years 5 and 6, and taught a range of subjects including Music, English and Maths. In addition, Avril was the class teacher for the three children in Year 6, and so had more contact with them than the other three. All, apart from May, had been in the school for more than ten years. I had observed all of them in their classrooms, at some stage, on my previous visits and had talked with each of them individually in a general way about my study and the children I was tracking.

I clearly had a very different relationship with these teachers than I had with Janet and Sandra, whom I had slowly got to know over an extended period of time. I anticipated that this might affect their attitudes to being audiotaped, or the kinds of information they would share with me. However, it was not as straightforward as this. None of them had any objections to being recorded, and all shared their views very openly and generously. Because I set up a group interview (mainly because of pressures of time), the dynamics of their relationships with each other turned out to be more important than that with me. As the analysis shows, I was very much an observer to their conversation, which displayed strongly collaborative features, reflecting the shared culture of the teachers themselves. The conversation lasted about an hour and only ended because the teachers realised they were late for another meeting they were scheduled to attend.

I began by reminding them of my observation visits over the past two years, explaining my purposes in a general way, and saying I was interested in what they thought about the children's progress in school. The three older women, Avril, Hazel and June, dominated the conversation, increasingly so as it moved away from the focus on the three children and their work in school into a wider discussion of the separation of school and home experiences for the children. As this happened, May took up very much a listening and questioning stance, asking questions of the others and expressing surprise from time to time at what they said. It was quite clear that the teachers

perceived the worlds of home and school as very separate and indeed as conflicting for the children: home was *another world completely*, where *they're very keen to preserve their own culture at all costs*. Islam was perceived as a dominant force in their lives which created *a big burden for these children* in that *the mosque comes first and everything's controlled*. The extract in Appendix 7.d, p. 466, illustrates the way the teachers clearly seemed to regard the effects of these aspects of the children's home experiences as negative for their schooling.

The conversation ranged extensively, touching on a wide selection of topics including arranged marriages, policing in Bradford and the position of women within 'the Asian community'. For the teachers, the 'Asian community' was clearly constructed as a homogeneous and undifferentiated group. They sketched a picture of very separate worlds in the lives of the children; not only of school and home for the Pakistani heritage children, but of 'Asian' and 'English' life in the school and the community as a whole. There were clearly certain features which marked the differences: religion, as already indicated, was one, others were dress and language. The following extract, which occurred about twenty minutes into the conversation, illustrates the powerful metaphorical force of these particular features within the teachers' discourse:

01 Avril: **I would** say that the *h-o-l-d* on these children by ... the community and the families .. if anything .. is *s-t-r-o-n-g-e-r* than it was ..

05 Hazel: it's fundamentalism ... basically .. I think it ...
it has a hold in Bradford

10 June: it's *s-t-r-o-n-g-e-r* than it was because of the
f-e-a-r of losing *c-o-n-t-r-o-l* .. because these
children as you say .. third generation ... *but I*
mean Nahida .. and Yasmin are *t-o-t-a-l-l-y*
d-i-f-f-e-r-e-n-t girls ... I mean .. Yasmin is .. is
v-e-r-y much ... influenced by .. er .. Islam ..
whereas .. Nahida ... I mean .. I've never
seen *h-e-r* in a shalwar kameez ...

15 Hazel: well.. *N-a-h-i-d-a* .. wants to .. to .. read the
sky news like Viv Creeger(?) ... and these are
her .. <laughter> .. this is *h-e-r* ambition ..oh
.. <indecipherable> .. or .. sky news ... well .. I
thought .. *w-e-l-l* .. good on *y-o-u* .. Nahida ...

20 June: and she never wears anything on her *h-e-a-d*
.. does Nahida .. does she she's always in ..
t-r-a-c-k-s-u-i-t what did she wear on ..
when it's a .. non-uniform day? ..

Hazel: it's always western ...

25 June: it's always western ... whereas the others
.. you see .. always wear shalwar kameez ..

Avril: her *m-u-m's* very westernised ...

Hazel: I've never met Nahida's mum ..

Avril: she might dress in their .. in their ..
traditional outfits but she's .. she's .. a
30 *l-o-v-e-l-y w-o-m-a-n* .. em .. somehow you
w-a-r-m to her ... *I can't explain why*.. she .. I
don't think of her as an *A-s-i-a-n* lady .. I
don't **mean** .. that's **not** derogatory to Asians
.. but .. *you know what I mean* .. a lot of them .. they
35 *just stand* there and they go <*yabber-yabber-*
yabber> to their child .. to see what **you've**
said .. and **her** English isn't perfect .. but it's
t-h-e-r-e .. and .. em ..

Hazel: you see .. there are one or *t-w-o* like that .. a
40 *h-a-n-d-f-u-l* ... but the majority ...

Avril: it makes you w-o-n-d-e-r .. if you went into it
.. and you went *h-o-m-e* .. and you actually
asked them to *t-e-l-l* you .. how are you
m-a-n-a-g-i-n-g to be like you are ... em .. are
45 you being *s-h-u-n-n-e-d* by .. others .. or are
you just *doing your own thing* .. *and it doesn't*
matter .. I don't ... I believe it's the second one
.. you know .. I just wonder how they
m-a-n-a-g-e it .. because *I've met her father as well*
50 .. *and .. I mean .. it isn't as if .. he's .. English* .. or
w-h-i-t-e or anything .. he's *A-s-i-a-n* feller
.....

Hazel: .. I think it's probably *e-d-u-c-a-t-i-o-n*

(short section omitted)

55 Hazel: I've only ever *o-n-c-e*, now I think of it ..
 heard ..<*indecipherable*> .. we're in
E-n-g-l-a-n-d now .. so we'll do as the
 English do .. and that's from a girl's father at
 .. at .. Hollydyke .. and she was .. a super
 60 bright girl .. you know .. very few like that ..
 and his attitude was ..no .. we're in England
 now... do what the English do

The conversation is of a strongly collaborative nature as indicated by the following features: there are several overlapping utterances (lines 13-14, 22-23, 27-28, 40-41), where the topics run on markedly from one speaker to the next and there is clearly a tacit understanding of the connotations of some of the words used. The participants seem to assume that they will share viewpoints on the issues under consideration. As already mentioned, May, the newest member of the group, takes on a listener's rôle. Rather than a negotiation of meanings, there seems to be a collaborative exegesis of a shared set of meanings in this conversation. For example, it is clearly accepted that *fundamentalism* (line 04) has a strong negative connotation, just as to be *influenced by Islam* (line 11), demonstrated by the wearing of *shalwar kameez*, is perceived as negative, intertextualising an orientalist (Said, 1978) view of Islam with its stereotypes of violence, repression and control into the discourse. Similarly, Bhatti (1999, p. 151) discusses the stereotyping attached by white peers to wearing *shalwar kameez* by Asian girls in school. That Nahida wears tracksuits and does not cover her head (lines 19-25) is taken as evidence of her ability to avoid Islamic influence. Similarly, her

mother's wearing of *traditional outfits* (lines 28-30) is seen as in contradiction to the assertion that she is *very westernised* (line 26).

Dress choice is seen as symbolic of compliance to externally imposed, rigid models of behaviour. For the teachers, the *shalwar kameez* seems to have become a powerful trope of repression. Wearing it shows the wearer to be docile and passive, trapped in a culture which denies her any freedom of choice; choosing not to wear it constitutes a daring act of defiance. It does not seem possible to them that the choice of wearing *shalwar kameez* or covering the head could be actively made by an individual for positive reasons. LePage and Tabouret-Keller (1985, p. 208), applying Barth's (1969) ideas about concepts of ethnicity, would suggest that, in their analysis of reasons for wearing *shalwar kameez*, the teachers are forming a boundary between themselves and the Asian community. In doing so, they *achieve unity* as a group and *mediate the concepts of difference* in a way that reduces their threat to them. Nahida's mother, in respondent validation after she and her daughter had read the above analysis, told me how Nahida had *laughed when she read that part* about herself. She also argued that *wearing western clothes did not make her a different person*, pointing out that I, who had eaten Asian food several times at her house, *had not turned into an Asian yet*. Nahida's mother explained that the tracksuits were chosen to keep her daughter warm in school, as she had suffered from pneumonia when a small child.

A similar attitude to language maintenance and choice is shown by the teachers in the extract. Nahida's fluency in English was remarked on by the teachers earlier in the conversation: *you wouldn't know she was a bilingual child*. She was also described at this point as *psyched up for success*. This reference to her language capability is significant, seeming to identify bilingualism as a problem and demonstrating the attitude underpinning the comments at the end of the extract (lines 55-62), that the best strategy for success for 'Asian' children is to *do as the English do*. This attitude is echoed in Avril's comments earlier on in the extract (lines 34-36), describing the ways in which mothers speak to their children. The mothers who *passively just stand there* are perceived as having to use their first language with their children because they have no choice, not because they may prefer it to English. Avril is also showing the *denial* response towards being perceived as racist (van Dijk, 1999). Nahida's mother is seen as different from the other women (lines 32-38) in that she speaks English. Even though her English *isn't perfect*, it is clear evidence of her attempts to move away from the constraints of her home culture, for which (it is suggested, line 44-45) there could be dangerous consequences. It is interesting in this light that Nahida's ambition to read the news on Sky television receives such positive affirmation (lines 14-18), though possibly with the implication that it is an unrealistic dream.

Just as the teachers reported by Shepherd (1987) in Chapter Six, section 6.4.1, the group of four middle school teachers whose voices have been recorded here do not seem to invest any cultural capital in

the out-of-school experiences of the children they teach. In this, they reveal different attitudes to the first school teachers. Their views reflect more closely than those of the first school teachers the prevailing ideologies of success within the education system, which entail an abandoning of, rather than a building from, the first culture. The teachers have very little first hand knowledge about the children's home lives. Their views are, no doubt, intertextually constructed by typical national media coverage of Islam and the rôle of women (e.g. Alibhai-Brown, 1998), which struggles to interpret complex issues for a mass audience. Local media also regularly report violent and frightening incidents which have happened in the community, themselves difficult to explain in simple terms.

Though it would certainly not by any measure be their intention, I suggest that the middle school teachers' attitudes to the children's home cultures and experiences make it harder for them to succeed in school. There is no evidence of the two-way communication advocated by Heath (1982b) for maximising the positive effects on school performance of home experiences. The teachers' implicit views on the factors necessary for success, insofar as they can be elicited from the conversation, seem to confirm the findings, such as those quoted in Chapter Three, section 3.3.3, by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) and others, that, in order to succeed in any learning and teaching context, learners need to be or to become like their teachers. This has, I suggest, implications for their expectations of the children in the classroom which can be seen to be borne out in the classroom conversations examined in Chapter Eight, section 8.3.

7.2.3. 'Pragmatic biculturalism' in the children's home and community experiences

Research evidence for the advantages in language processing identified in bilingual children is presented in Chapter Three, section 3.4.2.ii. In addition, Chapter Three, section 3.4.2.i, discusses the ways in which young children actively construct and mediate the different *social worlds* (Cook-Gumperz and Corsaro, 1986) in which they find themselves. In this final section of the chapter, I provide evidence from the layers of interaction which illustrates these positive aspects of the four children's home and community experiences. Knight (1994) advocates the development and support of what she calls *bicultural acquisition* in order to *enable pupils to function with greater skill and understanding within the mainstream culture which controls their lives* and so promote genuine equality of opportunity in inner city schools (p. 102). Part of the way to achieve this is undoubtedly the valorising of the kinds of knowledge and skills which children bring to the classroom, and which the three extracts in this section exemplify.

As part of my corpus of data in the ethnographic study in the first school, I collected examples of the informal talk of the small group of children who formed the focus of the study. I did this by arranging to have lunch with them on some of my weekly visits and then sitting with them in the classroom during the remainder of the lunch hour. I sometimes took a few books or an activity to encourage the

conversation to flow. However, there was usually plenty to say and the prompts were not necessary. Altogether, there are about ten hours of audio recording of this type; four hours from when the children were in Year Three, and six hours from Year Four. The vast majority of the interaction is in English, though there is slightly more use of other languages (usually Urdu or Punjabi) than in the more formal classroom conversations. These audiotapes provide evidence of a much wider range of language use in English in terms of grammatical structure, lexis and so on, than the classroom conversations. I present here three short extracts from the tapes illustrating some of the ways in which the children experience their worlds and are able to articulate their experiences through language.

Extract One – Rehana's experiences in Pakistan

Rehana, who in Year Three was the quietest member of the group, went on a visit with her family to Pakistan which meant her missing about four weeks of school at the beginning of Year Four. On her return, she was very eager to join the lunch-time group again, as she said she had lots to tell us about her visit. During the lunch-time conversation on her first week back in school (which was the week before the one from which the extract is taken), Rehana told us something about her visit, and promised to recount more *stories* in subsequent weeks. I asked the others to think of stories from Pakistan to tell also, as all except Yasmin had been there. The next week, Rehana greeted me on my arrival with a list which her father had written out of the names of the places the family had travelled to in

Pakistan. She told me that Janet, the class teacher, was going to take it home to look up the places on her map. At lunch-time, we settled to our conversation and Rehana began with the following account of a visit her family had made to some hot springs which were *loads of far* from the house they were staying in:

01 Rehana: ... there was this river where it was .. **s-o hot**
water .. and .. er .. my niece .. she had **eczema**
.. and we took her there a-n-d .. w-e .. we
put that hot water on her .. and s-h-e .. got
05 better .. and it was so hot that you couldn't
touch it ...

JC: the water in the river was so hot?

Rehana: mm .. yeah ..

JC: so how did they put the water on your niece
10 then if the water was so hot you couldn't
touch it?

Rehana: well .. this .. *s-o-r-t* of ..

Nahida: well?

Rehana: no .. this sort of ... mm .. **little** .. place ...
15 where the **hot water** didn't go on there .. mm
.. there were cold water .. so .. they **put** the
cold water in a **jug** and then they got .. a **cup**
.. and put some hot water .. and put some
cold water .. then they put it on her ..

20 JC: then you poured it on her .. did you?

Rehana: .. mm .. then my niece .. she wanted to eat ..
and her **mum** brought a **egg** .. and my mum
.. put it .. er ... on .. er .. a stone .. and she put
.. um .. er ..

25 JC: the egg?

Rehana: no .. she put this *s-o-r-t* of .. er .. **leaf** sort of
thing .. er

JC: mmm .. on the stone ..

30 Rehana: and then .. she put the **egg** .. and .. when ..
my.. when .. my .. brother was going to get it
.. it was so hot he couldn't touch it .. and it
was .. it was **cooked**

Shrubshall (1997, pp. 402-403), in agreement with many others, argues for the importance of oral storytelling and narrative in children's learning experience and as a preparation for literacy. Rehana's narrative of the visit to the hot springs, I would suggest, illustrates confident use of the features of evaluation and episodic structure which Shrubshall postulates are indicators of skill in storytelling and important for predicting children's success in literacy learning. Rehana's story arises from meaningful and memorable personal experience. She clearly has a strong purpose for her telling. She has an attentive audience in myself and the other children. She selects appropriate events to render the incident meaningful to her listeners. She introduces and frames the incident effectively (lines 01-06). She provides an appropriate amount of detail, using fairly complex

syntactic structures (e.g. lines 05-06, 14-17, 29-32). Her telling, though hesitant at times, is lucid and coherent, almost as if she has rehearsed it. She handles questions from her listeners with skill, weaving them into the thread (lines 08, 14, 21, 26) while maintaining the trajectory of her narrative. She amply illustrates Labov's (1972b) conditions for the transformation of personal experience into narrative.

In addition, Rehana shows clearly that she views herself as a member of a close, culturally-defined group. She knows where she belongs. Her use of pronouns to position herself within the narrative is interesting. In line 03, she is part of the *we*, the family group who took the sick child to the hot springs, whereas in lines 16-19, she talks about how *they* poured the water on the child; at this point, Rehana has become the observer and teller of the story, aware perhaps that her audience may need more detailed information. She shows the ability to turn her experience into a *cohesive text* (Hickman, 1985, p. 244) through an intuitive and powerful use of referents. She also shows that she understands her place in it all: she constructs her social worlds, first as a member of a close family group on an expedition to the hot springs, then as an individual with an interesting story to tell.

The story clearly had a strong impact on the other three children, and their active engagement is revealed in their questions. When Janet returned to the class about 20 minutes later, they eagerly related the incident to her, Anwar taking the lead, but the others joining in to summarise the main points and jointly reconstruct the narrative:

01 Anwar: miss .. and when the niece .. the niece .. was
hungry miss.. em .. so .. they ...

Nahida: they got an egg ..

05 Anwar: they put a leaf on the **stone** . miss .. and
an **egg** .. on the stone miss and it cooked

Extract Two – Yasmin’s account of a wedding

This extract is taken from a lunch-time conversation early in Year Four where the children were telling stories about their families. Yasmin’s announcement that she was going to talk about her mother’s wedding was greeted with incredulity by Rehana, *oh .. how did you born?* but Yasmin quickly solves the mystery of how she knows about an event that happened before she was born:

01 Yasmin: my mum *w-a-s* .. had a wedding **before** my ...
before I was born because they made a **film**
and I watched it ...

JC: oh .. right ..

05 Yasmin: miss .. miss .. they made a film .. and it was
in **18** ... **87** .. and I were born in **88** ..

JC: oh *r-i-g-h-t* .. yes .. yes

Yasmin: so.. I've **seen** the film of it .. and miss .. you
know .. do you know what miss .. my .. my
10 dad wanted to sit down and my **aunty** ..
never .. *<indecipherable>* .. she wouldn't let
him sit down right .. so she said .. **give me**
some money and then I'll get up and my dad
gave her some money and then she got up ..
15 *and then my dad sat separate .. and my mum sat*
separate .. then someone sat in the middle of my
mum and dad ... and then ... they said you get up.. let
my mum and dad sit together miss it was at ..
em .. 10 Jones Street

20 JC: oh .. in Bradford?

Yasmin: yeah .. miss ..

Nahida: my uncle had **wedding** at Riverside .. miss

JC: and what else happened?

Yasmin: miss .. er .. miss ... we went to a hall .. miss ..
25 and ..

Rehana: we **know** that .. you *a-l-w-a-y-s* have a
wedding in a hall

JC: yes .. but you weren't ...

Yasmin: no .. sometimes they have it in a *h-o-m-e*

30 JC: but you weren't **there** yet .. were you

Yasmin: no miss .. because .. because I've seen the
film of it

Again, this is an account which shows evidence of confident control of narrative structure and vocabulary. There is the same active engagement with the listeners which was apparent in the first extract. In addition, Yasmin, in the same way as Rehana in the first extract, indicates her own sense of belonging in the family and cultural network; the *we* in line 24 and the references to *my mum and dad* (lines 10-19) show her self-implication in events that happened before she was born. The other children, in their comments, show that they share a very clear but tacit understanding of the context and culture of weddings, obviating the need for lengthy descriptions and contextual detail in Yasmin's text. I would suggest that in this they display the ways they are developing as *cultural beings* through the process of *enculturation* (Cole, 1996, p. 109). They are in effect, becoming bicultural, actively learning how to be members of their own culture while operating within the mainstream one.

Extract Three – Collaborative reading of an Urdu text

The final extract was selected for the evidence it shows of the positive effects of bilingualism, of the children's facility with the different languages at their disposal, particularly with the transference of reading strategies from one language to the other. The context was a lunchtime conversation about half way through the first term of Year Four. I had taken a dual language story book to read with the children. This motivated them to look for an Urdu book they knew was in the classroom, which turned out to be a rather formal Urdu

'reader' with repetitive sentences about different animals, each illustrated with a small picture. The children proceeded to read the book aloud together, arguing over and correcting each other's pronunciation of the Urdu words and discussing the best ways to translate them into English. In their reading of the Urdu, they provide examples of the kind of positive miscuing revealed by a miscue analysis (Arnold, 1982), clearly transferring skills to the task of reading Urdu which they have acquired in developing fluency in reading English. In the extract, they are reading the sentence '*khargosh ghajar shawk se kah raha hai*' (the rabbit is eating the carrot happily):

01 3 ch. tog: *k-h-a-r-g-o-s-h ... k-h-a-r-g-o-s-h*

JC: the rabbit ..

Yasmin: *k-h-a-r-g-o-s-h ..sh ..sh ..em.. gha .. gha*

Nahida: ghu .. ghu ..

05 Yasmin: *khargosh .. g-h-a ..*

Nahida: heh .. spell it out .. gha ...

Yasmin: what's *c-a-r-r-o-t* in Urdu? ... ghajar

Nahida: ghajar ..

Anwar: ghajar ...

10 Yasmin: ghajar ...

Yasmin)

Nahida): ghajar .. sh .. s-h-a-w-k s-e k-a-h
r-a-h-a h-a-i ...

Yasmin: it means .. **rabbit** .. is eating ..

Nahida: the rabbit is eating happily the carrot

15 JC: the rabbit is happily eating the carrot

Yasmin)

Nahida): eating the carrot

Yasmin: yeah .. miss

The illustration in the book allows me to provide a cue for prediction (line 02), but the children ignore this and continue with attempting to decode the word *ghajar*. Nahida suggests a strategy (line 06).

However, she is unable to get past the first syllable, and Yasmin actually solves the problem by using the picture and translating the word from English to Urdu (line 07). At lines 08-10, the children are all pointing and looking closely at the word *ghajar* in the book. They then complete a correct reading of the sentence. Nahida's word order (line 14) does not correspond to the Urdu (which is *rabbit carrot happily is eating*), but shows almost a hybrid of English and Urdu word order with the adverb positioned in a possible, though not usual, place in relation to the verb in English, and the noun at the end of the sentence (which can happen in either language). There almost seems to be a syncretism of the two languages here. It is

certainly a clear example of active processing of a reading text using all the resources the children have at their disposal, evidence for the ways in which literacy in one language can support literacy in another.

These three extracts from the four children's language and cultural experiences provide examples of their *pragmatic biculturalism* (Knight, 1994); their ability to mediate diverse experiences and to articulate them. They provide evidence of skills in managing discourses which, I suggest, the teachers in the middle school classroom would not recognise in the same way as the first school teachers do. Opportunities to display and develop such skills are becoming more and more rare in mainstream classrooms generally, where the pressure teachers feel is to provide pre-packaged, uniform learning experiences, and not to listen to what children can bring. Its negative effects on the quality of learning in ethnically diverse classrooms are as yet not recognised. This is a point taken up and its implications discussed in Chapter Nine.

7.3 Summary

In this chapter I have provided evidence from the layers of social contexts for some of the external factors which can affect children's success in learning in ethnically diverse classrooms. The contexts are presented in three broad layers; home and family settings and parental experiences and views; experiences, attitudes and dispositions of teachers and finally the social, cultural and language

knowledge of children themselves. There are intertextual links among the three. There are also points where there is clear evidence of divergent viewpoints and understandings, for example in some of the teachers' views (particularly those in middle school) on the children's home and community experiences and their significance for success in school. Especially in the parents' and first school teachers' narratives, there is evidence of contradiction and tension, of needing to account for and explain events which appear to violate expectations about the ways in which and home and school experiences interact to provide opportunities for success in school.

Besides illuminating the external factors postulated as necessary for success in school, this chapter serves as a context for the following chapter, which presents a detailed analysis of two classroom lessons involving the children who are the focus of each layer of interaction described here, and in so doing illustrate the internal factors which – I argue – mediate classroom success.

CHAPTER EIGHT

INSIDE THE CLASSROOMS: DIFFERENT MEANINGS OF SUCCESS

8.1 Introduction: the inner layer – a comparison of two classroom lessons in the experiences of the children

This chapter presents an analysis of two classroom lessons from the corpus of data, in both of which three of the four children who were the focus of the longitudinal study took part. The first took place when the children were in Year 4 and the second in Year 6. While they are clearly different in organisation, the first involving only a small group of children and the second the whole class, the lessons can be compared for the evidence they provide of talk interactions of different kinds between teacher and learner as a feature of classroom learning. That they are both science lessons is coincidental, though it may be the case that the nature of the talk in science lessons in general allows the processes underpinning the interactions to be revealed more clearly than in other areas of the curriculum. Driver et al. (1998, p. 259) discuss the *problematic relationships between scientific knowledge, the learning of science and pedagogy* and define the task of the science educator as:

.... to mediate scientific knowledge for learners, to help them to make personal sense of the ways in which knowledge claims are generated and validated, rather than to organise individual sense-making about the natural world. (p. 260)

The successful science teacher, in this view, can be seen as being engaged in providing opportunities for the learner to discover for herself what is already known, in other words, to appropriate and learn to control interactions in order to engage in the joint construction of knowledge, echoing the assertion of Shaw (1973), referred to in Chapter Three, section 3.2.1.iii, that science learning is *enculturation*, not discovery. These processes are illustrated in different ways in the two lessons. In section 8.2, the analysis of excerpts from one 'task' (Doyle, 1983, p. 161) in science with learners in Year Four provides evidence for the children themselves taking control of the interactions, though the task is clearly teacher-directed. Following this, in section 8.3, a science lesson which took place in middle school 1 (see Table 8.1 below) is analysed. Here, the interaction remains very much teacher-child rather than child-child, though the children still take an active rôle. It is argued that the processes of joint construction are revealed in these two examples in different ways.

Cazden's (1988) three-dimensional framework for describing the purposes of talk in the classroom (i.e. negotiating the curriculum, establishing control and maintaining personal identity) is introduced in Chapter Two, and transposed into the following three questions as a framework for organising the data:

1. What are we learning?
2. How are we learning it?
3. Why are we learning it?

These questions are used as a framework here to organise the analysis of the talk which took place in both lessons.

8.1.1 Data collection in the classrooms

The first school classroom described in Chapter Two was the main site for the study, but other classrooms were also visited for observations as the children made the transition from first to middle school at the age of nine years. My visits to the middle schools to observe classrooms took place from May 1997 to December 1998, as the children moved through Years 5 and 6. I asked if I could observe in the classes which were being attended by the children in the study. The teachers involved all willingly assented to my presence in their classrooms, and several were interested in discussing their work with me. I tried to avoid saying too much about the research in order not to influence what they said too greatly. I was able to observe a wide range of subjects and several different teachers. Because I was not able to control the nature or setting of the lessons I observed, some audio recordings were not usable because of their quality or the subject being taught, but I was afforded the opportunity to compare styles of interaction as I observed the same class taught by different teachers. Also, on occasion, I observed the same teacher working with different groups of children. Field notes were made in all of the classroom settings.

Table 8.i below shows the range of schools visited and the approximate dates of visits. The Year Six science lesson analysed in this chapter took place in middle school 1 in December 1998.

DATE	SCHOOL	NATURE OF VISIT(S)
Jan. 1996 – June 1998	First school 1	Weekly or fortnightly visits of one morning or afternoon duration to observe, assist in working with groups of children and collect audio-taped data in one classroom (50 visits altogether)
May 1997	Middle school 1	Initial liaison visit with 3 children before transfer
Dec. 1997	Middle school 1	Whole day visit to observe and audio tape in classrooms (4 different teachers observed)
Dec. 1997	Middle school 2	Half day visit to observe and audio tape in classrooms (3 different teachers observed)
March 1998	Middle school 1	Whole day visit to observe and audio tape in classrooms (3 different teachers observed)
April 1998	Middle school 2	Half day visit to observe and audio tape in classrooms (2 different teachers observed)
Dec. 1998	Middle school 1	Whole day visit to observe and audio tape in classrooms (5 different teachers observed)
June 1999	Private primary school	Half day visit to observe in classrooms (1 teacher observed)

Table 8.i Programme of visits to schools

8.2 The children take over: the successful negotiation of a science task in Year Four

The lesson analysed in this section took place in the final weeks of the children's time in Year Four, in the summer of 1997. The purpose of the activity, from the teacher's point of view, was for the children to complete a diagnostic sheet to be sent on to middle school as evidence of their achievement in science. In this respect, it resembled the kind of limited, evidence-gathering task described by Sandra in Chapter Seven, section 7.2.2.i. An example of the completed written sheets produced by the children is provided in Appendix 8.a, p. 468. The whole task took over an hour altogether, and included the following four phases:

1. Discussion of how to carry out the task, and writing predictions;
2. Carrying out the experiment;
3. Discussing what has been done;
4. Writing up the experiment.

Examples of the talk from across the four phases of the lesson are analysed in the following three subsections:

- what are we learning? The children constructing knowledge;
- how are we learning it? Carrying out a 'fair test';
- why are we learning it? The second bounce.

These illustrate discourse processes related to the three broad purposes embodied in Cazden's questions. Evidence is revealed of

successful learning of the kind postulated in Chapter Two, of the children taking control of the processes of negotiation through talk, of the collaborative construction of the culture of learning in this classroom, and of what counts as knowledge in this activity. My analysis also has close parallels with the approach followed by Gibbons (1998) in her exposition of the social elements of learning a science topic among 9- and 10- year old bilingual children in Australia.

The science task was an investigation to find out which of a set of five balls would bounce the highest. It had been suggested by teachers in the middle school. One of the conditions of the task was that it should be carried out without adult direction. The group of children here were the last in the class to do the task, others had completed it earlier in the week with either the teacher or a support assistant on hand. The three girls, therefore, had some idea what the task entailed.

My rôle as 'observer' was explained to the children by the teacher. I was there to help them if they needed it, but not to tell them what to do. They were used to me by this time as I had been visiting the class for about 18 months. I had tried through this time to develop a more relaxed persona with the children than the conventional 'teacher' one, though old habits die hard. I did not attempt, however, to remain neutral or take a non-participant rôle. As I explain in Chapter Five, section 5.2.3, that would have been impossible, and would also have militated against the main purpose of the study, to try to capture the interactive processes at work in the classroom. My presence and

the interventions I made in this particular instance clearly changed the context. For example, it resulted in the children maintaining a focus on the task which they would not have done in such a sustained way had I not been there. I felt this was appropriate. I tried not to make my interventions too directive in order to allow the opportunity for the directions of the children's own thinking through the course of the task to be made apparent.

I am not bilingual and do not share the first languages of the children, so I cannot offer the kind of dimension on the children's understandings which Morrison and Sandhu (1992) advocate. However, the children spoke in English for the vast majority of the time during this activity, so I knew what they were saying. This was their normal practice in the classroom. When they made the occasional use of Punjabi, it was for interactional purposes (Halliday, 1969, p. 30). It usually resulted in laughter, and they always kindly told me what they wanted me to know about what had been said. A distinctive feature of their speech in English was the occasional use of a particular 'filler', which I have indicated in the transcripts as *heh* or at times *heneh*. The children were aware of this, and explicitly referred to it as a feature transferred from their first language use. Sometimes, they pointed it out with humour to me when it occurred in each other's speech. They told me how one teacher had warned them they needed to *drop the habit before going to middle school*. Apart from minor features like this and others of accent and intonation, their voices on the tape sound like any other 8 or 9 year-old child born and brought up in Bradford.

8.2.1 What are we learning? The children constructing knowledge

At the point where the transcript starts, the children are about to write their predictions on the sheets (see Appendix 8.a, p. 468) given to them by their teacher before they carry out the investigation. To help them make their choices, we discuss the different properties of the balls:

01 JC: that's quite what would you say? No .
don't bounce them . I *s-a-i-d* . don't bounce
them what would you say was the
difference between that one and that one?

05 Parveen: miss . more air in . it's got more air in

Rehana: this is harder

JC: that's a bit harder . that's a bit softer

Rehana: miss . this has got holes in it ..

Nahida: ... <*indecipherable*> ...

10 JC: that's got holes in it . but it's actually ... it's
very

Ch. tog: hard

JC: hard . isn't it? and it's actually

Parveen: smaller

15 JC: *s-m-a-l-l-e-r* ... what about that one?

Parveen: that's soft ...

JC: that's very **soft** . yes ... so . what do you think,
then? Let's put them all here . put them
all over here . What do you think then ...
20 . we've got ... hard hardness and softness .
we've got *s-i-z-e*.

Rehana: *m-e-d-i-u-m*

JC: yes . we've got a *s-m-a-l-l* one . a
m-e-d-i-u-m one . we've got big ones

25 Nahida: soft

Rehana: miss . the air . this one . the air . this one will
bounce most . it's going to be ...

JC: now . why do you think that one will
bounce the highest?

30 Rehana: because there's more *a-i-r* in it

Nahida: miss . I pick this one

Parveen: no . I pick that one

JC: listen to what Rehana says ... Rehana
said she thought this one will *b-o-u-n-c-e* the
35 highest

Parveen: why ... <indecipherable>

JC: it might because it's got <rising tone>.....

Nahida: more air

Rehana: more air

40 JC: air in it . OK

3 ch. tog: <indecipherable>

*<the children are arguing about their choices of
the ball they think will bounce the highest>*

45 Parveen: miss . I think the spongy one because it
hasn't got any *a-i-r* in at all

JC: you think the spongy one . because

Parveen: yeah . Miss

JC: it'll ... it hasn't got any air in ...

50 3 tog: ... <indecipherable> I think this one
one of these two

<children's voices unidentifiable>

Parveen: because at home when I wash up

Rehana: I think it's one of these two and everybody
thinks

- 55 JC: one of those two ... what do you think .
Nahida?
- Nahida: I think it's this one here . 'cos it's
- JC: you think that one . do you?
- Rehana: yeah . everybody does
- 60 JC: <to Parveen> what were you going to say
about home when you wash up?
- Parveen: because . when it falls on the ground . it
bounces
- JC: it bounces . does it? ... <laughs> oh, right ...
- 65 Nahida: like ... <indecipherable>
- Rehana: miss . we need a ruler . won't we . to
- JC: right ... good . so, now we're getting on to the
next bit then ... so . you've got to write your
p-r-e-d-i-c-t-i-o-n . and . I think you should
70 do this before you start .. alright?

I begin the discussion about the balls by introducing the theme of *differences*. My hope is that the children will identify the ways in which the balls look different. However, Parveen (line 05) immediately refers to the idea of air in the balls (she has chosen a plastic ball with holes in it). Because I intervene again, the initial focus of the discussion moves away from this to factors of size and

softness and hardness, i.e. the ones which I have elected as appropriate attributes for bounciness. The children willingly join in the enterprise of comparing the balls on these dimensions, using words such as *hard, smaller, big, little, medium, feel*. They are happy to supply the right words to make *my* conversation work (e.g. lines 14, 16, 22, 25). But their real interest is in choosing the ball which they think will bounce the highest, so that *their* contest can begin.

The discussion about size and hardness does not seem to offer the children the potential they are looking for, so Rehana returns to the theme of *air* in line 26, and links it directly with bouncing. Several references to air follow (lines 30, 38-39, 44-45). These all indicate that the children have a clear sense of the kind of language which should be used, and of the kinds of statements it is appropriate to make when engaged in a scientific investigation. Instead of the attributes of size, however (which was my suggestion), they focus on the notion, which they have introduced themselves, of the amount of air which each ball contains. They use the framework of the discussion to explore the ideas which are of most interest to them. The connection between air and bouncing was something which had not occurred to me, yet it was clearly important to the children. Nahida subsequently offered it in writing as a reason for making her prediction on her report sheet (see Appendix 8.a, p. 468).

It could be argued that the children have postulated a viable scientific hypothesis. A case could indeed be made for saying that the amount of air contained in a ball is a determinant of its bouncing properties. It

is easy to see why the children seized on this idea. There is a powerful intuitive connection between *air* and *bouncing*. After all, footballs bounce higher when they are fully inflated than when they are not. Moreover, compelling evidence was to hand: one of the balls in the experiment had a leak, and when someone squeezed the air out of it, it would not bounce at all. Parveen's justification for her choice, however, in lines 44-45, *because it hasn't got any air in at all* contradicts the earlier assertions of Nahida and Rehana that the balls with *more* air in will bounce higher, and so is, at one level, incorrect. As it turns out, though, she makes her choice because the ball reminds her of the yellow sponge she uses at home to wash up (lines 52, 62-63), so she is linking her home experience with the task she is engaged in at school, an appropriate strategy for learning, and one which the teachers encourage the children to do.

It seems to me that the children are participating in the kind of *exploratory talk* where *reasoning is visible*, discussed by Mercer et al. (1999, p. 97). They are handling very confidently the dynamics of the kind of discussion that needs to take place as part of a scientific investigation, and making *personal sense* in Driver's terms (1998) of the *validated* knowledge of science. They are using the language and procedures of science to develop the *genre of scientific exploration* (Wells and Chang-Wells, 1992, p. 46). Though their hypothesis is wrong in the sense that it will not lead them to the scientifically *validated* knowledge about the factors which influence bouncing, I suggest that this does not really matter, as, according to the evidence provided by their talk, it allows them to engage in the processes of

analytic thinking about the conditions for bouncing. It demonstrates clearly their growing control over the process skills discussed by Harlen (1996) as important in the constructivist model of learning in science incorporated into the National Curriculum (DfE, 1995). It also provides a good example of the intertextuality and *intercontextuality* (Floriani, 1994, p. 255), happening in this classroom and illustrated in Chapter Two, section 2.4.2, of the way the children have developed the capacity to use talk as *a situated resource* for their learning. They are able to do this, partly because they have been participants in sustained interactions with and between their teachers and then have had the opportunity to go on to co-construct new texts for themselves.

When I showed the teachers the transcript of the children's science conversation as part of respondent validation, they were surprised at the length and complexity of their discussions and impressed at the extent of understanding of the scientific concepts which they revealed. They pointed out that as class teachers they would not be able to devote the amount of time which I had done to a small group of children during a typical afternoon in the classroom in the normal patterns of their teaching. Thus, they missed valuable opportunities to appreciate the nature of the children's thinking in this way. They also contrasted the quality of the evidence of conceptual understanding captured in the oral data with the limited evidence revealed in the children's written responses (see, for example, Appendix 8.a, p. 468), which was all that the middle school teachers would have access to. Despite the limited evidence they contain, the

sheets had clearly been difficult for the children to complete. At one point during the writing up, Yasmin read the sentence, *This is what I found out* on the sheet out loud, then turned to me and asked, *Miss, what did I find out?* to which Nahida replied, *to use your brain.*

8.2.2 How are we learning it? Carrying out a 'fair test'

There was a box on the recording sheet where the children had to write an explanation of how they would make their test 'fair'. We discussed this before beginning the practical work, and the children wrote down their suggestions. This extract shows part of the discussion about making sure the test is fair:

- 01 JC: what about when you drop the ball to
bounce?
- Yasmin: like . you've got to drop it from the *s-a-m-e*
height . from the *s-a-m-e* place as where you
05 dropped the first one . you've got to drop it
from the *s-a-m-e* height
- JC: yes . yes . what about if you drop the ball like
that . <*demonstrating*> . or you drop the ball
like that ... or....
- 10 Yasmin: miss . miss . if you throw the ball like **that**
<*demonstrating*> . you throw all the balls
like that <*demonstrating*> ... if you throw
the ball like **that** <*demonstrating*> . you
throw

- 15 JC: yes . that's right . if you took this ball and you **threw** it hard like that
- Rehana: it would *b-o-u-n-c-e* you'd have to do **that** *<demonstrating>* . to that as well.
- 20 JC: yes . so you've got to decide the same way you drop one ball . you've got to drop all of the balls . haven't you . and that will help to answer **this** question . this is how I will make my test *f-a-i-r*
- Rehana: fair . I know how to make it fair
- 25 JC: yes
- Rehana: with the r-u-l-e-r . if you hold it like that
- JC: yes
- Rehana: move it with your hand ... *<indecipherable>* you've got to . and I'll tell you summat else . you've **got** to bounce it from the same height
- 30
- Yasmin: do it from the same height
- Nahida: same height
- JC: why is it important to have a fair test?
- 35 Nahida: *<indecipherable>* because like if the other ball and they *b-o-u-n-c-e* it in a different way . heh . and then ... the other

- balls won't *b-o-u-n-c-e* like that
<*indecipherable*> . this way . *b-o-u-n-c-i-n-g*
40 like that
- JC: yes . so that would be unfair . and what
would happen to your results then? what
will your results?
- Nahida: they will be **different**
- 45 Yasmin: <*indecipherable*>
- JC: your results would be different for each one .
and you won't . you won't have actually
- Yasmin: yeah . somebody will not be telling the
t-r-u-t-h
- 50 JC: yes . so you won't have actually found **out**
which ball bounces the highest . will you?
- Rehana: that's *i-m-p-o-r-t-a-n-t* .. we've got to find
that out
- JC: yes . yes . so can you write *n-o-w* . this is
55 what I'm going to **do** . can you write down
what you're going to **do** . and then write the
bit about the fair test . then we'll go and do it
- Yasmin: miss . can you write what we're going to **get** .
and then what we're going to use?
- 60 JC: yes . that's very good – you'll need to write
the *t-h-i-n-g-s* that you're going to *t-a-k-e* .

the things that you *n-e-e-d* . and then you're going to have to write down how you're going to do it

The children seem to have definite ideas about what conducting a fair test entails: Rehana equates it with holding the ruler straight (line 26), and Yasmin with *telling the truth* (lines 48-49), indicating a very specific meaning of *fair*, which may have been a response to my (possibly misleading) suggestion that it would be *unfair* to conduct the test inconsistently (line 42). They mention other actions like dropping the balls from the same height (lines 03-06) and with the same force (lines 10-14). Yasmin also has a clear sense of the kind of procedural written text which accompanies a science task (lines 58-59). Through observing the ways they behaved when we proceeded to the practical part of the task, I had no doubt that the children genuinely attempted to perform the actions they had been talking about, though they were thwarted at times by their lack of experience and physical dexterity. They knew what scientists were expected to do, and relished their opportunity to behave like scientists. They also, except when the power of emotion took over, talked like scientists, using linguistic forms and vocabulary which they would not have used in their normal conversations, such as the use of conditional clauses (e.g. lines 10-14, 26, 35-40). Yasmin and Rehana's turns at lines 10-14 and 17-18 are interesting in this respect: Yasmin begins the sense-unit *if you throw the ball like that ...* and Rehana finishes it *..... it would bounce*. Not only are they jointly constructing knowledge, they are jointly constructing the grammar which mediates that knowledge for them.

8.2.3 Why are we learning it? The second bounce

When they had bounced each of the five balls once, the children decided that they should do it all a second time. I asked them why they thought they should do this, and the following interaction occurred:

01 JC: why do you think you should do it one more time?

Rehana: miss

05 Yasmin: miss . because to make *s-u-r-e* ... it's right

JC: to make sure

Yasmin: 'cos no c-h-a-l-k this time

JC: mm-mm . so what are you going to do this time use a different coloured chalk?

10 Rehana: come here . I'll do it for you . give it to me

Yasmin: are we gonna .. we gonna .. to put the ... heh ... *m-a-r-k* on again?

JC: do you think that'll be a good idea?

Yasmin: yeah

15 Rehana: to make s-u-r-e it is on that mark . Miss

JC: yes ... OK

Rehana: so which one was the *f-i-r-s-t* one to do?

There seems to be the sense here that the children believe they are conducting the investigation in order to be as sure as possible which of the balls bounces the highest. It is unclear what Yasmin's *it* refers to (line 04), possibly the bouncing of the balls, which is what I was referring to in my question (line 01), though it could be cataphoric reference to the chalk mark. Rehana, however, is clear (line 15) that they need to check that the chalk marks they have made on the ruler for the first bounces are correct. When they did the second bounces and found that the heights the balls reached were different from the first, the children crossed out the first figures they had written on the piece of paper where they were recording their results (see Appendix 8.b, p. 469).

The notion of a fair test seems to mean to them that they should do everything as carefully and accurately as possible in order to get the 'right' answer, the eternal goal of learning, as far as most children are concerned. This viewpoint is reflected in their written evaluations, where they all stress the need to do things in the same way in the repeated procedures of the test (see Appendix 8.a, p. 468). This is not quite the 'validated' National Curriculum definition of a 'fair test' (DfE, 1995, p. 44), though the children have clearly captured the notion of there being separate factors involved in successfully

carrying out a fair test. Their own conceptualisation of the purpose for conducting science investigations seems to be the need to find the right answer: it exists somewhere, and it is their task to seek it out. I would suggest that this is a perceptive viewpoint on the nature of science as it carried out in schools. It matches the definition of scientific learning postulated by Driver et al. (1998, p. 260), and is the one captured in Edwards and Mercer's (1987, pp. 104-105) observations of teachers who set up discovery approaches but can only allow the children to 'discover' what they expect them to and cannot afford to allow them to pursue lines of investigation which they know will not lead to the results they anticipate.

However, there is also evidence from comments the children make, interspersed throughout the whole conversation, that they actually see the investigation very much in terms of a competition in which they have a strong personal investment. For example, at one point, Nahida says of the balls, *Which one's going to win?* When she is about to bounce one of the balls, Rehana says, *Ready, steady, go...* and after the bounce, Nahida asks the others, *Did you vote for that one?* When I try to encourage the children to speculate on why their results for the first and second bounces are different, a quarrel breaks out:

01 JC: do you think was it **wrong** the first time?

Yasmin: I **think s-h-e-'s** bouncing them differently

JC: I think there's maybe something ... yes ...

m-o-r-e than once because you might *f-i-n-d*
that they're **all** different or you might find
that

30 Yasmin: every time

Rehana: miss . it's *m-e* or *h-e-r* . it's *m-e* bouncing em
wrong . or ... it's *h-e-r* . or it's *h-e-r* ... holding
the ruler wrong . heh

The written transcript does not fully capture the emotions unleashed at this point. At line 18, Rehana has thrown the balls on the floor behind me and Nahida is making faces at her, hence my attempts to keep order. There is clearly much at stake here for the children. Rehana feels she is being accused of great misdemeanours, and Nahida sees the chance to stir things up. Yasmin, on the other hand, actually continues speculating in a sustained way through all this drama on the reasons for the difference between first and second bounces (lines 02, 12-15, 17, 30). These four turns, taken sequentially, form a connected sentence which shows grammatical and conceptual complexity and sophistication. Her tone remains calm throughout and she carries on, regardless of the fracas caused because Rehana has taken Yasmin's suggestion about the differences in the bounces as an attack on her ball bouncing skills. After her outburst (lines 04-05) and Nahida's goading, Rehana retaliates in kind (lines 31-33). The next few seconds on the tape are totally indecipherable, but order is ultimately restored.

For the children, the science task has the excitement of a game and its completion the thrill of victory or the chagrin of defeat. They have subverted the official definition of a 'fair test' to suit their own purposes of setting up an exciting competition. I would suggest, however, that, in so doing, they employ with great skill many of the processes of negotiation which underpin successful science learning in general. Also, Rehana, in her ostensibly defensive comments about where the blame lies (lines 31-33), is observing, speculating, hypothesising and drawing conclusions, all of which provides evidence that she is operating at a high level (DfE, 1995, p. 52) of skill within the academic genre of science.

8.3 A different view of success: an analysis of a Year Six science lesson

In Year Six in middle school 1, the three girls, Rehana, Nahida and Yasmin, were still in the same class. The class had eleven different teachers in the course of a week, and their timetable was divided into twenty lessons (four each day) with eleven different subjects. They had two lessons of science each week, lasting an hour and ten minutes, taught by two different teachers. The lesson from which the extracts analysed here are taken occurred in December 1998. There were 28 children present in the lesson. In the preceding week, the whole class had made a visit to a science museum where they had observed displays and experiments to do with heating and cooling. The content of the lesson centred on the effects of heating and cooling of air, and its effects on weather and climate. It was organised in four distinct phases:

1. Oral discussion of prior knowledge;
2. Reading from text book;
3. Written responses to text book task;
4. Oral feedback on task.

Cazden's three questions summarising the purposes of talk in the classroom are again used to organise the analysis of the lesson in three sections, which are, as follows:

- what are we learning? The subject of science;
- how are we learning it? The power of the textbook;
- why are we learning it? The pressure for evidence.

8.3.1 What are we learning? The subject of science

John, the teacher, began the lesson by explaining to the children that they were going to discuss what they had seen in the museum to help them to *try and go over some of the things you have done in science in the last two or three years*. His manner was pleasant and encouraging, and he offered detailed prompts to the children to remind them of the exhibits:

01 John put your **hand** up ... if *y-o-u* ... in the
 museum ... pressed a **button** .. held it down
 for thirty seconds and *w-a-t-c-h-e-d* ... while
 the *b-a-l-l-o-o-n* was inside ... who can
 05 *d-e-s-c-r-i-b-e* to me

*<general murmuring of assent from children
 begins>*

10 .. right .. who can **describe** to me what
happened .. Phil . would you like to have a
go ..

Child 1 sir .. the **air** went into balloon .. then the
balloon went up .. and it pushed it out .. the
air .. then it went down ..

15 John right ... anyone else like to add anything
to that

Child 2 hot air ..

*<general murmuring from children; several
voices begin utterances>*

20 when you held your finger down . you
were pushing it out . and all the air went out
of it

25 John right . so you held it down for thirty seconds
. did anybody **see** what **happened** during
those thirty seconds . that you were holding
it down .. ah

Child 3 sir .. all the hot air was going into the
balloon

John hot air .. how was the hot *a-i-r* going
into the balloon

30 Child 3 *<indecipherable>*

- John right . so when you pressed the **button** ..
 these **heaters** came on .. heated up the *a-i-r* .
 thirty seconds .. then what happened
- 35 Child 4 sir . the balloon started getting .. filled with
 the hot air . and it went . up .. sir . then when
 the air started getting cold . it came back
 down
- 40 John excellent . so when the **balloon** .. when the
 air . was **hot** .. the heater had heated it up .
 the balloon went *u-p* . then when it cooled
 down you say the balloon went down .. did it
 go down more slowly or quickly or about the
 same ..
- Child 4 more quickly
- 45 Child 5 no
- 50 John you thought quickly .. slowly .. **right** .. well
 that's something we may not have **time** for ..
 right . that's **one experiment** .. so the air was
 heated up .. the balloon went up .. and it
 came down when the air cooled down

In this first phase of the lesson, the teacher is ostensibly valorising the capacity to describe what has been observed. He asks a series of questions (lines 04-05, 08-10, 14-15, 23-25, 33, 40-43) which all expect the children to recall in increasingly greater detail what they had seen several days previously. The conversation is linear and additive; there are overt requests from the teacher to 'continue the story' (lines

14-15, 33). The children who take turns in the conversation all add collaboratively to the cumulative account, satisfying the initial requirement they were given (lines 08-10). However, the child who earns the greatest praise is the one who attempts to move beyond description to an explanation of *why* events happened in the way they did (lines 34-37). It is not until the next phase of the lesson is under way that it becomes apparent that it is the teacher's aim to link the science work with what the class have been doing in geography (to which it seemed to relate more closely in National Curriculum terms, see DfE, 1995, p. 90). This is, indeed, the true purpose of this section. Despite his reference to a subject called Geography, however, this subject does not appear on the class's timetable. Instead, they have something called 'Humanities' once a week, also taught by John. His awareness of the links between the subjects is to be expected, but this is not made clear to the children.

The point at which John's purpose, to link what the children are reading in the text book with what they had observed the previous week in the museum, is actually made clear does not occur until well into the second phase of the lesson, when the fourth child selected to read comes to the statement, *Clouds form when moist air rises*, (see Appendix 8.c, p. 470, [p. 22, para. 4]). John stops her, and makes her repeat this three times, then he asks the same question of three different children, *What does the air do?* Each child supplies the same answer, *it rises*. John himself then repeats this. He then changes the question slightly and asks another child, *What did the hot air in the balloon do?* to which the child answers, *it rises*. John corrects this

to *it rose*. The link is abundantly clear to him, but it is questionable whether it is so to the children.

8.3.2 How are we learning it? The power of the textbook

There then follows a text based phase in the lesson. The children share one book between two. The text they read is reproduced in Appendix 8.c, p. 470. The transcript below picks up the lesson at the point where the reading aloud from the text book is about to begin and follows from the previous transcript after a short interval:

01 John O.K. turn .. then .. to .. because this ties in
with what we've been doing in
g-e-o-g-r-a-p-h-y ... so turn to *p-a-g-e* .. 22 .. in
your book

05 <general murmuring from children>

John 22 ... and you can put the **title**.. in .. on your
piece of **paper** ... that will be . how does it
rain

<more murmuring from the children as they
10 organise themselves>

John remember .. the way you write your title ..
why does it rain ... sh-h-h-h ...

<background noise gradually quietens>

15 ... and I want . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5 . 6 . people .
please ..

<noise from children rises again>

.. who would .. who would like to read ..

<some children raise their hands>

.. 1 .. 2 .. 3 ...

20 Chn: .. sir .. sir ..

<and indecipherable background noise>

John: 4 .. 5 .. 6 ..

Ch: yes ..

John: sh-h-h-h

25 *<noise gradually subsides>*

... now we're gonna have a look at this piece
of *w-r-i-t-i-n-g* . here ... sh-h-h-h ... and we're
gonna try and work out .. why I've talked
about the **experiment** . *before w-e-'v-e* ...

done

30 this ... right . number 1 .. when everyone's
nice and quiet . could you start reading .
please .. once you've finished the title . make
sure you follow .. Bilal

35 Bilal: <reads aloud first paragraph of page 22, with
some murmuring from the rest of the class>

John: right .. could you look at *t-h-e* .. **diagram** at
the bottom of the **page** **now** . what we've
just had read to *u-s* .. and . I hope you
followed . Kylie .. *i-s* .. the fact that **some**
40 places in the world are very **wet** .. and other
places are very **dry** ... for instance . in the
desert .. one desert . the Atacama Desert . it
hasn't rained for over four hundred years ..
right . but in other places . like the Amazon
45 rain forest it's very very wet ... and ... em ..
even in **Britain** ... you get **Seathwaite** which
is in the Lake District .. that **gets** .. over 3,000
millimetres of rain each year .. whereas ..
Newcastle .. right .. that only gets .. 630
50 millimetres .. of rain each year .. and the
question today is *w-h-y* ... there is a
r-e-a-s-o-n .. it's not just ... well .. it's just like
that .. there is a **reason** .. and it's to *d-o* .. with
what we started off talking about ... it's to do
55 with the fact .. it's to do with if you
<indecipherable> .. the *b-a-l-l-o-o-n*
experiment .. the experiment over there ..
right .. and we're going to .. sh-h-h .. yeah .
come on to that bit later on ... alright .. so .
60 number two . could you .. erm .. could
you read . please ..

This transcript of part of the reading phase of the lesson (which lasted altogether about 25 minutes) illustrates its overall unilinear direction and the repetitive nature of its delivery. The reading aloud is

efficiently organised, if in a somewhat regimented fashion. A lot of children do not follow in their books: while others are reading, their eyes are wandering round the room or their heads are resting on their elbows. There is, indeed, no real need for them to follow – after Bilal's reading (between lines 34 and 36), John repeats, almost verbatim, the content of the paragraph from the book (lines 39-53). There is no discussion, though John does make explicit at this point the links with the visit and the content covered previously in science (lines 53-59), suggesting rather obliquely how the reasons for the rainfall figures quoted in the text can be understood with reference to the balloon experiment.

The reading aloud continues in the same pattern with subsequent paragraphs from the book. The references the textbook makes to rainfall in different places around the world do relate to the scientific 'fact' that warm air rises, demonstrated by the balloon experiment, but in very complex ways, not in the sequential, linear manner implied by the organisation and progress of the lesson, and modelled for the children in the ways the language of the lesson is controlled and structured by the teacher. The textbook has, in effect, become the focus of the lesson, providing the parameters for the legitimate knowledge it is transacting, conveniently laid out over a double page spread, Apple (1993, pp. 48-49) comments on the 'power of the textbook' to contribute to the homogenising of the curriculum, to *deprive teachers of a vital component of the curriculum process* (p. 140), and to lead to passive, transmission models of teaching and learning.

8.3.3 Why are we learning it? The pressure for evidence

After this, there is a phase, lasting about 30 minutes, where the children work individually to write the answers to the questions in the text book (see Appendix 8.c, p. 471 [p. 23 in textbook]). Through this phase, there is a steady undercurrent of noise in the classroom, some of which is discussion among the children about the questions. As they begin, John encourages the children to *read the questions for yourselves* and to *have a go and do the questions as best you can*. A section of the written work Rehana produced is included in Appendix 8.d, p. 472, where it can be seen that she has reproduced several chunks from the text book. She has done what she has been asked, looking for the answers within the two pages of the textbook. Her main guiding principle seems to have been to link words from the questions with the equivalent words in the text.

About ten minutes into this phase, John calls the children to attention and says:

....now most people have got the idea of this .. one of the things I have been trying to get you to do for the last few weeks .. is read questions by yourself and try to work out what they mean .. so you can do the answer... so when you're presented with an activity like this .. the first port of call ... is for you to think ... where's the answer most likely to be .. so for number two it says .. with the help of a labelled diagram .. describe how it rains .. what diagram is most likely to help you to be able to do that .. looking at the diagrams on the page?

.....

diagram A .. which is called how it rains .. so if you use your .. if you think a bit .. when you're trying to answer these questions .. then you should be able to work out what they are asking you to do .. then have a think about whether you can do that or not .. have a read of the text .. the words .. have a look at the diagrams .. if you can work out what to do .. then just do that .. if you can't then that's when you ask for help....

John is making explicit to the children the ways he wants them to interrogate the text in order to answer the questions. The answers to the questions (which have been validated as the legitimate knowledge for this lesson) are contained somewhere on the two pages: there is no need to go outside their confines. What needs to be learnt is there, and the evidence that it has been learnt can be reproduced by the children in their exercise books. The discussions which took place in the first two phases of the lesson seem to have been rendered irrelevant by this activity.

The lesson ends with an oral feedback phase where John invites individual children to go to the whiteboard and report the answers they have written, aided by diagrams which he has drawn on the whiteboard (a slightly adapted copy of those on page 23, see Appendix 8.c, p. 471). Rehana is one of the children asked to do this. She begins by actually writing the answers she has written in her exercise book on the whiteboard. When she is stopped by the teacher, she repeats

orally almost word-for-word what she has written in her exercise book, and is rewarded with a housepoint. She has successfully achieved what the teacher has asked her to. There is no evidence of the active learning through talk which she showed that she was able to enact so confidently in the Year Four classroom. Successful learning in the current classroom has become a very different enterprise.

It must be remembered that I have selected only one lesson from the many I observed in the middle schools. The main reason for the selection is to provide a contrast with the Year 4 lesson discussed earlier in the chapter. I do not wish to imply a judgement, or to suggest that there were no lessons in the middle school where collaborative talk was a strong feature. There were some, though the kind of lesson presented here as an example was much more common. There was a sense of much greater control on the part of the teachers over the children's learning, which could almost be constructed as a lack of trust in allowing them to control their own learning. Classrooms were generally much quieter and orderly than in the first school. The children obediently followed routines and established practices, but did not seem to be personally involved in what they were doing. When I asked them about their lessons, they answered in terms of procedures and routines, rather than ideas and content.

It is possible to detect from John's comments in respondent validation the tensions inherent in working within a system where it

is necessary to produce measurable results and evidence of those results alongside the awareness that children need to engage more actively in their learning in order to learn effectively. He described the recall of the lesson in my analysis as *accurate*. He explained that his intentions were to follow up the museum visit where the children had done some short scientific experiments, and *to try to draw out some scientific information from these experiments they could use in a SAT test*. John's somewhat self-critical closing comment on my discussion of his lesson is telling, summarising as it does the need he feels to prepare the children for their test (albeit five months away, at this point) and his frustration with not being able to help them engage in some *real* learning:

Science teaching in Y6 in my opinion is more and more a tension between real scientific learning and cramming in the necessary facts to help them achieve L4 and this lesson probably didn't achieve either.

This very closely parallels the findings of the study by Galton et al. (1999, pp. 33-34) which attempted to replicate the 1976 ORACLE studies, and offered as one its conclusions that:

....the introduction of the National Curriculum appears to have resulted in an increase in the traditional secondary style of teaching, creating a one-way communication system where, for most of the time, teachers talk and pupils sit and listen.....
(p. 34)

8.4 Summary

In this chapter, I have described and analysed two contrasting science lessons using the same three-part framework from Cazden (1988) as was used in Chapter Two to analyse a 'three-way' conversation between two teachers and a class of children. This allows focus on the construction of the 'text' of the lesson rather than other matters of organisation or pedagogy. I have demonstrated how, in the first lesson, the children collaboratively construct through their talk not only the knowledge to be transacted but also how and why it can be transacted (that is, the 'knowing'). In the second lesson, though there is still the sense of a collaborative construction of a text, the form and content of this text is very much more under the teacher's control. I suggest that, in the first lesson, there is evidence of the children appropriating through their talk the processes of knowledge construction and of knowing. They thus gain power over their own learning. In the second lesson, this is not the case. The knowledge is externally-mediated (and, indeed, packaged within the textbook), and the means to knowing remain under the immediate control of the teacher.

I argue that the changes from the earlier lesson to the later have come about mainly because of external pressures on the teacher to meet targets for the KS2 SATs. While this pressure is no doubt much more explicit in the middle school than in the first school, it is by no means absent in first school, as Chapter Five, section 5.5.2 attests. There are clearly other reasons which contribute to the change, some of which

could be attributed to the differences in ethos and cultures between first and middle schools. I suggest, also, that some of the reasons relate to the differences in teachers' views and discourses in Chapter Seven, section 7.2.2 and to the external influences on classroom cultures reviewed in Chapter Three, section 3.3.

CHAPTER NINE
CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR
FUTURE RESEARCH

What do we do with a variation?

*What do we do with a difference?
Do we stand and discuss its oddity
or do we ignore it?*

*Do we shut our eyes to it
or poke it with a stick?
Do we clobber it to death?*

.....

*Do we pass it stealthily
or change route away from it?
Do we will it to become like ourselves?*

*What do we do with a difference?
Do we communicate to it,
let application acknowledge it
for barriers to fall down?*

Berry, J. (1988) *When I dance* (Puffin Books)

9.1 Viewpoints

This thesis is about difference, specifically some of the ways in which difference is problematised within the English mainstream education system and can become divergence. It illustrates the effects of a range of factors on the learning outcomes of some of those children who

are categorised as 'different'. It argues for the need to critically analyse the detail of the processes of teaching and learning in classrooms within the broader social, cultural and political contexts of school, home and community. The data reported in Chapter Seven, about the lives of people who encounter the tensions and contradictions of living in an ethnically diverse society on a daily basis, illustrate the deep complexities of the issues involved. They show the ways in which individuals and communities construct their own meanings to make sense of the contexts in which they find themselves, at times with great skill and subtlety, but also at great personal cost. They indicate how, when the system does not recognise and valorise the diversity of people's lives and experiences, voices are silenced, possibilities for dialogue are reduced, and those with the power to effect change run the risk of forgetting that there was ever a need to listen.

In this concluding chapter, I have three main intentions:

1. To sum up what has been learnt from the ethnographic study of the viewpoints of three different sets of participants in the layers of interaction of home, school and community; the teachers, the children and the parents.
2. To consider the implications of the findings for policy and practice in language pedagogies related to the needs of children in ethnically diverse primary classrooms.

3. To suggest possibilities for future research which will help to inform our understandings of the kind of education which can *make a difference* (May, 1999, p, 8) to children's opportunities to succeed in school in contemporary multicultural society.

9.1.1 The three groups of participants

In this section, I sum up the conclusions to be drawn from the findings in relation to the parents, the teachers and the children whose words provide the main data for the study. I highlight the contradictions faced by each group in their daily encounters with difference and diversity in education, and indicate some of the consequences of these for the children's success in school.

9.1.1.i The parents

The interviews with parents reveal clearly that their aspirations for their children and their faith in education to help achieve them are both high. But they have to make difficult, and at times contradictory, decisions in the search for education of a good quality for their children. Asserting their rights as parents is not easy, as illustrated by Parveen's account of her experiences in Chapter Seven, section 7.2.1.iv in choosing appropriate schools for her sons. It has to be remembered, moreover, that Parveen is probably exceptional in her perseverance and her understanding of the system and how it operates. Ethnic minority parents who are not so well-informed and articulate as she is possibly do not even have the opportunity to begin to exercise their choices in the ways she does in seeking out the

schools which are perceived to 'deliver' the increasingly narrowly defined models of 'success'.

Despite her efforts, Parveen herself, it can be argued, is not well served by an education system in which she has been led to invest great hopes. She is certainly disappointed in her expectations of a constructive dialogue with her children's teachers. I do not suggest that her experiences are representative of ethnic minority parents as a whole, but the critical discourse analysis of her case in Chapter Seven, section 7.2.1.iv, demonstrates – among other things – the need for those working in ethnically diverse contexts to take account of personal and community issues. It is a salutary reflection on the policy decisions of recent British governments with their much-vaunted support for parental choice and valuing parents' rôles in their children's education that she has felt the need to go to the private sector to find what she is looking for. Her actions are indicative of a growing trend among parents in the ethnic minorities, as well as the majority.

9.1.1.ii The teachers

The teachers' viewpoints reveal equally contradictory and personally complex issues. They demonstrate major differences between teachers and parents – in some respects – as to what counts for and facilitates success in school, as well as among teachers themselves. Sandra and Janet, and the middle school teachers whose interviews are analysed in Chapter Seven, section 7.2.2.iii, can, I suggest, be taken to be

representative of a large number of monolingual teachers of primary age children in England, who are struggling to make sense of a system which does not allow them to recognise the rich and diverse everyday experiences of the children they teach. They have had no real support from their training, and receive none from their normal professional contexts and contacts, in understanding the fluid, ever changing demands of the daily lives of children from ethnic minorities. The 'blaming the victim' reaction revealed to differing extents in their responses is understandable, albeit damaging. For many, the consequence is that they become disillusioned and increasingly disheartened, losing a sense of their own professional value and self-worth and, more dangerously perhaps, the awareness of their pupils' potential for success.

It is significant that none of the teachers involved in the study come from an ethnic minority background. This is indicative of the very low numbers of such teachers in British mainstream schools. The reasons for this are not yet fully documented, as Chapter Three, section 3.3.3.ii shows. Research into the reasons why members of ethnic minority communities in Britain choose teaching as a career and their experiences once qualified is, at present, very limited (e.g. Ghuman, 1995; Osler, 1997; Rakhit, 1998), but it begins to indicate clearly the highly complex cultural and personal nature of the reasons for the current situation. It also begins to point to ways forward, ways in which our education system needs to and can begin to recognise diversity as a central aspect of the experience of everyone in different ways, and not just of a minority. The rôles which teachers

from ethnic minority communities can play, for example, in all-white schools need to be recognised, as well as the ways in which their detailed cultural knowledge can be used, when appropriate, to improve access to the classroom interactions which mediate successful learning for minority ethnic children themselves.

9.1.1.iii The children

The four children who are the focus of the study demonstrate all the positive factors of successful learners, defined in constructivist, Vygotskian terms, particularly in the first school classroom. These factors are illustrated with different kinds of data: Chapter Seven, section 7.2.1 provides evidence of the rich, shared discourses of their home contexts and section 7.2.3 illustrates the range of their personal language and discourse experiences, Chapter Two, section 2.4 and Chapter Eight, section 8.2, show their facility with language in the classroom in Years Three and Four.

A central argument of the thesis, reflected in the models of culture postulated in the preface to Chapter Three, sections 3.a and 3.b, is that these kinds of experiences form a layered and intersecting set of discourses through and with which the child actively constructs her worlds. As such, they need to be valorised in classroom learning contexts and activities. However, the current models of success constructed by the system do not recognise them all, as the discussion in Chapter Three, section 3.2 on legitimate knowledge, shows. Moreover, as evidence presented in Chapter Seven, section 7.2.2

demonstrates, they are not all factors which would be recognised as indicative of success by some of their teachers.

Matching the recent study by Galton et al. (1999) into patterns of talk in Key Stage Two classrooms, the evidence from the middle school classrooms for the factors which contribute to successful learning – as defined in the study – is less positive than that from the first school. Chapter Eight, section 8.3, demonstrates how the range of opportunities available to the children to negotiate their learning through talk in formal learning contexts reduces significantly as they approach the watershed of the Year Six SATs. I argue that this trend affects the potential for success of children from ethnic minority backgrounds more than those whose home experiences match more closely what happens in school. The children may still achieve the standards required in the formal tests, but the danger is that, without the support which the discourse-rich contexts such as those illustrated in Chapter Two and Chapter Eight, section 8.2, can provide, their achievements in the longer term will decline, and their results at GCSE level and beyond will not live up to their earlier promise.

A significant cause of the children's changing experiences in school is that, by Year Six, their home and community discourse patterns, reflecting their cultural knowledge (which is revealed in the evidence in Chapter Seven, sections 7.2.1 and 7.2.3, to be so rich and diverse) have all but become invisible in school. In the middle school, there is virtually no recognition of their bilingualism and

bilculturalism, apart from in a negative sense. While there are arguments, summarised by May, 1999 (ch. 2 pp. 18 ff) for *public* and *private* identities to be kept separate in education (arguments which, indeed, both Parveen in her reasons for sending her sons to private schools and the teachers in the middle school intuitively acknowledge), the effects of this separation can be problematic. May (p. 21) sees denial of *ethnicity* as a *principal catalyst of disunity* socially and politically, rather than as a means to achieving social cohesion. The metaphor of layering used to represent the intersecting cultures of the child throughout this thesis illustrates the need to view these cultures as embedded within each other in the range of contexts within which the individual operates. *Private identity*, thus needs to be seen, it is accepted, in the sense of ... *individual ... intimate ... personal* (Brown, 1993, p. 2359), but within the public layers rather than as separate and dislocated from it.

9.2 Implications for models of language, learning and pedagogy

In this section, I discuss the implications of the findings for teaching and learning in ethnically diverse contexts in relation to the following three aspects of education:

1. Language, talk and learning;
2. School cultures and ethos;
3. Teacher education, teacher development and the need for 'critical pedagogies'.

9.2.1 Language, talk and learning

A central argument of this thesis is of the importance of talk in a constructivist model of learning. Extensive evidence is provided in Chapter Two, section 2.4, Chapter Seven, section 7.2.3 and Chapter Eight, sections 8.2 and 8.3 for the ways in which knowledge is mediated and learning transacted through talk in a range of contexts, both within and without the classroom. The cognitively beneficial kind of talk characterised as *exploratory* by different researchers (e.g. Barnes and Todd, 1995; Mercer et al., 1999) is illustrated. The importance of the social aspects of talk, for example in the home, are foregrounded, and their links with cognitive development suggested. This is an area of language development which is yet to be thoroughly researched. Along with other aspects of this thesis, such findings indicate the need for the clearer recognition of diversity, of the possibilities for *success through difference* (Gregory and Williams, 2000, pp. 10-12) in the ways we learn, and for the provision of a wider range of routes to learning (especially in terms of classroom interaction) than are available in the current models of knowledge and knowing which prevail within the system.

Issues of bilingualism are also central to the thesis. In Chapter Three, section 3.4.2, arguments are developed for a model of bilingualism in education which recognises the social and cultural factors of language change and language choices, particularly for children of second and subsequent generation ethnic minority heritage. In Chapter Seven, section 7.2.3, evidence for the *pragmatic biculturalism* of the children

in the study is presented. This demonstrates in different ways the inseparability of language and cultural factors in the children's experience, and indicates the need for models of bilingualism in education to take both sets of such factors into account. Such models are already being advocated by some commentators (e.g. Blackledge, 1994; Genesee, 1994; Cummins, 1996). The evidence from the classrooms presented in Chapter Two, section 2.4 and Chapter Eight, sections 8.2 and 8.3 of teacher-child and child-child interaction reinforces this view. It also shows how teachers differentially mediate through talk children's access to knowledge and so to success. More evidence of these processes is required from a wider range of contexts and especially from teachers who have experience of different language and cultural backgrounds from those in the study, and who share more closely those of their pupils.

9.2.2 School cultures and ethos

Successful learning on the part of children is inextricably tied in to the negotiation of meanings through talk in the classroom. A central argument of the thesis, however, is that classrooms cannot be seen as immune from influences from the social and cultural contexts within which they are positioned. Chapter Three presents extensive justification for recognising the external factors which contribute to cultures of learning and teaching, and those which support the achievement of success are suggested. Chapter Seven provides evidence from the different layers of interaction of the factors which influence what goes on in classrooms. The evidence of the

contrasting and contradictory views of the teachers in Chapter Five, section 5.4 and Chapter Seven, section 7.2.2 indicates the crucial importance for constructing success of shared values between teachers and learners, a positive ethos and a classroom climate which encourages negotiation rather than *one-way accommodation* (Nieto, 1999a, p. 76).

The contrasting evidence from the two classrooms featured in Chapter Eight indicates how external curricular and assessment demands sometimes mean that teachers feel that they are not able to allow negotiation between themselves and their pupils. Teaching becomes an urgent matter of telling the children what they need to know. John's response to my analysis of his lesson in section 8.3.3 clearly demonstrates this. This is not surprising. John is expected to transact a curriculum, in the development of which he had no part whatsoever. Successful curriculum change needs to be carried out through processes of negotiation with those who have to mediate it with the learners. Nieto (199⁹₉^b) reminds us of the need to take students' viewpoints, in addition to those of teachers, into account in developing curricula which will promote *critical multiculturalism*. She points out (p. 207), however, that such a perspective, with its need for teachers who take questioning, critical stances and have the confidence to exercise their independent professional judgements, *complicates the question of pedagogy* and does not allow for simplistic answers.

A recent OfSTED report (OfSTED, 2000), which had as one of its purposes to *identify and illustrate the features of success in more effective schools serving disadvantaged urban areas* stresses the value of dialogue and negotiation in achieving success in such contexts. Among other factors, it found the following to be important in schools which are achieving high standards despite their 'disadvantages' (pp. 7-8):

- recognising a range of strategies for improvement;
- active partnership among all those involved;
- communication at all levels.

Such findings reflect those of similar studies in North American contexts (May, 1994, pp. 194-195). Unfortunately, those currently transacting 'the vision' for state education in England and Wales seem, at times, unaware of the need for dialogue and diversity of response (e.g. Barber, 2000; Hextall and Mahony, 2000). In addition, others (e.g. Cole, 1992, p. 124; May, 1999, pp. 1 ff) have for long expressed concern about the top-down, patronising qualities of British multicultural education. It is to be hoped that recent official documentation indicates a positive change in stance (see DfEE, 2000; Teacher Training Agency, 2000).

9.2.3 Teacher education, teacher development and the need for 'critical pedagogies'

The issues discussed in the above two sections point to the need to consider the rôle of teacher education and teacher development in achieving success in ethnically diverse classroom contexts. Though I did not address this as a main concern at the start of the study, it has become very clear to me that the nature and quality of teacher training and professional development strongly influences both external and internal factors of classroom success. In Chapter Three, section 3.3, the need for training which enables newly-qualified teachers to begin to develop critical reflectivity and the ability to make professional judgements is highlighted, along with the dangers of an overly simplistic approach. The evidence presented in Chapter Five, section 5.4, of one teacher's daily struggle to make sense of the contradictions and tensions of the cultural complexities which she encounters provides evidence which points to the urgent need for an approach to teacher training which allows critical reflection on issues of difference and diversity. The evidence in Chapter Seven, particularly section 7.2.2.iii, of teachers who are not informed about and so are unable to recognise and value the *funds of knowledge* (Moll, 1992) which their pupils bring to the classroom demonstrates the ways in which boundaries are formed which impede the processes of co-construction of classroom cultures necessary for success.

There is a growing body of literature on the ways in which teacher education courses can best support the development of critical stances and *culturally relevant pedagogies* (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) review the different conceptions of *teacher learning* which have developed over the past twenty years, categorising them as *knowledge-for-practice*, *knowledge-in-practice* and *knowledge-of-practice*. They conclude that the third offers the best opportunities for developing *communities* of teachers (p. 284) who work together to evaluate critically their own knowledge, ideologies and practices, and promote social justice through education. Hoffman (1996, pp. 560-563) emphasises the need to examine assumptions about *culture, self and individual identity* on the part of both teachers and students in order to work towards relevant multicultural practice.

Burstein and Cabello (1989) suggest a programme to help prepare teachers to meet the needs of culturally diverse students which aims for four levels of development; *knowledge, awareness, acquisition and maintenance of skills and reflection* (p. 10). They stress the importance for beginning teachers of examining, understanding and further developing their own attitudes and beliefs about how things should be done, or, as Yonemura (1986, p. 475) phrases it, *holding on to their own voices...* thus experiencing control and power over their own learning. Ladson-Billings (1995), reinforces this with her definition of *culturally relevant pedagogy*, which is appropriate in both teacher training and school sectors. It:

.... addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate (p. 469)

She provides evidence of the culturally relevant pedagogies of eight successful teachers of African-American students who, significantly, are not all of African-American heritage themselves. The one salient factor seems to be the capacity to develop *connectedness* (p. 480) with their students through the development of equitable and reciprocal relationships.

Nieto (1999a, p. 131) reminds us that, in spite of the way teachers' actions are increasingly *constricted by others*, they still have power to *create enriching and empowering relationships with students, colleagues and members of the community in which they teach*. She makes suggestions for ways in which teachers can empower themselves to work towards greater social justice and more equitable access to educational success. She emphasises the need for examining issues of beliefs, attitudes and values (p. 78) on teacher education courses and for teachers and students to become collaborative *researchers of their own situations* (p. 124) in order to develop critical multicultural perspectives. Her contention that genuine *critical multiculturalism* needs to value the viewpoints of all participants is further explored in Nieto (1999b), where, through case studies which have secondary students' own words as their main data, she demonstrates the insights to be gained from listening to students.

McWilliam (1992, pp. 3-5) problematises some of the claims of the 'critical pedagogy' movement, discussing the tensions between *theory* and *practice* which, though in many ways a false dichotomy, prevail on teacher education courses. She warns of the danger of the quest for *equity, empowerment and the like* becoming *appropriate rhetorical garnish*, rather than *genuine emancipatory goals*, mainly through the tendency to see all-too-common student resistance on courses as *their problem*, rather than the articulation of *legitimate and thoughtful responses to the relations of power/knowledge available to student teachers* (p. 7). Her conclusions (p. 15) highlight the need to develop a pedagogy for teacher education which is responsive to *the dynamic interplay of thinking about and doing teaching* ; in another word, *praxis*.

Working on a day-to-day basis within the contexts of teacher education, I find such advice illuminating, but frustrating. The struggle to maintain a stance which promotes an *emancipatory education model* (May, 1994, p. 3), while constantly pressured to meet the needs of students working in schools where central reforms are prescriptively interpreted, requires a great deal of energy. May's closing chapter (pp. 190-199) offers some lifelines through analysis of some of the ways in which one school has achieved an approach to teaching and learning which incorporates *pluralism and basic skills* (p. 193) and effectively puts into action a model of multicultural education which combines critical educational theory and practice.

9.3 Possible directions for future research

In this final section, I discuss the outcomes of the study in terms of possibilities for future research. I organise this in two subsections which represent the two main intersecting strands which have run through the whole thesis, those of language and culture. The first subsection considers areas for fine-detailed research into interaction, mainly within classrooms, and the second research into the cultures of teaching and learning, taking a wider view which encompasses the experiences and viewpoints of all those involved in classroom processes as they unfold.

9.3.1 Classroom interaction and the significance of talk for learning

While there is increased awareness of the rôle of talk in supporting and enhancing learning in classrooms, the body of evidence is still somewhat limited, and from a narrow range of contexts. The viewpoints of the pupils as to the value of talk and their awareness of their different rôles in interaction are still relatively unknown. The skills and strategies which children bring from home and community contexts are largely unexplored beyond the early years. While methodological approaches of a broadly qualitative nature offer the best possibilities for positioning research questions in their cultural, social and political contexts, Snyder (1995) points out the value of merging quantitative and qualitative approaches in researching language and literacy in classrooms in order to include

both the story of the research as well as detailed analysis of its structures and patterns (p. 58). Stubbs (1995a and 1995b) provides examples of the use of quantitative techniques using IT to aid the analysis, which, combined with sensitive and informed intuitions, can very quickly produce findings from large bodies of language data.

The following are examples of feasible small-scale studies of a mainly ethnographic nature but with possibilities for qualitative analysis, which would both support and extend the findings of the present study and which would be very appropriate as action research topics for student or practising teachers:

- studies of the interaction between children and ethnic minority teachers who may or may not share specific language and cultural backgrounds;
- comparative studies of the small-group interaction of ethnic minority and ethnic majority children in different learning contexts;
- comparative studies of children's experiences in mainstream school and community school contexts, with close analysis of the discourse processes involved in the different contexts;
- comparison of the interaction patterns experienced by children in home and community contexts (e.g. social settings and places of worship) and in school.

9.3.2 Life history approaches to researching cultures of teaching and learning

This final section returns to the very start of the study. In Chapter One, section 1.4, I argue for the importance of a concept of teaching and learning as dialogic, and for investigations into classroom teaching and learning to take account of the subjectivities and viewpoints of the participants. My own understandings of the factors which mediate success in education have been greatly enhanced by listening to and reading the personal experiences of others as well as exploring my own. The importance of recognising personal viewpoints in ethnographic research is discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.2.3. Specific techniques which allowed participants in the research to present their own viewpoints, such as respondent validation, were used in this study as part of the methodological processes in the fieldwork. Other approaches to achieve the same objectives are the use of co-researchers, who can provide data from contexts which may not be accessible to everyone, participants' logs, journals and diaries, and so on. These offer potential for researching the cultures of teaching and learning. The following are suggestions for studies, the findings of which could support and contribute to the validation of the present study and also enhance and refine understandings of the factors which contribute to success in school for children learning in ethnically diverse contexts:

- exploration of the life histories of teachers from ethnic minority communities, focusing on specific issues, e.g. reasons for choice of career, experience of racism, influence of early experiences, etc.;
- investigating the parallels between teachers' and children's viewpoints and opinions about relationships which either support or inhibit school success e.g. through matched studies of the same contexts and activities;
- analysing teachers' responses to centrally-directed change in curriculum organisation, content and assessment in terms of their own work and the possibilities for success of their pupils;
- comparative studies of the viewpoints of teachers and parents about different patterns of classroom organisation and other factors which have been identified as contributing to success in school.

Such studies would reveal in various ways how success in diversity is already occurring in our schools and classrooms. They would illustrate how *difference* complements rather than opposes mainstream school learning (Gregory and Williams, 2000, p. 11). Success in education should and can be possible for all members of our ethnically diverse society, not just the few.

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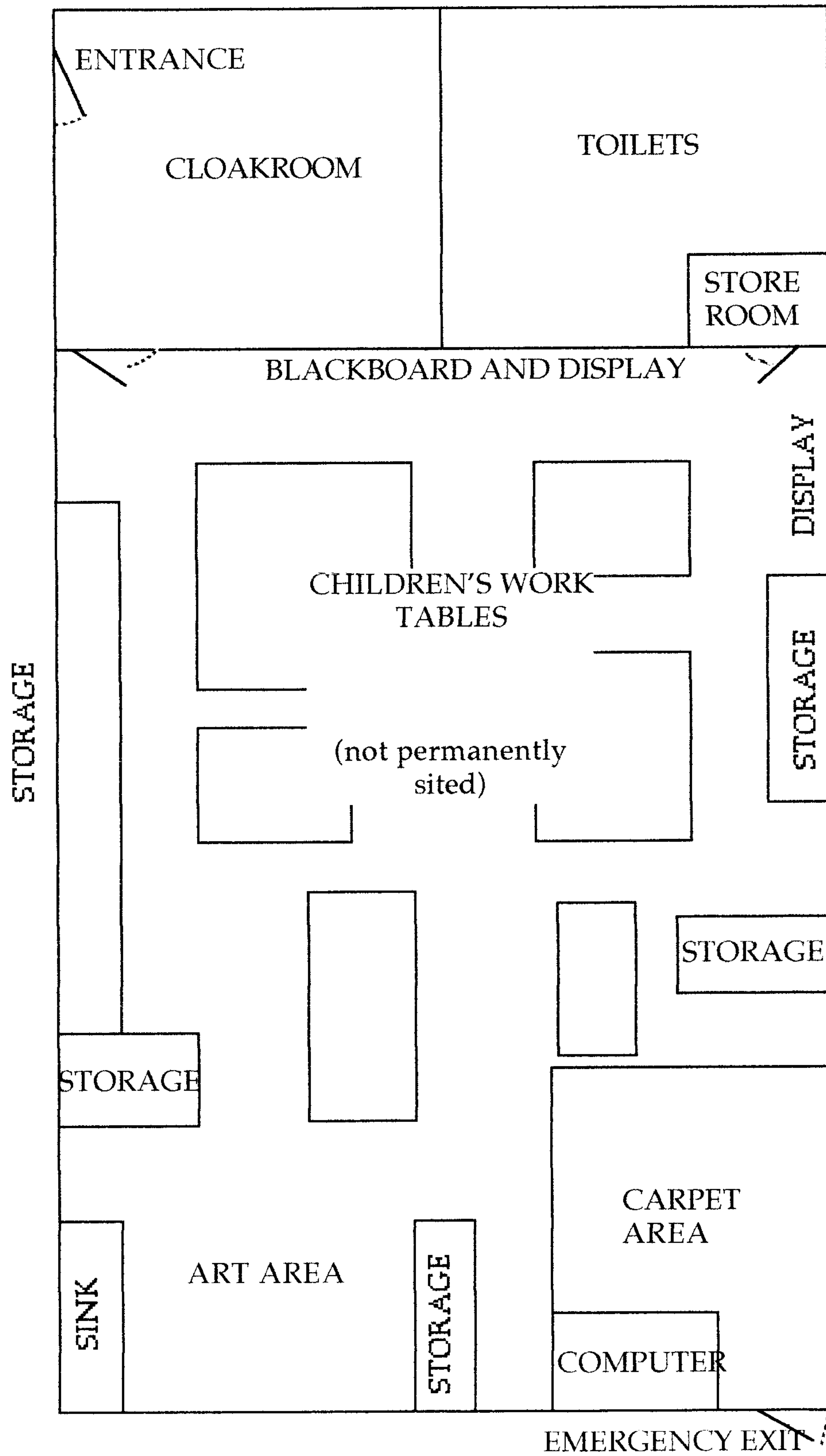
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APPENDICES

Appendix 2.a Floor plan of first school classroom



Appendix 2.b Conventions used for coding the transcripts

The following prosodic features of spoken language emerged from the data as significant for indicating implied meanings. Their extent varied from speaker to speaker:

- The relative speed and pacing of delivery – speeding up and slowing down within and across utterances;
- The stress given to particular words and phrases;
- Pausing

In addition, the occurrence of overlapping utterances between speakers occurred more often in some conversations than in others. It seemed to be significant for indicating sections of the discourse where the participants were closely identifying with each others' meanings, or where there was the sense of negotiating towards an agreed meaning.

I have indicated these features in the transcripts in the following ways:

1. *Speed* – *italics* for words or phrases delivered with differences in speed from the surrounding text – *s-t-r-e-t-c-h-e-d* for slower speed and *condensed* for faster speed.
2. *Stress* – **bold** for words given stress when this would not occur in a normal, unmarked delivery.
3. *Pausing* – 1 dot (.) for short 'syntactic' pause (i.e. when a comma, full stop or other punctuation would be appropriate in written text);
2 or more dots (...) for longer pauses – the number of dots is an estimate of the length of the pause.

4. *Overlapping utterances* are indicated by underlining.

Other conventions used are as follows:

1. I have not tried to represent the speech phonetically, but used standard spelling, apart from features which sound markedly non-standard on the tapes; 'gonna' for 'going to' , etc.
2. I have not used any conventions of the punctuation of written English apart from apostrophes marking contraction; *can't*, capital letters for proper names and question marks (?) where the intonation clearly indicates the speaker is asking a question
3. I have used my initials, 'JC' to indicate my own contributions to the conversations
4. Bracketed and italicised words are used for non-linguistic actions or sounds which I consider contribute to the meaning of what is being said or provide necessary contextual information;
<*laughs*>
5. With the agreement of the participants, I have changed all personal and place names, apart from the name 'Bradford', as the historical description makes it obvious that this was the location of the study.

**Appendix 2.c Summaries of four three-way classroom
conversations showing the sequence of topics**

Conversation 1. 24.9.97 27 mins. altogether

000 Sandra: so .. shall we start by explaining to Mrs.
W. what we've just been doing this
afternoon?

*recall of walk to cemetery near school to observe the
view over Bradford, with close detail of what they
saw, so they can paint pictures*

092 Janet: it would interesting to find out how many
windmills there are ... we'll have to ask Mrs.
Williamson because she actually goes up that
quite a lot, doesn't she . to walk ...

(7 mins.).....

098 Sandra: Before we say any more .. I've just picked out
four of the books .. I thought the children
might like to show their sketches

*discussion of sketches which children have done,
children telling Janet what they had tried to record in
their pictures*

166 Janet: that's a good start to your sketch books .. isn't
it?

Sandra: it certainly is

(5 mins.).....

169 Sandra: right .. shall we move on to something else
that we've done?

*discussion around key words ... what links Windyhill
to town? How is Bradford connected to other towns?
topic ends with a discussion of the word 'beck'*

259 Janet: mm .. it's a similar name .. isn't it?

(7 mins.).....

259 Sandra: right .. now .. who were the children who were working with Mrs. Dobson this morning?
put your hand up if you can remember what you were doing .. Masood ... can you tell Mrs. W?

discussion of counting different kinds of traffic at the side of the road, ways of tallying them and then recording information on a graph

320 Janet: I'll be interested to see that .. to see how you have recorded your information

(4 mins.).....

322 Sandra: right .. have we got any more ideas .. about what we've been doing this week?

various topics suggested by children, i.e. doing Maths and playing recorders, but rejected by Sandra because they happen regularly, not 'special' and so Janet is already aware of them

350 Janet: that's something you were doing last week .. we're really thinking about things we are doing this week

Sandra: Yes

(2 mins.).....

352 Sandra: Ben ... I think you'll be the last person to speak ..

Ben introduces the topic of handwriting and Janet explains how she liked doing it when she was at school, and ways of doing it; a parent comes in to explain that her daughter has hurt her ankle

381 Sandra: it is actually time to go now .. erm .. I'll send one group at a time

(2 mins.)

Conversation 2. 8.10.97 20 mins. altogether

013 Janet: right .. I wonder if you'll be able to read from this graph here ... what about the number of buses?

discussion about traffic passing outside school, based on a large graph made by a group of children (they are standing in front of the class holding it up)

085 Sandra: yes .. I did say that I was going to put that group's name on the merit board .. so I'll do that this afternoon ..

(5 mins)

087 Sandra: right .. OK .. anything else that we've been doing?

group who were working with me earlier in the afternoon on 'the journey of a letter' explain what they have done and show the pictures they have made; Janet and Sandra question them

205 Janet: it's quicker if it goes by an aeroplane

(8 mins)

207 Sandra: right .. that's .. we'll just hear very quickly from those boys ... and Claire and Kylie did ask very sensibly earlier on if they could play their new tune on their recorders .. so .. Jagdeep can you tell us what we were learning in English?

Jagdeep explains about verbs being 'doing words', and that someone found a place in the dictionary which explains it

240 Sandra: right .. we'll do a bit more about that next week .. and perhaps you can tell about exactly what we have done ..

(2 mins)

242 Janet: right .. have we got our two recorder players then? .. Claire and Kylie .. would you like to come to the front?

Kylie and Claire explaining what they have done in recorder lessons, and get themselves organised to play their new tune, which is received with enthusiastic praise from Sandra and Janet.

287 Janet: thank you very much .. I enjoyed that .. it was lovely

(3 mins.).....

289 Sandra: right .. it's time to go home .. but just before we go home .. Mrs. W.. is this your earring .. we thought it might be yours and we've kept it safe ..

discussion between Sandra and Janet of when earring was found and who it might belong to, leads to discussion with children about taking care of their clothes when they change for PE

319 Sandra: right .. so it really is time to go .. people are standing outside in the rain .. shall we start with square group?

(2 mins.)

Conversation 3. 29.10.97 16 mins. altogether

took place on mats after PE in the hall because of the noise from builders constructing the new nursery outside their classroom.

006 Janet: so we've got 20 stones in the jar? .. that's really wonderful

discussion about the behaviour which has earned the class their rewards; lining up quietly, being polite, etc.

038 Janet: <indecipherable> .. settling children on mats

(2 mins)

039 Sandra: we've been looking at old photos of the school to see how it used to be

the task children had to do is explained to Janet , who asks the children to explain why they were looking at the old photos, Sandra explains to Janet that the children drew their own pictures after looking at the photos

069 Janet: oh yes .. I'll try to get time to have a look at those

(2 min.)

071 Janet: right .. what shall we talk about now?

children introduce the topic of the Tudor dance they have been learning to perform; Janet suggests they can perform it in the hall for Sandra because there is space to do it, praises children for learning it so quickly

088 Sandra: you remembered that because you did it with Mrs. W. last week ..

Janet: something we did last week .. that's right .. Kylie .. we were . weren't we .. try to think of something we have done this week

(1 min.)

090 Sandra: erm Salnan

Salnan: paired reading

Sandra: what do we do in paired reading?

children explain to Janet how they have been organised into pairs and have had two 'goes' at doing a paired reading session. Janet suggests to Sandra that she could continue with this, and see if children can remember who their partners are, Sandra agrees that this is a good idea

135 Janet: I'll try that out on Friday and see if we can remember who their reading partner is don't tell me now, tell me on Friday ..

(3 mins.)

137 Sandra: Surmehd

Surmehd gives a long and detailed account of a poem she had chosen in a reading session with me earlier in the afternoon, and is praised by both teachers for remembering so well, but there is no interaction with the content of what she said, general discussion of choosing a poem, to which a few other children contribute briefly, one of them mentioning that he had chosen a poem for me

169: JC: he warned us it was a bit rude .. but we didn't mind ..

Janet: oh .. right ..

(2 mins.)

169: Sandra: right .. it's almost time to stop .. it's very rushed this afternoon .. er Jagdeep

child introduces the topic of the death of a support assistant from the school, Janet explains that they have been given the chance to write about their memories, and are going to make a picture of some pressed flowers, then talk about their memories in assembly

230: Sandra: .. and Mrs. M. has said we'll have a special assembly

(3 mins.)

232: Sandra: let's just see how you can do the dance .. and Mrs. W. and Mrs. Conteh can see

a group of children perform the dance they have just learnt (to music); enthusiastic praise from Janet and applause from the rest of the class. Janet talks about how hard she finds it when she tries to learn a new dance, how carefully the children must have listened to learn the moves, etc.

277 Janet: well done .. good

(2 mins.)

278 Sandra: now, we are going to have to go back to the classroom ..

Janet: right ..

organisation for going back to the classroom

(1 min.)

Conversation 4. 05.11.97 27 mins. altogether

002 Child: <indecipherable>

Janet: ah ... now he's answered my question .. I was wondering what you were doing this afternoon

Janet leads the children in explaining to Sandra about the walk they have just been on, to an old building in the locality, which was the site of the school, and is now used as a Sunday school building. They talk about looking at old maps to find out how the streets have changed, and old photos to see what the buildings originally looked like. They describe the drawings they have done and the photos they have taken of the building; Sandra questions them closely.

136 Sandra: we thought it might rain .. and there were a few drops as we were walking back but it wasn't so bad ...

Janet: good ..

Silence for a few seconds on the tape while everyone relaxes after quite a long and intense conversation.

(9 mins.)

139 Sandra: right ... Amy

Amy: we had to look at photos and draw them

Janet asks if these are new photos, and Sandra explains that they are ones she has taken, and children have been looking at them to see what they could notice about the modern buildings. During this, three children who had been sent out earlier for misbehaving are allowed to come back and sit on the carpet. Janet talks about how she had watched a video with the children the previous week, but the photos are probably better.

166 Janet: I'll look forward to looking at that

(2 mins.)

167 Naya: miss ... can I say something?

Sandra: .. mmm ..

Naya: miss .. we've got new books on storywriting ...
and we've been doing bookmarks on bonfire ..
miss

Janet points out to Naya that she has mentioned two topics, and asks her to choose one to talk about. Naya chooses to talk about the new exercise books they have been given to write stories, and Sandra picks up the topic, explaining to Janet that these are new 'special' books for Monday afternoons, but some children are getting confused with choosing which books to use.

198 Sandra: it should be easy to know .. which book is
which .. really

(2 mins.)

200 Sandra: right .. now then ..

Mohsin: miss .. we've been doing bonfire bookmarks

Janet expresses interest in what Mohsin means by this, and a discussion ensues, to which many children contribute, about firework safety, and making bookmarks with slogans to remind them of the firework code

279 Sandra: so those were the three messages we had to
remember

(5 mins.)

281 Sandra: we practised them in handwriting practice first .. didn't we?

Child: miss .. letter 'r'

Sandra: good girl .. yes .. you remembered

Sandra explains to Janet that this is the letter they have been practising in handwriting this week. Janet talks about how it was always a letter she found difficult, and how much she enjoyed handwriting when she was at school, a child gives a lengthy explanation about how to form letter 'r'

299 Sandra: ... mmm ... mmm

(1 min.)

301 Janet: Anila's got her hand up

Anila: miss ... we've been doing some speech mark work .. miss .. and there's some on the board

Discussion between Janet and Sandra about when the speech mark work started, and how it influenced the children's writing.

331 Janet: I did notice how it stood out in some of the children's work

(2 mins.)

332 Sandra: ... right then...

Janet: ..yes?..

Different children suggest a range of topics, including 'fraction work', 'my birthday' and 'going swimming'. None of these are accepted as valid topics and there is some discussion about what makes a valid topic. Then someone mentions 'number bonds'

347 Janet: oh ... number bonds ..

(1 mins.)

349 Sandra: yes .. we've just started to practise ..

Sandra guides the children in explaining to Janet how they are regularly practising number bonds to 10; many children join in with examples.

392 Janet: I'm glad they're doing that .. it will help for the maths we're doing on Friday .. it's nice to see the children making good use of their time .. don't waste your time

(3 mins.)

394 Sandra: .. Usman ..

Usman: yeah . miss .. art work and handwriting

Nabila: .. RE .. about Jesus

There is some negotiation of the topic, then Nabila is allowed to tell the story about converting water to wine which the children have heard in an RE lesson, with contributions from other children. Surmehd has brought in her grandmother's Koran, and both teachers express interest in it.

425 tape ends just before conclusion of conversation

(2 mins.)

Appendix 3.a Modifications for certain pupils in Wales (p. 32 of
The National Curriculum Orders for England,
second page-proof copy, 1994)

MODIFICATIONS FOR CERTAIN PUPILS IN WALES

Key Stage 2 Programme of Study

- **1.** These modifications to the Key Stage 2 Programme of Study apply only to pupils in Welsh speaking classes who are excepted from the requirements relating to the provisions of the National Curriculum with regard to the teaching of English for Key Stage 1. The pupils excepted are those who are in a group where the medium of teaching is wholly or partly in Welsh for more than half of the National Curriculum foundation subjects and Religious Education, and Welsh.

- **2.** Pupils who have been taught through the medium of Welsh in Key Stage 1 will have developed skills in and knowledge about language similar to those pupils taught through English, and will generally display a growing confidence in their use of language.

- **3.** The development of English and Welsh should be seen as mutually supportive. This may require modification of the teaching within the programme of study at Key Stage 2, but this will be slight and should ensure activities that:
 - build on the English language experiences of the home and of the community at large;
 - encourage pupils to transfer their skills in, and knowledge and understanding of, one language to the other;
 - draw pupils' attention, in a structured and systematic way, to the similarities and differences between the two languages;
 - assist pupils to acquire appropriate terminology that will enable them to discuss these similarities and differences purposefully;
 - develop pupils' understanding of the social contexts in which the languages are used;
 - provide a variety of reading material, *eg pupils' own work, the media, literature, reference books*, that will highlight these social contexts.

Appendix 5.a Sandra's attitudes to the children in the class

01 Sandra: I'm **interested** in the children um ... I
mean *le-n-j-o-y* .. sort of finding out about
them as well .. you know .. they tell me
things about **their** family and their
05 background and their trips ... um I mean
I'm interested I'm interested in the children .. um ...
you know the Asian children .. I mean that
was my interest when I was at college .. that was ...
that was actually my long study .. you know
10 .. my

JC: dissertation ..

Sandra: **yeah** .. that's .. I don't think we used that
word at college . dissertation but .. um .. I
mean you know .. that was my .. er .. my
15 **main subject** at college .. was ... education in
a multicultural society ..

JC: oh .. really .. yes

Sandra: I **wanted** to teach in a inner school .. where
there were lots of children from different
20 cultures .. I mean that's something that I
really .. like .. um

JC: 'cos you're not .. um .. I mean you're not
from Bradford .. originally are you?

Sandra: **no** .. I'm not .. I'm from ... well my parents
are up in the Yorkshire Dales now ... um ...
25 in fact .. I've never *r-e-a-l-l-y* lived in a .. well

.. in a **city** .. it was *g-o-i-n-g t-o c-o-l-l-e-g-e* ..
you know I went to college in Scarborough
that .. we had somebody there who .. was
30 interested in multicultural education .. really
really interested .. and he would .. he sent us
to **Bradford** for a week .. then sent us to
Huddersfield for six weeks .. and he sent us
to **Coventry** for a week .. I just thought it was
35 just fantastic .. there was just so **much** ..
more .. that I hadn't .. really experienced ..
and that was why I wanted to come and
teach in a Bradford school .. and I still like
that aspect of it .. I mean obviously with us
40 it's mainly ... um ... Muslim families ..
Pakistani Muslim families ... um ... but even
within just the one.. religion and the one
culture there's **so much** of interest .. and
then .. you know on the odd occasion you get
45 a child from **Hungary** or a child from the
circus .. you know it's so ... that is **something**
I really like .. the diversity .. and I think I
would find it hard ... **not** to have that .. really

JC: although you were saying before .. the
50 **language p-r-o-b-l-e-m-s** .. you know .. there
was something that .. er I mean that
comes along with the

Sandra: *y-e-s* .. it does come along .. yeah .. yes but
that isn't something I find *a-s h-a-r-d* as
55 some of the other things .. I think again
because I've had .. you know .. we did .. we
did **talk** about that back at college .. and we
did do quite a lot of things about that at

60 college .. um .. and it is something that I've
really got an **interest** in .. you know .. um .. I
think you've got everything you would have
in another school *p-l-u-s* .. a lot of other
things as well really .. haven't you?

65 JC: yes .. yes .. but .. you see them as a **plus** ..
whereas other people might see them as
.. um .. yes

Sandra: *o-h* other people would .. well .. I'm sure
some people would think . well .. in fact
some people would **say** to me when .. you
70 know when I said I'd got a job in Bradford ..
they would .. couldn't you get a job
anywhere else? ... *<laughs>* ... well I
wanted a job in Bradford .. you know ..
there's lovely little village schools .. why..
75 why go to this place where the children can't
speak *E-n-g-l-i-s-h*? .. well .. it's all *p-a-r-t* of
it .. I love it really ... in some ways I would
love to **be** .. a section 11 teacher and just do
that ... I mean I *w-o-u-l-d-n-'t* love to **be** what
80 goes with it ... I mean .. the **trauma** about
your **job** and not knowing .. where you are ..
and that ... and I do like having .. a *c-l-a-s-s*
rather than just working with the groups ...
but I would .. I would quite like .. **that**
85 ... really ... I mean I suppose my ideal would
just be a *s-m-a-l-l c-l-a-s-s* of perhaps
children that all had language problems .. in
my class .. perhaps say ten children to really
... I'd sort of love that ... that would be
90 wonderful.

Appendix 6.a Population estimates for Bradford District and 'Windyhill' Ward, 1981 and 1996

Population 1981 - 1991 - 1996

'Windyhill' ward		Population Estimates				% of total population	Annual change	Notes
		South Asian	White/Black/Other	All groups				
Aged 0-4	1981	440	790	1,240	8.2%		1981 and 1991. Population derived from the national Census in each year 1996. Population is an average of two methods of calculation (a) The count of GP patient records held by the Health Authority (b) Updating the 1991 Census Both methods use counts from the electoral register The uncertainty in the 1996 population is the difference between the two methods, divided by two, uncertainty far from zero indicates a less reliable estimate. Rounding. Each population estimate is independently rounded to the nearest 10 people Percentages are based on unrounded figures Annual change. The percentage change between 1981 and 1991, divided by ten, and, the percentage change between 1991 and 1996, divided by 5. Retired. Age 60 for women, 65 for men.	
	1991	440	890	1,330	8.0%	+0.7%		
	1996	550	810	1,360	7.9%	+0.5%		
	(Uncertainty)	20	30	50				
Aged 5-15	1981	640	1,900	2,540	16.7%			
	1991	1,020	1,680	2,700	16.2%	+0.6%		
	1996	1,030	1,810	2,830	16.5%	+1.0%		
	(Uncertainty)	-10	30	20				
Aged 16-24	1981	400	1,960	2,360	15.5%			
	1991	690	1,820	2,520	15.1%	+0.7%		
	1996	820	1,450	2,280	13.3%	-1.9%		
	(Uncertainty)	0	-60	-60				
Aged 25-44	1981	640	3,060	3,710	24.4%			
	1991	810	4,270	5,090	30.5%	+3.7%		
	1996	1,130	4,330	5,460	31.8%	+1.5%		
	(Uncertainty)	-10	-70	-80				
Aged 45-Retired	1981	370	2,570	2,940	19.4%			
	1991	350	2,020	2,370	14.2%	-1.5%		
	1996	370	2,140	2,500	14.6%	+1.1%		
	(Uncertainty)	0	90	80				
Aged Retired-74	1981	50	1,490	1,540	10.1%			
	1991	60	1,610	1,690	10.1%	+1.0%		
	1996	150	1,520	1,680	9.8%	-0.1%		
	(Uncertainty)	0	10	20				
Aged 75+	1981	30	840	860	5.7%			
	1991	10	1,000	1,020	6.1%	+1.9%		
	1996	20	1,050	1,070	6.2%	+1.0%		
	(Uncertainty)	0	70	70				
Total (all ages)	1981	2,570	12,620	15,190	100.0%			
	1991	3,400	13,300	16,700	100.0%	+1.0%		
	1996	4,070	13,110	17,180	100.0%	+0.6%		
	(Uncertainty)	10	80	90				

Bradford District		Population Estimates				% of total population	Average annual change
		South Asian	White/Black/Other	All groups			
Aged 0-4	1981	8,210	26,100	34,310	7.4%		
	1991	8,350	28,370	36,720	7.7%	+0.7%	
	1996	10,710	25,320	36,030	7.5%	-0.4%	
Aged 5-15	1981	12,260	66,410	78,670	16.9%		
	1991	19,320	55,180	74,490	15.7%	-0.5%	
	1996	19,510	58,400	77,910	16.1%	+0.9%	
Aged 16-24	1981	8,080	59,400	67,480	14.5%		
	1991	12,960	52,150	65,110	13.7%	-0.4%	
	1996	15,170	44,060	59,230	12.3%	-1.8%	
Aged 25-44	1981	12,400	104,600	117,000	25.2%		
	1991	16,350	122,330	138,680	29.2%	+1.9%	
	1996	22,370	121,260	143,620	29.7%	+0.7%	
Aged 45-Retired	1981	6,210	81,810	88,020	12.9%		
	1991	6,720	73,550	80,270	16.9%	-0.9%	
	1996	7,480	78,890	86,370	17.9%	+1.5%	
Aged Retired-74	1981	1,100	51,070	52,170	11.2%		
	1991	1,470	48,120	49,590	10.4%	-0.5%	
	1996	2,580	46,320	48,900	10.1%	-0.3%	
Aged 75+	1981	560	26,620	27,180	5.8%		
	1991	300	29,990	30,290	6.4%	+1.1%	
	1996	420	30,390	30,800	6.4%	+0.3%	
Total (all ages)	1981	48,810	416,000	464,810	100.0%		
	1991	65,460	409,700	475,160	100.0%	+0.2%	
	1996	78,220	404,640	482,860	100.0%	+0.3%	

Prepared by the Research Section, City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, July 1997
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Appendix 7.a Field notes of first visit to Yasmin's house

24. 6. 97 (*A few weeks before Yasmin was to transfer from first to middle school*)

When I got to the classroom (at about 1 p.m.), Yasmin said something to me about going to her house after school. She kept referring to it (she was in the first group I recorded stories with). I kept asking her to wait until later. By the end of school, she was nearly bursting. Her little sister, Arifa, appeared at the door and said, "Are you coming to our house?" We set off, deciding it was better to go in the car than to walk. On the way, Arifa said something about Yasmin not being happy about boys in school. Yasmin kept wondering aloud whether we should go to the front door or the back door. We arrived at the back door and Y. was still undecided if this was the right thing to do. We went inside to an absolutely immaculate and huge kitchen with an elaborate fireplace, two settees and a beautiful rug filling most of the floor space, baby asleep on one settee and grandmother (?) watching over her. Y. was very unsure of what to do, but conscious of the need for etiquette – she invited me up to her bedroom. She and Arifa put scarves over their heads then went off to find their mother. I was left with grandma and sleeping baby. We smiled at each other, then more people arrived – a silent boy (who turned out to be a cousin in Yr. 7 at Windyhill), two women (one young, one old) and a small child. Y. and A. came back, got changed and the youngest woman made a cup of tea. The children sat in the corner of the room, Y. smiling proudly at me. Eventually, Mum arrived with two little girls, followed soon by Dad and another man. Mum polite, articulate; Dad rather wary and taciturn. So there we were, sitting on the two settees; two grandmothers (who were sisters), mother, father, aunt, uncle and six children, including the baby, who woke up, totally calm, to be absorbed into the group. Y's mother engaged me in conversation about what I was doing – she had clearly read the letter carefully (sent previously to ask permission to visit) and was interested to know what I thought about her daughter's ability and progress. Her father

had a few, incisive questions, “How will it help Yasmin?” and whether any other children were involved. When I told him there were four, he asked if they were all Asian children. He then asked me about other schools I worked in, and worked out dates and places immediately when I told him. The problem about boys and Y. was discussed – she had been assigned a male ‘guardian’ for when she starts at Windyhill next term, and was upset about it, because – as her mother explained – “We like to keep girls and boys separate”. The Yr. 7 cousin chipped in and explained that he was a guardian for another child, and that the school had reorganised things by giving some Yr. 7 girls two first school girls to ‘guard’ so that everyone had a same-sex guardian, but there were “too much girls” this year. This was all gravely discussed and considered by the family group, the grandmothers smiling approval. Y’s mother explained that they hadn’t really had time to think about the letter I had sent because two uncles had died in Pakistan, brothers to the Grandmas, and one of the grandmothers wasn’t well. They were still having a lot of visitors. She said they would be happy for me to come back and talk more, so that’s where we left it. I left them all sitting there, a safe and comfortable extended family group – Y. beaming with satisfaction – I think she was pleased that things had gone so well.

Appendix 7.b

Parveen's account of racism at Leafylane

01 Parveen: there was a lot of **racism** within the **children**
as well . he says . well . you can't stop that .
you know . *r-e-a-l-l-y r-a-c-i-s-t* comments .
the man . his **father** ... I thought well no
05 wonder the son's got it . you know . because
the ... my older brother's son he was getting
threatened by this **big boy** . he took his
jumper off . a new **jumper** I'd bought him .
and he was a big lad ... he put it on and he
10 was saying all sorts to him ... I'll break your
n-o-s-e . and I'll put your **hand** ... he was
saying all sorts of threatening things to him .
and Asif was getting scared as well . and he
didn't **dare** come out . and I said well stay in
15 the school until I come to pick you up . now
when I approached the *b-o-y-'s f-a-t-h-e-r* .. I
mean he was so abusive . I thought . oh . I
know where the **son** gets it from ... you
know ... and the **headmaster** . he was just **not**
20 interested . you know

JC: no, they just sort of fob it off, I think

Parveen: they **fobbed** it off . and on **top** of that . you
know . one of the girls . she were racist as
well . every time ... this was happening
25 **within** the **class** ... every time . you know .
there was something going on . she'd say to
the teacher .. oh, give him lines . this . that
and the other . and the **teacher** was
obviously *r-a-c-i-s-t* in the head . I mean she
30 should have ignored the girl . oh . do that for

him . oh . miss . you know . she kept saying
this ... so the lady did it as well . the teacher...
and *h-e k-n-o-w-s* .. the girl saying it and
putting up . because she used to .. he says she
35 used to like the girls as pets er . and the
worst thing **was** . they use to seemed to get a
book out and every time they did she'll nod .
you know . as if he was one of the bad
children . or something . so he was even
40 hurt *m-o-r-e* . he was really upset . very badly
.. and . **once** . the girl actually accused him of
stealing *s-o-m-e* pencils and things ... you
know . he didn't have any of it . and I said .
here you are here's your pencil case . he took
45 them all out . and there was **nothing** of hers
in there . but she said no *.h-e u-s-e-d* them
last . he's got them . and ... you know .. he's
taken them . he's taken them home . this .
that and the other

50 JC: and the teacher just took the side of the girl
all the time

Parveen: **oh . yeah** ... they didn't want to hear the
other side ... I was just *d-i-s-g-u-s-t-ed* with it
all . you know ... and when I went to the
55 **headmaster** . he just ... he was
u-n-a-p-p-r-o-a-c-h-a-b-l-e . he didn't want
to know about it . he thought I was just
c-o-m-p-l-a-i-n-i-n-g

JC: yes . yes ... so how long was ... was
60 Anwar there then?

65 Parveen: I think it was *t-w-o* years ... two . three
years ...

JC: he was there for three years ... he started at
five ...

Parveen: yeah ... he started in the nursery, actually ..

Appendix 7.c

Janet's account of discussions with children

01 JC: yes .. so there's a real **purpose** to their having
to do it . and I think that's very *r-a-r-e* .. isn't
it because I mean most of the time .. er .. you
know .. the teacher might say *e-x-p-l-a-i-n* ..
05 but .. I mean .. you know .. underneath it all
it .. it's not a real situation

Janet: that's right .. this is a *r-e-a-l*
e-x-p-l-a-n-a-t-i-o-n isn't it .. I mean some
of the times they'll be thinking .. well ..
10 why's she's asking me to *d-o* that .. 'cos she
k-n-o-w-s .. you know .. she *k-n-o-w-s* what
I've done .. and .. and .. you know .. the ideas
behind it .. but why's she asking me to
r-e-p-e-a-t it? .. but if they *k-n-o-w* .. that
15 they're doing it for another **person** .. and that
will **help** them in all *t-h-e-i-r* ... experiences
won't it? when they're speaking to each
other and trying to explain to each other ..
then you know they've got a good *r-e-a-s-o-n*
20 for doing it and they'll hopefully verbalise a
bit *m-o-r-e* than they possibly would have
done before ... but there's always children
that will talk more .. isn't there .. that will ..
will .. offer more

25 (*short section omitted*)

I think the *m-o-r-e* ... positives you give
them .. like we try and .. you know there
a-r-e some children that *d-o-n-'t* say much

normally .. then the few times that they *d-o*
30 *s-a-y* something we make it very
o-b-v-i-o-u-s that .. you know that they've
done **well** .. you know .. gives them that ..
that *b-o-o-s-t* .. and they think .. oh well ..
next time .. I'll .. I'll say a bit *m-o-r-e* ... you
35 know hopefully .. and I think bit by bit
that does *w-o-r-k*

JC: yes .. I mean it creates a culture .. I think ..
that .. um .. as the time goes on .. that ..
they will ... but you know .. I mean ..
40 obviously .. with some children it will take
longer than others

Janet: I mean that's something I've .. I've .. learnt
very much from Sandra .. this .. the way that
she's a child will *s-a-y* something which
45 isn't really what you *w-a-n-t* them to say ...
you might ask a question and they might ..
s-a-y .. give an answer that's not *q-u-i-t-e*
what you want .. but then .. you know ..
Sandra will *t-u-r-n* it round and say .. well .. I
50 can understand what you're saying there ..
you're really referring to .. you're really ..
talking **about** something *e-l-s-e* ... um .. yes ..
that's something we **will** be maybe doing
later on ... and she's turned it round a little
55 bit so it's not like .. ah .. no that's not what
we're talking about now ... you know .. it's ..
well .. *that's not what we're talking about n-o-w* ..
b-u-t .. you know so whatever they've said is
i-m-p-o-r-t-a-n-t .. and I think .. I think ..
60 Sandra does that *really w-e-l-l* .. in the way

she .. you know.. she .. she can do that .. and
whatever they *s-a-y* .. she can turn it round
and make it sound extra specially
i-m-p-o-r-t-a-n-t even though it's not **quite**
65 what we want .. or it's not quite the right
answer ... you know ... I can **see** why .. they
say a **word** and they say the wrong word ...
well .. I can see why you've said that word
because it *d-o-e-s* **sound** like it .. doesn't it ..
70 you know ... that **type** of .. that **type** of thing ..
and I think that's really valuable .. 'cos .. I ..
you know .. I've kept trying .. I've tried to
pick up on that .. that's something that
Sandra did initially and I thought .. well ..
75 that's really good the way .. you know .. that
she can *t-u-r-n* things round and make
whatever they say feel *i-m-p-o-r-t-a-n-t* .. and
that's what we try and do

Appendix 7.d Home-school dissonance in the views of the middle school teachers

01 Avril: he said .. we did not *h-a-v-e* .. em .. a *n-o-r-m-a-l* set of children ...Asian children ... this was **not the norm**

05 Hazel: no .. it's very *p-o-o-r* .. isn't it ... because back at home they would be the poorest within the ...

Avril: yes ... yes

JC yes .. and I think rural as well ...

10 Avril: makes you think ... they must be very confused these **children** .. sometimes

Hazel: I don't **think** they're allowed to think .. really ..

Avril: but they **see** things *h-e-r-e* ... and .. then they **go home** ...

15 May: everything's going to be a different way when they get home

Hazel: mmm ... mmm ..

20 June: I **think** one of the biggest *r-e-g-r-e-t-s* *i-s* that they *d-o-n-'t* *e-n-j-o-y* a *f-u-l-l* *s-c-h-o-o-l* *l-i-f-e* .. because of their commitments everywhere else .. you know .. I mean for example .. at the end of term there'll be a party and a disco or whatever .. and they're

25 party and a disco or whatever .. and they're
not allowed to come to that .. er .. because
they've to go to the mosque .. we're going
out on a visit .. and they won't be doing that
because they've to get *b-a-c-k* in *t-i-m-e* for
the *m-o-s-q-u-e* .. every time you say there's a
30 trip somewhere .. will we be back in time for
mosque?

Hazel: because they go *e-v-e-r-y* night ...

Avril: I think they go on automatic pilot, though,
don't they ... I don't think they ... I don't
think ... yes . you're right .. one of you said
35 something like .. they don't think ... I don't
think they think why are we doing this?
They *d-o* it because it's **the rule** .. isn't it ..
like breathing

Hazel: and I think women .. **females** are taught not
40 to question<*long silence*>

June: it's a way of keeping control .. really ..
keeping them under control in the situation ...
keeping them ... but it **is a shame** ..
because we've a lot of children who have a
45 great *d-e-a-l* to give ... but they're not allowed
to do that ..

Hazel: but I **can't** see the aforementioned Nahida
sitting back and getting married to
somebody less bright than she is .. and she
50 **may** be one who doesn't suffer fools gladly

Appendix 8.a Written sheet for ball bouncing task

My Science Investigation

Which ball bounces the highest.

This is what I think will happen (Prediction)

I think the yellow, spungie, small, ^{soft}-ball bounces the highest.

Because it has no air in it.

This is what I am going to do

I am going to use a long ruler. Somebody has to hold it. Then someone bounces a ball. Then mark ^{the ruler} ~~it~~ with a chalk. The ball has to be thrown from the same height.

Appendix 8.b

Children's results sheet from ball bouncing experiment

Yellow hole one
~~37cm~~ ~~33cm~~ 37cm

Yellow spongy ball
~~42cm~~ ~~45cm~~ 39cm

Green hard 32cm 31cm

blue noise 26cm ~~22cm~~ 23cm

Yellow hard balls
20cm 29cm

2 Weather and climate

How does it rain?

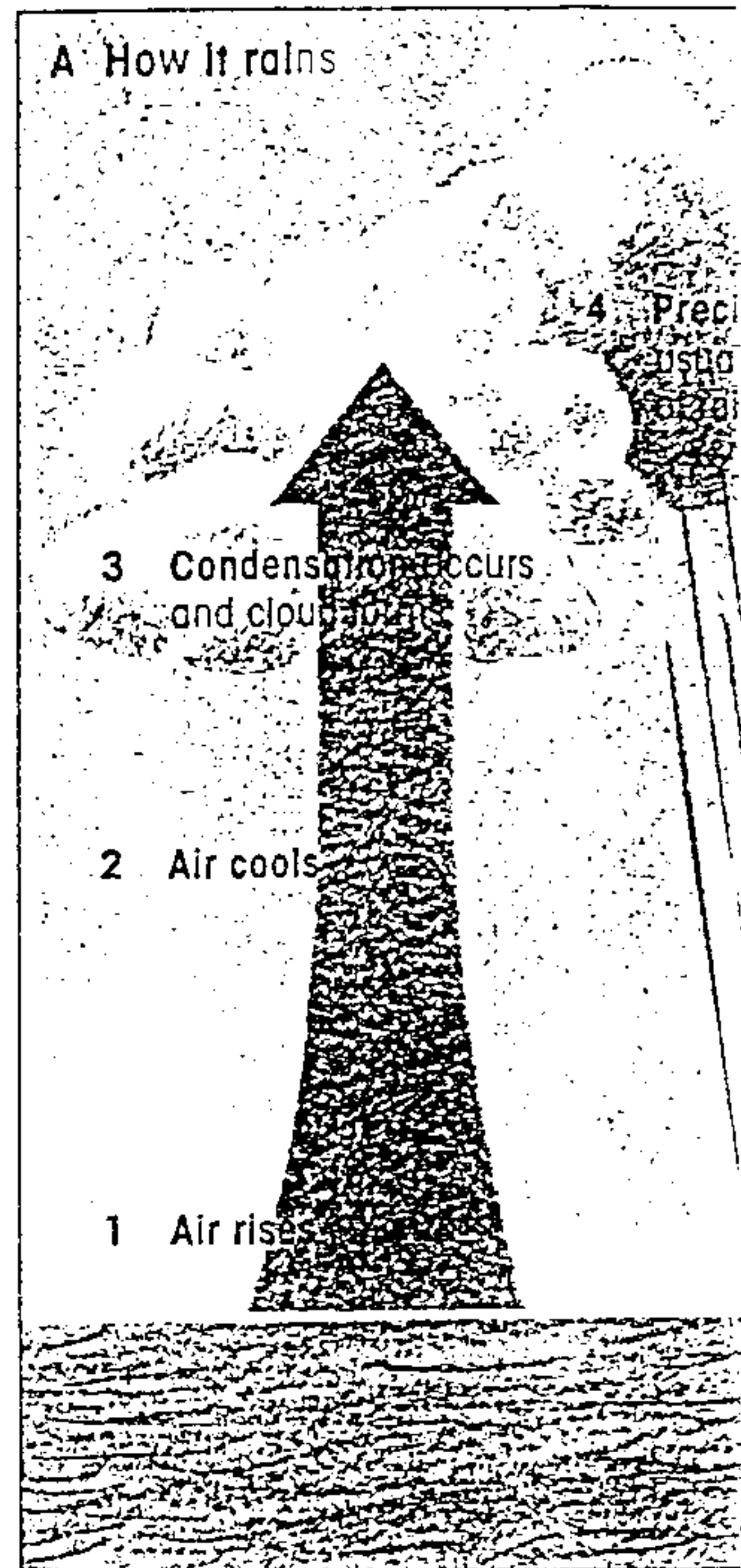
The Atacama Desert in South America has had no rain for over 400 years yet parts of the Amazon rain forest, also in South America, have rain on over 330 days each year. Seathwaite in the Lake District, the wettest place in England, has on average 3340mm of rain per year whilst Newcastle only 130 kms away, may expect just 630mm.

What are the reasons for this, what causes rain and why are some places wetter than others?

Clouds are made up of extremely tiny drops of moisture called **cloud droplets**. They are only visible because there are billions of them crowded together in a cloud.

Clouds form when moist air rises, cools and changes into cloud droplets. This is **condensation**. A cloud gives rain after these tiny cloud droplets grow thousands of times larger into raindrops which then fall to the ground.

Look at diagram A. It shows how rain is formed. The process is always the same: air rises, cools, condenses and precipitates.

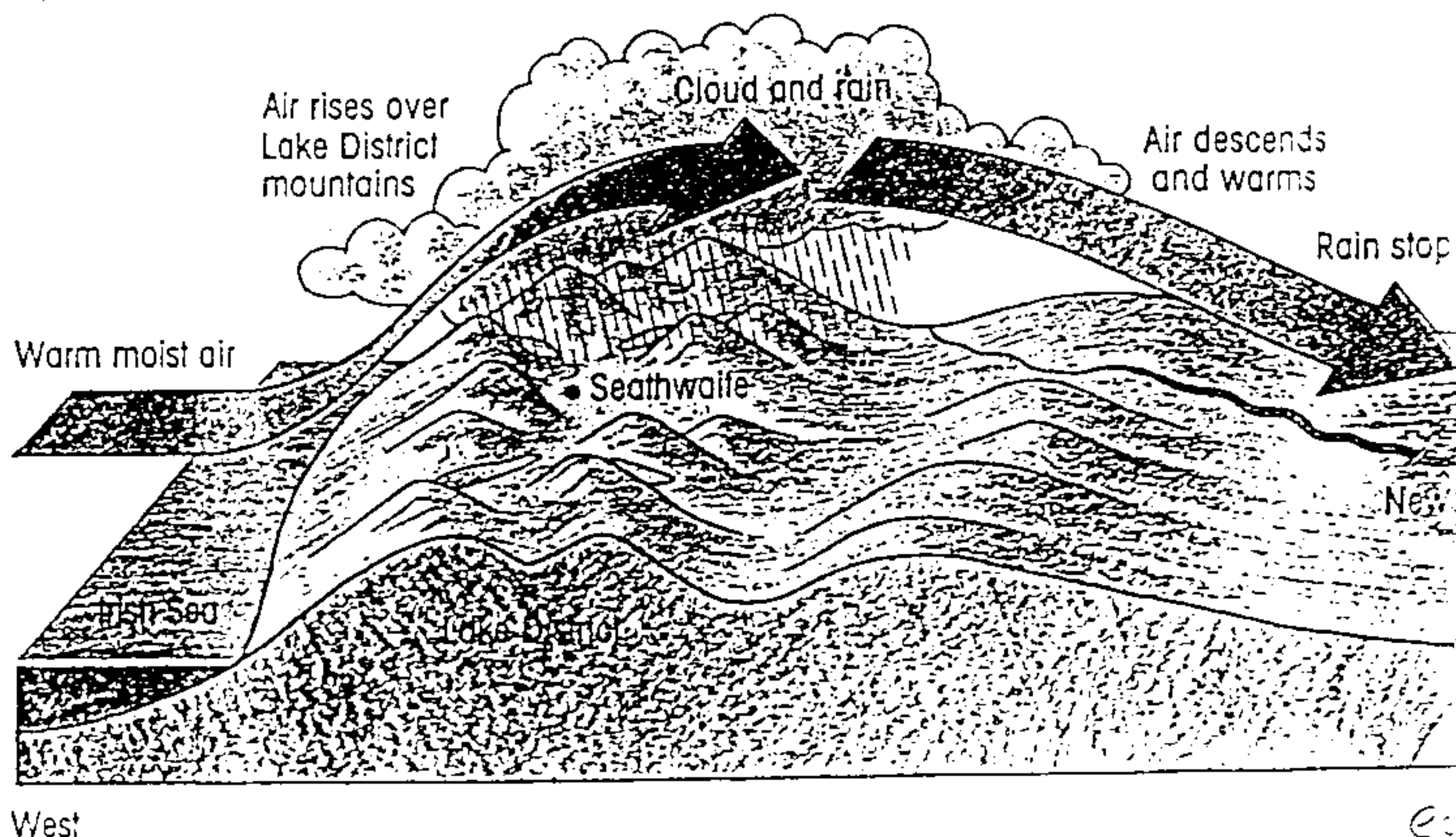


Air can be forced to rise in three different ways. This gives the three main types of rainfall, relief, convectional, and frontal. These are shown in diagrams B and C.

B Relief rainfall in the north of England

Relief rainfall occurs when moist air is forced to rise over mountains. As it rises it cools and the rain making process shown in diagram A comes into operation.

Relief rainfall is quite common in Britain especially in the west where most of the high land is located.



Waugh, D. 22

C Convectional rainfall

Clouds and rain
Rising air cools
Warm air rises
Ground warmed by sun

When the ground surface is heated by the sun, the air above it is warmed up. This air rises and as it cools down clouds form and rain follows. The showery weather and thunderstorms of a British summer are this type of rainfall.

D Frontal rainfall

Clouds and rain
Warmer, lighter air rises over heavier, colder air
Rising air cools
Warm air
Cold air

When a mass of warm air meets air at a lower temperature, it rises up and over the colder, heavier air. Once it is made to rise, cloud and rain will follow due to the process shown in diagram A.

The place where warm and cold air meet is called a front. Frontal rainfall is very common in Britain throughout the year and especially in winter.

Activities

1 Match the following beginnings to their correct endings.

Clouds are	rain, snow and other forms of moisture in the sky.
Precipitation is	when water vapour changes to water.
Condensation happens	made up of tiny drops of moisture called cloud droplets.

- 2 With the help of a labelled diagram describe how it rains.
- 3 a) Make larger copies of the three diagrams below.
b) For each diagram explain how it rains by adding labels at points ①, ②, ③ and ④.
- c) Add colour to make your diagrams clearer.
d) Underneath each of your diagrams give a brief reason for the air rising.
e) Give each diagram a title.
- 4 Explain why Seathwaite is wetter than Newcastle. Use diagram B to help you.

Summary

Rain is caused by moist air rising and cooling. The three types of rainfall produced in this way are relief, convectional and frontal.

ShabnamThursday 10 DecemberHow does it rain.

- 1) Clouds are made up of extremely tiny drops of moisture called cloud droplets. They are only visible because there are billions of them crowded together in a cloud.
- 2) ~~R.R. Precipitation~~ occurs usually in the form of rain.
- 3) ~~Condensation~~ happens
- 2) Precipitation is rain, snow and other forms of moisture in the sky.
- 3) Condensation happens when water vapour changes into water.

When the hot air rises, the air gets colder. After that it forms a cloud then the cloud gets heavier and rains, the cloud gets heavy because the water gets colder.

