Teachers' Experiences in a UK International School:

The Challenges of Adaptation

by

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Στο Δημητράκη μου, με αγάπη

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

DECLARATION

I declare that this research was conducted by me and I am responsible for the work described in this thesis with the exception of those instances where the contribution of others has been acknowledged. Verbatim extracts have been distinguished and all sources of information have been specifically acknowledged by means of reference.

None of the information contained in this thesis has been previously submitted within a degree programme at this or any other university.

V. Papaioannou

ABBREVIATIONS

am	……………………	Before midday
appr.	....	approximately
BA:	……………………..	Bachelor of Arts
C.S.	……………………	Contractual status (of DS teachers)
CPD	…………………..	Continuous Professional Development
DS:	……………………..	Dombey School
EFDA:	……………………	European Fusion Development Agreement
e.g.:	……………………	For example
ES:	……………………	European School
ESM:	……………………	European School Model
et al.	……………………	And co-workers
etc.:	……………………	And so on…
EU:	…………………	European Union
fig.:	…………………	Figure
FT:	....	Foreign teacher(s)
F/T:	…………………	Full-time
QR:	....	Qualitative Research
IB:	……………………	International Baccalaureate
ibid.	……………………	In the same place
ICT:	……………………	Informatics, school subject
i.e.	……………………..	That is
IS:	……………………	International School(s)
JET:	……………………	Joint European Torus
Lng(s):	……………………	Language(s)
L1:	……………………	Student's first language
L2, L3, L4 etc.:	……………………	Student's second, third, fourth language etc.
mins:	....	Minutes
No.:	……………………	Number
PE:	……………………..	Physical Education, School Subject
per cent	……………………	Per hundred
PhD:	……………………	Philosophy Doctorate
pm	……………………	After midday
p. (pp.)	……………………...	Page(s)
P/T:	……………………	Part-time
Ref.:	……………………	Reference from documents
Ts:	....	Teachers
Ting:	....	Teaching
UK:	……………………..	United Kingdom
UWC(s):	……………………..	United World College(s)

ABSTRACT

This research is a qualitative case study which explores teachers' past and present experiences and beliefs in a multilingual, UK International School: 'Dombey School'. This school employs teachers from eight nationalities and enrols students from more. Two research questions guided this study: In what ways (if any) are teachers' experiences in such a multilingual school distinctive? Is there any evidence that the multilingual – multicultural identity of such a school offers particular advantages or disadvantages to teachers in terms of work or professional development?

Semi-structured interviews with forty-seven secondary cycle teachers shed light on their educational and teaching backgrounds and explore their experiences in a school dedicated to the promotion of multilingual and multicultural education. Fieldnotes, memos, classroom observation and documents were also used as data in the study.

This research explores teachers' cultural differences and their impact on teachers' work, relationships and adaptation to the school. It also highlights some of the professional challenges faced by teachers in a culturally diverse context which draws them towards linguistic and cultural ghettoes. Teachers' behaviours in the school are explained in terms of Hofstede's four dimensional model (1986) and the analysis also draws on other work by Hofstede as well as that of Triandis. My findings discuss teachers' values and attitudes in the school taking into account the individuality and the particular characteristics of the existent school culture.

This thesis points to the need for cross-cultural teacher training programmes and an induction phase in schools of this sort in order to help teachers acquire skills which will help them respect and appreciate cultural differences, prepare them to teach in a school of cultural and linguistic diversity and lead to their successful integration into the school culture. The conclusion highlights the neglect of teachers' needs compared to the importance given to students in this type of education.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

International Schools are defined as those calling themselves such and enrolling internationally mobile students. It is widely believed, especially among those in the field of international education, that these schools foster intercultural understanding, offer insights and encourage a commitment to cooperation in a world which is increasingly accepting the values of cultural diversity and international understanding. Dombey School is one of them, the only one of its kind on British soil, and it employs teachers from eight nationalities and enrols students from more.

Research so far in International Schools like Dombey School[1] has mainly focused on students; how multilingualism is realised (Baetens Beardsmore 1979; 1993; Olsen 2000), and how language and European identity are promoted in a system very different from other International Schools (Housen 2002a; Savvides 2006a; 2006b; 2006c). The outcomes of bilingual education on pupils in International Schools like Dombey School have been thoroughly discussed, as well as second language acquisition and comparisons with other immersion programmes worldwide (Baetens Beardsmore and Swain 1985; Baetens Beardsmore 1995). It becomes obvious that most current research has explored ways in which students will come to appreciate cultural differences in an international context and gradually become internationally-minded.

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[1] The characteristics of Dombey School are included in Appendix 1, providing all essential background information about school type, organisation, language sections and curriculum.

There have been very few studies except those relating to intercultural communication programmes, models or theories (Harrison 1984; Bennett 1986; Wilson 1982; Black and Mendenhall 1990; Bennett 1993; Cushner and Brislin 1997a) which have investigated the professional well-being of teachers (Aelterman et al. 2007), their perceived role in education (Hart 1989; Nelson et al. 2001), their adequate preparation to teach in culturally diverse classrooms (Bennett 1995; Sleeter 2001; Deveney 2007; Goodman 2007), or their becoming effective cross-cultural teachers (McGee Banks 2001).

In the absence of research about teachers' experiences in schools like Dombey School, it would be interesting to explore Dombey School teachers' experiences, beliefs, needs and relationships within a non-elitist international system with distinctive characteristics (freedom and flexibility, high reputation and remarkable quality of work). Teacher identity is formulated and reformulated through experience as 'experience not only enlarges the mind but also tugs at the heart' (Wilson 1982:191), and teachers' views and perceptions affect efficacy, as well as their ability to cope with challenges.

Experiences also influence teacher development and Kelchtermans (1993) argues that professional development can only be understood properly if it is conceived as a result of a life-long process of learning and development from teachers' experiences throughout their career (p. 443). It can also only be accomplished if we understand that teachers have different professional needs in differing educational contexts and at different stages of their careers (Conners 1991:78).

Experiences from private life (parenthood, friendship, family), as well as experiences in the professional field (prior or recent, mentoring, assessment, self-evaluation,

critical incidents etc.), can help teachers gain insights and can have a profound effect on teachers' relationships in educational contexts. Teachers' work in multicultural institutions has even more possibilities of gaining insights into teaching (compared to teachers in monolingual – monocultural schools), as their motivation, experiences and emotional energy might be enriched through working with other cultures. Those insights can help teachers gain a more complete understanding of themselves, help them understand others who are different, and can serve as a 'foundation' for becoming cross-cultural teachers (McGee Banks 2001:171).

My research gives voice to the teachers of a very exceptional UK-based International School responding to the views that 'sponsoring teacher's voice is a vital part of educational research' (Goodson and Numan 2002:276), and that we can best discover something about teachers' thinking from their perspective (Solas 1992:206). Although multicultural education goals have been defined through programmes or educational philosophy which is primarily related to students rather than teachers working in it (Banks 1993; Nieto and Bode 2007; Levinson 2007), equal importance should be given to teachers' need for similar research, giving them the opportunity to understand their cultures more fully and, thereby, encouraging them to become more effective members of an International School context.

Understanding teachers' cultures includes accepting particularities as 'the best of intentions can lead to misunderstandings if individuals are not aware of the culture of the people with whom they are interacting' (Brislin and Yoshida 1994:85). Placing teachers in the centre of my research will take me further than just observing or understanding teachers' attitudes towards multiculturalism. Teachers' experiences could reflect the degree of their commitment to international education, and highlight

challenges of adaptation to the school and the factors which inhibit or facilitate this process.

 Although both pre-service and in-service teachers have educational experiences, my research focuses on the experiences of experienced secondary school teachers at an exceptional school which offers multilingual education in an international context. This thesis discusses teachers' emerging cultural differences, and sheds light on some of the professional challenges faced by them, but also offers insights into their survival and adaptation strategies in a culturally diverse environment.

This school's cultural diversity starts from the assumption that different nations/cultures may have different educational objectives and recruiting teachers from different language and cultural backgrounds means accepting those differences and adapting to them. This is why analysis of teachers' perceptions and attitudes relating to teachers' communities, work and lives is an important factor in organising teacher training in multicultural education, having in mind that all people can successfully overcome the difficulties if they are aware of the range of challenges they will face (Cushner and Brislin 1996:3).

The literature review (chapter two) focuses on intercultural interactions and confirms a 'terminological shift' from multicultural to intercultural communication in the last decades (Coulby 2006:245). It also discusses basic concepts about International Schools worldwide, their types and objectives, highlighting the characteristics and challenges for teachers in international education within different types of school culture. My methods of data collection are described and discussed in chapter three where I explain how design, sampling and refining decisions were made in order to increase the probability of a worthwhile project.

Data analysis is presented in two chapters: chapter four will try to show, from the teachers' perspective, in what ways they are responding to the aspirations of international education and the ethos of the school, so it will be a deliberately positive and uncritical picture. Chapter five exposes some of the faultlines within the above picture, revealing how existing cultural and organisational differences make teachers' work in this school extremely challenging.

The discussion (chapter six) presents the findings in the context of Dombey School, explaining teachers' beliefs and attitudes through Hofstede and Hofstede's analysis of mental software (2005), also based on Hofstede's four dimensional model (1986:309-11). It raises cultural issues and professional challenges that both British and foreign teachers face in the school, because of their cultural and linguistic differences. It makes the case for the introduction of a well-designed teacher training programme which will offer teachers the opportunity to accept their differences and overcome their tendency to resort to linguistic ghettoes and cultural stereotyping, while working towards a deeper integration into the school culture. The conclusion (chapter seven) summarises the challenges ahead, highlighting the neglect of teachers' needs, compared to the importance given to students in this type of education.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Intercultural Interactions

Intercultural interactions among human populations would be less important in a world of similarity. But in today's world, where interactions are frequent or even imposed in business, education, neighbourhoods, homes and other living or working places, where there is a 'tremendous increase in the number and size of organizations that span national boundaries' (Hofstede 1984:271), humans will have to strive to live or work together without aggressive or negative feelings against each other, without prejudices or biases and without anxiety in a workable and sustainable global community.

> As the world becomes more and more a global village, people are forced to get along with those who are different from themselves.
>
> (Triandis 2003:486)

Teachers are no exception to the above. In fact, teachers more than other people need to develop the ability to plan and conduct multicultural learning and teaching experiences, especially when they are involved in cultural interchange within an emerging world society, having in mind that 'interactions with culturally different others are more anxiety-provoking than interactions with very similar people' (Cushner and Brislin 1997b:1), and that intercultural sensitivity is not natural (Bennett 1993:21); one needs to make an effort for it. Teachers need to make an effort to transform themselves into multicultural people before becoming multicultural teachers, because any attempt to develop a multicultural perspective

will be 'shallow' and superficial' otherwise (Nieto 2000:338).

Intercultural interactions in the globalized world of the twenty first century are particularly frequent and significant in international or rather 'intercultural' schools, if we need to highlight culture instead of nationality as a significant identity construct (Heyward 2002:10), and if we consider the development of the individual rather than the organizational form of International Schools (Bunnell 2007:2). Nations and cultures are sometimes 'confused and very often confounded in theory and research' or 'meaningfully equated for the purpose of a specific research project', but treating nations as cultures can be either extremely useful or highly misleading because, whereas nations can have multiple cultures and comprise people with many different cultural backgrounds, it is often the case that people in one nation often have a unifying national identity, language, political, legal, economic or educational system (Levine et al. 2007:208).

Dombey School, however, seems to be the kind of International School where linguistically and nationally distinctive groups are considered and treated as culturally distinctive. The school separates teachers on all formal and informal occasions and considers them members and part of one linguistic subsection, even if they teach in two, according to their native language and according to the country they are seconded from (for full-time teachers). Therefore, the English section comprises English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish (British) teachers, whose medium of instruction is English and who represent the British culture; the French section comprises French-speaking French and Flemish teachers, the Dutch section comprises Dutch-speaking Dutch and Flemish teachers, and the German and Italian sections comprise native speakers who represent their home culture accordingly.

In order to highlight the similarities or differences of groups in culturally diverse educational environments, Dombey School included, and consider them meaningful units in cross-cultural comparison, I shall first define culture in general and its meaning in my research; then I need to distinguish between cross-cultural and intercultural communication (2.1.2) and discuss some of the most significant intercultural skills (2.1.2.1). In defining the above conceptual framework, I will follow Wittmer's et al. preference for the terms 'culturally distinct' and 'culturally different' (1992:60), as opposed to terms that have been widely used in the past to describe different cultural groups, such as 'culturally deprived', 'culturally disadvantaged' and even 'minorities', which seem outdated and even oppressive. In order to locate the school in the wider picture of international education, however, I shall first describe its characteristics and aims.

2.1.1 Current research in Dombey School

Dombey School is one of those International Schools worldwide which facilitate the mingling of teacher and student population through contact with members of other cultures. Such schools have grown up catering for the pragmatic and educational needs of the children of expatriate employees and parents who work in fields where they are frequently expected to work abroad.

As a consequence, students from many different countries are educated together in the same classrooms which are not only mixed ability ones, but very culturally and linguistically diverse. International Schools are often perceived as elitist as they are in an advantageous position of having school fees for the services they offer.

Dombey School students, however, are exempt from school fees[2]. There are currently fourteen schools of its kind in seven countries (Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom, Spain and Luxembourg), with a total of approximately 20,000 pupils on roll.

Teachers who work in the above type of schools often have multiple cultural and linguistic backgrounds, as they need to cope with extremely diverse student communities and multilingual tasks. What makes these tasks easier to accomplish is that teachers are usually particularly motivated to work in such schools due to a variety of international teaching experience or an already acquired internationally-minded attitude. What makes their adaptation challenging, however, is teachers' diversity, which is defined as teachers' 'cultural differences in values, beliefs and behaviors learned and shared by groups of interacting people' defined by nationality, ethnicity, economic status, education etc. (Bennett and Bennett 2004:150). Having in mind Dombey School's population diversity and in order to explore teachers' experiences in that school, it is necessary to take a closer look at various international educational contexts worldwide (2.2 and 2.2.1).

This chapter defines and explores the distinctive principles and underlying ethos of International Schools (IS) and United World Colleges (UWCs), also incorporating the European School Model (ESM) into this overview (2.2.1). In order to understand the beliefs, values and differences of the teachers who work in such international institutions, as well as the factors which influence their adjustment to them, their professional relations and attitudes, this chapter will raise the profile of the

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[2] http://www.eursc.eu/index.php?l=2 (access 14/07/2008)

International School teacher (2.3 and 2.3.1), and discuss some of the challenges s/he faces (2.3.1.1) which point to the eminent importance of professional development (2.3.2).

It will also discuss the significance of school culture worldwide (2.4), placing special emphasis on the unique characteristics of an International School culture, such as teacher collaboration (2.4.1) and parents' contribution to it (2.4.2) in order for common ground to be found, differences to overcome, a sense of community to develop, rapport to be established and common targets to be achieved.

2.1.2 Definition of culture and types of communication

Culture is 'a collective phenomenon' (Hofstede 1991:5) and by definition 'something that is shared among people belonging to the same socially defined and recognised group'. Culture is 'a fuzzy set of attitudes, beliefs, behavioural conventions, and basic assumptions and values that are shared by a group of people' (Spencer – Oatey 2000:4), and is something people have in common with some people, but not with others (Levine et al. 2007:207). Its significance in the functioning of organisations has been particularly highlighted by Shaw (2001) who suggests that people from different cultural backgrounds work in different ways and that, therefore, culture is central to the way organisations work (p. 159).

Culture is also important in order to understand how the individual works within an organisation. Wittmer et al. (1992:55) speak of 'cognitive empathy' as an important factor in effective interpersonal communication, which is knowledge of that person's culture, or knowing 'where that person is coming from'. However, 'awareness or knowledge of a culture is insufficient – one also needs to have a feeling for it' (Bennett and Castiglioni 2004:249).

Cross-cultural communication research, according to Levine et al. (2007), involves 'comparing and contrasting the communication patterns observed in people from a different culture. Alternatively, intercultural communication research deals with the interaction between people of different cultures' (p. 208). However, thinking more broadly, 'the communication between two (or more) culturally distinctive groups could also be the focus of intercultural communication' (ibid. pp. 208-9), as is the case for at least five culturally distinctive linguistic groups in Dombey School, formally recognised by the school.

2.1.2.1 Skills for intercultural communication

A good deal of research in the field of international relations (Hofstede 1984; Bennett 1993; Brislin and Yoshida 1994; Cushner and Brislin 1996; Blandford and Shaw 2001a; Hofstede and Hofstede 2005) has explored the challenges that a diverse social or working environment represents for individuals who make huge efforts to survive and become successful cross-cultural professionals and communicators. Dombey School teachers are no exception to the above effort. It would therefore be interesting to explore which intercultural skills are perceived as important by Dombey School teachers in theory, and which ones are actually adapted by them in their everyday life, for the sake of successful professional and interpersonal relations.

Heyward (2002) recommends the 'intercultural literacy' skill which is defined as 'the competencies, understandings, attitudes, language proficiencies, participation and identities necessary for effective cross-cultural engagement' (p. 10); Bennett and Castiglioni (2004) highlight the importance of understanding 'cognitive constructs such as the values of a target culture' which will consequently be translated into

actions 'such as modified social behavior in that culture' (p. 251). 'Behavior modification' is one of the procedures that can be used to change interpersonal relationships (Triandis 1977:429), and involves members of two or more cultural groups discussing 'particular behaviors that annoy them and learn how to reward the other when such behaviors are absent or when the other emits behaviors that are incompatible with the annoying behaviors' (ibid. p. 430).

Brislin and Yoshida (1994:90) mention 'perceptual acuity' as the desirable skill which is linked to an unusual amount of sensitivity, in terms of verbal and non-verbal messages, when dealing with interpersonal relations in general.

When people communicate across cultures, like teachers in Dombey School, they are in a disadvantaged position because they do not 'hold the same values, nor have they undergone similar socialization experiences' (ibid. pp. 90-91). The co-existence of miscellaneous cultures makes it rather unlikely for individuals to share the same beliefs and values about the world in which they live. This obviously makes it more difficult for the individual teachers in a multicultural context to share the same approaches in teaching. There is evidence that the unique way secondary school teachers approach teaching shapes and is accordingly shaped by their personal identity, and also depends on the subject they teach, which is what makes every classroom 'look' different (Walkington 2005:54).

McGee Banks (2001) speaks of 'multicultural competency' as one dimension of cross-cultural teachers, which helps them move outside their own cultures, allows them to work successfully with other individuals from diverse populations and eventually helps them understand better their own culture and themselves (p. 183), although the process can be 'challenging', 'time intensive' and 'requires

commitment' (p. 177). Banks (2001:12) also highlights the development of 'cross-cultural competency' beyond teachers' national borders as a significant skill for intercultural communication, defining it as the knowledge, skills and attitudes teachers need to develop in order to survive, overcome differences, transcend traditional ethnocentrism and function effectively in a culturally diverse society. Dombey School teachers will obviously have to be equipped with a range of innate or acquired intercultural skills in order to respect, appreciate and validate the culture of the school and build collaborative, healthy relationships in it.

While the importance of perceiving cultural similarity has also been stressed (Brislin 1981), with a preference for capturing the 'common ground' of shared positive expectations, 'without being distracted by behaviors that appear different or potentially hostile' (Singelis and Pedersen 1997:197), the importance of difference has been widely accepted in the field of intercultural communication. There is always a tendency among people to focus on differences, where there should be a tendency towards pointing out people's similarities (Cushner and Nieman 1997:139), and difficulties in learning the concepts and skills of intercultural communication are 'nearly always attributable to a disavowal of cultural difference, not to a lack of appreciating similarity' (Bennett 1993:25). Teachers' interactions and work in an International School like Dombey School will possibly bring to the surface more differences than similarities in education, because 'culture differences between countries are also reflected by differences in education' (Denessen et al. 2001:61).

Dombey School teachers will go through several stages of personal growth as they come to recognise differences, discover similarities and adjust successfully in the particular cross-cultural context. Bennett's research (1993) presents a model of

'intercultural sensitivity' (p. 21) which is defined in terms of stages of personal growth. This model shows a moving development from ethnocentric stages (denial, defence and minimization) to 'ethnorelative' stages (acceptance, adaptation and integration) (p. 29), placing a particular emphasis on the stage of integration through which ethnorelativism 'may be synthesized into a coherent and workable new identity' (p. 47). Louie (2005) additionally acknowledges 'meta-cultural sensitivity' and defines it as a process of personal growth, through which the teacher 'can progressively attain more sophisticated awareness, understanding and acceptance of cultural difference' (p. 24).

Intercultural sensitivity is defined as 'the construction of reality as increasingly capable of accommodating cultural difference that constitutes development' (ibid. p. 24), and presupposes skills that are also linked to intercultural communication as an important step in acknowledging and respecting the difference. The underlying assumption is that 'as one's experience of cultural difference becomes more sophisticated, one's competence in intercultural relations increases' (Bennett and Bennett 2004:152). The acquisition of 'culture-general' (Brislin and Yoshida 1994:89) and 'culture-specific' skills (ibid. p. 103) therefore becomes apparent and possible through training, although the former were previously considered as personality traits (ibid. p. 92). Culture specific training should, where possible, be given with regard to the culture of the foreign country where a person will live, including that person's family as much as possible, having in mind that 'culture shock phenomena are also culture-specific' (Hofstede 1984:277-78).

Hofstede and Hofstede (2005:358) point out three phases through which the acquisition of intercultural communication abilities pass: 'awareness', 'knowledge'

and 'skills'. These are also the skills which, according to Singelis and Pedersen (1997:184), are useful to mediators, helpers and counsellors in mediating intercultural conflicts in international environments like Dombey School. Particular emphasis, however, is placed on awareness which has always been 'the key to greater adaptability' (Bennett and Castiglioni 2004:259), and goes hand in hand with the recognition that 'I carry a particular mental software because of the way I was brought up, and that others brought up in a different environment carry a different mental software for equally good reasons' (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005:358-59).

Dombey School teachers need to understand and be understood by colleagues across cultural boundaries and eventually reach a level of adaptation where they use knowledge about their own and others' cultures to 'intentionally shift into a different cultural frame of reference' (Bennett 1998:28). This thesis will explore aspects of the cultural frame of reference within Dombey School and identify barriers to understanding.

2.2 International Education – International Schools

Early research, (Leach 1969; Peterson 1987) set the theoretical foundations for the criteria a school should meet in order to be considered truly international, placing an emphasis on multilingual instruction, international curriculum and lack of dominance by any nationality or national group. Most of the research conducted on International Schools has focused exclusively on the ideology-driven schools as they 'represent the purest form of international education' (Matthews 1989:12). Recent research, however, has identified a 'second phase' in international education which involves 'moving towards becoming a more ordered, structured and outwardly professional worldwide system' (Bunnell 2007:6) with a greater 'shared sense of universal

standards' (ibid. p. 10) and focus on quality rather on quantity.

It has been argued that in many countries around the world International Schools are the only institutions that provide a qualification 'that has international currency and the only schools where English can be acquired to a high degree of fluency' (Richards 1998:176). The rapid growth of such schools in the last century has given rise to attempts to distinguish between international education and International Schools. Hill (2000) insists that there is not necessarily a relationship between international education and International Schools (p. 30), and claims that there might be a national school, at home or abroad, which may provide an international education (p. 36), having in mind that the term 'international' itself is not 'any guarantee of a particular ethos or philosophy of education' (Mackenzie et al. 2003:300).

Hill (2000) also argues that schools may use the term 'international' in their name for one or more of the following reasons, particularly the first:

– To reflect a school population of diverse nationalities

– To indicate that the institution is operating overseas principally for the nationalities of the home country whose programmes it delivers

– Because the school subscribes to the ideological and pedagogical principles of an international education and acts this out

– Because the term is attractive and may give a market edge for student recruitment (p. 31).

The use of 'International' for schools has been much debated. Heyward (2002)

claims that the term could be more accurately translated as 'foreign' or 'overseas', as their mission is to provide a specific national education to an expatriate community off-shore (p. 21), and what really makes these schools different is that they offer an alternative to local, national approaches to education (p. 22), though operating outside a clear national framework (Robertson 2003:277). However, the most important mission of International Schools should be the recognition of the uniqueness of human kind, in general, and of the individual, in particular, as a part of a commonly shared world and the recognition that all individuals differ; when these differences are dealt with positively, teachers and students can develop their full potential in the light of their abilities and styles.

International Schools have obviously many similarities with the United World Colleges (UWCs) which, according to Hill, are clearly an ideology-driven group of schools which do not use the term 'international' in their names, but provide an international education (2000:31), as opposed to 'market-driven' International Schools which are far more 'eclectic' and have arisen from 'the needs of particular expatriate communities' (Matthews 1989:12). The students and teaching staff of each College are international and include the widest possible range of nationalities, races, religious and political allegiances.

The aims[3] of the UWCs are described as to provide an education which will produce involved, active, educated citizens, whose attitudes of understanding and service will be a force against bigotry and hatred between people, and to provide a practical demonstration that international education works and that it can build bridges of understanding between peoples. The mission of UWCs and their underlying school

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[3] http://www.uwc.se/newsite/uwc/policy.php (access 05/05/2008)

ethos has clearly been stated in the official website[4].

Since Dombey School is a particular kind of International School, it favours the 'coming together' of cultures in Europe under one school roof, and shares common characteristics with the above categories of schools as it enhances and promotes multilingual education. One of the most essential and critical values in tomorrow's world, however, is the skill that all International School students acquire: to 'distinguish between what is superficial and what is essential' (Keson 1991:59). Having seen that students from any part of the world have similar pleasures and likes and fears, they come to appreciate the difference.

This school also offers the European Baccalaureate which compares to the International Baccalaureate in its aim 'to reflect the needs of a mobile international community of students' (Davis and Ellwood 1991:60), and 'develop a new generation of world-minded citizens and a community of people who respect[ed] the diversity of cultures and work[ed] together for greater peace and understanding' (ibid. p. 61). It also represents 'an internationally accepted pathway for students from international schools to enter the top universities in the western world' (Heyward 2002:23), and its objectives seem to meet several practical needs of the fast growing internationally mobile community whose children wish to return to their home countries' higher education in the future. The International Baccalaureate (IB), however, is an international passport to higher education in more than thirty countries and it is believed to be more than an examination; it is also a curriculum and a growing movement in international education (Blackburn 1991:15).

Recent definitions of international education have moved towards the experience of

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[4] http://www.uwc.org/about_us/mission_and_vision (access 05/05/2008)

the students themselves, leaving the experiences of teachers out of the picture in current research. The importance of each system's linguistic outcomes, differences among various systems in international education and cultural differences in schools have been defined and highlighted, mainly, in reference to students and the language used as a medium of instruction (Scherr 2007; Jonckers 2000). High standards of selection of students, especially in UWCs, means that they tend to be viewed as prestigious institutions, and the choice of languages offered in these schools strengthens and enhances young people's worldwide linguistic representation.

What makes International Schools distinctive, however, as far as the student population is concerned, is the increased opportunity provided for a highly effective student growth via the achievement of commonly valued goals and insights within a context of obvious cultural diversity. It is interesting that Walker (1998) sees international students not only as much travelled, multilingual, sophisticated students, but also as vulnerable young people at a crucial stage of their development. This is an important justification for the support and encouragement young people should have in the search for their own identity, their own self-knowledge and ultimately their own self-fulfilment (p. 25) in an International School. The development of personal values within the dynamics of situations and people and the clarification of these values so that they can provide skills for student achievement, flexibility, social competence, cultural awareness, understanding and adaptation could lead to 'intercultural literacy', considered a crucial literacy for international students, if they are to be prepared for success in a globalized world (Heyward 2002:11).

Having discussed some basic principles contributing to an international ethos in

international education, it would be unwise not to mention the significant role of the school curriculum and language learning which, according to Sylvester (1998), are used in the school to move students and possibly teachers 'between and through frontiers of thought and perspective'. A well-balanced curriculum should be 'explicitly designed to prepare students to re-enter a variety of school environments and cultural orientations' (p. 190), and should be 'more truthful, more inclusive and more reflective of the histories and experiences of the diverse groups and cultures' in international contexts (Banks 2001:17). It is fairly obvious that tight ethnic boundaries should not be fostered in an International School as students must develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to become successful citizens of their cultural communities, their nation states and the global community (Sylvester 1998:190).

High priority has been given in Keson's research (1991) to skills 'of critical value in tomorrow's world' that students might obtain as a natural result of the experience of studying in an International School (p. 59), and Hayden's et al. study (2000) attempted to investigate what factors are perceived to be required in order for students to be truly 'international' (p. 109). McGee Banks' research (2001) suggests 'sensitivity training' for students in order to reduce prejudice, and this type of training is considered particularly constructive if it is directed by a well-trained and skilled leader (p. 175).

Prejudice reduction is theoretically more easily done for teachers, however, because teachers are sufficiently mature to reflect thoughtfully on their behaviours and attitudes and explore (informally) the feelings and perspectives of teachers who belong to other cultural groups. In order for this to be achieved, teachers themselves

need to make a deliberate attempt first 'to bring their own prejudices, beliefs and attitudes to self-conscious awareness' (Hulmes 1989:147).

Teachers can be a vital part of the international experience, a major component of which is teachers' 'multiple cultural identity' which takes them 'beyond the limitations of their own cultural identity' and is evidently a positive value to the growth of the individual (Wilkinson 1998:228). It is important that teachers look at their own cultural background first and face their own biases which affect interactions with others. The extent to which this happens in the context of Dombey School will be addressed in this thesis.

According to Heyward (2002:15), it is through the experience of confronting oneself in a cross-cultural situation, that is through becoming 'interculturally literate', that the individual learns about his/her own native culture, about a second culture and about the concept of culture in the abstract. In multicultural settings teachers are likely to expand their knowledge of their own and other cultures and deepen their awareness of their own cultural identity as they reflect on their cultural attitudes and values. In the light of this, the absence of research into the work and experiences of teachers in these schools is particularly surprising.

Teachers' and students' experiences and destinies, however, are closely linked within international education. The backgrounds and needs of the student population in International Schools should therefore be looked at in relation to the backgrounds and needs of the teacher population, since teachers' attitudes and behaviours are often also reflected in students' experiences (Coleman 1998:73-82). Moreover, teachers' experiences working in international education can be as significant and rewarding as students', since teachers can reflect an equally important cultural and

linguistic diversity as they are recruited from many different countries (Cambridge 1998:197). Teachers represent a wide variety of cultures and so, should provide a means by which students can move to acquiring 'a set of beliefs and attitudes towards other cultures' (Wilkinson 1998:227), so that an international ethos can be developed.

McGee Banks advocates that once teachers become aware of the processes students use to maintain prejudices, they can select or design appropriate 'intervention strategies and activities' (2001:175), although this can be very difficult having in mind that students in multicultural education may seem 'flexible and relaxed and tolerant of uncertainty', and may 'arrive with realistic expectations' and 'support the new school in its own terms and not theirs', yet, 'on International Day they turn out in national dress and serve national dishes' (Pearce 1998:59). Such events which are carefully representative of the dominant UK culture facilitate students' sense of being in their home country and also prepare them to re-enter their national systems. The extent to which home culture is represented in Dombey School by teachers working in it will be discussed in chapters five and six as part of the challenges teachers face in this type of international education.

The complexity and ambiguity of international education and International Schools as a concept have been thoroughly discussed (Hayden 2006), and Dean (2007) introduces a note of disillusionment with the ideal concept of international education by speaking of an exploration of the 'broad', the 'visionary' as well as the 'small, but not insignificant detail that can very often bring grief to an experience that begins with much hope, joy and idealism' (p. 90).

My study, however, is set within a context of an enquiry relating to international

education in a particular school, and focuses on the views and perceptions of one group of stakeholders: the teachers. Sustaining teacher dedication and commitment to education has always been a great challenge, especially after many years of teaching experience. However, socialising, teaching, learning and adapting can be equally challenging and has been relatively unexplored in culturally diverse educational contexts due to obvious cultural obstacles:

> Everybody looks at the world from behind the windows of a cultural home, and everybody prefers to act as if people from other countries have something special about them (a national character) but home is normal. Unfortunately there is no normal position in cultural matters.

> (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005:363)

My research will explore the extent to which this is reflected in Dombey School. This is an International School, falling into the category of European Schools. This particular model of International School will now be briefly considered.

2.2.1 The European School Model

The idea behind these schools[5] is that children of different mother tongues receive education in their own language, as well as in many others, through the recruitment of well-qualified and experienced staff by the respective countries' Ministries of Education. The insistence on a native-speaker requirement in teachers is important given the several languages that are used as the medium of instruction, the role models teachers represent and the 'linguistically mixed population they are confronted with' (Baetens Beardsmore 1993:125). These schools consist of several linguistic sections where none is supposed to be linguistically privileged and of unequal numbers of students and teachers with different language and cultural

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[5] Information about the schools can be acquired via the website: http://www.eursc.eu/ (access 05/05/2008).

backgrounds.

Olsen (2000:38) describes important aspects of the European Schools educational system, and suggests that their experience in developing and working with a curriculum designed for a multicultural and multilingual student body has much to offer internationally-minded schools, be they national or international. Multilingual education and the way it is realised in European Schools has been widely discussed with an emphasis on its goals, second language acquisition and linguistic outcomes, as far as students are concerned (Baetens Beardsmore 1979; 1993; 1995; Housen 2002b; Swan 1996).

These schools have much to offer in the education of the children of the mobile international community. They were originally set up to provide education for the children of employees of EU institutions. Encouraging pupils to develop a sense of European identity, to avoid 'ethno-linguistic prejudices and overly nationalistic sentiments', as well as preparing pupils 'for life in linguistically and culturally heterogeneous societies' (Housen 2002b:3) are also among the implicit aims of Dombey School and all schools of its kind. The combination of culture and multilingualism seem to be greatly appreciated in student learning.

Education is free for children of civil servants. Jonckers (2000) who used to be the director of the European School I in Brussels argues that the ES programme of studies requires and encourages the study of mother tongue language from an early age and that is an essential element in any education that is truly international (p. 45). Language education plays a central role in the European School network (Baetens Beardsmore and Kohls 1988:243), and is a very important component in the underlying philosophy of the schools.

Foreign language competency is also essential for teachers in the European School network. Teachers in ES are supposed to be at least bilingual, and it is impressive that no research has been done on the impact of teachers' bilingualism on their work and lives in schools of this type. Multi – bilingualism gives the staff the opportunity to initiate conversations in more than one language, and makes exposure to a second or third language a non-threatening experience as well as a socio-linguistically rewarding one. The process through which competence, needed for successful achievement, is built becomes a long-term individual and school target, and cross-linguistic interaction is given extra power in the light of different L1 backgrounds. Bilingualism is not the only characteristic/qualification of teachers in this type of international education. But is becomes particularly important especially when teachers have to live and work in another country, or within cultural diversity, the significance of which will be discussed in the next section.

2.3 Teachers in International Education

2.3.1 The importance of cultural diversity

Teachers in Dombey School coexist with members of staff from several European countries and this co-existence brings to light a variety of daily cross-linguistic and intercultural interactions as in most International Schools. According to Richards (1998), the composition of staff in an International School becomes highly significant 'if we accept that an ''international attitude'' is influenced by aspects other than the content of the formal curriculum' and since teachers are an integral, if not vital part of the school community, they should reflect the racial, ethnic and religious balance in the international community (p. 177). Although there are only eight nationalities in this school, Dombey School teachers reflect the ethnic-national

cultural balance in the European community.

Although cross-cultural learning situations are fundamentally problematic for both teachers and students (Hofstede 1986:303), and although teaching to a student body with a cognitive ability profile different from what the teacher is accustomed to is evidently problematic (ibid. p. 305), the recruitment of culturally diverse teachers becomes a 'must' in International Schools, if bridges are to be built and linkages to be established across cultures that facilitate the instructional process (Gay 1993:287). The mixed-culture nature of staff in International Schools also provides teachers with an environment which is concerned with developing teachers' understanding of emotions and social relationships, with an international dimension in mind. According to Hardman (2001), the diversity of teachers' nationalities, backgrounds and experiences contributes significantly to the successful evolution of international education (p. 129), and it can produce unexpected feelings and advantages, as well as considerable challenges.

Some of the challenges that international teachers face are discussed below, but more extensively, for Dombey School teachers, in chapters five and six, in the light of emerging cultural differences. The analysis in chapter four begins by presenting what is most positive about Dombey School, but chapter five explores the tensions underlying this, in order to develop a more nuanced picture. However positive the overall picture, it is important to offer as balanced a view of the situation as possible, which means making every effort to probe beneath surface representations.

2.3.1.1 Challenges in cross-cultural environments

There are usually special criteria for recruitment that most national teacher training diplomas require student teachers to meet, but there does not seem to be any specific

training available for teachers who are about to teach to diverse student populations in a national or international level, even though research has shown that if teachers do not receive training in teacher education programmes prior to entering the classroom, opportunities to acquire such training within the school setting are limited (Hiatt-Michael 2001:187).

Some of the theoretical requirements for teacher recruitment are quite obvious such as being able to recognize and value the creative ways that students express themselves, appreciating the obvious differences and not assuming that students or teachers with different cultural heritages will all be the same. Cultural diversity seems to be students' and teachers' greatest challenge in International Schools and, although they will eventually have to 'overcome distinct difficulties in getting along with those who are different from them' (Triandis 2003:487), they might not be aware of the safe ways and quick procedures to follow towards that goal.

When people perceive each other as dissimilar and make no efforts to eliminate the above dissimilarity, 'differences are magnified and seem to be immutable' (ibid. p. 488), with the immediate consequence of negative stereotyping. Stereotypes have been defined as 'oversimplified generalisations made with regard to specific groups of people' where individuals are not appreciated for their uniqueness (Brislin and Yoshida 1994:42). Although it is widely accepted that stereotypes 'distort our ability to perceive other people accurately', and cause a 'negative inferior self of self-esteem' to members of culturally distinct groups (Wittmer et al. 1992:62), whenever the topic of cultural difference is discussed 'the allegation of stereotyping usually is not far behind' (Bennett 1998:5).

Some researchers have argued that there is tendency in the educational field in

general 'to make sweeping generalisations about national groupings and to expect that each member of that culture or national group displays the same characteristics' (Randall 2001:139). However, Hayden's et al. research (2000) emphasises the fact that teachers are aware of the danger of cultural stereotyping in international settings and thus, of the importance of recognising the individual rather than the cultural label of the individual (p. 115). Stereotypes and myths may be related to various types of cultural or ethnic groups' construction of reality within a school context, but in the context of an International School there should be at least an explicit intention to 'treat every person as an individual' (Bennett and Bennett 2004:151). Minding the importance of individuality, particularly in international contexts, raises individual confidence, values individual contribution and can, in the long run, facilitate teacher relationships too.

2.3.2 Teacher development and professional challenges

Healthy teacher relationships in international contexts can also be affected by teacher development as the latter may lead to positive growth and a positive school presence. The school, as an organisation, and the teachers, individually, need to invest in their own development in order to deal with multiple dilemmas and issues arising in the working environment. In other words, there should be a process through which the teachers alone or with others will be able to 'extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching' and contribute to the quality education in the classroom (Day 1999:4).

Thew (2003) highlights the importance of teacher development by emphasizing the human cost of leaving it behind, no matter how supportive the school educational policy is or how self-confident, professionally and personally, teachers are. He

speaks of loss of control, guilt, lack of support, marginalization, losing sight of the big picture in the deluge of detail, losing sight of oneself, stress and illness, and a resulting life imbalance when teachers lack continued professional growth and in-service teacher education (p. 229). Another advantage of professional development is that a school's staff develop an awareness of its target objectives and realise which direction they should follow.

Most of the teachers in Dombey School were new to international education when they joined it. Starting a new job can be an anxious experience 'creating feelings of uncertainty and self-doubt' (Stirzaker 2004:31) which may contribute to the development of professional stress. Thew (2003) has shown that this can be caused by various factors affecting not only to novice but experienced teachers too:

– Lack of professional recognition within institutions

– Lack of clear career progress

– Finding teachers undermined and marginalized at certain times in their teaching pathways

– Not being involved in planning change but being expected to deliver and implement it (p. 234).

Moreover, starting a new job in a foreign country and in a culturally diverse context, as is the case for most teachers in Dombey School, can be particularly stressful, 'as it creates the necessity of simultaneously adapting to new cultures both in and out of the workplace' (Stirzaker 2004:31). Brislin and Yoshida (1994:37) place 'anxiety' and 'disconfirmed expectancies' among the 'intense feelings' teachers experience at their cross-cultural encounters, and Jandt (2007:315) mentions 'culture shock' as a

factor contributing to feelings of anxiety and disorientation that come from living in a new culture.

Teachers' tolerance for ambiguity may be challenged, when school life becomes unpredictable and confusing. 'Cultural discontinuity' (Ramsey 1998:311) can be a source of considerable stress for teachers when they find themselves confronted by a different culture. Because working away from home entails moving away from one's support systems such as friends, families etc., and teachers 'often have no one to turn to for help or assurance' (Brislin and Yoshida 1994:80) which might cause feelings of alienation or reactions of frustration that could have a significant impact on teachers' work and emotional self.

My research is also concerned with teachers' beliefs on multiculturalism and multilingualism, as well as survival strategies in a culturally diverse working context. Teachers' experiences are likely to throw light on our current understanding of factors which influence their adaptability and professional life. By investigating these experiences I hope to understand better the school culture, teachers' cultures and possible arising cultural differences.

In order for the impact of cultural differences to be understood, it is necessary to interview teachers in their relevant professional context, and consider the professional culture in which their beliefs are embedded. The type of institution in which teachers work, as well as its organization, are important issues to be taken into consideration, in order to understand what challenges lie below the surface for the teacher in an International School.

2.4 School Culture

Improving instruction, reaching an agreement on the methodology, enriching syllabuses and introducing many languages or modern teaching methods, increasing teachers' motivation or training teachers are unlikely to contribute to school improvement or student achievement if we do not take into account school culture and the school educational policy, since they all affect the quality of what teachers do inside the classroom and how they behave outside it. School culture is also one of the main influential factors affecting teacher learning at school level (Flores 2004:298).

It has also been argued that 'school culture does not exist in isolation of the organisational aspects of the school and the external environment' (Cavanagh and Dellar 1998:15) which means that the role of school culture is so important that 'a mismatch between the school system and a teacher' could, at the very least, lead to 'that teacher's morale being adversely affected' and effective and efficient organisations to suffer (Richards 1998:182).

Singelis and Pedersen (1997) agree on the importance of shared positive expectations within a school culture if 'hostile behaviors [that] will lead to hostile expectations' are to be avoided. In the absence of positive shared expectations, individuals will judge each others' behaviours from their own cultural perspective rather than from the perspective of the other's culture. The conflict will escalate as both parties respond to the other's perceived hostility. Neither partner will be aware of their original inaccuracy in misjudging the other person's behaviour, and the opportunity for harmony will have been lost (p. 199).

Additionally, teachers' attitudes and values are important components of school

culture and are unique to a particular school district. The background knowledge and perceptions Dombey School teachers carry, as well as the challenges they face in the school, eventually affect school culture and need to be investigated. It is necessary to look at the ethos of the school in order to get a clear picture of the school value system, comparing it and fitting it into the big picture of international education worldwide. It is also important to probe what teachers think is expected of them in a multicultural school context, how well they think they meet these expectations, how they experience the role of educator and staff member, what factors influence their role accommodation and speed or delay their adjustment.

In general, teachers in Dombey School belong to the British, German, French, Italian, Dutch, Flemish, Danish and Spanish cultural groups and are expected to transfer characteristics from their 'home' cultures and educational systems into the present working environment. Based on previous research (Hofstede 1986; Hofstede and Hofstede 2005), nations/cultures have certain criteria on the national/cultural dimensions of power distance, individualism, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance, therefore certain types of cooperation between nations and groups are more challenging than others.

All cultures in Dombey School appear to have different combinations of the above dimensions. Table 2.1 identifies the associated values in terms of Hofstede's four dimensional model (1986:309-11) for the existing countries in Dombey School. This is a model of thinking, feeling and behaviour which partially determines the behaviour of individuals and groups (Hofstede 1999:3) and it will be the main frame of reference for the analysis of Dombey School teachers' beliefs, attitudes and behaviours in chapter six in combination with Triandis' additional dimensions of

'horizontal' and 'vertical' individualism and 'tight' and 'loose' cultures (2004). The terms power distance, individualism, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance will be further discussed in chapter six in relation to the general characteristics of Dombey School representative cultures:

Belgium, France, Spain, Italy	Large power distance High Individualism
Germany, Britain, Ireland, Denmark, Netherlands	Small power distance High Individualism
Denmark, Netherlands	Weak uncertainty avoidance Feminine
Britain, Ireland	Weak uncertainty avoidance Masculine
France, Spain	Strong uncertainty avoidance Feminine
Germany, Italy, Belgium	Strong uncertainty avoidance Masculine

Table 2.1
Associated values, Hofstede's model (1986:309-11)

Teachers' attitudes, values, beliefs, habits, assumptions and ways of doing things constitute the 'content of teacher cultures', as opposed to the 'form of teacher cultures' which consists of the 'characteristic patterns of relationship and forms of association between members of those cultures (Hargreaves 1992:219). The forms of teacher cultures are important, for it is through them that the contents of teacher cultures – the norms, values, beliefs and practices – are reproduced or redefined (ibid. p. 231).

Understanding the major forms of teacher cultures can therefore help us understand much about 'the dynamics of educational change or its absence' (ibid. p. 232), which is why the dominant forms of teacher cultures will be also explored in Dombey

School in relation to the content of teacher cultures. Teachers' cultures also partly determine teaching strategies as the latter do not just arise from the demands of the immediate context (Hargreaves 1992:217). Chapter six highlights Dombey School teachers' cultures of teaching, their beliefs and values, their perceptions and ways of doing things among communities of teachers who have had to deal with similar or different demands and constraints within a particular multilingual school context.

Among the four broad forms of teacher cultures that Hargreaves (1992) distinguished (individualism, balkanization, contrived collegiality, and collaboration) (pp. 220-36), and the six aspects of school culture that Cavanagh and Dellar (1998) explored (professional values, emphasis on learning, collegiality, collaboration, shared planning and transformational leadership) (p. 2), collaboration and professional development have been considered among the most significant contributors to better experiences for teachers in International Schools (Dunn and Carroll 2005:136). These two factors will also be looked at in Dombey School, as part of teachers' beliefs about professional priorities, as constitutive of teachers' daily work and as important ingredients of a healthy school culture. Teachers, either individually or working with others, can develop and communicate ideas and expertise about teaching international students (ibid. p. 145) and benefit from the process.

2.4.1 Teacher collaboration

When teachers appreciate the power of collective activities and have a joint response to common concerns, school culture grows strong and is reinforced. Although 'the culture of collaboration' contains the potential for professional development through the free exchange of opinions' (Nias et al. 1989:70), Hargreaves (1994) argues that

collaborative and collegial practices among teachers are widely understood to be exceptions to the general rule, despite numerous efforts for improvement; 'individualism stubbornly prevails within the teacher culture' (p. 167). This kind of individualism 'isolates teachers from their colleagues and ties them to the pressing immediacy of classroom life' (Hargreaves 1992:232), and it has also been argued that 'professional isolation perpetuates professional ignorance' (Powell 2000:98).

There can also be cultures of collaboration that can just as easily divide as connect, that is, cultures like balkanization which 'separate teachers into insulated and often competing sub-groups within a school' (Hargreaves 1994:213), or cultures which are restricted in a combination of factors such as 'depth', 'scope', 'frequency' and 'persistence' such as 'bounded collaboration' (Hargreaves 1992:228).

True collaboration, however, might establish the conditions for individual or collective reform involving teachers in the change enterprise. A key component in teacher collaboration with all stakeholders in all educational contexts is communication. According to Humphreys (1996:49), the only healthy way to communicate is to use direct and clear statement where the communicator is respecting and valuing his/her colleague all the time, is accepting the colleague's right to be different in outlook, philosophy and attitude, and allows his/her colleague the freedom to respond or not to respond. Practice of direct and clear communication creates a supportive staffroom environment. It will therefore be interesting to explore whether or how most of the requirements for the 'creation of positive staff morale' are met in Dombey School, such as high level of interaction among staff, decisions made by the group, and the presence of available and approachable leaders (ibid. p. 56).

Internally, collaboration is realised via the co-operation and support of a teacher's colleagues, which 'also promotes professional growth' (Conners 1991:62-63). Deveney (2007) argues that if we recognise that teachers can learn powerfully from each other, International Schools should actively support teacher collaboration and formalise opportunities for information sharing by creating and developing forums in which teachers can learn from each other (p. 326). Externally, collaboration 'involves working with other interested parties outside the school locale'. When schools collaborate with universities in particular, opportunities for new kinds of expertise are developed on behalf of both school-based personnel and university-based colleagues (Sachs 2000:84).

Coleman's (1998) research on varieties of teacher collaboration (pp. 73-82) focuses on teachers' attitudes and behaviours associated with home/school collaboration. And although collaboration is not the focus in my research, Coleman's research has similarities to mine in the sense that interview data for twelve teachers were also included in the qualitative data set. The aim was to identify teachers' perceptions and develop profiles of their attitudes and practices regarding a) parent involvement b) students and c) professional efficacy. The teacher profiles were developed to provide general contextual information, and give the reader a sense of the school and community environment in which the teachers were working. I have adopted this approach in the case of Dombey School, where an international teacher profile is created in order to make it easier for the reader to understand later the mixing of the cultures, the challenges these teachers face and the insights that help them to deal with those challenges.

Data in Coleman's research also came from parent-student dyads in order to

investigate parents' and students' perceptions about involvement strategies and learning environment (because the teacher sample was small), while my research has only given voice to teachers because of the focus on teachers' experiences, drawing on interviewees from all cultures. In Coleman's study additional data were analysed quantitatively after the profiles had been developed in order to check classroom level differences in scale scores within the group at two times, while my research uses classroom observation to get a sense of the classroom ethos. In his research, teacher, parent and student data were combined to form a complete profile for each participating teacher (p. 74), and quantitative data were also used to check the results obtained from the qualitative analysis, to provide another form of validation (p. 75) and support the collaborative/non-collaborative distinctions derived from the qualitative data (p. 79). The combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis, according to Coleman (1998), ensured that important distinctions between and among classrooms would not go unnoticed since 'apparently important differences in perceptions in the qualitative data do not always predict the results of quantitative analysis' (p. 80). However, since my focus is on the staffroom rather than the classroom and since my research aims to understand the nature of teachers' relationships rather than to categorise them as Coleman does, I have relied on qualitative data.

School culture assumes there is interaction with the internal (school staff, headship) and external environment (parents, local community, government or educational system), and is also shaped by this interaction. The importance of this interaction is acknowledged by Gagliardi (1995:6), who believes that teacher training should also develop a teacher's capacity for establishing good communications with the families of pupils from different communities, and for stimulating them to participate more

actively in school activities. Dombey School teachers' perceptions of parents' collaboration will also be explored in my research as part of teachers' perceptions of parents' role in international education.

2.4.2 Parents in international education

My research focuses on the views of one of the crucial groups of stakeholders: the teachers. This focus should not be taken to imply a downgrading of the importance of other relevant groups, students and parents, but rather to consider these from the perspective of my chosen stakeholders.

The centrality of students in education is a given, but the place of parents in international education cannot be dismissed as peripheral. In fact, the cultural backgrounds of parents of International School students may be as diverse as those of the staff (Drake 1998:161), and there has been research on how cultural differences between parents and schools have implications on parents' educational attitudes, which may lead to different types of parental involvement (Denessen et al. 2001). Parents are a child's first and enduring teachers, and in a study which attempted to investigate what factors are perceived to be required in order for students to be international, teachers appear to view the influence of parental outlook as marginally more important than do students (Hayden et al. 2000:112).

Although current approaches to parental involvement contain assumptions such as that parents and schools should act as partners in education, Denessen's et al. research (2001) argues that parents' 'content-centered' and 'student-centered' attitudes and their relationship to the current pedagogical norms and values of the school involved influence the degree of the parents' involvement and are contributing factors to the improvement of the school as well as children's

development. 'Content-centered' parents favour teacher-centred education and a focus on product that is associated with large power distance values, whereas 'student-centered' parents prefer student-centred education with a focus on cooperative learning and student independence, that is typical of small power distance cultures (p. 59).

Pearce (1998:57) notes that International Schools have a good record of involving families in school life, appreciating the fact that 'the surest route to better schools lies through involving parents in the learning activities of students' (Coleman 1998:9). Psychologists working in International Schools know that their effectiveness is increased by working with teachers and other educational personnel, parents and other persons who influence the growth and development of children (Oakland and Saigh 1987:287). It is therefore important that teachers remain sensitive and responsive to parents' expectations and anxieties, as well as for the school to allow a policy where parents are not marginalised. Parents' views should be appreciated because the successful transition of the pupil is strongly related to the attitude of the parents (Langford 1998:38).

Although my research in Dombey School is not directly related to parents' attitudes or their contribution to the ethos of international spirit conveyed, the experience of the teachers is bound up closely with their relationships with students who are in turn influenced 'by many contextual variables', two of which are the parents' role in the school and their own background (Conners 1991:62). It is therefore important to be aware of the place of parents within the wider school community.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has drawn on a wide range of relevant research in order to establish the

conceptual context for the research that follows. This particular research takes place in a context of cultural diversity, where themes such as teachers' profiles, relationships, adaptation and professional development need to be addressed and possibly redefined in the light of teachers' differences, challenges, priorities and lives, which is what the chapters of analysis (four and five) and discussion (six) will attempt to do. But first, a methodological framework will be established in order for the process and findings to be understood within the context of a particular case study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Research findings have transformed our lives over the last century. Research remains an essential part of the world's pursuit and exploitation of new knowledge. The implications of research in human life are various and usually concern humans who are eager to enlarge their understanding of the investigated areas and are willing to undertake further risks for the sake of their own improvement. On the basis of the methodology adopted by the inquirer, research can be distinguished in qualitative and quantitative.

Qualitative research (henceforth QR) seeks to understand participants' perspectives on the world. It is neither context nor time free which means that it studies participants in natural settings which are not independent from the situations and time in which they occur. QR is used to gain insights into people's attitudes, behaviours, value systems, concerns, motivations, aspirations, culture or lifestyles. It seeks to understand the 'why', rather than the 'how' of its topic through the analysis of unstructured information and its does not rely on statistics or numbers, which are the domain of quantitative researchers.

One of the strengths of QR is its ability to access directly what happens in the world. It examines what people actually do in real life rather than asking them to comment upon it (Silverman 2006:113). It uses data collected 'over a sustained period' and focuses on 'naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings', so that we have

a strong handle on what 'real life' is like (Miles and Huberman 1994:10). This leads to the conclusion that 'the constant interplay of data gathering and analysis is at the heart of qualitative research' (Wiseman 1974:317) which tries to produce 'a coherent and illuminating description of and perspective on a situation that is based on and consistent with detailed study of that situation' (Schofield 1993:93).

As Bassey notes (1999:22), it is difficult to define what constitutes a case study and numerous definitions are available. Case study research has been described as a comprehensive research strategy (Yin 2003:14) and an 'empirical inquiry' that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context (ibid. p. 13). Sturman (1994) defines case study as an 'in-depth investigation of the interdependencies of parts and of the patterns that emerge' (p. 61), while according to Stake (2000:435), case study is not a methodological study but a choice of what is to be studied; his definition of an 'intrinsic case study' refers to the researcher's willingness to understand better a particular case (ibid. p. 437). However, the definition that most closely describes the case study undertaken here is provided by Merriam (1988:16):

> The qualitative case study can de defined as an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit. Case studies are particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic and rely heavily on inductive reasoning in handling multiple data sources.

My attempt to study teachers in this particular institution (Dombey School) by interacting with and observing them regularly in their daily lives through a prolonged contact with a field situation makes this research qualitative in nature. Reliance on multiple sources of evidence and the study of one particular school in its natural setting attempting to make sense of and interpret life there in terms of the meanings teachers bring to it makes this research a single case study.

Since 'colleagues, researchers and scholarly practitioners in education will find methodological information crucial for assessing the study's contribution to the field' (Merriam 1988:194), and since research gains credibility to the extent that the whole process by which one arrives at conclusions is laid open to scrutiny, I will give a thorough description of my methodology steps for my research in this chapter; One can only understand and appreciate the findings when the process is discussed in a clear and honest way. The qualitative inquirer has to describe and explain every step s/he takes and justify all choices that are being made about topic selection, manageability and feasibility of the social setting, methodology and formulation of research questions. Fieldwork issues and procedures, my research background, methods of data collection, coding and analysis, as well as ethical considerations are therefore discussed below in detail.

3.2 Importance of Fieldwork in Research

Although field research is 'fraught with difficulties' for the researcher (Burgess 1982:9), it is particularly significant in educational research, as plenty of data can come from real life contexts. This very much depends on the personality of the fieldworker, specific situations, as well as the school culture. Scott and Usher (1999:128) argue that the way in which the researcher behaves towards participants determines the status of the data and any conclusions drawn from them. This argument highlights the importance of field relationships in qualitative research and the development of 'rapport, trust and confidence' between the subject and the researcher (Hitchcock and Hughes 1989:46). Nevertheless, it is important to 'learn the local language' in the field (Burgess 1982:1) and establish a role in the research context.

Some relationships could be more important than others, but it is generally essential for the researcher to maintain healthy relations with gatekeepers and participants until the end of fieldwork. There are useful discussions in the literature (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983; Burgess 1984) about the range of strategies researchers have adopted in order to establish themselves in educational settings. As individual researchers tend to understand field behaviour in different ways, it is understandable that they use various strategies to survive and research. Researchers who adopt different frameworks do not necessarily understand the ethical dilemmas of research the same way (Scott and Usher 1999:128), and therefore justify their accounts and choices through their personal framework. This is what I will try to do in the following sections.

3.3 Research Setting and Participants

Dombey School is located in the countryside outside London, and a few miles of tree-lined driveway leads from the main road to the car park of the school, mainly used by visitors. A few signs and a yellow line lead from the car park to the main entrance, and all school buildings are located within walking distance of each other with the yellow line separating primary from secondary education. The school benefits from spacious landscaped grounds around its premises, and it accommodates nursery, primary and secondary education.

There are about 450 students in the secondary cycle in all sections, and there are currently fifty full-time and twenty five part-time secondary cycle staff members (approximately). Full-time staff are seconded from their national systems for a maximum period of nine years and part-time staff are locally employed to the school and usually hired by the Head. Olsen (2000:40) claims that the fact that the teachers

are appointed, in this kind of school, for a maximum nine year period ensures that the schools get regular injections of the best pedagogical practice from the EU member states, and that the national schools get a European perspective when the teachers return home. However, there are some teachers who were employed to the school before 1989 and are still working there (Ref.: 2007-D-232-en-1, art. 83/1, p. 65[6]).

Most teachers are at least bilingual in the school and they all speak English. Although linguistic competency gives teachers 'greater sympathy and understanding about the nature of bilingualism' (Baetens Beardsmore 1993:145), teachers' experiences in Dombey School are not limited to the experience of bilingual people just speaking two languages, but rather to the experience of living (or working) with other people through different languages (Wierzbicka 2004:98).

The study, however, raises one methodological concern. This is related to the extent to which these foreign teachers can express themselves in a foreign language when interviewed about perceptions, views, and issues that require full and thorough explicitness. What is positive, however, is that all interviewees were responding in the same language (English), as it was familiar to all intended populations. Instruments were therefore developed for a single language, thus avoiding translation in at least seven languages as anything less would be unfair to other teachers.

My research involves portrayal of persons and an institution in forms that 'may enable recognition' (Sturman 1994:65), therefore, all teachers' names have been changed due to promised anonymity within a school of distinctiveness and teachers'

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[6] Evidence from documentary materials usually has the coding 'Ref.' as used in the website and is specifically acknowledged by means of reference.

nationalities are only mentioned when necessary to link data evidence with issues raised in the discussion chapter (six). Moreover, for the sake of confidentiality, when referring to whatever teachers have said or done, a coding system has been used for this thesis as follows:

Source of data:	Name of Respondent (Initial)	Date of the source (reversed)	Extract number
e.g. I:	R	060223	-01

Table 3.1
Coding system used for acknowledging data references

I, stands for Interviews and F for Fieldnotes. So, {I: R 060223-01} means that the extract comes from an Interview with Roberto (R) which took place on 23 February 2006 and is the first interview with that participant that has taken place (out of two, for example). And {F: 060406-03} means that the extract comes from my fieldnotes which were kept on 6 April 2006 and this is the third extract (out of five, for example) which were kept on that date. Alternatively, full research names have been used for direct teachers' quotations and occasionally a number has been used after the name to demonstrate the number of interview transcript the particular quote comes from (i.e. Wallace, 02 refers to the second interview that took place with Wallace).

3.4 Research Questions

The main questions that guided my research were:

1. In what ways if any are teachers' experiences of a multilingual school distinctive?

2. Is there any evidence that the international culture of such multilingual schools offers particular advantages or disadvantages to teachers in terms of their work and professional development?

Those main questions pointed to areas I would like to approach in the interviews (Appendix 2) and gave birth to subsidiary questions which were accordingly formulated to elicit information about the particular needs of the teachers within the school. The respondents were perceived as 'experts' on the school and should therefore be allowed maximum opportunity to tell their experiences and story. First, I needed to understand the broader context of their educational background and careers and then define the culture of this school described by them as a community, as an organisational and professional culture. I needed to discover ways in which their professional identity developed through time, how their sense of 'self' evolved in and through their career, having in mind that most of them have international working or educational experiences. I needed to investigate their beliefs about their career paths over time and about the factors which may have had an impact on their work or professionalism.

In order to understand the characteristics of the present school culture which may have an impact on teachers' work and contribution to school ethos, I needed to explore their perceived values about school structures and organisation, school support issues and teacher collaboration, as well as their ideas about the role of

parents and the characteristics of student body in international education. Consequently, I would be able to understand whether their perceptions and cultural values match the reality of the school and how their present career or growth is enhanced or facilitated within the present school culture. Furthermore, I needed to understand what these teachers think of the term 'multiculturalism' and whether their expectations on this matter were met.

Teachers' views about the school culture could also be elicited via asking questions about other schools they have worked at or other institutions they have studied at or been trained in. Questions about how Dombey School compares to schools of its kind, to International Schools and to schools in teachers' national system in general, would bring in characteristics of Dombey School culture which are distinctive in different ways; they could also reveal teachers' perceptions of how things work in the school or should be working.

Dombey School teachers' previous experiences would highlight the major elements of those teachers' past professional lives which shaped their educational journey, enhance a possible commitment to their job and challenge their professional selves. They would also help me understand whether teachers' past experiences and beliefs shape or influence present experiences, behaviours and attitudes in the school, and whether there are values or perceptions in common for teachers from the same nationality. Exploring the relationship between teachers' beliefs and actions in the school would give me an idea of how teachers handle their past experiences and whether they bring them forward in their present jobs.

3.5 Methods of Data Collection

Qualitative research involves the analysis of unstructured material in the form of words (i.e. observation, interviews or documents). Collecting and analysing unstructured information (qualitative data) can be messy and time consuming, especially when using manual methods. Interviews are among the main 'means of participative knowledge construction' in qualitative studies (Shah 2004:552) and comprise a sensitive and delicate art, which draws from skills, aptitude, knowledge and participants' subjectivity for maximising research outcomes (ibid. p. 567).

Since the focus for my research is a 'particular unit' (Richards 2003:20-21), and my aim is to provide a detailed description of it, this study is a qualitative case study which mainly uses interviews as a method of data collection. I therefore needed to organize my methods of data collection and prepare my research questions within a semi-structured interview plan (Appendix 3) and a combination of other methods.
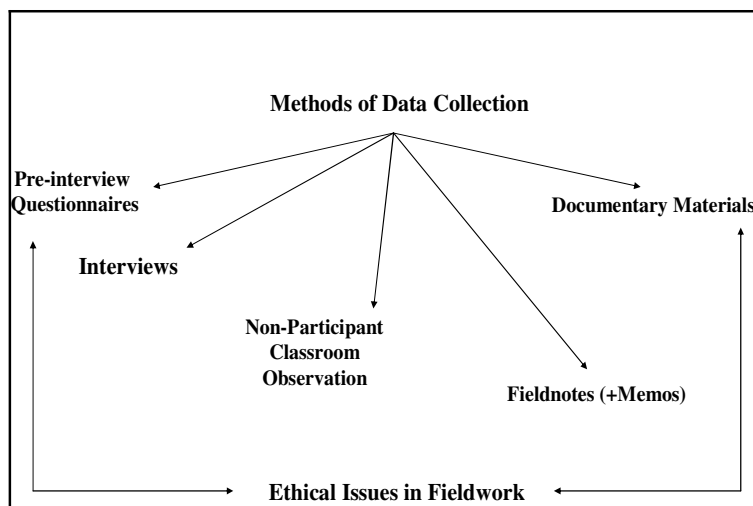
Figure 3.1
Fieldwork Plan

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Data collection started in the middle of February until 6 April 2006. A wide variety of measures was taken to ensure 'methodological triangulation' (Cohen et al. 2000:113), as this is particularly necessary where a researcher is engaged in case study (ibid. p. 115).

Figure 3.1 represents the process of fieldwork in my case study. Five sources of data collection were used (mini-questionnaires, interviews, classroom observation, documentary materials and fieldnotes (and memos), and are discussed in detail in the following sections.

3.5.1 Pre-interview questionnaires

On the day of the interview, respondents were requested to fill in a short pre-interview questionnaire (Appendix 4) which was divided into three parts. Part A required some basic details such as real and preferred research name, nationality, years of teaching experience, in general and in Dombey School, languages spoken and e-mail address for future correspondence. Details such as date, time and place of the interview were filled in by me. Part B required information about their professional status in the school which would help me identify possible differences or similarities according to their professional contracts. Part C required information about their teaching circumstances, such as the linguistic section in which they belong or teach, their medium of instruction, subjects and classes taught.

Mini-questionnaires gave me the opportunity to understand whether or how long I should proceed with the coming interviews, depending on whether respondents were meeting the criteria to be further interviewed, having in mind that I did not have many details about teachers' professional lives until interview time. I needed to have respondents who teach in all linguistic sections, from all nationalities and cultures,

with a variety of qualifications, and teaching experience. Among the goals of the study was to document cultural similarities and differences, therefore both context (teaching experience, teaching qualifications and circumstances) and psychological variables (traits, values, attitudes, styles, beliefs) were included in an exploratory manner in the interviews (3.5.2). If the samples were very different in demographic variables, the pre-interview questionnaires would show it before proceeding with the interviews.

But the most important contribution was that I kept informants constantly updated, using their (given) e-mail accounts, allowing them time to respond or ask questions about the research. Electronic communication was safer and more private than face to face exchanges or communication in their pigeon holes, and most double and triple interviews were arranged after approaching them via their e-mail accounts.

These questionnaires helped me identify later the dates on which interviews were recorded, as such information was not sometimes obvious in the transcripts. I could therefore double-check such information with fieldnotes or enrich my data with information that was not given anywhere else.

3.5.2 Interviews

Double and triple semi-structured interviews took place with forty-seven secondary cycle school teachers and interview details (participants' research names, nationality, sex, contractual status, frequency, dates and duration of interviews) are included in Appendix 5.

I interviewed twenty-nine full-time teachers and fifteen part-time teachers plus one school counsellor, the Deputy head and a visiting (at that time) student teacher.

Although the focus of the research is on teachers, I thought the contribution of the counsellor, the Deputy head and the student teacher (which is like a third eye which looks objectively at the culture of the school) would give another perspective to already acquired data, and that is the main reason they (almost) all took place at the end of fieldwork. The only exception was the student teacher who was interviewed three times and her comments about the school were always welcome whenever she felt like expressing herself out of spontaneity and willingness to help.

Eleven British full-timers were interviewed out of fifteen (table 3.2), six French out of nine, six Germans out of nine, all three Italians and both Dutch as priority and extra voice was given to the smaller sections which are also the ones which are gradually closing down. The only Danish teacher of the school was interviewed twice as his voice was again of extreme importance in a school where he does not practically have any colleagues, and where he has to teach extra hours. This produces a total of twenty-nine teachers out of thirty-nine which is almost three quarters of full-time teachers.

	British	German	French	Dutch & Flemish	Italian	Spanish	Danish	Total
FULL-TIME Teachers	11/15	6/9	6/9	2/2	3/3		1/1	29
PART-TIME Teachers	6/16	1/2	2/2	2/2	3/4	1/2		15
Deputy Head							√	
Student Teacher				√				
School Counsellor		√						
Total no of interviewees	17	7	8	4	6	1	1	47

Table 3.2
Nationalities and numbers of teachers interviewed

The percentage of part-timers interviewed was more than fifty per cent, which means plenty of voices and nationalities were represented, differences and similarities between part-timers and full-timers could be highlighted and data received by both categories could be checked for accuracy. Among the weaknesses of interviews can be 'deliberate deceit' which fortunately rarely occurs (Sikes 2000) and the interviewer needs to be aware of this. Comparing different data sources and having several interviews with the same person, accounts from other interviewees and fieldnotes can help towards the elimination of deceit.

The risk in cross-cultural interviewing, in particular, is that any effort to explain or understand culture-related phenomena, especially that which do not fit within a known frame of reference, may lead researchers either to make false assumptions, or to perceive difference as an oddity, both of which can misdirect the research interview, the nature of the data, and the interpretations (Shah 2004:552). Moreover, when interpreting data it is very important for researchers to see that sometimes what an interviewee says is not the straightforward answer to the interviewer's question (Mason 2002:231) and further analysis or interpretation are required to shed light on the participant's meaning from the participant' s point of view. It is also important to bear in mind when analysing interviews that they are co-constructed accounts involving both interviewer and respondent, so that the former's role cannot be regarded as neutral and the latter's responses need to be interpreted in the context of the unfolding talk (Baker 1997).

However, research questions in qualitative interviews have several strengths as methods of collecting data: because the ordering of questions is less important, the interviewer is freer to probe interesting areas that arise and can follow the

respondent's interests and concerns; interviews facilitate rapport with the respondent (Smith 1995:12) and they are relatively economical in terms of time and resources (Silverman 2006:113).

3.5.2.1 Piloting interviews

Since semi-structured interviews can be 'the richest single source of data' and a 'productive research tool' in case study research (Gillham 2000:65), I had to allow myself time to pilot the interviews, refine interview questions and be confident about the key issues in my research investigation. Initial interviews performed as piloting ones since listening to recordings enabled me to improve my interview technique. During the first week in the field seven interviews were recorded, and although they were not meant to be transcribed as they were a sample aiming at preparing me to 'obtain additional corroborative data' (Cohen et al. 2000:95), a couple of them proved to be extremely valuable in my research; therefore, they were fully transcribed and some quotations were eventually used in my thesis.

3.5.2.2 Transcriptions

Twelve interviews (one quarter of the total amount of interviews recorded) were initially transcribed verbatim and a sample from an interview transcript is included in Appendix 6. Realising, however, that some of the verbatim transcriptions content was redundant or repetitive I decided to extract the rest of the relevant data at a later stage, as listening to the first twelve interviews, deciding about major and subsidiary themes, the relationship between them, finalising them in an outline and analysing the data would be more important in the first stage (3.6). The twelve interviews which were initially recorded and used as a core in my research are shown in Appendix 5, in bold.

3.5.3 Classroom observation

Non-participant classroom observation took place for nine periods[7] in almost all linguistic sections, grades and subjects, both with part-time and full-time teachers. Details of my observations (Appendix 7) were also included in my fieldnotes and they were designed to give me a clearer idea about the school culture, about teachers' work inside the classroom, about the relationship between their beliefs and actions, as well as clues for interviews or follow-up questions. Classroom observation has been used in my case study as part of a 'multi-method approach' implying convergence of 'different kinds of evidence, gathered in different ways, but bearing on the same point' (Gillham 2000:49).

All but one of the teachers observed were also interviewed. Sometimes interviews were prior to observations to allow me time to get to know the teachers before I asked for an observation, (which is always a more intimate and intrusive process compared to interviews), but it also worked the other way round as I needed to see if there were any differences in the quality, or amount of data collected via interviews when their classes were initially observed. In that case, I needed to rely on my own instincts and abilities throughout the research effort (Merriam 1988:33-34), using my personality traits and communicative skills to approach teachers in the staffroom or in the dining hall in order to make them feel comfortable with the idea of me observing their class without them being interviewed first. Because of the different cultural background between myself and the interviewees, I felt I had to be skilled in intercultural communication showing openness, clarity and a non-judgmental style in

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[7] A period is the 40 minutes period of time that all teachers teach in Dombey School and is mentioned as such by teachers themselves and in all timetables or information given out.

communication.

 The relationship between teachers' beliefs and actions was really important in my project, therefore I could only understand it if I observed their teaching within their classroom environment. I tried not to give them very early notice of my observations for pragmatic and research purposes. Pragmatically, it was not feasible for them to schedule my invitation much earlier with all their commitment to events that were taking place in the school. So even if I had agreed for an observation much earlier, they would have forgotten about it, they would have probably needed several reminders in their pigeon holes, and in the worst case, they would have planned otherwise or changed their mind without informing me on time. This would have had an impact on my research plans, as I would have missed an observation and simultaneously an important interview with a teacher.

As far as my research is concerned, I preferred to have the teachers comfortable and relaxed until the last moment before the class starts. This would allow them to function as normal and, although it was one period I was observing, technically, it would give me an idea closer to their real, everyday presence in the class and the quality of their work on a daily basis. This information would have a lot to add to the already acquired views of mine about the school culture and the characteristics of the teachers based on other methods of data collection.

Due to my restricted language competency and in order to observe as many (different nationality) teachers, subjects and classes as possible, I worked on a six full-time, three part-time teacher observation patterns, including British and foreign teachers. This new experience would allow me to accurately and fairly represent most language sections and most possible teaching circumstances. I could later ask

them to reflect about 'things' they do differently under distinctive multicultural teaching circumstances, and discuss it in the following interview. Even when teachers were teaching in a language that I could not understand (e.g. Magdalena in German), I would pick a subject that I could understand (e.g. Latin), and have another observation in the English section on that subject to understand different classroom approaches from nationality to nationality or from section to section.

3.5.4 Documentary materials

 Documentary materials included notice board announcements, newsletters, school newspapers, regulations and handouts, web pages etc. These materials were kept in a separate file as a source of additional information related to the school, its activities and functionality, as well as its 'external culture' (e.g. parents' association newsletters).

3.5.5 Memos as part of fieldnotes

Everyday memories, personal thoughts and informal accounts during my time in the field took the form of a diary, parts of which proved to be useful for later reflection about field relationships. All the joys, risks, surprises, concerns, dilemmas and mistakes I experienced in those seven weeks in the field were all put onto paper as proof that fieldwork can be a source of frustration, as well as a source of self-satisfaction and pride.

Although it is recommended to distinguish memos and fieldnotes while doing fieldwork, I first started keeping them in the same file, for reasons of convenience and practicality. When I tried to separate them after coming back from the field, I realized it was much more helpful to keep them in the same file, as memos were in a

reflexive relationship with my fieldnotes and, at certain points, they would even reinforce the quality of information included in them. Combining fieldnotes with memos throughout the process was like keeping a journal of research activities and ideas, writing down speculations, interesting problems or challenges, everyday emotions, random ideas or interesting quotes. Real field stories can reveal a lot about the culture of the school context studied and random thoughts can come together and form a pattern often turning into a research project or even a thesis topic. They can even reveal a lot about yourself as a researcher and the quality of your fieldwork.

Fieldnotes and memos will henceforth be considered as one source of data collection. And although interviews are my main method of data collection, the centrality of fieldnotes will now be discussed because careful reading, coding and analysis of the fieldnotes shed light on the importance of the process while being in the field. Different aspects of my fieldwork constantly interacted with ethical issues in qualitative research (3.7), and this is recorded in my fieldnotes, not only as an everyday account memory and a process of getting, understanding and processing information, but also a means to return to interview plans, recruit interviewees, revise and enrich interview questions. In that sense, fieldnotes are in a reflexive relationship with my research and interview questions (3.5.6.2) and that gives my research a sense of the dynamics and flexibility which fully-structured interviews do not have.

Also reflecting and discussing my fieldwork experiences may indicate ways in which 'field problems have been handled, and, in turn, provoke questions about the conduct of field research today' (Burgess 1982:9).

3.5.6 Fieldwork: importance and contribution of fieldnotes and memos

The use of fieldnotes and their contribution to research have been particularly highlighted by ethnographic researchers (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983), and there has been a growing recognition of writing fieldnotes as one of the most central methods of participant observation-based ethnography (Atkinson et al. 2001). Moreover, fieldnotes are 'one person's version of their encounter with the world' (Richards 2003:136) and they are more than 'records'; they are personal property (de Laine 2000:146).

When I started fieldwork and was preparing myself to recruit respondents, the first thing that came into my mind was how I could meet respondents whose contribution would be valuable. There were times I might have thought that the amount of information coming from a particular respondent was satisfactory. However, a later reflection proved that I might have overestimated some participants' responses or underestimated those of others. It has been claimed that nothing always works out as planned and 'cooperative people may turn nasty' and 'uncooperative people may become superior sources of data' (Lofland and Lofland 1995:46). The first case was exactly the case of James:

> I knew James would make an excellent interviewee to start with and I have the sense he would have 'loads' to say about the school (F: 060220-22)… I thought it would be promising to start my interviews with James and he seemed he had a lot to say but it didn't turn out this way at the end.

> (F: 060223-15)

Keeping fieldnotes while being in the field helped me establish some distance from participants, whenever I felt this was convenient and necessary. My daily interaction with teachers for seven weeks was obviously causing discomfort and tiredness to

them, having in mind that the longest that other researchers had stayed in the school until then was three weeks. Lofland and Lofland (1995) make it very clear that because the people you are studying openly cannot know everything about what you are doing, there is always the fear that a direct and discomforting challenge is just around the corner (p. 47). So 'keeping notes' time was a perfect time for me to revise my plans and a good excuse to get time for myself, and eliminate possibilities of 'going native'.

Dombey School offers a wide variety of activities for teachers. Because teachers did not usually speak about the school, unless they were specifically asked about something, informal conversations with them were particularly helpful in getting an idea about what is 'going around'. Information such as learning support lessons which have priority over complementary activities (F: 060227-08) may have seemed unimportant at the time, but it gave me an idea about teachers' increased responsibilities in the school (and opportunities offered) and their way of handling them. It revealed at what cost such responsibilities are carried out by teachers, their commitment to them and their expectations.

My notes were also significant in the analysis, because people usually want to appear more 'legitimate' when their words are recorded, but they appear to be more relaxed about their image when they are just chatting about the same things they had previously been interviewed about. Looking at my notes as a source of information allowed me to learn things about the school, and the teachers. Information came up that would never be given in recorded interviews or simply information that helped me understand my research context in a different way than the one that interviewees would possibly reveal in other contexts. In that sense, fieldnotes analysis can always

take the research a step further than interview data analysis.

Fieldnotes helped me – as a researcher – remember aspects of fieldwork that I would not be able to remember a few months later, unless I wrote them down. I could also revisit my notes and change my perspective on things as it is always different to be an 'insider' from an 'outsider' in the field. Fieldnotes also gave me the opportunity to triangulate my research; certain aspects of Dombey School teachers' perceptions had been repeatedly met in interviews, as well as in informal conversations in the staffroom. This repetition of gathered information helped me realize it was accurate, thus random and spontaneous 'talks' with teachers have been productive and highly contributory to my research.

Fieldnotes can be a big writing endeavour in the sense that anything can be included and several parameters of one's human or research identity can be revealed. Putting down onto paper certain aspects of the process of fieldwork means you are ready to study them, identify reactions, recognize possible mistakes, familiarize yourself with less obvious sides of yourself, getting to know yourself better.

> The challenge and glowing reward of fieldwork is to come to know yourself honestly enough to discover with equal honesty the ways of others, and the process of recording is the balance by means of which this relationship can be weighted.

(Richards 2003:135-36)

Re-reading fieldnotes can activate other internal mechanisms as well as activating fading memory itself. Incidents related to access, re-access or gaining consent in particular, are obviously linked to ethical issues in research, but can also be a reason to reflect and rethink modes of access 'both at the outset and once a study is underway,' confirming that 'control over decision-making around access is not always in the hands of the interviewer and even when this appears to be so, can still

be problematic when gatekeepers are used' (Miller and Bell 2002:61).

3.5.6.1 Relationships in the field

3.5.6.1.1 Identifying the gatekeepers

My notes also helped me understand how certain roles are perceived in the school. I could then act towards recruiting interviewees in a way that would give me valuable responses to my questions. In particular, fieldnotes helped me understand my role in the school, mainly as a researcher and to understand the role of gatekeepers and teachers.

Identifying the gatekeepers before starting fieldwork is among the most significant things for the researcher. The process through which I was introduced to the school made me realize that the Head, the Deputy head, the counsellors and the psychologist are the most significant gatekeepers in it.

Only after almost two and a half weeks from starting my data collection was I given a proper visitor's badge to hang on my clothes all the time, so that people recognize me and so that I come in and out of the school 'as I please'. The Head(s) must have talked to the teachers about my presence to the school, and I got the impression that teachers had given some positive feedback about me which facilitated my remaining in the school as a researcher.

> The badge would solve some minor problems of mine, I believe, like having to introduce myself to new faces all the time, spell my name over and over again – it would also grant me a sort of legal status in the school. I know I was welcome at the school and that mattered a lot. It clearly meant that gatekeepers and teachers trusted me more now than in the beginning to give me the freedom to do as I please.

> (F: 060306-02)

Fieldwork in general was a process that involved several people inside or outside the

school, including some whose contribution could not have been anticipated. Lucas was the caretaker of the school who was always around during breaks and spare periods 'chatting' with the teachers and giving me his ideas of the cultural diversity in the school. He stressed out how important this diversity is and how parents contribute to it by speaking so many languages.

However, teachers' contribution to diversity is of paramount importance in this research. Getting to know their human side before interviewing them also meant keeping an eye open to follow-up questions. In the light of their constant feedback my first question was refined.

3.5.6.2 Research questions revisited

I should also be able to explore whether Dombey School teachers' approaches/practices are different in the classroom in the light of the new teaching circumstances. Informal and spontaneous interesting dialogues with the participants were put down onto paper and new ideas emerged about re-approaching respondents to get more information about issues which had already been discussed or about follow-up questions that I had just thought about in the light of the new circumstances.

This last research question made it clear that I should be seeking for answers in subsidiary questions in the field (Appendix 8). I should be able to explore beliefs and views when teachers teach the same or different subject in a mixed ability/nationality context and which factors contribute to this differentiation (if any) of classroom practices. Teachers' experiences might also be different when they teach in a language other than their mother tongue, and it would be interesting to understand how teachers' experiences in that school interact with their previous experiences and

whether this interaction has an impact on their work or self.

3.6 Coding and Data Analysis

All the interviews, except two, were recorded and saved under dated file names with the permission of the participants, on the condition that they maintain their right to double check and approve the quotations that would be finally included in my thesis. Researchers should take data from persons in ways which recognize those persons' initial ownership of the data and which respect them as fellow human beings who are entitled to dignity and privacy (Bassey 1999:74). Interview back-up files were kept consistently in order to avoid disappointment due to human error or faulty technology. Bassey also highlights the importance of being systematic in recording data, noting date, time and place and keeping back-up files (1999:69).

Notes with the participants who did not agree to recording were double checked with them at a later stage in order to clarify ideas mentioned, ask follow-up questions and show professionalism on my behalf. The ultimate objective was to make teachers feel safe, comfortable and very important.

Although I was in close relationship with my data throughout the whole process, when fieldwork was over fieldnotes and interview data were arranged chronologically and read (or listened to) carefully, several times making notes, comments and observations isolating the most important aspects and searching for regularities and frequencies within events, words, sayings, or groups of people. As data accumulated, I looked for conceptual categories that make sense in terms of existing theory. Using categories was a subjective, purposeful, but systematic process which helped me engage in an 'interpretive relationship' with the transcript (Smith 1995:18) and investigate what was made explicit by the respondents. I tried

to understand the data that I had as if I was looking at it for a first time.

I took an 'idiographic' approach to analysis (Smith 1995:19) looking in detail at one transcript before moving on to the others. I looked at each transcript many times in order for the reading to 'throw up' new insights each time. I used one side of the margin to note down what struck me as significant and the other margin to write emerging theme titles or key words that I thought captured the quality of the paragraph, text or line.

On a separate sheet (Appendix 9) I listed the emerging themes and looked for linkages between them. In the process I came up with new main themes that would explain and include some of the categories I had identified. I was trying not only to understand what the person is saying but also draw on my interpretative skills. I then produced a master list of themes (Appendix 10) ordered coherently with subthemes to go with each master theme, adding identifiers to indicate where in the transcript instances of master themes and subthemes could be found. This was done by writing the number of the particular extract next to the themes (Appendix 11). Emergent themes made me constantly think of the focus of the project.

Using the themes that had emerged I began to produce an explanation for the respondents' beliefs, thinking, feelings and behaviours, drawing examples from the respondents' answers as evidence. Unpredicted themes emerged and the project's area of focus shifted while I was working from teachers' experiences to cultural differences which have an immediate impact in the process of school adaptation. The themes are presented in the next two chapters (analysis), while the discussion chapter (six) is devoted to exploring the implications of cultural differences on teachers' relationships and work in relation to the existing literature.

I continued the analysis by analyzing interviews with more individuals from different nationalities. I went through the stages outlined above with each one of the fully-transcribed interviews (twelve) producing master lists with subthemes as well. New themes that emerged were tested against earlier transcripts and new themes could sometimes enlighten, clarify, modify or even become subordinate to a previously elicited one. After five or six participants it became harder to 'retain mentally an overall sense of all the links between individuals and themes' (Smith 1995:21), so I went through each additional transcript to look for occurrences of each of the themes that I had already produced, refining the categorization, adding or removing subthemes, ending up producing a more integrated linking set of themes. Then I added the identifiers under which each theme could be found, facilitating the location of all instances in the transcripts for the evidence required in the chapters of analysis. The final list of themes included most helpful material from the transcribed data in a coherent way, enabling me to develop a conceptual framework and move to translating the themes into a narrative account.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Although access to research contexts is not always that straightforward, my access to Dombey School was negotiated electronically and became definite after an interview with the Deputy head and his written consent that I would be allowed to proceed (June 2005).

Ethics in research includes three significant components of respect according to Bassey (1999): respect for democracy, for truth and for persons involved. These include the freedom to investigate, to ask questions, to give and receive information, to express ideas, to criticise the ideas of others and to publish research findings; it

also presupposes truth and honesty in data collection, analysis and reporting of findings (p. 73). My research with Dombey School teachers is no exception to these components and my actions throughout the research process aimed at protecting participants and myself by being sensitive to my informants' rights and privacy, anonymity and confidentiality, and by making the purpose of fieldwork as clear as possible to them throughout the process. Sensitive information was treated with care and teachers' names were changed in direct quotations. Each group's culture was fairly represented and teachers were considered more as associates or consultants than as participants or informants.

However, because the school is the only one of its kind in the UK and although teachers' nationality was only used in data analysis when absolutely necessary, this school might be among the few cases of qualitative educational research where it is often 'actually impossible to offer confidentiality and anonymity' (Walford 2005:84). Miles and Huberman also question 'what good' anonymity can be if people and their colleagues can easily recognize themselves in a case study and recommend that qualitative researchers adopt a highly professional approach in relation to the people whose lives are studied, no matter how unpredictable fieldwork can be (1994:288).

Being human in the field, and being a teacher too, were two parts of me it was not so easy to forget. Although I never felt I had to bribe anyone in the school or offer any sort of incentives in return for my data, there were times I thought that teachers really deserved all my gratitude for having me around for so long, yet being so kind, respondent and giving.

Dealing with difficult respondents was also part of the process and there was the case

of a teacher who withdrew all three transcripts of his interviews because he claimed that his English was bad and that he looked 'stupid' in the transcripts. At that time I felt it was more important for that teacher's contribution to be withdrawn than his trust to be betrayed no matter the cost for my research or the physical and mental exhaustion after transcribing for days.

The most important thing I learnt doing fieldwork, however, is that constantly examining your own values and suitability for the proposed subject (as a researcher) can be invaluable in the sense that you become aware of the circumstances around, learn how to react to them and how to reach what you need. This does not mean that you compromise at the expense of your research; you just challenge yourself, 'reinterpreting and changing the perceived situation' (Dawn 2004:268), if possible, and become a better researcher.

CHAPTER FOUR

DOMBEY SCHOOL: WORKING TOGETHER

4.1 Introduction

Chapters four and five explore teachers' experiences, lives and work in a multilingual school and focuses on teachers' perceptions of multiculturalism, professional and interpersonal relations as well as issues of adaptation in a school of (relatively) limited cultural diversity. Teachers' perceptions of the degree and impact of multilingualism and multiculturalism in the school reveal what these terms really mean for them in theory and in practice and highlight the factors which influence those perceptions. Although only eight national groups work and interact in the school in various ways (professionally and personally) and on various levels (linguistic, cultural, practical, human etc.), they seem to affect this school's culture in a unique way which is worth discussing.

Seven languages are taught in Dombey School (English, French, German, Dutch, Italian, Danish and Spanish) and teachers who are native speakers of the above languages represent them. English is officially the working language in the school:

> Of course other languages are spoken for various reasons, but it's basically English.
>
> (Owen)

All the other languages spoken or taught (French, German, Dutch, Italian, Danish and Spanish) as well as teachers who represent them will henceforth be referred to as foreign.

As there are students whose parents also work for the JET[8] in this school, with complex cultural backgrounds and first languages which are not taught in this school, more than seven cultures actually co-exist in this school:

> in my English class, I in fact have – I mean I can't tell you absolutely accurately – but I have Dutch students now, because of the Dutch section closing; I have Danish students, I have a **Russian**[9] student, I have a **Greek** student…half Greek, at least half Greek.
>
> (Owen)

Some cultures (British, French and German) seem to have bigger (numerical) student numbers and consequently teacher representation in the school and some, (Italian and Dutch) seem to have become redundant in the light of the changing circumstances, which started taking place in September 2004.

From January 2000, 'the operation of the JET machine was taken over by EFDA (European Fusion Development Agreement) and many of the former seconded JET staff transferred to Brussels…This will in 2016, lead to the final closure of the JET facility' at Dombey School (Burstorff – Silva 2007:3) and eventually to the closing of the school itself. Teachers in Dombey School are prepared for the future of the school and aware of the extinguishing of the small sections, as well as of its estimated closure:

> this school basically doesn't have a reason to exist…because the project, for which it was born, which is the JET, which is the atomic research facility of the European community is not populated by European scientists anymore so they don't bring along their families and children anymore or they bring them for short periods…so this school was created for that…as a facility for the European personnel to have their children even a national education, of their own nationality, now since this project is basically extinguishing or changing dramatically…the school does not really have a European reason to be…and it's extremely costly because

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[8] Largest nuclear fusion experimental reactor
[9] Words in bold in the data evidence show emphasis on behalf of the interviewees

sections are more and because teachers are paid very very well…and so the European commission wants to close the school...all the minor schools like Dombey School will be closed…but it's a process that is gonna take a long time and they are starting doing it by closing the small sections and since last year the Dutch and the Italian sections are faced out, so the first year is closed and it will be the second year, third year, fourth year…taken off.

(Roberto)

Although this particular school will be closing in about eight years, this analysis is still significant not only for the life of the school which is remaining or because of others schools of its kind, which will continue to exist in Europe, but also because the way cultures (and consequently people of different cultural backgrounds) interact in international (educational) establishments has always raised questions, admiration and concerns and has prompted research (Hofstede 2001; Hofstede and Hofstede 2005; Cushner and Brislin 1996; Cushner and Brislin 1997a; Brislin and Yoshida 1994).

This analysis consists of two chapters. Chapter four provides essential background information about the school as a successful, smoothly functioning institution and about the teachers, who are revealed as hard working, qualified and talented educators who seem willing to contribute to the school ethos for the benefit of the students (fig. 4.1). The approach responds to Housen's statement (2002b:2) that the proper understanding of the organisation and functioning of a multilingual school requires 'clarity about its target population, the context in which it is implemented and its proclaimed philosophy and objectives'; it also echoes Maund's voice (1999:4) to study both individual differences and the environment in which the individual operates in order to understand human behaviour within social situations and environmental factors.

Dombey School: setting and teachers

The secondary cycle:
A typical day

Teachers

Aims, ethos and underlying philosophy

Background, motivation to work in the school and qualifications

Linguistic richness and professional challenges
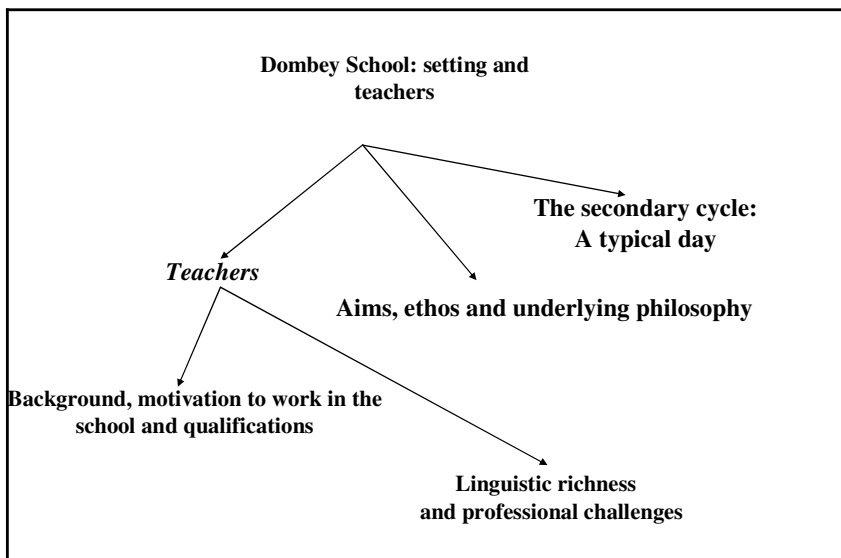
Figure 4.1
Dombey School Background

Chapter five reveals the nature of the faultlines evident below the surface which threaten to undermine a well conceived International School project. Cultural issues related to the school are explored and presented as well as challenges of adaptation that teachers face in multilingual education within a Europe and a world of cultural diversity.

4.2 The Background of the School

Before exploring teachers' relationships within a special organisational culture in Dombey School, showing how 'minor' cultures (Italian, Dutch, Danish and Spanish) interact with 'major' cultures (British, French and German), as well as how foreign cultures interact with the host culture of the school, it would be a good idea to describe a typical day at Dombey School. The reader is, thereby, likely to form an idea about what the school is like on a daily functional basis and understand better later the mixing of the cultures in a school of a very distinctive professional culture.

Following this, the objectives, ethos and underlying philosophy of the school will be discussed in order to give the reader an idea about what this school appears to be on the surface (4.3.2). An overview of the aims of the school and its organisational principles and a description of the teachers working in it (background, qualifications, motivation to work, beliefs, and relationships), (4.3.3.1; 4.3.3.2 and 4.3.3.3) will demonstrate what this school appears to be to those who know very little about the challenges of its distinctive culture.

4.3 Dombey School Secondary Cycle

4.3.1 A typical day

The school starts at 8:15 am and finishes at 3:45 pm. The secondary cycle works closely with the primary cycle in Dombey School as far as students' progress is concerned (I: W 060302-01) and the staffroom is common for all teachers. However, break times are different for pragmatic reasons and give extra space to hard working secondary teachers who start their day around 8:00 am with a cup of coffee, a look at their pigeon hole correspondence and a quick chat with their colleagues or school

management. Although not all of them are there early in the morning, as teachers do not have to be in the school unless they are teaching (I: L 060228-01), the staffroom can be so loud at this time of the day.

All school-related issues, timetable changes, absences, replacements and other important formal or informal information are shown on the noticeboard early in the morning, so that all coming teachers can have easy access and updated information. The Deputy head is always there at that time of the morning, discussing with teachers issues which may concern them. The Deputy head is closer to the secondary school teachers than the Head, listens to their problems and facilitates their 'accommodation' and adjustment to the school (F: 060220-05).

There is a well-equipped library in the school, a gymnasium, three new computer rooms, art and music blocks, laboratories, a hall and a canteen. There is no common student assembly entering the classroom, although there is a chapel (F: 060220-10), and there is no bell ringing in the school to let students or staff know about the breaks or about the end of periods; everyone seems to follow his/her own watch in order to start and finish on time:

> Have you noticed this is a school where there is no bell? It creates an atmosphere which is much more relaxed.
>
> (Jordan)

The school allows five minutes at the end of each period for the students to change classrooms while most teachers keep their own classrooms throughout the day.

There is at least one computer in every classroom and some interactive whiteboards and projectors in classrooms around the school. Some classrooms are spacious and others are extremely tiny.

There are so many corridors and pathways in the school that you can easily get lost. Classrooms are distributed among three floors and it seems as though different language sections occupy certain blocks of classrooms on certain floors, although this is not a rule. Following the closing down of the small sections (Italian and Dutch) since September 2006 (Appendix 1) small sections have had to share classrooms. At the time of my research there were still five linguistic sections, but there was no Italian and Dutch section in year one in September 2006.

A few teachers usually prepare their next lesson in the noisy room next to the staffroom, which has a few wooden, 'squeaky' tables and many chairs. There is a non-smoking policy in Dombey School, and most teachers smoke outside the staffroom on the green paths and benches by the art classrooms.

The secretarial and management offices are on the first floor and the reception on the ground floor of a block which is away from the staffroom, the labs and the ICT tower. The Head's office is opposite the Deputy head's office and is slightly smaller. Everyone reports to the reception when they come to the school and the receptionist is then responsible for contacting one of the Heads, depending on the reasons for the visit. Mary is the receptionist of Dombey School and Lesley is the secretary of the secondary cycle. They are both cheerful and hard working.

Breakfast and lunch can be bought in the school at competitive prices in the dining hall, which is on the ground floor of a block opposite the 'towers', the block of classrooms for ICT (first floor) and human science (second floor). However, the school has no boarding facility; it just caters for the needs of the students and teachers working there long hours until late afternoon. Teachers usually meet in the dining hall or staffroom, especially during lunch break, which gives them the

opportunity to chat, socialise and develop multicultural human relationships.

There are only two breaks in Dombey School: 9:50 – 10:10 am and 12:35 – 13:20 pm (F: 060223-05). Both partly coincide with primary cycle breaks, which give the opportunity to all primary and secondary teachers to come together and get to know each other as well as spend time with teachers of their own cycle. The second break is sometimes used to teach complementary subjects, so some teachers are really busy during lunch break as well.

Dombey School's main buildings 'are over 150 years old – full of character, but not ideal for a modern educational environment' (Burstorff – Silva 2007:4). Most buildings still look old, and very few teachers still remember the school as it was twenty-six years ago (I: R 060301-01).

The school seems to an outsider like a small community and a welcoming place to work and learn. Also for the insiders, teachers included, it is perceived as a community which brings cultures to work together in a way which is different from what these teachers are used to, but is acceptable and fruitful:

> and this whole school has a very nice warm atmosphere…it's strange coming to that but schools are usually quite regimented, they're very disciplined…and there's not very much discipline here at all…but it seems to work.
>
> (Tab)

4.3.2 Dombey School: aims, ethos and underlying philosophy

Dombey School is the only International School in the UK to offer language tuition in French, German and to some degree Italian and Dutch to some pupils from Nursery to Baccalaureate (Burstorff – Silva 2007:4). When my data collection took place (February – April 2006), Spanish was also taught in the school as a foreign

language and Danish only as L1. With a great variety of languages promoted in the school to a mixed student population by teachers who also have different language backgrounds, this school seems to offer a fruitful environment in which to develop multilingualism and multiculturalism.

Multilingualism is realised as a clearer term, as there is a strong emphasis on the learning, understanding and use of foreign languages, particularly on behalf of the students. The pupil's mother tongue (L1) remains his/her first language throughout the school. All pupils must study a first, compulsory foreign language (L2) from first year primary up to Baccalaureate. All pupils must study a second foreign language (L3) starting from the second year of secondary school. Pupils may choose to study a third foreign language (L4) from the fourth year of secondary school. Most students have interesting, multiple language backgrounds:

> Luxemburgish, a dialect of Luxemburg (is her first language)…English is her fourth language, that's what it makes it so interesting she is a very interesting pupil, actually Luxemburgish is her first, French is her better language spoken but she's not good written so they've put her into the German section…she speaks German, French a bit of Italian, Luxemburgish and English is her fourth language.

> (Joy)

The school promotes many languages and reflects the multicultural nature of the school society on a formal (professional, classroom) and informal (interpersonal) level for students and for teachers, and sets an international environment particularly for students to learn and socialise. Teachers agree that the school is multicultural for the children:

I think for the students is much more natural…that's probably the best thing we give here, we give the students an international environment that they switch into different languages and culture…that's really something special.

(Roberto)

Everyday interaction in the playground, the corridors and the recreation rooms helps students overcome language problems, especially when they have to socialise using a language which is not spoken at home:

And they spend all their time socialising, especially if, because it's a language like Spanish or Greek there aren't that many other children for them to communicate with in that language, so that then they have to speak English…whereas you know, sometimes you can teach someone in the fifth year in the French section whose English is really poor, but they speak French at home, they speak French at friends at school and their push to learn English isn't so strong.

(Lisa)

Interaction also enhances the acquisition of other languages and the realisation that using them is not only vital but natural. The school takes differentiation for granted, and encourages tolerance and acceptance when working with other cultures:

People, they're just accepted because everyone is different…There's so many different people here…I'm not sure but we're all different and we're all…so different – sort of learnt how to be tolerant.

(Lisa)

Multiculturalism is theoretically guaranteed as the school 'was officially recognised to cater for children from different cultural backgrounds' (Baetens Beardsmore and Swain 1985:3,13), and together with the other schools of its kind has nowadays acquired 'a solid reputation for scholastic achievement, linguistic equity, multilingual proficiency among the pupils and the promotion of multicultural awareness' (Baetens Beardsmore 1993:121).

According to the teachers, Dombey School students have very special characteristics

and a unique cultural background:

> children who have had interesting backgrounds…parents have educated their children well, not all of them but most of them…you can trust them more, they have generally more responsibility and in general, they think more than most kids.
>
> (Tab)

Teachers speak of an 'academic' background these students usually have (I: G 060228-01); they describe students' salient characteristics in bright colours:

> I think they're very cooperative and eager to learn and to improve, I think, that's genuinely a characteristic of most kids.
>
> (Carel)

> they' re very eager, open-minded…their mentality is open…and they want to listen , to learn.
>
> (Aurelie)

Students do not wear a uniform as in most British independent schools (I: S 060227-01), and are requested to take responsibility for their own actions within a school system which accepts, strengthens and encourages student maturity. Although it is a non-fee paying school, this school is mainly perceived to cater for bright students:

> I think this school is only catering for the very bright students…the 'poorer' students will leave the school before it gets difficult.
>
> (Jordan)

Teachers speak of a 'heavy school diet' that children are eventually offered in Dombey School:

> I think they get a pretty heavy diet, educationally, here. It's pretty demanding, it's rather passive.
>
> (Owen)

A few teachers speak of their children who eventually left the school just because the school had so increased demands that their children could not cope (I: R 060301-01):

no no no (my daughter has not taken the Baccalaureate here)…she is not that bright...they don't fail, but before they enter into the last two years, they are streaming out.

(Jordan)

The above students' features and the present school image seem to go hand in hand with the initial aims of all schools of its kind: to provide students with multilingual, multicultural and multidenominational education[10] reflecting an ideal which has been sealed in parchment into its foundation stones:

Educated side by side, untroubled from infancy by divisive prejudices, acquainted with all that is great and good in the different cultures, it will be borne in upon them as they mature that they belong together. Without ceasing to look to their own lands with love and pride, they will become in mind Europeans, schooled and ready to complete and consolidate the work of their fathers before them, to bring into being a united and thriving Europe.

(Jean Monnet)

Teachers agree that the school indeed offers a multidenominational education to students, as everyone is accepted for his/her different religious beliefs and all differentiations are respected in the school not only in theory, but in practice too:

Whereas here, we've got, you know, Jehovah witnesses and people like that…and they' re not different, they're not…why would they be? It's just completely accepted.

(Lisa)

There is even a special course offered to students in Dombey School who are not fond of religious education, which gives them the opportunity to discuss with teachers issues very close to religion or philosophy:

ethics is an alternative to religious studies so those students who don't want to do religious studies do an ethics course…which is not philosophy…but it's a general study of human behaviour…we do lots of things like capital punishment, labouring and all the various areas,

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[10] http://www.esculham.net/1europeanschool.php (access 29/04/2008)

euthanasia, every year…it's wonderful.

<div align="right">(Joy)</div>

The syllabus is delivered in five languages, as there are officially five language sections; the English, the French, the German, the Dutch and the Italian:

> but here of course we're effectively five schools on one site.

<div align="right">(Ronald)</div>

Everyone follows the same programme regardless the language of instruction. Rules about organisational issues are prescribed for all the fourteen existing International Schools:

> We have exactly, we operate under a statute from Brussels and we can't really change them to suit ourselves.

<div align="right">(Lisa)</div>

However, this school has a strong individual character and its own traditions:

> Things are…even though it's the same system, things are usually done slightly differently depending on the tradition of the school…I discovered what it was like here (when I came), what had used to be done here…so I accepted…other things I decided to change.

<div align="right">(Deputy head)</div>

4.3.2.1 Language sections: characteristics

Dombey School is a multilingual school whose policy is quite complex in terms of student sectionalising; although each language section is like a small language school, certain classes are composed of mixed nationalities. The profile of the classrooms, which now include students from the Italian and Dutch section, is gradually becoming multilingual as Italian and Dutch students are often incorporated into other sections:

> as I'm sure, you realise here the English section isn't just English…and

in the first year now for my science and my maths, the Italian and the Dutch section have been incorporated within that group, so now we have, Danish children, Danish and Dutch, Italian, Spanish, anyone who doesn't fit into the other language sections goes into the English section.

(Lisa)

In the light of the new circumstances students can sometimes be more competent in their L2 than in their L1 or face language problems:

Well some of our L2 students are better in their second language than in their mother tongue. It gets a little complicated.

(Owen)

They don't necessarily struggle (with the language) but for most of them English is not their first language…so there's always a little bit of a language issue.

(Tab)

Students are sometimes, strangely enough, fluent in languages other than the language taught in the section in which they belong:

you know, I'd say, wait, 60 to 65 per cent of the children don't speak English at home, in the English section…just because the families are different nationalities, they speak Russian at home, or Spanish, or Danish.

(Lisa)

Teachers naturally end up wondering about the linguistic identity of their students appreciating their ability to speak many languages:

I sometimes look around and think 'I wonder how many of these are actually English, English?' Do you know what I mean?

(Owen)

The children in general here, they seem to be above average, significantly more abled and I wonder if it is the added language skills, bits of research that were carried recently, it actually makes your brain bigger, it actually makes it to grow if you' ve learnt a language, maybe something to do with that I don't know.

(Wallace, 02)

Most sections, even the small ones, consist of students who are bilingual, and although they belong to one language section they appear to be equally or more fluent in another language:

> They mix often French and English, they are French but some speak English at home with their parents...they are bilingual.
>
> (Aurelie)

> Aaaa their Dutch is, tends to be, tends to be very mixed with English, some kids have mixed parents eh…They're only speaking Dutch in my class.
>
> (Carel)

Dombey School classes are mixed ability classes and are usually small:

> Here we have all levels of students, the weaker ones the middle ones and the bright ones.
>
> (Schmidt)

> Most of the groups are very small you know the geography and history…it's two, three pupils, one so I do almost always one to one tutorials.
>
> (George, 01)

Teachers appreciate the opportunity to encourage pupils in Dombey School small-sized classrooms, take care of them and guide them to success:

> we have more possibilities to encourage pupils here, even weaker pupils you know, or to help them because in Bavaria, I have classes of 30 pupils…what frequently happened and what I didn't appreciate was I saw pupils fail in my classes (in Germany) and I knew I didn't have enough time and opportunity to take care of them or to encourage them…because you can only administer 30 pupils you can't teach them…you can't take care of them, that's different in this place.
>
> (George, 01)

In final examinations, all pupils are expected to take content-matter oral and written examinations in the first and second language under the same criteria of achievement

(Baetens Beardsmore 1993:122). The teachers' salient concern is the preparation of students for the Baccalaureate with which the secondary school course is validated at the end of year seven. The certificate awarded is fully recognized in all the European Union countries, as well as in a number of others[11] (I: C 060224-01). Although the Baccalaureate is what most parents and teachers would want for their children and students, it does happen that certain families have to go back to their home countries before their children sit for the Baccalaureate:

> There are families that at the end of the first part of the secondary they decide to come back in Italy because they want for their children to have an Italian school and it's necessary to prepare in some ways the pupils.
>
> (Julia)

In this case teachers feel they should adapt their classroom practices and prepare their home students in a way so that they are ready and adequately equipped to face the challenges of their home country education:

> they have to be able to go back into the other system (German)…that's the reason we use German textbooks too, because it's easier for them when they have similar textbooks…I don't know which schools they are going to but normally they use similar books.
>
> (Walter)

One of Dombey School's major assets, however, is not so much the system itself, but the teachers who are working in it because without their hard work and positive image at the school none of the school aims would be accomplished. Although there are plenty of qualified teachers who work in International Schools all over the world, these teachers' background, qualifications and strong motivation to work in a school of linguistic and cultural diversity will be further discussed in order to reveal their role and beliefs as educators, individuals and professionals.

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[11] http://www.eursc.org/SE/htmlEn/IndexEn_home.html (access 29/04/2008)

4.3.3 Dombey School teachers

Teachers' work and actions are always better understood in the context of their background and 'teachers' well-being at school is not only related to the professional context; personality or personal background can influence the way in which teachers deal with factors within the school and with the demands of the profession (Aelterman et al. 2007:286). In order to understand Dombey School teachers' background and beliefs it is important to discuss their motivation to enter the teaching profession and eventually work at that particular school. Although entry into teaching and professional decisions can be very individual or accidental processes, careful analysis can reveal teachers' criteria for professional choices. It is worth exploring if this particular school recruits a specific type of teachers or teachers with similar or common characteristics.

4.3.3.1 Dombey School teachers' background, motivation to work in the school and qualifications

Most of the teachers link their entry into teaching with subject – oriented or student – oriented reasons like love for subject or innate love for children. That adds to their profile as good educators but also demonstrates a conscious choice to work in Dombey School which is likely to lead them to quicker adaptation to the school. Lisa is a science and maths teacher who was given the idea to delve into the teaching profession by one of her old Headmistresses who had appreciated her 'fantastic way with the children':

> I did some coaching before but not with teenagers, you know young people, I really enjoyed that…And anyway when I went to see her (the Headmistress of her previous school) and she said 'well, you know, when are gonna do your teaching qualification, everyone says that you've got fantastic way with the children, and I think you'd make a

fantastic teacher'.

<div align="right">(Lisa)</div>

Most of the teachers admitted that travelling and gaining new experiences was among their first priorities when they applied to work in the school. Carel was working in Singapore for years and wanted to go back to Europe (I: C 060224-01) and others simply wanted a change or to pursue different educational experiences:

> because I went abroad because I was fed up in Bavaria, it was always the same, always had the same classes, the same subjects and here I do a lot more different things, that's why I like it much more.

<div align="right">(Magdalena)</div>

> I wanted to move, I really wanted to change my life.

<div align="right">(Amoux)</div>

George speaks of his willingness to work at this school, as 'this is the top place someone can be as a teacher' (I: G 060228-01). Roberto, however, reveals the real reason most teachers work in this school, which is mainly financial:

> You ask anyone that's **the main** reason, the main…people might tell you that it's because they like to travel because they like different experience, that's all true but the main motivation is that you are outrageously overpaid….even for English teachers, you know…here they're probably paid twice as much…or more.

<div align="right">(Roberto)</div>

There is evidence, however, that teachers would not work in a school only due to financial reasons if the school itself was not remarkable and the students not worth teaching:

> I don't think that the money is the first point, obviously it's very nice but I think that if I were paid the same amount of money with pupils who wouldn't be nice, I wouldn't stay. But here it's a pleasure to come to school cause the pupils are collaborant, if there is a problem you can count to the parents, the contact with the pupils is really nice and I enjoy myself really, if it was (different) you can pay me what you like I can't

stay.

<div align="right">(Freddy)</div>

Most teachers in Dombey School seem to be very well qualified. There are even teachers who have got PhDs (I: R 060223-01, I: K 060309-01). The more qualified and experienced teachers are, the more likely it is for them to pursue positions that would make them happy professionally, individually, emotionally or financially. For teachers who have already had experience working in International Schools, working in a school of cultural diversity has always been a conscious decision in their minds:

> I think, that what I did there (working in an International School) helped me in a direct way, but it certainly made me very clear that it was the sort of school that I like to teach in. So although I went back after my Masters into a normal school, I was aware that I was still hankering after something more International.

<div align="right">(Owen)</div>

Many teachers have undertaken self-initiated, self-funded, pre-service professional development especially if it was going to help them cope with future international teaching challenges:

> That was partly pragmatic, which is, it was difficult to sort out jobs from Hong Kong, here, so I thought I'd turn it to my advantage and do a Masters, which I fancied doing anyway. And that was self-financed; it was out of my pocket, regrettably.

<div align="right">(Owen)</div>

The school involves teachers in research, stages[12], symposiums, trips, language exchanges, supervision, international and pedagogical days etc. Teachers are fond of in-service professional development too:

> I was in a stage to Brussels last Wednesday to Saturday…it was a chemistry stage…it was interesting…it was a lot of computer work done… a lot of the work was based on computer learning, on learning

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[12] training courses related to their subject

about the learning gateway, learning about classroom server…it was two and a half days really…all the schools are represented, so there was about 42, 45 people.

(Adam)

4.3.3.2 Dombey School teachers' linguistic richness and professional challenges

Dombey School is not only multilingual in terms of students but also in terms of teachers. Most staff members are bilingual or multilingual and are required to 'know at least one of the three working languages', English, French or German (Housen 2002b:5). This gives the staff 'an insight into the facts of life' and gives them 'greater sympathy and understanding about the nature of bilingualism' (Baetens Beardsmore 1993:145):

English (is my first language), my second language is actually Afrikaans…my third language is French I am not wonderful in it either and my fourth little bit is Yiddish…my grandmother is a Jewish…well, just for interests sake, I don't speak it but I have quite a lot of words in my vocabulary…but it gives you an idea of background really…half fluent in Afrikaan.

(Joy)

Teachers who are expected to teach in a multilingual school which has high language standards have to be at least bilingual and with high expertise in the language which is mainly spoken in the school, as it is also stated in the regulations for members of the seconded staff[13] of all schools of its kind:

In addition, they shall have a thorough knowledge of a second Community language. Knowledge of the language of the place of employment is desirable.

(Ref.: 2007-D-232-en-1, art. 10/1, p. 13)

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[13] http://www.eursc.eu/fichiers/contenu_fichiers1/274/2007-D-232-en-1.doc , (access 20/01/2008)

> ok I speak properly English and French and Italian…I did a bit of Spanish and a bit of Greek but I can't speak it properly.
>
> (Magdalena)

Some foreign teachers seem to be particularly confident in English and the school caretaker remembers that once there were two German teachers talking to each other in the staffroom in English. He said they were probably feeling as confident in English as in German (F: 060227-05).

Although English seems to be the working language in the school, teachers from other nationalities seem to expect other languages as well to be spoken on a personal level, unofficially, as a sign that value and respect are being given on every individual language each teacher speaks, so that everyone eventually feels 'at home':

> Usually I use English with my English, French and Dutch colleagues, Italian with the Italian colleagues and Spanish with my two colleagues at the department...and a little bit of German sometimes with the counsellor and with the other German colleagues…I try to approach people in their own languages yes, yes.
>
> (Carmen)

Most teachers are willing to speak the languages they know in the school, or when they approach their colleagues in the staffroom:

> I try to speak Spanish and a little German, (English and French).
>
> (Aurelie)

> I mean the better linguists will converse in French and German with their colleagues.
>
> (Eadmund)

Benefiting from each other's language and cultural heritage can also be a subconscious process at the school, especially for teachers who are open-minded and eager to develop. Hayden et al. (2000) define as open-minded the mind which is not

shuttered by ethnocentrism and is 'open to new and what might be considered – at least initially – as strange or 'unsettling' influences' (p. 113). Jørgen is the only Danish teacher in the school and prefers to speak in German to his German colleagues, rather than in English. He said he was not fluent in German when he came to the school, but he is now with so many German colleagues around (F: 060307-13).

Most teachers in the school are 'native speakers of the languages they use as the medium of instruction' (Housen 2002b:5):

> Then because it's in English (ICT) and when you are not so fluent in English, and because it is a complicated course it is better if you are a native speaker.
>
> (Walter)

According to Baetens Beardsmore (1993:125), the insistence on a native speaker requirement is important in schools where several languages are used as a medium of instruction. This is because by teaching in a language other than their native one, teachers can have their role models restricted and there may be a mismatch between a teacher's non-native patterns of usage and the more native-like patterns children bring with them.

However, this particular school employs some foreign teachers who teach subjects like ICT, PE, ancient Greek etc. in English. This happens for the same reason that big sections have recently acquired a multilingual student profile: because the school is small, compared to other schools of its kind, because English is the working language, and because it is extremely costly to recruit native teachers to teach certain subjects in very small classes/sections for a few hours, it brings all sections together and uses competent, already employed, non-English teachers who use English as a

medium of instruction:

> In the interest of the proper functioning of the School and in order to meet teaching requirements, a teacher may be asked, after the opinion of the national Inspector has been sought, to give instruction in a subject other than the one in which he has specialist knowledge but which is akin to it.
>
> (Ref.: 2007-D-232-en-1, art. 10/3, p. 13)

> I teach PE in Germany in German and here I teach PE in **English**…in multicultural groups I have multilingual groups…I have to teach most of my lessons in **English**…at the beginning it was pretty challenging.
>
> (Anna)

Dombey School teachers appreciate the opportunities they have to teach subjects

other that the ones they have studied in their home countries,

> you are not allowed to teach anything in Bavaria, you' re just allowed to teach the subjects you study at university…Latin and German…here I teach German mother tongue and foreign language, I teach a lot I teach moral education, I teach philosophy.
>
> (Magdalena)

and sometimes even in another language:

> actually back in Germany I teach for English history and geography…here at this school I teach history and geography and morals and German as a foreign language…but my main subject here in this school is teaching geography and history…to language students…that's my job I teach French native speakers or English native speakers history and geography **in German**.
>
> (George, 01)

This makes their staying and teaching at the school challenging and gives them

experience of doing different things from what they used to do before:

> I must say the more experience I get and the longer I do it and the more challenges I have the more I like it…here I do a lot more different things, that's why I like it much more.
>
> (Magdalena)

Italian teachers speak of lack of opportunities for promotion in their national system too, seeing employment to Dombey School as the greatest opportunity and challenge in their professional lives:

> The problem is that in teaching especially in the Italian system there is no career…basically the only career that you can do is go do 'the Head of the school'…but that's not the same jump, so…for example it doesn't interest me, at all…so coming to Dombey School money-wise and also as a challenge is the top of a career for a teacher…for an Italian teacher who can go no further than this.
>
> (Roberto)

English teachers speak of lack of 'huge opportunities for promotion' in British State schools (I: R 060301-01) and German teachers also speak of lack of promotional opportunities in the national German system, especially when they have been away working abroad for many years:

> no that's one of the disadvantages that we are not in the promoting system any longer. If you go back to Germany you start at the same like you were nine years abroad…and then you have to apply and you are going onto competition with others who were in the national system normally they have an advantage of us…it means that we are not going to be promoted as easy as others that worked in the German system so long.
>
> (Walter)

Teachers are encouraged to undertake new responsibilities as a way of helping themselves with their 'role accommodation'; 'to come in terms with the demands of their work' (Jackson 1992:65):

> Here, for example, it's my third year, I am coordinator in history and geography, because we rotate the thing and I' ve got the opportunity to coordinate the thing, I am deputy staff representative.
>
> (George, 01, German)

They seem to appreciate opportunities given to them within a school culture, which is very different from what they have been used to in their national systems:

that would never happen to Bavaria, I would never make it that quickly to such positions.

<div align="right">(George, 01)</div>

basically if I were in the Italian system I would be exactly the same now that I was 20 years ago.

<div align="right">(Roberto)</div>

4.3.3.3 Dombey School teachers' profile: beliefs about effectiveness

Dombey School teachers seem to have genuine affection for their pupils and this is not only reflected in their conscious entry into the profession but also in their perceptions of teacher effectiveness which are closely related to the students' 'well-being' and maturity in the school and to the ability teachers should have to 'be there' for their students:

> flexibility…and heart…spirit…heart-ness, open heart somehow, openness to the children…and to try to have... I had to learn it…from my own beginnings…not to have too much ego…because I think if you have too much you don't see the children and you're there for the children, in a way, you're there for yourself, but you're actually more there for the children.

<div align="right">(Joy)</div>

> I think a teacher should be...enthusiastic about the subject and interested in the students.

<div align="right">(Carel)</div>

> it is a very hard work…because it is not only what you teach…what the subject but also to help the students the boys and girls to grow…to mature…that is for me a great joy.

<div align="right">(Irena)</div>

Their idea of teacher effectiveness is closely linked to the mixed-ability class treated without discrimination or special benefits for the best students. All students have equal rights in learning:

My idea for a teacher is a teacher who teaches for the whole class and not only for the best class, or not only for the weak ones, so I try to reach everybody in the class.

(Walter)

Dombey School teachers find it natural to be able to admit their mistakes or doubts in the classroom, unlike some other teachers, 'inquirers into their own and their students' thinking', who want the 'freedom to express their doubts and uncertainties but often find it difficult to admit that they do not have all the answers' (Nelson and Hammerman 1996:10-11). Dombey School teachers do not find it difficult to admit that they are constantly learning from their own mistakes:

> of course a slip or a mistake might occur, so you have to be honest you have to say 'sorry I can't answer the question'…if you lose it you have to fight for you…try to get things back together, but I never lost anything, because you can't know everything; of course the children expect you to but you can't. It's impossible you know, so you simply have to say 'sorry', 'sorry', 'no, I don't know'.

(George, 02, German)

Teachers' beliefs are formulated in years of teaching experience for all of them and come as a result of self-awareness and honesty about 'who they really are' in the classroom; confidence and subject matter expertise seem to be the keys for success especially in a school like Dombey School where students are perceived to be 'fairly academic':

> I think you always have to be honest with yourself and with your pupils…I think you can't pretend this or that, you are who you are…that's what you realise, you can't pretend you're tough or the kind of guy you are not…and you have to respect the pupils…Expertise is important in this school because the pupils usually got from quite academic backgrounds…they have a lot of knowledge, they're quite keen, understood of young fellows, most of them so I think you must be confident.

(George, 02)

Success is accomplished, however, when love for children is combined with love

about their job:

> I have the best job in the world and I thoroughly enjoyed it
>
> (Ronald)

> I really love my subjects and I love the constant dialogue with young people especially my seventh year are very intelligent.
>
> (Magdalena)

Dombey School teachers are hardworking teachers who have strong views about teaching, which helps explain why they appreciate the flexibility of the Dombey School syllabus. Teachers who have experience from various educational systems seem to appreciate freedom in the Dombey School curriculum, especially in difficult or complicated subjects:

> I think the course (philosophy) there (in state schools) is much more difficult much heavier, much more theoretical, much more text-based, much more analytical…here I think it's freer and it's much better for this age group.
>
> (Joy, British)

However, syllabus freedom depends to some extent on the subject taught in Dombey School:

> of all the different subjects the curriculum is pretty precise for (Italian) L1 and L3 and L4, but not for philosophy, philosophy is very broad and very vague, it's more convenient because you can do basically whatever you want.
>
> (Roberto, Italian)

> we have no curriculum for one thing…the curriculum is what each department wants to make it or even in this case what each teacher wants to make it…well we don't have a curriculum, teachers teach what they feel it's appropriate, there is textbook, yes, but we don't have to do all of it.
>
> (James, 01, British)

The freedom in the Dombey School system also gives teachers the opportunity to

invest in students' learning via designing projects as well as inviting external speakers in their classes:

> Last year we had a science fair, we had a whole month, first, second and third year, a whole month, off the syllabus, designing and presenting projects for the science fair; we had outside speakers…and the motivation of the kids to produce this work and to do these projects was just amazing…I mean this group made this amazing model on an eye with lenses and everything else, made out of paper machine, it was just…amazing…the stuff they did.
>
> (Lisa, British)

> I have personal projects I like to bring outside speakers into the school, to my classes, in philosophy
>
> (Joy, British)

Ensing (2007) discusses how important it is for a school and a system to 'give the individual teacher free rein, within an agreed framework', to demonstrate his/her expertise because:

> At the end of the day, it is always the classroom teacher, the man or woman at the chalk face, who makes the difference and who determines the quality of education.
>
> (p. 11)

Dombey School teachers are considerate and aware of students' learning needs paying attention to the quality of materials that are used in the class:

> the materials that I give out, I have to think about them very carefully…so that the language is more accessible…this is the greatest problem because in philosophy you are reading a lot of original texts
>
> (Tab)

Teachers sometimes have to buy materials out of their own pocket for their own class:

> I bought everything…**I have everything** at home, cause everything here was so old, so I bought the first year I bought with £2,000 of my money I

bought materials, there was nothing here in Latin, no cd, nothing modern you know , no modern films, no modern things.

(Magdalena)

Most of them agree on the necessity to use a variety of materials to cover the educational needs of Dombey School children:

> I think that if you stick closely to one text, it's demotivating in philosophy…because it's too dry, so I tend to back-up my, I have a core text and then I know they've got something to hold on to and then if I think it's weak in one area , then I will bring something else in…a copy.

(Joy)

Teachers also feel they have to invent a variety of materials in order to support students' learning and stimulate their interest. One of the consequences of this is that teachers have to spend long hours preparing materials for their classes:

> we have to produce many things ourselves, we have to find sources, from books, the internet wherever we can get from…we have to make copies we have to scan things, to prepare.

(George, 02)

> Many many hours…most days I would say I would spend a couple of hours in the evening doing some work and most of Sundays, after lunch, I spend preparing as well and of course there is marking to do to so I do spend a lot of time working at home

(Eadmund)

Dombey School teachers' utmost concern as educators, however, is to invest in their students' emotional entity and be part of it, even unconsciously, for as long as possible:

> Occasionally you make a real difference to someone's life you know…I am still in touch with a couple of students who have left….they went on to university to do philosophy or something related to philosophy….and you really made a big difference to their life you know…don't know if this will last but for those months or years you made a big difference is their lives…which is good.

(Tab)

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4.3.3.3.1 School relationships

Most teachers agree that successful teacher – student relationships can be facilitated

when you have children of your own either in the school or outside it:

> I think it must be very difficult to be childless and a teacher…I think that
> must be so difficult…just for vocabulary for one thing if your own kids
> are around the language that they come out with…is useful and common
> in the school…it's totally alien to you unless you have daily contact with
> kids.
>
> (Ronald)

Parenthood helps teachers become more understanding towards the needs of their

students, and that has a positive effect on their image as educators:

> I came with children here…so I had the experience at home and I know
> that in year four and five it starts to get more difficult and harder with
> their own work…and six and seven is quite hard for them because they
> have to do so many subjects…bringing my children here helped me to
> understand the problem…and to see what we shouldn't do.
>
> (Walter)

Investing in a positive teacher – student relationship is part of Dombey School

teachers' philosophy of life and a target for them while being at the school:

> so you can be much more relaxed with them…and much more personal
> with them…create a better relationship with them, you don't have to
> keep all the time your distance…like you do in other schools…so you
> can make very nice friendships with kids here.
>
> (Tab)

For that purpose teachers may adapt their classroom practices to meet students'

needs and reach personal fulfilment. Some foreign teachers, for example, who teach

in English in this school praise students more than in their home countries and

appreciate the effects of their practices, as they seem to be advantageous for the

students:

maybe because I speak English with the pupils, so I think I am praising much more, for example, than I did in Germany cause it's so much easier to do that in English…here you just praise so easily and English is such nice language to praise pupils, I mean 'well done' and 'superb' and 'you did very well'.

(Anna)

Teachers' repayment for that 'unconditional giving' is learning from the students themselves in the process of daily interaction. Foreign teachers can even overcome their English language insecurity and upgrade their language skills, since students seem to have a lot to give back as an unexpected reward in a healthy teacher – student relationship:

that was pretty nice here because many pupils had the same experience, that at some stage of their life they had to get settled, or they had arrived in a new environment and they were very helpful, so they never laughed at me and they always helped me, I think they were just great…because they helped me to overcome my insecurity…it was great for me cause I learnt English.

(Anna)

Teachers seem to appreciate that everyone is different in a multilingual community, and this acceptance is reflected in their teaching. Olsen (2000:42) claims that it is in such a multicultural social context that people acquire human qualities like responsibility, trust, self-discipline, tolerance, respect for others, decency, confidence and many others, becoming a whole person. Teachers also seem to change with the passage of the time:

Ahhh I think I've become more curious ah...Yea about different ways of looking at things, about different cultures.

(Carel)

now…I' m far more tolerant with kids.

(Ronald)

They also seem to challenge perceptions of their own values and cultures reflecting

on what could possibly make them better people:

> I think I have changed yea, I think I've become more aware what it is to be Dutch, what the Dutch mentality is...Dutch can be very direct and unaware of the fact that it's not always appreciated by others…I've changed, I'm more aware of the idea that the way I deal with things may be offensive to someone from Japan or Korea…maybe even Spain...this sort of awareness of 'this is how I do things', or 'this is **normal** for me', is not normal to everyone.

<div align="right">(Carel)</div>

Dombey School welcomes and appreciates parents' support, as the 'parents' association plays an important role in various committees and working groups in the school' (school brochure, p. 22). Parents' contribution to the school culture is reflected in school documents such as the Parents' Association Newsletters,[14] and is confirmed by teachers in most interviews:

> and there are many devoted parents who are devoted to the idea so they work hard at fundraising and they work hard to keep the spirit alive so I think in that sense…and I think in parents' evenings they all come…only a few parents who stay away…I think that they are very interested in the progress of their children.

<div align="right">(Joy, British)</div>

In such newsletters, teachers frequently acknowledge parents' precious efforts to help with the school. New teachers' arrivals are always mentioned in newsletters or on noticeboards, giving the opportunity to new teachers to introduce themselves, express their interests and views, and reveal their educational background or their expectations from the school. The idea is that novice teachers should feel 'at home' and adjust quickly to the new working environment:

> I studied fine Art in London…I am currently studying for an Advanced Diploma in Art History…I was very happy to offered a post at Dombey School which not only enables me to pursue my own artistic interests but

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[14] http://cespa.org.uk/ (20/01/2008)

above all gives me the opportunity to teach receptive students in a friendly and culturally diverse environment.

(Kelly, British art teacher, 'EUROPARENT', 2006:11)

The school also has annual parents' evenings which give parents the chance to meet the teachers and become informed of their children's progress:

There is an evening where all the parents of the same class come and they meet all the teachers…you meet them individually…but that's only once a year.

(Roberto)

This school seems to have a strong sense of community which is partly reinforced through the assumption that it makes that it is a multilingual and multicultural establishment for parents as well:

I get the impression that there is a strong sense of community in this school among parents…maybe it is due to the fact that many of them come from other countries and so they are here on a provisional situation and they do have to approach each other in order to build friendships, bonds and…a kind of social network.

(Carmen)

It also seems to enjoy a linguistic and cultural richness, for which it is appreciated by teachers:

for the richness…Dombey School is a wonderful school…for the kids, I mean…then they can learn so many things from each other…I think it's a privilege.

(Calanthe)

Although the term multilingualism is understood by teachers in Dombey School, the term multiculturalism is questioned and depends on their background, nationality and previous experience. In order to understand how multiculturalism is reflected in the way this school actually works, it is first necessary to investigate cultural differences in the school that undermine the appearance of unity (chapter five) and

their impact on teachers' cultural adjustment in view of their professional challenges.

CHAPTER FIVE

DOMBEY SCHOOL: CULTURAL DIVISIONS

5.1 Introduction

When my research started, I was given a list of the numerical representation of each nationality in Dombey School. It was quite obvious from this list that British teachers comprise approximately half of the staff population (forty-seven per cent), while the representation for all other nationalities would roughly be: French, sixteen per cent, German, fifteen per cent and all the others together (Italian, Dutch, Spanish and Danish) twenty-two per cent. The English, the French and the German elements will be henceforth referred to as 'major' cultures as they tend to have a stronger representation and voice in the school (seventy-eight per cent) and all the others will henceforth be referred to as 'minor' cultures, as they obviously have a weaker representation and voice in the school (twenty-two per cent).

From the above percentages it is obvious that there is a fairly even balance of foreign and British teachers in Dombey School. Both foreign and British teacher recruitment happens in the school according to the needs of the school, position vacancy and teacher availability, and there is no prescribed rule or policy that I am aware of that distinguishes British from foreign teachers in any deliberate way in the school or gives more official rights to one category compared with the other.

However, this school seems to maintain an unconscious distinction between British and foreign teachers which originates in and is reinforced by their cultural differences. Evidence for this will be presented in the sections that follow and on the

basis of this I will suggest that the similarities, common characteristics and objectives that those teachers have are not sufficient to secure a unity and accomplish a sense of 'togetherness' in the school.

5.2 Cultural Issues

5.2.1 Differences between British and foreign teachers

5.2.1.1 Language competency of British and foreign teachers

Although British and foreign teachers seem to be numerically (approximately) equal, foreign teachers seem to be in a less advantageous position because the school is in England and English is the dominant language:

> because the whole environment is English speaking you know…the staff is communicating in English, mainly and the coffee ladies, everybody in the school you know, this is an English setting, so some people say this is the least 'Euromulti'[15] school of all the Euromulti schools…cause it's very English…it is an English school, it's an English environment.
>
> (George, 01, FT)

> Even for the staff, everything is English here.
>
> (Amoux, FT)

> What I think it's a pity…it's many English everywhere, a bit of German a bit of French, if I know some French people it will be French but everything most of it is English.
>
> (Tom, FT)

> I think it's probably too English.
>
> (Andrew, British)

All of the decisions, meetings and formal conversations are carried out in the English language and are supported by the management of the school as well:

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[15] Euromulti is the research name for Dombey School and all schools of its kind

as in Dombey School in any of these meetings you can speak in your own language, you can listen to others speaking in French, but then respond in English.

(Eadmund, British)

Some colleagues speak in German to me…and I answer in English.

(Deputy head)

All teachers agree that a shared common language in a school is always important for communicative purposes in a smoothly organised establishment:

English is very dominant language here…but I think in every school you will find a language, which is a common language, a shared language, because people have to get along at some stage.

(Magdalena)

However, foreign teachers seem to expect other languages as well to be spoken on a personal level, unofficially, as a sign that value and respect are being given on every individual language each teacher speaks, so that everyone eventually feels 'at home'. They seem to realise that the school is practically multilingual and often practice their language skills in their interpersonal relations with a great tendency to shift to English, whenever necessary or convenient:

I use all three languages, I use French with the French, English with all the others and German with the Germans, but I must say if I had to put it in a percentage I'd say 20 per cent German, 30 per cent French and up to 40 per cent English, sometimes more in English you know.

(George, 01)

Even though no written law in Dombey School obliges a teacher to communicate with colleagues in a language other than English, there is this sense of 'moving closer to other cultures' when the message is conveyed in the language of the interlocutor, that foreign teachers seem to realise more than the British:

with my Italian colleagues, I speak Italian with the French, French and

with the German, German.

<div align="right">(Magdalena)</div>

Foreign teachers seem to expect British colleagues to be able to use other languages as well whenever this is within their linguistic capabilities, and some of them feel very unhappy if these expectations are not met:

> and I must say it I feel that, although there are plenty of English colleagues who can speak other languages, they mainly speak…English…I found out with some of my English colleagues only after one year that they spoke German…although I had spoken to them on various occasions…with the English it's a strange thing they even if they have language capacities they rarely use them.

<div align="right">(George, 01)</div>

British teachers seem to perceive the school as a monolingual establishment for pragmatic reasons, since English is the prevailing language in the school:

> And something I found very interesting, even right up until now, is because I tend to see my students in a very English environment, and I know this is what comes – or is accused of being anyway – but my classroom, for obvious reasons, because I'm teaching in English, is an English environment.

<div align="right">(Owen)</div>

Some British teachers are in fact monolingual:

> Just English fluently. I do speak some French but not that I could teach in that language.

<div align="right">(Lisa)</div>

Moreover, they tend to present their lack of language skills or their inability to communicate in other languages in terms of laziness or even linguistic arrogance in an English speaking environment with a prevailing British culture:

> I think because the school is in England, the dominant language is English, and I think that a lot of the other staff tend to feel that **they**'ve got to move towards us that we do not move towards them, that they've

got to speak a lot of the language, our language…I think English speakers are lazy, you know we are all reluctant to speak a foreign language.

<div align="right">(Joy)</div>

I have an international whistle that blows in any language.

<div align="right">(Ronald)</div>

well I think I am very fortunate to teach English which is their mother tongue and part of the culture…I think the disadvantage in a small school (like Dombey School), there isn't the pressure on one to speak a second language, here, it's English.

<div align="right">(Fred)</div>

British teachers seem to perceive all their students who are fluent in English as English too; they only later realise that their students have multiple linguistic and cultural identities and the school is not only English, which is shocking for them:

It took some getting used to the fact that the students were from very diverse European nationalities and in a strange way, that's harder, because its close and yet far apart, if that makes any sense…Here, I think because it's subtler, because there's a lot which is similar about – certainly western European cultures – that it's easy to bypass the differences…I realise that you can get fooled, almost, in your own classroom, to thinking these students are very anglicised and then you hear them in a different environment and you realise that you have got a strong other dimension and I think that really is true, that these students actually probably are quite different, I suspect.

<div align="right">(Owen)</div>

After realising multiple students' cultural identities, British teachers end up perceiving the school as multicultural, while foreign teachers perceive the school as much less multicultural because of the similarity of western European cultures considered from a global perspective:

I wouldn't say this is a multicultural cause it's all European cultures, I would say this is more multilingual school but for me it's not what I understand multicultural cause it's very European, very western European or so…multicultural is that there are different, very different cultures, you know, like an Islamic or Muslim culture, a western

European culture and an eastern European culture and an African culture that's for me multicultural and not because they are English and French and Germans…I mean there are cultural differences…multicultural goes deeper for me than…the traditions are much more different.

(Magdalena)

Some even see the school as anglicised because of the strong presence of the English element in it and the obvious bond among English staff members:

that is a problem I think and the German inspector was not quite content with the situation I must say, he didn't lay the blame on us but this a decidedly English School…it's definitely, a rather English School…in the sense that the majority of people here of course speak English.

(George, 01)

so there is no much gathering, if you look in the staffroom during the break you will see that English sit with the English, especially the English, they are a pretty closed group.

(Roberto)

The way foreign teachers look at the school in terms of diversity also depends on their previous working experience; the more enriched their experience is, the less multicultural the school is perceived to be:

here mostly I don't find it a multicultural environment…it's a multi-language environment, basically they are all the same basic cultures…even in Morocco I found it more multicultural in Morocco, because it was completely different with all this Arabic and Islam behind it…here we are all with a Christian background we have all the same history basically, Europe…I think it's more multi-language environment more than multicultural, especially in this school where English is so dominant.

(Marco)

Other teachers, with a wider international experience point to less integration in the school than is characteristic of some other International Schools:

Ah, in a way the United World College is more of an International School because of the student population there…far more diverse…we had students from about fifty different countries…I taught Dutch to

> Dutch kids and Flemish kids but I taught theory of knowledge to kids from all over the world. That was more international...and kids were more mixed and mingled than they are here…Cause here there are fairly separate in their own language groups.

> (Carel)

Foreign teachers who are employed in an English speaking school may worry about their language skills which prevent them from expressing themselves:

> I am on my third year here…I've got still the feeling quite often, especially when it's about feelings, about impressions, it's very much easier for me to express myself in German than in English and quite often I describe what I could very easily in German I can't do it in English…my first language of course is German and I just learnt English in school.

> (Meier, 01)

> There are added problems because you've got the linguistic problem that you can't assume that everyone can join in…not competent in English…to the point of expressing a subtle point, in public, in a staff meeting.

> (Owen)

The last speaker compares this with his own successful experience of pushing through a proposal for a new award, where he tried very hard to 'brief all teachers' and presented it successfully at a staff meeting. His point about the relative sophistication required in situations like this draws on his own experience of using French:

> if there's a discussion in French, class councils, I can understand it, but I'm pretty reluctant to contribute in French, because I'm thinking 'God I'll say something wrong, I'll make a mistake'…I know that I shouldn't think that, but I do. And if I was in a French staff meeting, like I was in Brussels, I could understand it, but the idea of going to the next stage and actually formulating something not too banal to say, because there's no point in just saying something really basic is there? That's quite hard in a language.

> (Owen)

There is direct evidence for this in the case of Dombey School. For example, Aurelie

is a French teacher who admits she is quite reluctant in expressing her opinions in English in a staff meeting and prefers staying silent (F: 060315-07). Language competency issues bring up issues of communication within a school where several languages are spoken and several cultures are represented, even though all teachers are expected to be efficient at least in one main language and knowledgeable in all cultures in order to avoid misunderstandings.

5.2.1.1.1 Consequences

Under these circumstances one might think that British teachers would be well-settled in a school where they speak the dominant language and where they only deal with professional challenges:

> I am not used to teaching what are called mixed ability classes, where you have very bright and less bright pupils.
>
> (James, 02)

> So I'd never taught in a system where it was explicit that I was teaching L2 students, even though sometimes I undoubtedly was, in Hong Kong, it was never that explicit. So that took some getting used to.
>
> (Owen)

However, the shock of new teaching circumstances undermines such easy assumptions:

> There was nothing like I had done before except my subject was called the same thing, was called physical education.
>
> (Ronald)

> Everything is so different; it was just like another planet.
>
> (Lisa)

British teachers admit they do not feel they work on strong 'home' ground, although they work in England with so many British colleagues around:

I know that I'm in my own country – but it's still sort of foreign.

(Owen)

Having so many teachers in the school who are not very competent in English makes British teachers wonder about issues of democracy, decision-making and equal rights for all in a staff meeting when foreign teachers cannot convey their messages effectively and cannot consequently influence school decisions. They acknowledge how language difficulties may prohibit teachers who are not brave with the dominant language to stand up for their opinions:

> The discussion ones are sort of okay, but only a certain number of people speak. They are typically conducted in English, which you could say, suits someone like me, but I think it is sort of wrong, and it means that if you are not confident in English, you are very unlikely to contribute.

(Owen)

They also claim that staff meetings can give a wrong sense of democracy in the school:

> it was never, often not, made clear whether it was meant to be democratic…its not clear enough whether you are just giving information, discussing but with no power, is it really democratic? – which it never can be by the way – so I wouldn't support that approach because I think it gives a false sense of democracy.

(Owen)

Although foreign teachers' inability or reluctance to make their point or disagreement explicit in a staff meeting happens due to language deficiency, teachers may be confrontational with one another in cases when they feel their rights have not been respected, their ideas have not been heard or authority, in general, has been overstepped. Foreign teachers' professional beliefs can be culturally orientated rather than just linguistically limited and this can give rise to communication problems, as the following case demonstrates.

5.2.1.1.1.1 Case: Owen's proposal

Owen had invited comments on the proposal for an award which he was about to

present at a staff meeting:

> and this is where it gets annoying you see, I went and said if there's any
> other comments, please contact me or the Deputy head because it was
> sort of me with supportive management. And then the next staff meeting
> I was basically presenting how we are going to do this and this teacher
> got up, really took me by surprise, I didn't see this coming at all, and
> really he was quite annoyed and angry and he said: But we didn't agree
> this; we didn't agree this idea at the last staff meeting.
>
> (Owen)

He had taken foreign teachers' lack of argument against his proposition as a sign of

agreement:

> Well, we didn't have a vote because we don't really have votes, but my
> understanding is that the nature of the discussion and the fact that we
> asked for any comments and there had only been one person who had
> said anything, something typical and that was whatever it was and we
> had taken account of, that we felt it was okay.
>
> (Owen)

But the teacher who opposed him probably felt his democratic rights for voting were

not taken into serious consideration and needed to do something about it ultimately

not to offend his colleague's ideas for innovation but possibly to defend his

professional beliefs in a working environment which he felt was not interested in

them. It has been claimed that the 'strong and often unexpected emotional responses'

people experience in cross-cultural encounters are the result of their cultural values

being 'violated', their culture's expected behaviours being ignored or when things

'do not unfold according to their expectations' (Cushner and Brislin 1996:8):

> He replied: But we didn't vote on it; there was no vote.
>
> (Owen)

That foreign teacher's cultural schema of introducing or accepting innovations was probably through a formal procedure, which should be generally accepted by most teachers in a form of a written agreement or voting. Teachers who are reluctant to participate or verbalise arguments in staff meetings because of lack of confidence in the English language obviously hold an opinion of their own and innovators are well aware of that:

> I wasn't so naïve as to imagine everyone was sitting there thinking 'God he's a genius, what a great idea', but I thought at least they didn't have a strong objection.

> (Owen)

The whole incident reveals that linguistic and cultural barriers are difficult to distinguish in professional environments in the sense that one can never be sure what it is that makes teachers refrain from expressing themselves freely in a multilingual setting; however, this case indicates that foreign teachers can overcome linguistic barriers when they feel their voice needs to be heard in the school. This particular foreign teacher needed to support his professional beliefs and he did not seem to worry about linguistic mistakes in doing so.

Teachers' beliefs are constantly revised or reshaped within culturally and linguistically enriched contexts in the light of the unexpected feelings such misunderstandings might cause, even if it means negotiations need to start over and flexibility needs to be reconsidered as a safe policy, which is how this case was eventually resolved:

> So I was quite taken aback; obviously I defended myself and said how I saw it and if that was a general view then it would clearly have to be discussed again.

> (Owen)

5.2.1.2 Criteria for recruitment

Linguistic or cultural misunderstandings might be less common in a multilingual school like Dombey School, if criteria for teacher recruitment were alike for British and foreign teachers.

Foreign teachers have to undertake public language examinations in their home countries before they are employed to Dombey School and it is obvious that their national government does its best to prepare them fully for a multilingual context in terms of English language capacity and skills:

> so all the teachers, could…that were fully appointed, could undergo this public examination in different subject matters and the examination was not regarding the subject matter because you're expected to be an expert on your subject matter but on your language skills…so it was a language test…it is basic to know English and to know English in your field.
>
> (Roberto)

I am not aware of the criteria of assessment for teachers' language skills in public examinations, but foreign teachers argue that multilingualism, (speaking various important EU languages) and international working experience are eventually more important criteria for Dombey School foreign teacher recruitment than speaking good English and this is confirmed by the fact that most of them are not really 'fit' in English:

> many of the German colleagues are not really fit in English when they come here so…language is not the main criterion, I think the main criterion for me was that I had already spent sometime abroad, that I speak French
>
> (George, 01)

A first degree and a minimum of five years of teaching experience are obviously common criteria for recruitment for both British and foreign teachers in Dombey

School:

> The official one (criterion) was very limited; have a good first degree, I think, which is a 2:1 or…it wasn't much, but it was a minimum of five years teaching experience; So they didn't want people who were just out of college.
>
> (Owen)

> well, of course (I had previous teaching experience) cause if I hadn't taught before I would not be qualified to teach here, I wouldn't know how to teach.
>
> (Roberto)

Therefore, extra criteria (such as multilingualism, variety of experience) for foreign

teachers represent additional qualifications,

> You have to be qualified as a teacher, you have to speak English, at least two languages and English was of course requested for this post…and because I was in this kind of school where we had training students…so it was kind of plus, in my experience.
>
> (Freddy, French)

and make them theoretically more qualified than British teachers for whom the

criteria for recruitment seem to be limited to international experience:

> looking at it from their point of view, I don't know what they thought but I imagine they were saying 'well here's a teacher…who has experience from a range of schools including Africa and India', I imagine they thought, 'well I expect him to very good'…the evidence is not difficult to put together.
>
> (James, 02)

Even the criteria for assessment are different between British and foreign teachers.

British teachers have to be appraised every year:

> I have to be assessed every year, there is a written report every year…should be for all teachers…certainly is the case for all UK teachers.
>
> (Ronald)

Foreign teachers have to be assessed on a different less frequent basis:

> yes, they come to your classes they have an interview with you…they come two or three times…and then they write what they think, if you have to be confirmed, because the first year is like they can fire you after the first year, then if you are confirmed you are confirmed up to the fifth year and then after the fifth year they can renew or not.
>
> (Roberto)

5.2.1.3 Challenges of adaptation due to different qualifications

In practice, however, foreign teachers realise that surviving in a multilingual context has nothing to do eventually with the ability to speak many foreign languages or with the amount of international experience you carry as a teacher:

> that's what you want, you suddenly feel all alone your friends are far, your family is far, parents are far and you are here…I thought 'anyway you've got a great advantage, you speak the languages, you've got entirely a good experience abroad', because I think I was very moody in the first months here, and also it was difficult for me to establish relationships…and I was simply put off by the situation, I just found it yak…that things was simply not as I expected.
>
> (George, 01)

It has also been argued that people typically have difficulties when moving across cultures and occasionally find that behaviours and attitudes that proved necessary for obtaining goals in their own culture are no longer useful (Cushner and Brislin 1996:2). Foreign teachers are able to see that British teachers, with far fewer qualifications, survive in the school more successfully than them and they find it difficult to understand and rather frustrating:

> but the thing is I realised there were other teachers with much less experience abroad and less language qualities who felt much better here, who got into the system easier, they' ve got to know people much quicker than I.
>
> (George, 01)

Foreign teachers, however, are prepared to live a new experience in another country and ready for the challenges this represents:

> it's nice because one of the reasons I wanted to go abroad was to do something different and not teach in the next 20 years in the same school, so going abroad meant that you broke this routine and you experienced yourself in the new environment
>
> because then you only change your professional environment (if you stay in your country teaching in another school), you keep your network, your private network, you keep your friends, cultural environment you know what things are, you don't have to relocate…so it's only professional that something changes, of course you need some energy to adapt to that but here you have to adapt to everything, you have to adapt professionally, you have to get settled in your private life, you have to find everything…yea it's more challenging.
>
> (Anna)

Challenges are greater if they have to deal with important practical matters, and if they have never lived in Britain before:

> and I was looking for a house, I didn't know that you first need a bank account in order to get a house, but in order to get a bank account, you need a house first, so it shows petty problems that I worked quite hard to deal with, if you have no clue, if you've never lived somewhere.
>
> (Carel)

Having to separate yourself from family and friends adds on the stressing load for single foreign teachers, in particular:

> Oh I cried a lot…I was really difficult…if you don't go with your partner or with your children or you are as a family in a foreign country you have to build up everything, you, whereas when you have a family, you have a retreat, they somehow share life you already take with you…and I think especially when you go abroad on your own, I think the problems become more clear cause you have to confront them and you have to get along with yourself and there is nobody at home who helps you, you miss your friends, I wasn't homesick in terms of, 'Oh I wish I was back in Germany' I was 'friends homesick'.
>
> (Anna)

Foreign teachers need support in order to survive. Fieldwork has shown that they feel

confident and more settled when their English is proper or improving. Kees is a Dutch teacher who used to work in an International School in Holland and admitted that his previous teaching experience in that school (he was teaching in English) helped him adjust to Dombey School because he already had 'decent English' (I: K 060309-01) and Freddy appreciates his English language competency prior to Dombey School coming:

> I spoke English before so there was no problem about the language.
>
> (Freddy)

Issues of English language competency often make the process of adjustment challenging, but teachers eventually cope with this:

> The…hardest thing was not being a teacher because I could cope with that and it was familiar but the hard thing was the English language.
>
> (Jørgen)

> it was quite an exotic country and I didn't know English cause I was always very French…so that was a bit difficult but the more I knew English the more I felt at home.
>
> (Magdalena)

A distinction between British and foreign teachers is not the only one that this school makes at a cultural and linguistic level. There is also a distinction in favour of the major cultures and teachers of the school which will be further analysed and discussed.

5.2.2 The differences between minor and major cultures

English, German and French languages are considered the 'strong' languages and cultures in the school while Italian, Dutch, Spanish and Danish are seen as the 'weak' languages and teachers of the languages in the first group are considered

privileged compared to the others:

> English and French are the most representative cultures I would say yes.
>
> (Irena)

> Teachers of English, German and French languages (are privileged)…Those languages are privileged compared with others…There's languages of E series and languages of B series.
>
> (Roberto)

Italian and Dutch teachers cannot teach history and geography in their home sections:

> I don't teach history which is one of my main areas in Italy; I cannot because only the Germans and English and French can teach history, whereas the other language teachers cannot teach history.
>
> (Roberto)

A teacher who belongs in the minor cultures thinks that the whole idea of privileging some languages at the cost of others, especially for subjects like history, which should convey a sense of national identity through the language in which it is taught, just to support Monnet's theory of 'side by side' multicultural education is not fair either for the students or for the teachers who teach in those sections:

> I believe that every language if he has to preserve some power its nationality should teach history, history is not a subject matter like chemistry…because history is a cultural subject matter that conveys a sense of identity, so the idea of privileging some languages is totally unfair I think and wrong.
>
> (Roberto)

The same teacher believes that the fact that subjects like history and geography are taught in the school by teachers who belong in major cultures undermines other languages and countries' civilisation by influencing students' knowledge or ideas about them:

history conveys a sense of identity and nationality so for example the fact that our students are taught history by an Irish teacher, means that they don't learn anything about Italian history…the perspective being given about their past…is not shaped around a sense of belonging to a tradition, which is a national tradition, so for example they speak more about the Celts than they do about the Romans…and if you compare, I think that, with all the respect the Roman civilization was more meaningful, but anyway.

(Roberto)

A representative of major cultures justifies the school policy by focusing on the message that the school conveys about certain subjects being taught in another language (L2), so that the student approaches these subjects from a different perspective, rather than on the allowances that the schools makes for certain 'strong' cultures to teach more subjects than others:

The more idealistic notion is this whole idea of the philosophy of the Euromulti schools, coming out of the second world war, that these children are being educated – as you know in the sort of original mission statement – 'side by side', 'free of prejudice'…And if you take that view, I'm sure there were the movers and shakers who thought, 'well what better way of reinforcing this idea than actually teaching students certain subjects in another language'…deliberately so they would be getting that 'alternative' cultural view of a subject. And in that sense, I think geography and history are rather good choices, you could argue...well, what a good idea that a German student gets a completely fresh, non-German view of history, be it the second world war or whatever else it might be. The same with geography, the idea that someone is going to give you a rather different perspective.

(Owen)

The same teacher, however, tries to understand what it probably feels like to be rejected as a nationality within a system, which favours only three languages and cultures out of the existing seven:

On the other hand, I do understand…that's a very understandable reaction…Particularly perhaps if you feel you are in a small section and perhaps you've got a history or geography that you feel gets ignored by the wider Europe if you like, that you think, well, you know, these are Italians and I understand that and I want my Italian students to understand the history of their country, and you resent, I'm sure, the fact

> that you look at the syllabus and think 'well, where's Italy or where's Holland?

<div align="right">(Owen)</div>

The Dombey School system favours major cultures and sections as well as teachers who teach in them and this is not only shown in the curriculum. Minor sections tend to be smaller in student and staff population with a 'weaker' voice and a less healthy environment for students and teachers to socialise and learn:

> from four to ten (students)…they' re all small classes.

<div align="right">(Roberto)</div>

Small-sized classrooms are not always the ideal environment for teachers who eventually do not get the chance to regularly update their classroom practices:

> What you get used to is teaching in small classes…although it may seem easy, in fact, it is not always that easy…in fact, I think you are more less teaching the same way if you have a small class.

<div align="right">(Kees)</div>

Teachers of minor cultures and languages agree on the teacher – student relationship difficulty in a small class environment:

> because you can't get cosy with pupils, you can get too close and you should avoid that because they can get fed up with you so you got to keep a distance.

<div align="right">(Kees)</div>

> I don't like it…because I don't think it's healthy…for the relationship…it's not professional enough you cannot distantiate yourself enough…it's too familiar, too intimate

<div align="right">(Roberto)</div>

On the other hand, teachers teaching in their home language sections feel they can have a more intimate relationship with students of their own culture without being misunderstood:

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my relationship with the students is pretty informal; sometimes it might even go too far for someone's sensibility, what I mean is that there is a more distant relationship that I should try to keep that's more part of a tradition of an Anglo – Saxon school…but I am not accustomed to it.

(Roberto)

Some teachers think that small sections are not healthy for the children who belong in them either:

they (the children) are not enough to develop a healthy relationship between them in the first place because they haven't got many to choose from.

(Roberto)

A teacher's son had his section changed for the sake of a healthier classroom environment:

Conditions in the Dutch classroom are not ideal…socially it's a very small class, it's a very small group and we thought to give him an opportunity to be in a healthier atmosphere.

(Kees)

On the other hand, teachers who teach in small sections are in a better position to facilitate student learning compared to big sections, which are terribly mixed and culturally mingled:

I have a year seven, English section, philosophy class, English section, eight students, and they are eight nationalities in the class…but they are all English section.

(Tab)

A very small classroom has a negative part in the sense that there is not enough interaction, but very big classes are worse I think, at least the students they learn in these very small classes, they do a subject and they learn a lot during a period, from the point of view of learning the subject…I think the ideal number is twelve probably.

(Daniele)

Teachers who teach in the small language sections seem to turn classroom

homogeneity to their advantage when it helps them avoiding teacher – student misunderstandings:

> but luckily since most of the students belong to the same culture so they understand the things correctly and so they take it as what it is… and not as a harassment or for whatever it is…but I probably should be more careful…in what I say or do.
>
> (Roberto)

Although most classrooms are small-sized in Dombey School, minor sections tend to have smaller student numbers and are therefore easier for teachers to manage:

> I have small classes, I have lovely kids…Eh my smallest class is I think five students...(and the biggest) it's eight students…It's incredibly small.
>
> (Carel)

The only disadvantage is that because minor sections are extremely small, teachers of those sections need to teach more hours per week, compared to teachers in the big sections:

> 26 (periods I teach)…because Italian section has little classes and…for example if I have one period with an Italian class in which there are five pupils is the same of a 90 per cent of a French class, so they have to give less (periods) to a French or German teacher because they have a bigger class.
>
> (Julia)

Teachers in minor sections seem to be flexible and aware of the fact that they will eventually have to go back as their sections are phased out and the school is gradually closing. British teachers are perceived to be less flexible because they will stop working 'at home':

> if you come here and plan to stay here and everything and build a life, I guess (you will be sad) but people that are here are pretty, they are not, I mean except for the English that are English, everyone else is kind of flexible upon this kind of thing, because it is not really their country it is not really their place where they plan to live all their lives.

<div align="right">(Roberto)</div>

Although the big sections seem to be linguistically privileged within a school system of (relatively) limited cultural diversity, there is evidence in the next section that this school does not facilitate a possible sense of togetherness for teachers in them, despite their theoretically common characteristics; on the contrary, it seems to highlight cultural differences to a degree that facilitate competitive school attitudes, lack of collaboration and negative national stereotyping. All distinctive cultural groups in Dombey School seem to exist and function relatively professionally isolated from one another, with immediate consequences on teachers' adaptation to the school and a barely united school culture.

5.2.3 The English, French and German (major) cultural differences

Although major cultures have characteristics in common in this school, there is still considerable stereotyping of other groups. At some point this is inevitable, because British teachers have different classroom approaches compared to French or German teachers:

> With the best will in the world, a French history teacher does not approach history in the same way as an English history teacher.

<div align="right">(Owen)</div>

German, French and British teachers seem to have different classroom practices and views and they do not necessarily agree with each other:

> we can't really use the same documents…I've got a different approach towards teaching than he has…I start digitalising many things…but we

can't really use the same documents.

<div align="right">(George, 02)</div>

Even teachers of major sections with similar subjects disagree on the appropriateness of each other's approaches as they gradually become familiar with the ways of other teachers. Sometimes, however, they have to reach common decisions and this is where they realise the challenge:

> The problem working in a multicultural school is that your idea of what is appropriate…and other colleagues' from other countries idea of what is appropriate may not necessarily be the same…I'm not saying they're wrong and I'm right…whichever way it can sometimes mean that what you eventually agree, you take quite a long time to get there.

<div align="right">(Ronald)</div>

According to Cambridge (1998), different educational values are expressed by various members of the school community in any school:

> these differences include contrasting beliefs and attitudes about the purposes of education, the nature of teaching and learning, the nature of the subjects being taught, the purposes of educational assessment, and relations between adults and young people.

<div align="right">(p. 199)</div>

Therefore, in a pluralistic school community like Dombey School, with its cultural mix, teachers would have even more complex views about the purpose of education, appropriateness of methods or assessment criteria than colleagues from other cultures. History and geography teachers, for example, do not even have the same marking or assessment criteria, as the language level of the English L2 students is advanced in an English speaking environment:

> I suspect I expect a little bit more of them and I do think that's so wrong. I used to think that was wrong, but on the other hand, I think in a way what we should be judging is how our students are doing in the context within which they are working. So given that they are getting English hurled at them day in and day out here, I think I can expect a bit more,

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and it would be educationally not good if I lowered my expectations.

(Owen)

The management of the school discusses the subjective human factor when it comes to student assessment in every educational system and not just in Dombey School:

> You can make as many criteria as you like…it's still, in the final analysis, depends on the person doing the evaluation…you will find inevitably a certain inconsistency in the marking…within any system national or international…attempts have been made to, for example L2, they've started producing indicatives to assist in the marking of the written L2 exams...and that nearly helps.

(Deputy head)

As time passes, teachers familiarise themselves more with colleagues' approaches and learn how to accept or tolerate differences or simply justify them through a different cultural or knowledge background.

However, criticising other teachers' educational values comes naturally, especially when teachers familiarise themselves with each other's teaching practices:

> Sometimes of course you are critical, and of course sometimes you find yourself thinking – even if you don't say it out loud – that's such a French approach.

(Owen)

Dombey School teachers, however, rarely share professional views or observe each other's classrooms, due to the school policy:

> in my German school in Bavaria for every subject there were five to ten teachers, so there was more exchange, how did you do this how did you do that? Do you have a copy of this and that…here this doesn't exist at all.

(Magdalena)

An added complication is that the very distinctive composition of some groups makes maintaining certain groups' structure impossible throughout the day:

> 3C2 may be first class in the morning but then they' re never together for the rest of the day…and they' re taught all their basic subjects as learners and then they mix for everything else…so your experience of the class, nobody sees the classes that I teach.
>
> (Ronald)

Teachers have raised teacher collaboration and peer observation issues in staff meetings, but the response was not positive:

> But we should do more and I think across the school we should, but we've still got…I don't think that it would go down very well with my colleagues. I've wondered about raising it as a suggestion, I certainly have at a pedagogical day, and it goes down like a lead balloon.
>
> (Owen)

Teachers, however, seem to be fond of collaboration whenever this is requested or possible:

> I intend to try and work with some of the departments…one of the French teachers which are doing history and are doing something on caves…I said it would be interesting to join in for a project with some of his students.
>
> (Wallace, 01)

Lack of teachers who teach the same subjects within the same section and lack of teacher collaboration across sections or across schools of its kind makes teachers feel isolated:

> In German I had lots of colleagues to offer me help but in Latin I am the only teacher, so I didn't have anyone…my colleague from the English section is very nice, but it is not very helpful because she has another syllabus, another book and another level.
>
> (Magdalena)

As a consequence teachers work very individually in the school, and although they regularly have feedback from students or parents, they rarely receive feedback from colleagues:

> (in this school) you are just responsible to the parents or the students but not to other teachers or to the management.

> (Magdalena)

When teachers of big sections eventually get an idea of each other's practices and philosophy of teaching, this happens due to the fact that students belonging in any of the three big sections will eventually choose one of these strong languages as their L2:

> here only those that do French and German as a second language are the English speakers and only the English speakers.

> (Fred)

Therefore, French and German teachers end up teaching in the heterogeneous culturally-mixed English section (geography and history) which is, according to British teachers, theoretically easier to teach compared to the homogeneous French and German sections that British teachers end up teaching:

> if you're Dutch you do English as a second language, if you're French you'll do English as a second language…so in the English (L2) classroom they are mixed they are lots of different nationalities, but in the French second language classroom there are only English…that's a huge difference, because when you are facing a group that's homogeneous, it's more difficult than facing a mixed group…making the second language come alive.

> (Fred)

However, as it will be demonstrated below (5.2.3.1) and explained in the next chapter (6.3.4.1), teaching students with multiple, different cultural backgrounds is more challenging compared to dealing only with students' linguistic deficiency, because the former also has an impact on teachers' self confidence and adaptation to the school.

Teachers are often drawn into making assumptions about each other's educational

beliefs and classroom practices because of adjacent subjects, neighbouring classrooms in a small school or because of having their own children taught in the same school in another section:

> I've got a pretty good idea how George teaches…You know, if someone teaches next door to you, and I pop in sometimes, and he pops in, we're very relaxed; it's not a shut door. I've got a fairly good idea and through my daughter I've got a pretty good idea how he teaches.
>
> (Owen)

The Dombey School system gives the opportunity to most teachers in the big sections to teach in at least two of them. And although this should be considered a unifying factor and a reason for British, German and French teachers to collaborate and develop a sense of 'togetherness' in a multilingual school, there is evidence that it causes more incoherence as it leaves out the minor cultures and concentrates on the major ones, thus reinforcing stereotyping towards each section's students, parents and teachers.

Compared to the other two big sections, the English seems to be the prevailing one, although almost (numerically) equal with the other two. The German and French sections/cultures appear to be less significant in a school where even textbooks in the German and French section have possibly been written by British writers who have not taken into consideration the needs of the German or French students in this school:

> if you have a look at the syllabus at the geography syllabus you have the feeling that it was fashioned by English teachers, and if you compare with the English textbooks you get the feeling it's a copy of the content, table of contents of an English textbook, but we don't find suitable French or German books to cover so sometimes we have kind of books that can cover part of the year, but not everything.
>
> (George 02)

in fact, in the fourth, fifth year I don't use a textbook at all because the texts tend to be UK nominated, British economic textbooks.

(Eadmund)

The differences highlighted in this section might seem to be matters of merely professional concern and susceptible to remedy at an organisational or administrative level, but as the next section will show the roots go deeper than this and professional differences are bound up with more profound cultural assumptions that lead to national stereotyping.

5.2.3.1 Stereotyping

In this particular setting, stereotyping begins in and develops from having as a target the numerically and linguistically strong English section which represents the British culture in the school. The English section, although culturally-mixed, is perceived by the German and French teachers to be the least disciplined one, the most difficult one to teach in the school, regardless the size of the classroom, the subject taught and its perceived (by the teachers) importance. Classroom observation confirmed this:

> Most of the children were very naughty and kept teasing each other during the class. They seemed to pay no attention to me either. They kept talking to each other and playing with other stuff. (Mathew's moral education class in the English section)

(F: 060227-05)

The multicultural school is an arena for a variety of cross-cultural interactions between members of teaching staff and the student body. Cultural diversity can be the source of misunderstandings, especially in the classroom 'where different expectations of students and teachers about the nature of teaching can be interpreted as discipline problems' (Cambridge 1998:201). German teachers have their teaching expectations possibly not met when teaching the English section, especially when

they compare it with the disciplined German one:

> When I am in trouble with students from time to time it's always English students, they're the ones who are not at all behaved, disruptive, they don't have the homework, they don't do this, they don't do that and they're constantly struggling, they don't do the grammar, in the German section it's never a group of students, it's always one or two students (who don't have the homework), I'd say that 90 per cent is fine.
>
> (Magdalena)

Teacher – student relationships in Dombey School may sometimes be affected by differences between cultures, which are equally strong, but extremely diverse like English (which is considered free) and German (which is considered stricter). German teachers who teach the English group, which has a completely different culture from their own, highlight difficulties in such a relationship on various levels:

> what happens several times maybe the kind of humour…I find it with English students very often because they don't master the language so much that what I find funny that is offending for others and what they found funny was offending me…another kind of humour you know.
>
> (Magdalena)

German teachers who teach in the English section unconsciously compare it to the German one, usually acknowledging elements (language level and use, humour perception, learning and understanding etc.) that make German students superior in their minds and valued representatives of a strict home educational system:

> She said she speaks in a slow, proper language in the L2 (English) group and she also mentioned that **she never jokes** with the English students (L2) as they won't understand her jokes and as the language level is too low.
>
> (F: 060327-02).

Walter is a German teacher who used to teach ICT lessons in English, to classes consisting of German, Dutch, Italian and English students. His observations about the limited nature of English students' learning compared to the initiative shown by

their more autonomous international peers are quite interesting:

> He experienced something different, he said, because of the simpler language he sometimes had to use. Also because he realised that English students had less ICT skills than all the others in the sense that English students could only follow step by step instructions, while all the others were very capable of dealing alone with a task, once a task was assigned to them.
>
> (F: 060324-29).

German teachers' experiences from the English section can be so negative in this school, that some teachers would even be prepared to curtail their teaching career in the school in order to avoid teaching the English students:

> if I had to teach to the English section I'd say no so…never ever.
>
> (Magdalena)

German teachers' general comments about the English might have raised the possibility of a general 'German rejection' towards the English educational system, if French teachers hadn't been observed and interviewed too. Observing English students who are being taught history in French showed that French teachers seem to have problems with the English section as well:

> The history class (that I observed) was a naughty class consisting mainly of English students having French as L2. They kept talking, going in and out to bring their books or other stuff that they'd forgotten and speaking in English (instead of French). Lynette seemed a very well-controlled, knowledgeable teacher who was trying to handle the class without shouting, dealing with the noise and with the syllabus implementation at the same time.
>
> (F: 060324-27).

Teacher – student relationships in Dombey School may also be affected by teachers' personalities. Calanthe has admitted that her personality helps her to teach in this school (I: C 060308-01), which has also helped her deal with discipline problems within the English section, which is widely perceived to be lacking in discipline:

I mean I had problems at the beginning with one class because they were one bunch of wild kids, so this was hard and I was really worried…and now they are better…first I was cross with them, I told them off, I was really bitchy with them and I spoke English to them, because that's their language, it had to go straight to their brains, it worked, and now they've started to know me as well so we get on together better and now I like going and teaching them…I don't know how, it was a long process but I think they trust me and they know if I say something I will do it…but I still sometimes get to know it with them and then we stop and we say 'ok, there's something going on here'.

(Calanthe, French)

Thankfully all teachers in this school are highly qualified and well motivated, and prepared to deal with students' unwillingness to learn or participate in the lesson. Accepting differentiation among cultures and searching for new approaches to deal with learning difficulties and behavioural problems at the lowest cost seems to be Dombey School teachers' first step towards handling challenging situations in a multilingual school.

Teachers' feedback style to English students has changed in the light of the principles acquired during their pre-service training courses and their desire to enjoy a peaceful classroom environment:

I think a friendly approach is one thing and then try always to create an atmosphere in the class and not correcting them on the spot because then…they think…'oh we can't speak', you have to let them speak, you can correct them when you're focusing on the target language and then you say 'this is what you have to say, please correct it', but if you are generally speaking they have to feel free and then to improve their language.

(Calanthe)

German teachers have their concerns about French students too, who seem irresponsible and incapable of working in a non-structured educational environment:

for example that's so typical French, so for example French pupils, girls find it difficult, more difficult than other ones to be responsible for their own actions when they are not squeezed in a very clear structure...when

they are allowed to try something, or when I do give them some time to try things…to work on their own on something and they can't cope with this responsibility.

<div align="right">(Anna)</div>

They also complain about French teachers, considering them authoritarian:

For the English I can't say anything but the French are very very authoritarian I find…as teachers…I always said and I still say if I had a child I would prefer to kill it instead of sending it to a French school…Authoritarian means that teacher is in front of the class, I am the **Authority**, that what I say that is **Law**, **I** lecture, **you** have to listen and you have to learn everything by heart…that's not what I understand by teaching, I understand that we have a task, a problem and we work it out together, the students find themselves the answer and not just lecture them and they have to learn the answer and just spit it out again…that's why I left France because I was fed up with the French system , these French schools were for me like prisons…If I ever had a child I'd kill it before I send it to France.

<div align="right">(Magdalena)</div>

French teachers are perceived to be authoritarian by British teachers as well:

Because there are images you know, the stereotype images that French teachers are stricter, everyone is in serried ranks, don't dare speak.

<div align="right">(Owen)</div>

German teachers, however, appreciate certain aspects of British teachers' classroom policy as far as teacher – student relationship is concerned:

an English teacher is always trying to support a pupil much more than in Germany so it's always 'where is the pupil, where can I pick him up and how I can take him further'.

<div align="right">(Anna)</div>

German teachers seem to be extremely fond of their own home section and value its positive characteristics:

no, not all (Germans) of them (are organised)…and I think they understand better that there are rules, you follow these rules which gives you more freedom in other areas…but if you don't follow the rules it's

<div align="center">134</div>

getting difficult...I think they understand better 'free time is not chaotic time', free time is also demanding…I think they are more used to this teaching from primary on, I think they are more able to do that.

(Anna)

They seem to appreciate German parents for the help and guidance they are providing their children with, facilitating their learning:

> the German mothers here, this may be a disadvantage for the mothers but an advantage for us teachers, they are mostly housewives so they have a lot of time to pull down the neck of the children which is really so stressful for the children, but very helpful for me as a teacher, my little ones they are always there with their homework with their books and everything and their lunch and so on…I find it really an advantage to have these mothers because the students sometimes really burst into tears because it's too much pressure for them.

(Magdalena)

English parents are a target of criticism and the least appreciated by German teachers, as well being considered the main reason for their children's indifferent attitude towards learning:

> English parents are more…indulgent, yea that's true…I'd just say they are careless about the homework and the things their children do…but with the English parents constantly you don't…I just don't dare to say anything because they come and shout at you or something, so you just think, ok let's get through, next year we won't have them any more.

(Magdalena)

Although it makes sense for teachers to defend their home educational system, for obvious reasons, it does raise questions about how objective German criticism eventually is towards the other two big sections and particularly the English. The real issue, however, is not so much the fact that the German section supports and favours its own educational system, but why they have the attitudes they do and how such negative stereotyping of other cultures influences teachers' adaptation in Dombey School.

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German teachers are the ones who criticise the other cultures most and this may be accounted for at least to some extent as part of their general dissatisfaction arising from their poor accommodation in this school. The next section (5.2.4) adds more on German teachers' further cultural and educational beliefs which inhibit them from adjusting smoothly in the school.

British teachers, on the other hand, have their own experiences and views about students in big sections, being privileged enough to teach a variety of groups: multilingual and heterogeneous (e.g. English section) and relatively homogeneous ones (e.g. German and French section). The level and quality of English teachers' comments about French students, however, are very different from German teachers' comments on English students or parents in the sense that the former are mild statements or realisations which are not permanent or offensive and do not have an immediate impact on their teaching job. French students, who are mainly judged as individuals (rather than as whole sections) being taught in homogeneous groups, are perceived to be highly academic, and coming from an educational system which occasionally underestimates certain subjects:

> just anecdotally one doesn't like to subscribe sort of national characteristics to people but I have certainly noticed that the French are reluctant to go down the arts roots because of their educational system in France which seems to be terribly, terribly academic, the goals for students seem to be the professionals rather than the arts…if they are really bright then art is not a priority.
>
> (Wallace, 01)

On the other hand, German teachers are highly appreciated by British teachers for the structured way of dealing with their students, although accused of limited flexibility:

> with the Germans they are more empathetic to the arts, they seem to have

a very much sort of stricter, sort of way of dealing with their students, it is very structured, very measured very academic they don't seem to see any shades of grey in their students, there seems to be they've either done their work or they haven't.

(Wallace, 02)

Although cultural differences among teachers or between teachers and students may lead to relationship difficulties, all the teachers seem genuinely concerned about their relationship with students:

going back home that group was always on my mind.

(Calanthe)

every day yes every day…helps me, sometimes also it is not only pleasant there are also the unpleasant events, that give me a lot of difficulty, trouble…but normally I cannot detach completely from work leaving the school.

(Irena)

A German teacher remembers a British parent accusing her once of being so strict with her child in the lesson and of this as having an effect on his language acquisition:

yea the boy is so afraid of you and you make him so nervous and that's why he's so bad in German.

(Magdalena)

The incident annoyed her, as she is aware that bad teacher – student relationships always affect student learning and consequently damage the classroom environment. Students' disruptive behaviour causes insecurity to teachers who need advice and support from colleagues:

but the other teacher who had him last year said he is always that bad he just doesn't get anything…it' s not you.

(Magdalena)

Teachers' genuine concern about students' learning problems and their familiarity with the cultural image they are perceived to have in a multicultural educational establishment means they are at least able to understand the basis for some of the criticisms aimed at them:

> The English are seen as rather liberal, too liberal if you want to be critical, and a bit too wishy washy and everything is wonderful and give a rubbish bit of work in and the teacher will still say 'Oh what a good effort'.
>
> (Owen)

And although stereotyping is rather frequent in Dombey School, teachers are aware of the pitfalls it might lead them to and the lack of truth it might sometimes convey:

> And there's…like many stereotypes, there is **some** truth in the stereotype, but of course, not complete truth. Many French colleagues are clear and very compassionate and I think there are many English teachers who can be demanding and critical…But we do approach it in a different way, seriously, there's no doubt about that.
>
> (Owen)

Teachers' difficulties mainly come as a result of unfulfilled expectations and inevitable comparison between the teaching and learning conditions of their home education and Dombey School. All these teachers' views of other teachers, students and parents in Dombey School undoubtedly make it a challenging place to work and learn.

Since teachers' cultural differences affect their school relationships, teachers' cultural beliefs could also influence the degree of teachers' successful accommodation to the school; therefore these would be worth exploring.

5.2.4 The challenge of cultural adjustment

Exploring teachers' cultural beliefs goes hand in hand with exploring their educational background experiences in order to understand their expectations and explain their accommodation in Dombey School:

> sure you always take your experience with you, to settle in new school it's always the experience you take with you, makes it easier for you to settle in a different environment…and I think my experience of teaching in Germany which I had for 15 years or something, of course it helped my adjust here cause you' re not very much worried about your teaching, you can focus on the new situation.
>
> (Anna)

The Deputy head of the school discusses the importance of the beliefs Dombey School teachers bring with them when they join the school and which are related to those teachers' previous working experiences:

> First teachers who come here bring along, and they shouldn't, bring along part of their traditions and peculiarities of their systems…and it takes a bit of getting used to it…and particularly for those who come from a system which is very different from this one.
>
> (Deputy head)

British teachers have dealt with discipline problems and have gone through hard times in their national systems, where big classes or parents' attitudes do not facilitate their teaching job and where the school policy does not allow student exclusion:

> You can send them out and they go to the hall, and they're 'dealt with' but a lot of these children can't be excluded, they've been excluded from other schools and the educational authority cannot afford to pay, to educate them at home, so in reality they know that they cannot be… rooted…out of the school.
>
> (Lisa)

These experiences make British teachers look for working environments where

discipline problems and challenges are handled successfully or are simply less and

where the teachers have a higher social status than in the British educational system:

> I think that's one of the cultural differences between the British
> educational system and many countries in Europe, well in Britain
> teachers do not have a very high social status as you probably
> know…Head teachers would not have the same status as an equivalent
> person in industry for instance or in some European countries…in
> Germany teachers are highly respected, so I believe.
>
> (James, 02)

They now seem to feel comfortable within a school culture which does not face

major student problems or bullying compared to British state schools. Teachers also

seem to oppose the British state school system which only prepares students for

tests, rather than focusing on the learning process itself:

> it just feels that all you're doing is preparing them for tests and the
> teaching and the learning is a kind of separate thing…They're not
> interested in the information, they're interested 'will I need to know this
> for my exam?'
>
> (Lisa)

Dombey School system is highly appreciated for the freedom that British teachers in

the school repeatedly refer to, allowing both students and teachers to learn:

> it does give you a lot of freedom as a teacher…because…they don't have
> those judgemental exams, put on them all the time, they are here just to
> learn the information.
>
> (Lisa)

British teachers in general seem to have simple criteria as far as choice of working

environments is concerned, such as safe, financially rewarding or geographically

interesting places. Most of these expectations are met in Dombey School which

makes their accommodation to the school easier and their adjustment relatively

unproblematic:

I drew up some criteria about what sort of places I wanted to go to. And they were fairly obvious criteria, reasonably well paid, safe, geographically interesting...A fairly obvious list.

(Owen)

French teachers seem to have dealt with the same problems with student behaviour and control in their home country as British teachers. Previous challenges have emotionally affected them and influenced their decision to seek safer teaching jobs elsewhere around the world:

the second year when I was in northern France…I was shot in classroom…yes with a gun…it was horrible, it was a very violent place…the third year in the east of France it was also difficult…young people had knives in their school bags…it was very hard…it's paradise here.

(Aurelie) and (F: 060315-06)

French teachers, however, are more judgemental of the Dombey School system and agree on the stressful rhythm of the forty-five minute Dombey School lesson[16], compared to longer periods in their home educational system which give them the opportunity for experiments or reduce the load of preparation and marking:

because in France the physics and chemistry lesson are always 55 minutes…here a period is 45…so it's ten minutes difference it's not a lot but it's a lot yes and because physics and chemistry it's practical subjects in France you always have two consecutive periods which means two times 55 minutes with just only half of the class to do experiments…so in France we have three periods a week with all the class, three times 55 minutes and we have two consecutive periods with half the class…here I have four periods of 45 minutes, but…so it's very difficult to do experiments…45 minutes it's too short…they arrive you have to set up everything to explain what you want to do…you're losing lots of time.

(Marco)

the rhythm is sometimes stressing…because here the rhythm is 45

---

[16] the time (five minutes) that students are required to change classrooms is included

> minutes for a lesson and this is different from what I was used before…I
> was used to teach two hours…45 minutes for me is too short, mostly in
> L1 and it is stressing because it creates you more work because you have
> more lessons, so more groups, so more work…in administrative task,
> marking, so you have more exams to mark so more work in general…so
> I feel I haven't enough time to do everything in the right way

(Ines)

German teachers on the other hand are a lot more judgemental as they seem to have

worked in a national system which requires extreme rigour and punctuality and

which already offers decent annual salary:

> I mean in Bavaria teachers are well paid enough so we don't have to
> starve.

(Magdalena)

They expect the same punctuality and professionalism from all colleagues in

Dombey School, regardless their nationality and whenever these expectations are not

met, German teachers think this is unprofessional:

> people come too late, teachers are not prepared, they don't have their
> paper, they don't stick to dates and all these things.

(Magdalena)

These teachers appear to be stricter due to a national system which requires

following the rules. An inability or unwillingness to obey the rules always has

consequences for teachers in the German system, in contrast to the situation in

Dombey School:

> and I thought oh my goodness, with my old Head (in Germany) if I had
> done this, he would have killed us, you know.

(Magdalena)

However, they are critical of some aspects of their home system, such as the 'elitist',

'bureaucratic', 'hierarchical' system in Bavaria, which only gives rights and

opportunities to the older teachers in the system:

> it is very difficult to get old in the system…you know you have always to struggle and to strive but then again you don't get interesting things to do, because the interesting things like coordination of a subject will only be given to you when you grow older, so…the merit goes to the 'ancients professeurs', that's just, it's a weird system you know.
>
> (George, 01)

Nevertheless, they cannot adjust to certain aspects of Dombey School, such as poor organisation or syllabus freedom:

> In Bavaria you have strict rules how to plan a lesson, you have to do this and you have to do that and I am more, maybe I am more messed up you know...and the syllabus is a bit…you know for every cough (laughing) in Bavaria there is a rule and a sentence in the syllabus what you have to say and what you have to do…and here the syllabus in some subjects is just a few sentences and that's it…freer much more freedom in a certain base here.
>
> (Magdalena)

Comparison between Dombey School and the German system is inevitable, not only because most of the German teachers carry a respectable amount of experience and familiarity with their national system, but also because teachers frequently need to remind themselves of what they had to risk, or at least leave behind, in order to get something else and justify their choices in order to be happy. When the comparison tends to favour their home educational system, teachers start feeling unhappy or doubt their decision to work in Dombey School.

Italian teachers seem to compare the Italian school timetable with the Dombey School one and crave for the few hours they used to teach in Italy, comforting themselves with the increased financial reward they now get in this school despite the long working hours or overtime work:

> 28 compared with 14 that I teach, 14-15 that I teach in Italy, so that's

> exactly twice as much and in Italy you only teach in the morning, one o'clock is over, here you finish every day at four, so it's heavier and is also more stressful, but you are paid not twice but three, four, five times more.
>
> (Roberto)

Because Italian teachers are not used to working so many hours in their home education system, they ask for allowances in Dombey School timetable, which seems obscure to teachers from other nationalities. This is, however, a decision to be made by the Head:

> some of the Italians think this 'stay abroad' is really something where you go during the week to work and stay at the weekend in Italy…a lot of them are going back every weekend…and then it is really difficult because then they want to finish on Friday fifth period and they want to start Monday fifth period or something like that to get a longer weekend…yea, but I think when you decide to go abroad you have to do with all the consequences, and then you have to stay here, you live here... Normally it's a decision made by the Head, because I don't make these decisions the Head does it, so he says 'try if something is possible' and when it's possible, then we let it happen but if it's not.
>
> (Walter, German)

Italian teachers also seem to doubt the suggested 'Italian' textbook methodology and approach in a multilingual school which is supposed to be respecting the Italian students' needs and home education:

> it's a little bit Celtic this approach…but in Italian school maths is organised in a different way, we have a book for example, and I study all the book and all the argument, for example algebra and when we finish we pass to another part of maths…here we must study algebra and a little of geometric together…at first here, wow…I thought it's beautiful because you think that you can do a lot of things but at the end for the pupils to leave after two or three lessons a part of maths and restudy the next year to restudy it's difficult and some of them do not have a clear idea of the development of maths…I think.
>
> (Julia)

However, the Italian teachers are not happy with the failure policy in their home system, compared to the Dombey School one, which does not fail many students:

the school doesn't fail the students or fails less students. In Italy the rate is, it depends on the class but it's 20-30 per cent…that's a lot…in three years the classes extinguish…that's in the first two, three years, then it kind of stabilises…normally the classes are up to 30 in the first year and then they go up to seven, eight in the last year.

(Roberto)

Meetings with parents are held on a different basis in the Italian system and contact with parents in Dombey School is less frequent:

If I have to make a comparison with Italy it's different cause in Italy you have one hour a week to talk to parents and in your hour every week there is someone…here, you still have one hour a week but no one comes…I had maybe five (parents) in a year.

(Roberto)

In fact, teachers seem to compare most aspects of Dombey School organisation and culture with their home educational system. Some elements they seem to like and others they seem to reject depending on their beliefs, convenience, personality or just habit. German teachers, for example, complain about the way teacher appraisal is organised in this system compared to the strict German one:

what I found as well there is so much control in Bavaria in my school, every four years you're inspected for a whole school year and they don't tell you when they're coming, they're just there some week and here they tell you what lesson, when they are coming…at the beginning I felt a bit alone and then I enjoyed it very much that there is less I am more responsible for what happens in tests and in classrooms.

(Magdalena)

But they welcome it when they get feedback which is so much better than what they could expect in their own country:

I did read it yes (the report) I was quite amazed how good it was so, because in Bavaria you never ever get such a good report.

(Magdalena)

Interestingly, there is evidence that at least some teachers eventually change their

expectations as they adjust to new ways of doing things:

> I would like to learn this way…and this was one of the reasons why I applied for the job abroad. Cause I wanted to know how it is living abroad and how it is different to deal with the situation, I don't want to be really the German living somewhere still being the same person cause this wasn't, hasn't been my expectation.

> (Meir, 01)

Teachers also speak of personal or even cultural challenges they face in Dombey School. Their concerns or expectations are not always understood by colleagues from other nationalities:

> yes, the noise level here, this is really a conflict for me because when I complain how noisy everything is my Italian colleagues say 'oh come to an Italian school, here it's so quiet'…and I just can't understand it…I mean in class it's up to me to make them quiet, I'll kill them if they' re too loud, but in the staffroom…maybe this is special to me cause I am so sensitive to noise…but that's something which really stresses me, too much noise.

> I think there was one incident where…Bavarians feel like Mediterranean people are more direct…and the English are so formal, so polite…and at the beginning I had the impression I was too direct, I said what I thought.

> (Magdalena, German)

A Spanish teacher was the victim of a cultural clash with another colleague when she was trying to sort out the practical problems of beginning life in a foreign country and demanding certain things from the accountants of Dombey School:

> for example at the beginning of last year when I had just arrived to Dombey School I was trying to sort out all the things related to the national insurance number…and in Spain it is usually the people, the accountants of the school who do that for you…and when I came here I didn't know that it was yourself who must go to the jobs to sort it out…and during several days I was so sort of putting pressure on the accountants because I was starting to feel…I was here without a bank account number without a national insurance number, I had not even signed my contract yet and I guess once I became really nervous or stressed, yes stressed out…and a person from the staff was offended by that situation, so there was a little bit of misunderstanding, fortunately it was solved afterwards.

> (Carmen)

Some cultural issues have deeper roots, as this observation by an Italian teacher reveals:

> here it's not permitted to film or take pictures of the students which I find totally weird…the parents cannot take pictures even of their own kids in the carnival we have today…there's this idea of the privacy that's obsessing.

> (Roberto)

At the same time, cultural differences can emerge even in relatively trivial circumstances:

> I guess everyday dynamics like when you are in the photocopying room and you have to tell the people, to the person that is next to you that you finished, I mean in Spain we wouldn't say we finished because it is obvious if you switch off the photocopying…it's even funny but things like that.

> (Carmen)

Focus on cultural differences instead of similarities give rise to a variation of communicative behaviours and their practical consequences will be thoroughly discussed in chapter six as they tend to exacerbate the teachers' tendency to complain about things that would seem normal or simply challenging under different mono-cultural circumstances or environments with which those teachers would be more familiar with or happily settled in. Pressure like the above can sometimes have

an effect on teachers' emotional being. They can also facilitate the growth of stress which might be accentuated by people or other factors. The case of Dombey School parents illustrates.

Teacher – parent relationships in Dombey School came up in the interviews naturally and were eventually explored as part of the type and quality of relationships teachers develop in this school and as part of the professional challenges they face (6.2.4.2). The factors that influence these relationships (cultural, professional differences and beliefs, diversity, background, etc.) seem to have an effect on how parents are perceived in the process of education, since parents in this school belong to an equally diverse cultural group, outside school but very close to it, and are representatives of more nationalities/cultures than teachers.

In that sense, parents become a meaningful part of Dombey School teachers' work and lives and it would be unfair to underestimate this dimension of parents' input in teachers' work or their contribution to the school culture. Everything that teachers have to say about understandings impacting their activities as educators engaged in different types of relations in the school, as well as the main elements that define this framework of relations, is worth exploring.

5.2.4.1 Dombey School parents

Although every school as an institution needs to ensure consonance between its educational, pedagogical and social functions and the expectations of the parents, Dombey School parents are sometimes very negatively perceived and it is worth investigating why this should be so. Could this be the result of a comparison of parents' role between their home educational system and Dombey School or the result of an overloaded teaching life which leaves no margins for relaxation and rest?

Could it be that:

> parents may be very conscious of the need for their children either to return to a national education system or to transfer to the next international school in another part of the world, and they need to be sure of the appropriate curriculum and the right assessment procedures to smooth this move?

> (Blandford and Shaw 2001b:2)

Many teachers in Dombey School have mentioned some inevitable difficulties in the relationship with parents, mostly because parents interfere in their children's education and make negative comments about teachers' work. Teachers believe it is the type of school that makes it easier for parents to interfere:

> The type of school we are working they constantly make comments…I hope (I respond) positively…If they have something useful to say I will listen, it they're just being rude, then, I won't listen.

> (Ronald)

Many teachers spoke of an 'eloquent group of parents' with a very strong opinion about everything, which is giving many Dombey School teachers a hard time:

> They are not parents who are going to just go 'Tut, oh, well'…They tend to be coming in banging on the door.

> (Owen)

Although parents do not often visit the school, they follow the school closely and can sometimes be rather difficult to handle:

> Parents here even though they don't come and speak with the teachers that much 'follow' the school very closely, they have an organisation that's pretty powerful…and so I know that they have been giving hard time to some of our colleagues.

> (Roberto)

> I do feel some parents can be rather stroppy…it's sometimes…among colleagues that they feel that particularly some parents can be particularly...unpleasant…The way they see things…And it's funny

cause you realise that it's a common feeling about certain parents among colleagues.

(Carel)

Although teachers try to respond to parents very professionally, they are sometimes overwhelmed by parents' indiscreetness, especially when parents bypass the teachers and go directly to the management:

> eh, I try to keep friendly…calm**…**professionally calm but...eh, yea I get annoyed but I get over it.

(Carel)

> that's what they do they don't come to you and speak to you but they go directly to the Head of the school, or to the parents' organisation against you, if they have reasons.

(Roberto)

> quite often they bypass teachers and go to management, which is bad…There's a tendency here a little bit to go and see the Head or Deputy.

(Owen)

The strong presence of parents in the school, combined with the demands of a heavy workload, contribute to teacher stress and although the process of adaptation is not itself the subject of this study, it is revealing to consider briefly how the school tries to prepare these teachers for their work there and how valuable they consider this to be.

5.3 Adaptation to the School

The teachers' adaptation to the school is not an easy process bearing in mind that most of these teachers work in a foreign country where they are required to start working 'without specific knowledge of the school or its locality'. Some information about the institution and location can be sent in advance or may be obtained online or from other teachers who have worked there, but 'most learning will inevitably

happen on site' (Pearce 1998:57):

> So, so in the beginning I did have the feeling that I had to sort out, find out things by myself pretty much.
>
> (Carel)

> You just learn by yourself actually…you do not read a lot, you just ask the others, you just keep you informed.
>
> (Amoux)

The period of adjustment varies from teacher to teacher and depends on personal, professional or culture-specific factors. Some of the teachers speak of the difficulties they face from the very beginning:

> The problem…to really understand how it works, it's all new when you arrive there, it takes a long time to really get into the system…we haven't really any help coming from anywhere…I don't know (it took me) six months?...to really understand how it really works, but sometimes we're still learning.
>
> (Amoux)

Others speak of the first year like being a party. However, all teachers agree that difficulties or problems are likely to arise sooner or later when you work abroad:

> the first year was really an easy going, the second year was more difficult to me…I think the first year is a big party almost, everything is new, you are in a new situation you have to get used to it, it's nice…and then in the second year everything becomes normal again…so everything you hope you could live in your home country like being bored with your job or I think any other problems you would love to leave in your home country the latest in the second year, all these…arrive…that's what I found.
>
> (Anna)

The teachers undoubtedly need a certain amount of time to adjust and a certain amount of understanding. Some of them face individual or family problems which can be exacerbated when they are combined with a school system of 'obscurity' (I: O 060307-01), while the distinctive school culture can have an impact on their

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professional confidence:

> the whole system at the school, it was different…you know different cultures and the system with those sections, how they are integrated and how they are not integrated and all those things, that was hard.
>
> (Jǿrgen)

> less now but certainly in the first year, cause I had lots of practical problems, to settle down, I had my family problems to deal with and I had to understand a whole new system, I was never comfortable there that I was doing the right thing.
>
> (Roberto)

During this process of adaptation, the school undertakes a responsibility to accommodate teachers in their new role and make them feel comfortable. In the case of Dombey School, however, although initial information comes from the school, this is often ignored and more significant information comes from colleagues from the same cultural background or language section:

> yes they'd given us some papers which I barely read I think…mainly asked and I've been told…by my colleagues especially from the Italian section.
>
> (Roberto)

> the German section was just great...and they offered their help which was very helpful cause sometimes you don't know what to ask, but they offered their help so they were very helpful not only in giving information but welcoming you, inviting you helping you sort out things, asking you how you were.
>
> (Anna)

Although the school is trying to help, teachers agree that it is not enough and they feel more comfortable with the help of colleagues or people who have been in the system longer than them and know how things work:

> (The induction lasts) maybe one day and a half…I don't think if you call it a course, no I don't call it a course.
>
> (Roberto)

This is something that isn't terribly well done I would say but again the information that you get when you come (to Dombey School) is improving but certainly at the time I went to…it wasn't very good I had to ask…colleagues, and there was no documentation I was handed to allow me to fairly easily adapt to at least a different way of teaching, it's ok I got by, but it was me who had to take initiative.

(Eadmund)

well they've all helped, people (who) have been in the system for a long time, not at this school…and there's another maths teacher...who's been at this school for a long time, and he's very good at all the kind of, he knows all the little rules and regulations.

(Lisa)

Teachers make an effort to join what the school recommends in an attempt to help new teachers adjust, but most of them agree on the unsuitability of the process. Carel discusses the objectives of group work, which was offered to new teachers as an equivalent to an induction phase:

Ah it was decided on one of those inset days that we should think about how to improve the process for new teachers…Because we had a brochure sent to us with some information, but the information was rather…general…This little work meeting...we had then, we had like two or three meetings…In which we discussed how we can improve the information and what information should be included in the brochure and stuff like that. I joined that group because I felt like that the way the school dealt with new teachers was rather…loveless…Lacking, attention, warmth.

(Carel)

Some of the teachers even take the initiative to meet their predecessors, which is something that the school could have suggested or arranged for them:

I met with her once, that was done also not because the school wanted that to happen but because of my own initiative, I thought that was something that could have been, could have been dealt with more…cautiously of the school.

(Carel)

Counsellors are available to new teachers, who 'always come up with many

questions' (I: C 060403-01), but apart from this there is little evidence that the school offers them explicit help in the process of adjustment to this international context, apart from providing opportunities to socialise and take part in international days, though Hill's (2000) comment on the value of such events is worth noting here:

> Counting the nationalities, the intercultural food fairs, or the celebrations of national days is not of itself sufficient to qualify for providing an international education; these are laudable but superficial indicators.
>
> (p. 36)

These teachers feel the need for welcoming support from an environment that should be more 'giving' and guiding especially in view of their own commitment to education:

> and the most annoying things are things which are related to management really…they are not really supportive, not really interested in what's going on in the school…I tried at the beginning to get involved but then I thought it's a waste of energy…it won't change, she won't listen.
>
> (Anna)

This school's culture is very distinctive in the sense that it does not encourage collaboration or peer observation so that teachers can develop by sharing ideas or practices. Professional isolation and increased responsibilities, as well as the overwhelming presence of parents add to the heavy teaching load and promote a tendency towards balkanization:

> that the multicultural is not often **multicultural** but it's different cultures cohabiting side by side but without really mixing…the mixing of different nationalities as far as teachers are concerned…but within teachers there is not much of a mix…so somehow…actually quite the opposite happens, every nationality kind of strengths and highlights its own identity…for as a defence mechanism.
>
> (Roberto)

> I thought the school was 'a melting pot of cultures' when I first came here. I was quickly disappointed in the sense that people stick to their own way, their own culture; they are frightened to try a new approach.

> (F: 060316-01)

A teacher even speaks of the 'immigrant syndrome' teachers are likely to develop within a school when they are isolated from other cultures:

> and actually seeing the difference sometimes you tend to think that **your** things are better, **your** friends **your** cooking **your** whatever it's better than the others and rather than taking in the other people's habits you kind of go back to your own…and that's a kind of immigrant syndrome I guess.

> (Roberto)

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter issues of Dombey School ethos and intercultural communication have been highlighted, teachers' characteristics, roles, beliefs, motivation to work in the school and qualifications have been explored and their needs and expectations from the school have been identified.

Dombey School teachers' role as educators is a well-established one due to their genuine love for the children and their subject. Teachers are very conscious of their deliberate choice to work in this school, they enjoy freedom in most areas and appreciate that they are well paid.

However, the existence of more than seven cultures and three privileged languages in the school does not prevent the English 'host' language and culture from being the dominant one and this has an impact on foreign teachers' personal and professional relations in the school, as well as on teachers' perceptions of each separate culture.

Differences between British and foreign cultures, major and minor cultures and

among major cultures in the school, cause an unconscious categorisation, and the impact of this is that individual cultures and teachers tend to keep their distance from one another. This has a consequent impact on teachers' professional development:

> to study I am always open…but that's not professional development…I mean if someone would offer to me to chair a board of some kind of enterprise that would be a development I guess, but would be also switching to another field…I don't see the career as an issue here.

(Roberto)

Dombey School teachers are members of a school which is multilingual and culturally diverse. And although it is not extremely diverse, teachers from several nationalities transfer their beliefs and views from their national systems and make huge efforts to adapt in an environment which has a distinctive cultural and organisational structure. The means by which and the extent to which those beliefs are transferred into the new working environment depend on those teachers' previous experiences and perceptions and present job status and have an impact on their degree of satisfaction within a school which does not cater for their individual or professional needs as well as it does for the students.

For the students, the deliberate mixing of pupils from different national and linguistic backgrounds for various subjects, events or activities, studying for a common goal, following the same syllabi, enhances the formulation of cross-linguistic friendships and minimises the 'nationalistic antagonism and ethno-linguistic tensions across the various language sections' (Housen 2002b:8), as well as fosters a 'community spirit' (Savvides 2006a:119). Teachers unfortunately find themselves in a less enviable position.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss some of the issues arising from the differences that have emerged as the result of people from different cultures co-working in this school. It will concentrate on the cultural values that underlie these differences, on the professional ethos and school culture such differences can create in an International School like this, and on the influence that these differences have on teachers' adaptation to the school. It will also attempt to search for teacher training ideas, which can improve intercultural understanding and relations and facilitate adaptation in an international context.

Teachers' previous experiences and present contextual circumstances seem to affect their way of handling current challenges – originated in cultural differences – and their functioning effectively within other cultures. However, there is no evidence that this has a significant impact on student learning in this school or its extremely high reputation as research and data analysis have already demonstrated high levels of student academic achievement and teachers' unquestionable contribution to it.

My research questions could not be answered without entering the school, as there was a desire to understand the teachers' cultures on their own terms, rather than simply studying the documents available on the website and articulating hypothetical differences among teachers of a different status, nationality, etc. Among the strengths of a case study is that it provides a unique example of real people in real

situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply presenting them with abstract theories or principles (Cohen et al. 2000:180). Moreover, differences can sometimes also be of different kind, and although they may start from the linguistic or organisational field they can have deeper roots, which may affect communication, educational targets, accommodation or development.

In order for cultural differences to be comprehended, as well as their impact on individual teachers, teachers' 'subjective experience' of cultural difference needs to be identified (Bennett 1993:22), and personal cultures need to be understood. Understanding Dombey School teachers' realities, judging standards and interpretation of events from their own ethno-cultural perspectives are the first steps towards the development of skills in cultural adaptation and intercultural communication.

Because there are relatively few coexisting cultures in Dombey School, compared to others schools of its kind, it might be assumed that teachers' behaviours and actions are the result of differences in structure of personality which preclude meaningful cross-cultural comparisons. Repeated or common patterns of behaviour, however, and certain beliefs and stereotypical views according to the teachers' national/cultural background tend to reflect teachers' corresponding cultural characteristics and perceptions. Feelings and attitudes shared among members of the same cultural group may not only be attributed to teachers' previous similar experiences but also to a common national/cultural perspective which is worth discussing. I will, therefore, consider national/cultural groups in this school as relatively homogeneous and draw general conclusions about existing cultural groups' orientations.

This chapter discusses cultural values that Dombey School teachers have and tries to explain some of their behaviours, expectations and views, according to earlier research (Hofstede 1980; 1986) and later analysis of mental software (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005), as Dombey School national cultures are present in Hofstede's most early research in which he analysed data from only thirty countries (1980). The characteristics of Dombey School culture and the extent to which it is collaborative are further discussed (6.2 and 6.2.2). Teacher adaptation to the school (6.3) is seen through the challenges of teachers' cultures (6.3.1) and divergent subcultures formulated (6.3.1.1), foreign teachers' (mainly) linguistic difficulties (6.3.2.1), teachers' expectations from the school according to their values and previous experiences (6.3.3) and teachers' professional challenges (6.3.4), such as dealing with a divergent student and parent population (6.3.4.1 and 6.3.4.2). Although most teachers are willing to develop professionally in order to satisfy their professional needs, they feel they are left behind (6.3.4.3), even though professional teacher updating is particularly significant in a school like this, where student academic achievement is set as priority.

It has been argued that teachers' experiences in a school become positive and meaningful through productive intercultural interactions and through understanding all cultures and subcultures and how these cultures can be both 'beneficial' and 'harmful' (Louie 2005:23). Because teachers are not always aware of how to establish this kind of understanding in an international context, a well-planned and well-implemented teacher training programme and a proper induction phase are very important and their objectives will be discussed in the last sections (6.4 and 6.4.1).

6.2 Dombey School Culture

Dombey School teachers are agreed about the ethos of the school and quality of its underlying philosophy towards student learning. Teachers seem to adapt their practices in the new teaching context, and maintain healthy relationships with the students. Data have additionally revealed that Dombey School teachers have an 'open mind' and place students at the top of the educational pyramid (4.3.3.3).

Certain conditions and incentives were identified that motivate the teachers who work in this particular school. Job challenge and willingness to experience aspects of international education were highlighted as strong motivators, and the fact that most teachers are self-motivated, responsible professionals who are concerned about their ability to teach effectively was not just an orientation or a philosophical underpinning. In motivational terms, although more subtle aspects of teacher motivation were articulated, 'money never came far behind more highly valued conditions or incentives' (Hardman 2001:128). Nevertheless, in this case study it was not the only priority.

Since Dombey School culture comprises several national cultures, Hofstede and Hofstede's analysis (2005) offers a productive way of approaching a discussion of the characteristics of national cultures and emerging cultural differences, highlighting which reactions are understandable, according to teachers' personal cultural past. Hofstede and Hofstede's ideas (2005) are based on a larger research project which analysed data from sixty-four countries from a cross-cultural perspective, including those countries represented in Dombey School, so it provides a useful guide to understanding relevant differences in culture.

The model has proven to be quite often accurate when applied to general

populations, and has also been used to explain cultural characteristics of eight western middle-class alumni of all schools of this kind (Noorderhaven and Halman 2003:71); therefore, there seems no reason why it cannot also be innovatively applied to teacher population. The presence of only western individualistic cultures in Dombey School encouraged me further to draw on Hofstede's (1980; 1986; 1991; 2001), as well as Hofstede and Hofstede's (2005) analysis, because it avoids the criticisms of insensitivity which have been directed at his analysis of group-oriented (collective) cultures (Triandis 1993:162).

The findings summarised below fit in with Hofstede's findings from the same countries, as opposed to the mismatch revealed in Noorderhaven and Halman's research sample (2003:71). Although the culture of a country changes over time, Hofstede's conclusions on national/cultural differences are applicable to the Dombey School teacher population and provide a useful means of accounting for the behaviours revealed by the analysis of field data.

Although Triandis analysed culture before Hofstede, and discussed the four universal dimensions of social (interpersonal) behaviour (1977:420), he later used Hofstede's work as stimulation for corresponding research. Triandis' dimensions of 'horizontal' and 'vertical' individualistic cultures (2001) make sense in a school which comprises individualistic cultures, where cultural differences need to be explained on various levels. The distinction between 'tight' and 'loose' cultures (Triandis 2004) also helps in this respect and reinforces Hofstede's uncertainty avoidance dimension. For this reason, Triandis' work has also been drawn on where appropriate in the discussion that follows.

6.2.1 Individualism, masculinity, power distance and uncertainty avoidance

In Hofstede's four dimensional model of national placement according to power distance, individualism, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance (1986:309-11), all existing cultures in Dombey School seem to score high in individualism, and all except France, Spain, Netherlands and Denmark being masculine (table 2.1). The individualism – collectivism dimension represents the degree of balance between individual and collective needs and the strength of bond among people in those cultures (Ortiz Elías 2007:336), in the family as well as within institutions (Hofstede 1980:210).

In the individualist value pattern, the relationship between the individual and the organization is 'calculative' – it is based on enlightened self-interest (Hofstede 1984:269). According to Triandis (2001:920), people in individualistic cultures see the self as stable and the social environment as changeable, so they tend to shape the social environment in order to fit their personalities. Attitudes like the above, such as lack of personal flexibility, are important factors when we consider Dombey School teachers' views about change and issues of adaptability in an international working environment, which requires personal and cultural compromises in order for teachers to be successful communicators.

The Masculinity and Femininity dimensions are rooted in one's social gender rather than one's biological sex (Stets and Burke 2000:997), and have to do with what people in a culture expect of gender roles (Hofstede 1980:291). Germany is among the strong masculine countries, where gender roles are clearly distinguished and where failing at school is considered a disaster (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005:137), whereas failure in a feminine culture, such as France, is accorded far less importance

(ibid. p. 138).

This explains why most Dombey School teachers appreciate the school's non-failing policy, as failure in masculine countries – where most teachers come from – is something major and significant, often seen as threatening. Italian and German teachers, for example, pointed out Dombey School's low rate of student failure, as opposed to the Italian and German system in which a considerable number of students fail each year (5.2.4 and 4.3.2.1).

This should not be interpreted to mean that Dombey School culture is actually a feminine one, or that it is a culture which deliberately contradicts Dombey School teachers' national cultures, since issues like student failure equally depend on both the quality of students and school policy. It does reveal, though, that teachers work within a school culture, where they are allowed to think critically and make comparisons with their home educational systems and express their views openly. The extent to which differences and similarities with national systems are identified, understood and handled and the extent to which they influence teachers' work and adaptation to the school will be discussed below in the light of teachers' expectations when working with other cultures.

Criteria for evaluating both students and teachers also differ between masculine and feminine countries. On the masculine side, teachers' brilliance, academic reputation and students' academic performance are the dominant factors, whereas on the feminine side teachers' friendliness, social skills and students' adaptation to the school play a bigger role (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005:139). In masculine countries the best students are treated as the norm, whereas in feminine countries the average student is considered the norm (ibid. p. 137), which explains why most Dombey

School teachers are happy with the fact that the school caters for bright students (4.3.2). This also accounts for differences in Dombey School teachers' perceptions of what is important in education, in terms of whether the focus should be in the process (femininity), or the outcome (masculinity).

Although feminine and masculine values bring out contrasting teachers' attitudes, as far as educational targets and evaluation are concerned what seems to cause more problems in Dombey School teachers' interactions is each culture's score in power distance and uncertainty avoidance. Power distance is the extent to which the less powerful persons in a society accept inequality in power and consider it as normal (Hofstede 1986:307), while uncertainty avoidance refers to the extent to which people within a culture are made nervous by unstructured, unclear or unpredictable situations (ibid. p. 308).

Most foreign countries which are represented in Dombey School, (France, Spain, Germany, Italy and Belgium) score high in uncertainty avoidance, compared to Britain, which scores low. Because of high uncertainty avoidance values, most teachers, (e.g. German, French) favour structured learning situations with precise objectives and strict timetables which are preferences clearly typical of stronger avoidance countries (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005:178). They seem to prefer 'ritualistic and predictable behaviors and many rules' which help them 'preserve a comfortable amount of predictability' (Brislin and Yoshida 1994:97). High uncertainty avoidance cultures function effectively in structured learning situations which explains French female students' preference for a structured PE class, according to the German teacher in 5.2.3.1.

Germany scores particularly high in uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede 1986:310) and

this helps to explain German teachers' rigour and punctuality in the school in their professional obligations, as well as their frustration with other teachers' professional inconsistency (5.2.4). German teachers' tolerance for ambiguity seems to be challenged in this school, as they find themselves in an entirely new and different culture. They realize that school life that used to be quite predictable becomes unpredictable and confusing. Predictability of events is highly valued in high uncertainty avoidance cultures (Triandis 2004:92). This explains the fact that German culture is considered a 'tight culture', which is defined as one having many rules of behaviour, not tolerating deviations from these rules (Triandis 1999:128).

British teachers, on the other hand, are suspicious of too much structure and favour open-ended learning situations, which are typical for countries with weak uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005:178-79). This helps to explain why they feel so well accommodated in a school with a non-strictly prescribed curriculum and a degree of freedom (4.3.3.3 and 5.2.4).

France and Spain score high in terms of the power distance relationship, which combines with their feminine values to establish a significant contrast with the British and German cultures, which score low in power distance and have strong masculinity. Germany, in particular, is a below-average power distance country (Hofstede 1984:262), where initiatives are taken by subordinates (ibid. p. 258), and subordinates have weak dependence needs toward their superiors (ibid. p. 259).

Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) argue that cooperation with nations or groups scoring high in power distance (France, Spain, Italy and Belgium) is problematic because it 'depends on the whims of powerful individuals' (p. 365). In Triandis' distinction between vertical and horizontal cultures (1999:130), the above four cultures seem to

belong in the vertical group. Accepting 'power', privileges' and hierarchy as a given and 'those at the top ''naturally'' (Triandis 1999:130) are among vertical cultures' characteristics. Therefore, British and German cultures which score low in power distance seem to benefit from 'privileges' given to them in the school. This explains the fact that initiation and implementation of new ideas are fully appreciated by British teachers (i.e. Owen's proposal), and German teachers appreciate promotional opportunities they are given in the school (i.e. the case of deputy staff representative, 4.3.3.2).

France, Italy and Belgium are also among the highest individualistic, vertical cultures (Triandis 2001:910), except for scoring high in uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede 1986:310; 2001:249); Britain is also among the highest individualistic countries of the world (Hofstede 1986:309). Individualistic countries are considered self-centred and tend to emphasize their individual goals. They want to be 'the best' and to be noticed by others (Triandis 2004:91). People from high individualistic cultures tend to think only of themselves as individuals and consider their 'I' to be distinctive from other people. They prefer clarity in their conversation to communicate effectively and come in generally directly to the point.

This helps to explain French teachers' frankness, when speaking to the parents (I: I 060224), whereas their 'authoritarian' professional presence in Dombey School (5.2.3.1) can be explained via their large power distance values which favour teacher-centred education and want the teacher 'never to be contradicted or publicly criticized' (Hofstede 1986:313). High uncertainty avoidance values partly explain Italian flexibility, as far as school obligations are concerned. The German teacher described in 5.2.4 (Walter) does not deny the difficulty in communicating with

Italian teachers, as far as timetabling restrictions are concerned, and he understands it is wiser to ask for the help of the management on these issues, showing 'sensitivity to circumstances' (Brislin and Yoshida 1994:31) and respect on hierarchy. Moreover, subordinates in small power distance cultures like Germany expect to be consulted before a decision is made that affects their work, but they accept that the boss is the one who finally decides (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005:56).

The above cultural analysis is not meant to ignore or underestimate the existence of 'allocentric' people within individualist cultures, that is people who think, feel and behave like people in collectivist cultures (Triandis 2004:90), or the existence of people who have different values than the ones that have been assigned to their national/cultural groups. Its contribution should rather be seen in terms of offering a way of understanding teachers' thinking, feelings and relationships in Dombey School, depending on teachers' cultural background, nationality and associated perceptions, without neglecting individual uniqueness and personality traits. The above factors partly explain teachers' behaviour in the school, and once teachers are aware of these, it is possible that they become more conscious, flexible, tolerant and understanding. Otherwise, they will carry on working in a context, where cultural differences are prevailing and teachers suffer rather than benefit from them.

6.2.2 Teacher collaboration

In a context such as the one described above, it is unsurprising that Dombey School teachers who experience differences between their own value system and those of others spend more time with colleagues from their own national group, where they feel it is safe to discuss common concerns about the school, preferably in their native language. This encourages the creation of linguistic and cultural ghettoes and

reinforces individual beliefs and values, resulting in the group developing its own set of shared beliefs or even its own culture. Extended contact with individuals within their own group means that teachers tend to avoid examining or changing their biased attitudes and beliefs. This increases the likelihood of them holding on to cultural stereotypes, which is against the ethos of an International School.

Distinctive subcultures formulated within the school are based on national identities rather than professional ones, and this can exert considerable influence on the state of the prevailing school culture. Furthermore, because the subcultures are diverse, the overall school culture is weak and the school staff is not cohesive. Set against this, however, is an educative context, which theoretically encourages acceptance/respect of cultural differences. As a result, a healthy staffroom climate has developed in Dombey School, and teachers have repeatedly admitted that they are seeking and receiving the support of colleagues. Teachers have realised that seeking and receiving contact, help and support is part of their daily working routine:

> yes, I am working with one teacher together…at the beginning I had a German colleague who was working with me and now I have a Belgian colleague who is working with me and now I have just passed onto the Belgian colleague and an English one and now I accompany them.

(Walter)

Because these teachers have strong professional values, they value learning and feel a need for collegiality; however, prevailing cultural segmentation means that they do not have the internal conditions conducive to shared cultural maintenance and growth. And although in reality common ground may exist (common values, targets, shared language), teachers will not necessarily take the risk of having their different ways and values questioned or rejected.

Where there is disrespect in teachers' cultural values, there is a great danger that

energy gets diverted away from the central educational task and is expended on suppressed resentment, misunderstandings, stereotyping or conflict. Stereotypes and conflicts can cause tension and are major barriers in effective intercultural communication in any international context. And although the more freedom and tension there is in a conflict, the better the final decision can be, there is also the fact that conflict can undermine the ability of the team to collaborate, the unity and determination of the team, and the quality of decisions.

If this situation is to be changed, development of 'intercultural sensitivity' is required. Emotional skills such as self-awareness and communication enhance the quality of the decisions and help teachers disagree in a positive way, which promotes fruitful decisions. This involves the development of 'consciousness', which represents a 'natural' approach to cultural difference (Bennett 1993:26). Bennett (1995) defines this 'intercultural competence' as the ability to interpret verbal and non-verbal communication, as well as customs and cultural styles different from one's own (p. 263).

In order for teachers to collaborate by 'drawing on each other's strengths' (Dooner et al. 2008:565), rather on each other's differences, the school needs to support 'job-embedded collaboration' and to allocate time and resources to teachers and other staff to work together constructively (Ferriter and Norton 2004:21). Ways in which this might be approached are discussed below.

6.2.2.1 Staff meetings

Managing the curriculum or introducing ideas is more than just a matter of agreeing content, practices and materials used; it involves a process which reflects the nature of decisions about teachers, cultures, priorities and directions. Successful school

functioning depends on collaboration between teachers to ensure commonality of understanding on issues related to the operation of the school.

Although there are several kinds of meetings in this school which require teacher participation and collaboration (committees and councils) and which deal with matters affecting the school, (effective teaching or promoting positive and stimulating human relations, Ref.:812-D-2000-en_fm, art. 22/2, p. 9; art.19/1, p. 8; 21/1, p. 8), the focus here will be on staff meetings as they are the only kind of meetings which involve full teacher participation to discuss matters directly related to the teachers.

These meetings are run on the understanding that the decisions will be implemented, and they involve being considerate towards teachers' individual or cultural expectations. Emotional staff meetings in Dombey School could mask negative feelings and attitudes, whose origin might be different from what appears in surface, and this makes them worth investigating.

Subordinates in small power distance countries, like Germany and Britain for example, expect to be consulted in the decision-making process (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005:56), and failure to do this might cause misunderstandings or clashes between teachers of different background and expectations. Although the British teacher (Owen) has not mentioned the nationality of the teacher who wanted to participate actively in the voting process, it makes sense, from the analysis above, that the British and German increased teacher representation in Dombey School (sixty-two per cent) is likely to ensure democratic procedures in the decision-making process in staff meetings.

According to Humphreys (1996:57), regular, well-organised, goal-directed staff

meetings, where the expression of initiative by teachers is encouraged, are essential for the creation of good morale; meetings for the sake of meetings only create frustration and annoyance. Meaningful collaboration produces decisions of benefit to the school and individual teachers and is supportive of school improvement. Consequently, the personal and social needs of teachers are satisfied in a school culture which emphasises collegiality, and which is sensitive to their personal needs, respecting individual differences (Cavanagh and Dellar 1998:14).

Dombey School teachers need to be consulted on matters affecting the school or their responsibilities. The lack of empowerment and collegiality necessitates caution when discussing (controversial) school matters because of the likelihood of criticism or conflict. Decisions which have not evolved from consultation with staff are likely to receive poor cooperation and can sometimes even be sabotaged. Decisions which are not inclusive of staff are non-respecting of the staff's right to be participants in the decision-making process, so teachers' meetings should provide the opportunity for 'contact between personnel with different interests, overt or covert' and between participants who represent 'diverse educational philosophies and personal aspirations' (Klein 2005:78).

Successful staff meetings in Dombey School should not depend on each nationality/culture's numerical representation, as percentages may alter each year and as there has to be a kind of stability in the school, for teachers to feel secure. School decisions cannot be respected unless teachers' voice is given the chance to be heard and argumentation comes from teachers speaking for themselves, rather than on behalf of their nations or linguistic sections. The school should also give voice to teachers teaching in the small sections, who currently see their participation in staff

meetings as at best peripheral.

6.3 Teacher Adaptation and its Challenges

6.3.1 Teachers' cultures

Although Dombey School is theoretically like an international organisation 'without a home national culture, in which the key decision makers come from any member country' (Hofstede 1984:271), English is effectively the home culture and the frame of reference. Things are mostly 'done the English way', and there are many similarities between the culture and traditions of British schools and Dombey School. This could be justified via the increased numerical British teacher representation in Dombey School, its location and uniqueness on British ground and English being the working language; however, the challenges such an assumption entails for teachers' adaptation to the school need to be discussed in the light of cultural differences that have been discovered and teachers' cultures based on previous experiences and beliefs.

Some teachers, (groups of teachers) because of their cultural and language characteristics, are more consistent with the school culture, norms and expectations than other groups of teachers. Teachers whose cultures are more consistent with the school culture are more likely to take initiatives in the school and have greater opportunities for successful adaptation than teachers whose subjective cultures conflict with the school culture.

British teachers, for example, who are working in a familiar culture seem to identify themselves in terms of process and change, which means that change and growth are seen as natural, rather than threatening. They learn by trying new things, which are

essential ingredients in developing and maintaining new relationships. Interculturalists believe that 'tolerance of ambiguity', a characteristic of low uncertainty avoidance cultures, is also generally held to be facilitative for intercultural relations (Bennett and Castiglioni 2004:251). Hofstede (1984) explains that cultures sharing low power distance, low uncertainty avoidance, high individualism and masculinity usually face fewer difficulties in adapting to cultures located in the opposite dimensions than cultures which show high power distance, high uncertainty avoidance, low individualism and low masculinity (p. 260). Therefore, British teachers seem to develop better relations in the school and adapt sooner than others.

But this conclusion should not automatically mean that British teachers are more adaptable in any international context compared to teachers from other nationalities. Dombey School has a lot in common with British schools, therefore, British teachers only have to adapt to the school context, whereas foreign teachers have to adapt on many levels (school context, teaching, language, practical issues and life). The fact that British teachers, however, do not think they work on 'strong British ground' (i.e. Owen, 5.2.1.1.1) is due to distinctive school structures, distinctive teaching circumstances and the existence of a strong foreign cultural element in the school; cultural differences are maintained in an organisational culture, which encourages British – foreign interactions.

Foreign teachers, on the other hand, who come to Dombey School from high uncertainty avoidance cultures feel pressurised and stressed in the classroom, as they think they are expected to be the 'guru' with all the answers; if the answer is not given to students, this can be taken as a sign of weakness (Hofstede 1986:313).

German teachers therefore seem to appreciate the fact that they are allowed to lose face when teaching in the low uncertainty avoidance British section (i.e. George, 4.3.3.3); something that would not be professionally acceptable if they taught in a high uncertainty avoidance classroom in the German section in Dombey School or in their national system.

Teachers who come from low power distance cultures, (Germany, Britain, Ireland, Denmark and Netherlands) find it challenging because strategies which work in their home countries do not necessarily work in Dombey School. It is not uncommon for problems to arise with new staff to International Schools as a result of their expectation that previously successful teaching strategies or practices will be transportable into the new educational context.

Teachers also expect their professional views and styles to be transferable into the new educational context. When this happens, what is perceived, for example, by the German teacher as assertiveness and straightforward communication might be regarded by his or her colleague as unacceptable and highly individualistic behaviour (i.e. Magdalena, 5.2.4). What happens in reality, however, is that if the community (school) culture is similar to teachers' own experiences, 'then they can depend with more certitude on the interpretation of cues', because teachers use 'the filters or lenses of prior experience' to predict outcomes and make decisions about practice (McAlpine and Crago 1995:404).

Teachers' perceptions of success in the school are closely linked to the transferability of their practices and the applicability of their beliefs. Their expectations seem to be met when their cultures are compatible with the school culture. Teachers will theoretically adapt better and quicker to a school whose system and culture is close

to their national, familiar one.

6.3.1.1 Subcultures

Although the staffroom, which is frequented by secondary teachers from all sections and grades, is often the scene of joking, good-humoured teasing and laughter, it seems that Dombey School has a variety of existing, divergent 'subjective cultures' which are defined as group members' experience of the social reality, in a particular context, according to individual, professional, cultural or national interpretations (Bennett and Bennett 2004:150). All events, decisions, curricula, and ideas are shaped around the national/cultural groups which are present in this school, and teachers end up thinking of and treating each other as cultural representatives.

Although the success of a school requires consideration of the prevailing school culture as 'a common frame of reference' (Hofstede 1984:271), in the case of Dombey School this culture is occasionally influenced by cultural or organisational subcultures, some of which are only minor in numerical terms as they exercise considerable influence on the overall school culture, as far as teacher representation, values, personality and school policy will allow. The divergent nature, disparities and hidden tensions among groups generate opposing subcultures, rather than joining together in a unified professional culture.

Subcultures are not only formulated because of a variety of nationalities working in the same school or because of lack of congruence in the professional, cultural values and experiences that these teachers maintain. Informal subcultures also develop as a result of the school organisation and curriculum. Teachers are further (informally) separated into part-time teachers and full-time teachers, into those who teach in their home sections (homogeneous) and those who teach in heterogeneous or other

language sections, teachers who teach in their native language and teachers who teach in another language, teachers who are fluent in the working language of the school and teachers who struggle with it, teachers who teach with resources and styles they are familiar with and teachers who are required to teach according to a model of a very different educational system in order to be effective.

Although subcultures formulated because of cultural and linguistic differences can be major, but somehow predictable or expected, subcultures formulated in the process of curriculum implementation or because of the school structures can be equally powerful and can have an impact on the overall school culture and consequently on intercultural education itself. If both the learning process and curriculum content are to be taken into account in an ideal intercultural education model for students (Batelaan 1998), then teachers' sources of diversity (teaching process, professional status and curriculum implementation) also need to be acknowledged and appreciated in International Schools.

Teaching materials for example, according to teachers' views, are mainly mono-cultural in Dombey School (English or inspired by the English curriculum), presenting only the dominant cultural English model (5.2.3). Such materials may not match the expectations of teachers from other cultures and can reinforce discriminatory conceptions and attitudes. According to Banks (1997:23), even multicultural and sensitive teaching materials are ineffective in the hands of teachers who have negative attitudes toward different cultural groups, let alone mono-cultural teaching materials, which are (practically) imposed on teachers in an International School, where all cultures should be treated equally and all cultural groups' needs should be taken into consideration.

In addition, only British, German and French teachers are allowed to teach geography and history in the German, French or British section in the students' L2 (5.2.2). The students are therefore learning in the teachers' language which, according to Hofstede (1986), decreases the chances for successful cultural adaptation for both teachers and students, compared to a situation where the teacher teaches in the students' language, in which case the teacher would have 'more power over the learning situation than any single student' (p. 314). Moreover, making certain subjects available for students only in the strong languages of the school (English, German and French) is justified by the 'linguistically advantaged teachers' as a school policy of multiple language promotion and as facilitating teacher acculturation in a cultural environment which will be enriched by the process of cultural sharing and interaction with linguistically different students.

However, this tends to increase the cultural gap instead of building bridges between teachers' cultures, as some teachers (Italian and Dutch) feel linguistically (and consequently culturally) less privileged within the curriculum in a system which is 'based on the principle of language equality in order to meet the aspirations of most national groups represented' (Tosi 1991:88); others (e.g. French), have a sense of disharmony with particular (e.g. British) students' cultures (5.2.3.1).

Furthermore, as this is the first time voice has been given to minor cultures in a research project on schools of its kind[17], the difference between major and minor cultures in this school gains extra significance and highlights inconsistencies in the curriculum that should be taken into consideration if direct contact between members of different groups needs to be of 'equal status' (McGee Banks 2001:175) as

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[17] Most research about these schools has been done on the big linguistic sections, therefore the 'stronger' ones in this school and all schools of its kind.

inequality creates stress, envy and resentment (Triandis 1999:130).

Building respect, self-esteem and appreciation of others, not only for students but for teachers as well, helps schools to contribute to the building of a just and equitable society. Growing from insights such as respect and appreciation of cultural diversity, understanding the cultures of Dombey School and taking them into serious consideration in the curriculum, equitable relationships among all teachers of different categories and national backgrounds will be created, with a subsequent impact on teachers' relationships.

6.3.2 Foreign teachers

Previous research in this school has shown that most teachers cannot totally escape from their national points of view when teaching (Savvides 2006a:121), and this has emerged in my research too. Therefore, most foreign teachers find themselves having to move towards the British element not just linguistically but professionally, using it as a common frame of reference with other teachers in order to communicate, succeed and avoid misunderstandings or conflicts.

Conflicts and misunderstandings may be created due to the differing expectations teachers of different cultures have of each other or of the host culture which mean that exhibited behaviours are misinterpreted by others. Teachers may interpret events from their ethnocentric perspectives, judge others by inappropriate standards, and make faulty attributions with regard to their meaning and intentions.

Foreign teachers, therefore, find themselves trying to change their way of thinking or looking at things, or even teaching (when they teach in culturally mixed classrooms or in another language); however, they find it hard to accomplish as their national

beliefs are deeply rooted inside them regarding most aspects of school life.

Foreign teachers seem to go through a 'honeymoon' period at the beginning of their stay overseas, which may extend over a period of several months. Following this stage, there can be various other stages of disillusionment, where teachers start to realise that things are very different from home. At this point, they might start becoming critical of the host country and culture or other cultures in the school, or carry strong feelings towards other nationalities. Foreign teachers perceive the environment in which they are working as an 'alien' cultural environment, in which lack of similarity to their national systems may lead to 'communication breakdowns and loss of effectiveness', apart from its effects on the individuals (Hofstede 1984:277).

According to Hulmes (1989), host teachers (British in my case) need to approach the traditions and beliefs of different others with respect, because:

> Without some initiative, without some first step, showing a willingness to understand what it feels like to belong to another community, it is doubtful that members of that other community will be disposed to reciprocate, especially if they belong to a minority group.

(p. 149)

Otherwise, foreign teachers who feel their views are not approached with respect will often see themselves treated as inferiors and there will be a suppressed 'resentment' emerging through different attitudes; frustrations with the host culture will consequently be interpreted by intercultural receivers as 'hostility' toward them (Jandt 2007:292), which may eventually affect the atmosphere in the staffroom or in the school.

This will be particularly so during times of innovation or change, during staff

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meetings and other activities which require teamwork. And if there is a feeling of powerlessness on behalf of the management to handle conflict or manage cultural differences, there will be a level of disappointment for staff, which leads to assumptions of not really belonging in the community, despite their faithful and committed service to the school. Moreover, the challenges of 'mismanaging cultural differences', it has been argued, 'can render otherwise successful managers and organizations ineffective and frustrated when working across cultures' (Pheng and Yuquan 2002:7).

Among the circumstances which cause enormous frustration to foreign teachers is their lack of English language competency and inability to express themselves as professionals, properly, in a European working environment, as it is theoretically considered to be. Language seems to be the most apparent of behavioural differences, and respect for cultural differences in behaviour always comes before respect for cultural differences in values (Bennett 1993:48) in intercultural encounters.

6.3.2.1 English language competency

Because the Dombey School model of education is considered to be 'the most ambitious attempt at intercultural education in Europe' (Noordehaven and Halman 2003:68), it is worth highlighting the importance of mother tongue compared to the importance of English in international education. The school values the contribution of all teachers – not just language teachers – in multilingual education, because teachers not only promote pupils' language development, but can also contribute significantly to developing their mother language with the support of the system.

English, however, is the working language for teachers in Dombey School, which

gives it a feeling of a typical International School, where English is the language most commonly used, except for certain lessons that take place in another language, or informal interactions among some members of staff. This realisation might be confusing or unexpected for most of the teachers, the foreign ones in particular, who wonder about the importance or practicality of their native language use, outside the classroom, in a school where English seems to be so significant.

Although there is no assumption that one national culture will dominate in the school, the fact that English is the prevailing working language, and British the prevailing numerical culture, gives the implicit and unintentional message that the British cultural and linguistic aspects are very significant, causing attitudes of superiority and linguistic chauvinism in a social environment where several national cultures are formally represented. British teachers' verbal dominance in Dombey School may have placed them in a position of authority that allowed them to assume a dominant role and may have originated from a range of other factors such as cultural differences (5.2.1).

Because multiple language competency in Dombey School is meant to promote interactional skills and enhance teachers' ability to participate in multilingual interactions, there is a genuine attempt on the part of foreign teachers to engage with other languages. Lack of English language competency, however, makes it hard for foreign teachers to contribute a unique point of view to formal discussions and makes it easier for British teachers to make a successful case for the implementation of new, even radical, ideas.

What makes teachers' communication even more challenging is the fact that what represents a 'message' in one language does not necessarily 'survive' as a message

in the other language (Hofstede 1986:316); therefore, although there is a common language in the school, Dombey School teachers tend to resort to exchanges in linguistic ghettoes in order to facilitate clarity of communication and avoid misunderstandings.

A similar challenge for students has been investigated in previous research on students' limited language and communication skills (Hartas 2005), exploring their frustration in their interactions with others, frequently resulting in inappropriate behaviour (p. 64). Cultural and communication difficulties, such as lack of confidence and poor language skills, in Dombey School constitute a primary limitation on the articulation of questions and answers in a public discussion for foreign teachers, and this does not seem to be understood or appreciated in the school or the system; for students, language and communication skills required to overcome emotional and behavioural difficulties have been identified (ibid. p. 72), whereas the language needs of teachers have been neglected.

In addition, because English is the prevailing language in Dombey School, a tendency to use other languages by British teachers is devalued, further reinforcing distance and chauvinistic attitudes. Moreover, lack of interest or effort on behalf of foreign teachers to learn properly the working language of the school 'is usually attributed to disinterest or condescension toward the host culture', which points to the need 'to integrate language training with culture learning' (Brislin and Yoshida 1994:48).

6.3.3 **Teachers' expectations**

Challenges in adaptation can also be due to Dombey School teachers' tendency to judge situations from their own cultural perspective, as they have preconceived ideas

about appropriateness in behaviour in given situations. There is research evidence to support the claim that teachers' expectations are partly attributable to cultural elements; individuals may look at the same thing, yet disagree, while they are both right (Covey 2000:35).

This could also mean that individuals may deal with similar challenges, yet the way they perceive them has a different impact on their attitudes and response, depending on their values, background or experience. This conclusion is important in the case of Dombey School teachers, who come from different nationalities, with the result that their perspectives on professional issues might differ and might cause conflicting handling or behaviour, even if they face common challenges in the school.

Covey (2000) mentions an experiment that took place in the business administration school of Harvard many years ago. A professor brought a pile of cards in the class, half of which showed the image of a young lady (appendix 12.1), and the other half the image of an old lady (appendix 12.3). He distributed the cards, those with the young lady to one side of the class, and those with the old lady to the other. He asked the students to look at the images for ten seconds and then give them back to him. Then, he showed the image (appendix 12.2) which combines both the above images and asked students to describe what they were 'seeing'. Almost all the students who had seen the cards with the image of the young lady on (12.1) saw the same young lady on the overhead projector. Almost all the students who had seen the cards with the old lady on (12.3) saw the same old lady on the overhead projector.

When the students were requested to discuss what they were looking at, there were serious communication problems, which caused several misunderstandings. All

students insisted on what they thought they had 'seen' and had strong arguments when defending it. Very few of them really tried to look at the image through another perspective. After a long period of vain efforts for communication, students eventually started to recognise/share some points in other students' thinking. But when their eyes were taken away from the image on the overhead projector, most of the students were still 'seeing' the same image they were looking at in the first ten seconds of observation and insisted on its objectivity (Covey 2000:35-38).

This incident reveals a lot about intercultural effectiveness and the influence of previous experience and beliefs on the way we perceive, describe or react to circumstances. If ten seconds had such a major influence in the way the above students 'saw' things, then it is easy to imagine the strength and impact of a life-time's experience on the way we look at and perceive the outside world, the professional world included. It is only natural that Dombey School teachers, consciously or unconsciously, carry their own influences from their national professional environments and systems, home, friends, colleagues etc. as a framework, through which they 'see' the world. Regardless how 'invisible' this framework is, it is this we must seek to understand, if we wish to influence behaviour and beliefs affecting interaction, professional or interpersonal relations in Dombey School.

It is surprising, however, that when changes in this framework eventually happen ('paradigm shift'), the more devoted individuals or group members are to their initial framework, the more shocking and enlightening the experience of redefining the framework is (Covey 2000:40). Therefore, careful consideration and training is required in the process of 'socialization', where both the future and the past of

teachers should be given equal importance (Cushner and Brislin 1996:5); a possible break with teachers' previous traditions, beliefs and paradigms cannot be easy for either individuals or groups.

In seeking to bring about change, use might be made of Singelis and Pedersen's interpersonal cultural grid (1997:197-98), (table 6.1) with different combinations of behaviour and expectations in four different cells, designed to help individuals to see beyond differences in behaviour and help find the common ground of similar positive expectations, from which conflict can be successfully managed. Once common ground has been established, on which people or groups can agree and build their shared understanding, then the different and potentially hostile behaviours will become more acceptable and less threatening:

Same behavior +	Same expectations	= ideal situation
Different behavior +	Shared expectations	= cross-cultural conflict
Same behavior +	Different expectations	= personal conflict
Different behavior +	Different expectations	= war (or 'disengagement')

Table 6.1
Singelis and Pedersen's interpersonal cultural grid (1997:197-98)

Dombey School teachers should not be asked to deny the importance of 'home' cultural values and beliefs or distance themselves from other existing cultures; the school should rather examine its own structures in the light of understanding the

differences, as well as (deliberately) creating more equal-status engagements. Otherwise, national days, sports, events, festivals etc. will take on an exaggerated significance, and their purpose to bring all teachers together on more levels than the cultural one, will remain unfulfilled.

6.3.4 Professional challenges

6.3.4.1 Teaching a culturally and linguistically divergent student population

Dombey School teachers are a morally aware teaching staff with motivation and initiative, prepared to meet the challenges of their profession and willing to cope with the increased demands arising from relationships with students in an International School. They employ strategies that facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse cultural groups by remaining familiar with students' characteristics and variability in learning.

Previous research carried out in some schools of this kind has demonstrated that very few teachers have received special training for teaching in culturally diverse classrooms (Housen 2002b); the schools seem to assume that a teacher who is 'curious, reflective, flexible, caring, optimistic and genuinely interested in other cultures' may have the skills to become an effective teacher without having undertaken such training for teaching (Sears 1998:325).

The case of Dombey School teachers, however, undermines such an easy assumption. As teaching conditions change during teachers' careers, teachers' relationship with pupils can change as well, due to different circumstances. Among these is classroom interaction among different ethno-linguistic populations, where there is no single shared common language or a shared culture.

When the teacher comes from a linguistic and cultural community different from that of the pupils, it may be difficult to understand that different cultures have different learning styles. Some Dombey School teachers encounter problems in teaching pupils from different cultures, and also find it difficult to establish good relations with them if they do not know their 'precepts of communication' (Gagliardi 1995:4). Because it is very difficult for teachers to communicate effectively with students who do not interpret symbols and behaviours in the same way as they do, teachers may stereotype students from other cultures and the outcome may be 'culturally inappropriate classroom interactions' (Louie 2005:20), or cultural misunderstandings.

Magdalena and Walter, for example, are two German teachers who have been complaining about English students' disruptive classroom behaviour, about their linguistic difficulties (in the German language, L2), their different sense of humour, their limited ICT skills and their understanding only via following step by step instructions (5.2.3.1). Cultural misunderstandings may occur in the classroom because much of the 'personal/cultural knowledge' students from diverse cultural groups bring to the classroom is inconsistent with the teacher's personal and cultural knowledge (Banks 1998:76-77). Teachers can therefore teach more effectively if they have a good knowledge of their students' societies (Louie 2005:24), language profiles and cultures which would help them predict and handle most of the challenges.

What makes teaching students from other cultures even more challenging in Dombey School is the fact that staff are experienced teachers, who have already developed the necessary coping skills for effective classroom management and therefore might

expect to be able to focus on the new content by adapting their techniques to successfully motivate a new range of pupils. However, they come to realise that instead of coping with purely pedagogical challenges they often have to deal with discipline and classroom management, issues they thought were under control a long time ago – a realisation which lowers their self-esteem and professional confidence and increases their professional stress.

What adds to that stress is teaching student groups whose incoming backgrounds, norms and experiences are fairly heterogeneous, which is the case for foreign teachers in particular, who teach in the multicultural English section or in English. If the student body is diverse, 'culturally responsive schooling' is much harder to achieve (Levinson 2007:629), so they find it hard to cope with the curriculum and classroom practices necessary to meet their students' needs, even though they make huge efforts in that direction.

The influence of culture gains extra significance in the international classroom in terms of teacher – student relationships because the nature of communication between teachers and students affects class management, student achievement and motivation, instructional effectiveness and eventually teacher job satisfaction (den Brok and Koopman 2007:233).

Therefore, an integrated model of teacher training for multicultural education should seek to enhance teachers' capacity for surmounting learning obstacles caused by pupils' lack of language development, particularly in the case of bilingual children who may have limited skills in both languages (Gagliardi 1995:8), while also aiming to overcome challenges which are caused by different perceptions and values arising from teachers and students from divergent cultures. Among the goals of international

education, those for teachers – as well as students – should be to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to function in culturally diverse school classrooms and societies.

Dombey School may not be able to ensure that their teachers have undergone prior training for working in culturally diverse environments, but it can ensure that teachers learn effectively 'on the job', through shared experience and guided reflection (Deveney 2007:327). Observing other teachers and exchanging ideas about teaching would be a useful start for the teachers. Classroom observation can be a source of evaluating the outcomes of teaching and learning and can be the basis for reflecting on and revising practices.

6.3.4.2 Dealing with a culturally and linguistically divergent parent population

Dombey School teachers also have to deal with a diverse parent body. It is quite natural for teachers to expect certain things from parents in every school, depending on their culture, views and previous experiences, but in this school parents are generally perceived negatively by teachers and it is worth exploring why. Does the blame lie with parents who suffer the 'cultural overload syndrome' (Keson 1991:58) and take their stress out on teachers, or is it lack of congruence between teachers' and parents' cultures in the school?

Although teachers have not specified the nationality of parents that cause them problems in the school, it is worth mentioning that the expected role of parents, as perceived by teachers, also varies according to different (teachers' and parents') culture score in masculinity, power distance and uncertainty avoidance. According to Hofstede and Hofstede (2005:137), for example, parents in masculine countries expect their children to try to realise their full potential, which matches Dombey

School's policy to cater for bright students, achieving high levels of academic success.

Hofstede suggests that teachers who come from cultures with high uncertainty avoidance may allow parents access as an audience in the classroom, while regarding them as mere 'laypersons' who do not need to be consulted by the 'expert' teacher. This explains the German teachers' negative perceptions of British parents in Dombey School and their preference for home culture parents, who can 'pull down the neck of their children' (Magdalena, 5.2.3.1), as Germany is among the strongest uncertainty avoidance cultures in the world. British teachers, on the other hand, favour parents' involvement in their children's learning process and actively seek out parents' ideas on education (Joy, 4.3.3.3.1), which are typical characteristics for low uncertainty avoidance societies (Hofstede 1986:314).

For whatever reason, it is clear from teachers' interviews that most teachers are not happy with parents' impolite involvement in their work and this leads to the conclusion that parents' contribution in this school does not match teachers' expectations, or vice versa, although teachers understand that parents can help a lot in the multicultural aspect (Savvides 2006a:123). Although parents' help is theoretically sought and welcome in the school, teachers perceive it as a stressful impediment to their work, further inhibiting their adaptation to the school.

Communication with parents, which starts at the beginning of the school year, in parents' evenings, could also include a face – to – face interview, in order to discuss more than just the behaviour and progress of the children (Ref.:812-D-2000-en_fm art.24/2, p. 15). It could provide an opportunity for parents to reveal their expectations and for teachers to discuss how they plan to work during the year. Any

issues arising should be discussed during teachers' weekly available hours and parents should be kept informed about possible concerns.

Teachers' efforts to survive, adapt and work in a distinctive school culture depend on their actively seeking out resources to support their own development, and this aspect will be discussed in the next section.

6.3.4.3 Issues of development and change

School improvement and student achievement are among the first priorities of Dombey School and they depend on the energy and efforts of the staff as well as their investment in professional development. Although the EU invests money in the professional development of these teachers in order to provide the quality to which children and their families are entitled, what is offered tends to be 'generic in content' (Hayden 2007:227), based on the expectation that teachers are responsible for applying it as appropriate to their own classroom.

Data collected indicated that Dombey School teachers do not consider it a high priority to upgrade their professional qualifications by undertaking further study. Demographic data in this study, however, indicated that the majority of teachers have academic qualifications that enable them to attain promotion positions and that they attend training courses whenever this is of interest to their work; therefore, this lack of desire to gain further professional qualifications should not be taken to suggest that teachers are uninterested in updating their methods or teaching practices, especially since data have also indicated that teachers have a positive interest in updating teaching methodology and adapting it in their classrooms.

Although there are conditions and incentives that strongly motivate teachers to

continue working in the school (financial incentives, happy working climate, appreciation and respect by students, colleagues, most parents and management), certain things are noticeably absent, such as a powerful sense of job challenge and regular professional updating for all. When my research took place there was some 'on-site external provision' (Hayden 2007:228) of professional activities available in the school {(e.g. ICT skills, interactive board training etc. (F: 060309-01)}, but it was offered on an optional basis, with limited teacher participation.

A foreign teacher mentioned the teachers' need to be informed about educational changes in their home national systems, comparing schools 'at home' and abroad. He said that teachers who have been working abroad, like teachers in Dombey School, can be quite reserved, conservative, reluctant to try something new, compared to teachers at home who are familiarised with new methods and approaches, who can be modernised in a sense and become more open-minded (F: J 060316-02).

This statement sounds particularly interesting in the context of a multilingual school which one would expect to lead the way in terms of open-mindness, freshness and innovation. Conservatism in the school represents an obstacle to professional development and a barrier to adaptation, and these teachers already have plenty of challenges to deal with on various levels.

The school should therefore find ways to help teachers keep contact with their home educational systems if this helps them with their work and lives in a foreign context, and should encourage them to look for ways to bring fresh air in their classrooms, via on-site or off-site opportunities for development. It needs to ensure that teachers participate in effective professional activities including action research, reading or writing in professional journals, keeping professional portfolios etc., encouraging

'effective dissemination' of what has been learned. Collaboration across national boundaries between the school and universities or the school and external facilitators should also be established, in order to ensure the subsequent application of what has been learned (Hayden 2007:228).

Successful and cost-effective ways of meeting the development needs of all staff need to be sought, as it is necessary to reshape policies on international education and adapt them to individual teachers' educational needs, particularly in the case of teachers who work away from home or teach in very small classes. Additionally, a well-implemented teacher training programme and a suitable induction phase will help teachers avoid 'intercultural blunders' that can be extremely costly to both individuals and organizations (Heyward 2002:11).

6.4 Cross-cultural Teacher Training

Most approaches to cross-cultural training programmes so far have had certain goals in mind, such as managing the stress of cross-cultural interaction, developing and maintaining interpersonal relationships and restricting the time teachers need for successful adjustment to what would be expected in a more familiar context (Cushner and Brislin 1996:20).

Teacher preparation for international classrooms and adaptation remain the underlying philosophy for holding training programmes. As teachers read and analyse experiences and incidents drawn from their actual experiences, living and working in a multicultural school context, they will become even better prepared for other upcoming intercultural interactions. They are then likely to develop a broader conceptual thinking about intercultural interactions that will empower them to solve problems more efficiently.

According to Black and Medenhall (1990:120), cross-cultural training enables the individual to learn both content and skills that will facilitate effective cross-cultural interaction by reducing misunderstandings and inappropriate behaviours, addressing the issue of diversity without overwhelming teachers with the effort of making differences more prominent than commonalities. The target should be that appropriate behaviour in an international context can flow naturally from our embodied experience, just as it does in our own culture (Bennett and Castiglioni 2004:260), and conflicts stemming from misinterpretations of intentions to be managed in order to lead to greater understanding.

Although this attempt can never alleviate all of the problems that people will encounter in their adjustment to living and working across cultures (Cushner and Brislin 1997b:2), it can, however, partly help individuals overcome emotional and cultural barriers. Teachers can become more knowledgeable about cross-cultural issues, derived from 'cultural encapsulation' (Wittmer et al. 1992:61), which is what the Italian teacher (Roberto, 5.3) referred to as the 'immigrant syndrome' (i.e. the tendency to see things only one way, 'our way').

Teachers in International Schools like Dombey School have the opportunity to fruitfully mingle with colleagues of other cultural or linguistic backgrounds and spend a significant amount of time together. What is missing, however, is a formula that will establish cooperative links among all members, a common set of expectations and beliefs which will convey a clearly communicated sense of purpose and shared aims.

Disputes and conflict situations need to be resolved by the management but because this school, as a professional organisation, works closely with a board of governors

with whom conflicts could conceivably arise, teacher training has to be planned ahead in order to have an orderly and structured procedure in place to deal with any conflict situation. There should be management – board – teacher reviews in communication and relationships, with the help of outside facilitators, so that the respective roles and duties are clearly understood during the coming year.

What makes training programmes extremely significant is the fact that different behaviours may afterwards be tolerated or even 'celebrated' when this platform of common ground is constructed (Singelis and Pedersen 1997:199). Teachers will eventually learn how to respect differences in beliefs, ideas and perceptions, and gradually become skilful in searching for alternative ways of living and behaving in the school. In a supportive cultural, social and organisational context, teachers can respond to intercultural experiences in positive ways, whereas in a non-supportive cross-cultural school context, distancing, confusion and frustration may result.

6.4.1 Teacher induction

All teachers carry the unwritten responsibility to care about pupils, to put the school ethos into practice, to be aware of the pupils' needs and not to have automatic expectations of their profession. In order to do all the above, however, teachers need time to adjust to the school ethos and enjoy the merits of a smooth induction phase. The characteristics of a 'proper' induction phase vary from school to school and from teacher to teacher. However, considerable attention needs to be paid to the 'introduction', 'socialisation' and 'follow-up' of new members of international organisations in order to avoid the creation of strong organisational subcultures based on national identities rather than professional ones (Hofstede 1984:273).

Teachers in Dombey School usually come from national professional environments

which in most cases are very different from their current one. Because teachers differ not only in terms of demographic variables such as years of teaching experience, grades and subjects taught, but also in terms of their previous involvement in professional development activities and personal and cultural variables (pedagogical beliefs, ambitions and priorities, personalities and styles), teacher induction programmes must pay attention to teachers both as individuals and educators in cross-cultural settings. Stirzaker (2004:39) emphasises the importance of awareness of prior learning and the flexibility to manage it so that everyone is offered an induction that is appropriate to them as an individual.

An adequate induction phase ensures that new members of staff can access information from the moment they start work at the school through three areas: 'induction', 'mentoring' and 'professional development' (Deveney 2007:326). It also makes it clear for the teacher what the expectations should be throughout the year on all levels (professional, academic, interpersonal, personal etc.). Tomlinson (1997:168) argues that expectations need to be clarified on both sides (employees and organisations), since more experienced teachers will bring with them expectations based on their previous experience.

It is likely that working in a culturally diverse school might involve loss, anxiety or struggle and it is always healthy to raise the question of whether the strategies that are used in schools like the above can help teachers cope with such feelings. Teachers who come from a variety of educational or teaching contexts should be settled into programmes which empower them to become knowledgeable, confident and productive, as far as the culture of the new international educational context is concerned. However, there is no training available in Europe for working in a

multilingual school and 'most teachers learn how to adapt to the special circumstances of the school while on the job' (Baetens Beardsmore 1993:143).

Teachers may have upsetting experiences, can be culturally shocked and can even stop enjoy teaching if their adjustment skills, personal and professional fulfilment is not of integral concern or high priority to an International School induction programme. All phases or stages of transition that teachers might go through may affect teachers' attitudes towards their professional development and adaptation to the school. Although teacher professionalism needs to be encouraged, it is unlikely to develop very far unless it is nurtured and supported by the school and by well-adapted teachers.

> If happy teachers truly perform better, then leaders must create conditions in which happiness thrives.
>
> (Gruenert 2008:57)

Comprehensive and systematic procedures must be undertaken to induct all new staff members into the culture of the school in particular, and into the teaching service in general (Conners 1991:57). Training sessions must be lengthy, appropriately spaced or supplemented, with additional follow-up activities to provide the feedback and coaching necessary for the successful implementation of new ideas (Guskey 2000:23). Induction practices in Dombey School should include:

– Departmental handbooks which vary according to teachers' needs (e.g. nationality, language, culture, subject, teaching grade etc.)

– New teachers to be paired with experienced colleagues in order to become familiar with the practical day – to – day running of the school and get a sense of the culture of the classroom. Experiences should be actively shared and involve seeking and

giving feedback.

– Provision of special lessons in the language of the country (working language), in order to help foreign teachers gain linguistic competence and a louder voice in collaborative activities, meetings or when they teach in English. Teachers can identify areas of need themselves and sessions should be designed in response to those needs.

– Teacher training in the production of multicultural training materials presenting all cultures and the history of all communities in more than one language.

The school should be aiming at gaining the features of a 'Clan culture' (Ortiz Elías 2007) for a clear sense of vision, frequent meetings, keeping everyone informed, assignment of clear roles, concern for close personal relationships, carefully prepared feedback for colleagues, frequent expression of esteem, and clear goals relating to people's career and personal development (p. 332). Intercultural communication, including feelings, thoughts, nonverbal behaviours and ideas can be taught and teachers can learn ways to overcome the challenges they face in every context. Although most of the above outcomes cannot realistically be achieved, at least in the short term, and not all of the procedures I have recommended can be implemented immediately, they at least provide a variety of options that are available, in the light of what my research has revealed.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Teachers' behaviour in International Schools is the result of what happens incidentally or accidentally, as well as the product of the values and experiences that teachers have before coming to the school, or acquire while working in it. In that respect, it has been interesting to explore Dombey School teachers' national backgrounds, cultural views and frameworks, survival strategies, as well as beliefs and attitudes representative of their home educational systems and cultures.

Issues of diversity and difference have been addressed, despite their subjectivity, as have a variety of measures that can be taken into account, such as ethnicity, nationality, culture, educational level, background, professional status, native language etc. In view of the fact that these teachers are linguistically and culturally diverse, it has been enlightening to discuss with them their experiences. This school has been found to appreciate and support difference and diversity in student population, within European boundaries.

In practice, however, diversity and cultural differences are less appreciated in the case of teachers than they have been in the case of students, and as a result teachers' relationships are not among the first priorities of the school. My findings suggest that this school has an organisational culture which is grounded in the significance and value of student well-being and academic achievement. This reflects the main purposes of the school and is recognised by the teachers in my research. Students face explicit expectations for academic success from their teachers, and are buttressed by their parents and by their beliefs that doing well scholastically will

improve their post high school circumstances.

Most teachers' efforts are therefore directed to students' well-being and achievement, and teachers are keen on experimenting and working hard to achieve satisfaction for students. They adapt their classroom practices and invest in healthy teacher – student relationships, hoping to achieve professional fulfilment and joy as a reward. It seems likely that teachers' professional satisfaction and happiness are met via students' successful adaptation in the school, and the teachers' own well-being is effectively regarded as of secondary importance – or less, considering that parents need to be kept happy as well. In that sense, the bond between teachers and students appears stronger in this school culture than the bond between teachers and teachers or teachers and parents.

My findings highlight the fact that multicultural education can reinforce the cultural identity of teachers from all nationalities/cultures, and stimulate the development of knowledge of the characteristics and achievements of their own communities while at the same time confronting negative attitudes towards other communities. However, the findings of this study do not necessarily transfer automatically to predictions about cross-cultural communication. Just because members of certain cultural groups in this school, for example, have high frequencies of stereotyping directed towards other groups, this does not mean that they will have high frequencies of stereotyping in all schools of its kind or any international organisation, or that it is always teachers from particular cultures who stereotype the most in international contexts. In that sense, intercultural communication cannot fully exhibit cross-cultural communication differences, although Levine's observation is relevant to the lessons that might be learnt from this study:

> it is certainly informative to know cultural characteristics of members of one cultural group when predicting what might happen when the group members encounter/interact with members of another cultural group.

<div align="right">(Levine et al. 2007:209)</div>

This research has taken place in the secondary cycle of a distinctive multilingual school, which means that findings could possibly be different in the primary cycle of the same school or other schools of its kind with a different combination of teachers. Nevertheless, since problems have been identified even within the relatively limited variety of cultures in Dombey School and it is likely that some other schools would include a wider variety of nationalities and perhaps cultural characteristics, further research of this type in such schools would possibly be equally – perhaps more – productive. The findings of this project, therefore, point to the need for more research of this kind.

Bearing in mind that this was a case study, it is nevertheless possible to make some generalisations about challenges teachers face in most schools of this kind with regard to linguistic and cultural differences and adjustment, and the impact of transferring their home traditions and previous experiences into present jobs and teaching. Mismanaged cultural differences can be the source of stereotyping, conflicts and misunderstandings, which inhibit teachers' adaptation in the school in relation to other contextual factors.

This thesis does not set out to criticise individuals, schools or organisations which find diversity and difference extremely challenging to cope with, or do not even realise their existence and impact on the school culture and individual teachers; on the contrary, it should work as a reminder that cross-cultural relations within international organisations can be extremely rewarding if individual and collective efforts, supported by appropriate research and training, can be directed to helping

employees concentrate on their similarities and realise the pitfalls of stereotyping, the challenges of adaptation and the beauty of difference. This should be a continuous process of awareness, just like multicultural education, 'because the idealised goals it tries to actualise – such as educational equality and the eradication of all forms of discrimination – can never be fully achieved in a human society' (Banks 1997:26).

This awareness might also extend to a return to the home culture. Although Dombey School teachers' return to their national systems is not the focus of this research, it could be interesting for a future research project to identify the challenges this re-entering might provoke, and the contribution that teachers' experiences in Dombey School might make to the process of (re-)adaptation to their national systems.

It is important to remember that in all cultures, and not just International Schools, humans are 'ethnocentric', that is they use their own culture as the standard for judging other cultures. The result is that they assume that what goes on in their own culture is 'natural', 'normal', and 'correct' and what is different in other cultures is 'unnatural', 'abnormal', and 'immoral' (Triandis 2003:488). Thus ethnocentrism reflects our cognitive limitations. If we know only one culture, it is natural that we will use it as the standard for comparing other cultures. Teachers can thus be helped to understand the importance of holding more than one identity and to realise that we all have 'composite identities which reflect the multiplicity and diversity of our belongings' (Helot and Young 2002:110).

A challenge that multicultural education has already responded to as far as students are concerned is to help students from diverse groups mediate between their home and community cultures and the school culture. Students can acquire the knowledge,

attitudes, and skills needed to function effectively in each cultural setting and the competence to function within and across other microcultures in their society, within the national macroculture, and within the world community (Banks 1997:8).

Teachers in multicultural education should enjoy the same opportunities via teacher training and staff development programmes designed to help them respond positively to the demands of the very unusual professional circumstances that are characteristic of International Schools. In short, the findings of this research suggest that if these schools are to achieve their full potential, attention needs to be directed towards the needs of teachers, as well as those of students.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 (The particular characteristics of Dombey School)

Organisation, rules, aims, curriculum, language policy, student sectionalising[18]:

− Dombey School is a UK-based school. It opened in 1978 to educate the children of scientists working on the nearby Joint European Torus project[19]. It now welcomes pupils from the wide local international community.

− It belongs to a network of schools with the same underlying philosophy {14 establishments at present in Europe in seven countries (Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom, Spain and Luxembourg)}. These schools are official educational establishments controlled jointly by the governments of the Member States of the European Union. In all these countries they are legally regarded as public institutions[20].

− These schools provide teaching in the official languages of the European Union. However, not all of the schools are able to provide the full study cycle in all of these languages[21].

− Dombey School comprises five language sections: the English, the French, the German, the Dutch and the Italian. The curricula and syllabuses (except in the case of mother tongue) are the same in all sections.

− The Dutch and Italian sections started to phase out in September 2006.

− Seven languages are taught in Dombey School (**English, French, German, Dutch, Italian, Danish and Spanish**). Danish is offered to Danish pupils, who are integrated into the English section and Spanish is taught as a foreign language.

− Students have complex cultural and linguistic backgrounds: more than seven cultures actually co-exist in this school.

− Education in the schools is organised on the basis of the following principles[22]:

• The school year must consist of 180 working days for pupils.

• Basic instruction in (some of) the official languages of the European Union allows the primacy of the pupil's mother tongue (L1) to be safeguarded.

• To foster the unity of the school and encourage genuine multi-cultural education, there is a strong emphasis on the learning, understanding and use of foreign languages. This is developed in a variety of ways:

− The study of a first foreign language (English, French or German), known as L2 is compulsory throughout the school, from the first primary class;

− All pupils must study a second foreign language (L3), starting in the second year of secondary school. Any language available in the school may be chosen;

Pupils may choose to study a third foreign language (L4) from the fourth class of secondary school. Any language available in the school may be chosen;

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[18] The information given below about Dombey School was valid until the time my research took place (March – April 2006)

[19] http://www.esculham.net/1culham.php(access 09/11/2008)

[20] http://www.esculham.net/1europeanschool.php (access 09/11/2008)

[21] http://www.eursc.eu/index.php?id=202 (access 09/112008)

[22] http://www.eursc.eu/index.php?id=132 (access 08/11/2008)

– Language classes are composed of mixed nationalities and are taught by native speakers;
– From the third class of secondary school, history and geography are studied in the pupil's first foreign language, also called "the working language" (English, French or German). Economics, which may be taken as an option from the fourth class of the secondary school, is also studied in a working language. From the third class, therefore, all social science subjects are taught to groups of mixed nationalities
– The conscience and convictions of individuals are respected. Religious education or education in non-confessional ethics is an integral part of the curriculum.

Student Sectionalising

A fundamental principle of Dombey School and all schools of its type is the teaching of mother tongue/dominant language as L1[23]. This principle implies the pupil's enrolment in the section of his/her mother tongue/dominant where such section exists.

Is schools where the section corresponding to a pupil's mother tongue/dominant language does not exist, s/he will be enrolled in one of the vehicular language sections.

At any age, pupils arriving at school with insufficient knowledge of an essential language receive short-term intensive tuition to enable them to catch up with their peers.

Organisation of studies[24] - Baccalaureate

Classes 6 and 7 form a unit which leads to the European Baccalaureate. Although there is a core of compulsory subjects including mother tongue, L2, mathematics, a science, philosophy, physical education, history and geography, students have a wide range of further options and may choose to study some subjects for two periods, four periods or at an advanced level.

The certificate awarded is fully recognised in all the countries of the European Union, as well as in a number of others. Those awarded the certificate have the same rights and benefits as other holders of school-leaving certificates in their countries, including the same right as nationals with equivalent qualifications to seek admission to any university or institution of higher education in the European Union[25].

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[23] http://www.eursc.eu/fichiers/contenu_fichiers1/278/2007-D-4010-en-5.pdf (access 20/11/2008)
[24] http://www.eursc.eu/index.php?id=137 (access 09/11/2008)
[25] http://www.eursc.eu/index.php?id=138 (access 20/11/2008)

APPENDIX 2 (Areas I would like to approach in the interviews)

A (1): Broader context of their career and personal life history (how they have developed their identity, their sense of self in and through their career?)
How and when do they change (if they do) (or have they changed) over time and what were the factors influencing this process?
PAST EXPERIENCES:
Which schools did they come from?
Do teachers reflect back on their career experiences and tell their career stories?
What influences did past career experiences have on the teaching practices of teachers?
What knowledge they have, how they have evolved and formulated it.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT:
How does one get from one phase to the next?
Which processes determine the transition?
Is the transition gradual, smooth, partly discontinuous, disruptive?
Do they put emphasis on career development?

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT:

Do teachers participate to school improvement activities?
Are they committed to school improvement?

CHANGE:
Have teachers experienced many changes?
Are teachers committed to change?
Does the present school culture meet the challenges of modern society?
CURRICULUM:
Are teachers intellectually engaged in curriculum development? (affecting its content)
Do they have curriculum planning skills? (key aspect of staff development)

INTERACTION WITH STUDENTS:
(linked to pedagogical issues)
Any striking memories from the past about (successful or faulty) interaction with students?
Is there (has there been?) shift in rapport with students?
Does every student feel valued as a member of the classroom community?

A (2): What are the perceived beliefs, values and perspectives (about curriculum, discipline, staff relationships, pedagogy, self-evaluation etc.) that the individual staff members bring with them when seconded to the school? (Major elements of teachers' **past** professional lives)

PEDAGOGICAL ISSUES:

Do they design stimulating and interesting lessons?

Do they feel generally confident as experienced teachers?

Do they bring the class back after they've lost them?

How do they deal with deviant student behaviour?

Do they cover the programme without overload?

Do they motivate students who show little interest?

Do they assist students who are behind?

How do they diagnose and help students overcome problems? (family, personal etc.)

How do they judge and discuss their sources of information and technologies that are available to students?

How do they educate students with multicultural and different social backgrounds?

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT/LEARNING*:*

What is their view of development as a process?

Do they believe in life-long pursuit?

Do they seek ideas from conferences and workshops?

Do they think initial training is enough in the context of social and educational changes?

SELF*:* (characteristics of teachers as individuals – humans)

What is their view of the teachers' self?

Their perceptions of self-image, self – esteem, job motivation, task perception, future perspective?

Do they reflect? (self-evaluation)

How teachers' self-concept develops over time?

ATTITUDE TOWARDS STUDENTS:

Do they believe they can make significant contribution to the lives of pupils?

Are there expectations for student behaviour and academic performance based on race, class and gender?

Do they feel the educational system should meet the needs of all students?

Is the student population changing every year?

Are students motivated, disciplined, pathetic, frank, direct, polite, hypocritical, impossible, disrespectful, lazy, rude, lively, imaginative, intelligent, open-minded, dynamic?

Are there students for whom little can be done, no matter how much one tries?

Are all students 'reachable' provided that one invests the necessary time and effort?

Does tolerance towards students increase when they have school age children themselves?

HANDLING PARENTS:

Is the school environment welcoming – helping parents be involved in their children's education?
Opinions of how to handle parents
Was learning to know and respect parents a progressive progress?
Are they firm and straightforward with them?
Are they manipulated by them?

GROWING OLD:

Their opinions of how they perceive/experience and adapt to growing old.
Do they become bitter, disillusioned, disappointed, less enthusiastic?
Is there dissatisfaction, disenchantment, energies directed elsewhere?
Do they feel they have over-invested?
Do they lose their motivation and commitment as they get older?
Do they lose dedication and take their service to students less seriously?

ROLE AS TEACHERS:

Which are the choices and personal priorities in their work as teachers?
Do they have a high opinion of their profession and responsibilities?
What must a teacher do to be a good teacher? (task perception)
Are teachers' current perceptions of professional identity related to contextual or biographical factors? (Which factors influence these perceptions?)
Is the pedagogical side of their profession more important than the didactical side and the subject mater side?

What are the roles and authorities of teachers in school? In which circumstances are the above reformulated?
Is there preparation time? Which place do they use for preparation?

A (3): What kind of experiences and events:
Contributed to a commitment to multicultural education?
Contributed to personal development (What was the role of critical incidents – critical people in shaping their educational journey?
Challenged their professional selves?

PROCESS OF BECOMING CULTURALLY COMPETENT:

Is there a most representative culture in this school /organization?
Were there cultural misunderstandings that occurred because of the built-in incompatibility of two languages?
Can they mediate cultural incompatibility?
Have they served as facilitators or catalysts for contacts between cultures?
Do they interpret cultural symbols?
Do they read body language?
Do they show cultural empathy and imaginatively participate in the other's view?
Do people perceive or misperceive them?
Do they build bridges – Do they establish linkages across cultures that facilitate the instructional process?
Do they feel the educational system meets the needs of all students – of all cultural backgrounds?
Is there (has there been) preparation for teachers in working with racially and culturally diverse student population?
What do teachers think about the cultural diversity in their school?

COMMITMENT TO MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION:

Is there a commitment to multicultural education? – Was teaching in that school a decision that they made themselves?
Is there an inclusive curriculum that provides multiple perspectives on the world and validates the cultural backgrounds of all students?
Are there morning gatherings, team building, classroom meetings, active listening, collaborative problem solving, restorative discipline and co-operative teaching strategies?
Is there a permanent contract? Why do they remain in the job? (Job stability?)

CRITICAL INCIDENTS (is there anything in your experience…?)

Have there been highly charged moments and episodes that have consequences for personal change and professional development?
Are there any critical incidents related to discipline?
Were there moments made up of feelings of lassitude, frustration, fatigue and routine?
CRITICAL PEOPLE:

Who were the people who had impact on their career? (critical people – critical incidents)
What is the meaning facts have for the respondents?

STRESS-CAUSING AREAS:

What are the areas that cause them most anxiety?
Is there classroom press – is there classroom discipline?
How do they respond to pressures?
Do they strive for personal and professional acceptance from pupils, colleagues and school administration?
What are their coping strategies in order to deal with complex tasks?
Is there an induction phase?
Is there adequate support and guidance during the early years in the profession?
Do they experience isolation?

B (1a): SCHOOL CULTURE

What are the characteristics of the particular school culture – main elements it is constructed by {(broadly speaking, is it weak, strong, inert, moving, individualistic, innovative etc. – are the above characteristics historically, politically, socially or economically rooted?)}

In what ways is the culture of the school related to staff development?

APPRAISAL: (did you get any feedback in the process of your adjustment to the school…?)

Do they get clear and meaningful feedback about the work and effectiveness of what they do?

Do they get feedback from appraisal (if yes, by whom?)

Do they do self-evaluation?

Do they accept legitimate criticism?

To what extent do they believe appraisal has been internalised as a learning process?

GROWTH OR MAINTENANCE OF SCHOOL CULTURE:

Are teachers sufficiently empowered to control growth or maintenance of school culture?

How do they learn to influence school culture?

Are they aware of external factors? (external agencies, community, parents, formal school organisation) which influence school culture?

TROUBLE – CONFLICT:

Do they receive help when trouble arises?

Is there a carefully designed set of experiences for kids? (How does it enhance conflict resolution and learning)

Do they vocalise disciplinary problems in staffrooms?

When they do are they given constructive, positive feedback?

PLANNING ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Do they plan? About what? Short-term? Long-term?

Is planning being made individually or collaboratively?

SCHOOL AS ORGANISATION:

What are the characteristics of the school as organisation?

How do internal conditions (strong professional values, value for learning, need for collegiality) influence cultural growth?

What kind of impact, innovations have on the prevailing school culture?

Do educational innovations affect teachers' careers?

B (1b): ECOLOGY OF THE CLASSROOM
Is there evidence about the ecology of the classroom?
Is balkanisation encouraged?
How is collaboration realised?

i) COLLABORATION:
Do they discuss each other's work?
Do they compliment/support and acknowledge each other's positive efforts?
Do they observe colleagues?
Are they reluctant to say their ideas?
Do they seek ideas from colleagues?
Do they share resources/supplies?
Are working relationships spontaneous, voluntary, evolutionary, development oriented, pervasive across time and space and unpredictable? (Hargreaves 1994)
Is there contrived collegiality? (relationships imposed and compulsory for teachers)
ii) DECISION MAKING:
Do they participate in decision making?
Does sharing in decision making (responsibilities and authorities) create pressure to school staff?

iii) BALKANISATION:
Do they attach their loyalty to a particular group?
Do they spend most of their time and work closely with a specific group of people or colleagues?
Is regular co-operation across years and/or subjects rare?
Do teachers cooperate with colleagues from other departments?
Are there subcultures in the school? Are they radically different?
Is grouping of teachers according to pedagogical or organisational purposes/principles?
Do they compete for resources, status and influence in the school?
Does collaboration only take place in the interest of the group?
Do they unconsciously perceive the world in similar ways?

B (1c): Did teachers' perceptions (about teaching) and general values match the reality of the School?

PERSONAL JUDGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL CULTURE:
What was it like when they first came to he school?
What were the things they had to learn?
What were their individual needs at the school at the beginning?
Were these needs satisfied? – How did they build self-esteem?

CHANGE:
Is there congruity between the prevailing values and norms of the school and the anticipated impact of innovation?
Did innovation implemented meet the original needs of individuals and groups?
Do innovations affect (change) the level of collegiality within the school?
Do they affect interpersonal relationships?
What is the criteria teachers use in assessing any given change?
Do teachers from different subject areas undergo the same changes in their perceptions of their professional identity?

B (2): How do teachers develop professionally overtime and what are the factors, which hinder or facilitate such growth?

CPD (Continuous Professional Development):

What were they trained about initially (area of expertise)?
Is the amount of studying typical for teachers in their culture?
If CPD was offered to them would they do it?
How would it be seen in the school?
Would it have to do with salary or status enhancement?
Would it improve their individual performance?
Would it enhance their ability to meet changing needs? (Implement/reform/change attitudes or behaviours?)
Would teachers train for diversity or promotion?
Would they get prepared for management?

FACTORS WHICH HINDER OR FACILITATE SUCH GROWTH:

Were there any obstacles in their effort for improvement?
What was the role of their families? (Was there any kind of support?)
Role of Head – Deputy head?
Role of colleagues?

B (3): How do these International Schools compare with mainstream schools in terms of what they offer to teachers working in them?

SELF:	PAST EXPERIENCES:	PRESENT OPINIONS/BELIEFS:
Were new aspects of the self brought into being? How and why?	Has their previous teaching experience (in other schools) helped them adjust in this school? Or was it an obstacle? (Something they hardly want to remember)	In what sense are these schools distinct?

What is your subject area? What is your degree in?
PAST EXPERIENCES:
Which school did you come from? Which country?
Did you teach secondary education? Upper? Lower?
What was the language in which you taught there?
What were the subjects you taught there?
How many years did you stay in your last school? How many years of teaching experience in total?
Any other schools before that? Were they all typical mainstream schools or did they have something in particular, a feature which needs to be mentioned?
Has your previous teaching experience (your being in other schools) helped you adjust in this school? *{Or was it an obstacle? Something you hardly want to remember?}*
IN THIS SCHOOL:
Why did you decide to come to this school?
 Is there a permanent contract? *Why do you remain in the job?*
What were the criteria to apply for the job in the school?
What were you trained about initially? What is your area of expertise?
Do you have a family? Children? Did you bring your children with you? How do they like it? Which school do your children go?
If it is this School they are going to, was this an incentive for you to be seconded here as a teacher? *(was it the reason you came?)* Why? What do you think the benefits of the school are when it comes to your kids? In what sense are these schools distinct?
Has there been preparation for teachers in working with racially and culturally diverse student population? Has there been an induction phase for you?
Is there adequate support and guidance during the early years in the profession?
Do you experience isolation?
What were your individual needs at the school at the beginning? Were these needs satisfied?
INTERACTION WITH STUDENTS:
Is the student population changing every year?
Are you responsible for any class? Keeping the registry, behaviour, etc.?
What are students like in (your class) this school? (Mature, naughty, etc…)
Do you believe students are facing any particular problems in this school? Language problems, adjustment problems, commuting problems, friendship problems…etc.?
Are they all fluent in many languages from the very beginning?
Language problems: Would you like to tell me how many languages students have to choose in the year – class you are teaching? What are their criteria you think for them to choose an L2, an L3 or an L4?
What do you think are some of the individual needs of students in this school? Do you think individual needs of all students are met here?
CLASS CONTROL/DISCIPLINE:
Have you ever lost the class?
Is there classroom press? Is there classroom discipline?
Do you receive help when trouble arises?
Do you vocalise disciplinary problems in staffrooms?
When (and if) you do, are you given constructive, positive feedback?

STRESS CAUSING AREAS:

What are the areas that cause you most anxiety?

How do you respond to pressures?

Do you have (strive for) personal and professional acceptance from pupils, colleagues and school administration?

What are your coping strategies in order to deal with complex tasks?

Does sharing in decision making (responsibilities and authorities) create pressure to you as a member of school staff?

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT/PLANNING:

Is the curriculum predefined in your subject area?

Is there a curriculum that validates the cultural backgrounds of all students?

Do you follow it? Do you overload students you think?

Are you facing any kind of difficulties? (When it comes to transmission of knowledge?)

(Curriculum planning/development) Do you design your own lessons? (Do you cooperate maybe?)

Do you think students find your lessons stimulating and interesting?

Do you feel confident when you are teaching? Has anything happened so far to make you lose your self-esteem as a teacher? (if yes, how did you regain?)

Are there students in your class who show little interest? (who need further assistance?)

If yes, which are the areas they need further help in? How do you help them?

Are there students for whom little can be done, no matter how much one tries?

Are students 'reachable' provided that one invests the necessary time and effort?

Are there morning gatherings?

CAREER DEVELOPMENT:

Do you have any other interests other than your subject area? What are they?

Do you feel you had a smooth career development so far? Were there any obstacles in the effort for improvement? What was the role of your family? Head-Deputy head? Role of colleagues?

Did you have the last word in your choices or you feel that things have just happened for you?

Have you ever been to any conferences or workshops about multicultural education?

Do you believe educational innovations affect careers?

If CPD (continuous professional development) was offered to you would you do it? How would it be seen to the school?

Would your decision have to do with salary or status enhancement? Would it improve your individual performance? Would it help you meet changing needs? How? Would you train for diversity or promotion? *Would you get prepared for management?*

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT:
Do you participate in any (outdoor or indoor activities?) in the school?
If yes, how often? Can you please give a description or some details of what you do?
Are students involved? Motivated? How do you keep them motivated?
Do the activities in which you participate (or initiate) have an impact on you as a teacher/person or on the students? Do children enjoy them? Do they become better? Are they changed? In what sense?
HANDLING PARENTS:
Is the school environment welcoming?
Does it help parents be involved in their children's education? (on which occasions are parents involved?)
When you remember your first step as a teacher – comparing to now – was learning to know and respect parents a progressive process?
Are you firm and straightforward with parents?
Have you ever felt you've been manipulated by parents?
Did you ever have difficulties with parents?
SELF:
What do you think of yourself as a teacher? Do you ever reflect?
Are you confident? Job-motivated? Do you still like your job?
Has your self-concept developed over time?
ROLE AS A TEACHER:
Did you want to become a teacher from the very beginning? Why? How did it happen? Was teaching in this school a decision you made yourself?
What are your responsibilities in the school?
What features, do you think, make an individual a good teacher?
Do you have preparation time? Which place do you use for preparation?
Do you plan? About what? Short-term? Long-term?
Is planning being made individually or collaboratively?
Were new aspects of the self brought into being? How and why?
EXPERIENCES AND EVENTS:
Is there a most representative culture in the school?
What do you think of the cultural diversity in the school?
Is there cultural compatibility? Have there been and cultural misunderstandings?
Have you ever tried participating in the others' view?
Do students use body language?
Can you read body language? Can you interpret cultural symbols?
Do they establish links across cultures that facilitate the instructional process?
CRITICAL INCIDENTS:
Have there been highly charged moments and episodes in your teaching career?
Have there been critical incidents related to discipline?
Have there been moments made up of feelings of lassitude, frustration, fatigue and routine?
Were there any people who had impact on your career?
What is the meaning events/facts have for you?
COMMITMENT TO MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION:
Is there a carefully designed set of experiences for kids? How does it help them? (How does it enhance conflict resolution and learning?)

Part A

1. Place of interview:	2. Time: ………	3. Date:…….	4. Sex of the participant:…….
5. Real Name:	6. Name to be called in the Research:	7. Nationality:	8. Years of teaching experience (in total):
10. English language proficiency:	11. e-mail: ………	12: Languages spoken: ……………	9. (In this school): …………………..

Part B

| Part-time: | …………. | Full-time: | …………. |
| Nationality: | …………………….. | Year of secondment: | …………………… |

Part C

| Linguistic section: | Classes taught: | L1, L2, L3, L4: | Subjects taught: |

APPPENDIX 5 (Dombey School secondary school teachers – Interview details)

no	C.S.	Sex	Teaching subject	Research Name-Nationality	Interview Times	1st Interview Dates	2nd , 3rd Interview Dates
1	P/T	M	Maths (1,2,3,5)	James, British	11:46, 23:20	23/02/2006	24/02/2006
2	**F/T**	**M**	**Phil, HC, L1,3,4**	**Roberto, Italian[26]**	**41:45 mins**	**23/02/2006**	
3	F/T	M	L1	Fred, British	25:26 mins	03/02/2006	
4	P/T	F	L1, L3	Irena, Italian	38:09 mins	24/02/2006	
5	F/T	F	L1, L2,L3	Ines, French	44:16, 6:24 mins	24/02/2006	06/04/2006
6	F/T	M	L1	Jørgen, Danish	40:40 mins, 4:15 mins	24/02/2006	07/03/2006
7	**P/T**	**M**	**L1**	**Carel, Dutch**	**35:45, 12:58 mins**	**24/02/2006**	**16/03/2006**
8	F/T	F	ISc, Bio	Sarah, British	Not recorded	27/02/2006	
9	P/T	M	Learning support, socio, ethics	Mathew, British	23:24 mins	20/03/2006	
10	F/T	M	Latin, L1, HS, Morals, phil, ICT, ancient Greek	Kees, Dutch	25:03, 5:13, 5:43 mins	09/03/2006	15/03/2006, 6/04/2006
11	**P/T**	**F**	**Ethics, philosophy**	**Joy, British**	**36:37 mins**	**27/02/2006**	
12	**P/T**	**F**	**Bio, HS, maths, IT**	**Lisa, British**	**37:56 mins**	**28/02/2006**	
13	**F/T**	**M**	**Geo, Hist, morals, L5**	**George, German**	**41:08, 11:25 mins**	**28/02/2006**	**07/03/2006**
14	F/T	M	economics	Eadmund, British	33:56 mins	01/03/2006	
15	F/T	M	L1,L2,L3 1-7	Freddy, French	28:30 mins	01/03/2006	
16	F/T	M	PE	Ronald, British	26:56 mins, 4:10 mins	01/03/2006	31/03/2006
17	F/T	M	L1,L2,L3,(L4,L5), PE	Meier, German	46:16 mins, 6:40 mins	01/03/2006	15/03/2006
18	**F/T**	**F**	**Maths, learn support**	**Julia, Italian**	**36:37 mins, 7:47 mins**	**01/03/2006**	**15/03/2006**
19	F/T	M	History, geography	Amoux, French	18:15 mins	02/03/2006	

[26] Rows in bold give details of the twelve most important interviews which were fully transcribed verbatim.

20	F/T	M	ISC, L2,L5, Science	Roy, German	25:23 mins, 5:38, 10:51 mins	02/03/06	---
21	**F/T**	**M**	**Maths, informatics**	**Walter, German**	**30:58 mins**	**02/03/2006**	
22	F/T	M	L2	Nick, British	28:12 mins, 7:24 mins	08/03/2006	03/04/2006

23	F/T	**F**	**PE, L1**	**Anna, German**	**42:00 mins**	**07/03/2006**	
24	F/T	**M**	**HS, geo**	**Owen, British**	**55:49 mins**	**07/03/2006**	
25	P/T	**F**	**L2,L3, morals**	**Calanthe, French**	**18:22 mins**	**08/03/2006**	
26	P/T	M	art	Wallace, British	33:37, 8:52, 4:42 mins	21/02/2006	08/03/2006
27	P/T	**F**	**L3**	**Carmen, Spanish**	**36:54 mins**	**09/03/2006**	
28	F/T	M	Maths, ICT	Tom, French	19:01 mins	09/03/2006	
29	F/T	**F**	**L1, L2, morals, phil, latin**	**Magdalena, German**	**28:13 mins**	**09/03/2006**	

30	P/T	F	Maths, IC, ICT, Physics	Daniele, Italian	21:40, 11:04 mins	09/03/2006	06/04/2006
31	F/T	M	Maths, ISC	Rutger, Flemish	36:26, 10:27 mins	15/03/2006	
32	F/T	F	L1,L2,L3,phil	Aurelie, French	25:53 mins	15/03/2006	
33	F/T	M	Chemistry, ISC	Adam, British	23:22, 1:51, 6:07, 0:07 mins	16/03/2006 (1 &2)	03/04/2006 (3rd & 4th)
34	P/T	M	Maths, physics	Jordan, Dutch	41:01 mins	16/03/2006	
35	F/T	M	maths	Andrew, British	24:17 mins	16/03/2006	
36	F/T	M	Physics, chemistry, ISC	Marco, French	40:35 mins	17/03/2006	
37	F/T	M	Phil, politics, L2	Tab, British	17:16, 14:50 mins	24/03/2006 √	27/03/2006
38	P/T	F	art	Kelly, British	Not recorded	20/03/2006	
39	F/T	M	Maths, physics	Aldis, British	21:43 mins	24/03/2006	
40	F/T	M	ICT admin	Aidan, British	6:17 mins	24/03/2006	
41	P/T	F	Religious education	Schmidt, German	11:08 mins	27/03/2006	

42	P/T	F	Che- bio	Betty, Italian	18:39 mins	27/03/2006	
43	F/T	F	L1,Latin, learn. support	Samantha, Italian	18:59 mins	27/03/2006	
44	F/T	M	IcS/ BIO	Louis, French	15:50 mins	03/04/2006	
45	P/T	F	RC, HSc	Lynette, Flemish	18:42 mins	03/04/2006	
46	F/T	F	counsellor	Chloris, German	5:44mins, 22:52 mins	03/04/2006	
47		F	counsellor	Senta, Danish	Not interviewed		
48		F	HEAD	Mrs Alexis Chavez, Portuguese	Not interviewed		

no	C.S.	SEX	Position in the school	Research Name –Nationality	Interview Time	Interview Date	
49		M	Deputy Head	Mr Allen Henricksen, Danish	5:37 mins, 12:41 mins	06/04/2006 (1st & 2nd)	
50		F	Student teacher-visitor	Elaine, Flemish	23:41 mins, 7:45 mins, 3:22	24/03/2006	31/03/2006 (2nd and 3rd)
51		M	Clinical psychologist	Dr Fagan	Not interviewed		
52		F	Coffee lady	Jean, British	Not interviewed		
53		M	School caretaker	Lucas, British	Not interviewed		
54		F	Receptionist	Mary, British	Not interviewed		
55		F	Second secretary	Lesley, British	Not interviewed		

– INTERVIEW WITH LISA –

0401	Me: ok
	Lisa: Even if it's got to do with what type of trainers
0402	you've got, or jumper or something else, or as here
	you are through the playground, half of the children
0403	have -----with their brothers and their sisters, those
	sort of, even though we don't, some people say it's
0404	good to have a uniform because then your children
	don't feel they've got to have , all these, it's just not
0405	applicable here, culturally, people except, that people
	don't, you know, a lot of people here who are
0406	Danish, they wouldn't buy their clothes here, they'd
	buy them in Denmark.
0407	Me: Yes
	Lisa: The same with the German section, French
0408	section, so there isn't this cling of conformity, they
	don't feel this need to conform, I mean, we have
0409	some really odd characters in this school, kids that if
	they were in a state school…
0410	Me: Aha
	Lisa:…just wouldn't survive
0411	Me: Here, you mean…
	Lisa: Yea
0412	Me: Children from here if they were in a state
	school…
0413	Lisa: Oh yea..
	Me: Why?
0414	Lisa: They're odd! Boncus!
	Me: Because they came…
0415	Lisa: Here!
	Me: They carry …the cultural…?
0416	Lisa: No, no nothing to do with being cultural, just
	with being eccentric
0417	Me: Aaaa!
	Lisa: Eccentric children, children who're really
0418	eccentric…
	Me: In the way they dress you mean, in the way they
0419	behave?
	Lisa: Just the way they behave. There are some nice -
0420	-----children but if they were in a state school they'd
	be shunned, they'd be pushed out…
0421	Me: Really?
	Lisa: …on any social group. But, here everyone is
0422	different, there isn't anyone who's really the same as
	everyone else, everyone's got a different background,
	you know, very few people, even in the English

Annotations (right margin):
- 0402: DS:
- 0403–0404: LACK OF UNIFORM
- 0407–0408: Odd characters in DS

0423	section, have got 2 parents who are English	
	Me: Aha…so just because they' re eccentric, they	
0424	get…	
	Lisa: People, they're just accepted because everyone	ACCEPTANCE- DIFFERENTIATION
0425	is different	
	Me: OK.	
0426	Lisa: There's so many different people here.	
	Me: Does the same thing happen with teachers you	
0427	think?	
	Lisa: Maybe…	
0428	Me: Yea	
	Lisa: I'm not sure but we're all different and we're	
0429	all..	
	Me: so different---sort of learnt how to be tolerant…	
0430	Lisa: {see? It's weird}…	
	Me: {..in the differentiation I think}	
0431	Lisa:…cause you don't seem to learn that, tolerance	TOLERANCE
	is there, people are different from you they' re	
0432	always going to be different from you…	
	Me: Yes	
0433	Lisa: And so when you see someone, you know, it's	
	a couple of kids I'd seen in the playground, I think,	
0434	and they've got friends around and everything…	
	Me: Yes	
0435	Lisa: And you just think, if that was in a state	
	school…	
0436	Me: Yes	
	Lisa: …they'd be bullied, they'd be teased and	
0437	they'd be so unhappy	
	Me: Yes	
0438	Lisa: But here there is a place for them, everyone is	ACCEPTANCE
	different	
0439	Me: Yes. So, there's no bullying because everyone is	
	different	
0440	Lisa: Oh there's, inevitably there's some little petting	Bullying
	especially with these little first years, you know, 'I	
0441	don't want to be your friend anymore', but no, it	
	doesn't tend to be over things, physical appearance	
0442	or money, or clothes, or anything like that…	
	Me: Ok	
0443	Lisa:…which is, seems to be the main route of things	
	Me: Aha	
0444	Lisa: In English schools it's like 'oh you've got	
	funny ears, you've got..', you just don't tend to find	
0445	that here.	
	Me: It sounds like things are pretty bad in the state	English schools bullying
	schools, here	
	Lisa: Oh, they're horrible.	
0446	Me: Mmmm	
	Lisa: They can be really, really horrible. And I know	
	friends who've got children, in them and …they look	
	perfectly normal to me and they get bullied	
0447	Me: Allright, ok.	
	Lisa: So ... everyone is afraid , there's a lot of, in	
	English, it seems to me in English state schools	
	you've got to be the same and anyone who is slightly	English schools vs DS

0448   different is penalised for that.
Me: Ah, Ok
Lisa: They're afraid of things to…
Me: Which is sad isn't it?

0449   Lisa: It's very very sad and you know in my state
school people only socialised with who they perceive
with their peers, so very little mixed race friendships, LITTLE MIXED RACE
and, you know, if people did have different religion,   FRIENDSHIPS

0450   they definitely didn't talk about it...
Me: Ok.

APPENDIX 7 (Classroom Observation details)

	C.S.	DATES OF OBSERVATION:	TEACHERS BEING OBSERVED + SUBJECTS:	TIMES	YEARS	No. of STUDENTS:	HOMOGENEITY OF THE CLASS- Lng sections	MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION
1.	F/T	23/02/2006	Tom – (French, **maths**)	13:20 pm – 14:05 pm	Year 2	19 students appr.	Homogeneous – French section (students with French as an L1)	French
2.	P/T	27/02/2007	Mathew – (British, **morals education** class)	11:50 am –12:35 pm	Year 3	15 students appr.	Multilingual classroom (English, Dutch students etc., all having English as an L1, L2)	English
3.	F/T	27/02/2007	Kees – (Dutch, **ancient Greek** , optional course)	12:35 pm – 13:20 (lunch break)	Year 1	4 students	Multilingual (English and Dutch students)	English (and Dutch)

	C.S.	DATES OF OBSERVATION:	TEACHERS BEING OBSERVED + SUBJECTS:	TIMES	YEARS	No. of STUDENTS:	HOMOGENEITY OF THE CLASS- Lng sections	MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION
4.	F/T	7/3/2006	Nick – (British, **Economics** Theme: about money)	9:05 am – 9:50 am	Year 7	18 students	Multilingual (4 sections other than English), L2	English
5.	F/T	8/3/2006	Magdalena – (German, **Latin)**	10:10 am – 10:55 am	Year 3	12 students	Homogeneous-German section	German
6.	F/T	17/3/2006	Tab – (British, **philosophy)**	13:20 pm – 14:55 pm	Year 7	8-10 students appr.	English section	English
7.	P/T	20/3/2006	Yiolanda – (British, Latin)	3:00 pm – 3:45 pm	Year 3	9 students	English section	English
8.	F/T	24/3/2006	Tab – (British **ICT,** optional)	-	Year 4	8-9 students	Multilingual	English
9.	P/T	24/3/2006	Lynette – (Flemish, **History)**	14:05pm – 13:50 pm	Year 2	10 students appr.	English section	French

APPENDIX 8 (Research Questions revisited)

First research question refined: Is there anything teachers do differently (in their classrooms/staffroom or in the school) in the light of the new teaching/working circumstances in a multilingual context?

Subsidiary Questions:
1. What are the things teachers take into account (beliefs teachers carry) when they teach the same or different subject in a mixed-ability context?
How do they correct students' mistakes?
How do they give them feedback?
What are the criteria for student assessment? Are they written in the syllabus, do teachers carry their personal criteria of student assessment or the criteria of the national system they come from (or have worked for)?
Can they reflect on the teaching approaches in the other countries/ International Schools/educational contexts they have worked in? Can they mention similarities or differences between the present or past teaching contexts?
Are they in a position to adapt old methods/teaching approaches in the light of a new teaching context? What insights such an adaptation would bring them? How would students benefit from such an adaptation?

2. Which are the factors that contribute to the differentiation of teacher classroom practices in the school?
(Things teachers do differently from class to class and whether this has to do with the (language – ability) level of the students or the (different) first language background that pupils have.)
Is there something they take into consideration when they teach different language sections, or different levels of the same language (L2, L3, L4, and L5)?
 Do they have different expectations from students with different language level, capacity, and ability? What are these expectations? What do they depend on?
 What are the factors which influence the learning process (prohibit or speed it) in the classes?
How do teachers choose the materials, classroom equipment and practices, language use, resources etc. when they teach homogeneous or multilingual classrooms?
3. What are their experiences like when they teach in a language other than their mother tongue?
What are the things/areas that cause them stress/anxiety?
What are the difficulties/new challenges they have to face?
How do they overcome obstacles – highly charged moments? How do they handle difficult situations? What are their attitudes/coping strategies towards problems/discipline issues?
What is the students' attitude towards their non-native speaking ability?
What is their attitude towards the students' multilingual background?

APPENDIX 9 (Emerging themes from individual transcripts)

DOMBEY SCHOOL (DS): Quality of Education (multidenominational, multilingual) Job Recruitment conditions/ criteria Multidimensionality of sections Sectionalising in the school (features of sections) (lng sections + science groups- science group classrooms) Differentiation – Acceptance Characteristics of the school (lack of conformity, oddity, eccentricity, lack of bullying, school policy, posh parents + students)	**Professional DEVELOPMENT:** Pre-service Teacher training (Motivation/incentive for teacher training) In-service teacher training (Motivation / incentive for in-service teacher training) **TEACHER TRAINING:** PGCE (, incentives, description, kinds, strengths, benefits, importance) Personal views about teacher training courses **PERSONAL INTERESTS:** Outdoor Activities (DS) Indoor Activities
MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS: **English Schools (ES)** (ES vs DS) ES characteristics (registration, assessment, uniform, parents, playground, discipline policy, bullying, religious education, equipment) **State Schools (SS)** SS characteristics (experiences, benefits, coping strategies) SS problems: Bullying, classroom management **(Ting (teaching) (**Ting mixed ability groups Ting big classes) SS vs DS **Independent Schools (IS) vs DS** IS characteristics (student assessment/ motivation)	**TEACHERS:** Adjustment issues (Induction phase) Teaching approaches Coping strategies (values) (empathy, understanding, structure, confidence, discipline policy, tolerance, self organisation) Feelings (fear, stress) Socialising (getting help +support) Resources / equipment

SYLLABUS:
Freedom
DS syllabus vs SS syllabus
Project (design – developing)
Science project – symposium
        {description, initiative
         Motivation
         Preparation
         Participants
        Target – Objective}
	STUDENTS:
	Characteristics (bilingualism)
	Behaviour
	Differentiation – Acceptance
	Language Problems
	Language Learning support
	Socialising
	Assessment
	Motivation for learning (lack of judgemental exams, curriculum freedom, project developing, initiative)
	Ss' Responsibility of themselves (for learning)

PROFESSION: Job Appeal	**T's PERSONAL VIEWS:** about teacher training courses about school statute about cultural diversity in the school

PARENTS: Teacher's feedback to parents/ students Parents' expectations Teacher – Parent collaboration Issues	**APPRAISAL:** Inspection issues Feedback Self-assessment

DOMBEY SCHOOL (DS) vs other SCHOOLS:
    DS vs national Schools
…………………………………………………
    DS vs English Schools (ES) (ES characteristics - problems)
…………………………………………………
    DS vs Independent Schools (IS characteristics - problems)
…………………………………………………
    DS vs State Schools (SS characteristics - problems)
…………………………………………………
…………………………………………………..
………………………………………………….
…………………………………………………
	DS CHARACTERISTICS:
	    Quality of education
	    Job recruitment conditions/ criteria
	    Issues of differentiation/ acceptance
	    General characteristics of the school
	    (ethos) (school reports, grading, discipline
	    school policy, failing policy, school
	    community, classroom environment- size)
	    Teacher working conditions / P/T, F/T
	    contract)
	
	LANGUAGE SECTIONS:
	    Multiculturalism
	    Multidimensionality
	    Purity
	    Stereotyping
	    Problems
	    Sectionalising in the school (Ss grouping)
	    Cultural diversity

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:
    Pre- service teacher training (motivation/ incentive) (PGCE:
    incentives, description, variety, strengths, benefits,
    importance)
    In-service teacher training
    Job appeal
    Research
    Promotion
    Issues of improvement/ change (awareness, curiosity, ways of
    looking at things, teaching practices)
 	
    TEACHER CAREER :
    Career change
    Career perspectives in the national system
    Financial issues
	TEACHERS (Ts):
	entertainment (indoor, outdoor activities)
	school adjustment (induction phase, receiving
	help & support)
	Values / coping strategies (empathy,
	understanding, structure, confidence, discipline
	policy, tolerance, self- organisation)
	Ts feelings/ behaviour/acceptance (fear, stress,
	challenge, handling Ss)
	Socialising
	TS responsibilities/ obligations
	Resources/ equipment (Textbook {txbk use,
	limitations, library, interactive boards}
	Handling parents
	
	TEACHING: (Ting)
	    Qualifications
	    Subject (subject matter expertise)
	    Experience (overseas, international)
	    Ting diverse student population
	    Supply Ting
	    Ting non- mother tongue Ss
	    Ting subject in L2
	    Ting lng in L 3,4,5
	    Approaches to Ting

STUDENTS (Ss):
    Characteristics
    Background (family, cultural/linguistic)
    behaviour
    differentiation /acceptance
    language problems (L2 vs L1 Ss)
    students' support (lng learning, L2 lng problems)
    socialising
    motivation for learning
    Ss responsibilities
    Individual needs
    Homework (Ss reply to homework)
	SYLLABUS:
	    Freedom/preciseness issues
	    DS syllabus vs SS syllabus
	    Project (design & development)

T's PERSONAL VIEWS (about):	PARENTS:
Teacher training School statute Cultural diversity in the school (culture clash) School meetings Teacher career Role of boarding facility in a school Effective teacher qualifications	Parents' evenings Issues of school trust Parents' expectations/ involvement to school

ASSESSMENT:
DS Teacher   DS Student
assessment   assessment:
     appraisal   Exams, grading
 	
(inspection, ,
feedback from
students/
management,/parents,
classroom
observation, self-
assessment)
	SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS:
	     Teachers- teachers relationship
	     (collaboration- compromise-
	     balkanisation)
	
	Observing colleagues
	Giving and receiving feedback
	     Teacher – student relationship
	Expectations from Ss
	     Student- student relationship
	     Teacher – Management rel/ship
	Teachers' support
	Organisation issues
	Classroom observation/ inspection
	     Student – Management rel/ship
	     Teacher – parent rel/ship
	     (collaboration)
	     Teacher – inspector rel/ship

LANGUAGE: - Lng problems	

- Teachers don't have their own classes Roberto(0112)

3.4 Structural differences in the school go even further creating a conflict between minor cultures (Dutch and Italian) and major cultures (English, French and German) in the light of the closing down of the small sections:

English is now the lingua franca of science Sarah (0011)

- Teachers feeling they have to move towards them [Camondoso - Joy]

Minor cultures (micro cultures): Dutch, Italian	Major cultures (Macro cultures) (English, French and German)
There are less privileged languages in the school, therefore less privileged cultures and less privileged teachers ✓	There are more privileged languages in the school, therefore more privileged cultures and more privileged teachers. There is 1 dominant language in the school and 3 privileged ones. (German, French, English)
Minor groups (sections) tend to be smaller in student and staff population, with a 'weaker' school voice and a less healthy environment for students and teachers to be (extremely small classes) (Roberto 0117) ✓ 01 22,0129	They have a strong image in the school and it is against those cultures that stereotyping mainly takes place. Those cultures are more 'in target' compared to the minor ones English section: big classes French, German section: small classes which are sometimes even further split. (Walter 00
Minor sections tend to be 'pure' linguistically which makes teachers feel 'safe' and 'at home' ✓ (Owen 0 too)	Major sections are not that 'pure' in terms of student composition and this makes teachers feel alert and more careful (Owen 0691) ✓
Easier to manage ✓	More difficult to manage and less disciplined but in some subjects (maths) they are further split into 2 groups
Teachers in small sections (small classes) teach more periods (Rutger 0005) (Owen 0101)	Teachers in big sections (big classes) teach less periods
Minor language sections are gradually closing down – teachers will have to go back to their home countries eventually ✓	The school itself will close down at some point but the big sections will be 'alive' until the very end
Less privileged languages and cultures are sabotaged through the curriculum. Teachers of minor cultures are not equally treated from the system with teachers of major cultures. They are not allowed to teach geography and history in their home sections (Roberto 0023 –0024)	History and geography are only taught by English, German and French teachers in the system They understand the unfairness (Owen 0657) although they have an argument about it (0611 –0612 Owen

(Roberto 0032-33 0036|

Italian ss understand the ongoing things Roberto(0277?) they

Teacher Test + (example of Italian teacher (0642)

and say it only happens in human science for the favour of students Owen (0658)