CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

by

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Abstract

Since the statutory introduction of Foreign Languages in the Key Stage Two national curriculum in England (DfE, 2013), it has remained an outlier, with full implementation yet to be achieved. Whilst many countries have embraced early foreign language learning within their prescribed curricula, across England, national aims for foreign language learning (FLL) remain unfulfilled, despite having been expressed for many years. A substantial evidence base exists about what is taught and teachers' perceptions of the new subject, however, little is known about how children themselves experience and respond to learning this new curriculum subject. This thesis seeks to address that gap.

This longitudinal, ethnographic study explores children's experiences of FLL across three schools in South-East England. It provides new insights into children's FLL, revealing them as active agents of their own and others' FLL, with much potential to yet tap into. Evidence suggests children took their FLL seriously. In the absence of specific instruction or recognition, children actively sought to make sense of the FL, drawing on their mother tongue and other knowledge. In seeking to make the best of their own, and other's FLL, children scaffolded their FLL through a sub-culture of learning developed amongst themselves as a close, class community. This operated largely under the radar of teachers, who tended to focus on delivery and documenting content coverage within a broad climate of performativity. A disjointed experience for children was otherwise revealed, not just between settings but also within the same setting and class. Children's FLL was found to be 'othered' and subject to practices that arguably neglected the relative merits of an earlier start to FLL. Evidence suggests academically able children and those from reportedly socio-economically advantaged backgrounds were conferred more time, continuity, and activities more suited to their abilities and wider experiences than others.

Children's experiences are understood through sociological lenses informed by Blumer's (1969) symbolic interactionist theory and Margonis' (2011) concept of 'educational events'. Data is analysed in relation to a combination of Emirbayer & Mische's (1998) concept of agency, Biesta's (2010) three functions of education and Hargreaves' (1994) 'experiential coherence'. Data was gathered over a period of four years with findings emerging from an inductive process of analysis and reflection.

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GLOSSARY of ANACRONYMS

CPD	Continuing Professional Development
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELF	English as a Lingua Franca
ESOL	English as a Second or Other Language
FL	Foreign Language
FLL	Foreign Language Learning
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
ISLA	Instructed Second Language Acquisition
KS1/2/3/4	Key Stage 1/2/3/4
KAL	Knowledge About Language(s)
L1	First language
L2	Second language
LL	Language Learning
LLS	Language Learning Strategies
LOTE	Language Other Than English
LP	Learner Psychology
MFL	Modern Foreign Language
MT	Mother Tongue
NC	National Curriculum
PL	Primary Languages
PMFL	Primary Modern Foreign Languages
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
YLL	Young Language Learner
YR/1/2/3/4/5/6	Year Reception /1/2/3/4/5/6

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This thesis concerns children's experiences of foreign language learning (FLL) in primary school. It resides within a national context where the statutory implementation of FLL at Key Stage Two in England (ages 7-11yrs) remains problematic, with a persistent, declining overall trend in the take-up of languages for GCSE and beyond, still happening after some twenty years (Tinsley& Comfort, 2012; Board & Tinsley, 2015; Holmes & Myles, 2019; Collen, 2021; Wardle, 2021). This thesis makes a substantial contribution to the knowledge base of children's experiences of FLL in the primary classroom. This thesis argues that the field has been hitherto dominated by adult-centric concerns and normative research approaches which have served to marginalise children's FLL experiences and ultimately limit what is known and understood about these. This study aims to foreground children's FLL experiences, based on the premise that knowing and understanding more about these will help inform future practices and initiatives.

The term 'foreign language' (FL) is drawn from the National Curriculum in England (DfE, 2013) referring to the formal, statutory teaching of a language other than the mother tongue (MT) in the Key Stage Two (KS2) Primary school phase of education. This term is distinct from Modern Foreign Language (MFL) which in England embraces the statutory teaching and learning, usually of a European language, in the Key Stage Three (KS3) Secondary phase of education. It is also distinct from second language learning which embraces language learning contexts beyond those conducted via formal education and those which refer to the teaching and learning of English an as additional, other, foreign or second language- or lingua franca (e.g., EAL, LoTE, EFL, ESOL- ELF).

This chapter outlines the purpose, rationale, and overarching research questions of this study, locating children's experiences within both national and international fields of FLL and research. A conceptual understanding of 'experiences' is introduced, followed by an overview of the research approach adopted and settings involved. The chapter continues with a reflective summary of the influence exerted by my own background researching children's FLL experiences, as a teacher and teacher-educator with over 26 years' experience working within the field of primary education and FLL. The central role reflexivity necessarily has within this thesis is introduced, recognising the underlying tension involved in seeking to develop an understanding of *children's* experiences, as an *adult* researcher (Dennis & Huf, 2020). This chapter concludes by outlining the structure of the rest of this thesis.

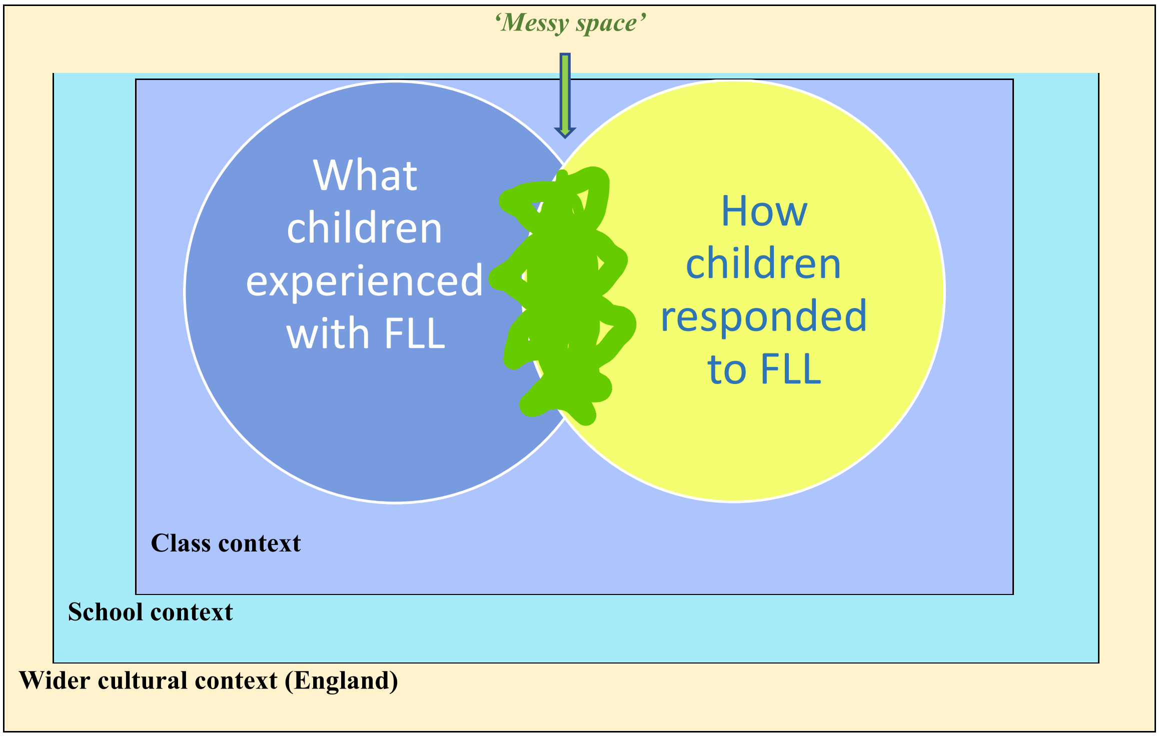
1.2 Purpose of the research and research questions

This study seeks to add a new and necessary dimension to the field of FLL about what is known and understood about children's experiences of formal, or 'instructed' (Murphy, 2014) FLL in the primary school. This study looks at the activities and engagement of children with their primary school FLL experiences. It looks at the opportunities offered to children with FLL within the wider context of their classes and schools and children's engagement and responses to these. This thesis therefore resides in a 'messy space' between what children experienced and their responses and perceptions of such experiences, exploring threads between these (see Fig.1).

This research was framed by two overarching questions:

1) What do children experience in school with FLL?
2) How do children respond to FLL in school?

Fig.1 The 'messy space' between what children experienced and how children responded to FLL in primary school:


'Messy space'
What children experienced with FLL
How children responded to FLL
Class context
School context
Wider cultural context (England)

This study concerns Zhang & Hu's (2010) third dimension of state-led educational policy-based programmes, namely the classroom level, but from a child-centred perspective. This third level is concerned with examining the enacted curriculum, the *"processes of interpretation and construction that transform the institutional and programmatic curricula into curriculum events in a particular classroom"* (Zhang & Hu, 2010, p.126).

The final report of the influential, independent Cambridge Primary Review (Alexander, 2010, p.6) emphasised that *'one of the most insistent themes in our evidence was the view that children in England are required to do too much, or the wrong things, too young'*. One further question therefore concerned whether children themselves may also share such a view, or whether this is instead better understood as an adult-centric concern regarding issues with the implementation of statutory FLL in KS2 (DfE, 2013).

Children's experiences of FLL, their responses and perceptions of these events are understood in this thesis to be dynamic rather than stable features. This thesis therefore does not entertain to present 'the' truth, but rather a series of 'non-static truths' such as emerged from this study and my own integral role with it.

1.3 Rationale

Since first entertaining thoughts about this research, FL has remained a fledgling area of the primary-school curriculum in England. My study however also took place within a unique timeframe, involving the build-up to, and realisation of Britain's exit from the European Union: 'Brexit'. Within this context, the economic, social and educational arguments used to support the statutory introduction of FL in KS2 in England (DfES, 2002; Gove, 2011; DfE, 2013) endorse England's need for languages, with much resting on their successful implementation.

FLL in KS2 in England is also an integral part of what Johnstone (2009, p.33) has described as 'the world's biggest policy development in education'. Many countries have already embraced early FLL within their prescribed curricula (Enever, 2012; Drew & Hasselgreen, 2008; Murphy, 2014; Nikolov, Djigunović, Matteoudakis, Lundberg & Flanagan, 2007; Rixon, 2000). Since its statutory implementation in England in Key Stage Two (DfE, 2013), 'Foreign Languages' however remain a problematic outlier in the primary curriculum where full implementation has yet to be achieved (Holmes & Myles, 2019; Collen, 2021). As a relatively new subject area, issues regarding its implementation remain.

The statutory provision of FLL in KS2 in England (DfE, 2013) is itself built upon foundations of non-statutory teaching of French and/or other languages in some English primary schools, evidenced in various forms since at least the late 1960 National Primary French project (Burstall, Jamieson, Cohen & Hargreaves 1974; Driscoll & Frost, 1999; Hunt, Barnes, Powell, Lindsay & Muijs, 2005; Kirsch, 2008; Martin, 2012; Sharpe, 1992, 2001). Questions as to the very validity of teaching languages to children in the primary phase of education have, however, repeatedly been asked over the years, perhaps most seminally by Burstall, et al (1974) and thirty years later, in a larger study by Driscoll, Jones & Macrory (2004). This latter study found such diversity it called for further research and evaluation. The focus for much research to date has therefore concerned the establishment and implementation of language teaching in the primary school; what is taught, teachers' perceptions of the new subject and studies involving language learners older than those in the primary phase of education (older than 11yrs). The lens has not been directed upon the younger learner experience. Despite national and international arguments concerning an increase in research studies involving children's voices and perspectives about their experiences, together with the importance and value in so doing (e.g., Alexander, 2010; Drew & Hasselgreen, 2008; Wray, 2008), others, such as Ferreira, Karila, Muniz, Amaral & Kupiainen (2018) and Robinson (2014) posit that children have nonetheless been left out of such discussions. This is particularly the case for younger children.

A lack of engagement with children's experiences is further exacerbated in specific relation to FLL where not enough is known about both what and how children experience FLL in primary school. This is especially the case in England, where the statutory introduction of FLL remains a relatively new phenomenon having only been awarded such status for children in state schools in KS2 from September 2014 (DfE, 2013). Of the research that does exist, much is now also over ten years old, arising from an initial 'capacity building era' marked by a period of substantial government funding for MFL in the primary school initiated by the 'Languages for All: Languages for Life' strategy (DfES, 2002). The continued relevance of earlier findings, such as children's enthusiasm for FLL and the apparent ease with which they do so is thus questioned, serving to increase both the value of, and arguable need for research that focusses upon children's experiences of FLL in the primary phase in England.

'Young language learners' are also arguably distinctive as a group from 'older language learners' (Wray, 2008; Drew & Hasselgreen, 2008) meriting their own specific research. This is further endorsed by FLL in KS2 being distinctive from its counterpart, MFL in KS3. Whilst afforded the same ‘purpose of study’ across each Key Stage, state primary schools are now at liberty to choose any foreign language, Ancient Greek or Latin as opposed to the KS3 focus upon MFL and related exam syllabi. Sharpe (1992, 2001) highlighted that the environment and educational structures within which Primary MFL took place were distinctive from those usually to be found within the Secondary school. Caution is therefore necessary in any application of what may ‘work’ in the Secondary MFL context to younger children’s FLL in primary school contexts. The two are not the same. Primary-based FLL and children’s experiences of this are therefore worthy of their own research and this field merits further development (Holmes & Myles, 2019).

The world has itself also changed during the period of this study, not only through statutory implementation of FLL in KS2 in England, but also with the wider socio, economic and cultural contexts of Brexit, the global Covid-19 pandemic and Ukraine invasion. The context and remit for children’s FLL in primary school are therefore not the same as it perhaps once was in the build-up and eventual statutory implementation in September 2014 (DfE, 2013), making the call for new research that focusses upon children’s FLL experiences particularly timely. This study has therefore been afforded a unique timeframe within which to seek and present an understanding of children’s FLL experiences.

1.4 Defining and understanding children’s experiences

An indicative review of literature indicated that whilst terms relating to learning experiences can abound, they have rarely been afforded a clear definition, neither full explanation of how the term itself was interpreted or applied. In the following section I therefore introduce the definition and conceptual understanding of ‘experiences’ developed by this thesis.

An ‘experience’ is otherwise a commonly used term, subject to broad interpretation. It is of note for example, that Alexander (2010) did not offer any precise definition regarding the notion of ‘children’s experiences’ in the authoritative Cambridge Primary Review (CPR). An outline was instead provided that the CPR’s reviews of children’s experiences would focus on ‘what happens to children when they attend primary school’ (Alexander, 2010, p.6). This offers a broad step towards a more defined expression of ‘experience’ for this thesis, involving ‘what happens’ to children in primary school with FLL.

Understanding children’s experiences however in terms of ‘what happens’ remains complex, comprising a convergence of different influences beyond the purely physical dimension including a range of external and internal physical, emotional, psychological forces. Forbes, Evans, Fisher, Gayton, Liu & Rutgers (2021) suggested from their study exploring a multi-lingual identity-based pedagogical intervention involving 2000 secondary-aged children in England, that learners' experiences of languages and language learning comprise their evaluations and emotions. They proposed a '3 E's model' where 'experience' was a learner's exposure to and interaction with languages and their evaluation of this (Forbes et al, 2021, no page). Sato & Csizér (2021, p.2) have furthermore argued the need to unite the intersections between learner psychology (LP) and instructed second language acquisition (ISLA) to be able to answer important theoretical questions concerning how LP is related to L2 learning processes.

A nuanced definition of experience was offered by Larrosa (2002) who considers experience as being something that happens that transforms us. This indicates that a definition of a 'what happens' experience, may usefully include two distinct elements: firstly, determining an experience as what happens in the literal, 'physical' sense with FLL, and secondly, in exploring the impact of such happenings upon the children experiencing them; whether what happens to the child's 'self', and/or children's 'selves' is transformative in any sense. A clear challenge with this latter aspect of Larrosa's (*ibid.*) definition is recognised; whether it is at all possible to reach any understanding regarding how children may come to internalise, recognise, and express their experiences of 'what happens with school-based FLL' as being, or becoming 'transformative' for themselves. This is because I understand this to be an ultimately personal, individualised, and internalised process; one that may not always be consciously recognised at the time, or later. I also recognise this may be even harder for children given it can be hard enough for adults to always realise and appreciate. In this respect, I believe Larossa's definition offers a clear challenge, and one that, essentially calls upon psychoanalysis, as endorsed by Sato & Csizér (2021). For this reason, I have chosen to define 'experience' without inclusion of Larossa's 'transformative' sense of the term, but rather in terms of some experiences being more noteworthy than others.

Identifying what appear to be noteworthy experiences for children in turn may be viewed in the immediate and short-term in relation to how children initially react and respond; in the longer-term, in terms of what they choose to articulate and how they refer to their school based FLL experiences. For the purposes of this thesis, 'experiences' are therefore understood as being a dynamic and active part of a continual process, conceptualised more as a verb (experiencing) than a noun ('an experience').

In exploring the value and 'ease' of adopting such a definition of experiences, the comparative study by Ferreira et al (2018) was noted because in investigating children's perspectives on their learning in school spaces in Brazil and Finland, Larrosa's (2002) definition was utilised. Their investigation involved forty children aged 3-6 years in one school from each country and included the understanding that *'the learning experience is a process by which situations are able to influence the way we are constituted in a certain time (moment of life) and space*' (*ibid*, p.261). Their study therefore also gave particular focus to how not only the contextual elements involved played a role in defining the children's learning experiences but also confirmed the understanding of 'experiences' as more of an active process than a static 'thing'. They also recognised that learning experiences happen in different social contexts, times and spaces and so clarified their specific interest in the learning experiences in early childhood education and care and in the school as a learning space. In such a way, it is useful for me to clarify my intent in focussing upon children's FLL experiences within the 'space' and context of the primary school as at the time of data collection.

1.41 My conceptual understanding of 'experiences'

Children's experiences with FLL in the primary school are conceptualised as being fluid entities and part of an ongoing process, shaped by various situations and interactions that may affect different children in different ways. My data and analysis captured and explored children's experiences at moments in time in their school lives. My findings are therefore not presented as a 'static', or 'fixed' truths about the nature of children's FLL experiences. They do however seek to inform a deeper understanding about the ways in which children are constituted and affected by their school based FLL experiences. These themselves are part of a much bigger process where it is understood that experiences build and develop over time. In this way, my thesis is offered as an informed 'snap-shot' of primary-school children's experiences with FLL, and of the way in which such experiences may constitute them, informing and contributing to children's developing perceptions, understanding of, and ultimately relationship with school-based FLL.

An overarching sociological lens supports this study's exploration and understanding of children's experiences where Blumer's (1969) symbolic interactionist theory informs an understanding of how children's FLL experiences in primary school may manifest themselves and come to have meaning, be 'realised' and 'experienced' by the child. Hargreaves' (2006, p.18) concepts of 'deep experience' and 'experiential coherence' furthermore advocate schools offering learning experiences to students that are ‘highly engaging’ and that to do so, students ‘must play a role in co-constructing the curriculum’. His argument was that ‘deep experience provides the framework, including the curriculum, the new technologies and an approach to pedagogy, by means of which deep learning is gained through engaging educational experiences with enriched opportunities and challenges.’ Whilst this thesis is not explicitly concerned with the extent to which the FLL in primary school is co-constructed with children in support of ‘deep experience’, consideration of the extent to which children may display and report ‘highly engaging, deep experiences’ of FLL and why is merited.

In this thesis, ‘experience’ is thus understood as part of a process supported by a two-fold definition with need to explore both what children encountered and did, and how children responded and reacted. This two-fold understanding of children’s FLL experiences subsequently led to the decision to explore children’s FLL experiences in a two-fold way, supported by the two overarching research questions introduced in Section 1.2:

1) What did children experience in school with FLL?
2) How did children respond to FLL in school?

The first aspect regards the ‘factual’ nature of ‘what happens’. Margonis’ (2011, p.5) concept of ‘educational events’ supports this aspect and involved looking at the ‘patterns and rhythms that transpired in a particular social field’ (FLL in primary school). This included the FLL activities and resources encountered by children, the time and place in which FLL happened, who was involved, how FLL and the curriculum in which it resides was structured and organised within the physical, social and cultural environments of the school and classroom.

The second aspect regards children’s responses to FLL in primary school in the immediate/short term, and their developing perceptions of FLL in the longer-term, exploring how children talked and what they had to say, whether any ‘happenings’ or ‘events’ appeared more noteworthy than others for children. This element drew upon Blumer’s (1969) symbolic interactionist theory, where people – thereby also children- are theorised to interact together based on meanings generated through shared experiences and negotiation which ultimately become socially patterned and are sustained through cultures.

In defining an experience as more than just factually ‘what happens’ to include something that happens that is noteworthy or meaningful, it is recognised that whilst an educational ‘event’ may be ‘experienced’ it may not of itself be a notable ‘experience’ for the individual or wider group involved. This is supported by Schmidt’s (1994) concept of ‘conscious awareness’ and his noticing hypothesis, regarding what children attended to and noticed. Additionally. some experiences may be found to be more memorable and meaningful than others. Erikson & Schultz (1992, p.467) for example posited that children may '*inhabit and construct profoundly different and subjective worlds as they encounter what the world presents as a standardised curriculum*'.

In reaching a considered definition of the term 'experience,' I consider the two elements to be an important nuance for the purposes of this thesis. My research inhabits the space between 'what the world (may) present as a standardised curriculum, akin to what Kohonen (2006) termed the 'map,' and the extent to which children may be 'inhabiting and constructing profoundly different and subjective worlds' of their own as regards FLL, itself resonant of Kohonen's (2006) 'terrain' of children's learning. The extent to which both 'map' and 'terrain' align may furthermore be illuminated by Hargreaves' (2006) concept of 'experiential coherence', introduced earlier.

This may mean that in exploring children's experiences of FLL, not all such experiences will of themselves lead to children 'having an experience' in a sense and that it will be necessary to consider any apparent relationship between the two. It is also accepted that, according to Bruner (1995, p.203), 'meaning, according to the classical mantra, cannot be explained causally', arguing that 'causal explanation is categorical rather than particular… based on the testing of propositions whose verifiability does not depend on a contextual setting or on the meaning-making processes of participants in the action'. It is also recognised that neither will it be possible for my research to be able to grasp all such experiences children may have where the impact of concrete or tangible experiences with FLL may not be 'visible' or consciously recognised in such a way as to be articulated, demonstrated or otherwise readily 'captured.'

1.5 Research approach and settings

Relevant to the overarching research questions introduced in Section 1.2, and the conceptual understanding of 'experiences' discussed above, an ethnographic research approach was developed through which to build an understanding of children's FLL 'experiences and understandings' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). Such an approach was sought in support of engaging as directly as possible *with* children and their experiences of FLL in school, as opposed to doing research *on* children (Fetterman, 2010; Dennis & Huf, 2020). This approach developed inductively as research progressed, underpinned by a theoretical framework within a social-constructivist paradigm. By examining whether children's experiences and understanding had any resonance with others, including with the knowledge and understanding gleaned from a focussed literature review, I seek to acknowledge and address some of the 'problems of interpretation and translation' as identified by Booth & Ainscow (1998, p.1). This approach is also supported by relativism, a framework which argues that there are multiple constructions of reality based on a person's ethnicity, culture and gender (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). This thesis therefore seeks to be interpretive rather than normative or prescriptive.

This thesis was informed by data emerging from time spent within three primary school settings in SE England with data collection spanning a four-year period: 2014-2018.
Data collection spanned some four academic years between September 2014 and July 2018. supported by ongoing, inductive analysis of emerging data and threads for further enquiry.

Research was conducted in a series of phases in three different school settings in Southeast England. With over 26 years' experience as a teacher and teacher-educator working in the field of primary education and FLL, it was particularly necessary for me to learn to try and 'make the familiar, strange'. Initial phases of research were therefore designed to support and facilitate my own entering and learning to navigate the field within two, contrasting school settings; one a prep school and the other, a small, rural, state primary school. School and class visits allowed me to observe and engage with children's FLL across the primary phase from Reception Year (YR) to Year 6 during two weeks in Autumn 2014. Later phases of research were conducted within a new, third school setting over a longer period; a larger, semi-urban state junior school. Time was spent with a Year 3 class and their teachers between November 2015- July 2016. The same class was subsequently revisited in the summer term during May-July 2018, when the children were in Year 5. Whilst these settings were purposefully each different in terms of size, location and in-take, each setting was one rated 'Outstanding' or equivalent by relevant national inspection bodies. The third setting provides the most extensive data from which this thesis mainly draws. Findings are however informed by all data from my time in the field.

Data was collected primarily by spending time immersing myself and becoming 'entangled' (Dennis & Huf, 2020) within an English primary school setting, getting to know and experience its ethos and ebb and flow; spending time with children in a range of lessons with their teachers and curriculum events including, but not restricted to foreign language lessons. This included:

- Watching and observing and listening to children in school during the school year(s);

- Sitting in various positions within the classroom, sometimes sitting at a table along with a group of children, sometimes sitting separately as best seemed to befit the situation and context at the back of the classroom / at the side / towards the front;
- Going out with children into the playground, sitting and chatting and engaging with children outside;
- Joining children with assemblies, school rehearsals and before/after-school clubs;
- A mix of participant and non-participant observation across the school day in various lessons and events;
- Observing and paying close attention to children and their reactions and responses in lessons, including languages lessons;
- Seeking teacher's perceptions of what children were experiencing: talking with teachers and teaching assistants in an attempt to avoid just interpreting what I saw children do and hear children saying from my own, singular perspective;
- Looking at children's books; looking at displays, the wider school environment and learning culture; taking photos of these where permission was granted;
- Asking questions and developing an ongoing dialogue about this research with participants;
- Reflecting constantly throughout each aspect and stage of my data collection and ongoing, inductive analysis, trying to understand what I was seeing, hearing, noting in my field diaries (including seeking to become aware of what I was NOT noting) thinking and reasoning from different participant perspectives and theoretical perspectives;
- Examining my findings and themes emerging from the field through an additional 'mosaic-type approach' to creatively engage with children about their experiences and perceptions about their FLL in primary school. This involved working more directly with children in a selection of focus group activities.

Whilst I began my thesis with a set of proposed key questions to frame my research, those research questions themselves also evolved as the inductive research process and data itself evolved. As suggested by Ely (1991), I needed to recognise that it was entirely possible that my thesis finished by highlighting and examining questions different to those it began with. That was a prospect I initially found daunting, even if rationally understandable with the research approach adopted. As my confidence and 'ease' with my research approach developed, this was something I eventually came to relish, coming to view my research as an organic process much in the same way I have come to view learning itself. A further challenge posed by this thesis was also therefore how to write about something 'messy and organic' in a clear, logical, and accessible manner, but also in such a way not to camouflage or diminish this rich process for the reader.

My research yields both deeper and new insights into children's experiences and perspectives about FLL as encountered in primary school. These include which aspects of current practices regarding foreign languages in primary school appear more conducive than others for encouraging a 'life-long love of language learning' amongst children (European Commission 2002) and what we may learn if we are in England, to successfully realise the recent statutory provision in Key Stages Two for all children (DfE, 2013). It is not desired, or even possible, for this study to find *'the'* truth. Rather, the focus is on the 'truths' as perceived and shared by participating children with me. Kramsch (2003, p.126) suggests that researchers' interests in learner understanding and beliefs be *'redirected from the exploration of static beliefs to the interpretation of believers' dynamic constructions of possible worlds', and thereby 'reinstate language into its full aesthetic function as the symbolic play that enables us to make sense of our world and make choices for future action.*' For ultimately, it will be the children's own beliefs, shaped in part by their various experiences perhaps including those at school and their developing understanding, and not those of their teachers, nor mine, that will likely shape their thinking and actions as regards their current and future language learning.

The reader will naturally bring their own perspective to this study. It is therefore important that I seek to make my own position within this thesis as clear as possible throughout this study; reflecting and seeking to make explicit the potential influence of my own social, cultural, economic, political, ethnic and gender influences (Schwandt, 1994). These aspects are introduced in the following section.

1.6 Researcher positionality and reflexivity: professional and personal influences

My own background and professional identity have undeniably exerted influence throughout each aspect of this study, from its conception through to completion (Coffey, 1999). I therefore understand the need, as raised by Taylor & Ivinson (2013, p.666) to try and properly recognise that I have ‘no birds-eye position from which to look back or down at our world’ and the need to ‘take seriously’ my ‘own messy, implicated, connected, embodied involvement in knowledge production’. An emphasis on reflexivity necessarily underpins this thesis and the following section provides a resume of how my professional and personal backgrounds and identities have influenced this research. This is also in attempt to help the reader elicit their own understanding and apply their own critical awareness concerning my position and positioning throughout this thesis, from which their own conclusions and perspectives may be drawn.

My interest in children’s experiences with FLL in the primary school stems from over 26 years’ professional experience with FLL as a primary school teacher, lead teacher of primary languages, teacher-educator, and leader in primary teacher education. It also stems from personal experiences as a learner, daughter, sister, wife, aunt, and mother, seeking to raise three children bilingually together with my German partner, in England. Aspects considered to be influential for this research are now highlighted. This begins with a reflection of my own familial and school experiences with languages as a child, followed by a reflection of the influences stemming from my time as a teacher, and teacher-educator. In this way I seek to provide the reader with a reflective account drawing on my childhood and adult professional experiences, relevant to the recognised tensions within this thesis of exploring *children’s* FLL experiences as an *adult* researcher (Dennis & Huf, 2020).

1.61 Familial influences as a child

My interest in languages likely stemmed from an initial favourable introduction via my father with his interest in other places, languages, and stories of his own school exchange visits to Germany just after World War Two and beyond, and via my mother, with stories of her time working as a nanny to an army family stationed in Germany. This early introduction as a child invoked the specialness of ‘otherness’, accompanied by some ‘special treat’ family day trips to France, a couple of family holidays in Austria and Germany, experiences of school exchanges with a German pupil by my eldest sister, and subsequent exciting annual exchanges of Christmas and Easter gifts with this German family, with memories of trying to collectively decipher their letters. My own exchange links with French and German penfriends developed courtesy of further personal links. I am now married to a German, attempting to have brought up our three children up as bilingually as possible in England: a fascinating experience itself.

1.62 School influences as a language learner

School-based language learning started as for most other pupils at the time, at age 11/12, when starting secondary schooling. French was the unquestioned, default language to be studied and learned. It was not a wholly positive experience with clear recollections of a diminutive, rather scary teacher who happened to share the same surname as me. I soon learnt to put my hand up at the start of lesson to answer something I could, before the learning developed with the fear of then getting something 'wrong' and potential ridicule from the teacher in front of the class, usually couched in the form of sarcastic humour with a clear emphasis on maintaining classroom order. The classroom itself however was positioned with a glorious view towards my grandfather's home; something that helped redeem these lessons for me, and again, provided a familial – and comforting- link from an otherwise often uncomfortable experience.

Two years later and at a new school, I was able to start German in addition to French. My memories are of an enthusiastic, colourful teacher. I remember this being enjoyable; certainly not because of the ancient audio-visual scheme stemming from the early 1960s being used in the 1980s, neither the rather tedious naming of classroom paraphernalia routine starting each lesson and long lists of vocabulary to learn for weekly spelling tests, but because I was learning with friends: social interaction was encouraged in contrast to the formal and strict setting I had previously associated with language learning at school. I also felt I had some 'inside' knowledge as one of my sisters had also had this teacher for a while and had reported it being a favourable experience – information I trusted; it was also a language with which I had already had some contact and personal connection; the teacher was more engaging and seemed to 'like' children more; she showed some warm humour and empathy. I became more confident learning French too: I enjoyed learning languages; I learned that I was 'OK' at it too.

Moving to another new school I had to choose between languages as both could unfortunately not be supported by the school timetable. Ultimately German was chosen; largely because if studying French, I would also have had to take Chemistry; not a wise choice for me. The transition between GCSE and A-Level for German was fairly traumatic; having scored highly with GCSE, I floundered with A-level and its emphasis on a new skill set. My results, and confidence, plummeted. It was only when invited to spend a couple of weeks over the Summer with the German pen-pal family we knew that I really began to grasp the grammar, seeing and experiencing a real need for the language beyond academic study and qualification. This inspired my own self-study beyond completing school homework, supported by ongoing letter-writing contact with the family and conversation evenings with an elderly German neighbour who helped 'Germanize' my English pronunciation. My grades gradually improved, and I ultimately achieved top marks at A-level and the school prize for German.

Such reflection of my own experiences as a language learner reveals that for me, my family background and personal connection with the language supported and maintained my favourable inclination towards language learning; regardless of, or on occasion inspite of whatever I was doing at school. Concerning this study, I therefore remained mindful whether some children may also maintain enthusiasm towards language learning regardless of what they experience at school, and the role that may be played by personal or other external factors beyond the immediate scope of this study.

1.63 Influences as a trainee teacher

My interest in languages and travel in Europe further manifested itself during my initial primary teacher training; at the time (1991-1995) it was not possible to elect a foreign language as a subject specialism, so I purposefully chose Geography instead, with its links to the 'European Dimension,' people, places, languages, and cultures. This followed a gap year spent working in Germany to immerse myself in the language and culture in a way I decided simply would not have been possible if returning to complete a deferred four-year language/linguistics degree in England.

My underlying languages bias was further reflected in the academic modules I selected for study, seeking to shape the opportunities I had to better meet my own interests and goals: 'political geography' looking at the German political geographers; an individual third-year Undergraduate research study spent in the German-speaking region of Belgium; a fourth-year Undergraduate study exploring pupils' knowledge and understanding of 'Germany' and 'Germans'. I was both fortunate and pleased at this time to also have experienced the enthusiastic teaching and experiences afforded by Keith Sharpe, an early pioneer in England regarding the resurrection of primary French in the 1990s.

1.64 School influences as a qualified teacher

As a qualified teacher, I shared my German language interests and experiences from travelling with the pupils I taught across the primary phase via Geography, the 'European Dimension', Music and making full use of the 'hidden curriculum' to have a go at teaching German and

French. There was no entitlement or requirement to do so; but the Headteacher was happy, as were the pupils, and as I discovered via a funded DfES Best Practice Research Scholarship exploring the implementation and development of foreign language teaching in our primary school setting, so were the parents/carers. This allowed me precious, creative freedom I found being eroded elsewhere by a growing culture of scrutiny and compliance required by both the various National Strategies (DfES 2002; 2005) and developing Ofsted regimen. For me, it was, and has since remained, a 'golden nugget' which I believe enabled me to thrive as a teacher. For most children, I also believe this to have been a special experience, affording them something new and unique that helped capture their interest and curiosity, which as well as giving them a 'break' from the compulsory curriculum, also helped them make links with it too. This was, however, my own likely biased interpretation of children's engagement and responses to lessons in class, as children's views were only really consulted in a largely superficial way; something which this study has sought to redress.

As a 'Leading Teacher' for languages I was able to develop plans and resources for the school in which I worked and supported other teachers in other neighbouring schools. One challenge presented in this respect was trying to win over a particular child with absolutely no inclination to learn any foreign language whatsoever. I began to question literature writing about how 'all children love learning languages at primary school', as I realised this could not really be true, unless of course I was getting something wrong as a teacher? What I was reading was not something I necessarily found reflected in all my experiences. I furthermore began to appreciate the vested interests that could arise in writing such articles and research studies; I passionately believed in the fruitfulness of language teaching in the primary school, yet, if questioned, the fledging curriculum area could be jeopardised by opponents highlighting the 'already crowded' nature of the curriculum with 'no room' for anything else and how children 'needed to learn their own language properly first'. I certainly did not want – and do not wish- to contribute to any 'jeopardising' of foreign languages in the primary curriculum, but it also appeared apparent that the literature was perhaps not conducive to facilitating a truly open and transparent discussion concerning languages in the primary school.

I also learned during this time, to move more frequently out of my own 'comfort zone' as a teacher and languages lead. In supporting other teachers with teaching languages, my best learning emerged from an uncomfortable experience of being required to deliver a CPD session with French – and explicitly only French. With no GCSE, my language levels were demonstrably lower than many of those of the teachers to whom I presented. What I was fortunately able to do however, was demonstrate how to make optimal use of limited language through which to engage, support and develop children's learning of French, through focussing on pedagogy, resources, and progression. This had the reported effect of motivating those teachers to have a go and develop teaching themselves. As several teachers notably responded: if I had completed that CPD as an 'expert' linguist, that would have put them all off, thinking 'it's OK for her because she's good at the language'. By seeing and experiencing that they were better French linguists than me, that provided confidence and motivation to be able to focus on how to make use of that language to engage children, support and develop their own learning. I learned that having knowledge, skill and competence with a language does not equate with being an effective teacher of that language, nor necessarily an effective 'leader' of other teachers with language learning.

1.65 Influences as a senior lecturer – teacher educator

Roles have included a specific focus upon teaching languages in primary school, academic module, course, and senior leadership. Previous project and research interests involved bilingual student teacher exchanges, ways in which languages may be integrated into the curriculum and pupil, student, and teacher motivation. This study develops that trend by seeking to critically question and reflect in as open a way as possible about children's experiences of FLL in the primary school as they themselves recognise them to be. How successful are primary schools in engaging and promoting (all) children's experiences with FLL? What can we learn from children? What could yet be improved in the language learning experiences afforded all children in primary school as we strive towards successful educational, social, and economic outcomes? In this way, this thesis is a culmination of my own development and experiences to date as a daughter, sister, learner, teacher, wife, aunt, mother, senior lecturer in initial teacher education, and developing researcher.

1.66 Reflective summary

In considering these influences, it is apparent that I did not come to this research in an unbiased manner. All such experiences as outlined in the preceding section will have affected and shaped my thoughts and actions throughout this study. I share this to also afford the reader an enhanced critical perspective of their own regarding what is, and what is not contained in this thesis.

1.7 Structure of this thesis

Having introduced the purpose, rationale, key questions, and conceptual consideration of ‘experience’ that frame this thesis, together with my research approach and an autobiographical reflection concerning the influences of my own personal and professional background, this chapter now concludes by outlining the rest of this thesis.

Chapter Two is the first of two literature review chapters. It first examines literature regarding the relative merit of engaging with children’s experiences; their ‘voice’ and agency, supported by Emirbayer and Mische’s (1998) concept of agency. It next considers the apparent distinctiveness of young language learners. Literature regarding children’s learning experiences and responses to foreign language learning in the primary school is then reviewed, informed by Hargreaves’ (1994, 2006) notions of ‘deep experience’ and ‘experiential coherence’. The chapter examines the methodologies adopted by research studies conducted with young language learners and identifies further gaps in the field of knowledge and understanding regarding children’s FLL experiences.

Chapter Three is the second of the two literature chapters. It comprises a critical review of the historic and current functions of FL education (Biesta, 2010) and FLL as an ‘educational event’ (Margonis, 2011). The chapter presents a review of languages educational policy and context regarding what is known and understood in the wider field about why, what, when and how foreign languages are taught to young children in primary school in both national and international contexts. The chapter explores the contexts in which FLL is ‘presented’ to children in primary school, through which to understand the learning contexts and encounters presented within the research settings and data arising in this thesis.

Each of these chapters considers the wider international literature as well as that located within the English context. Gaps in the field of both knowledge/understanding and methodologies employed in research studies with young language learners are highlighted. Each chapter weaves in the theoretical frames outlined earlier. Each conclude with a summary of the ways in which this thesis offers both unique and new knowledge and understanding to current debates regarding the and learning of foreign languages by young learners in primary school.

Chapter Four introduces the methodological and ethical approaches adopted by this research. It begins with a review of the theoretical and methodological insights gained from the review of literature. The chapter then highlights how the theoretical frames underpinning and informing the thinking and reasoning about data emerging from the field developed. With data collected in four phases in an ongoing manner, methods are introduced and discussed in a progressive manner in this chapter. Data from initial phases are drawn upon to account for how ongoing, inductive data analysis informed next steps. This seeks to help the reader understand the tensions, opportunities and reflections that led to methodological and ethical- decisions made through each phase of data collection. Issues of validity and recognised limitations are discussed. The chapter concludes with a summary of data analysis, accounting for the findings reported in Chapters 5& 6.

Chapter Five is the first of two chapters that presents and discusses research findings reported by this thesis. It concerns findings regarding children's encounters with FLL. These are presented under key themes that emerged from analysis. The chapter presents a detailed discussion concerning the way in which such encounters were found to fragment for different children, even within the same class, for example in terms of curriculum input and opportunity. Findings are discussed in relation to the literature discussed in the review chapters and in relation to adopted theoretical frames. Possible implications for policies and practices with young children's FLL in primary school are highlighted. Reflections about the approaches adopted as well as about my role and influence within this research form an integral aspect of this chapter. It concludes with a summary of its documented findings.

Chapter Six is the second of two chapters to present and discuss culminated research findings. This chapter illuminates a major finding reported by this thesis: children's agency in support of both their own, and others' FLL in class. Children's collaboration in making sense and making the best of FLL opportunities are detailed, revealing a subculture of children's FLL, largely operating under the radar of the teacher. Findings are discussed in relation to the reviewed literature and theoretical frames underpinning this thesis. Implications for policy and practices are considered before the chapter concludes with a summary of documented findings.

Chapter Seven concludes this thesis. This final chapter begins with a resume of the purpose of this research and the extent to which its aims were achieved through the research approach adopted. The main findings emerging from this study are summarised together with the proposed implications for policy, practice, and further research. The chapter then reviews the theoretical and conceptual frames underpinning this study, its methodological approach and its limitations. The chapter ends with a final reflection about my own learning through this process, and its impact on my own professional practices and understanding.

CHAPTER 2

Understanding children's experiences and perspectives of FLL

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews what is known and understood about children's FLL experiences in primary school. The chapter is divided into five key sections and begins by appraising the value of engaging with children's FLL experiences. I draw on Emirbayer & Mische's (1998) definition of agency through which an understanding of children's experiences of FLL, beyond that of their 'voice,' is considered. The chapter then explores the distinctiveness of children as a group of young language learners, meriting both specific research and a distinctive FLL pedagogy. Drawing on Hargreaves' (1994) concept of experiential coherence, the chapter continues with a focus upon children's wider experiences of learning in primary school from which a critical understanding of children's FLL experiences is presented.

Integral to the chapter is consideration of how such knowledge and understanding about children's FLL experiences has been achieved with attention paid to the methods of reviewed studies. The chapter argues that the field of early language learning is a problematic one, shrouded in some confusion. It is argued that primary-aged children are social actors in their own rights and whilst their FLL experiences are phenomena meriting specific research, these remain both under-researched and under-developed. Little research to date exists, resulting in limited knowledge and understanding of children's FLL experiences, particularly within an English context. Of the research that does exist, much was found to be 'adult-centric,' marginalising children's experiences. This has led towards a field currently informed by a shallow understanding. The chapter concludes with a summary of the identified gaps in the field.

2.2 Engaging with children's experiences and perspectives

The following section reviews the value of engaging with children's experiences and perspectives. It argues that such engagement has been framed in different ways and that realising such 'child-centric' engagement remains valuable but problematic within educational practices, policy, and research.

2.21 The value of engaging with children's experiences and perspectives

A salient reminder that children in school are not 'abstract' neither an 'homogeneous mass' but specifically classed as 'raced, gendered…people whose biographies are intimately linked to the economic, political, and ideological trajectories of their families are communities' is provided by Apple (1986, p.5). This endorses the value of engaging with children's experiences both individually and collectively, informed by a theoretical view that people – thereby also children- interact together based on meanings generated through shared experiences, negotiation and which become socially patterned and sustained through cultures (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934, p.6).

Children are also recognised as important contributors of their own reality (Alexander, 2010; Robinson, 2014; Ferreira et al, 2018, p.259), with a right to have their voices listened to and taken seriously as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989); particularly Article 12. This gave children and young people the right to express their views on all matters affecting them, and for these views to be given due weight in accordance with the child's age and maturity. The adage that 'children should be seen and not heard' is therefore not one often associated with education in England. Despite opposing ideological and political frames, an overriding notion of engaging with the 'child's voice' remains.

The authoritative and widely respected, independent Cambridge Primary Review (CPR) is a valuable addition to my review with its explicit inclusion of 'children's voices' concerning their experiences and perspectives of learning. Its final report and recommendations, 'Children, Their World, Their Education' had 'fair claim to being the most comprehensive review of primary education for 40 years' (Alexander, 2010, p.2). Whilst the CPR was not directly focussed upon FLL, in asking 'what was right in English primary education, what was wrong and what was needed by way of improvement' (Alexander, 2010, p.1), it asked questions it was felt were not being addressed by either side of the political spectrum: 'the political perspective had come to matter more than it should, England's state system of primary education had become too centralised and too overtly politicised' (*ibid.*). This is a point to which I return when reviewing FL in the primary curriculum in Chapter 3 (p.75).

Since the introduction of the UNCRC, schools in England have been encouraged by national guidelines to develop a children's rights-respecting ethos (DCSF, 2010; DfE, 2014). This has for example involved schools in setting up school councils and electing child council representatives. Alexander (2010, p.6) also alluded to 'children's voices' having become a significant strand in educational research and in educational policy in England. He also cites the UNCRC as a reason for this, in asserting the rights of children to express opinions on matters directly affecting them, and to be taken seriously.

Engaging with children's perspectives and 'voices' is also recognised beyond England's shores. In listening to children's voices, Ferreira et al (2008, p.259) argued that 'researchers are enabled to better understand social phenomena (Sant'Ana, 2010) with opportunity to gain access to new meanings about the lives of children (Trautwein & Goncalves, 2010; Palmadottir & Einarsdottir, 2016)'. It has also been argued that understanding young children's perspectives can provide educators with concrete information to effectively guide their practices toward improving children's learning outcomes, as expected by contemporary curriculum frameworks across the globe (Colliver & Fleer, 2016, p.1559).

Ferreira et al (2018, p.261) also endorse the importance of understanding the learning process from the perspective of children, arguing that 'efforts should be made to reduce the conceptual gap between adults' acknowledgement of children's competence and understand children's perspectives about learning'. Their study into children's perspectives on their learning spaces in schools in Brazil and Finland endorsed children as young as 3-6 years already as agents of learning as well as producers of their own learning environments, with a strong call that 'children must be featured as protagonists in their learning process' and be 'invited to imagine, design and make material changes' to their learning settings' (Ferreira et al, 2018, p.274). Findings by Colliver & Fleer (2016, p.1559), analysed through a cultural-historical frame, have also revealed children as young as 2yrs to be 'authorities on their own learning'.

2.22 Challenges engaging with children's experiences and perspectives

Despite arguments concerning an increase in research studies involving children's voices and perspectives together with the importance and value in so doing (Alexander, 2010; Drew & Hasselgreen, 2008; Wray, 2008; Coleyshaw, Whitmarsh, Jopling & Hadfield, 2010; Valberg, 2013), others posit that children, and especially younger children, have nonetheless been left out of such discussions - including policy and practice (e.g., Colliver & Fleer, 2016; Ferreira et al, 2018). In contrast to Alexander's (2010) argument about children's voices having become 'a significant strand in educational research', these instead only acknowledged 'some' increased interest in international research involving children's voices since the1990s.

They suggest this is due to an alternative position that considers young children as incapable of understanding what learning is and reflecting on their own learning process. Such a position is itself endorsed through consideration that metacognition does not develop in children under 4 years of age (e.g., Larkin, 2010; Powell, Graham, Taylor, Newell & Fitzgerald 2011). This does not however explain why the perspectives of (older) primary- school children (5-11 years) have otherwise remained under-researched.

The phrase within the UNCRC (1989) that children's perspectives and voices should be taken seriously 'with due weight given in accordance to their age and maturity' may also be a contributory factor, with subjective, adult-centric decision-making regarding exactly how much 'weight' and 'seriousness' to lend children's perspectives and 'voices'. Underlying notions of the child as more of a 'becoming' rather than a 'being' (Uprichard, 2008) may also be influential, together with the voices of more conservative theorists. Conroy (2007, p.23; 2020) for example suggested we 'overwhelm childhood with the anxieties of adulthood' and Thompson (2009) considered a 'rampant confusion about childhood'. Notions that children should have greater voice in the running of schools were rejected further to the argument that schools should be places where children can learn about the world without having to take responsibility for it (Thompson, 2009).

Research-engagement with children's voices is not considered the same as 'student voice' initiatives in schools. An initial review of the field revealed many more studies involving children that focussed upon tangible learning outcomes rather than children's own perspectives or 'voices'. This was also reflected in the study by Ferreira et al (2018), who similarly found more research 'linked to the effectiveness of educational programmes or practices aimed at the acquisition of specific knowledge or skills' (e.g., Burger, 2015; Goodrich et al, 2017; Crawford et al 2017). This indicates a gap in the field beyond England's shores, with a field dominated by 'adult-centric' research ostensibly focussed on addressing performative needs, but in so doing, effectively missing an essential ingredient: understanding about children's actual engagement and experiences.

In England, this appears especially apparent through an increasing politicised shift towards a centralised view of educational research, pushing for 'what works', such as the studies compiled by Churches (2013), badged as a 'quiet revolution'. This 'revolution' has since become much less 'quiet' due to an array of Government initiatives with a clear 'what works' narrative and notions of 'right', and thereby also 'wrong' research. Such trends arguably serve to lessen the impact of children's voices and perspectives by encouraging normative, positivist research approaches at the expense of others: *'Recent policies have done little to emphasise children's agency in English schools, instead prioritising a standards agenda dominated by proving performance within a tightly defined curriculum; a model underpinned by values of individualism and competition' (*Kirby, 2018, p.11).

Despite Alexander's (2010) assertion that engagement with children's voices had become a significant strand of research and policy in England, engaging with children's voices has instead been positioned in a less 'central' manner in England; one to which more 'lip-service' rather than real value and attention has been paid. This can be evidenced by what happened with the DfES funded longitudinal research into the experiences and 'voices' of children and practitioners in the Early Years phase conducted by Coleyshaw et al (2010). Commissioned by the DfES under the Labour government, it concluded at the juncture of the general election that brought in the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition. It was published under the new DfE with a clear preface indicating the report did not necessarily voice the views of the new Government, heralding a new ideological direction.

Whilst the UNCRC call to engage and realise the importance of acknowledging children's voices, it is apparent that it has neither been fully enacted nor realised in practice more widely, seemingly caught between polarised political agendas. Writing at the start of the 1990s and the beginning of the reported growth in research and policy involving children's voices, Erikson & Schultz (1992, p.467) offer an argument that the phenomenon of student experience and its diversity was neither of interest in debates of education policy nor research. These are sentiments which continue to have some resonance:

> *'It is a nuisance, a distraction, to think that different students, together with their teachers and fellow students, might be inhabiting and constructing profoundly different and subjective worlds as they encounter what the world presents as a standardised curriculum, with intendedly standardised methods of instruction and assessment'.*

Since the reported growth period of research and policy involving children's voices during the 1990s (Alexander, 2010; Ferreira et al 2018) a distinct lethargy in England in enacting Article 12 is instead apparent, with the value of doing so yet to be both fully accepted and realised in policy, practice, and research. Robinson's (2014) extensively referenced survey of published research building upon previous work undertaken regarding children's perspectives of primary education within the CPR (Robinson & Fielding, 2007 and 2010) countered Alexander's (2010, p.6) assertion that children's voices were a significant strand of research and policy in England. She instead writes of *'a continued scant amount of published research relating to pupils' views on the primary curriculum'* (Robinson, 2014, p.2).

The UK and Northern Ireland report from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 2016) also endorsed such a view. Its concluding observations in its fifth periodic report expressed concern about the lack of progress in the UK regarding promoting the rights of children. For example, whilst the UK-wide strategy, Working Together, Achieving More, was introduced in 2009, this had still, by 2016, not been fully implemented: 'children's views are not systematically heard in policymaking on issues that affect them' (*UNCRC, 2016.* p.6). Concerns were furthermore raised about the rapid increase in the number of academies and free-schools and their considered contribution towards substandard and deepened inequalities in the UK and Northern Ireland (*ibid*.p.18). The UK was ultimately tasked with the need to '*ensure that children are not only heard but also listened to and their views given due weight by all professionals working with children*' (UNCRC, 2016, p.6).

In addition to such endorsement of the value and need to hear and listen to children's voices, key findings from the summary report of the Social Metrics Commission (SMC, 2018, p.7) in the UK highlighted issues around poverty which arguably increase the urgency to engage with children's voices. With FLL having become statutory for all children in state primary schools in England between the ages of 7-11years (DfE, 2013), this is of note. Recognised issues of poverty further increase the importance of proactively engaging with children's voices, rather than their being marginalised. It also highlights the importance of engaging with a representative mix of *all* children's voices rather than engagement with adult voices or some children's voices 'speaking' for all. The summary report indicated that in September 2018, 32.6% of all children in the UK were living in poverty, with such trends since increasing. The extrinsic 'push' exerted by the UNCRC to engage with the child's voice has thus been acknowledged even if in the UK at least, the value of doing so has yet to be fully realised.

A possible way forward through such tensions was suggested by Mannion (2007, p.417). He argued that 'voice and participation research' needed to be reframed. Promoting the value of children's voice was argued to be insufficient, because the lives of adults and children are interdependent:

> Without a focus on the relations between adults and children and the spaces they inhabit we are in danger of providing a narrow view of how children's 'voice' and 'participation' are 'produced' (Mannion, 2007, p. 417).

Whilst my research is not focussed on how children's voice and participation are 'produced', Mannion's (2007) point about the need to focus upon the relations between the teachers (adults) and children is salient, and something to which I return in Chapter 4 (Methodology), mindful of Thompson's argument:

> If we listen to children, that is a starting point, but we must also understand how their voices are co-constructed. For Mannion, listening to children is only likely to be helpful if we also understand broader relational issues in society at large. In particular, he cites the work of Lee (2001) who has argued that, in an age of growing instability in adulthood, the traditional distinction between childhood 'becoming' and adult 'being' should be superceded by an analysis in which both adults and children are seen reciprocally as 'becoming' (Thompson, 2009, p.671).

2.23 Children's voice and agency

A need for initiatives and research to move beyond the idea of 'voice' and specifically toward that of 'agency' was proposed by Fielding (2007) who argued 'voice' is otherwise limited as 'a metaphor for student engagement':

> 'Voice' has too much about it that smacks of singularity, of presumed homogeneity, of deferential dependence on the unpredictable dispensations of those who deftly attune the acoustics of the school to the frequencies of a benign status quo (Fielding, 2007, p.306).

This is reflected by a recognised shift over the last three decades from research epistemologies regarding the child as an object towards the child as a social actor (Christensen & James, 2008; Valberg, 2013; Dennis & Huf, 2020). Viewing children as competent, active agents rather than as objects that are 'subordinate and secondary' (Clark, 2005; Conroy & Harcourt 2009; Lancaster & Kirby, 2010) is however not unproblematic, with Coleyshaw et al (2010) highlighting this as a complex notion. Uprichard (2008) problematised the tension between the polarised notions of children as 'beings' (actively constructing their own childhood) and as 'becomings' (adults in the making, lacking skills and experiences). In so doing he suggested these characterisations overlap, serving to increase – and thereby further endorse- studies exploring children's agency.

Whilst the notion of agency is recognised as different to that of 'voice,' Prout (2005, pp.64-65), attests that like 'voice', agency is often 'glossed over, taken to be an essential, virtually unmediated characteristic of humans that does not require much explanation'. The definition of agency provided by Emirbayer & Mische (1998, p.970) offers an understanding however of how both 'voice' and 'agency' may relate:

> 'a temporarily embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past but oriented toward the future (as a projective capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as a 'practical evaluative' capacity) to contextualise past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment'.

This definition in turn draws on the work of Mead (1934) for whom 'agency' was the capacity of actors to shape their own responsiveness to problematic situations. Three levels of conscious awareness were outlined, distinguished 'by the increasing capacity of actors to actively constitute their environments though selective control over their own responses' (see Table.1):

Table 1: Levels of conscious awareness (drawn from Mead, 1934):

Level of consciousness awareness	***Type of conscious awareness***	***Characterised by:***
1	'Contact experience'	Immediacy of response to sense and feeling
2	'Distant experience'	Capacity to use ideation and imagery in remembrance and anticipation
3	'Sociality in communicative interaction'	Social meanings and values develop from capacity to take on the perspectives (concrete and generalised) of others.

These ideas were further endorsed by Arendt's (1958/1998) 'subject-ness', more recently also drawn upon by Biesta (2019) and his concept of 'grown-up-ness'. These indicate that agency is to be found in a person's response to 'subject-ness': 'an agent is not an author or a producer but a subject…namely as the one who began an action and the one who suffers from and is literally subjected to its consequences' (Arendt, 1958, p.184). Arendt (1958) also proposed three forms of active life in which agency was understood as operating within the final form, 'vita active':

1) *Labour:* 'producing what must be consumed for life, such as food or wages'(Lau & Ho, 2018, p.15)
2) *Work/works of art*: 'the making of enduring things' (Lau & Ho, 2018, p.15)

3) *Vita Active*: human action/initiative involves intervening in the flow of events, by which citizens display freedom… by facing their world's challenges (Clohesy, 2004).

Emirbayer & Mische (1998, pp.970-971) posited three elements of human agency: iteration, projectivity and practical evaluation. They argued this allows agency to be examined via forms of action that are oriented towards to the past, the future or the present. This resonates with the initial definition proposed by Mead (1934), discussed previously. These are considered useful frames through which children's voice and agency, and not just those of adults, may be considered; drawn upon in data analysis:

Table 2: Elements of agency (drawn from Emirbayer & Mische, 1994, pp.970-971).

Element of agency	**Description**
Iterational	*The selective reactivation by actors of past patterns of thought and action, as routinely incorporated in practical activity, thereby giving stability and order to social universes and helping to sustain identities, interactions, and institutions over time.*
Projective	*The imaginative generation by actors of possible future trajectories of action, in which received structures of thought and action may be creatively reconfigured in relation to actors' hopes, fears, and desires for the future.*
Practical-evaluative	*The capacity of actors to make practical and normative judgments among alternative possible trajectories of action, in response to the emerging demands, dilemmas, and ambiguities of presently evolving situations*

These inform the wider sociological lens through which children's FLL experiences are explored and understood in this thesis: 'Our conception of agency is intrinsically social and relational since it centers around the engagement (and disengagement) by actors of the different contextual environments that constitute their own structured yet flexible social universes (Emirbayer & Mische,1998, p.973). My study of children's FLL experiences is therefore understood as an exploration and analysis of the variable interplay between such structures and agency. These two elements are not theorized as being mutually constitutive in a direct and stable way, mindful of Bruner's argument (1995) that a causal link between what was offered to children and what was then 'experienced' by children should not be assumed.

Kirby's (2018) ethnographic study on children's agency in a Year 1 English classroom provides a further reference point. Her study reported the skill of children in 'exploring cracks in the school day, with its emphasis on discipline and a knowledge-based curriculum, to transform their educational landscape and to let the light in' (Kirby, 2018, p. 15). Agency was understood as a phenomenon (or set of phenomena) to be 'described, understood and explained' (Biesta & Teddler, 2006, p.9) rather than as an explanatory theory for human action. My study similarly conceives children 'not as atomized individuals, but as active respondents within nested and overlapping systems' (Emirbayer & Mishe (1998, p.969).

2.3 Children as a distinctive group of Young Language Learners

The call for specific research that engages with children's experiences and perspectives is further strengthened by the identification of children as a distinctive group of 'young language learners (YLL)' (Hasselgreen, 2000). The context in which young language learners learn in school, what they are taught and with which materials is also recognised as particular, relative to older language learners. Applying findings from research involving older language learners to 'young language learners' is therefore considered problematic, as is applying FL teaching approaches that may 'work' for older language learners to younger language learners.

With almost all European countries now expecting children to have begun learning a foreign language (FL) by the age of nine and many starting at the age of 7 and some earlier (Enever, 2012), YLLs are generally defined as learners from five years to 12/13 years. This is reflected by the lower and upper limits of primary education, at least in Europe (Drew & Hasselgreen, 2008, p.1). Nikolov et al (2007) argued this shift also heralded a move from the traditional research focus on older language learners towards YLLs as a distinctive group.

Hasselgreen (2000, pp.262-3) cited 'YLLs' apparent enthusiasm for, and openness to learning new languages, and their need for special classroom methods'. By contrast such a definition implies that older language learners (beyond 12 years of age) may be defined as having less enthusiasm for, and openness to learning new languages and have no, or less need for any special classroom methods. Whilst such an assertion is rather general and clearly contestable given the amount of historic research that exists concerning older language learners, others have also highlighted that YLLs form a particular and 'special' group as their teachers are often not specialists in either one or both of language or language learning (e.g. Edelenbos, Johnstone

& Kubanek, 2007; Grauberg,1997; Kirsch, 2008; Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols, 2008;; Satchwell; 1999; Sharpe, 2001).

In defining 'YLLs' as a distinctive group, it is also argued that the foreign language produced by young language learners is different to that of older learners/adults (Drew and Hasselgreen, 2008). Ellis (1997, p.33) references interlanguage, a term coined by Selinker (1972) in recognition of the fact that second language (L2) learners construct a linguistic system that draws, in part, on the learner's L1 but it is also different from it and from the target language (TL). Whilst a learner's interlanguage is therefore recognised as a unique linguistic system, it is suggested that YLL's interlanguage is of itself unique, further distinguishing them as a distinctive group.

A range of studies also suggest that YLLs are special on account of their enthusiasm and openness to the learning of new languages and that motivation and positive attitudes to learning a second language are there to be fostered in primary aged learners (Dȍrnyei, 1994; Blondin, Candelier, Edelenbos, Johnstone, Kubanek-Gernam & Taseschner, 1998; Donato et al, 2000; Hasselgreen, 2000; Tierney & Gallastegi, 2005; Martin, 2012). Costley et al (2018, p.646) help update this, concurring with (Suárez and Muñoz 2011) that '*whilst the body of available research is smaller in the area of child language learning, language learning aptitude, which refers to the ability to learn foreign languages quickly and with ease, is dynamic in young learners who are still developing cognitively'.*

Such definitions of YLLs present their engagement with FLL as positive, dynamic, and distinctive, with children bringing different skills, facets, and dimensions to their FLL than older learners (including teachers). Such a distinction between 'younger' and 'older' language learner was supported by specific research conducted by Wray (2008). This concerned the learning of a new foreign language by a young bilingual child. She posited the way a young child learns a new language was different from the approach taken by older language learners. Rather than learn language as an older learner might by unpicking its elements and repackaging them lego-like in a 'block by block' way, younger learners 'just get on with it, like equal players in a football game' (Wray, 2008, p.269). She furthermore argued that it was during the primary phase, pertinent to this thesis, where children made this transition from 'younger' to 'older' language learner, at different times for different children. What may therefore 'work' and be understood for older language learners should therefore not be conflated with YLLs in Primary school, especially in the early stages; it may also be anticipated that the way children approach

FLL during the primary phase may differ, calling for a variety of teaching approaches through this phase.

In contrast to arguments considering YLLs as a distinctive group, Ofsted's (2021) research review instead presents children under the umbrella of 'the novice language learner'. With no recognition of possible distinctive attributes and particular abilities the YLL may bring to FLL as discussed previously, 'novice' language learners are presented as 'slow at recognising sounds/letters', 'slow at recognising and producing words and structures' and following 'slow, effortful and prone to error' processes of language learning. Progression in language learning is presented as a 'building block' trajectory for learners, largely focussing on the 'pillars' of phonics, vocabulary, grammar. This is resonant of Wray's (2008) earlier argument concerning how older language learners may perceive and engage with FLL 'block by block', and Uprichard's (2008) argument where children are considered as 'becomings' rather than 'beings', requiring children to fit into an adult-world, rather than the adult-world shifting to accommodate the needs and distinctiveness of YLLs. Such a view of the 'novice language learner' therefore appears 'adult-centric', supported by a literature-base that itself arguably lacks research both from and for the primary phase; a recognised gap in the field with implications for developing policy and practice. It is potentially problematic in realising identified aims of FLL, for as also argued by Wray (2008), the 'adult' way of FLL is not necessarily the most effective, given that languages, in the main, 'are just not that logical'.

Research into 'the YLL phenomenon' presented at the influential Pecs Conference in Hungary considered the wider picture and emphasised issues concerning young language learners (Drew& Hasselgreen, 2008, p.2). Such issues in turn arguably also distinguished YLLs as a group being particularly worthy of specific research interest, with five identifiable aspects:

1) issues pertaining to national implementation and age of acquisition
2) issues pertaining to YLL teachers, and teacher-education
3) activities, material, and curricula in the YLL classroom
4) the development of YLL language skills
5) the learners themselves.

Instead of treating 'YLLs' or 'novice language learners' as a homogenous group however, Erikson & Schultz (1992) advocated need to recognise and explore young learners' individual differences. Individual learner differences refer to psychological variables that either have been shown to impact on or are thought to have an influence on language learning (Costley, Gkonou, Myles, Roehr-Brackin & Tellier, 2018). Sufficient evidence arguably exits regarding individual difference variables in instructed adult language learning (Dörnyei 2005; Dörnyei & Skehan 2003), but, as argued by Costley et al (2018), these cannot be compared with child language learning. The current field remains limited. A salient point is raised by Djigunović (2012, p.55) who drew on the work of MacIntyre, Baker, Clement & Donovan (2002) in her study of young foreign language learners' attitudes and motivations. She posited that contrary to the historic view that all young learners were homogeneous, and thus less worthy of research, young learners vary among themselves just as more mature learners do. This suggests that learner variation should be included within any definition of YLLs, or 'novice language learner'.

If such assertions are accepted that YLLs are a distinctive and 'special' group of learners, they are therefore worthy of research that focusses exclusively upon them, their learning contexts, experiences, and perspectives – both as a distinctive group, and recognised and respected as individuals. The following section illuminates how children's FLL experiences and perspectives have nonetheless been largely side-lined from research, including those purporting to specifically include them, challenging the selection of relevant literature for inclusion in this review.

2.31 The position of children's FLL experiences in research

The five defining features of a 'YLL' were used as an initial framework to help locate and categorise literature. An initial review of FLL-specific literature highlighted a relatively contemporary and expanding nature of research concerning young (foreign) language learners – though not necessarily concerning their perspectives or 'voices'. Drew & Hasselgreen (2008) recognised that the global trend to introduce foreign languages at earlier stages of the curriculum may be one such reason for that. This trend was defined by Johnstone (2009, p.33) as 'the world's biggest policy development in education' whilst in Europe, the challenge set by the European Commission in 2002, to teach at least two foreign languages from a very early age, provided impetus for many countries to move initial teaching of a second foreign language from secondary to primary school, or to lower the existing starting age in primary school (Rixon, 2000). This arguably inspired a raft of research into practical and logistical implementation and teacher's experiences teaching FL, rather than upon those of children learning a FL. An initial review not only highlighted the problematic nature of locating research involving YLL perspectives, but research also involving YLLs commensurate with the considered definition (5-12/13 years).

One example is an extensive meta-analysis of the cognitive benefits of language learning commissioned by the British Academy and completed by Woll & Wei (2019), where the methodology, data gathering and analysis arguably side-lined the voices of YLLs, despite their apparent inclusion. The research included a set of online questionnaires, developed to explore stakeholder attitudes to language learning and perceived cognitive benefits: adults, youths, and children. One questionnaire was developed for adults and the other for youths and children, with a combined average age of 14 years: clearly older that the defined 5–12-year age-range of YLLs. They also report receiving over 740 responses to the adult questionnaire but only 40 usable responses from the combined child and youth questionnaire, affording children's perspectives much less 'voice'. A possible issue with the design of the questionnaire is also suggested, given so many were deemed 'unusable'. Such issues limit the validity of findings and provides an example of how children's voices within research that apparently includes them can instead become side-lined by decisions even experienced researchers make throughout the data collection and write-up processes.

Mindful of these limitations, the table of child/youth responses nonetheless shared by Woll & Wei (2019) indicates two statements being reported equally as most strongly agreed with, at 81% each: 'learning a new language will help me get a good job'; 'learning a new language takes a lot of time and effort'. Whilst such perceptions may not be representative of the age-phase with which my study is concerned, a cautious use of these findings indicate young learners may not perceive FLL as 'fun' and intrinsically worthwhile for its own sake such as is indicated by a range of other earlier research studies (e.g. Cable, Driscoll, Mitchell, Sing, Cremin, Earl, Eyres, Holmes, Martin & Heins, 2010; Martin, 2012) – developed in section 2.5, p.56.

Woll & Wei's (2019) systematic review of international evidence is also drawn upon by Driscoll & Holliday (2020). In their paper concerning 'cultural threads in three primary schools,' no mention of reported children's responses is made. Woll & Wei's (2019) meta-analysis and the additional part of their study involving the interviews of a range of adult stakeholders is instead referred to. However, in questioning how schools use languages as part of an overall suite of experiences to encourage, enliven and enrich children's lives, the relationship between language learning, academic learner achievement and the cognitive benefits of FLL were considered. They point towards evidence shared by Woll & Wei, that 90% of studies, reported a positive impact on learning across English language, literacy, maths and science. With studies including learners studying a new language finding it improved attention and mental alertness after only one week of study, Driscoll & Holliday (2020, p.67) ask: ‘Why then are languages marginalised in schools where students would arguably benefit the most?’ With a wide range of variables included within the meta-analysis improving its generalisability, this question may also be more confidently posed about the primary phase.

The extent to which such purported benefits are recognised in children’s own stated views and experiences, however, remains unclear. It also indicates further subtle ways in which children’s voices may become marginalised both in the research process and in the subsequent reporting and use of the research, limiting knowledge and understanding of this unique phase and group of learners, and its application to policy and practice.

A further example of the problematic and confused nature of FLL research concerning the experiences and views of YLLs is provided by the study included by Drew & Hasselgreen (2008) by Wawrzyniak-Sliwska (2007). Her study addressed whether autonomy was a relevant issue for YLLs in young learner classrooms, including how teachers understood it. The research however was ultimately based upon adult perceptions, not whether autonomy was a relevant issue for children themselves. Factors reportedly studied were the extent to which *teachers* allowed their learners to take responsibility for their own learning, the extent to which *teachers* believed young learners were capable of doing so and the strategies employed allowing learners to develop their autonomy. The study was based on interviews with 32 trainee teachers, 18 teachers and observations of 87 lessons given by pre- and in-service teachers. As a result, whilst purportedly focussing upon YLLs, its ultimate research questions, data collection and analysis led it to predominantly focus upon teachers’ perceptions of whether autonomy was an issue for children. It did not include those of, and from the children themselves.

A lack of commonality in studies about the age of YLLs is also apparent, requiring scrutiny. Despite YLLs being defined as a distinctive group between the ages of 5-12/13 years, diversity is nonetheless apparent in research studies in the involvement of children, or YLLs included in research within the field. For example, some research, drawn from Norway included in Drew & Hasselgreen’s (2008) review, was often still associated with the teaching at upper school levels, with most empirical research not actually involving YLLs as otherwise defined. When exploring the methodology of studies by Alexiou (2007) and Nikolov (2007), it became apparent that the Hungarian study involved pupils aged 12, 14 and 16; older than the proposed definition of YLLs (5-12/13 years) and the ages of children involved in this thesis (7-11years). Alexiou's Greek study, by comparison, involved pupils aged 5-9 years. This further emphasised the need for caution both in deciding which studies to include in this review and in extrapolating findings between studies as the actual ages of children involved were found to vary with potential to undermine the validity of this thesis if not duly recognised. It also raises a critical question concerning how the studies were categorised by Drew & Hasselgreen (2008).

Most international research into YLLs has also focused on contexts where English is the foreign language. As highlighted by Alexander (2001), there is an issue concerning the extent to which findings from one cultural context can be applied to other cultural settings. This is also indicated in applying findings from research with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and the learning and teaching of 'foreign languages.' The study by Liu & Evans (2015, p.1) concerned students with EAL and teacher constructions of languages in two Secondary schools in England. They similarly pointed to 'great variability of EAL practices in school' yet with 'relatively little research that examines the voices on the ground that underpin these varied practices'. The lack of research may itself lead to such variability, and appears to be a common thread, regardless of whether a foreign or additional language is involved.

There is recognised value and a need to engage with children's voices in research to help inform policy and practice, particularly with YLL and FLL in primary school. It is, however, apparent that engaging in such may be both challenged and challenging due to the ages of children included in such research, the wider logistical constraints concerning methodological approaches and decisions made in the research process together with an underlying counter-narrative that has perhaps served to diminish the extent to which research, policy and practices have engaged with children's perspectives about their learning experiences. Whilst this has challenged the selection of literature for inclusion in this review, it also signifies a gap in current research. As argued by Robinson (2014, p.9): '*as pupils have the experience of being involved in a wide variety of learning activities, they are a rich resource, and they have a wealth of ideas about what supports their learning; it is, therefore, a missed opportunity to keep pupils on the periphery when it comes to discussing and setting learning agendas.*'

2.4 Understanding children's experiences and perspectives

This section begins with consideration of children's broader learning experiences in school, through which literature concerning children's FLL experiences is subsequently framed.

2.41 Children's experiential coherence

In seeking to develop an understanding about children's FLL experiences and perspectives, Hargreaves' (1994, p.185) term 'curriculum and experiential coherence' was considered. He argued that experiential coherence for pupils 'has as its ideal that they should grasp coherence both within and between subjects', but that 'most pupils do not currently achieve such coherence, in either primary or secondary school'.

In arguing that any curriculum needs to be manageable and coherent within and between subjects, a tension is apparent. There is need for teachers to ensure progression and continuity within each subject, whilst also ensuring that the relationships between subjects are clear and explicit. Learning may otherwise be presented, and then experienced, as a series of disconnected experiences that lack coherence (Hargreaves, 1994). Specific issues can arise with in-subject coherence where teachers lack specialist subject knowledge. The example given is with science. He argues that primary teachers are 'more alert to problems of between subject experiential coherence because of the class teacher system' (ibid, p.185). Being relatively new to the curriculum, FL may place further demands on teachers' subject specialist knowledge, exacerbating the degree to which teachers are unable to make coherent links within the subject area or with other subjects. This may have further implications for children's FLL experiences in primary school.

Whilst dated, Holt (1964, p.37) noted from his own observations of pupils in primary schools that:

> '*For children, the central business of schools is not learning, whatever this vague word means; it is getting these daily tasks done, or at least out of the way, with a minimum of effort and unpleasantness. Each task is an end it itself. The children don't care how they dispose of it. If they can get it out of the way by doing it, they will do it'.*

This sentiment was later revisited and reiterated (Holt,1994) with Hargreaves (1994, p.185) also likening the experience of the curriculum as being like a 'brick edifice' with each element 'divided up into schemes of work, syllabuses, lessons, tasks'. Whereas the idea is that each element (or 'brick'), through schooling, is built by the child into an 'edifice of the learnt curriculum', Hargreaves argues that Holt was implying that instead, 'pupils stand amid a bombsite of disconnected bricks and fragments' (Hargreaves, 1994, p.185); ostensibly meaning that the child was left to make sense of each brick themselves, and learn – or guess- how to put them together themselves. In 1994 (p.186), Hargreaves argued that the introduction of the then new national curriculum 'rendered the task of achieving coherence difficult to manage in practice'.

Writing from an indigenous African perspective, Nsamenang (2005, p.4) argued that the value in knowing not only how children grow up thinking, but also feeling and acting in a given society 'cannot be overemphasized'. He posited that contrary to how learning is conceived by largely Eurocentric/Western perspectives, the 'African precept is of not shredding human knowledge into discrete disciplines.' Instead, 'the embedded knowledge, skills, and values children learn … are not compartmentalized into this or that activity, knowledge, or skill domain, but are massed together as integral to social interaction, cultural life, economic activities, and daily routines'.

With arguments endorsing the importance of children's experiential coherence supported by different cultural perspectives, there is value in considering the extent to which children's FLL experiences were cohesively experienced, and whether children related to their FLL more as 'learning' or as 'task completion' (see Chapters 4 &5).

2.42 Influence of the learning environment upon children's experiences

Wu's arguments (2003) that the motivational influence of the learning environments should not be underestimated 'as the immediate classroom setting produces a direct effect on the L2 learning process' appear compelling (also in Martin, 2012, p.349). Arguments posited by Dὂrnyei (2003) concerning the quality of the activities and the way in which they are presented impacting upon FLL experiences and attitudes endorse this. This is furthermore supported by James & Pollard's (2008) longitudinal ethnography involving twenty primary children in two, contrasting schools which found that well-matched learning activities, practical hands-on activities, and collaboration underpinned children's positive learning experiences.

The influence of children's social learning environments and collaboration is also endorsed by Nsamenang (2005, p.4) who posits, 'in principle, children are rarely instructed or prodded into what they learn but discover it during participation'. He emphasized the influence of peer culture on children's learning experiences, rather than a tendency to focus on the individual: 'In traditional Africa, the peer group plays a pivotal role in the development of this genre of cognition because, from toddlerhood, the child comes more under the purview of the peer culture than of the adult world.'

Returning to 'the West', both Corsaro (2003, 2005) and more recently Ferreira et al (2018) have also emphasised the role of children in co-constructing peer culture through their sharing of meanings. In the latter's comparative study, children 'not only referred to their peers as a reference point but also sought their voluntary and intentional assistance for learning how to do something' (ibid. p.274). Considering children's peer culture(s) in the creation and 'meaning-making' of coherent FLL experiences should therefore be included within the milieu of children's instructed FLL learning environments.

A need to concentrate on the social factors affecting pupil learning and 'on the ways in which teachers can create classroom climates which allow situations of 'high risk…and ambiguity to be coped with successfully' was emphasised by Galton (1989, p.4). The work of Margonis (2011) furthermore recognises the role social, collaborative relationships between the teacher and child have in the creations and realisation of learning experiences. As a contemporary educational philosopher based in the United States, his work aligns with the social constructivist, symbolic interactionist theories underpinning this thesis but offers a broader perspective.

In problematising the collaborative relationship between teacher and child, Margonis (2011, p.6) indicates more than class and race is at stake as regards educational success and failure. A strong call for pedagogies where teachers focus upon 'facilitating the development of strong relationships enroute to creating exciting educational environments and fertile contexts for social justice movements' is made instead. This call places responsibility upon the teacher or knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1978) rather than the child for fostering and building upon such collaborative relationships. Margonis however indicates this is anything but ordinary where wider educational policies in the USA (and I suggest, England) assumed an individualistic path of success and assimilation of students. In line with others (Holt, 1994; Pollard, 1996; James & Pollard, 2008) Margonis (2011) argued the 'narrative asserting every individual who wishes to succeed can do so, if only they work hard enough' otherwise 'transfers responsibility to the excluded students.'

Margonis (2011, p.5) nonetheless advocates viewing educational events 'in terms of the patterns and rhythms that transpire in a particular field, to enable educators ways to create powerful educational environments, even in neo-colonial contexts that pit students and teachers against one another.' This is because 'viewing educational events as social fields allows us to understand how the common classroom, which focusses each student on the material in front of them, creates impotent individuals who disassociate themselves from others' – or, as Holt (1994, p.9) argued, 'at its worst, school is … a place where children learn to be stupid'.

The underlying cultural narratives underpinning educational practices in schools and classrooms remain deep-seated, requiring a fundamental shift in ideology. As revealed by James & Pollard's longitudinal study (2008), whilst pupils actively negotiated their way through schooling, the teacher-pupil relationship was collaborative only in as much that was concerned with establishing and maintaining the 'moral order' of the classroom, behaviour and discipline. Margonis argued that 'huge polarities' between the 'education afforded the privileged' and the 'education of containment of others' remain. (Revisited in Chapter 3). Whilst the relational give and take which emerges in a relationship is recognised (Todd, 2003; Biesta, 2006), Margonis (2011,p.9) argued that whenever teachers act upon their knowledge of the student, they instead pursue their own desires and not the needs of students: '*As students and teachers engage in communicative give and take, various performances come to be accepted…participants develop a sense of which ways of speaking and acting are welcome…and which...may not'.* Biesta (2006, p.130) also suggests that humanistic ideals, as advocated by Dewy and Freire, 'limit the pluralism of pedagogies and lead to acts of educational exclusion and assimilation'. Margonis (2011, p.8) alternatively posits that the teacher's ideal of 'critical consciousness' leads them to respond favourably only to students who dialogue in the way expected of a critically conscious activist, while teachers attempt to bring wayward students around to the ideal. This provides at least one explanation for the way in which the collaborative relationship between teacher and child may remain limited, bound to the realms of the classroom moral code, behaviour and discipline as found by James & Pollard (2008).

Margonis (2011, p.8) advocated need of an educational language and practice which embodies a far more appreciative and nuanced understanding of students and a more generous search for the conditions that will enable all students to thrive: 'instead of expecting one form of dialogue, educators would do well to invite broad and cacophonous forms of interaction to the classroom'; for a praxis that enacts what Martin Luther King Jr. (2001, pp.157-158) referred to as 'a radical revolution in values', from a 'thing-oriented society', where national interests or economic competitiveness and 'human capital' are prioritised, to a 'person-oriented society'.

> 'By focussing upon the character of meaningful educational relationships, and not upon the specific human traits students are said to possess or upon the traits a pedagogy is designed to produce, relational philosophies of education have the potential to offer more humane and nuanced interpretations of educational events, while expanding the pedagogical possibilities for powerful educational interactions' (Margonis, 2011 pp.8-9).

The edited work of Pollard and Bourne (1994) also supports a critical understanding of the influence of learning environments upon children's experiences, informed by a range of respected authors. Whilst appearing dated, it sits squarely between the 1988 Educational Reform Act, which, discussed further in Chapter 3, introduced wide-ranging changes to the system: 'the most radical legislation in half a century' (Pollard & Triggs, 2000, p. 3), and the revised curriculum and national strategies subsequently introduced, leading towards statutory implementation of FLL in KS2. Pollard has since developed an authoritative focus on the sociological aspects of primary schooling making his inclusion pertinent.

Counter to the folklore adage that time at primary school 'are the best years of your life', the nature of what learning has been like for children in the primary school has often been reflected with more negative undertones within the literature reviewed. A clear argument arising in the edited work of Pollard & Bourne (1994) is that of the negative implications for both (adult) teaching and (pupil) learning experiences further to the way in which national governments in England had successively challenged teacher autonomy. This belies an assumption that if teacher autonomy is challenged and reduced, this leads towards negative learning experiences for children. This may also be questioned as a more 'adult' than 'child-centric' concern where the adult 'voice' is dominant even when involving and reporting upon 'children's experiences.'

Several studies reporting on children's learning experiences positioned both teacher and pupil together, likening the experiences of one with the other. For example, findings reported from the independently funded UK Economic and Social Research Council and eight year longitudinal Primary Assessment and Curriculum Experience (PACE) project (Pollard & Triggs, 2000) were summarised by Nias (2000, p.ix) as a 'vivid and disturbing picture of teachers' and pupils' evolving experience of the new requirements for curriculum, pedagogy and assessment' and of 'the cumulative effects of this experience upon their sense of autonomy, their motivation and their attitudes to, on the one hand teaching, and the other, learning'. Nias (ibid.) highlights that the research 'points up some of the unintended consequences of, and tensions within, the policies of three different governments, each intent on raising educational standards by… centralization and control, together with an appeal to the power of competition and parental choice'.

The volume of children's overall learning experiences in primary school with FLL may also remain limited, as findings from the PACE project indicated raising standards in the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science apparently were achieved, 'at least in part, by sacrificing some of the characteristics of teaching and learning in English primary schools that had drawn the attention of visitors and researchers from over the world' (ibid. p. xii) including cross-curricular learning.

Evidence is also presented indicating children from 'manual' families and those in inner-city and estate schools experienced a greater amount of time spent learning English and Maths than other children / children at other types of schools' (Pollard &Triggs, 2000, p. 52). This highlights the new curriculum at the time was implemented subject to local mediation leading to differences in what both teachers and pupils experienced. It also exemplifies Margonis' (2011) argument about two opposing types of education; one for the privileged and an 'education of containment' for others, was not confined to the USA but also evident within the England. It is indicative of a deep, historic entrenchment of such educational socio-economic and cultural divides (a point I return to in Chapter 3).

Further findings about pupil experiences of primary education reported by the PACE project (Pollard & Triggs, 2000) indicate most lessons observed involved children listening to teacher input, and then being set tasks to complete individually. It was 'exclusively the case' that where any co-operative group work was attempted, it was with 'higher-attaining children in schools serving more favoured socio-economic communities' (Pollard & Triggs, p.54). Such practices are endorsed by Margonis' (2011) notions concerning differences about the 'education for containment' of lower ability children from less-favoured socio-economic communities.

The extent to which the curriculum and experiences within the classroom may still reflect these nearly twenty years after these PACE projects is pertinent for my own analysis of data. Times have changed and are changing again with the introduction of the new Ofsted (2020) Inspection Framework and the new emphasis on the whole curriculum, including foundation subjects. Affecting educational change at a fundamental socio-cultural level may take a long time to abridge, so it can be anticipated that children in my study may still largely experience core subject learning, and that their experiences both with, and of FLL, remain on the fringes of their broader primary school experience.

2.43 Children's perspectives about learning in primary school

Robinson's (2014) review of empirical studies based in the United Kingdom published since 2007 provides an updated, useful point of reference concerning children's perspectives about their experiences of teaching and learning in the (English) primary school. Studies selected from the 'scant amount of published research' (Robinson, 2014) specifically involved those which explored children's experiences from the perspectives of the pupils themselves, and not studies which reported on teacher perspectives of pupil experiences; criteria which matched my own rationale. Studies included in her review furthermore help provide an empirical sample; most studies involved between 100 to 450 primary pupils, though three studies included involved considerably less, and three were much larger, involving between 1000-2000 pupils. All studies included in her review favoured surveys, questionnaires and/or face to face interview as data collection methods. This supports a holistic, empirical understanding of children's perspectives regarding general aspects of their primary schooling, useful as a foundation for my own study's focus on their FLL experiences. Robinson's review furthermore confirms not only the gap in published research focussing upon children's own experiences and perspectives of the primary curriculum, but the further gap in such studies involving qualitative, ethnographic approaches, such as those developed in my study.

The review of pupils' views on the ethos of their schools highlighted the importance of the relationships and behaviour within schools, how cared for and respected they felt and the pupils' sense of 'belonging' to the school community. Two studies into rights-respecting schools (Covell, Howe & McNeil, 2010; Sebba & Robinson, 2010) highlighted pupils in such schools reported less incidents of bullying and positive relationships between staff and pupils. Covell et al (2010, p.48, in Robinson, 2014. p.6) noted that pupils in schools not actively working towards a rights-respecting ethos were more likely to comment on the school's physical resources such as equipment and the playground, rather than a positive school ethos where staff were genuinely felt to care for pupil well-being and respect their pupils. Furthermore, children in schools promoting a rights-respecting ethos were found to express more inclusive views than children from schools not actively working towards this (Chamberlain, Golden & Bergeron, 2011). Overall Robinson's review suggests that pupils are happiest and feel most secure at schools with positive relationships between staff and pupils, and where there is an absence of bullying. However, these are cautioned as 'initial insights' only to ensure that stated intentions of building positive, mutually respectful relationships are realities experienced by all groups of pupils. Of particular interest is the third section of

Robinson's review: pupils' views about their learning in primary school. Two studies largely inform this part of the review, one by Hopkins (2008) which involved eliciting the views of 180 junior pupils between 7-11years about their learning, and the other by Chamberlain et al (2011), looking at children's views about education policy. Robinson's review of these, and other supporting studies will now be synthesised to consider clearly what can be learned from published research about what pupils report liking and disliking about their learning.

Hopkins (2008) found that pupils in all participatory year groups expressed a liking for 'hands-on', active learning with a desire to be challenged and stretched. These findings match aspects previously identified as important for children's learning (eg Donaldson, 1978; Piaget, 1952; Vygotsky, 1962). Older pupils especially in Year 6 however, also expressed a particular desire for independent learning, resonant of Csikszentmihalyi's (2008) notion of learner control and opportunity to 'lose' themselves in their learning tasks: 'flow'. All pupils were found to enjoy having a variety of activities, '*being able to break away from routines*,' '*having different teachers,*' and '*lots of different teaching'* (Hopkins, 2008, p.399 in Robinson, 2014, p.7). Children expressed a liking for enough time to complete their activities, and older children highlighted the value and enjoyment of their afternoons in school over the repetition and coverage of the core subjects in the mornings. History, art, music and drama were valued by the older pupils as being 'good subjects that teach you a lot' (*ibid.*) but given too little time and attention in school. The studies by Wall (2012) and Miller & Lavin (2007) both reported pupils recognising the value of having clear learning intentions and success criteria, with Wall (2012) also reporting the preference expressed by pupils for opportunities to take ownership of their own learning.

Conversely, pupils in Hopkins' study (ibid.) in all participatory year groups expressed dislike for 'over-talk' by the teacher, giving them too little time to complete their tasks, not having enough time to work independently, being rushed and feeling under pressure. The study by Chamberlain et al (2011) reported older pupils in the primary phase were unhappy and weary about the amount of pressure teachers placed on them to achieve. Pupils also expressed feeling de-motivated by long lessons and 'the predictable routines and rhythms of schoolwork' (in Robinson, 2014, p.8). This echoes the findings relating to 'boredom' as reported by Pollard & Trigg in the PACE project (2000) and is resonant of one of the least optimal mental states of learning as identified by Csikszentmihalyi (2008) where challenge and skill level are not well matched. Whilst Goodnow & Burns (1985, in Pollard & Triggs, 2000, p. 51) provided some evidence that many school pupils in their study were not overly concerned about the subject content they are required to study, the more pertinent question as raised by Pollard & Triggs (2000) was the question of what children were actually expected to 'do' in terms of reading, writing, listening, talking, making.

Too much writing, copying, working from books and repeating things were cited by children in Robinson's review (2014) together with some older children expressing frustration about a lack of challenge, with the example given of a child having their work marked as correct but being asked to copy it out again neatly. Older learners also complained about the dominance of the core subjects in the mornings and amount of time spent practising and preparing for the Standard Attainment Tests (SATs) at the expense of other subjects. The study by Wall (2012) reported pupils' dislike for explicitly teacher-directed activities and Chamberlain et al (2011) reported on pupils' dislike for being disrupted by other pupils 'messing around in class and being told off' (Robinson, 2014, p.8), having their teacher's attention directed away from supporting their learning and dealing with disruptive pupils instead. Whilst some aspects of children's learning experiences arguably seem to be perceived in similar ways in terms of what children liked, there remain elements that may be perceived in diverse ways by different pupils. It is in exploring any such diversity that this thesis has opportunity to offer fresh insight.

Whilst the above highlights that children in these reviewed studies valued and desired more variety in their lessons with a greater balance between the core and foundation subjects, Robinson (2014) notes that very few studies reported on pupils' perceptions of their learning and experiences relating to specific subjects. The study by Murphy et al (2012) from Ireland is cited as one notable exception. It is a large study exploring the experiences of and attitudes towards science in school of 1, 149 primary aged pupils aged 6-12 yrs. Robinson highlights that the findings from this study resonate with the findings about children's views and experiences about learning in general in primary schools. For example, pupils enjoyed engaging with 'hands-on' science, wanting more practical science and less writing, and liked working collaboratively with a friend rather than on their own. They also expressed a preference for less teacher-talking, less use of textbooks and worksheets, being negatively disposed towards reading and writing in their science lessons. These are summarised in Appendix 1 (p.300).

2.5 Children's experiences of FLL in primary school

Rich (2014) warned that merely lowering the age of L2 commencement without appropriate investment in the quality of the teaching can lead to an impoverished classroom experience for students and the development of negative attitudes towards language learning. Evidence however exists that shows children enjoy FLL (Cable et al 2010; Kirsch 2008; Martin, 2012; Maynard 2011). Many of these studies are however over ten years old and were conducted at a time when FLL had substantial government funding and support prior to gaining statutory status (developed in Chapter 3). These studies also focussed mainly on teachers' subject and pedagogic knowledge, curriculum content and teaching practices. Within this frame, the following section reviews selected literature concerning what may nonetheless be gleaned about children's FLL experiences.

Studies that included reference to children's perceptions and perspectives of FLL that emerged from the 'capacity building phase' during 2002-2012 for Primary Foreign Languages in England (developed in Chapter 3) have reported children's enjoyment of FLL, with frequent reference to fun (e.g., Cable et al, 2010; Hunt et al, 2005; Kirsch, 2008; Martin, 2012; Maynard, 2011). Whilst Kirsch and Maynard were writing within their own textbooks, Cable et al's study comprised empirical research, which was robust, tested and evaluated, funded by the DfES.

The Pathfinder Evaluation (Martin, 2012) provides a salient 'end-point' to research conducted during this phase in England, focussing on pupil perceptions of FLL in KS2. Findings emerging from this comprehensive study across 19 Pathfinder Local Authorities with 41 case study schools reiterate that children were 'generally overwhelmingly positive towards their language learning experiences in all the Pathfinders and across all year groups. They were typically enthusiastic and attentive, and regarded their language lessons as both fun and useful' (Martin, 2012, p.348). Particular likes that were expressed related to lesson content – the topics and tasks children engaged with e.g. numbers and days of the week. It was also reported that children liked making links between the similarities and differences between different languages. Children participating in this study were reported as speaking extensively about the range of learning activities that they enjoyed such as songs and games, though these declined a little for older children. They also appreciated their teachers' use of actions, visual and kinaesthetic aids to support their learning, speaking in pairs and groups and participating in team activities. Martin (ibid. p.350) also reports that these types of activities clearly set language lessons apart from the rest of the curriculum, and pupils 'mostly described their lessons with enthusiasm and obvious enjoyment'.

Findings reported more subtly within this Pathfinder Evaluation indicated that occasionally, some teachers perceived pupils' reactions as mixed, although 'hardly any children claimed to dislike language learning entirely' (Martin, 2012, p.350). Whilst the report indicates that different children responded differently, it is unclear who the 'some children' may be. For example, 'some children' reportedly expressed anxiety about the use of the target language and lack of comprehension, whilst others expressed frustration at learning pronunciation, just repeating, memorising lots of words and the overuse of games. Other causes of 'low level anxiety' related to difficulties with reading and writing and spelling in the target language. Furthermore, it was suggested that maintaining 'some' children's initial enthusiasm after one year of learning was becoming problematic where children were 'beginning to suggest they were losing interest in the teaching' (Martin, 2012, p.351) – a phenomenon also recognised in the Secondary phase of education with the waning 'novelty factor' of learning something new (Forder, 2015).

The report also highlights that literacy related activities were emerging as 'problematic… in lieu of the fact that the KS2 Framework for Languages incorporates literacy related activities from Year 3' (ibid.). It was also reported that 'some children' were aware that some of their classmates were 'getting left behind', and expressed concern for their well-being' (Martin, 2012, p.354). A few children were reported to feel frustrated at their own limited progress and complained about the amount of repetition and lack of challenge in some lessons (Martin 2012, p.360). As such, it appears that as it was only a few children, these responses were ultimately of less interest and afforded less prominence in the report. The overarching emphasis was otherwise placed on the reported fact that 'hardly any children claimed to dislike language learning entirely' (Martin, 2012, p.350). Such findings about children's likes and dislikes arguably however also only represent a broad, basic canvas of understandings about children's experiences and perceptions regarding FLL. It is the finer detail expressed within Martin's (2012) report that provide for nuance, specifically picked out for the purposes of this thesis.

An imbalance between children considering their learning of French in the primary school either as too challenging, or not challenging enough was one finding emerging from my MA study investigating the impact of learning French in an integrated way on attitude and motivation (Schulze, unpublished, 2012). Notions of 'Friday French' were reported more favourably than 'Tuesday French', with the former comprising the new (novel) integrated languages practice with a student teacher rather than their regular diet of French lessons as otherwise timetabled and resourced. Findings from that study alluded to more variation in children's responses which were only in part attributed to children's ages and cognitive ability. Reasons for such differences in findings could be attributed to the study's methodological approach involving a smaller sample size with longer engagement over a period of a term with the schools/children involved. In this way, it became apparent that just because a child was of an apparent higher cognitive ability, it did not always equate with better learning outcomes or a more positive disposition, and vice versa. Given the study was about a 'change' in approach to French, these findings may also be more about children's relationship with change than explicitly with beliefs and perceptions in general about their FLL experiences. It does however indicate the contribution that small-scale, focussed studies can make to overall knowledge and understanding in the field.

2.51 Children's classroom language preferences

Macaro and Lee (2012) argued that young children tend not to prefer a L2-only classroom. This supports findings from other studies relating to the use of L1 and L2 in immersion programmes in promoting cross-linguistic awareness (Lyster, 2007; Lyster, Collins & Ballinger, 2009; Ballinger, 2013; Murphy, 2014). Murphy's assertion (2014, p.139) therefore, that translation as a pedagogical activity could have some benefits for young learners 'if used appropriately', would seem to have merit with young children reportedly tending to prefer a mix of L1/L2 languages in the classroom.

Parrish (2020) investigated student's views as to the languages they would like to learn and their views of particular languages. The sample size was large with 666 students completing questionnaire. It is included even though it involved children aged 14-15 years, given its focus on children's views in an English context. The paper concluded that students were interested in a wider range of languages than is currently available, for reasons mainly relating to perceived usefulness. It also found that (Secondary) schools were constrained by operational concerns preventing them fully considering the possibility of teaching a wider range of languages. In discussing implications for national-level language policy and the culture of school accountability, Parrish in turn echoes the call for diversification with the national languages 'diet' to counter the 'vicious cycle of monolingualism' (Tinsley, 2013).

Costley et al's (2018) paper investigating language learning strategies of monolingual children and those with EAL in contrast was conducted with primary school children, in England, of an age commensurate with those involved in my study. Evidence of hegemonic practices and the dominance of English as the standardised language through which children experience FLL are however also clearly apparent:

> *'The facts that the class teachers saw English as the school language, that they were not MFL specialists, and that MFL teaching and learning played only a very minor role in the school's curriculum all seemingly helped enforce a monolingual norm that does not see or treat multilingual children as special or qualitatively different' (Costley et al, 2018, pp.653-4).*

In exploring how EAL children, monolingual children and their teachers in a Year 4 primary school class in England perceived and related to FLL, Costley et al (2018, p.646) recognised the evidence is mixed. Drawing on both Cenoz (2003) and Tellier (2015): '*A possible reason ... is that children tend to display positive attitudes throughout, showing relatively little variation. Such a situation may help explain why correlations with achievement are not necessarily found. Existing research suggests that individual differences between learners are likely to play a role in children's instructed MFL learning in a limited-input classroom setting'* (Costley et al, 2018, p.646)

Their research followed a mixed methods approach, conducted over one week. It comprised observations of two French lessons, interviews with children which included questions about what languages they liked, and with both teachers, including questions about current and past experiences with languages, questionnaires about background and attitude and tests of French proficiency, metalinguistic awareness and associative memory. The methods used to ascertain children's attitudes and perceptions relied upon Year 4 children self-reporting through questionnaires and interviews and upon *teacher's* perceptions of children's language learning and any differences *they* perceived between children with EAL and monolingual children. The lesson observations instead reportedly focussed upon other aspects, namely: which language(s) were used by the teachers and the children (French, English, other languages); whether French was compared to English or any other language; whether metalinguistic information was used; whether any observable learning strategies were used by the children; whether EAL children's multilingualism was drawn on in any way; and anything else noteworthy.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, findings indicated that children had a very positive attitude towards learning French with the monolingual group showing slight variance that their EAL group. They also report girls indicating they had more positive attitudes than boys, but with a small effect size. Interestingly, *'As the French classes require the EAL children to learn a new language through English, the potential challenge can be appreciated. Conversely, our results suggest that in the monolingual group, individual differences do not matter for improved development of French proficiency. This may suggest that the French classes cater for the weaker monolingual children. Lower* *levels of metalinguistic awareness and associative memory are no hindrance to French achievement, such as it is, and higher levels do not convey the expected advantage.'*

Costley et al (2018, p.652) report all children being positive about the notion of multilingualism, commenting on the social dimension of knowing different languages, making friends and helping others in and outside of school. Whilst nearly all children were reported as liking learning French, they also reported finding pronunciation and spelling difficult, resonant of Martin's (2012) findings. Both monolingual and EAL children' understanding of French of did not go beyond a set of new words to learn; teachers 'seemed to have low expectations in terms of their pupils' academic achievement in learning French and argued that the 'real' learning of French would take place in secondary school (Costley et al, 2018, p.653). Use of the Rigolo French programme was reported by teachers as being easy to use and a 'quick fix', enjoyed by pupils, whilst insufficient time for learners to progress was argued with French 'definitely not a priority' in the busy school curriculum. The classroom observations suggested that English was widely used throughout the French lessons, with French primarily used for individual or choral drilling of individual words or short phrases. Some translation of French words and phrases and some writing of individual words in French also happened. Although children were reportedly enthusiastic about the French lessons and remained engaged throughout, uses of language either as an object of study or as a communicative tool were reportedly absent: 'French lessons focused exclusively on rote memorisation of individual words and short phrases'. The study concluded that 'potentially valuable knowledge, skills and experiences of these learners remain under-explored and under-utilised in the primary-school classroom' (Costley et al, 2018. p.654).

2.52 The phonological impact of the FL upon children's perceptions of FLL

In recognising that early language experiences may establish a foundation for later learning Pierce, Chen, Delcenserie, Genesee & Klein's (2015) neuroscientific research study is included as it sought to investigate the influences of early language experience on later neural processing on both bilingual and monolingual children. Using electro-magnetic resonance imaging, the phonological working memory of three groups of children were scanned: monolingual French children, children adopted from China before the age of three and who discontinued Chinese and spoke only French, and Chinese-speaking children who learned French as a L2 whilst maintaining their Chinese. The study found that whilst all groups performed the research task equally well, brain activation between each group differed, leading to the conclusion that:

> ‘Early exposure to a language, and/or delayed exposure to a subsequent language, continues to influence the neural processing of subsequently learned language sounds years later even in highly proficient, early-exposed users’ (p. 1).

The study offers potential insight into ways in which exposure to the sound of the FLL in primary school may have some emotional influence upon the ways in which children build upon subsequent FLL experiences and respond to these.

The importance of what children experience in terms of what FLs they hear, when and how often has the potential – at least theoretically – to influence the ways in which children may subsequently respond to their FLL experiences both initially and building incrementally over time. Pierce et al’s (2015) study indicates that the way in which children initially learn to respond through the ways in which their neural networks are formed, may potentially be sustained at least in terms of the ‘phonological impact’ of the taught FL. This makes the choice of target language(s) to which children are exposed and taught of increased importance. Children’s experiences and perceptions may be informed and shaped by the sound of the taught FL and may influence the way in which children subsequently interpret, or ‘make-sense’ of their FLL experiences; the phonological impact of hearing the FL. The range of foreign languages that children are exposed to both at home and in school may therefore make a difference to their experiences and perceptions. Pierce et al (2015) argue that:

> *‘The impact of early developmental experiences on later neural outcomes is a compelling question. It is a particularly relevant issue in the domain of language learning given the wide variety of linguistic experiences children encounter in an increasingly global world’* (p.2).

With evidence that neural representations supporting the processing of the language acquired during the first months of life are not overwritten or lost overtime but maintained in the brain, a question arises concerning how long whatever representations of FLL that the children develop when they are first introduced to it are maintained. Once initial neural responses to the FL have been made and recognised by the child, to what extent can and do subsequent phonological experiences with the FL serve to reinforce, challenge or even change a child’s perspective? Furthermore, what, if any, phonological impact is there for the child in simply hearing the FL in their FL lessons/learning activities, given that ‘phonological working memory is a component of executive functioning responsible for storing and manipulating incoming speech sounds in memory' (Klein et al, 2015, p.2). I return to these considerations in Chapter 4.

Children's speech or phonological perception of foreign languages is not a specific research question framing this thesis and it is recognised as having an entirely separate discourse (Kuhl, Conboy, Padden, Nelson, & Pruitt, 2005; Werker & Hensch, 2015; Baddeley, Gathercole, & Papagno,1998). Klein et al's (2015) findings, however, suggest that speech perception of the FL could have some possible influence upon how some children may respond to and perceive their FLL experiences and inform the analysis of my data. In reflecting upon this point, I recollect my daughter asking me to read to her in 'my other voice' (English) if reading a bedtime story in German. This suggests that the prosody of a language may have some bearing upon children's emotional responses and perceptions of what they experience with FLL in the primary school.

Whilst the study provided evidence that very early language experiences have a lasting influence on how the brain processes the sounds of a language, it also found that neural differences 'did not preclude the achievement of equally advanced language proficiency' highlighting 'the incredibly adaptable ways that the brain is able to respond to a variety of language-learning circumstances' (Klein et al, 2015, p.8). It might therefore be anticipated that children may still achieve well with FLL whilst still maintaining a more negative affective disposition towards the given FL; you may be able to learn to speak it well and do well learning the FL; this does not however necessarily mean that you will still like it or think favourably of it.

In further consideration of this argument, Piller (2011) touched albeit informally on the ways in which hearing unfamiliar sounds, rhythms and tonalities including in music and with foreign languages, can seemingly cause strong, physical responses in some people. She draws on other neuroscience research investigating the role of the brain's release of dopamine when hearing unfamiliar sounds; small quantities of which can cause feelings of happiness whereas large quantities can lead to schizophrenia. Her musings, however, concerned adults. Children's brains are recognised at a different stage of development and maturity than an adult brain. In also considering the brain as one of the most flexible organs in the human body (Kuhl et al, 2005), it is considered plausible that children's brains may likely also soon adapt to the effect of hearing unfamiliar sounds, tones and rhythms, such as children are exposed to when learning a FL, to a greater or lesser extent depending on the language itself and similarity to children's mother tongues. This still however suggests the choice of target language(s) during the primary phase of education together with decisions about how, where and when to expose children to them may not be inconsequential in terms of children's developing perceptions. It also reiterates a further way in which children, as YLLs, may be distinctive to older language learners, with greater propensity to move between more languages than an older learner may.

In summary, a simple comparison between children's reported likes/dislikes and their reported likes/dislikes with FLL in primary school, indicates a few similarities between FLL and learning more generically across the curriculum. (See Table 3). Aspects that appear conducive to children's FLL experience and wider learning include active learning with variety and collaboration. Less conducive to children's learning in both FLL and in other curriculum subject areas, appear to be repetition, and too much time spent reading and writing. It is also apparent that there appear to be more things reported that children dislike about both FLL and other subject learning, than they like about them, summarized by Table 3:

Table 3: Children's reported likes and dislikes about FLL and other learning in primary school: (drawn from a range of studies by: Ballinger, 2013; Chamberlain et al, 2011; Covell, 2010; Hopkins, 2008; Lyster, 2007; Macaro & Lee, 2012; Martin, 2012; Murphy et al, 2012; Porter, 2020; Robinson, 2014; Schulze, 2012; Wall, 2012).

Children like…	**Children dislike…**
1. Making links between the similarities and differences between different languages	1. Use of target language; over talk by the teacher
2. Range of learning activities e.g., games, songs	2. Lack of comprehension
3. Break from routines	3. Learning pronunciation – lots of repetition
4. Active, hands-on learning e.g., use of actions, visual and kinesthetic aids	4. Just repeating things
5. Variety of teachers	5. Memorising lots of words
6. Speaking in pairs and groups	6. Overuse of games
7. Participating in team activities	7. Reading, writing and spelling in the target language
8. Novelty factor of languages	8. Limited progress
9. Mix of L1 and L2 in the classroom	9. Lack of challenge
10. Opportunity to experiment with different languages	10. Too much challenge
11. Just the right challenge – desire to be stretched	11. L2 classroom only
	12. Limited/no choice of language to be learned
	13. Working by themselves

12. Range/diversity/choice of languages 13. Independent learning together with collaboration with friends 14. Taking ownership of own learning 15. Having time to complete activities 16. History, art, music, drama – variety of subjects 17. Warm, affective climate in the classroom and school	14. Predictable routines and rhythms of schoolwork 15. Too little time to complete tasks 16. Being rushed and feeling under pressure to achieve 17. Long lessons 18. Worksheets and textbooks 19. Too much reading 20. Too much writing, copying and repeating things 21. Dominance of core subjects 22. Teacher-directed activities 23. Being disrupted by other pupils messing around and being told off

2.53 Children's emotional responses to FLL

This chapter has thus far presented a range of preferences and perspectives held by children, as a distinctive group of YLLs, as reported in literature. Upon reflection, each of these aspects appear to have one thing in common: the emotional responses of learners both to the language(s) being learned and to the way it is presented for learning. FLL appears to elicit a range of emotional responses from learners, but this has not always been explicitly acknowledged. The study by Forbes et al (2021), concerning the development of secondary school learners' multilingual identities, is one exception:

> 'Emotions are an important factor in language learning: Aronin and Laoire (2003: 22), for example, speak of the 'emotional changes accompanying the process of acquiring a new language while moving from a mono- or bilingual state to a multilingual one' and Dewaele (2011) similarly highlights the emotional dimension of the language learning process and…. the role that the teacher can play in shaping these emotions in the classroom' (ibid, p.4).

The study of young foreign language learners' attitudes and motivations by Djigunović (2012, p.55) concluded that these are, like emotions, unstable characteristics which 'change over time, creating layers of complexity that warrant further research.' She too, critiques the popular belief, acknowledged in Murphy's review of literature (2014, p.57), that 'all children are highly motivated to learn FLs, have very positive attitudes and no inhibitions, and are successful by default'.

Learning conditions may have much greater importance in developing and sustaining positive FLL experiences in the case of languages other than English (Djigunović, 2020). This develops her thinking from 2010, where she posited that structured teaching, proper guidance, enough space for concentration and an appropriate amount of teacher attention to the young language learner were found to be key to positive attitudes and motivation during the early years of FL learning.

In attempting to focus this review on literature involving YLLs one study located and included with Drew & Haasselgreen's review (2008), centred upon young learners' cognitive skills (Alexiou, 2007) and several studies were located which compared young learners of two foreign languages (Nikolov, 2007). Findings from these studies from Greece and Hungary respectively suggest that there is firstly a link between cognitive skills and young learners' achievements in learning a foreign language, suggesting that teaching methods should be adjusted to match, promote or enhance the progress of YLLs. Secondly, strong relationships were found between achievements and intensity (number of weekly hours) and socio-economic status (indicated by parents' level of education).

Findings from the studies of Alexiou (2007) and Nikolov (2007) also indicated that practice and methodology appropriate to the age group were rarely in tune with each other. It could therefore also be surmised that, faced with practice and methods better suited to older learners, those children more emotionally and socially mature and adept would also fall into the higher achiever group of language learners. Whilst these studies were both concerned with achievement, the extent to which cognitive skills, intensity, socio-economic status and practice/methodology may also influence children's emerging perceptions about foreign language learning, and their actions in class, is therefore of relevance for this thesis.

2.54 Children's agency with FLL

In drawing this section to a close, a study by Kirsch (2012) suggests whilst children may have limited control within the classroom environment, they remain social actors. Her study involved Y5 children in England, whilst 'not an ethnography,' drew on sociocultural theory and ethnographic methods to explore children's language learning strategies (LLS), where French was the taught FL. The paper itself draws on data gathered ten years earlier, in 2002, at a time when, as acknowledged, language provision in the school was 'good' (Kirsch, 2012, p.26). Reported findings provide a reminder that 'children do not necessarily learn what teachers intend them to learn' (ibid., p.21), as previously argued by Nsamenang (2005) (see section 2.42, p.49). Children did some reading and memorising of vocabulary even though the class teacher was not observed to focus on those aspects. Kirsch alludes to the way in which children seemingly 'engaged in the French activities on a deeper level than one might expect' (ibid. p.21) and the way in which some children at least were able to recognise 'the potential particular situations hold for language learning, and …pay particular attention', for example, by writing German words in their notebooks even though the teachers did not ask them to. Her findings indicated that children were able to develop LLS in the absence of explicit strategy instruction, reasoning that the 'strategic' primary classroom appeared to have played a greater role that the FL instruction itself (ibid. p.26). She acknowledges that 'children had limited control in their language lessons but were fortunate their Y5 teachers promoted learner autonomy,' already recognised as an important feature of children's positive dispositions towards FLL in school (see Table 3, p.64-5). Kirsch's findings also endorse children as social actors (Christensen & James, 2008; Dennis & Huf, 2020).

2.6 Children's perceptions of FLL

It is useful for my study into children's FLL experiences and perspectives to consider the role of learner beliefs and perceptions in relation to FLL. This is presented in the following section.

2.61 Children' language learning beliefs

Highlighted by Pajares (1992, in Barcelos, 2003, p.7) beliefs about language learning have been called a 'messy' construct. One study also reported by Drew & Hasselgreen (2008) involved a comparative study of language *teachers'* beliefs involving the major languages taught in Norway. In this context, 'beliefs' were defined as 'a form of personal knowledge consisting of implicit assumptions about students, learning, classrooms, and the subject matter to be taught' (Kagan, 1992, in Drew & Hasselgreen, 2008, p.10). In considering the merit of this definition for the purpose of my study focussing on children's experiences and perceptions of FLL, it is useful to attempt to view this definition from a pupil's perspective. Being thus re-written, the definition of *pupil* beliefs in relation to language learning could be: 'a form of personal knowledge consisting of implicit assumptions about *teachers*, *teaching (the process of being taught)*, classrooms and the subject matter being *learned*.' Following this, learner beliefs about language learning could perhaps be elicted through exploring any implicit assumptions held concerning:

1) how they are taught

2) assumptions about the teacher themselves

3) the (classroom) environment in which they are learning

4) what they are learning (content)

Viewed in this way, an approach could be considered where data relating to each of these aspects is gathered and triangulated to see what may be learned from this about the nature of pupil beliefs.

Defining beliefs about language learning is, however, understood to be more complex than such an approach might at first suggest. Such difficulty may be partly due to 'the paradoxical nature of beliefs' and the 'different agendas of scholars' (Pajares, 1992, in Barcelos, 2003, p.7). Barcelos (2003, p.7) also noted the existence of different terms used in literature to refer to beliefs: folklinguistic theories of learning (Miller & Ginsberg, 1995); learner representations (Holec, 1987); representations (Riley, 1994); learners' philosophy of language learning (Abraham & Vann, 1987); metacognitive knowledge (Wenden, 1986,1987); cultural beliefs (Gardner, 1988), learning culture (Riley, 1997); the culture of learning languages (Barcelos, 1995), and culture of learning (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996). Such a profusion of terms is not necessarily negative: 'the issue is not the pluralism of labels, but the recognition of the phenomenon itself' (Freeman, 1991, p.32). Furthermore, whilst there may arguably be a profusion of different labels, there is nonetheless at least one observable similarity between them: beliefs are not only one dimensional; they have a cognitive and a social dimension, and 'are born out of our interactions with others and with our environment' (Barcelos, 2003, p.8). She argues that 'understanding students' beliefs means understanding their world and their identity' (ibid. p.8). Concurring with this view is Gauvain (2005), arguing that a shared understanding is created during peer reactions in lessons.

Kalaja's critical review of studies on beliefs about SLA (1995, in Barcelos, 2003, p.10) drew the conclusion that at the time, beliefs had been seen mainly as 'cognitive entities to be found inside the minds of language learners' characterizing beliefs as stable. In comparison to Barcelos' three distinct approaches, Kalaja identified two, categorising the then current studies as: 'mainstream', and proposing instead that beliefs be researched via a 'discursive' approach. Her own definition of beliefs as related to language learning states they are a 'dynamic and socially constructed concept' (p.10). She suggests that beliefs in learners should therefore be investigated in their 'stretches of talk' or 'pieces of writing'. In comparison, Barcelos (2003, p.11) purports that ‘normative’ approaches to such research, take the definition of beliefs to be ‘synonyms for preconceived notions, myths or misconceptions’, where an implicit assumption is that ‘students’ beliefs are wrong or false, and the opinions of scholars are right and true’. Her review suggests that studies in this approach usually use or adapt the use of the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) developed by Horwitz (1985) or invent their own. The ‘metacognitive approach’ defines beliefs as ‘a subset of metacognitive knowledge’, otherwise referred to by Wenden (1987, in Barcelos, 2003, p.16) as ‘the stable, statable although sometimes incorrect knowledge that learners have acquired about language, learning and the language learning process.’ Both normative and metalinguistic approaches are argued to have the aim of generalizing about beliefs about SLA. In contrast, the ‘contextual’ approach she recognises and as illuminated by the studies included in Barcelos & Kalaja (2003), infers beliefs from actions, as well as from intentions and statements. Here, beliefs are investigated from different perspectives, aiming to describe student beliefs as embedded in their specific contexts, and data is triangulated ‘to bring students’ emic perspectives into account’ (Barcelos, 2004, p.19). The relationship between beliefs and actions is defined as being one of cause and effect with the normative and metalinguistic approaches, with the aim of finding ways to transform learners into better learners. In contrast, the contextual approach seeks to gain a better understanding of beliefs in specific contexts and appear more mindful of Bruner’s (1995) argument about not assuming a causal link between what is offered to children and what is then ‘experienced.’ Such studies have used a variety of methods including ethnographic classroom observations, case study, phenomenography, diaries and narratives, metaphor analysis, and discourse analysis (Barcelos, 2003, p.21).

Barcelos (2003) highlighted a relative paucity of research into learner beliefs about Second Language Acquisition (SLA), stating that such research interest only began in the mid-1980s. In reviewing such research up until 2003, she concluded that very few of them reviewed the common methodologies used in the investigation of beliefs about SLA, stating that the research had mainly ‘described beliefs without trying to understand why students have certain beliefs and what role they play in students’ learning experiences’ (ibid. p.7). Research involving YLLs was even more scarce. In the collection of research papers edited by Kalaja & Barcelos (2003) for example, only one of the studies directly involved young children (Alanen, 2003); the rest involved adult learners or teachers. This one study by Alanen (2003, in Kalaja & Barcelos, 2003) into young language learners’ beliefs about language learning was therefore particularly pertinent for my thesis.

Alanen’s study (2003) has been the only study located which not only concerns itself with similar questions posed by my own proposed study, but also involves young participants; in this case ‘first and second graders’ in Finland. Even then, Alanan referred to her study as ‘embryonic’ (Alanen, 2003, p.82), stating that ‘more needs to be done to specify the nature of beliefs as a type of psychological and cultural tool or artefact, and that further research is needed to investigate how beliefs are put into practice during language learning’.

2.62 Metaphor and simile to describe children’s perceptions and understandings of FLL

The use of figurative language as a way of explaining young children’s engagement with FLL is apparent in literature. Wray’s (2008) paper for example used similes and metaphors such as playing football or being like a bull in a china-shop to explain what the act of engaging with FLL is like for young children, whereas it was likened to building a wall from lego for older learners. Her study drew on one pre-school child’s developing bilingualism where English was the foreign language. The figurative language appears to be her adult interpretation of what it is like for children, rather than language arising directly from children themselves.

Other studies have expressly focussed on the use of simile and metaphor in their research methods about learner perception of foreign languages (e.g., ÇavuŞoĞlu, 2013; Farjami, 2012; Fisher, 2013): ‘The advantage of enquiring into learners’ thoughts and beliefs through less explicit means is that the findings are more likely to be authentic and genuinely reveal beliefs and values learners cherish’ (Farjami, 2012, p.93). Fisher (2013) also argued that beliefs influenced how learners would construe what they experienced in the classroom and their learning behaviours, endorsing the importance of including such consideration in this review.

These studies were however again found to include participants older than YLLs. ÇavuŞoĞlu’s (2013) small-scale comparative study involved eleven participants from Turkey and Germany. Limited information is shared concerning the cultural and social background and context in which the participants were recruited and the ways in which the teaching and learning of the foreign language (German, in this case) was approached. Whilst not stated, it is also believed that participants were older than YLLs, given the context and nature of participant responses reported. This limits overall validity and applicability of this study to my own but it is of interest nonetheless because of its direct engagement with language learners about metaphors concerning foreign languages and learner perceptions about foreign languages. A wide range of metaphors and similes arose from the study involving just 11 participants, due in part perhaps because of the methodological approach which directly asked participants to suggest metaphors with which they perceive foreign languages. Many suggested metaphors were also of surprise to me and appeared unique to the cultural and socio- economic context as well as to the given individual. I also consider them to be quite creative responses to the question the researcher posed for them in an essay-based task to be completed over a period of 50 minutes: "A foreign language is like …, because …" (ÇavuŞoĞlu, 2013, p.38).

Metaphors and similes such as petrol, peach tree, money, the sky, human shadows, the internet, musical instrument, rope, son and spaghetti were apparent and coded. Some depicted the foreign language being learned as illuminating eg '*The foreign language is like a rope, because it knits different cultures, traditions, ideas each other' (sic.)*; others however depicted challenges and tensions, Eg *'The foreign language is like my son, because he annoys me every day. Learning language is also annoying*' (ÇavuŞoĞlu, 2013, p.42). The study concluded by affirming that learners in each group provided different metaphors about the (same) foreign language being learned and those in Germany provided more than those in Turkey. Those from Germany referenced both the challenges and 'entertainment' involved in the learning of a foreign language whilst those from Turkey made no reference to those, and only to the 'illuminating' nature of learning a foreign language. In this way, the affective influence of culture and context upon learner perceptions is also illuminated: *'The country and its conditions and also the structure of language can affect the learning and teaching process. However, language teaching process should be carried out not only by considering the country's conditions in which the language is taught but also by considering the country's conditions from which the learners come'* (ÇavuŞoĞlu, 2013. p.42). In considering the creative range of responses elicited by the research approach adopted, this study provided a further salient reminder to me about the influence different methodological approaches and decisions can have on resultant data, further endorsing the qualitative, interpretive approach selected for this thesis.

Such gaps acknowledged in the reviewed literature present an opportunity for my own study; by seeking a considered methodology to help attempt to understand why children may hold certain perceptions and understandings, and the role this may play in their experiences of FLL. Of note is Barcelos' (2003) suggestion of the existence of three distinct research approaches when looking at the definition of beliefs, methodologies and the relationship between beliefs and actions: the normative approach; the metacognitive approach; the contextual approach. A comparison of these is summarised in Appendix 2 (p.301).

The main methodologies employed by most studies reviewed arguably fall under the ‘normative’ and/or ‘metacognitive’ approaches. Findings from these studies are therefore arguably valid only within the research perspective within which they were conducted. The many assertions that have been found to occur in existing research and other literature that children find learning languages ‘fun’ and that they enjoy the experience for example, may therefore only have arisen because of the similarity of research approaches adopted to date; respondents’ choices may ultimately have been restricted by the set of pre-determined statements or questions provided, and the methods adopted may not have adequately allowed for sufficiently different interpretations by respondents.

Considering this, it has become clear that, when considering my own research questions, the approach most relevant, and the one that would potentially add the most ‘new knowledge’ to the body of current research in the field, is the ‘contextual’ one. Here, beliefs are seen as context specific, meaning that it is necessary to investigate children’s experiences and understandings within the context of their actions and ‘stretches of talk’ (Kalaja, 1995, p.10).

2.7 Summary

A lack of studies involving YLLs at an age commensurate with KS2 in England is apparent. The international trend to initiate language learning at a young age is arguably now well-established, with a growing body of research exploring pedagogy and the impact on teachers and teacher education. Much previous and current research however involves young learners learning English as a foreign language in contexts where the multi-lingual, cultural and political context is arguably very different to that in England. A further gap in research investigating children’s experiences is evident, particularly in research attempting to explore that from a child’s perspective, and especially involving primary-aged children in an English context. Instead, it has been found that such research has often instead involved, if not relied upon teacher/educator perspectives about children’s experiences rather than direct involvement with children. Reasons for this gap have also been identified and discussed.

Murphy (2014, p.138) highlighted the lack of available research reporting on the pedagogical approaches taken by teachers of FL and children’s experiences. This echoes Garton, Copland and Burns (2011) who, given the recognised increase in FL instruction around the world, also emphasize this anomaly. Much literature that did concern FLL learning in primary school was also found to concentrate predominantly on learning outcomes, with trends in research concentrating on exploring and identifying ‘good’ or ‘effective’ practice with ‘what works’ and implications for teachers rather than specifically upon the impact on learner perspectives (e.g., Churches, 2013; Edelenbos et al, 2006; Murphy, 2014; Phillips, 2017; Porter, 2020). Whilst there is a wealth of international literature pertaining to learners’ motivation for FLL (Djigunović, 2012; et al), this becomes more limited when considering literature related specifically to YLLs, and even more so regarding research with YLLs, learning FLs, in primary school in an English setting.

By exploring what children experience with FLL in primary school and how they respond, this study has potential to shed fresh insight into the influence of pedagogical approaches upon children’s developing views and understandings regarding FLL in a specifically English context. This research therefore addresses this recognised gap in research-informed understanding.

As a result of this review, this thesis moves forward with a pretext that children’s perspectives regarding their FLL experiences are developing, and not fixed. Within this framework, Djigunović (2012, p.69) highlights the importance for the teacher to understand how and why their learners’ motivation changes over time, ‘so that they may be able to arouse and maintain it successfully through appropriate motivational teaching strategies.’ This is countered by Illeris’ argument (2014, p.159) however, that most teachers are aware of the need for motivation, ‘but, by trying to motivate their students make the mistake of trying to create motivation instead of finding it.’ His position is that motivation is deeply rooted in a person and cannot be created or imposed if the motivation is to be strong enough to trigger transformative learning, or, as proposed by Larossa (2002), the ‘transformative experience’. By exploring the extent to which primary classroom practices and pedagogies for instructed FLL might influence the development of children’s relationship and understanding of the nature of FLL, my study is therefore more concerned with Illeris’ recognised need to ‘find’ children’s inner motivation, rather than looking for ways to better ‘create’ or ‘impose’ it. It is emphasised however, that this thesis has not set out to focus on ‘motivation’ itself.

Not only are children recognised as a distinctive group meriting particular research interest as YLLs, but with their ‘voices’ having largely been side-lined, there is a recognised gap in the field of FLL, addressed by this thesis. As endorsed by Robinson (2014, p.13):

> ‘The benefits to both pupils and teachers of consulting pupils about teaching and learning are well documented (Robinson and Fielding, 2007 and 2010) and endorsed as recommendations in the Cambridge Primary Review final report (Alexander et al 2010). There appears to be continued

> interest by teachers and school leaders in developing measures that can be used to consult pupils about matters to do with teaching. However, there have been limited advances made when it comes to translating these interests into classroom practice…thus, the situation remains where it is all too common for pupils to be excluded from discussions about the kinds of teaching that support or hinder learning…Teachers have responsibilities to make decisions which are in the best interests of the children with whom they work. However, there needs to be a deliberate move away from these 'best interest' debates and decisions in relation to teaching, being based on only adults' perspectives, rather than being informed and guided by the opinions and perspectives of children themselves.'

In recognising children have capacities to develop sophisticated forms of representation for meaning and understanding (Tizard & Hughes, 1987), children are conceptualised in this thesis in line with Pollard & Bourne (1994, p.13) as '*social beings who construct their understandings from social interaction within specific socio-cultural settings. They are seen as intelligent social actors who, although their knowledge base may be limited in absolute terms, are capable in many ways.'* By seeking to explore the experiences and perspectives of children regarding a specific curriculum area (FLL), this research also addresses this further recognised gap in current research. It is a desired outcome of this research that in its sharing and dissemination, future decisions regarding FLL in primary schooling have opportunity to be increasingly informed by children's, rather than just adult-centric, 'best interest' perspectives. As endorsed by Clark & Moss' (2011, p.48) international review of listening to and consulting with young children, 'young children will be best served by changes to policy and practice which remain alert to their differing perspectives and interests as well as their needs'.

CHAPTER THREE

Foreign Languages in the Primary phase of education: purposes and practices

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the context, purpose, and practices of FLL within the primary curriculum, informing an understanding of the contexts within which children's FLL experiences reside. It begins by establishing the intentions and historical context of primary education and FLL. The review draws on Biesta's (2010) 'functions of education' to inform an understanding of 'what happens' with FLL in primary schools. The chapter reviews a range of literature to consider why, what, when and how foreign languages are taught to children in primary school. It argues that FLL inhabits a problematic place in the primary curriculum in England. Despite much initial investment in preparing for FLL as a new, statutory subject in the primary curriculum, it remains an elite outlier, challenged by a curriculum and context that has yet to fully realise, engage with and capitalise upon both the purported distinctive attributes of YLLs discussed in Chapter 2 (section 2.3, p.41) and the distinctiveness of the primary phase.

3.2 Primary Education: What is Intended?

Framed simply within the national context of the most recent English National Curriculum, a two-fold function of England's national, primary state education is apparent (DfE, 2013, Section 2.1): preparing children for their future lives (arguably through the auspices of the past) by introducing 'the best that has been thought and said' and 'essential knowledge'(DfE, 2013, Section 3.1), and developing children's spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development.

A broader perspective embracing the historical, political, social, cultural, and economic context of the English National Curriculum supports a more complex view. One of the first contestable queries is defining what 'essential knowledge' and 'the best that has been thought and said' is, according to whom. Education and education policy in England cannot be considered without first gaining an understanding of its use as a political tool by which successive governments have sought to gain and retain power and influence. The neoliberal trend of setting measurable targets by which Governments may hold others to account and 'prove' to the electorate the impact of their policies is one such mechanism. Many ideological and cultural viewpoints frame big, political questions of what education is for, and thus the particular purpose served by primary education, and within that, FLL. A rich literature surrounds this broad area and whilst greater discussion is beyond the scope of this review, a broad overview helps establish a critical understanding of the basis within which children's FLL experiences in this study reside.

3.21 Political influence: uniformity and initiatives

State education in England, including FL in the primary phase, is widely recognised as becoming increasingly politicised and 'controlled' since the National Education Act in 1988 and subsequent introduction of the National Curriculum, further to political demands for greater transparency of what was taught and greater accountability for school leaders and teachers (Alexander, 2014; MacAllister, 2016; Margonis, 2011; Phillips, 2017; Pollard & Bourne, 1994; Pollard & Triggs, 2000; Robinson, 2014; Tinsley & Doležal, 2018). With state education at the time likened to a 'secret garden', the argument was that children's educational outcomes had suffered under left-wing progressive, 'child-centered' ideology which required improvement to support and sustain national economic growth (Jenkins, 1995).

Interventionist Government policies subsequently led to greater centralisation and uniformity across state schools (Bryan, 2009; Jenkins, 1995). Schools, teachers, and 'education' remain rarely away from Government and media attention, subject to greater control and direction than arguably any other profession. Policy documents such as the 'Excellence in Schools' White Paper (DfES, 2007) placed 'education …at the heart of Government' with expressions of 'zero tolerance of underperformance'. Flagship 'National Literacy' and 'National Numeracy' projects were introduced (DfE, 2011) with the 'Literacy Hour' for example explicitly directing much of the content and lesson time for teachers, and by default, children. Compliance with these measures was subsequently assured by the introduction of the national inspection of standards in education office, Ofsted.

In September 2014, FLL joined Key Stage 2 (KS2) in what had become an increasingly controlled and accountable curriculum and educational environment which had been weathering various initiatives, often before their success or otherwise could be evaluated. Both the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, introduced in 1997 were for example quietly phased out in 2011 by the same Government that had, much less quietly, introduced them. One of the newest initiatives schools have been required to fully engage with, other than FLL, is 'Synthetic Systematic Phonics', indicative of the repeated investment and input with two 'core' elements of Primary education: English and Mathematics.

In paradoxical support of effecting such changes, teachers, schools, and 'education' have been positioned against the 'greater Government good'. In 2013 for example, then Education Minister, Gove, positioned the 'Marxist blob' of educationalists against the 'rightful' policies and practices of the Government. In 2021, such sentiments were again echoed by Gibb, then Minister for Education, writing for the online Conservative home platform that the 'failing system they inherited' was 'the fault of politicians from all spectra' who over decades were 'swayed by a cadre of education academics promoting assertions as fact, driven by ideological certainties.'

Such initiatives are of pertinence given that by Government direction, free-schools, and academies, whilst publicly funded, are not required to teach the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013). Since the national elections of 2010, the agency, roles and responsibilities of different types of schools have increasingly diversified, in line with the overarching political ideology of the time whereby competition and marketization practices were introduced and strengthened within national education (Bryan, 2009). It may be anticipated that different children's experiences of both what is taught, and how, may also be becoming more, rather than less diverse.

State education in England is thus framed as an integral part of a contested political battlefield. The nature of the curriculum, its purpose and resultant impact on children's learning experiences might be conceived as a political power-ball. Clarifying the purpose of primary education is thus not without tension, neither debate. It also underlines the importance of establishing the political context and dynamics of the time this research was conducted and completed, to enable a critical understanding of what, and how, children experienced FLL.

3.22 Effective performance

An era of educational performativity is highlighted, with education becoming centred and driven by the measurement and comparison of performance in high stakes assessment at local, national, and international levels (Alexander, 2012; MacAllister, 2016; Margonis, 2011; Phillips, 2017; Pollard & Bourne, 1994; Pollard & Triggs, 2000; Robinson, 2014; Tinsley & Doležal, 2018). The culture of such measurement is seen as problematic with Biesta (2010) arguing it was not just students who suffered, with increasing expectations also placed on research to generate evidence about 'what works,' while teachers are increasingly working in conditions of excessive 'managerial accountability.' The '*Transformational Languages Research by Teaching Alliances*' compiled by Churches (2013) provides a salient example. By focussing attention on technical and instrumental values geared towards effectiveness and performativity, ultimate and normative values have been neglected (Biesta, 2010).

A classification of learning and teaching offered by Pollard & Triggs (2000, p. 65) (see Appendix 3, p.302) is useful both in considering the extent to which the reforms from the1990s onwards heralded a shift from progressive, 'competence' ideas towards 'performance education', and the value of such models in supporting an understanding of children's FLL experiences. A clear power differential between teachers and pupils is implied, suggesting that children may be experiencing limited learner autonomy, explicit regulation, and control, with a focus on the 'products' they produce through explicit structuring and instruction. Margonis (2011) recognised a negative influence of such a power differential upon the nature and type of learning experiences afforded the child (see Chapter 2, p. 50) with Pollard (1994, p.26) positing:

> '…children develop their perspectives, strategies…in response to their need to cope with circumstances which adults … control. If such adults fail to co-operate, to liaise, to negotiate, or to think their actions through, then it is the children who will suffer. Certainly, such vulnerability deserves our attention and can, I would argue, best be addressed by focussing on the nature of the learning provision in different settings and by recognising the integrated nature of that experience'.

Such a shift in emphasis towards performance education was endorsed by Kamens (2013, p.17), recognising this as an international phenomenon. His paper focussed on globalisation and the emergence of an audit culture, where a 'horse-race mentality' of educators and education was depicted. Ten years prior, Ball (2003), had already recognised teachers and schools spending more time compiling information that 'proved' they were meeting policy targets or performing better than 'normal' standards – themselves set by the ruling elite - indicative of how ingrained the audit, performativity, and accountability culture since 1988 had become for state schools and teachers. Such a culture arguably encouraged research focussing upon teachers and 'what works', rather than children and their experiences.

3.23 The historical context of primary education

Based in England, my study inevitably inhabits a bespoke national and cultural context. Understanding such a context requires a brief review of the historical context in which children's FLL resides as, 'by failing to situate the problems of contemporary education historically we are again limited from understanding issues of politics and control' (Goodson

& Marsh, 1996, p.3). The school subject is itself argued to be 'socially and politically constructed and those involved deploy a range of ideological and material resources as they pursue their individual and collective missions,' (ibid. p.131). The social construction of such issues was also indicated by Young (1977, pp.248-9): 'such limits are not given or fixed but produced through the conflicting actions and interests of (men) in history'. Echoed by Goodson (1990), a call for the inclusion of a social constructivist perspective with any study involving school subjects has long been made, endorsing its use in this thesis.

Children of different social classes, genders and ages both in England and across Europe have historically experienced purposefully different schooling experiences: 'the link between schools, and an essentially meritocratic view of the social order was discernible across Europe at the time of the Reformation' (Goodson &Marsh, 1996, p.8). Languages, in the form of Latin or Greek, were positioned in England in 1868 (Taunton Report, in Goodson & Marsh, 1996, p.9) as an 'elite' curriculum area, offered as part of a classical and extended academic education for sons up to 18 or 19 years, 'of men with considerable incomes independent of their own exertions…or professional men… and men in business whose profits put them on the same level'. Schooling up to 16years was instead for the 'sons of mercantile classes' (ibid.) with a 'less classical and more practical orientation'. Schooling up until 14years was 'for the sons of smaller tenant farmers, smaller tradesmen and superior artisans' with a curriculum based on the 3 R's: reading, writing and arithmetic. Most of the working class (boys) in contrast remained in elementary (primary) schools, being taught basic skills in the 3 R's.

Three distinct phases and purposes of education dependent upon a child's gender, age and socio-economic background are apparent. Three separate traditions in English primary education, also linked to social class and gender, were also discerned by Blyth (1965, p.20), explored further in support of understanding the place of foreign languages within the curriculum (see also Appendix 4, p.297):

1. **Elementary or 'Utalitarian' tradition:** 'An education of the ordinary people by the ordinary people' to 'help prevent crime, disease, disorder' with an emphasis on basic skills and 'meticulous…conscientious compliance'.
2. **Prepatory or 'Academic' tradition:** Aimed at the upper middle class. An emphasis on 'subjects' and scholarship.
3. **Developmental or 'Pedagogic' tradition:** Open-plan education; the use of projects, co-operative activities and 'the elimination of subject divisions'.

The curriculum was adapted according to social status and needs of each class, determined by the ruling class. The term ‘universal education’ did not equate with ‘the institutionalisation of fair and equitable democratic schooling’ (Goodson & Marsh, 1996). Rather, a system of ‘class’ pedagogies and curriculum developed together with three message systems, as identified by Bernstein (1975) through which education is still recognised: curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation (assessment).

Literature concerning the historical context of primary education indicates a foundation upon two opposing knowledge bases: ‘one elite knowledge and the other the knowledge of the masses’ (Goodson & Marsh, 1996, p.113). By the late nineteenth century, the curriculum had three intertwined traditions, within which FLL largely resided as an intellectual discipline in the more elite, ‘classical (academic) tradition’:

1) ethical (utilitarian) tradition: moral and cultural development
2) classical (academic) tradition: intellectual discipline and close textual study
3) non-academic (pedagogic) tradition: concerned with enjoyment and appreciation.

Some long-established differences between curricula for the ‘elite’ which included languages, and for ‘the masses’ which did not, are therefore implied.

3.24 Hegemonic subject dominance

This chapter has so far indicated the political, historical, cultural and socio-economic importance of ‘core subjects’ in the curriculum for all, with languages instead emerging as an ‘elite’ aspect for the few. The addition of FLL to KS2 in 2014 afforded it ‘foundation subject’ status joining others such as history and art. A strong argument is however presented by Goodson & Marsh (1996, p.13) that a ‘definite pattern of prioritising pupils through curriculum’ remains as a feature throughout the years, resulting in ‘fragmentation and internalisation’ with conflicts and compromises both between and within subject areas. Languages, namely Latin, Greek, and then French and German as ‘modern languages’, were firmly under the umbrella of an established, elite academic subject; desirable, if not required, for university entrance; ostensibly desirable, if not required, for children’s educational learning experiences.

Similarities have also been apparent within other English-speaking nations, indicating the specific national context of this study is not unique. In Australia for example: ‘the fundamental assumption …was that the traditional academic disciplines are more to be valued than the non-academic subjects' (Freeman Butts, 1955, in Goodson & Marsh, 1996, pp.13-14). In reviewing the then newly established comprehensive schools in England, Shipman (1971, pp.101-102) noted that internal differentiation and subject fragmentation existed within the schools: 'inside the common school, a curriculum for inequality was apparent'; a school that is 'still clearly divided into two sections, one geared to a system of external examinations within established academic traditions; the other less constrained… still in its formative stages'. Such a phenomenon was also predicted by Dewey. Writing in America at the time of the First World War, Dewey (1916, p.372) theorised that the rise of vocational education was 'likely to become an instrument in accomplishing the feudal dogma of social predestination'. The overall function of education could therefore be argued to be predominantly concerned with social and cultural production and reproduction in terms of the specific knowledge, understanding and skills deemed necessary for each social class.

'Core subjects' in successive primary curricula have remained a hegemonic feature of primary education particularly for the education of children from lower socio-economic backgrounds: 'school subjects emerge as the most quintessential of social and political constructions that intersect with patterns of social relations and social structure and are intimately implicated in the reproduction thereof and in processes of cultural transmission' (Goodson & Marsh, 1996, blurb). The introduction of FLL as a new, 'hard' subject therefore called for a change to the status quo. Hoyle (1969) warned such change was 'major'. In contrast, learning a foreign language (usually English) has long been a 'core' subject in European jurisdictions (Kubanek-German, 1998).

3.25 Functions of education

Within such a problematic field, Biesta's (2010) 'functions of education' provides a useful reference. Together with the idea of there being 'three' phases and traditions of education as discussed in section 3.23 and 'three' message systems proposed by Bernstein (1975), Biesta added to the allure of 'three' by proposing 'three' functions of education: qualification; socialisation and subjectification. By examining these, particularly regarding the balance offered between each, Biesta posited that a richer discussion about the aims and purposes of education (and thereby also FLL) would be facilitated. Such a frame may also illuminate findings emerging from this study concerning FLL as an 'educational event' (Margonis, 2011) and how, drawing on Ferreira et al (2018), children may be constituted by the FLL curriculum and how, drawing on Mead (1934) and Blumer (1969) together with Emirbayer & Mische's definition of agency (1998), they may actively constitute themselves with it.

A strong argument that education should be about more than socialising students and helping them obtain qualifications was presented by Biesta (2009). Issue was taken with the increase of the language of 'learning' being used in education policy rather than the language of 'education', arguing that the focus has become more about what the individual can learn (and what can be measured) rather than a focus on whether what is learned is educationally valuable: 'the danger is we end up valuing what is measured, rather than that we engage in measurement of what we value' (Biesta, 2010, p.16). For the purposes of this thesis, examining what children come to 'value' -learn and understand about the place and nature of foreign language learning in their educational experiences is of central interest: framed by Biesta's 'subjectification' function, where students may become independent of existing orders; supporting ways of being in which the individual is not simply a 'specimen' of a more encompassing order.

Caution in using terms such as 'education', 'learning', 'schooling' is also suggested. Biesta's argument resonates with one previously proposed by Holt (1964;1994), where use of the term 'learning' rather than 'education' is comparable with Holt's use of the term 'schooling.' Biesta's argument is, however, not without critique. MacAllister (2016) for example argued whilst Biesta was advocating a return for more discussion about the purposes of education and a call for greater debate about the content of education, this was undermined by Biesta maintaining he did not want to specify what the purposes of education should be. MacAllister presents a reasoned critique of aspects of each of these functions in relation to their usefulness in discussing what the purpose of education is. In considering children's experiences and the functions served by FLL, Biesta's concept remains of value. A resume of this framework is presented in Appendix 5 (p.304).

3.3 FLL as a new subject in the curriculum

Against a backdrop of political, ideological, and economic tension, where some subjects in the curriculum were valued more than others, the introduction of FLL in 2014 was not without tension. Its introduction not least provided challenge to the established status-quo of subjects in the primary curriculum. The following section considers the positioning of FLL within the curriculum as a new subject area in KS2 in England.

3.31 The birth of a subject

Consideration of how subjects have come to be represented in education systems is of relevance given my focus upon children's experiences of FLL as a fledgling addition to the statutory KS2 curriculum. Other than a resume offered by Mitchell & Myles (2019), no study was however located that expressly focussed on how FLs were introduced into the primary curriculum in England. The following therefore contributes new knowledge to the field.

Applebee's (1974) writings concerning the 'birth of a subject' in the USA focussed upon English and English Literature introduced in 1865. It offers some insight to the processes involved (Applebee, p.120 in Goodson et al, 1996): 'Before it was able to emerge as a major school subject such as is easy to otherwise take for granted today, English, and in particular English Literature has to develop a methodology rigorous enough to win academic respect, whilst also ensuring the moral wellbeing of its readers' (pupils). Applebee (ibid.) indicated its success rested upon two specific movements:

1) The new techniques of the German philanthropists for its methodology and redefinition of culture and the role for moral well-being.
2) The institutional changes in the American system of education, begun through the influence of school/college education requirements.

Considering the extent to which the introduction of FLL developed a 'methodology' and 'redefinition of culture' together with any apparent institutional changes wrought through changing education requirements is therefore pertinent. Whilst historical studies of school subjects have for the most part been conducted in secondary schools, they have, for the purposes of this thesis, usefully indicated that school subjects, 'far from being a stable and dispassionately constructed unity, are in fact a highly contested, fragmented and endlessly shifting terrain'. The school subject is socially and politically constructed and 'the actors involved deploy a range of ideological and material resources as they pursue their individual and collective missions' (Goodson et al, 1996, p.131). It is suggested that the location and organisation of FLs will be influenced by the political culture of the country under consideration, highlighted by the following:

- The internal affairs of each subject community: *'the power struggles between social groups, coalitions, and segments within the subject community each with their own sense of mission and differing and competing vested interests, resources and influence' (Ball, 1985, pp.17-18).*

- The legitimising rhetorics and appropriate labels: *'What is most important for the success of school subjects is not the delivery of 'goods' which can be publicly evaluated, but the development and maintenance or legitimating rhetorics which provide automatic support for correctly labelled activity. The choice of appropriate labels and the association of these in public mind with plausible rhetorics of justification can be seen as the core mission of those who work to advance or defend the subjects of the curriculum', Reid (1984, p.75).*
- 'The daily micropolitics of the subject in the school and the habitus of the subject, the daily classroom routines of the subject teacher '(Goodson & Marsh, 1996, p.140). *A subject has to be negotiated and realised at a number of levels. The subject may be preactive at the level of guidelines, textbook or syllabus which in turn are interactively negotiated at a range of subsequent levels: the subject dept, the subject sub-culture…' (ibid.).*
- The legitimising constituencies, ideological support, and resource provision: *The wider subject group mission however is to promote the subject by winning over …ideological support and resource provision. Successful school subjects must appear as unchallengeable and monolithic essences. The subject then exists regardless of its specific realisation as structured or institutionalised practice', (Goodson & Marsh,1996, p.140).*

Informing such a framework through which to examine literature concerning FL in the Primary Curriculum, a four-stage process in the academic establishment of a school subject was proposed by Goodson (1996, p.145). This extends Applebee's (1974) much earlier identification of two elements in the introduction of any new subject area where each of these elements remain apparent in stages 1&2, and 3&4 of the following (see also Appendix 6, p.299):

1) **Invention** 2) **Promotion** 3) **Legislation** 4) **Mythologization**

Whilst dated and focussed on Secondary education, Layton's (1973) study concerning the evolution of science in England from the nineteenth century is also included. He too developed a brief model for the evolution of a school subject from his analysis. It also identified three distinct phases, resonant of both Applebee's earlier and Goodson's later models. It offers a staged framework through which the introduction of foreign languages as a subject area in the primary curriculum may also be considered:

Drawing from Layton's model of the evolution of a subject (science) in England (1973, pp.145-146):

First stage: the callow intruder stakes a place in the timetable, justifying its presence on grounds such as pertinence and utility. During this stage learners are attracted to the subject because of the bearing on matters of concern to them. The teachers are rarely trained specialists but bring the missionary enthusiasms of pioneers to their task. The dominant criterion is relevance to the needs and interests of the learners'.

In the interim second stage:

A tradition of scholarly work in the subject emerges along with a corps of trained specialists from which teachers may be recruited. Students are still attracted to the study, but as much by reputation and growing academic status as by its relevance to their own problems and concerns. The internal logic and discipline of the subject becomes increasingly influential in the selection and organisation of subject matter.

In the final stage:

The teachers now constitute a professional body with established rules and values. The selection of subject matter is determined in large measure by the judgements and practices of the specialist scholars who lead inquiries in the field. Students are initiated into a tradition, their attitudes approaching passivity and resignation, a prelude to disenchantment'.

The evolution of FLL as a subject area within the curriculum is thus conceptualised as being in a state of permanent conflict.

3.32 The 'birth' of FLL as a new, statutory subject in England

The education system in England underwent significant change since the 1988 Education Act and introduction of the National Curriculum. This is arguably true regarding both the place of FL in the primary curriculum, and the nature of its instruction (Costley et al, 2018). The fundamental change to the curriculum posed by the statutory introduction of FL, however, took time. A period of some twenty-six years from the time of the first National Curriculum in 1988 until FLL become a statutory part of the KS2 national curriculum in England is apparent (See Table 4, p. 87).

The Nuffield Languages Inquiry (2000) recommended all children be entitled to learn a new language from the age of seven, with a suggested allocation of 10% curriculum time. It took a further two years for the National Languages Strategy to be published: Languages for all: Languages for Life (DfES, 2002). Its aim was to provide a positive learning experience, 'harnessing children's learning potential and enthusiasm' (DfES, 2002, p.5). This strategy heralded an eight year 'capacity building phase' between 2002 and 2010 before intended statutory implementation. This additional time allowed for capacity to be built in support of eventual statutory implementation. This phase comprised a combination of stages indicated in models of new subject introductions (Applebee, 1974; Goodson, 1996; Layton, 1973), (see Table 4, p.87). Investment in national training programmes for both pre-service and in-service teachers was not insignificant during this phase (Alexander, 2009; Cable et al, 2010; Dearing and King, 2007; Rose, 2008; Wade, Marshall & O'Donnell, 2009). The National Curriculum proposed by Rose (2009) drew this capacity building phase to a close with its inclusion of FLL for all children in Key Stage Two (ages 7-11), due to begin in 2010. As Table 4 indicates however, 2010 instead heralded an abrupt halt to any further development and implementation for a further four years as the Rose National Curriculum was rejected by the new 2010 coalition government. In line with a change in political ideology, a different National Curriculum was instead written and approved by the new government, introduced in September 2014.

This curriculum re-wrote how foreign languages in KS2 had previously been conceptualised and positioned in the curriculum during the 'capacity building phase.' Following a four-year period of 'limbo', 'foreign languages' was introduced as a repackaged and rebranded subject entity, with neither fanfare nor funding.

Table 4: Key milestones towards national statutory implementation of foreign languages in the primary school:

<table>
<tr><th>Year</th><th>1988</th><th>2000</th><th>2002</th><th>2004</th><th>2009</th><th>2010</th><th>2014</th></tr>
<tr><td>Milestone</td><td>National Curriculum introduced</td><td>Nuffield Languages Inquiry and Report</td><td>National Languages Strategy: Languages for All: Languages for Life</td><td>The Key Stage Two Framework for Languages</td><td>Rose's National Curriculum</td><td>Change of Government</td><td>New National Curriculum: introduction of statutory implementation of foreign languages in Key Stage Two (ages 7-11yrs) in English state schools.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Content</td><td>Cursory mention in the appendices acknowledging the existence of some language teaching and clubs in Key Stage Two.</td><td>Recommendation for statutory implementation of foreign language learning for 7-11yr old children</td><td colspan="3">Capacity building phase:
national funding for pre-and inservice teacher-training; research projects; policy documents; literature base growing, Secondary school language hubs and outreach in primary schools</td><td>No more funding or preparation: preparation halted.</td><td>Re-branding and political 'ownership' of foreign languages. No funding or preparation.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Application of theoretical frame regarding how new subject areas are introduced.</td><td></td><td colspan="4">'Interim Second Stage' (Layton, 1973, pp.145-146) <i>With the first stage apparently by-passed.</i>
'A tradition of scholarly work in the subject emerges along with a corps of trained specialists from which teachers may be recruited. Students are still attracted to the study, but as much by reputation and growing academic status as by its relevance to their own problems and concerns. The internal logic and discipline of the subject becomes increasingly influential in the selection and organisation of subject matter'.
Applebee: first stage apparently by-passed:
1.. New (cutting edge) theoretical perspectives arising externally to the subject inform the new subject area's methodology.
2nd phase: Institutional changes begun through the influence of school educational requirements.
Goodson (1996, p.145): all stages apparent working concurrently, NOT in a linear way.
1.Invention 2.Promotion 3. Legislation 4.Mythologiation</td><td></td><td>'Initial Stage' (Layton, 1973, pp145-146):
'the callow intruder stakes a place in the timetable, justifying its presence on grounds such as pertinence and utility. During this stage learners are attracted to the subject because of the bearing on matters of concern to them. The teachers are rarely trained specialists, but bring the missionary enthusiasms of pioneers to their task'
Applebee: first stage apparently by-passed.
2nd phase: Institutional changes begun through the influence of school educational requirements,
Goodson (1996, p.145): different sequence to that proposed:
3.Legislation
1.Invention <i>(could be argued to be re-invention instead given the context)</i></td></tr>
</table>

In contrast to previously discussed models concerning new subject implementation, the way in which FL was statutorily introduced has arguably been unique. Not only is it apparent that none of the models discussed 'fit' in their entirety, but the various stages and phases have been anything but sequential as proposed by each of the models. It is instead apparent that the introduction of FL in the primary curriculum in England pursued a much less uniform trajectory, borne of the political, cultural, and economic context of the time. Whilst elements of the content of each model may be discerned to a greater or lesser extent, the structured sequence proposed by each model is upended. The influential and powerful role of 'politics' in and with education and the curriculum that has affected FLL is instead apparent.

The way in which FLL as a new statutory subject area was introduced into the primary curriculum was thus without precedent, subject to political influence and reinvention. The extent to which the statutory introduction of languages will 'take' following such an unpredictable pathway remains to be seen, especially considering that FL education in dominantly English-speaking national contexts is already recognised as problematic (Lanvers & Coleman, 2017; Mitchell & Myles, 2019). As suggested by Goodson (1996), this may depend upon organisational health. The alternative, proposed by Nisbet (1972) indicates the power of the conservative, where the introduction of languages may be 'weathered' as a 'crisis,' before regression to the familiar and traditional.

3.33 The non-statutory legacy of FLL

The statutory introduction of FLL was a culmination of various practices and policies developed over the last twenty+ years, united in seeking to redress an acknowledged national lack of linguistic competence, a recognised need to promote cultural empathy at primary level and increasingly, to address the economic needs of the nation (Nuffield, 2000; DfES, 2002; DfES, 2005; DfE, 2013). Whilst it may therefore have been new as a statutory subject for primary schools in England, it was arguably not 'new' itself, having been 'beset by shifts in government policy and marked by a series of false-starts' (Martin, 2012, p.343). This is also apparent from the array of terms found in literature. For example: Primary Modern Foreign Languages; Primary Foreign Languages; Primary Languages; Primary French (or Spanish et al…); and now Foreign Languages; the first time 'Primary' as a pre-face has been dropped, perhaps because of the distinction made by the curriculum between 'foreign languages' in KS2 and 'Modern Foreign Languages' in KS3. Need for an 'appropriate' and ‘legitimising label’ was recognised by Reid (1985, p.75); determining one therefore appears to be still in-progress.

Despite a period of uncertainty for FLL between 2010-12, the political will to establish languages, albeit modern, foreign, or ancient, was maintained. In June 2012, the Secretary of State for Education announced that FLL would be a statutory foundation subject throughout Key Stage 2 (Gove, 2012). With the introduction of the new National Curriculum, September 2014 ultimately heralded an historic moment for the position of languages in primary education in England. For the first time ever, ‘*foreign* languages’ became a statutory part of the national curriculum for pupils in Key Stage Two (DfE, 2013), allowing schools to teach any foreign language they deem best, Ancient Latin or Ancient Greek. Prior to this, primary schools had been tasked since 2010 to ‘entitle’ their pupils in Key Stage Two (Years 3-6, commensurate with ages 7-11) to learn one or more *modern* foreign languages in school time, which was allied more closely with the European directive (2002). The new statutory policy will arguably continue to be influenced from a range of practices apparent both between and within schools, with further anticipated implications for children’s FLL experiences.

3.4 FLL in the primary curriculum: what is intended?

The purpose and place of FLL in the current national curriculum (DfE, 2013) is arguably unique. Alone amongst other foundation subjects, it was made statutory only in KS2 and KS3, whereas other subjects are statutory from KS1. FLL also uniquely shares a stated purpose and overarching aims with KS3 even though they are each subsequently given their own list of attainment targets and different titles: ‘foreign language learning’ for KS2 and ‘*modern* foreign language learning’ for KS3. Such differences may be subtle, but they arguably contribute to a confused and problematic context through which to understand the purpose and place of FLL, as conceived for children, in England.

Adding to the challenge is the notion that one of the main aims served by ‘foreign languages’ in KS2 is to ensure that pupils are ‘secondary ready’ (DfE, 2013). Table 5 indicates some notable differences contained within the curriculum document suggesting what has been prescribed within the primary national curriculum may not readily facilitate such ‘secondary readiness’. For example, in the four-year phase of Primary education, ‘Key Stage Two (KS2, 7-11yrs), the statutory study of any ‘foreign language’, or the study of Ancient Latin or

Ancient Greek is prescribed; the choice ostensibly at the discretion of each school across the country (DfE, 2014). In contrast, the shorter two/three-year statutory phase, 'Key Stage Three' (KS3, 11-14yrs), the statutory study of a '*Modern* Foreign Language' is determined, continuing practices from previous national curricula.

Table 5: Differences between the statutory study of languages in KS2 and KS3 as discerned in the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013)

KS2	**KS3**
Foreign Languages Any foreign language, and/or Ancient Languages Greek/Latin: One to be studied over the 4 years to achieve 'substantial progress' *(this term is not defined; the document does not indicate that other languages cannot be added to this).*	**Modern Foreign Languages** Can be any MFL *(which commonly are French, Spanish, German)*
4 years of statutory study for all pupils	3 years of statutory study for all pupils *(often only 2 years, with KS3 being condensed by schools to give longer for KS4 exam study).*
12 Attainment Targets: focus on practical communication with x1 long attainment target focussing on spelling, grammar, and punctuation. (* Ancient Language study to focus on providing a linguistic foundation for reading comprehension and an appreciation of classical civilisation)	12 Attainment Targets split between: Grammar and Vocabulary (x4) and 'Linguistic Competence' (x8)
Lays the foundations for language learning in KS3 (*building upon the foundation of KS1...?)*	Builds on the foundations laid in primary *(regardless of language(s) learned there, whether continuing with the same one, or taking up a new one (or two) ...';* and lays the foundations for uptake in KS4...)
Focus on practical communication. Understand and communicate ideas, facts and feelings in speech and writing	To understand and communicate personal, and factual information that goes beyond pupils' immediate needs and interests
Using familiar and routine matters	Developing and justifying points of view in speech and writing, with increased spontaneity, independence, and accuracy
'Appropriate' balance of spoken and written language	Developing the breadth and depth of pupils' competence in listening, speaking, reading, and writing
Using knowledge of phonology, grammatical structures, and vocabulary	Based on a sound foundation of core grammar and vocabulary

As a result, whilst the two phases are given the same overarching aims in the curriculum, namely to:

- Understand and respond to spoken and written languages from… authentic sources
- Speak with increasing confidence, fluency, and spontaneity…discussing…asking questions…continually improving pronunciation and intonation
- Write at varying length…using variety of grammatical structures
- Discover and develop and appreciation of a range of writing in the language studied

…and whilst they ostensibly share the same overarching purpose as determined by the curriculum document, namely:

> 'Learning a foreign language_is a liberation from insularity and provides an opening to other cultures. A high-quality languages education should foster pupils' curiosity and deepen their understanding of the world. The teaching should enable_pupils to express their ideas and thoughts in another language and to understand and respond to its speakers, both in speech and in writing. It should also provide opportunities for them to communicate for practical purposes, learn new ways of thinking and read great literature in the original language' (DfE, 2013).

… the way in which the curriculum has been constructed together with the discussed differences in historical context paradoxically suggests rather than supporting smooth transition from one phase into the other, that it may instead be further challenged. Rather than being recognised as distinctive, in line with an understanding of children as a distinctive group of YLLs and KS2 being distinctive from KS3, the policy instead positions children's engagement with FLL on the same trajectory across both KS2 and KS3; the only subject of the national curriculum to do so with an apparent assumption that by treating language learning and its learners in each phase similarly, this will facilitate a coherent experience, progression and transition. With the longest period of statutory study residing with KS2, understanding 'what happens' has increased importance if children's FLL experiences and achievements are to be optimised.

3.41 Defining FLL as a subject

Defining any language or 'languages' as a 'subject' is not unproblematic as can be evidenced by the apparently conflicting way in which it is presented in the new curriculum. Whilst an overarching purpose to 'liberate' children 'from insularity' and teach them 'new ways of thinking' is highlighted, its twelve attainment targets in KS2 instead bely an ostensible focus upon linguistic communication.

Differences in the way languages have been conceived over the years may be a contributing factor. A distinction between 'English Language' and 'English Literature' has for example now been made. A clear position articulated by the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (Kay & Kempton, 1984) conceives 'language' as 'culture,' where the very act of teaching and learning a language means culture is also being transmitted and acquired. A further distinction is made by others who indicate that a language is instead a 'medium' or 'tool' (Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols, 2008) or a mixture of both (eg Sirbu,2015) but not a 'subject' per se. As argued by Brown (1996, p.1) 'language is notoriously difficult to characterise…because the term is used in so many ways.' This being so, unpicking how the new subject addition to the statutory KS2 curriculum is defined and interpreted, together with its realised 'function/s' (Biesta, 2010), is pressing.

Within mainstream Secondary school education, the study of a MFL has been an established part of the curriculum offer in England for much longer. How the language is conceived and what is taught by the teacher has long been informed and shaped by exam syllabi (Goodson & Marsh, 1996, p.12). It is therefore less of an issue than is posed for FLL in the primary phase. It is a further way in which 'what happens' with FLL primary is distinctive to that in the secondary phase.

For state primary schools, there is no such examination board. 'Asset Languages' initially provided an assessed 'Breakthrough' level exam for which children could be entered until the removal of national funding further to the 2010 change of Government. A reduced influence of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2001) is also apparent with the 'European Languages Portfolio' launched in 2001 and used to support PMFL (Primary Modern Foreign Languages) through the 'capacity building phase' no longer promoted since the re-branding of 'FLL' and 'Brexit'. Without such an external 'push' factor, the 'qualification' function served by 'foreign languages' as a subject area within the Primary curriculum is thus distinctly different to its Secondary counterpart.

In contrast to subject specialists in Secondary schools, primary teachers' understanding of the content of the National Curriculum is not interpreted, shaped, and defined by examination boards. Primary teachers, many of whom may still be new to the subject area, and are 'non-specialist' in that respect, either need to interpret the specifications of the national curriculum for themselves, through someone else, or may instead select and rely upon a published scheme to realise the ‘subject’ and its ‘function’ in practice. This may add further challenge for teachers and leaders, with potential implications for children’s experiences. Rather than being conceived as a deficit however, this was one of the original defining features of YLLs (discussed in Chapter 2, p.41). It partially provided the primary phase with alternative advantages to its secondary counterpart (Sharpe, 1992; 2001) and where each phase could complement the other, rather than replicate the other.

Writing from a secondary perspective, Brown (1996, p.1) stresses that any teacher who proposes to teach something to students ‘should have a clear grasp of what is to be taught’, and that this means ‘not only having a good grasp of what is to be taught in a particular class but also a view of how that part of the subject relates to the whole subject area’. I would also add that understanding *its relevance beyond its own subject area* is also of relevance. The ‘subject’ is thus one concerning academic study and skill development: developing knowledge, skills and understanding as espoused by the given curriculum.

A particular aspect of ‘language’ that commonly contributes to the ‘subject whole’ concerns an understanding of how languages are learned, with differences already noted between how this may happen with the ‘younger’ and ‘older’ language learner. Language learning theories are broad and a deeper critical discussion of these is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, further consideration of Second Language Acquisition Theory (SLA) with its notions of competence and performance is now made, in line with considering children’s encounters and experiences with FLL.

3.42 Competence and Performance

Saussure and Chomsky are two theorists in this field whose work has influenced the way language and its structure as a ‘subject’ has been conceived in education. Whilst Saussure used three terms: ‘langage / langue / parole’ to identify the key aspects of language making up the ‘whole subject area’, Chomsky used terms more Anglo-Saxon in origin, that have since become more frequently used in the West: ‘competence’ and ‘performance’ (Brown; 1996; Lyons, 1996). These well-used terms have already been discussed under a different guise in Section 3.22 with a different definition, adding to potential confusion in applying these terms; they are also resonant within one of Biesta’s (2010) specified functions of education: ‘Qualification’. In relation to SLA, ‘competence’ essentially relates to knowledge of, and about the language: ‘the speaker-hearer’s knowledge of the language’ (Chomsky, 1965, p.3). ‘Performance’ is used to refer to ‘the actual use of language in concrete situations’ (Chomsky, 1965, p.4) or, as Lyon (1996, p.12) purports: ‘the production and understanding of utterances’ (spoken and written). Whilst it is beyond the scope of this review to discuss the essential differences between these two theoretical positions, it is noted as problematic. Lyon (1996, p.25) points out that ‘boundaries’ such as these ‘are drawn for theoretical and methodological reasons; they are not necessarily given in nature’:

> ‘For certain purposes it may be appropriate to disregard the inherently psychological notion of competence entirely; for others it may be appropriate to introduce a broader, non-classical, notion of linguistic competence which deliberately rejects the postulate of homogeneity or the distinction between pragmatic and communicative, sociolinguistic or stylistic competence. Everything depends on what is then done with such a notion: what empirical research it promotes and informs, what data it helps to explain or to systemise’.

In line with its frequency of use recognised within the wider literature, I also refer to Chomsky’s ‘competence’ and ‘performance’ for the purposes of this thesis, whilst recognising these terms are themselves problematic, subject to interpretation. Of note is that ‘competence’ was not intended to relate to ‘ability’, but was a term adopted by Chomsky to ‘avoid the slew of problems relating to ‘knowledge’ (Chomsky, 1965, p.59).

Of interest regarding the ‘purpose’ - or function- served by languages in the curriculum is Chomsky’s view, that the primary function of human language is *not* as a ‘vehicle of communication’ as otherwise commonly conceived, but rather as the ‘vehicle of cognitive growth’ (in Brown, 1996, p.3):

> *‘It is only as a result of cognitive growth that the human being has anything to communicate which the chimpanzee could not have communicated using a much more rudimentary system of communication’ (Chomsky, 1965, p.59).*

In considering this notion, the two terms associated with Chomsky’s work: ‘competence’ and ‘performance’, are arguably themselves more concerned- at least in application– with language as a vehicle of communication rather than with language as a vehicle of cognitive growth. Chomsky’s view regarding the primary function of languages also resonates with the findings emerging from the growth of interest in neuro-scientific research, essentially summarised by Gove (2011) when promoting the inclusion of foreign languages in the new primary curriculum, that ‘learning languages literally makes you smarter’. Gove (ibid.) was perhaps not mindful of Freire's work (1970; 2005) and a consideration put forward previously by Goodson et al (1996, p.70) that *'a curriculum initiative which educates the poor is a curriculum which the more it succeeds the more it challenges the social order'* given a conservative ideological standpoint to maintain the social orde*r*. With a national foreign languages strategy initiative introduced for all (Languages for All: Languages for Life, DfES, 2002) that would perhaps by its very nature promote cognitive growth amongst 'the masses', foreign languages could perhaps even be perceived to be something of a dangerous, radical new-comer, providing challenge to the given social order and 'norms' of the national context within which 'the primary school' and its curriculum reside; quite different to the classical, 'elitist' past within the educational offer for (some) children.

The way in which the purported purpose of languages as written in the national curriculum is realised through its stated aims and attainment targets is therefore not unproblematic. Whilst there is suggestion that the purpose of languages is to 'liberate' pupils from 'insularity' and to 'foster curiosity and deepen pupils' understanding of the world' together with 'providing opportunities to learn new ways of thinking', these are not directly reflected in the attainment targets. These are instead synonymous with linguistic 'competence' and 'performance' with the ostensible function for pupils to learn a new language with which to be able to communicate as effectively as possible. There are no express inter/intracultural attainment targets and none regarding any express 'cognitive' learning targets such as may have been anticipated by Chomsky's work and the earlier KS2 Framework for Languages (DfE, 2005) concerning 'Knowledge about Languages' (KAL) or Language Learning Strategies (LLS). It would appear these are instead positioned as a potential by-product of the very act of learning a foreign/modern foreign or ancient language, resonant of the definition where 'language = culture'.

That such purposes may be realised as a by-product of FLL is questioned, together with the extent to which children's FLL experiences may lead towards children realising a sense of 'liberation' and 'curiosity' with 'a deepened understanding of the world' with opportunities 'to learn new ways of thinking.' The national curriculum policy document for languages declares within its opening paragraph that 'learning a new language is a liberation from insularity' (DfE, 2014) which is itself arguably an unusual, poetic assertion for a policy document. It is however resonant of the language used within the aims of the European

Directive (2002) for citizens to develop 'a life-long love of language learning'. No such poetic assertions are apparent from a brief review of other subject areas. Whilst such phrases in policy do serve to make languages unique, I suggest such 'flowery' positioning is counter-productive for a fledgling statutory subject area seeking to become established within an hegemonic curriculum.

Unsubstantiated and ill-defined phrases such as these together with the high expectations placed by the 'substantial progress' required of children by the end of KS2 present further challenge for non-specialist teachers and leaders in making decisions about its implementation. FLL in the national curriculum therefore arguably remains within a phase of contested development while teachers, researchers and politicians continue to learn just what can be expected and achieved by children, and how.

3.43 The contribution of FLL to children's learning in primary school

Introducing FL instruction at younger ages in the curriculum is part a global phenomenon, (Johnstone, 2008). Murphy's authoritative review (2014, p.135) highlights that the reasons for doing so can be complex and varied. She however also indicates that generally, aims stated from a European perspective at least, involve most, or some of the following six reasons:

1) To develop proficiency in the foreign language
2) To enable citizens to engage more readily in international business and economic development
3) Parental desire (Enever, 2007)
4) Respect for other languages and cultures
5) Enhancement of communication across different ethnicities within a country
6) Global stance: keeping up with the rest of the world.

The overriding importance placed on developing linguistic competence (numbers 1& 2 above) mirrors the increasing momentum and support for the strategic economic and social importance of languages since the Nuffield Enquiry in 2000 identified the lack of linguistic capability as a key aspect holding back national growth and economic sustainability. The essential driver behind finally introducing FLL in statutory capacity thus appears to be for the success of the national economy and extrinsic push for children to be educated to meet this identified need. It may, as a by-product, also afford children themselves the belief of greater choice and opportunity of employment in their future life; potentially 'liberating' them from economic, social and cultural 'isolation'. This matches two basic metaphors broadly driving curriculum theories in FL education previously identified by Herron (1982): 'the mind-body metaphor,' where FLL is viewed as mental gymnastics aimed to strengthen and discipline the learner's mind and 'the production metaphor,' where the aim of FLL was to produce a marketable and skillful workforce.

This contrasts with the early years of the capacity building phase (between 2002-2010) where one of the most important purposes of learning languages in primary school, revealed by Driscoll et al's (2004, p.96) nationally funded primary school teacher survey, were instead more altruistic: developing positive attitudes amongst children towards FLL; sentiments themselves which echoed the policy statements of the time. A range of studies endorsed this, suggesting that YLLs 'are special on account of their enthusiasm and openness to the learning of new languages' (e.g., Martin, 2012, p.12) and that motivation and positive attitudes to learning a second language are there to be fostered in primary aged learners (Dὂrnyei, 1994; Blondin, et al, 1998; Donato, 2000; Hasselgreen, 2000; Tierney & Gallastegi, 2005). As discussed in Chapter 2, much literature pertaining to children's innate enthusiasm and positive attitudes towards learning a second languages emanates from the same 'capacity building phase' where the development of this then soon to be introduced subject domain was subject to 'promotion' and 'legitimising' processes (Goodson 1996). The National Languages Strategy (2002, p.4) itself tasked schools with providing 'an opportunity to harness children's learning potential and enthusiasm'. More recent research however appears to have continued this trend, where generally positive attitudes continue to be reported (e.g., Graham, Courtney, Marinis & Tonkyn, 2014; Tinsley & Board, 2016; Mitchell& Myles, 2019).

Driscoll & Frost (1999) identified that much research regarding an earlier start to instructed FLL agreed only upon one advantage, namely, by giving children more time overall with which to engage with FLL. With Gibb (2021) and others (e.g., Tinsley & Doležal, 2018) expressing increased concern about the persistent national decline in the number of children entered for a language at GCSE level, affording children more time with which to engage with FLL appears even more pressing. Martin (2012, p.345) noted that already in 2005, the proportion of maintained schools with languages as a compulsory element in the KS4 curriculum had declined to one quarter. Six years later, Tinsley and Dolezal (2018, p.2) also reported that only a half of the pupil population took a language at GCSE with only a third obtaining Grade C or above, well below the Government's stated ambition for 90% of pupils to gain the English Baccalaureate, which requires a good GCSE in a language, by 2025. Three years on, in 2021, still under the conservative watch, this figure had fallen still further, with then Minister for School Standards, Gibb (online, 2021) acknowledging that 'less than half of children entered for GCSE are entered for languages' with a stated renewed aim to tackle this as 'languages are so important for a trading nation with a newly global focus'. Such statistics indicate that not all is well with MFL in the Secondary phase, raising the expectations for what can be achieved in KS2. It supports the call for a wider review of 'good practices' and 'what (apparently) works' whilst also questioning how wise the influence and application of Secondary-informed practices within KS2 is.

The 'high expectations of what can be achieved at Key Stage 2 underpin the whole National Curriculum Programmes for Study for languages' (Tinsley & Doležal, 2018, p.2). Together with the stated renewed focus on getting more children to take languages GCSEs, the importance of understanding the nature of children's FLL experiences in KS2 is endorsed. I suggest this means more than just increasing the amount of 'time' involved; *how* children spend time with FLL appears critical, given the persistent decline in the Secondary phase for MFL. This supports a shift away from 'teacher' to the 'child' in developing greater insight into 'what (may) work' from children's perspectives, to inform how such high expectations may be better realised and sustained.

3.5 Primary school practices with FLL

Since statutory introduction in 2014, state primary schools in England have been engaged with a variety of practices. Practice established during the 'capacity building phase' have either been consolidated, developed, altered, re-instated or started from scratch to fulfil statutory requirements. As argued by Alexander (2014, p.158), 'policies have little meaning until they are enacted by schools, and to enact is to domesticate, reinvent, or even subvert as well as comply.' I suggest that this process is one in which children themselves may engage, as they too enact FLL in primary school. This is informed by an understanding of both children and adults as ‘becomings’ (Uprichard, 2008), (see Chapter 2, p.43).

The national and global context within which primary schools found themselves arguably made such engagement both more pressing and challenging. National (and wider) economic austerity caused by the banking crisis followed by ‘Brexit’, together with the pandemic and mass movement of peoples from areas of war and conflict with globally increasing nationalism provided for financial, cultural, political, economic, and social challenges with the inclusion of FLL in the curriculum. This limited both scope and resource in an era of deficit and declining school budgets. The following section however reviews what is known and understood about what (may) happen in implementing FLL for children in the primary school.

3.51 FLL activities and the target language

Galton et al’s (2011) research, which was also drawn upon by Murphy (2014, p.138), indicates five learning activities as the ‘most common’ features of all early FLL in primary school settings internationally:

1) Repeating after the teacher
2) Listening to a tape/CD
3) Pupils reading aloud
4) Playing games
5) Songs

It might therefore be anticipated that children in my study may also be found to be engaged with a variety of these. Galton’s study however involved questioning five teachers of English to young learners in five different continents about what they did in their lessons, relating to non-Anglophone settings and the learning of English as a FL (EFL). My study however allows for a comparison between these ‘most common’ features from international instructed early EFL settings, and those arising from learning a foreign language other than English in Anglophone primary school settings (see Chapter 5).

International research has also widely demonstrated storytelling as a powerful means to promote an early approach to a second/foreign language (Bertoldi & Bortoluzzi, 2019; Bland, 2019; Moon, 2000; Pinter, 2006; Murphy,2014; Mourăo, 2015). It is therefore of note that storytelling was not specifically identified in Garton’s study. With the increased emphasis on ‘great literature’ in the new National Curriculum for foreign, and modern foreign languages in KS2 and KS3 respectively (DfE, 2013), listening to stories and storytelling may also be anticipated learning activities.

Despite its date, the report for the European Commission by Edelenbos at al (2006) is of note, as it focussed on identifying the main pedagogical principles underlying the teaching of FLs to young pupils in school. Evidence reviewed in this substantial report was gathered from x15 ‘national expert’ and ‘model teacher’ views. In addition to the limited number of views however sought overall, given the large and diverse area of the European Union, only 2 out of the 15 sources of evidence were found to involve children/teenagers. The majority drew data from teachers’ perspectives. Furthermore, interview questions used with these children/teenagers revolved around aspects of pedagogy, the process of learning and pupil motivation, rather than on the deeper impact of their experiences with EFL/SLA/FLL. The evidence underpinning this report is therefore more limited in relation to my study. Nonetheless, the renowned authors are respected experts in the field, and the report carefully addresses key aspects relating to the principles informing much FLL in European primary schools.

In England, it is instead apparent that the ‘capacity building phase’ between 2002-2010 led, perhaps unsurprisingly, to the emergence of a wide diversity of practice both across and within English primary schools. This was apparent in both teaching approach and number and range of languages offered by schools (Muijs et al, 2005; Evans & Fisher, 2009). The longitudinal study by Cable et al (2010) in contrast had found a much more homogenous approach in the schools participating in their study after 2005, coinciding with the introduction of the Key Stage Two Framework for languages (DfES, 2005). This document ‘suggested lesson content alongside activities and skills to be attained across the intended four years of learning, namely oracy, literacy and intercultural understanding’ (Phillips, 2017, p.216). Whilst many schools were included in Cable et al’s study, the extent to which these schools were representative of the range of primary schools across England is queried. This is because each school in Cable et al’s study (2010) was carefully selected on specific criteria and conducted only within specific regional areas.

Whilst considerable variation may have existed in terms of actual provision and teaching approach, some consistency in terms of the actual ‘target’ foreign language (French) and a shared notion of overall purpose remained. Most primary schools continued to offer French at the outset of statutory entitlement, as this was the language, if any, given historic reasons, possessed by current staff (Tinsley & Doležal, 2018).

Schools for whom the national curriculum applies are therefore working towards children achieving yet-to-be defined ‘substantial progress in one language’ by the end of Key Stage Two (DfE, 2013). With primary schools at ostensible liberty to choose any FL or from two ancient languages (Greek or Latin), there is clearly scope for such diversification from the ‘classic’ set of European modern foreign languages. The fact that Latin and Ancient Greek are included within the new curriculum provides further insight into the underlying ideology and powerful, elite, ‘classical’ lobbies still at play. The new curriculum appears to accentuate the apparent divide between those advocating an historical ‘classical’ or ‘academic’ purpose for education, and those pursuing a more practical, ‘pedagogic’ purpose in aligning the teaching to suit children’s environments. Such a divide provides tension in the current development of FLL with implications for further diversification if each side serves to hold the other in check.

3.52 The four skills and ‘three pillars’ of FLL

A total of twelve attainment targets are specified covering aspects of the four language skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing (DfE, 2013). Being bullet-pointed rather than numbered, and with no subheadings alluding to any of the four skills, no attainment target is given priority or predominance. Neither is there any suggestion as to when certain attainment targets are optimally taught and how, other than ‘by the end of Key Stage Two’. It is left to interpretation how this can best be implemented in practice, to constitute ‘liberating children from insularity’ and instilling a ‘life-long love of language learning’ (EC directive, 2002) whilst helping children ‘make substantial progress’ and become ‘secondary ready’.

The KS2 Framework (DfES, 2005) had recommended a virtually concurrent introduction of both written and spoken vocabulary, also endorsed in the new curriculum. Phillips (2017, p.218) argues however, that it ‘should not be assumed that our ability for reading and writing skills necessarily enhances auditory language skills’ and vice versa with FLL.

Neuroscientific research also indicates that this could be problematic as our senses are represented in different neural systems (Blakemore & Frith, 2005).

Since the publication of the KS2 Framework for Languages (DfES, 2005) FLL has however been commonly conceptualised within curriculum documents as combining the four skills, echoing Secondary MFL. These remain apparent in the new National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) with Ofsted's (2021) languages research review most recently also alluding to 'three pillars' of FLL: vocabulary, grammar and spelling. Two 'cross-cutting' strands allied with Chomsky's concept of 'competence' included in the KS2 Framework for Languages are much less prominent: Knowledge About Language (KAL) and Language Learning Strategies (LLS). The common notion of languages being presented and taught primarily as a tool for communication, rather than as a 'vehicle for cognitive growth' as conceptualised by Chomsky, is apparent (see section 3.42).

Phillips (2017.p.217) also presents a compelling argument against aligning the four skills and governmental guidelines in England produced both during and further to the 'capacity building phase' (DfES, 2007; DfE, 2014) which 'assumed the four skills are mutually supportive'. This assumption is also directly reflected and endorsed in Ofsted reports (e.g., 2021). Within the wider context of performativity and accountability, it is rarely challenged nor discussed, and neither is any theoretical foundation offered in support of these guidelines; a concerning trend.

Ongoing debate concerning whether 'oracy' should be introduced before 'literacy' in FLL remains, reflected in some research conducted by Porter (2020). In the absence of a clear primary-focussed, research-informed position, it appears to be governed more by personal or ideological conviction, 'folklore facts' (see Chapter 2, p.67) and the hitherto largely unproblematised application of L1 learning strategies to L2 school-based learning and KS3 MFL practices to KS2 FLL.

Further insight into the arguments presented by Phillips (2017, p.219) that challenge the assumptions that the four broad skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are mutually supportive, and that 'some skills may be appropriate for learning at a particular age and/or stage' is provided by the longitudinal study by Graham et al (2014). This investigated the impact of an oracy-based approach as opposed to a literacy-based approach to teaching

French. It concluded no advantage of either approach to the teaching of French upon learners in Years 5, 6, and 7. For the purposes of this thesis, viewing the emerging practice as *diverse* as opposed to 'inconsistent', may yield richer discussion.

The programme of study provided for KS2 FLL in England comprises a brief x2 sides of A4 paper, with 'very wide scope for interpretation of expected outcomes, including the relationship between language skills' (Phillips, 2017, p.217). This compares against many more sides for English in the new curriculum, indicative of the ongoing hierarchy of subjects apparent within the established curriculum. It thus appears that foreign languages may be implemented in very diverse ways, both through the choice of target language(s), limited guidance and limited 'value' placed on languages in the new curriculum – despite the high expectations placed upon it to achieve successful outcomes.

Such high expectations arguably indicate an inherent contradiction for FLL in KS2. Given the statutory introduction of FL in 2014 was arguably such an historic moment in the life of England's Primary Curriculum, it is also noted that this historic event passed, without any government, media or public recognition or fanfare. This perhaps belies an underlying national apathy for FLL with ineffective attempts at raising its profile. In my own experience as a Senior Lecturer working with Initial Teacher Education, whilst most student teachers have voiced initial surprise and interest in FL's statutory introduction in 2014, many are also often then somewhat underwhelmed – until the realising that, if teaching in state primary schools, they will also have responsibility for children's FLL. This can then lead some to a sense of disbelief followed by initial concern, until a comforting thought occurs that perhaps there's another teacher who could 'take' that subject instead.

3.53 The role of the class teacher

In-service teachers have a critical role as proactive agents in young children's language socialization (Schwartz, Oranim & Hijazy, 2020; Cekaite,2017; Dubiner, Deeb, & Schwartz, 2018). In England, where the prevailing model in primary schools largely still follows the one teacher teaching a class of children all subjects throughout the year, this is considered of even greater influence, especially where, in line with recognised moves towards performance education, 'the transmission process … binds knowledge, teacher and pupil into a more traditional and more hierarchical set of relationships' (Ball, 1985, p.71). The views of the various stake holders and their various spheres of influence are duly recognised as influential factors affecting the dynamics of FLL in practice.

The case-study by Schwartz, Oranim & Hijazy (2020) is of note with its methodological approach using ethnographic observations to enable a wider, international perspective given it was based in a bilingual Arabic-Hebrew preschool setting in Northern Israel. Two main scaffolding strategies used by teachers were identified that positively enabled and supported children's learning:

> 'First, they encouraged the child to accomplish a participatory role and to gain access to the ongoing interaction by using her dominant L1 (English) and by negotiating her peers' understanding. Second, the teachers' scaffolding strategies were contextualized and changed over time; after four months, they showed less patronizing treatment and gradual reduction of the language mediation. … the study highlights the crucial role of the teachers' development as proactive agents in ensuring that the early stage in novel language learning happens in a reduced stress environment and draws on the child's L1 knowledge'.

Returning to the English context, Phillips (2017) noted that teachers' confidence levels within different skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) are likely to influence their choice of activities in supporting / delivering languages lesson in class. She also highlighted the likelihood that teachers, due to brain plasticity, may still resort to secondary style language teaching practices.

A concerning trend since the introduction of foreign languages as a statutory entity in the KS2 curriculum in England is ultimately recognised from a review of literature, found to present a largely 'deficit model' of the non-specialist teacher as measured against traditional, secondary-informed MFL practices. A lack of confidence with speaking a targeted language, lack of subject knowledge and ability to decode the written language into its phonological form often cited (Phillips, 2017, p.222). As highlighted in earlier discussions, this has implications for the type of activities selected by the teacher for the children to engage with, and the extent to which such choices match with the learning needs of the children. Phillips (2017) for example presents a clear argument regarding why it is of value for teachers to build on children's speaking and listening skills – but that these are the very areas where many teachers lack confidence and ability. It may be the case that in some instances, teachers are understandably choosing learning activities they themselves feel comfortable with, but that are ultimately unhelpful in terms of the nature of children's own learning experiences and needs, as intimated by Wray (2008). In addition, where visiting / specialist teachers are employed, this is often done to enable the class teacher their contractual time for planning, preparation, and assessment (PPA). As a result, children may also lack reinforcement of their learning and lack any coherence with other areas of their learning eg in English, geography or music.

A small-scale research study conducted in Poland into the impact of professional development more recently also hypothesised that as the primary-phase teachers in the study activity lacked intercultural experience themselves, it was consequently doubtful if they would be able to raise similar stances in their learners. This would leave the goals of European early language education policy unfulfilled (Rokita- Jaskow & Krol-Geirat, 2020). On closer review however it is also apparent that the study did not include any specific input into professional development activities involving intercultural learning experiences thus questioning the validity of some of their findings. As reported by Tinsley & Board (2017, p.10):

> 'Almost all primary schools in England now provide at least some teaching of languages to pupils throughout Key Stage 2, and just over one third of schools now have access to specialist expertise in the teaching of languages within the school. However, there is evidence that some schools are finding it challenging to provide the kind of systematic and consistent language teaching envisaged in the national curriculum.'

Furthermore, Tinsley& Doležal (2018, p.12) reiterate that the findings over the previous years suggest 'little movement in developing languages as a new subject in the primary curriculum'. The challenges being experienced would thus appear themselves to be particularly persistent, and one where minimal progression has been apparent from the data presented in the annual surveys:

> 'While offering foreign language instruction at primary level is certainly desirable in principle, the learning and teaching contexts in primary schools in England are complex' (Costley et al, 2018, p.643).

Various teachers are employed and tasked with FL teaching by primary schools in England, with no 'one' model: visiting specialists with a secondary-trained background, native speakers (trained / untrained), primary class teachers (trained / untrained), teaching assistant, parent helper, no-one. This arguably reduces capacity to learn from collective experiences and also potentially affords some children with the need to develop and maintain an effective relationship with different teachers: ‘language has a distinctively social nature...as social behaviour underlies our ability to acquire language, it requires other interacting human beings’ (Kuhl et al, 2005; Maye et al, 2002; Phillips, 2007, p.221; Saffran et al, 1996). Furthermore, there is an apparent increase in the numbers of primary schools claiming no access to specialists with 30% in 2017, compared with 23% in 2015 (Tinsley & Board, 2017). This suggests the situation is becoming more challenging.

3.54 Continuing professional development and teaching resources: exacerbating the gap

The new NC’s (DfE, 2013) stipulation for four years’ languages learning places greater demands on teachers’ subject knowledge/expertise with influence on both ‘what’ and ‘how’ children may experience FLL. The statutory provision for FLL was not however supported by any funding to support its implementation. This contrasts with the amount originally available during the ‘capacity building phase’ of the National Languages Strategy (DfES, 2002). The extent to which that money invested by the then Government provided long-term value is itself questionable.

‘As original funding sources for training primary teachers have largely dried up, the training of future teachers may fall mainly to schools themselves even though these are apparently short of PL expertise’ (Phillips, 2017, p.217). Combined with other factors discussed, the lack of current funding combined with what happened with the previous funding could lead to adopted practices remaining unchallenged and / or underexplored in schools. The 2017 Language Trends Survey (Tinsley& Board, 2017, p.41) reported a ‘general reduction in the forms of support used by primary schools’, increasing the vulnerability of a newly statutory foreign languages education in primary schools. Schools who are more financially stable will be more able to engage than others. This may arguably increase the diversity of practice between and within schools and the nature of what children from different geographical and socio-economic areas may experience, potentially exacerbating a continued ‘elitism’ with FLL.

With primary schools now ostensibly having the option to choose any FL (Tinsley & Board, 2017), the need to support teachers with CPD has increased. Whilst French still leads, Spanish is increasing in popularity. It is also acceptable for primary schools to teach an ancient language (Latin or Greek), itself suggesting it is acceptable for pupils to learn the historic culture of the ancient language rather than undertake language learning per se

(Phillips, 2017, p.217). There thus remains wide scope for interpretation of expected outcomes and resultant experiences by children, not least of concern regarding pupil progress and 'secondary-ready' transition (Evans & Fisher, 2009; Courtney, 2017; Mitchell & Myles, 2019). The 2018 Languages Trends survey indicated a clear discrepancy between how well primary teachers perceived their pupil outcomes at the end of Year 6, and those of the Secondary teachers at the start of Year 7 (Tinsley & Doležal, 2018, pp.13-14). Rather than restrict FLL to one language over the four-year statutory period in KS2, a compelling argument to revisit, refresh and update a more multilingual approach is a suggested alternative (Forbes et al 2021), developed in Section 3.58.

The need for professional development which can influence practitioners' attitudes, knowledge and skills, and the quality of their teaching was also recognised by Egert, Dederer & Fukkink (2017) and Kirsch (2020). This includes the choice and use of teaching resources to support FLL. During the capacity building phase, several published and online resources were developed to support the non-specialist KS2 teacher, such as Heinemann's Tout Le Monde, and Rigolo, amongst others. The continued use of such resources may be anticipated, with little yet known about the impact on how children experience FLL. Piller (2018) has however highlighted that teaching resources employed in the classroom can be problematic with different languages and cultures portrayed in both classical and popular fiction and media as 'othered'. This essentially 'sets up the foreign other as a weird spectacle ….so that …children can feel reassured they are safe, normal and proper – in contrast to all the imagined inferior others out there' (Piller, 2018, no page (Kindle edition).

With low confidence levels in PL and funding issues to support CPD, 'teachers may be tempted to choose the dead language (Latin, or Ancient Greek) and its cultural collateral, delivered in English, rather than refresh their own knowledge of a living language in its spoken form' (ibid.) or continue with limited or questionable practice. This may in turn also contribute to the reported struggle for schools to staff and facilitate consistent and sustainable foreign languages provision (Mitchell & Myles, 2019).

Such challenges experienced by schools appear to be increasing, rather than diminishing. The 2018 Language Trends survey (Tinsley & Doležal,2018, p.12) for example reports 62% of respondents indicating that staff training to boost their linguistic proficiency and/or their confidence and pedagogical expertise is a challenge, in comparison to 35% of respondents in 2017. This is a situation that also places the English context at odds with many other international contexts where access to others with linguistic and cultural proficiency is less problematic.

3.55 Diverse approaches to the teaching of foreign languages

Such underlying diversity, or inconsistency, depending upon perspective, has led to various issues regarding the implementation of languages in the primary curriculum, affecting what children may experience. Some of these were identified in the comprehensive study by Hunt et al (2005). For example, the need for smooth transition between Primary and Secondary schools, keenly recognised since the Burstall Report (1974) effectively halted the then embryonic Primary French project. This report cited the lack of evidence supporting the advantages of an early start, including the fact that Secondary schools either ignored or were unable to build on what pupils had learned in primary school. It is argued that *inconsistent* practice with pedagogy and the choice of languages to be taught in the primary phase has been detrimental, hampering transition (Evans & Fisher, 2009; Wade et al, 2009). This perhaps belies an assumption that transition can only be best facilitated by teaching the same language in the same way across both phases.

3.56 The competence (performance) model

A 'competence model' aims to develop children's linguistic attainment by focussing primarily on developing oracy skills (listening and speaking) and was the approach adopted by the majority, and growing number of schools since Driscoll et al's (2004) study, (Hunt et al, 2005; Cable et al, 2010; Martin, 2012; Graham et al 2014). This definition of 'competency' was therefore notably at odds with linguistic 'competence' as defined by Chomsky (1965). Studies such as those by Tierney & Gallastegi (2005) and Martin (2012) confirmed high levels of pupil motivation when oracy was prioritised and children experienced early success: 'the evolving primary language curriculum was largely topic-based, with an emphasis on enjoyment through speaking and listening. There was relatively little written work or attention to structures' (Martin, 2012, p.348).

In England, it is apparent that despite government policy and strategy documents indicating need to be focussing on all four language learning skills, learners have, at least in the recent past, largely experienced language teaching that emphasizes oracy development more than their literacy (reading and writing). These skills are recognised as being less well-developed (Cable et al, 2010; Martin, 2012; Graham et al, 2014; Wardle, 2021). This was also evidenced by Mitchell & Myles' (2019, p.75). Their study investigated children's engagement and learning outcomes over some 38 hours of a teaching intervention in a Year 3 class, taught by a single, specialist French teacher. They report an ‘age-appropriate pedagogy’ in their methodology, where ‘a largely oral approach was followed, with a range of activities including games, role plays, stories, songs and crafts’. Whilst these are in line with those reported by Galton et al (2011), potential disagreement with what may be understood as an ‘age-appropriate pedagogy’ for KS2 between policy and practice is suggested. This adds to a complex situation where there is still only limited evidence available about what children in KS2 can achieve (Mitchell & Myles, 2019; Murphy, 2014).

Trüb’s (2022, p.247) empirical study of EFL writing in primary school provides a salient European contrast: primary school EFL teachers ‘gave priority to listening, speaking and reading over writing’ and made use of ‘a wide variety of tasks and genres when teaching EFL writing’ (ibid.p.246). This study showed that ‘at the time of data collection (4–6 months before the end of the school year) about 90 % of the learners reached or exceeded the minimum curricular requirement for EFL writing (i. e. level A1.2)’ (ibid. p.243). In contrast, not only is such use of benchmark attainment for FLL against the CEFR in England no longer considered since the 2011 change of Government and Brexit, but the jury remains ‘out’ as regards what teachers should be giving priority to, and why, let alone have any benchmark data against which to consider the efficacy of adopted models.

3.57 The Language Awareness model

Another approach developed in England during the capacity-building phase in the Coventry region was ‘Language Awareness’, since re-branded as ‘Discovering Language’ (Downes, 2012). This approach sought to develop children’s knowledge about languages and language learning strategies through a multi-lingual language awareness approach. Its main feature was in teaching several languages for a limited period of time each, used to give pupils a solid foundation in how language ‘works’; an interest in FL and an enthusiasm for learning; greater awareness of other countries and cultures through languages (Downes, 2012).

The National Curriculum’s stipulation for children to make ‘substantial progress with one language by the end of KS2’ has not encouraged teachers to promote and adopt this approach to timetabled FL lessons. ‘Language Awareness’ or ‘Language Discovery’ programmes in England are therefore not as widespread in comparison to timetabled ‘Primary French’ or ‘Primary Spanish’ for example. Whilst initially appearing at odds with the new NC aims and attainment targets, it might depend upon how these are defined.

Achieving 'substantial progress in one language' by the end of KS2 (DfE 2013) remains an unqualified term with no agreement within reviewed literature on how YLLs best achieve any such 'substantial progress'. Instead, many 'different' ways, promoted further to personal preference, experience or stance by those promoting them are apparent, rather than being empirically supported by a body of independent research and developing theory focussed on the primary phase in England. Viewed through the lens of Applebee's phases of subject development (see section 3.31, p.83) the lack of an independently arising 'primary methodology' for the subject area may be problematic for the sustained development and place of foreign languages in the curriculum, compounding the challenges experienced with its initial statutory introduction.

3.58 A multilingual approach

A multilingual approach towards FLL in the early /primary phase of education is becoming of increased interest throughout Europe, making it worthy of further attention. England, contrary to popular belief, is not the only 'mono-lingual' country in Europe. This approach, resonant of that advocated by Downes (2012) is arguably more about developing transferable skills than language-specific knowledge, understanding and 'performance'. This appears advantageous in helping children become 'secondary ready' (DfE, 2014) and as reported by Forbes et al (2021), should help foster a multilingual identity amongst students, 'to positively influence the uptake of and investment in language learning'. Its aims seem more conducive towards realising the purpose of FLL as stated in the most recent national curriculum (DfE, 2014), if not the attainment targets it does then list. As Forbes et al (2021, no page) argue, the new NC 'fails to acknowledge the potential for drawing on and developing students' wider multilingual repertoires' with its focus otherwise firmly placed upon developing skills in a particular language.

Ibrahim's (2020) small-scale action research project with pre-school teachers in Norway provides further illumination. Agreeing with Von Ahn et al (2010), Ibrahim concurs that multilingualism is a statistical fact at least from a quantitative perspective. She makes a compelling distinction between a surface-level acceptance of multilingualism and the need for a deeper understanding of the qualitative and 'translingual' aspects of the phenomenon. She argues the discrepancy between the perceived and the actual experience of multilinguals has created a false sense of well-being and glosses over the monolingual foundations of (Norwegian) education, that then result in inadequate language experiences for children and teachers at all educational levels (Ibrahim, 2020). She purports that to 'demonolingualise education and redress the balance, the hybridity of everyday lived experiences should be made visible in educational practices' *(ibid.)* - suggesting need for further 'major change'.

> 'In the society of the future, education will be the key to change; but for this to happen, a radically different educational model is needed, one that supports people to adapt to a society in constant transformation. A model that enables educators to transform education, develop a conscious and critical awareness, be committed to the profession, and develop a multilingual, multicultural profile with a creative and global outlook.' (Imaz Agirre and Ipiña, 2020 in Arebiotorre & Imaz Agirre, 2020, no page).

Since 2006, a growing trend in England towards multilingualism amongst children is furthermore apparent (DfE, 2018, 2022; Naldic, 2018). Costley et al (2018) recognised that an increasing number of primary schools no longer comprise a monolingual English community but instead, educate a mix of monolingual English children and children with English as an additional language (EAL). Whilst in English primary schools, 21.2% of children in English primary schools are now exposed to a language known or believed to be other than English in their home, up from 20.6% in 2018 (DfE, 2018, 2022), this trend is also recognised as a global phenomenon. Language teaching policies in many countries are already moving to adapt more multilingual policies and practices (Garcia & Lin, 2017; Kirsch, 2020; Scheckle, 2020), with English as a Foreign Language (EFL) also beginning to be reconceptualised as English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) (Esleben, 2020; Jenkins 2015; Cavalheiro, Guerra & Pereira, 2020). The time appears ripe to review 'what happens' with instructed FLL in England.

Piccardo & Galante (2018, p.148) posit that 'heterogeneous communities are the norm rather than the exception in many parts of the world' with increasingly diverse societies 'characterised by 'mobility, immigration, technology and globalisation' (*ibid.*). They too call for a rejection of the 'monolingual disposition' coined by Gogolin (1994), and for wider advocacy of plurilingualism as a framework for language teaching. This is apparent in some policy e.g., Council of Europe, 1996 and wider literature beyond the English national context (e.g., Beacco & Byram, 2003/2007; Cangarajah & Liyanage, 2012; Cenoz, 2013; Conteh & Meier, 2014; Glaser, 2005; Kubota, 2016; May, 2014; Moore & Gajo, 2009; Piccardo, 2013). Plurilingualism as a conceptual framework for languages education is recognisable within the Language Awareness or Language Discovery programmes advocated by Downes (2012) in England, but these have, to date, neither been endorsed nor supported by national policy or funding. This is arguably indicative of the pervasiveness of a classical academic and 'monolingual disposition' still at large in England.

Concurring with Costley (2014), the national curriculum can perhaps also be best described as monolingual in its orientation, which Ibrahim (2020) argues is also the case in Norway. The existence, influence, and persistence of a 'monolingual habitus' with conceptualisations of a 'standard language' affecting education is also recognised more broadly in literature (e.g., Gogolin, 2002; Heller, 2012; Martin-Jones, 2007; Joseph, 2016). Whilst linguistic diversity may be broadly celebrated and valued as being beneficial, it is not necessarily valued or conceptualised as a tool for learning within policy or the classroom (Costley 2014; Leung 2001).

The 'container metaphor of competence,' coined by Martin-Jones (2007, p.167), argues that both educators and researchers have in the past constructed monolingual, and parallel monolingual spaces for learning, which 'in effect all conceive of languages and linguistic competences as separate containers, side by side, that are more-or-less full or empty'. A further issue arising from such a 'monolingual habitus' is the assumption that a single language is the basis for the operating norm (Gogolin, 1997) with 'standard languages' being taught and tested in schools integral to the maintenance of such habitus.

Whilst a paradigm shift towards bilingualism, multilingualism and plurilingualism is apparent, a salient reminder that these are of themselves not a panacea for addressing issues arising from monolingual dispositions towards languages education is provided by Wei (2011). He states that even those teaching practices have long been perceived as the teaching of discrete languages – still resonant of the 'container metaphor' view of language teaching and learning. Instead, a more holistic view has been presented by Cenoz (2013, p.12) advocating practices which 'pay attention to the way multilingual speakers use their linguistic resources in ways that are different from the way monolingual speakers use single languages.' In practical terms, the challenge is clearly in realising this if the political and teaching force are still operating from a largely monolingual linguistic habitus, or 'repertoire' (Piccardo & Galante, 2018, p.151). Whilst they recognise that many educational policies, including in the UK, appear to give value to plurilinguistic practices with 'good intentions and an elaborate set of objectives' (ibid.), practical application is still uncommon they argue because of the lack of support to language teachers. I also suggest it is also due in part to the hegemonic nature of the ‘monolingual habitus’ and apparent emphasis on ‘performance language learning’.

This review indicates it should not be assumed that all primary schools in England are teaching one language for the full four years of Key Stage Two, and neither should it be assumed that doing so is the ‘best’ or ‘only’ way to achieve ‘substantial progress’. What may constitute an ‘age-appropriate FL pedagogy’ for primary children appears an area of contest. The diverse practices that have been discussed within the national context also have resonance with those from mainland Europe. What ultimately happens in practice will instead likely depend on not only who the decision makers are, but also the facilitators in the classroom: teachers’ experience, knowledge, understanding, beliefs, and children themelves.

3.59 Exposure to the foreign language

Children’s language learning is reported to be overall more successful in a context that provides both extensive and intensive long-term exposure (Costley et al, 2018) and where FLL is integrated with the wider curriculum (Mehisto et al, 2008), chiming with Hargreaves’ (1994) concept of experiential coherence and notions of YLL and ‘primary’ distinctiveness. Regardless of actual or potential approach to the teaching of FL in primary school, this review however indicates children in England experience limited exposure and access to the foreign language both in educational and social-life settings, a phenomenon echoed in other English-speaking national contexts (Lanvers & Coleman, 2017; Mitchell & Myles, 2019). This contrasts with many of their European counterparts for whom English FLL is both a ‘core’ subject and more widely accessible. Ultimate success may also be subject to individual differences in instructed minimal-input settings at primary-school level in England (Costley et al, 2018), supported by the current Government’s argument that it is for the school to decide what, how, when and how long to devote to FLL.

In English primary schools, children have plenty of exposure to English, usually being taught through English as well as studying English as a core curriculum subject. In contrast, the time spent with and studying FL is very limited: Board & Tinsley (2015, p.28) reported less than one hour per week in nearly 90% of the primary schools who engaged with their survey, and often as little as 30 minutes per week. There is also limited wider cultural and social exposure to foreign languages that places the English national context at odds with the experiences of children in many other European countries. For example, where English as a FL is otherwise more readily accessible through media. Interesting accounts can be readily found detailing the ways in which European counterparts have taught themselves English/American English through watching films and listening to popular music; learning in spite of the school and curriculum offer.

Previous national guidelines indicated a minimum of 60 minutes per week to be devoted to PL, with a little and often approach spread across the week being ideal (DfES, 2007, p.2). Even then, curricular time constraints were reported that challenged this, noted in a small-scale case-study (Schulze, 2012) a longitudinal study (Cable et al, 2010) and national reports (e.g., Tinsley & Board, 2017). Current guidelines do not specify any curricular time allocations, with individual schools tasked by the Government with deciding this themselves, with 'one in ten schools now not providing a minimal 30 minutes per week language teaching' (Tinsley & Board, 2017, p.41). The time and timing of sessions may not just affect children's memorisation and recall of language, with Phillips (2017, p.221) also citing further potential issues regarding visiting 'specialist experts' bringing secondary MFL traits and 'rules' into primary practice. This suggests further possible challenges for children - and teachers -in navigating primary-school -based FLL.

Tinsley & Doležal's (2018) summary of the challenges experienced by schools responding to the survey indicates the gravest of all challenges reported was that of finding sufficient curriculum time, together with staff training. Such challenges were however reported less by schools based in London and/or who had higher numbers of children recorded with English as an Additional Language (EAL). This adds further weight to the argument for a more multilingual approach towards FLL in the primary phase (see section 3.58) and otherwise confirms the diversity of FLL experiences to which different children are exposed.

Whilst children are thus subject to a potentially eclectic range of FLL experiences in primary schools in England depending on where they go to school, little is known about the impact of these experiences upon children and their developing perspectives of FLL. Phillips (2017, p.224) argues that there is now 'potentially lower teacher capacity to support/deliver PL learning with a lack of definition regarding the processes for PL learning', further compounding the challenges.

3.6 Summary

This chapter has revealed a problematic and confused context within which children's FLL experiences in primary school in England reside. The evolution of FLL in the primary curriculum has arguably followed a unique path, beset by a series of stops and starts informed by a range of ideas and assumptions about 'what happens' but which themselves lack insight about children's FLL experiences due to an overall lack of specific research in the field engaging with children's experiences and perspectives.

Within the English context, FLL has been closely aligned with MFL in the Secondary phase of education. This does not appear to have built upon the purported distinctiveness of YLLs (see Chapter 2) and advantages offered by the structures within the primary phase whereby each year, the same class is usually taught by the same teacher. It was otherwise largely found to be concerned with performance and performativity, framed by an overarching 'monolingual habitus'. Broad trends have also been recognised beyond England's shores.

The nature of FLL in England was furthermore revealed to have come with some 'elite baggage', drawn from an historic legacy of languages conceived within a 'classical' or 'academic' educational tradition, and with established, but not necessarily successful secondary practices informing those now developing in the primary phase. This review also suggests an increasing diversity of practices is emerging across schools, despite the existence of the national curriculum. This in turn suggests implications for what different children may experience with FLL in primary school.

Whilst the independent Cambridge Primary Review Trust (CPRT) steadily campaigned for commitment towards a broad and balanced curriculum, Frame's (2015, online) review of primary education in the English political arena highlights the ongoing trend for 'tough talking about 'the basics' of reading, writing, and maths' and a 'utilitarian approach to education driven by political subservience to neoliberal dogma'. This argument was illuminated by the then Prime Minister Cameron's declaration that all children 'should be taught how to turn a profit' (online, 2014). The place of FLL in English primary schools appears borne out of recognition for such economic gain, set against schools' accountability 'being mainly judged on performance in the core subjects of English and Maths and the need therefore, for other subjects, including PL, to achieve positive outcomes to maintain their curricular time allocation' (Phillips, 2017, p.216).

This view regarding the economic necessity of incorporating FLs into the statutory national curriculum for KS2 (DfE, 2014) draws on support provided by the national Nuffield Languages Enquiry in 2000, and a host of other literature. In contrast to such a 'utilitarian approach' towards FLL in primary school, is the notion, at least expressed in policy, that FLL can 'open up children to other cultures' (DfE, 2013, p.213) and promote social cohesion (DfES, 2002; 2005). Emerging evidence from fields such as neuroscience furthermore led to claims such as that made by another politician, Gove (2011): 'learning a foreign language literally makes you smarter.'

What happens in primary schools with children's FLL really does matter as statutorily, at least, this is not only where children become introduced and inducted into FLL in school and start to develop their understanding and relationship with this area, but also where children –and teachers – ostensibly have the most amount of time to devote to it, across 4 years. With 'predilections established during PL learning likely to affect pupils' language learning in the future,' Phillips (2017, p.216) also highlights the influence of our developing understanding of brain plasticity, which describes how neural pathways in the brain are built according to the activities undertaken. Whilst recognised as a fledgling area of research, with caution needed in the application of any apparent links from neuroscience to education, it remains prudent to maintain critical regard of this for 'the establishment of counterproductive learning habits and pupils' negative attitudes could jeopardise their next stage of learning at Key Stage 3' (Phillips, 2017, p.216).

If the capacity to encourage, facilitate and sustain children's improved skills and understanding with FL and cultural understanding in support of economic prosperity and social cohesion are to be developed, primary teachers can thus not afford to leave FLs to their secondary school counterparts, and neither can secondary school teachers neglect what happens in primary schools. A timely need for a rethink of the relationship between practice in primary schools and secondary schools regarding how foreign languages education is organised and facilitated has also been highlighted. As recognised by Phillips (2017, p.215) however, 'with language learning, until recently, virtually the domain of secondary schools, secondary school practice is likely to inform the beliefs of teachers supporting PL learning'. This is recognised as a particular issue. Not only has it been discussed that younger children in primary schools, possess different learning attributes to older language learners (Klein et al, 2014; Wray, 2008; Hasselgreen, 2008), but the nature of the way in which the school day and timetable is organised is very different (Sharpe, 1992).

What may itself questionably be termed ‘good practice’ with language teaching in secondary schools is therefore not wholly transferable or suited to the primary phase. Phillips (2017 p.215) notes that ‘the different learning environments of procedural and substantive knowledge are not accommodated within the timetabling of such learning,’. Whilst Krashen (1982) theorised specific factors that influence language learning and/or acquisition, Phillips highlights that the distinction is rarely recognised in governmental surveys of school learning environments, such as the annual reports produced by Tinsley & Board, (2017, et al).

The pertinence and timeliness of my study is further strengthened not only by the historic nature of our current political, social and economic context but also recognition of the ‘considerable responsibility’ placed on primary schools for the new foreign languages policy initiative (Phillips, 2017, p.216). Addressing what arguably has not yet worked in the secondary phase, there is potential to learn from, and apply fresh insight into the phenomenon of children’s FLL in England. A need to seek, develop and present a new and deeper understanding of children’s FLL experiences in English primary schools has been recognised by this review. There is perhaps some inevitability that a policy document managed and written from an ‘elitist’ perspective, in line with notions of a ‘classical education’, being applied to the ‘education of the masses’– without due consultation or direct engagement with the ‘child’s experience’ - may potentially not fully chime with the context and experiences of all children, neither the teachers that are tasked with teaching them.

The findings from the established body of research reviewed through the last two chapters clearly indicate variability in FLL practices in the primary school, yet there is surprisingly relatively little research that directly engages with children’s experiences of FLL. A lack of direct engagement with children’s experiences in education, particularly in relation to foreign languages is apparent. This in turn may indicate something much more hegemonic and broadly at play as regards not recognising neither understanding the value placed on engaging with children’s experiences in education and educational research.

This is indicated by the place and purpose of foreign languages within the English education system itself. Rather than being perceived and acted upon as assets, it appears that YLLs and the distinctive attributes of the primary phase both remain more broadly conceived as problematic; ultimately unhelpful in challenging the hegemonic dominance both of English as a language, and the hegemonic dominance of the established, traditional curriculum. Liu

& Evans (2015, p.2) problematised the idea of English schools as monolingual 'communities of practice' and argued that multilingualism can be theorised as legitimate 'shared repertoires' of school communities of practice. The practical implications drawn from their research furthermore endorse the need for students' experiences to be examined, acted upon, and translated into school language policies in order to provide transparent information on the language needs of children.

Rather than a leading educational theory or ideology shaping children's FLL experiences, such as Meade (2000) argued from a New Zealand perspective, and Nias (2000) from an English perspective, it may instead be something much more 'essential'. In suggesting future research should be focussed much more on the nature and impact of children's learning experiences, Meade pointed towards the same kinds of areas highlighted by others for future research (e.g., Alexander, 2012; Murphy, 2014; Phillips, 2017; Robinson 2014). What can yet be learned from the nature of classroom discourse and 'happenings' with FLL and children's experiences and perceptions of FLL?

This thesis continues with Chapter 4: Methodology and Data Analysis.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY and DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a rationale for the methodology and methods adopted in this study. It details their inductive development through the research process to account for the decisions and strategies facilitating research design, data collection and analysis.

The chapter begins by highlighting the initial research questions framing this study. Heed is paid to implications arising from the gaps in knowledge and understanding identified by the review of literature. How research in the field was pursued and developed is then presented, where an applied ethnographic, longitudinal, contextual research design was adopted in preference to a normative design in the positivist tradition. The centrality of my own role and developing reflexivity is included within these discussions together with the role of participants and opportunities arising in the field. The chapter next details the inductive development of my research through its four phases of data collection including:

- How access was gained to the research sites and participants
- A description of the research settings and participants.
- Data collection methods and particular ethical considerations
- Threads and themes which emerged from ongoing analysis and reflection.

The chapter then summarises the overall methodological approach taken and presents a critical consideration of its reliability and validity. Ethical considerations were central to the entire research process and are woven into each phase of research (supported by Appendices 7-11, pp.306-324). This chapter concludes by detailing the process of analysis which began from the outset of this study. It accounts for the emergent threads and themes that were defined and secured throughout this process and final analysis. Findings arising from this analysis are subsequently presented in Chapters 5 and 6.

4.2 Research questions

In seeking an understanding of children's FLL experiences in primary school, this study posed two questions, initially explored through a review of literature:

1)What do children experience in school with FLL?

2)How do children respond to FLL in school?

4.3 Looking for a methodology

The review revealed a problematic and limited understanding of children's FLL experiences in primary school, particularly in an English context. With children broadly reported to be experiencing 'a more specified curriculum, a tighter framing of classroom life and new level of assessment activity' (Pollard & Triggs, 2000, p.4), exploring how children related and responded to the new curriculum dynamics of FLL in the classroom, since the 'capacity building phase,' and further to its statutory introduction in September 2014, is merited. Children were also revealed as a distinctive group of YLLs, with the primary phase of education itself found to offer potential, distinctive learning opportunities for YLLs. Secondary MFL practices and those emanating from an historic, 'elite' background were otherwise found to be influential in informing current practices for YLLs in England, with research in the field having hitherto largely neglected YLL experiences and perspectives.

The literature review identified gaps in knowledge and understanding of children's FLL experiences regarding both the content of current knowledge and with *how* such knowledge had been gathered**.** Many studies found to be influential in the development of FLL across primary schools in England were developed through the 'capacity building phase', supported by national funding. These arguably presented a certain pressure to yield positive outcomes at the expense of engaging with the subtleties and complexities of learner experiences such as those reporting children's holistic enthusiasm for, and ease with language learning. Many studies were also found to have been based upon constructions of learning more distant from the actual learners themselves, especially regarding children's FLL experiences. Lamb (2005, p.103) for example voiced concern in his thesis about Secondary MFL, with learners distanced 'by research methods which atomise learning, by pre-constructed theoretical frameworks, by research instruments that largely focus on measurement according to an already existing scale', such as with use of Likert –style questionnaires where students may have different interpretations about the set of statements predetermined by the researcher, but are restricted in their responses (Barcelos, 2003, p.27). A general impression of learner experiences has instead been gleaned from such studies, as if painting a large canvas with large, sweeping brushstrokes. At the time of the research conducted during the capacity building phase, generating a general impression was arguably precisely what was needed as FLL was nurtured into being. Time has however since moved on with need to add light and shade, intricacies and nuances that add flashes of new colour, depth and greater understanding to the phenomenon that is children's FLL.

A call for alternative and inductive methodologies is recognised (e.g Barcelos, 2003; Lamb, 2005). Nicholls (1992) had also identified need for research that involved fewer subjects but was more in-depth to yield richer data, 'if the complexities of students' perceptions in different learning contexts are to be understood'. Such a call is therefore not new, but my review indicated neither has it been fully addressed. Lamb (2005, p.100) suggested that such a call had increased as the field of literature concerning language learning itself matured. Lamb's thesis however concerned learner constructions of language learning in an urban secondary school and his argument is therefore understood in relation to Secondary MFL, not Primary FLL. The field of literature relating to young children's FLL in primary school, particularly in England is, as already discussed, still in its infancy. By purposefully adopting an alternative methodology, my research has capacity to make a further contribution by bringing more diversity to the field, adding to what is distinctively 'Primary FLL'.

As my intention with this research was to find out how children experienced and perceived FLL in school, a more inductive approach was desired that did not impose predetermined categories by following more well-trodden paths in research. Riley (1996, 2003) called for more mixed methods research, with the use of more anthropological/ethnographic approaches, including for example the use of metaphor to analyse language learner beliefs and experiences. An ethnographically inspired research design was therefore adopted, selected for its apparent merits in seeking deeper insights into children's FLL experiences. This is detailed in the following section.

4.31 Connecting to an ethnographic approach

Ethnography is understood to be a social research style that emphasises encountering 'alien worlds' and making sense of them, with ethnographers setting out to show how social action in one world makes sense from the point of view of another (Agar, 1986, p.12). The process of conducting an ethnographic study, while recognised as being resource intensive, also offers merit for this study in reducing the difficulties otherwise associated with including young children as members of a design team (Wyeth, 2006). As posited by Hammersley & Atkinson (1983, p.2): '*the ethnographer participates overtly or covertly in people's daily* *lives for extended periods of time watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions. In fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on issues with which he or she is concerned'.*

With a focus on exploring and examining children's experiences of FL in primary school, such an understanding allows for a focus on the behaviours of the members of a particular community (children in class) by studying them in naturally occurring, ongoing settings, typically while they participate in mundane day-to-day events (Dufon, 2002, p.42). As highlighted by Wyeth (2006, p.1226), 'Ethnographic studies involve a process of building an understanding of work or activity as it occurs, *in situ*.... By following the core principles of ethnography, researchers … study activities in the natural settings in which they occur and develop detailed descriptions of the work experience'. Such observation is ethnographic because it allows the researcher to gain understanding through first-hand experience of the situation (Mears, 2013).

The aim, according to Geertz, (1973) drawing on Ryle (1949; 2009) and an established tradition developed from anthropology, is to provide a 'thick description' or a descriptive-explanatory–interpretive account of that community or some aspect of life within it. A subtle distinction between 'an ethnography' and 'doing an ethnography' is also noted, defined less by its methods, and more through the intellectual effort of venturing into 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973, pp.311-312). Watson-Grego (1988) suggested two perspectives should be incorporated: emic, taking consideration of the cultural frameworks used by members of the community being studied to support the interpretation and meaning assigned to their experiences; and etic, based upon the academic frameworks, concepts and categories of the researcher's discipline. For this reason, my time in the field ran concurrently with reading and reviewing literature in the field, where emic and etic perspectives were informative of the other. Doing so was not without tension, providing for a more empathetic understanding of what Geertz (1973, p.312) referred to as the 'intellectual effort' of 'doing an ethnography'. It required excellent time management with the constant re-prioritisation of readings, ongoing analysis and critical reflection about what I was seeing, hearing, feeling; what I was and was not noticing and doing when out in the field.

To achieve a 'thick' ethnographic account, Dufon (2002) suggested three things were necessary. Firstly, as emphasised by Lutz (1982), the need for an 'holistic' approach.

Watson-Grego (1988) explained that meant behaviours are to be investigated in the context in which the people produce them and that these are then interpreted and explained in terms of their relationship to the entire system of which they are a part. Secondly, as also highlighted by Hammersley & Atkinson (1983), there is need for ‘prolonged or intensive fieldwork in the community under study’ (Dufon, 2002, p.42). This is necessary for the researcher to become socialized into the community, to build trust with the participants, to repeatedly observe the phenomenon under investigation in order to gain some idea as to its degree of typicality and its range of variation, and to test information and analysis for accuracy (ibid, p.42). Thirdly, a triangulated inquiry is necessary and should be incorporated into both the collection and interpretation of data, where a) a variety of techniques are employed, b) from different sources, and c) these are checked with various members of the studied community or even outsiders who come from other communities. This was an approach adopted by Tobin, Wu & Davidson (1989) who included a ‘multivocal ethnographic approach’ involving video-recordings, the researchers themselves, ‘insiders’ (children, parents, teachers, administrators) and ‘outsiders’ – groups not associated with the school but from the same country. Checking interpretations of data with members of the studied community was therefore something I pursued to enable multiple perspectives of a particular behaviour, event or phenomenon; not just my own interpretation as a researcher. It is thus suggested that this process builds in, and yields, thicker layers of description and therefore increased validity (Goldman-Segall, 1998).

The analysis of ethnographic data is recognised as starting as soon as the researcher selects a problem to study, and that it continues throughout the project ‘until the last word of the report is written’ (Fetterman, 2000, p.42). It was therefore important to recognise and realise an ongoing and inductive approach to this study, quite literally from beginning to end, where early findings were inductively used to guide the focus and methods of subsequent observations and actions.

Wyeth’s (2006) ethnographic study examining children’s play experiences in the Kindergarten in Quebec, Canada was of particular interest in informing my approach. Whilst it focussed upon children younger than that of this study and within a different cultural setting, it was completed within an instructed setting with young children, with two stated aims:

1) To explore the effectiveness of ethnographic techniques in providing contextual information from a playful environment;

2) To gain an insight into children's behaviours within a kindergarten setting; interpersonal relationships, interactions within the environment and styles of engagement with kindergarten resources.

Wyeth's first reported step was to develop a better understanding of the kindergarten environment, to be able to focus upon discovering the important implications that such an environment has on the design of technology. This suggested merit in my research also focussing on exploring the environment of the school and classroom to reach a better understanding of it. This was also necessary to help draw awareness of any implicit assumptions and possible bias given my professional experience in primary schools; the classroom environment was not unfamiliar or 'alien' to me, although those of the particular school settings initially were. An initial foray into the field was therefore determined (outlined in section 4.4, p.127).

In developing an ethnographic approach and methods to develop an understanding of the nature of young children's FLL experiences in primary school, the following were explored during my time in the field, supported by this study's symbolic interactionist frame:

1) Nature of the environment
2) Nature of the young children
3) Nature of the FL curriculum and teaching/learning activities
4) How children's related interactions with the environment – activities, resources, peers/teacher(s) – informed the nature of their FLL experiences.

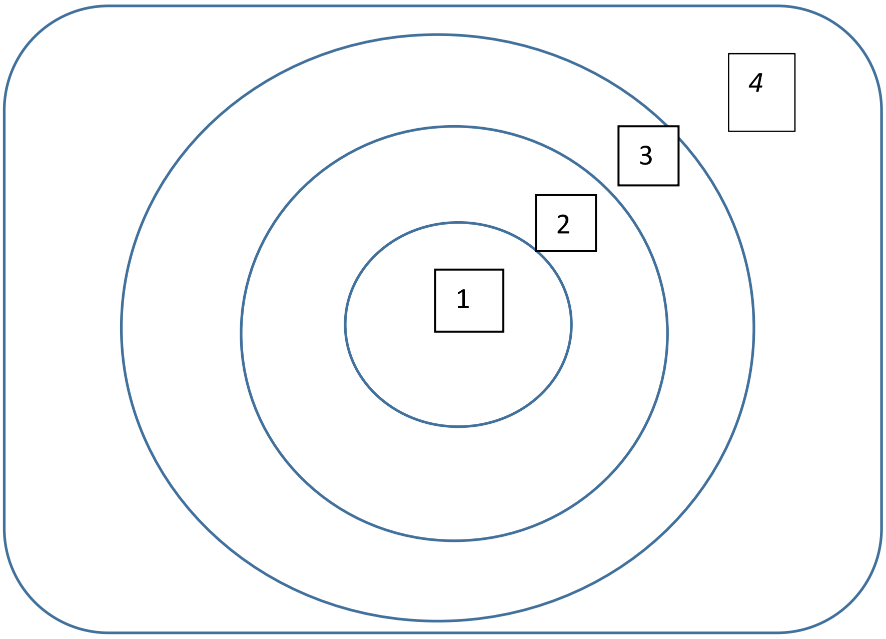
The ethnographic ethos advocates finding patterns in observations and discovering the important associated interrelations through ongoing analysis (Wyeth, 2006, p.1228). This is supported by Margonis' (2011) concept of the 'educational event' and its patterns and rhythms. In my study, ethnography was selected to help provide timely, new and fresh insights into children's FLL experiences in primary school, where aspects of the ebb and flow within the primary school and foreign language experiences with notions of autonomy and control, and the social and emotional elements of such experiences, may be anticipated.

4.32 Reflexive considerations

The specific nature of this approach was influenced by a tight-rope balance of decisions between methodologially 'best' or preferred ways of working, and practical limitations imposed as working mother, completing this study part-time. I recognise that an explicitly 'orthodox' or anthropoligical, ethnographic approach, where the ethnographer goes out in the field and remains there immersed for a significant and sustained duration, 'living and breathing' in the studied community, was not a wholly feasible model because of the time required for that. The ethnographic approach adopted was borne out of pragmatic and logistically feasible decision-making. Rather than being able to spend a long and sustained period of time immersing myself in the cultural and social 'order' of the school, classroom and lesson settings with children, a compromise was sought whereby as much time as possible was spent within specified periods of time such as could be balanced with other commitments. Completed in a part-time manner also extended the overall duration of my study. As much as it can be an issue 'knowing' when to finish reading for a review of literature, a similar tension arose with 'knowing' when to finish data collection in the field. This study is therefore not a 'traditional' ethnography, but an applied one, informed and influenced by the wider ethnographic tradition. This perhaps also indicate why there have been such few studies to date, despite earlier calls for these (eg Nicholls, 1992; Barcelos, 2003; Lamb, 2005).

Dufon (2002, p.42) argued that when investigating Second Language Acquisition (SLA), two communities are under investigation: the 'native' language community of the learners, and the target language community, with need to consider the extent to which I may, or be perceived to be more of an 'insider' to one and an 'outsider' to the other. She acknowledges however that in FLL settings, the target language community 'may be more imagined due to its lack of a physical presence.' As this study was concerned with children's FLL experiences in primary school, one community studied was that of the FL classroom; a second, the general classroom community. Both of these are in turn also situated within the wider school community. Whilst it is acknowleged that these first two communities comprise the same human participants and the same environment, they may operate in a different way, affecting chidren's FLL experiences. This is summarised by the following Figure 2:

Fig.2: Communities involved in this study



1: Foreign language classroom community *(excluding the imagined TL community)*

2: Classroom community

3. Wider school community

4. Local and national contexts

Reflecting upon my own background, I brought more cultural insider experience and knowledge of both the 'generic' foreign language, classroom and schools communities, less to the specific school and class communities. In contrast, I was much less of a cultural insider to the children's cultural community itself by virtue of the fact that I am an adult; noticably larger through height, weight, noticeably older too and with behaviour and dress different to that of the children. My role as researcher rather than pupil, teacher, assistant or helper also afforded a different status to the children, staff and other adults in school. This made me a cultural outsider to all communities involved in this study. It was anticipated therefore that teachers involved might for example be confused at different times as to my role, which might inadvertently give rise to tension and stress. This required careful ethical consideration and ongoing negotiation with such factors potentially affecting participants and the extent to which I was able to integrate into the communities involved. The ethical issues involved were therefore woven into each aspect of my approach, repeatedly addressed and monitored (see Appendices 7-17, pp.306-345).

4.4 Phase 1 Fieldwork: Initial scoping visits in primary schools

My first step was recognising the need to 'get out into the field' and 'try it out for size' as soon as possible, balancing time out in the field with the ongoing need to read, reflect and write up as soon as possible the notes from the fieldwork itself. There was not insignificant discussion regarding the 'best' approach to take, where ultimately it appeared a question more of personal preference with conflicting opinions as to whether a secure literature base and confirmed conceptual framework was needed before entering the field. Navigating this was one of the first 'researcher decisions' it was ultimately mine to take, rationalise, keep under review and be ready to defend. After further reading and reflection about pursuing an ethnographic approach, the decision was taken to get out into the field early on. The following section reports this first phase of 'getting out into the field'. It includes school selection, initial observations in the field and reflections that informed my developing approach in subsequent phases.

4.41 Entering the field

Following ethical approval adhering to BERA guidelines (e.g., 2018), contact was made with two primary schools in SE England to arrange a scoping visit, mindful of the implications emerging from my review concerning diversity of approaches between settings (see Table 8. p.157-8). These were schools I knew offered FLL in their curriculum and with whom I had some previous, minor professional contact. The aim was to explore entering the field and get a feel for ethnography, and children's FLL experiences. I proposed to spend time observing and note-making during these visits as unobtrusively as possible whilst taking opportunity to listen and talk with teachers and children.

Given the potentially different pedagogical and socio/cultural environments anticipated from my review, schools with purposefully contrasting settings were approached via initial, formal contact with the Headteachers. This was supported by informal contact with teachers at each school I was aware of who supported the teaching of languages. The two primary school settings contrasted in terms of size, geographical location, and catchment; one a small, rural state primary school in a relatively mixed catchment area (number on roll: 133, 4-11yrs) rated by Ofsted as 'Outstanding', and the other a large preparatory school on the rural outskirts of a large urban area (number on roll: 350, 4-11yrs), rated by the ISI as 'excellent' in all categories. Both schools offered French as the Target Language (TL). The first visit occurred at the beginning of November 2014, and the second at the end of the same month. Each visited comprised three days: one day as an introduction, the second and third to get more of a feel both for the FLL encounters children were having and my approach as a new ethnographer.

In entering an 'alien world' as an ethnographic researcher, if not in my professional capacity, it was necessary to explore 'making the familiar strange'. During these intensive visits, a total of seven foreign language lessons were observed across the primary phase (YR-Y6). In trying to see the 'strangeness' within the professionally familiar setting of a primary school classroom, I aimed to sit as discretely as possible in each classroom in a non-participant capacity, watching, listening, and making notes as to what I observed the children do and how they responded to their lessons, noting the nature of the classroom environments in which these experiences took place. Mindful of the ethics of observing in a classroom and in checking my own interpretations of what I had been noting (e.g., Tobin, Wu & Davidson, 1989), a summary of the notes I made was shared with the teachers, with further comments and ideas noted, adding to the 'voices' included in my data and contributing towards its interpretation. This process began to help me build a picture of the field, question assumptions and identify initial threads for further consideration. Reviewing my notes also helped me analyse and explore what I was noting, and in time, equally come to appreciate more of what I was not. Analysis therefore began with my own interpretations which were synthesized in liaison with other participants. My study was understood as a form of 'fiction', in the sense that it would be 'something made…something fashioned' (Geertz,1973, p.317).

These two visits yielded a plethora of written notes as in my desire to help make the familiar 'strange' I sought to note as much as I could about all I was seeing, hearing, experiencing, and noticing, being anxious not to 'miss' anything that might have some bearing later on. This led to a further tension, recognised early on: the urge to be writing about everything rather than to simply sit and absorb, being part of what happened and what I experienced, with the obvious catch being in the act of writing, something else going on in the field might be missed. I experienced this as a tangible pressure, anxious to maximise and respect the precious time afforded with children and staff in these settings by noting down everything I could. Being able to relax into the field was not automatic and required time, arguably exacerbated by my professional background with its performative, 'results-driven' culture. Ruminating about my notes and memories proved an important part of my initial and all subsequent analyses. Implications arising from these informed where, how and when further time in the field was spent.

4.42 Getting a feel for children's FLL experiences and for ethnography

Early scoping visits allowed me to develop feel for what it was like to be 'doing an ethnography' (Geertz, 1973) in beginning to seek an understanding of children's FLL experiences. The following considers these dual aspects and how reflections about these informed subsequent decisions about where and how to explore and seek an understanding of children's FLL experiences.

The first setting visited was the small, four form rural primary school (School 2, see Table 8, p.157-8). I observed French language lessons taken by the specialist teacher (native speaker, originally secondary school trained) from Foundation Stage up to Year 6. The visit started at 08:15am with a weekly 'Gifted and Talented' group lesson of 10 children arriving especially for this 'before school' opportunity. Children had been selected from Year 5 and Year 6 by agreement between both the class teacher and specialist French language teacher. Observed behaviour and ability had reportedly been taken into consideration for these choices. Of note for me was the specialist teacher's comment that occurred later in the visit: *'it tends to be the most able and those with good behaviour who get chosen for most things e.g., for additional music and for the concert too'.* As became apparent from a review of my observation notes, such 'specialness' appeared to be conferred to other 'Gifted and Talented' children in other year groups in Key Stage Two. This left me pondering the potential impact of this on the other children who were not chosen whether, and how that may reflect in the way they experienced and perceived FLL.

In all lessons observed during this phase, I found children involved in engaging with, and completing the same 'whole-class' tasks together. This was the case from Foundation Stage lesson observed, through to Year 6, regardless of whether it was a special group, or a whole class lesson. The younger children were observed engaging with more songs and games, whilst the older children observed were engaged with more reading and writing tasks. This implied an underlying notion of progression through the four skills of language learning, starting with listening and speaking, and moving on to reading and writing rather than all four skills together as suggested by the Key Stage Two Framework for Languages (DfES 2004) and NC (DfE, 2013).

Writing was only a key feature in lessons observed with the eldest learners. As such, it appeared an underdeveloped and underutilised skill. This echoes findings about foreign language learning in English primary schools from other literature (Cable et al, 2010; Graham et al, 2014; Wardle, 2021). The potential effect of an increase in writing, as is suggested by the new National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) upon children's developing experiences and perceptions of FLL was thus identified as an aspect meriting further awareness and 'testing' during subsequent time in the field.

Children's FLL was also found to be led in both settings by a commercial scheme of work (see Table 8, p.157) with specialist teachers occasionally providing some additional worksheets and activities. French language and culture were supported in the wider school curriculum. For example, in each school, children experienced an authentic link with a partner French school, participating in visits, and penpal links for the older children. 'French' displays were apparent throughout the first school setting, in all classrooms visited, and in the corridors. In School 1 there was a designated 'French' classroom, *'although I also teach maths here, but the French takes over as you can see!'* Senior leaders in both schools were also reportedly 'Francophiles', supporting the teaching and learning of French, trusting the teachers to simply get on with it:

> Class teacher, School 1: *'I'm trusted and allowed to be creative...I have been observed maybe once...I like to be...to get some feedback...it's a good thing to be trusted but you know...sometimes you have to really make yourself...'*

Conversations between lessons shed light on some disparity between what different children experienced, where the teacher highlighted differentiation being harder in Key Stage Two because of the 'Gifted and Talented' groups:

> *'I find this group needs really special attention, so they're not bored in the main lesson...these children are way ahead of the others – they need reading books to keep them occupied in main lesson...(sic.).'*

The impact I had as a visiting researcher also became apparent, as during the conversation, I suggested these children could be asked to perhaps help coach their peers. The reaction was one of, *'oh, I hadn't even thought of that...that's a good idea......but really, I hadn't even thought before that these special groups could cause a problem with differentiation. You are right. You have made me think about that...'*. Such conversation arose in a natural way, yet I had not fully considered the impact that sharing my thoughts and asking questions might have. On further reflection, my own comments within the context of trying to make the familiar strange to myself, might also have contributed towards the teacher also coming to recognise a strangeness in the otherwise familiarity of their 'everyday' experience: '*you've made me think about that…'* I had not intended to negatively question the practice at all, yet this could still have been perceived, with the teacher possibly also interpreting my suggestion as highlighting '*a problem'*. This illuminated the ethical complexity of navigating and maintaining the relationship between the researcher and participants, where shared dialogue was necessary but how such dialogue could equally have implications other than those intended, because the bottom-line remained; I was the researcher but also perceived as 'experienced' in the field given my background, known to both teachers. This was a tricky balance to maintain and required ongoing vigilance and maintenance.

Similar tension arose at the end of this visit, where the teacher requested feedback as to her teaching. I found this difficult to circumnavigate, as she was not content with my initial response that I had been there as a 'researcher' trying to immerse myself into the nature of children's experiences and the classroom environments in which they were learning. My purpose there as a researcher felt secondary to my other known professional role. It became clear that feedback was wanted, perhaps as an implicit underlying reason for me having been granted access to observe: *'I rarely get much feedback and the headteacher would like to know what you thought too.'* Finding ways to uncover, recognise and manage such implicit expectations was recognised, beyond what the overt, transparent approach and confirmation with school settings in approving my purpose could achieve, especially in school settings where the teacher(s) may otherwise have known me in my professional capacity. The desire requested by both teachers to receive feedback about their teaching and children's achievements also led me to question the degree to which FLL was afforded 'value' and recognition even in such schools rated 'outstanding' and therefore, about children's own FLL experiences.

These visits highlighted how very difficult, if not impossible, it is for the ethnographic researcher to have limited impact upon their research setting, its members, and participants. Unless you literally hid your physical self from (all) participants as exemplified in the non-participant approach taken by King (1984) and additionally became a select mute, the actual ethnographic research process will of necessity be one that will need to be constantly re-negotiated with participants and their settings, and certainly, as suggested by Grimes (2014) explicitly recognised within my methodology and data collection. Sitting 'quietly and unobtrusively' in a classroom, such as I had sought to do is stated quite simply; King (1984) may have been at ease politely refusing to engage with children when they approached him for help, I however, was not. I furthermore recognised a purely non –participatory, non-engaging approach would still not mean that my presence as a researcher would have limited impact. It felt an awkward and inauthentic stance to maintain. This experience supported my decision to achieve a blend of participatory and non-participant observations in subsequent time in the field, drawing from each through which to enrich data and increase its validity (Dufon, 2002).

The need King (1984) felt in his study to hide himself in the children's Wendy House is none- the-less one with which there can be some empathy. For example, when visiting School 1, the specialist teacher made frequent reference to *'Mrs Schulze in the corner'* during my time in class, even though I had previously introduced myself to children in class with my first name and was striving to present myself differently to that of a teacher/helper/assistant. I became acutely aware of children for whom I most appeared to be a distraction; those who turned to look; gave me repeated shy smiles; those who came to ask me whether they were allowed to go to the toilet or ask questions about their work or to show me what they had done; those who appeared to studiously ignore my presence. I began to find children's differing responses and reactions rather fascinating.

The draft observation 'schedule' developed from the first visit, in line with my research questions and ethical approval, was ineffective (see Appendix 16, p.344): I found it far better to have a blank page but with thoughts in my head rather than written prompts devised from a 'logical' temptation to be supposing what I might find and needed to be noting at this early stage of data collection. Learning to trust the ethnographic approach was something that needed time, recognising an early tendency to slip into 'positivism' with the urge and anxiety to 'find something'. This teacher also requested feedback about her teaching and the children's learning: e.g. *'I know it's a cheeky question, but could you tell me if the Year Six children were working at the same standard, or better, than others you have observed?'* or *'if you could give me some feedback that would be great – I can then forward that to the Headteacher and let him know.'* Both visits yielded a plea for professional feedback which reinforced for me the overall performative culture of the school climates from the teacher perspective, and the standing of FLL in the curriculum, resonant of literature in the field (see Chapter 3). Whilst I might have needed to find ways to make the familiar strange to myself as a researcher, this did not mean the same for participants involved. Trying to maintain ‘making the familiar strange’ provided for a potential ‘inauthentic’ tension for existing relationships. This led to a choice; either to abandon notions of making something that was entirely familiar less familiar to myself, or to search for a setting where the teachers were not familiar with me; the latter of which was decided.

4.43 Reflections and conclusions moving forward to the next phase

Field notes from both school settings had highlighted the impact of children’s socio-cultural and socio-economic status within each setting, not just between settings. How teachers themselves perceived children’s status appeared influential regarding what different children experienced with French. The teacher from the first school visited stated that *‘the parents often take their children to France here...it’s much easier...they all have passports...it’s much harder in the other school* (where the teacher also works) ... *because certainly not all the children have any links with France....they are much poorer...a more deprived area. I much prefer this smaller school.’* And in conversation with the second teacher, teaching in the prep school was a change from teaching French in a state secondary school, and one that they were very happy about because ‘*it makes the teaching much easier... the children are more interested, and they have to behave.’* The ‘behaviour’ of children in lessons appeared a key theme in notes from both settings, seeming to affect how children engaged and participated in all lessons observed. Whilst all lessons observed were ‘whole – class’, the majority of 1:1 teacher/child interactions I noted still appeared to be related to behaviour/control rather than related to learning-content, resonant of James & Pollard’s (2008) finding that the teacher-pupil relationship was collaborative only in as much as it served to establish and maintain the ‘moral order’ of the classroom, behaviour, and discipline.

This early time in the field indicated a range of factors involved in children’s FLL experiences, informing subsequent data collection:

- the nature of the classroom environment in which they learn (with those children able to cope better with ‘outside’ distractions conferred advantage)

- the nature of the actual learning content, tasks and activities (with those children who are best behaved being conferred advantage)
- the nature of the wider school context and opportunities for FLL (with children in school settings where there is most support and opportunity conferred advantage)
- the children's home background (with children from families with foreign language 'links' conferred advantage, including with writing, than those from home backgrounds lacking such 'links')
- their socio-economic status (with children from wealthier backgrounds conferred advantage, including with writing)

I began to perceive what children experienced with FLL as being exclusive. If so, this could potentially exacerbate the gap between rich/poor, able/less-able at a time when 'closing the gap' or 'diminishing the difference' was a pressing area for national education policy (DfE, 2013; DfE 2017) even before Brexit and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Further questions asked of data and findings emerging from subsequent time in the field therefore included:

- To what extent do all children relate positively to their FLL experiences in school?
- To what extent might children perceive FLL as something 'exclusive' and for some, rather than all?
- What might we learn about FLL in school from those children's experiences who are 'on the periphery?'

Whilst my research aimed to focus upon children's experiences as expressed and articulated by children themselves, I recognised that my early scoping visits were only able to touch the surface of this phenomena. It was also mostly my own interpretation of what I had seen, heard and noted, together with shared dialogue with the language teachers which informed and shaped my early thinking and experiences in the field. This phase was important in providing me with the opportunity to both experience and realise this. The scoping visits prompted further questions that subsequently informed my research. Exploring what I did not appear to notice from these initial scoping visits was of value in my quest to try and 'make the familiar strange', to become more consciously aware of what I might take for granted as a researcher informed by a wealth of foreign language teaching experience in the primary school. For example, whilst purportedly seeking to focus on children, my notes indicated a stubborn tendency for the actions, thoughts and explanations of the teacher instead to take precedence – indicative perhaps of an unwitting bias given my professional role, but also arguably encouraged by the nature of the teacher's engagement with me and potential underlying reason for granting their consent for my observations. Children's voices were lacking, such as I had recognised in earlier research (see Chapter 2). Further exploration of ways to engage more directly with children's FLL experiences and perceptions was necessary, together with the decision taken to seek a setting where the teachers themselves were less familiar with my professional role.

4.5 Phase 2: Fieldwork in one setting with one class

Next steps required me to spend more focussed time within one school setting, over a longer period, with one class of children, exploring children's FLL experiences more directly within their wider school environment and experience, and where teachers were less/not familiar with my professional role. These were not insignificant parameters to meet but if children's experiences in FLL were not explored and considered more directly within the wider culture of their other school and learning experiences, I recognised my research would be fundamentally flawed and subject to the same critique I had made of previous studies. The following section describes the decisions made and provides a rationale for choices made.

4.51 Homing-in on children's FLL experiences with a developing ethnographic approach

Whilst ostensibly desirable, it was not feasible for me to spend a considerable amount of blocked, consecutive time in which to immerse myself with children in a new school setting, further to other commitments. Spending a longer, but also none-the-less still time limited block of time in school could also be argued as a mere extension of a 'snap-shot' experience and considered more 'artificial' in its set-up, both for me as researcher, and for the participants. A 'middle ground' compromise was therefore taken.

The first step was to locate such a school, class and teacher willing to host such research. A two-form entry state English junior school on the edge of a small town in SE England was located (number on roll: 210 aged 7-11yrs; also graded 'Outstanding' in its 2016 Ofsted inspection through which to enable some similarity with the previous settings involved in this study). Further to ethical approval (see Appendices 12-14, pp.325-340) data were obtained over the period of 9 months in one academic year, between November 2015-July 2016, with a Year 3 class.

The school selected was one with which I was still professionally familiar but via the Headteacher rather than teachers. Thomas, Nelson & Silverman (2005, p.349) highlight that ‘rapport is everything’, and the initial familiarity and trust with the school and Headteacher both enabled and facilitated further discussions regarding Foreign Languages policy and teaching approaches, and their own perspectives of children’s FL learning experiences against which I could compare my own. Meaningful data could therefore be gathered using the ‘opportunity to investigate an interesting setting’ (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p.36). The Headteacher had a keen international outlook, very supportive of previous European links and student teacher exchanges. The school had appointed a MFL coordinator who had specialised during her (Primary) PGCE with languages. Further to liaison between Head and teacher, my research was based in her class with the teacher happy to engage for her own experience. The research opportunities in school settings supporting this research were therefore informed by a mutual ‘give and take’ between research and professional development. The teacher taught in Year 3, the first year of statutory provision, which provided an excellent opportunity to be able to investigate children’s first FL experiences in a KS2 setting, and to follow their developing experiences through their first year of statutory FLL. The school represented a ‘good opportunity’ to explore such detail (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). Taking the wider context into consideration, this time was also unique in terms of the build up towards the UK ‘Brexit’ vote – and ultimately towards the actual vote itself and initial fall-out. This period of research in school yielded opportunity to explore a never-to-be-repeated moment in time, both for the children involved and within what proved to be a rapidly changing wider climate for FLL.

The next decision was to find and agree a block of time for a ‘mini-immersion’. This was deemed necessary to help become more familiar and ‘part of the scene’ with participants, and less of an obscure visitor than would otherwise be likely to happen if I were to just ‘appear’ every now and then. The intention was to help participants become accustomed to my presence and to help the development of a more mutually familiar relationship and rapport. Heeding Thomas et al’s (2005, p.349) ’rapport is everything’, investment in developing rapport was considered vital.

The initial part of my second phase of fieldwork was conducted in November-December 2015 over 6 days with the Year 3 class between Friday 27 November 2015 and Thursday 3 December 2015. During this time 1x French FL lesson occurring as timetabled was observed and an after-school Spanish Club was attended. I otherwise immersed myself in the wider school environment and classroom life of the class and children within it.

The approach taken for this second phase of fieldwork focussed on one school, one class, over a consecutive period. This was purposeful decision, facilitating an attempt to obtain a better feel for, and understanding of, the 'normal' ebb and flow of the school day and routines and relationships in the wider school and class, against which to balance observations of FLL and children's responses. It enabled a more natural rapport to develop with the teacher(s) and children in class, although by remaining bound by the need to be able to develop and nurture such a rapport, such rapport cannot be wholly described as 'natural'. I was able to see and experience how the school week and each day ran, how the class was organised, and it allowed me to observe a range of different curricula lessons and extra-curricular activities. This enabled me to start exploring the three different contexts involved in children's learning experiences in school: the wider school setting, the classroom and general lessons, the foreign language lesson. I was able to observe and participate where it felt more natural and 'right' to do so in the context, making field notes about the environment, activities, actions and responses in as detailed a manner as possible both whilst there, and as far as possible, immediately afterwards. As in phase 1, I additionally included further thoughts and questions, and ideas and prompts arising from children and teachers.

4.52 Classroom Observations

During this phase I sought more direct immersion in the 'rhythms and patterns' of the children's day as advocated by Margonis (2011). I sought to observe and notice what children were experiencing, both in terms of the collective experience of the class as a community of learners and with different groups and individuals. Mindful of Gee's (1996, p.127) assertion of the importance of discourse as 'ways of being in the world, or forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes and social identities as well as gestures, glances, body positions and clothes' (quoted in Miller, 2004, p.26), I also sought to faithfully attend to dialogues concerning FLL as they occurred between children and between teachers and children during the school day. This is supported by the argument presented by Conquergood (2013, p.85) that observing 'sizes up exteriors' whilst listening is ‘an interiorizing experience, a gathering together, a drawing in’. It was also necessary to pay attention to non-verbal discourse, mindful that some children may be more ‘verbal’ than others and in line with Hargreaves (2006, p.145) who advocated consideration of ‘non-verbal communication and paralinguistic aspects of speech… to help us understand some of the challenges that children face when they begin to talk to relative strangers in ‘public’ situations, like school’. Bakhtin (1984, p.293) also notes that life is by its very nature dialogic: ‘To live means to participate in dialogue: to ask a question, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth. In this dialogue a person participates wholly and throughout his life: with his lips, hands, soul, spirit, with his whole body and deeds’. In this way, I recognise the ethnographic approach as a reciprocal one comprising vulnerability and self-disclosure (Conquergood, 2013, p.85) both for participants and the researcher: ‘ethnography is interaction, collaboration’ (Glassie, 1982, p.12, quoted in Conquergood, 2013, p.85). Such time in the field arguably took on a loose form of ‘sensory ethnography’ (Pink, 2015, p.xi), an approach which recognises the ‘multisensoriality of the ethnographic process’ and how ‘sensory ways of experiencing and knowing are integral to both the lives of people who participated in my research and to me as the researcher in how I came to ‘practise the craft’ of ethnography and came to ‘know’.

Having experienced some initial challenges and limitations by restricting my observations to a traditional non-participatory form during Phase 1, during this phase I joined in with children’s learning by sitting and joining in with children at their tables when the opportunity arose, where it felt relevant to do so and where this was accepted by children. Mindful of the need to revisit ethical assent, I always checked with children if it was ‘ok’ for me to join their table, providing reassurance that it was not a problem if not. In recognising the power difference that might prevent children from doing so I was also mindful to observe children’s body language that might bely possible discomfort, and act accordingly with where I sat. This continued throughout my time in the field even as children grew more accustomed to my presence. Such opportunities were valuable in enabling me to engage more directly with children. Doing so conversely limited my ability to make on-the-spot notes and as my time in the field progressed, I also became aware of a possible gradual switch of allegiance where my attempts to successfully engage more directly with children was something teachers may have found more challenging to navigate.

Whilst nothing obvious was said, during my time in the field I perceived a gradual switch from teachers initially aligning me as another adult in class with whom to engage in a narrative keeping the children in check (eg *'I'd be interested to see if you think the children are being more fussy now'*) to one of virtual alignment with the children themselves (eg '*I hope that's not you talking'* – class teacher's pointed comment to a child who they saw and heard was saying something to me as they were clearing away to go to assembly). These things provided further reason to try and maintain a blend of participatory and non-participatory observation and engagement during my time in the field as I tried to learn to navigate what could at times be a more uncomfortable space between children's learning worlds in the classroom and the teacher's teaching world. Some similarity with notions of moving between dominant and subcultures (Conquergood, 2013) was also recognised, where there was need to learn to operate in two cultures simultaneously, such as has been described within a different context by Todorov (1984). Whereas I found I was able to develop an increasingly respectful and engaging relationship with children, this increased at some apparent expense of my relationship with some teachers. It appeared more as an 'either-or' choice with some, rather than one where both may readily be maintained. Kohonen (2006, p.8) provides a possible explanation where, drawing on philosophical 'conceptions of man' by Buber (1923/1958), he reiterated how 'learners' may be conceptualised either as 'I-thou,' a relationship of mutuality between subjects as equal partners, or 'I-it,' in a relationship in which the other is treated as an object, with implications for subsequent power-relationships in class. I became aware that my presence could unwittingly affect the established power-balance in class between teachers and children and some teachers were more OK with that than others. As my time in the field progressed, I became ever-more alert to this, and found further ways to engage more directly with teachers, sharing and talking about my notes maintaining an open, on-going dialogue both verbally before/after lessons, and through email contact before/after spending time in the school (see Appendix 17, p. 345). All relationships require maintenance and reassurance, a salient lesson of which my time during this phase reminded me.

4.53 Field diaries and inductive analysis

Counter to Ravitch & Riggan's (2012, p.156) suggestion that the research journal is 'generally underutilized', the use of field diaries became integral both to my research in the field and ongoing analysis. Ravitch & Riggan (2012, p.156) advocate their use as an important and valuable research tool: 'It is a place to examine -in an ongoing and oftentimes unstructured and informal way – thoughts, questions, struggles, ideas and experiences with the process of learning about and engaging in various aspects of research'.

Wilson (2009) suggests it is necessary to write up detailed and 'rich' descriptive notes about such observations as soon after the event as possible. However, not only did work / home commitments prevent this from always happening, but it also felt more useful to have some time away from the intensive time in school and resultant detailed note-making. Such 'breathing time' also proved valuable for 'thinking-space', helping to 'situate' my time in school. Further to the induction period of phase 2 research, time was spent reading and re-reading my notes at different times of different days, and across a period of at least a month, highlighting aspects that seemed interesting, repetitive, or novel; adding further recalled detail to field notes and further thoughts and questions prompted by such re-reading and thinking. This inductive process was one that I repeated time and again.

I learned to write immediate observations and notes on one side of my field-book; leaving one side blank for such ongoing additions, thoughts and analysis was a particularly useful way to structure this, although running out of room on the 'blank' side at times was problematic, leading to notes and highlights scribbled over notes, with post-its and other paper being stuck into my field diaries. This approach developed organically during and after 'phase 1' where time in school was, whilst intensive, more focussed, and time-limited, enabling a swifter write up of the notes made in the field, as they seemed to reach a more natural 'conclusion'. In this instance, even though the number of days came to an end, the wealth of notes, descriptions, and time to assimilate and think about the experiences and observations made, and conversations had with staff and children meant I spent much more time re-reading and making notes upon notes, leaving it a while, and then revisiting to 'check' and refresh my thinking. In not coming to such a natural conclusion as with Phase 1, it felt uncomfortable to formally write these notes up. This led to juggling a niggling feeling of either not doing my notes justice or risk overly reducing and simplifying my data.

Reviewing my field notes in the light of the literature was a further step in the process; firstly, about the nature of what I observed; secondly about children's observed reactions and responses in the lessons, and thirdly about the methodological approach undertaken, allowing for further necessary reflexivity. This became an ongoing, inductive part of my overall research approach. It was not a linear approach where reading always preceded action, but was a symbiotic and interwoven relationship between reading, methods, observations, underpinned by thinking about all three strands together, in dialogue with teachers and children. Such an 'organic', contextual and co-constructed methodology also better reflected the 'organic', contextual and co-constructed nature of children's experiences and actions/responses to their school based FLL. Whilst this recognition did not make my approach any easier to manage, reflecting about that and recognising that did provide me with a much clearer conviction as to the research approach I developed as a novice ethnographer.

4.6 Phase 3: Extended fieldwork over time in one school setting with one class

Phase 2 of the fieldwork enabled me to gain a tantalising insight into the complex social interactions and cultural 'norms' apparent in both children's general learning experiences in primary school, and those with FL. The following questions remained pertinent for further exploration, seeking a better understanding of the school culture and environment for learning in which instructed FLL took place:

- What and how do children experience FL in primary school (over time?)
- (How) do children's experiences of FL, and with their FL learning at school resonate with their other learning experiences in primary school?
- How do children act/respond to/engage with FLs and their FL learning in school? What, if any, 'meaning' be inferred from this?

I had only begun to scrape the surface of these aspects of children's FLL experiences. Thus, as part of the ongoing inductive progressive focussing and nature of the research approach adopted, following phase two research, and with a naturally continued rapport with the class teacher established during Phase 2, further time during the rest of the year was arranged for me to attend. It was a valuable opportunity, carrying straight over into the following year. As the school year then progressed, the following pattern of time and foci emerged where Phases 2 and 3 of my fieldwork became a natural part of the same process:

November-December 2015

1) 6-day immersion: introduction, getting established, building rapport, gaining a deeper understanding of the wider curriculum and learning experiences in class and in school together with FLL wherever/whenever it arose.

January – Easter 2016

2) Whole days on different days of the week: to continue to explore the wider picture of children's learning experiences and context within which their FLL occurred during the working week of the school and life of the class.

Easter- May 2016

3) Focussed days, when FLL was specifically scheduled on the timetable: this became more challenging to unite with my work diary, but with the developed rapport, this could be more easily negotiated and changed with the teacher, e.g. if they had a sudden change to their plans etc. This allowed me to still develop my understanding of the school day and children's experiences within it, but also start to focus in more depth on children's experiences in FLL and other subject/learning areas.

May-July 2016

4) Specific half days where FLL was specifically planned: having now secured a better knowledge and understanding of the wider context within which learning was taking place and the nature of children's learning experiences, narrowing down the focus even further back towards FLL and including the transition in/out of these lessons with children's other learning experiences.

4.61 Moving forward with observations, field diaries and reflections: passive drift

Inductive analysis of my notes revealed how I began by noting a wide range of different things from the minutiae of classroom organisation, such as what was on children's tables and FL specific resources noted in the class environment to the broader, such as whole-school practice for the Christmas concert, and from a focus on the content and structure of lessons and teaching strategies towards an ever more progressive focus on children's actions, behaviours, responses, reactions: how the class as a whole responded in different learning situations and as relevant, different groups and individuals as permitted by ethical permissions of the school, teacher, parents/carers and children themselves. The time it took me to 'zone in' was a surprise, as I had entered the field with the express intention at exploring and looking at children's experiences of FLL and other lessons within the school day/time as a key focus. It took time for me to be able to 'get there', which at the outset of my research, I underestimated.

Time to simply ‘be’ in the school with the class; time to look actively; time to engage with the children, the teachers, the other staff, and time to get bored, proved both necessary and valuable. For it was this latter time especially, when I was sitting in class with children, when my ‘conscious noticing’ (Schmidt, 1994) fell away to a state of more ‘drifting awareness and contemplation’ that I then seemed to be more ‘open’ to the subtle things that were going on around me; noticing who else wasn’t actively engaged with the specified lesson content and who was; time for more idle contemplation of what caught my attention: what was going on outside, the subtle, social interaction between children during lessons; what other things I was hearing and seeing other than the immediately obvious. It was this time of ‘drift’ that ultimately, and rather surprisingly, provided the deeper, richer insights and reasoning, prompting further questions. At the time, I was concerned this was ‘dead’ time; worried about wasting precious time, missing things, the feeling that I needed to keep making notes, worried that my research was in danger of going nowhere with ‘nothing found’. This was unsettling. It was only when reviewing and adding to my notes after the time spent in school, thinking about what I had done (and thus not been worried about ‘consciously noticing’) that the possible deeper understandings began to emerge. Much of my time in the field initially seemed to have been a battle with myself, between performativity and obtaining ‘results’ within a clearly delineated time, learning to trust the ethnographic approach, where time became necessarily more fluid.

Further reading about ethnographic approaches also suggested such time as ‘normal’ in seeking an understanding from the first-hand experience (Mears, 2013). I gradually became more relaxed as a researcher within class, joining in and observing children’s experiences with assurance it was not just ‘ok’ to have those periods of ‘drift’, but that they were valuable in yielding richer considerations. For me, this period altered my conscious approach from one, that I can recognise on reflection as being mainly driven by ‘performativity’ to one that permits, requires even, a much more ‘experiential’ one; a necessary journey with my research into children’s experiences, and in my journeys between my professional role working in, and being used to a predominantly ‘performance-driven’ culture from which I had to ‘let-go,’ as my own developing researcher identity, culture and practice developed.

I considered such moments, where ‘conscious noticing’ ceased, to be of interest, not just as an ethnographic researcher, but also in terms of exploring these in terms of children’s FLL experiences. Did children also experience such moments in their learning lives? Were these recognised and of any value to children? To what extent did children have more, or less such moments of ‘passive drift’ in FLL than other lessons/learning? Furthermore, is it right to have phrased that as ‘passive drift’ given it was precisely this time that allowed other thoughts and thinking to be more actively ‘switched on’ at a deeper level, especially in terms of what is needed to help ‘make sense’ of things being experienced. This was an avenue of subsequent exploration.

4.62 Inductive analysis: a summary of emergent threads and themes

A review of the setting and participants is now shared before summarising main threads and themes developed from an ongoing, inductive analysis of data between November 2015 and July 2016. This built upon those emerging from Phases 1 and 2 and provides a frame through which my final phase of data collection, Phase 4, is then detailed.

Phases 2& 3 were spent with a Year 3 (Y3) class comprising 24 pupils (11 boys and 13 girls). The vast majority had moved to the Junior school from the local Infant school and had been settling into their new school and class for two months before I met them. One girl in the class was bilingual (Swedish). The young class teacher was relatively new in post, moving to the area and joining the school half a year previously. She was in her fourth year of teaching having previously worked for three years in a different school and area with a Year 6 class. She was the Modern Foreign Language (MFL) lead in the school, with her ITE having focussed on primary languages, including a 4-week placement in a Spanish school as part of the previous national Bilateral foreign language teacher exchange programme. Her main second language was Spanish, and whilst the school’s policy was to be teaching French throughout the school, the teacher also led an after-school Spanish club once a week, open to all children. Working full time with the Y3 class was an experienced Teaching Assistant. The two Y3 classes were set for maths lessons; this class teacher took the top group, comprising 30 children in total, whilst the other Y3 teacher took the lower group, comprising 18 children. Both Y3 classes were located next to each-other with an interlinking door. Both classrooms opened out on to the main large playground area of the one –floor, 1960s-style school building.

The class was arranged in 6x table groupings under laminated table ‘name plates’ hanging from the ceiling: Willow, Hawthorn, Sycamore, Ash, Birch and Oak, where children sat either in groups of 6 or 4 (see Appendix 18, p.349). It did not take me long to work out that ‘Sycamore’ was the ‘top’ table; the furthest away from the teacher’s desk, and ‘Oak’ was the ‘bottom’ table, located nearest the teacher’s desk. At the time I entered the class, the TA was administering a maths assessment to the class, while the teacher worked on the class computer. TA and Class teacher interaction became a key part of what I noted about how the learning environment was managed in class. For example, when going through the maths questions, one child found the explanation tricky and the teacher stepped away from the computer to help the child work it out; the TA told the class that she would mark the rest during their assembly time and posed the rhetorical question *'how kind was your teacher when she went through some examples before you started the test; wasn't she kind to you?'* Very subtle ways of reinforcing expectations, relationships and a clear partnership between both teacher and TA, who between them also managed the transition and class behaviour on their way to assembly. There were numerous other examples of how the TA and classteacher would interact and work together like this in the class during a range of lessons I observed. Further analysis of my researcher notes indicated some interesting anomalies with the ways in which the TA and class teacher worked in FLL lessons as compared to other lessons/times of the day, warranting further exploration.

4.7 Phase 4: Following up with children about their FLL experiences in primary school

This section details the final phase of fieldwork. It was completed in the same school as Phases 2& 3, and where I returned to the same class of children in the summer term in Year 5. This phase included engaging children with a choice of focus group activities through which to help 'test' threads and themes emerging from my previous time in the field. It was also a period in which I again immersed myself in the general school day and children's FLL experiences, making descriptive notes in field diaries to which further thoughts and reflections were added.

Decisions regarding when first to go out into the field, how long for, when not to, when to go back again, what for, and how, are recognised as some of the biggest, most influential decisions to have been taken and managed as regards the potential impact, positive or otherwise, for my research. Issues involved in managing that could be one further reason why for a recognised lack of research with such methodologies within reviewed literature. Not only can time out in the field be problematic to arrange, dependent upon other commitments, and of itself time-consuming, but combining the fieldwork together with the need for ongoing reading and analysis was also complex. As a result, the research approach developed was symbiotic and 'messy' in its complexity, rather than 'systematic' in a positivist sense. When managed on a part-time basis, this arguably added to the critical mix.

Always, the question churned over was ‘does this matter?’ This question is returned to in Chapter 7 (Conclusion).

Reflections from previous fieldwork led me to conclude need to search for further ways to best help support and scaffold conversations with children, to allow me further opportunity to listen to the children, and make that a more ‘natural’ experience for the children involved within the context of the school setting, rather than a formal interview situation. Following the previous phases of fieldwork, I recognised a developing and increasing need to engage more directly with children. I also wanted to develop a range of supportive practical activities to scaffold this, as I felt that formal approaches to interviews, or simply sitting down with children in a ‘so tell me...’ kind of way would simply be limited and lacking any semblance of authenticity and respect for children’s experiences. Ethically, I felt it unfair to put children in such a potentially unnatural situation and context with me, and my view was that such an approach to interviews could also jeopardise the potential richness and detail of their responses. Careful thought and attention were given how best to proceed with this final phase of fieldwork, addressing three key methodological questions:

1) What activities/approaches can be designed to support engaging more directly with children to help draw a better understanding of their experiences from their viewpoints, ideas, and ways they choose to express these in relation to their FLL experiences in school?
2) How can children’s voices be given greater prominence in my research, to enhance, help inform, question and balance the analysis and my own interpretations of children’s experiences with FLL?
3) How can these help address the recognised ethical issue of the otherwise asymmetrical power relationship inherently present between me as adult researcher, and the children as pupils of the school?

Before proceeding with Phase 4, fieldwork methods beyond observation, informal conversations and field notes were reviewed to help capture children’s perspectives of their FLL experiences in school and help me ‘test’ themes and threads emerging from inductive analysis and reflection together with children.

In considering how best to address this, Maccaulay's (2008) thesis proved informative. In seeking to explore the ways that British Bangladeshi children experienced their literacy learning, her study faced the same issue concerning how researchers can come to interpret and represent the sense that young children make of their own learning experiences. Whilst her research involved studying children across three different settings: at home, in the community and at school, the essential question for each study was, how can research make inferences that go 'beyond what is seen and heard to find out what people know?' (Spradley, 1980, p.10; in Maccaulay, 2008). The selected methodology Maccaulay adopted in seeking to address this was also largely ethnographic, based on observing naturalistic instructional events as children participated in literacy-related activities. Maccaulay (2008) sought to study learning, as I did, from the children's own perspective, where children were also viewed as active participants in their social world who made meaning through their lived experiences. Her findings were also interpreted within a wider social and cultural context. To support her observations and own fieldnotes, she used interviews and conversations with children and adults, audiotape recordings of the children's interactions with adults and peers, and children's drawings of literacy related activities at home and school.

When reviewing the nature of her findings however, again, the 'adult' voice appears very present in both the data and its interpretation. For example, more adult interviews were completed and the interviews with children involved a dominant adult voice. For the purposes of my study, I instead sought a way to enable the children to be a greater part of both the actual data and its interpretation. I recognise that the strength of the 'adult voice' is perhaps inevitable and to some extent unavoidable, however, I perceived a need to try and at least be much more consciously aware of this facet of my research. For me, seeking to increase the 'voice' of the children in my study would also help address the recognised power imbalance that exists between adult and child. So far, the 'adult' voice was recognised as all too present from my review of literature and from ongoing analysis of data from my first fieldwork phases. Engaging children with more bespoke activities was a recognised but warranted challenge for Phase 4.

Such 'messy' research caused some angst as an emergent ethnographer and highlighted the struggle involved with an ethnographic approach. Whilst ostensibly sounding simple to 'set aside any abstraction, theorising and generalisation' the reality was not, particularly given the acute awareness of the strong differences of academic opinion that reside in seeking and seeing the need to so do.

At this point, I drew more heavily from my own professional experiences as a teacher and teacher educator, recognised as a key influence in my research. A brainstorm of possible activities to use in school with children yielded the following ideas:

- the use of video/filming / photos: eg of observed lessons / part of the school day – children in charge of the camera - and to use this as a way to engage with children in focus groups, looking at it together, listening to their comments, the way they engage with that. Possibly having a camera too as researcher and complete the same task – to be able to compare what I notice and capture in comparison to the children, to help give me a deeper understanding as to my own biases and deepen my own reflection as novice ethnographer;

- the use of FLL 'climate walks' around school led by children: to see where children choose to take me and why, to listen carefully to how and what they talk about;

- engaging children with some short, practical tasks such as picture sorting: eg with artefacts/resources from the observed lesson(s) to act as prompts for discussion and conversation to try and elicit children's engagement and experiences with them; what seems more/less significant for whom, and why?

- engaging children with some more creative ways to express what they feel their FLL experiences are like, such as through making a collage – and thus also drawing on the use of simile/metaphor, as discussed by Barcelos et al (2003, see Chapter 2, p.70).

Further analysis and reflection about my previous fieldwork encouraged consideration of using small, mixed groupings for such practical tasks and 'conversations' (interviews) with children. My initial findings suggested it valuable to explore children's responses and experiences from a mix of socio-economic backgrounds and academic abilities, to explore children's perceptions of their FLL experiences.

Continued exploration of methodological literature concerning children as active participants led me towards the 'Mosaic Approach' (Clark, 2011). Its contribution in informing my approach in Phase 4 is shared in the following section.

4.71 Exploring the Mosaic Approach to data collection

The following section considers relevant aspects adapted from the 'Mosaic approach' in enabling closer inclusion of children's voices and their own insights about their FLL experiences during Phase 4. Such an approach to data collection is taken from the viewpoint of children as competent meaning makers and explorers of their environment (Clark, 2011). It brings together a range of methods for listening to young children about their lives and raises wider questions about the adult-child power relations and the status of young children.

The Mosaic approach was originally developed in 2003 by Clark, McQuail & Moss, in a research study with a range of stakeholders that was to include the 'voice of the child'. It was an approach developed directly within the context of research with young (pre-school) children. In her 2011 article, Clark uses a variety of case-studies from her second study (Spaces to Play, 2005) to illustrate 'the complex, multifaceted, and sometimes surprising process of listening to young children' (Clark et al, 2003, p. 12). It has since also been used by early years practitioners, which she asserts, 'illustrates how the distinctions between research and teaching can blur' (2011, p.12), resonant of my initial brainstorming drawing on my professional background. Rinaldi's research (1996, p.192) with the Reggio Emilia schools also highlighted the need to 'recognise research as a way of thinking, of approaching life, of negotiating, of documenting'. These resonated with the way in which my ethnographic approach towards this research had evolved, with its blend of observations and conversations, other data from the field with ongoing analysis, reading and reflection.

Theoretical perspectives about the active view of the child were again suggested, promoted through the sociology of, or for, childhood (Mayall, 2002), where children are not seen as passive objects in the research process or in society in general, but as social actors who are 'beings ***not*** becomings' (Qvortrup, Bardy, Sigritta & Wintersberger, 1994, p. 2). In questioning Qvortrup et al's assertion that children are '***not*** becomings', my view was that children, and as we all remain through life, in line with Uprichard (2008), are ***both*** 'beings' ***and*** 'becomings' – and that it is the very way these two facets interrelate is what makes such research both so fascinating, complex, and necessary. This theoretical perspective also endorses the emphasis on exploring children's perceptions of their lives, their interests, priorities and concerns (e.g., Christiansen and James, 2000).

A further influence in the development of the mosaic approach were theoretical perspectives about 'voice' as explored in the field of international development and through Participatory Appraisal techniques (Hart, 1997; Johnson et al, 1998), also discussed in Chapter 2. Methodologies were devised in these studies 'to make visible the voices of the least powerful adult members of communities, as a catalyst for change'. It begins with an expectation of competency; local people are expected to have a unique body of language about living in their community'. Notably, the techniques developed included visual and verbal tools, further endorsing ideas brainstormed previously.

Clark (2011) also acknowledged that theoretical perspectives explored in the Reggio Emilia schools in Italy (Rinaldi, 1996) inspired the Mosaic approach. These hinged around notions shared by my thesis, of the competent child, and the pedagogy of listening and the pedagogy of relationships. This approach thus appeared well suited in helping me complete my fieldwork with children.

The following elements drawn from Clark (2011, p.13) informed a framework for seeking and listening to children:

- Multi-method – recognising the different 'voices' or languages of children
- Participatory – treating children as experts and agents in their own lives
- Reflexive – includes children and practitioners in reflecting on meanings and addresses the question of interpretation
- Adaptable – can be applied in a variety of contexts
- Focused on children's lived experiences - can be used for a variety of purposes including looking at lives lived, rather than knowledge gained or care received.
- Embedded into practice – a framework for listening that has the potential both to be used as an evaluative tool and to be embedded within classroom practice.

The name of the 'Mosaic' approach itself reportedly represents the bringing together of different pieces or perspectives in order to create an image of children's worlds, both individual and collective. Whilst it usually combined positivist methodology of observation and interviewing with the introduction of participatory tools, I sought to adapt this for more inductive, contextual use.

Whilst research case-studies using the Mosaic approach have notably largely only been conducted with pre-school children, Clarke (2011) suggested the approach could easily be adapted to use with adolescents and adults. It was thus necessary to consider how this approach may be applied either in its entirety, or carefully selected from. As soon as aspects from different methodological approaches are selected in a kind of 'pick 'n' mix manner, one has to question whether or not all qualitative approaches are in fact in essence a ‘mosaic’ – if not actually a tapestry woven from threads of different hues, each selected with purpose, from which a rich, detailed and nuanced image can emerge over time on one side – with a mass of methodological knots on the other. Ultimately it may not matter the order in which each thread is chosen and woven; it will have some implications along the way for ease of completion, but if the threads are there, the image will emerge and arguably the more threads, the richer the eventual nuance. With anticipated potential to add more such ‘threads’ to my data, adapting and developing considered aspects of the Mosaic approach was pursued:

a) It offered a practical framework against which to involve child participants much more directly to explore their FLL experiences in primary school, complementing my own observations and field notes drawn from the ethnographic tradition. Having been designed and implemented with young children, this practical approach offered a supportive context for developing conversations with children and would seem a better ‘fit’ together with the other child-focussed and reflexive ethnographic approaches that form the backbone of this thesis.

b) By adding new tools and methods, it afforded greater scope for adding depth and richness to my research and the eventual ‘image’ of children’s FLL experiences revealed. It could be used in support of evaluating interpretations attached to observations and draw from participants in the co-construction of interpretation and meaning, thus strengthening the triangulation of my data and addressing an otherwise recognised limitation.

Some important aspects of the Mosaic approach that were potentially more problematic in terms of its value to my research were also recognised and managed:

- The approach as described by Clark (2011) was developed and expressly intended to be used to explore and evaluate tangible aspects of children’s lived experiences, such as with playparks, buildings; with concrete environments as opposed to children’s ‘lived experiences’ with abstract concepts. My own research, whilst based within a ‘concrete’ environment with tangible resources and with others, focuses on exploring a more abstract concept about children's FLL experiences and their relationship(s) with it.

- It was developed for use with pre-school aged children and has so far had more limited application with older children/adolescents and adults; care was therefore needed to ensure the practical tasks devised to create the 'mosaic' of children's FLL experiences were both age-appropriate and fit for purpose.
- The ethnographic approach required the use of a range of data to triangulate data and help with its interpretation. However, that approach largely argued for naturally occurring data, grounded in the setting and with the participants themselves, such as occurred during Phase 2/3 of my fieldwork. The adoption of more prescribed tasks for use with children, as advocated by the Mosaic approach for Phase 4, could add something entirely different to my methodology and subsequent findings which may help but also potentially hinder my purpose. More fitting with my inductive approach would be for such tasks to evolve more naturally in an inductive way through the course of my fieldwork. However, ethical approval was required, and therein lay a further tension: to obtain ethical approval, a full outline of focus group 'mosaic' tasks was required. Thus again, a 'middle way' needed to be secured, one in which assured the ethics but one which would also appease the inductive nature of my ethnographically informed methodology. A range of potential group tasks was therefore devised to illustrate the kinds of tasks from which children would be able to choose and adapt.

Ultimately all such considerations were deemed a necessary and important part of my developing methodology and approach as a researcher:

> *'It is an important endeavour to continue because unless adults are alert to children's own ways of seeing and understanding and representing the world to themselves, it is unlikely that the child will ever manage to identify with the school's and teacher's ways of seeing'* (Brooker, 2002, p. 171). -to which I would add the researcher's ways of seeing too.

Two stages were defined that were pertinent for Phase 4. Stage One: gathering material using the designed tasks, and Stage Two, bringing these pieces of documentation together with children's and teacher's comments to form basis for further dialogue, reflection, and shared interpretation.

4.72 Focus Group Tasks

Rather than pursue a pure ‘mosaic’ of practical tasks to all be completed by children as described by Clark (2011), a ‘menu’ of practical tasks to support the evolving conversation with children was developed. This nuanced Clark’s (2011) approach, allowing for choice and children’s own input. They were designed to help explore children’s ‘conscious awareness’ and attention to input (Schmidt, 1994) to question, ‘test’ and explore facets of children’s FLL experiences as had begun to emerge from inductive analysis:

- Notions of ‘challenge’ and ‘persistence’ rather than ‘fun’
- The extent to which children’s experiences and responses to them resonate with eachother’s
- The extent to which there were any noticeable differences between the experiences and responses of children from different socio-economic backgrounds and designated academic ability

I sought to afford children choice with the activities and how they preferred to express and articulate their experiences, mindful of the challenges children can face when they begin to talk to relative strangers in ‘public’ (Wood, 1988, p.145). I was also keen to ensure my approach continued in an inductive vein, informed by my ethnographically inspired approach. My approach with such focus group activities therefore needed to avoid advancing my own agenda as a researcher over the research community such as can happen in the process of conducting interviews and/or focus groups (Gibson, 2012, Silverman, 2011, pp.161-228).

It was not intended that all tasks would necessarily be completed. Instead, they were presented to focus groups as options and prompts from which they could select or suggest their own ways of adapting and adding to them to help me understand their experiences. For the purposes of my research, it would not be the finished ‘product’ that would be of interest; rather the conversations and responses elicited during the *process* of completion, working together with the children participating. The devised menu of activities were activities through which to encourage and scaffold conversations with children about their FLL experiences.

Outlines of each activity are shared below, with copies of the written prompt tasks used with children in Appendix 15 (p.343). As children completed tasks, their conversations were recorded and later transcribed for analysis (see Appendix 19, p.351).

4.721 Focus group activity menu:

a. FLL climate walk around the school led by focus group, providing their own commentary about FLL, and choosing where to go. Group to record key aspects of tour afterwards on A3 paper, together with any further notes they wish to add. Data to be collected and analysed by researcher with children: where taken, order of route, nature of children's comments and interactions/relationships; A3 group representation of the tour.

b. Children's focus group camera/video: volunteers from each focus group to have a different camera to that above, and to choose and 'frame' scenes/resources/moments to depict their FLL in school. What do they choose to photograph / why / not? To share with children and reflect upon, adding layers of description.

c. Reflecting about observed lessons: Children viewing and using key resources/photos from each of the lessons provided as prompts for discussion / reflection. Comparing and contrasting their learning experiences through discussion and conversation.

d. Collage /mosaic creating (group): Learning a foreign language in school is.../like.... group collage/mosaic/poem with different tiles representing different responses. (Like a picture 'Wordle').

e. Picture sorting: metaphor/simile style. Learning a foreign language in school is... / like.... (Pictures derived from those suggested by Wray (2008) and others from literature review concerning language learning (see Appendix 20, p.372). Samples shared as discussion prompts, choose and suggesting other pictures / images.

f. 'Blob' tree type activity: identifying themselves with a selected figure (or more) to represent their engagement and feelings towards FLL and explaining why chosen. (See Appendix 21, p.374)

g. Emoji sorting and selecting, representing emotions and feelings about FLL in school: discussion prompts. (See Appendix 22, p.378)

4.73 Selection of participants

Children were recruited in small groups (c.4-6 max.) from the Year 5 class. Each group engaged with up to three short practical activities, each designed to last no longer than 20 minutes. Children were recruited following time back in class to re-integrate myself with the class and establish a rapport with their (new) teacher(s) and also some new children who had since joined the class. This allowed participants and me time to 'acclimatise' before conducting focus-group tasks. Mindful of the desire to engage with 'all' children's voices, I sought to recruit children from a range of socio-economic backgrounds and academic ability, as defined by their teacher. Whilst ethical gate-keeper approval was received by the Headteacher, additional active consent from some parents/carers in line with GDPR was less forthcoming. This was found to be particularly the case for children of designated lower ability and from lower socio-economic backgrounds (as defined by teachers). This ultimately reduced the range of children with whom I engaged in these groups. The precise composition of each focus groups was agreed by the teacher, dependent upon which children were 'free' at times in the day teachers were happy for me to work with these groups. This led towards a mix of both 'higher' and 'middle' children in each group (see Table 6).

Table 6: Focus groups of children:

	Socio-economic background & Academic ability (teacher-designated)	***Focus group tasks selected***
Higher	1x group of 6 children and 3x groups of 4 children (mixed)	e. f. g
Middle		
Lower	Unavailable: No active parental/carer consent	

4.74 Specific ethical considerations

Due ethical approval in line with BERA Guidelines was sought and received for each phase of data collection, with specific approval for focus group activities. Gate-keeper consent and proactive parental/carer consent was obtained for all children who participated in focus groups (Appendix 14m p.332). Children's verbal assent was also obtained where I explained to children and reminded them of their right not to participate, or to withdraw at any time they wished (Appendix 11, p.316). Each task was designed to take no longer than ½ hr, mindful of children's mainstream curriculum time. Notes about what children did, their responses and reactions were made during each task, and conversations were recorded, for later transcription. No child was identified in these notes, with children's responses anonymised by a simple coding: 'P1' for a pupil from group 1; P2, for a pupil from group 2 and so on.

The tasks were conducted in an agreed space conducive to discussion and sharing ideas and thoughts, in liaison and agreement with the class teacher / school and due safeguarding practices. Finding a suitable space for some of the written tasks was at times found to be problematic. The weather was however clement, and several such tasks were completed on the playground, on the field, or in the school's quadrant. On two occasions, such group work was disrupted and cut short as a result, giving priority to children's wellbeing and respect for their time: once by a drumming workshop which led to difficulties in being able to converse and hear; a second time when we were memorably disrupted by a swathe of flying ants.

Mindful that not all children were able to be included in the focus groups, I spent additional time in an informal capacity with children at play and lunch breaks, through which to also make myself accessible and approachable within the normal course of their school day.

4.8 Validity and reliability

This section summarises the overarching research approach described in the previous sections and considers primary issues of validity and reliability, further to what has already been discussed.

My research approach enabled me to deconstruct as well as reconstruct and ultimately re-present knowledge and understanding about children's FLL experiences in primary school. A qualitative, interpretive approach within a contextual, ethnographic tradition as a 'way of knowing' (Mason, 2002) was adopted through which to explore and deepen understanding about the relatively under-researched phenomena of children's FLL experiences in English primary schools. Research in the field was conducted in four phases, details of which were outlined in the preceeding sections, summarised by Tables 7 & 8:

Table 7: Research timeline overview

Research phase	Time	Purpose	School and class setting
1	Nov 2014	Exploring the field and an ethnographic approach to data collection	School 1: Y3-Y6 School 2: YR -Y6
2	Nov 2015	Getting deeper into the field; developing ethnographic approaches	School 3: Y3
3	Dec-July 2016	Homing-in on children's FLL experiences.	School 3: Y3
4	June-July 2018	Final 'testing' of emerging threads and themes with children; mosaic-type approach included with ethnographic immersion.	School 3: Y5 (same Y3 class revisited)

Table 8 : School settings overview

	School 1 (Phase 1)	School 2 (Phase 1)	School 3 (Phases 2,3,4)
Setting and location (SE England)	Prep school on the rural outskirts of a large urban area	Rural state primary school	Semi-urban state junior school
Number on roll	350, 4-11yrs (YR- Y6)	133, 4-11 yrs (YR-Y6)	210, 7-11 yrs (Y3-6)
Ofsted/Inspection grade	'Excellent' in all categories (2014)	Outstanding (2014)	Outstanding (2016)
Target Language(s) in curriculum	French YR & KS1: 30 mins weekly KS2: 1 hr weekly	French (with additional French before-school club for invited participants) KS1: 20 mins weekly KS2: 30 mins weekly	French (with Spanish after-school club) 30 mins weekly
FLL teacher	Specialist French teacher: Secondary trained.	Specialist peripatetic French teacher: Secondary trained, teaches 'gifted and talented' in KS2 and all in KS1. 'Generalist' class teachers for others in KS2.	Y3: Primary Languages Specialist trained classroom teacher and MFL lead. Y5: 'generalist' classroom teachers.
FLL resources	Rigolo; with some additional material from specialist teacher	Heineman Tout Le Monde & Specialist teacher's own.	Heineman Tout Le Monde.

My approach was in line with an applied ethnographic tradition, drawing additionally upon adapted ‘mosaic’ methods. This latter approach aimed to help test and add further nuance and detail to naturally occurring data. Choosing and developing such an approach was considered less reductionist and more respectful given the phenomenon being studied. It was purposefully inductive rather than positivist, as initially informed by a review of literature (Chapters 2 & 3). This approach, being novel in the given field, provided opportunity for new insights and understanding about an under-researched phenomenon.

Such an interpretive approach, whilst suited to my study, cannot however provide generalizable findings (Mason, 2002). I acknowledge that findings and conclusions are interpretations and the research and analysis process itself, is a ‘(re)construction of the social reality’ (Charmaz, 2006, p.130). Single studies are also recognised as ‘limited in the generalisability of the knowledge they produce about concepts, populations, settings, and times’ and ‘frequently illuminate only one part of a larger explanatory puzzle’ (Cook et al, 2007, p.3). This can undermine the applicability, relevance, and usefulness in other contexts. By conducting my research across three school settings, over a period of time, and by including participant voices in both the construction of my approach and ongoing analysis of emergent findings I sought to address such limitations whist recognising the impossibility of full mitigation. Findings presented and conclusions drawn (Chapters 5, 6 &7) thus remain tentative and suggestive rather than definitive and absolute. They are ultimately my ‘truths’ further to my interpretations and (re)construction of children’s social reality during the time in which my research was conceived and completed.

My study followed a research paradigm associated with naturalistic inquiry. As with the studies within the same research tradition reported by Glisan & Donato (2012) and Bailey &Nunan (1996), my study did not seek to control variables, neither introduce ‘treatments’ on subjects. Rather, it sought to understand the complexity of children’s FLL experiences within the classroom through an ethnographic approach. Donato (2012) posits that such studies are constructed within their own theoretical and philosophical framework and subject to their own standards of quality and verification. He asserts that ‘attempts to evaluate such studies on standards from the quantitative paradigm (for example generalizability) are unfair and inaccurate’ (Donato, 2012, p, 30). Ellis (1997) furthermore indicated that investigations on classroom learners need to be conducted on classrooms not just in classrooms, as I have equally sought to do. Donato (2012) suggests that this, together with the long tradition of research within the qualitative paradigm, means that investigations of classrooms are therefore not flawed studies:

> 'In contrast to experimental studies, naturalistic inquiry holds as its primary objective to preserve the instructional completeness of classroom events, including the discursive interactions that occur there, to illuminate the topic under investigation' (Creswell, 1994, in Donato, 2012, p.30).

My research fits within the broad category of qualitative social science as the purpose and interest of this research lay in exploring the experiences and responses of children with FLL in primary school. Throughout this thesis I have therefore sought to ensure the rigour of my research by trying to make my philosophic position as researcher clear; identifying the theoretical constructs I worked with; describing the nature and extent of my 'sample'; seeking to ensure my arguments were based on data and were logical; gathering sufficient evidence; checking emerging findings with participants involved in the study; avoiding making generalisations to populations beyond those in my study (Meade, 2000, p.25).

4.9 Data Analysis

The following section builds upon the threads and themes already outlined where ongoing analysis was introduced as an integral feature of this study. Analysis was therefore both iterative and analytical. It was initially guided by research questions but became increasingly guided by the emerging data itself (Gibbs, 2007). My analysis also drew on my tacit knowledge and understanding developed both in the field, and from my own background.

Initial and on-going analysis highlighted an apparent fragmentation of children's experiences and children's agency with FLL as two main themes. In phase (4), children were presented with a choice of hands-on activities, designed to facilitate more direct engagement with children's thoughts and ideas about FLL to ascertain the significance or otherwise of the emergent themes (Gibbs, 2007).To better capture the complexities of children's FLL experiences and their responses to these, the themes were further analysed in relation to children's perceptions of FLL (what happens in class) and practices (what children do in lessons) and finally, how children appeared to theorise their own and others' responses.

The following section begins by outlining the way in which data was coded and categorised. It highlights the resulting threads and themes that emerged and were inductively refined during the research. The section finishes by summarising the defined threads and themes which frame the findings presented and discussed in Chapters 5 & 6.

4.91 Coding and categorisation of the data

A variety of codes were applied and refined. As suggested by Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) some codes remained, others went, whilst others were retained but became more nuanced, e.g., ‘restless children’; ‘waiting patiently’; ‘trying to help’. In this way, data was funnelled through a gradual series of refined codes, threads and developing themes. Doing so enabled the fine-tuning both of what I began to learn from patterns in my data and what to become more alert to question and check. Such on-going distillation moved from initial coding to realising a more defined set of codes, some initial examples of which are shared in Appendix 23 (p.381).

Further to the completion of fieldwork, time was spent considering the whole corpus of data, revisiting early data and dipping in and out of field diaries completed in different phases of fieldwork. Distance away from the intricacies and detail of the data was needed through which to consider a wider perspective about what I considered I had learned and was learning still from the data. This process led me towards settling upon ‘fragmentation’ and ‘agency’ as the most stable of themes that developed were consolidated through my time in the field (see Appendix 24, p.382).

Key, focal events that happened in the field were identified to illuminate wider, embedded meanings drawn from my data. Vignettes from events such as whole-class French lessons were considered for their value as a metaphorical way to help illuminate a wider wealth of information contained in my data and identified threads (Fetterman, 2010, p.99).

With the ‘constant recourse to the material one is analysing (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p.218) moving between the data and developing concepts, my analysis was clarified with codes and categories developed in relation with eachother (ibid.). Such an iterative process (Fetterman, 2010) also allowed me to examine other plausible links and scope to ‘test’ my developing sense of what was emerging (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). For example, having initially started to find data pointing me towards some disconnections between children’s FLL and their other experiences, it was also necessary to be alert to, and for, connections instead. In this way, my research in the field and parallel analysis of data supported an ever-more finely tuned ‘sense’ about what was and what was not seemingly going on; what I was and was not noticing. It was akin to a content analysis of my own fieldnote journals and my own approach as an ethnographer; what was I paying attention to and why – and what might I otherwise be missing? For example, becoming sensitive to whether I was attributing codes and categories using my own terms and phrases such as the codes referring to 'order', 'routine' , 'elite' or those arising from participants in the field, such as with 'pieces by pieces' ; 'getting the writing done'; 'fitting French in', and how codes and categories blended further to my own synthesis and interpretation of the data and literature such as with 'the hidden curriculum'. One external category drawn solely from the literature was also consciously applied to my analysis: 'fun'.

Analysis was completed in a series of three broad stages:

1) Initial selection of data and analysis during fieldwork;
2) Systematic analysis of data through a longer process of comparative analysis. This involved a lot of sifting and sorting, to-ing and fro-ing;
3) Definition of overarching themes and supporting threads.

The initial stage of analysis largely involved my own perception, selecting pieces of information to record and revisit from my growing data. This selection and isolation of such information was a subjective process. As suggested by Fetterman (2010, p.94), the initial stages of my analysis followed a personal or idiosyncratic approach, informed by a developing range of theories and against a back-drop on-going reading across the field. This analysis started almost straight away as it required active decision-making processes of what to record and as time progressed, active processes of interpretation and meaning making (Emerson et al, 2001). For example, in deciding what to note when, when out in the field. As fieldwork progressed, so my own approach became gradually more refined, trying out different interpretations of my data for size.

For example, this excerpt from my field journal was initially highlighted and coded with *'quiet class'*; *'waiting patiently'*; '*routine*':

> CT *(teacher)* directs a child to hand out exercise books. CT writes the LI *(Learning Intention)* on the IWB *(Interactive whiteboard)*. Children wait to receive their books. Class is very quiet. Children waiting patiently. When they get their books, children copy the LI down in their books.

During this phase of data collection and analysis, I perceived a performative pressure to 'find' something whilst being simultaneously unsure of my ability to perceive the 'right' things to ‘find’ (whatever they were) and of the wish to avoid the risk in wasting time pursuing red herrings with my data. Accepting this as a necessary and integral part of ethnographic analysis, rather than a risk to be wary of and avoided, was something that took me time. This is recognised by Fetterman (2010, p.94) who also wrote about the need to be able to synthesize and evaluate information. I also found that a renewed sense of patience and trust in the process was needed with an ability (and time) to step back from the data and look at it with ‘fresh eyes’; ethnographies take and need time to develop and evolve; they are not things that can be readily rushed if they are to retain as much validity as possible. I was again reminded of Geertz’s (1973) note about the ‘intellectual effort’ of ‘doing an ethnography’. I found this a challenging lesson to learn with data analysis and obvious need to complete this study. In much the same way it can be problematic to know when to finally stop reviewing literature, knowing when to draw the analysis to a final close was also not without tension.

The value of the second phase of data analysis after data collection itself had finished was clear. With no more data coming in, I was able to explore the corpus of data I had in its entirety. Initially overwhelming, the subsequent adoption of a more systematic approach provided a lifebelt of sorts (Fetterman, 2010). However, the adoption of a more systematic approach was itself supported by the initial time to dip in and out of the corpus of data, ‘bathing’ in it.

The coding I applied as my data collection and its analysis progressed was organic rather than clear-cut (see Appendices 23 & 24, pp.381-382), even though presented in a ‘demystified’, coherent and logical manner. If repeating such research, I would retain, away from the data itself, a separate record of codes and categories and their refinement as research progressed to support the final stage of data analysis. I consider this even more important with such ethnographic research where researcher-bias can often be cited as a weakness of such a methodological approach. I would also consider using a database software program such as NVivo during the data collection period as sorting this manually was valuable, but considerably time intensive, and where, despite the best efforts to check and re-check, through human-error there is the potential for some data to still have been overlooked or incorrectly sorted. I recognise this as a limitation of ethnographic research requiring an understanding and appreciation of all that is entailed.

Bryant (2009) argues that researchers cannot claim the analysis of data is pure induction, endorsing Kelle's (1995) suggestion that researchers investigating social interactions bring their own lenses and conceptual networks that cannot be avoided. As has been discussed above, I therefore do not claim my analysis was purely inductive. Rather, it is understood as a co-construction of knowledge developed between my participants, the wider social and cultural contexts, and me (including my review of literature). The reader will also bring their own lens to the data and the way in which it was analysed and shared in this thesis.

4.92 Summary

This chapter has sought to explain and account for the overall approach and methods adopted in purposefully pursuing am ethnographic, contextual approach to explore and reach an understanding of children's experiences of FLL in primary school. My approach developed organically, further to ongoing inductive analysis and opportunities that arose arguably as soon as I stepped into the field. Whilst unorthodox, relevant aspects of my initial inductive analyses and examples drawn from data have been included within this chapter in an attempt to clearly account for methodological decisions subsequently taken as my time in the field, and analysis progressed.

The final categories derived from my analysis form the foundation of the forthcoming Chapters 5 & 6 which present my findings from this research. They draw from the system of interconnected data developed through analysis, supported by argument and discussion (Holliday, 2007).

CHAPTER FIVE

Children's encounters of FLL in primary school:

'It's like a jigsaw puzzle without the picture'

5.1 Introduction

This chapter documents the ways in which children encountered FLL. Fragmented and disjointed FLL encounters by children are revealed, not just between settings but also within the same school and class. The nature and degree of these furthermore appeared to echo children's socio-economic background and attributed academic ability. Children identified by teachers as academically able, including those from socio-economically advantaged backgrounds, were conferred more opportunities to encounter and engage with FLL than others, who could at times otherwise be 'stranded'. Findings shared in this chapter also reveal a surprising pedagogy focussed on *'getting the writing done'* that infused children's FLL encounters.

The chapter continues by presenting findings about the 'othered' way in which children encountered FLL. Whilst established routines and practices through which to incorporate and 'normalise' FLL for children were drawn upon, the timetabled day, classroom environment and general classroom discourse otherwise positioned FLL on the periphery of children's 'main learning'. Children's recognition of such challenges in learning a FL and the wearing-off of the initial novelty of their engagement with FLL at the start of Year 3 are also revealed.

Data used to illuminate findings mostly draws from my time in School 3. Where this is different, it is specified within the chapter. Such data includes field notes and diary entries, photographs, notes from conversations and those transcribed following focus group activities with children.

Four sub-themes concerning children encounters with FLL are used to structure findings presented in this chapter:

- Finding and making time for French
- Disruptions and interruptions
- The 'otherness' of FLL
- 'Top table' and 'lower table' learning

Each subtheme is presented with evidence drawn from the data to exemplify and illuminate findings. Minor themes drawn from analysis are included within each section as minor sub-headings. These are mainly drawn from data arising from the children themselves through which I seek to foreground their encounters and their voices. Findings are analysed considering literature and adopted theoretical lenses. This chapter concludes with a summary of its key findings, contextualising the findings about children's FLL experiences illuminated in Chapter 6.

5.2 Finding and making time for the foreign language -French

French was the default FL of choice in each of the settings appearing an unquestioned, well-established, and expected feature of the curriculum offer for all children attending them. For example, according to the specialist teacher in School 1, *'French is just the done thing here'*; in Schools 2 and 3, my question upon entering the field in both settings, to confirm the language(s) being taught, was met with some incredulation: *'French of course!'*

It however appeared challenging to *find* the time for FLL for some children, whilst for others, it was more readily *made*. The availability and amount of time children spent with FLL differed both between settings, within settings and of more surprise, even for children within the same class. From the macro level to the micro, analysis indicated some children had greater access to FLL in school, whilst others encountered greater challenge. Minor subheadings that frame findings presented and discussed in this section draw from children's voices: '*When we do do French'*, '*Clicking back into French'*; '*Being taught French'*.

5.21 'When we do do French'

Children from each setting positioned FLL slightly differently within their talk. For example, fieldnotes drawn from School 1 (Independent School) indicate children readily talking about *'our French lessons'*. In School 2 (small village primary), children's talk about FLL was instead framed in phrases which more often identified FLL with a specific teacher: *'when we work with xxx'* (name of peripatetic French teacher). In contrast, children attending School 3 (suburban junior school) talked about FLL in a more qualified way, such as: *'when we do do French'*.

Key differences in FL provision identified between these settings may have some bearing on such nuanced talk. These are summarised in Appendix 25 (p.383). Children attending School 1 for example, had opportunity for double the amount of lesson time than children attending Schools 2 or 3. This may explain why children in School 3 were more commonly found to talk in a more assured way about '*our French lessons*', as a regular feature of their timetabled school experience.

Counter to what was found to happen in School 1, timetabled lessons in Schools 2 and 3 did not always occur for all children in class. For example, in School 2, whilst some children remained in class to be taught by the class teacher, other children from the same class were taken out to be taught French by the peripatetic teacher employed by the school. (See Appendix 25, p.383). Children's talk appeared to reflect their associations with this: e.g., '*when we /they work with xxx*'. For children remaining in class, timetabled French was reported by both the peripatetic and class teachers as being liable to *'slip'*, subsumed by completing or continuing with other learning, not French. In School 3, timetabled French was also found to be subject to similar 'slippage', reflected within children's talk, e.g., '*when we do do French*'.

Whilst a weekly French lesson of half an hour was formally timetabled, lessons themselves did not always occur as timetabled. During my time in School 3, experiencing a French lesson as intended through what was timetabled proved to be an exceptional occurrence both for me as a researcher and the children in class. During the 1 ½ years spent visiting and revisiting the children in School 3, I only experienced a total of x3 specifically timetabled French lessons in Year 3 occurring when formally timetabled to do so, and 2x specifically timetabled lessons with the same year group in Year 5. One reason for this finding may well be the extended amount of time spent in School 3 in comparison with the other settings. This afforded greater propensity for such occurrences to happen and be observed within the natural pattern of the school day, whilst my visits with Schools 1 and 2 were more unique, specially arranged to include French lessons and thus occur.

With the NC (DfE, 2013) purposefully not specifying, neither indicating a recommended number of hours for FLL in the curriculum, variations in the time and delivery planned for children's FLL were anticipated and unsurprising. They are also in line with those reported for example by Tinsley & Board (2017, p.10) that:

> ‘Almost all primary schools in England now provide at least some teaching of languages to pupils throughout Key Stage 2, and just over one third of schools now have access to specialist expertise in the teaching of languages within the school. However, there is evidence that some schools are finding it challenging to provide the kind of systematic and consistent language teaching envisaged in the national curriculum.’

Findings suggest that ‘some schools’ where provision is challenging, are those serving children in less-privileged communities. This is endorsed by Ofsted’s report (Wardle, 2021), citing uneven FLL practices between schools, and that children who attend schools in less advantaged socio-economic circumstances, and children where educational attainment is lower overall, are more likely to be taught languages for a shorter time and receive less systematic instruction without access to specialist teachers, than those attending schools with higher educational attainment and lower numbers of children from poorer homes. This is turn echoes findings repeatedly reported in the Language Trends surveys (e.g., Collen, 2021, 2020; Tinsley, 2019) and by the White Paper presented by Holmes & Myles (2019).

Cursory consideration of these findings suggests that a ‘secondary-style’ approach to the organisation of FLL in primary school may also provide at least some children with more time and consistency with FLL. Children in School 1 and those identified ‘gifted and talented’ children in School 2, for example, encountered FLL in a more ‘Secondary’ manner and referred more assuredly about FLL in their talk. In contrast, children not singled-out as ‘gifted and talented’ in School 2 and those in School 3 encountered FLL through an ostensibly more traditional ‘primary’ model, whereby children remained in the same classroom, taught by their class-teachers for all subjects. References to FLL in their talk were less assured, further evidencing how different children encountered and experienced FLL.

Such differences contributed towards a fragmentation between what different children encountered. For some, as indicated by Appendix 25, FLL was encountered as a distinct subject, physically split by both time, space and teacher; for others it was encountered as part of the daily ‘blend’ of wider learning experienced within the same class, with the same teacher, where learning within the school day was physically punctuated by breaktimes, school assemblies and when the teacher announced a change of focus for children. In addition, some children in Schools 2 and 3 had further opportunities for even greater exposure to FLL than others in class, for example through attendance at the after-school Spanish club (School 3) or invited to attend before-school and additional in-school French lessons with the specialist teacher (School 2).

The more systematic 'secondary-school' model of staffing and timetabling FL for primary-aged children should not however be conflated as being the most conducive for children's FLL experiences, just because it may afford a more systematic and consistent way of enabling FLL to happen. As indicated by Sharpe (1992), and discussed in Chapter 2, primary schools offer other advantages conducive to younger children's FLL, with other literature providing strong arguments that YLLs and their needs are distinct from older language learners (e.g., Grauberg,1997; Satchwell,1999; Hasselgreen, 2000; Edelenbos et al,2007; Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols, 2008; Kirsch, 2008; Wray, 2008; Djigunović (2012).

Established curricular practices affecting how children are constituted and how children may constitute themselves (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969) helps explain perpetuated pre-existing differences in the way children encountered FLL, depending on socio-economic background and overall educational attainment. Schools were required to make their own decisions in realising specified curriculum learning for children. These appeared to be influenced by established practices and expectations, and/or the various experiences and perspectives of school leaders and teachers themselves rather than those of, and for, the children. For example, *'French is just the done thing here!'* (School 1).

Such variation both between and within settings indicates a problematic, confused understanding about how the aims of the NC for FLL (DfE, 2013) may best be realised for children within the 'instructed school setting'. Both Murphy (2014) and Huang (2015) furthermore argued the pace of non-immersion learning is slower and the amount of progress children can make by learning a FL in an instructed manner in primary school is itself limited. With much research suggesting that it takes anywhere between 80-100 hours to obtain a basic 'tourist level', broadly equivalent to A1 on the CEFR (online, no date), the amount of time with which to engage children in FLL in KS2 matters if all children are to benefit from instructed FLL. Findings indicate this will otherwise only continue for children attending more socio-economically 'privileged' settings and/or with higher overall educational attainment rather than for all children.

5.22 'Clicking back into French'

Children were aware of the limited time many of them had with FLL in school, and the challenges this could pose them and others. The infrequency of having French and having to '*click back into French'* was for example raised by children in their conversations during focus-group activities:

P: when we have French….?

P: well…when we do do French…

P: we had a bit more French in Year 3… hardly any in Year 4. Now in Year 5, we've had a few more lessons again…

P: *you look around and can see it on everyone's faces… we have to …click back into it again.*

Further context about children's talk in School 3, for example, of *'having to click back into French'* is provided in (Appendix 26 (p.385). It shows a total of x9 French lessons recorded by Year 5 children in their exercise books during the year. With each lesson assumed to be c.30 mins. this suggests about 4 ½ hrs lesson time in total during Y5. In comparison, this amount of time would have been covered by children attending School 1 (KS2) in less than half a term, suggesting these children had access to much more than double the amount of time with FLL than those in School 3.

The mixed nature of how, when, and what children covered in lessons may provide a further reason for their talk about their experiences of needing to '*click back into French'*. For example, as revealed by a 'book look', children used exercise books titled 'Intercultural Understanding' within which both 'multi-cultural learning' and 'French' were recorded. This necessitated ability to 'click' between each term as well as between the different aspects of learning content in each.

Summarised in Appendix 26, whilst individual lessons were identified for French at the beginning and end of the year, a block of teaching was otherwise apparent for multi-cultural learning. Children's learning of French focussed them upon what they could say, understand and write, with each lesson covering a different theme for vocabulary such as 'school subjects' or 'directions in a town', whereas multicultural learning instead focussed on selected factual knowledge about a specified country, e.g., Canada and Inukshuks.

Children's talk not only illuminated encountered challenges in '*clicking back into French'*, trying for example to recall and remember what they had done in previous lessons, but by the end of Year 5, revealed some awareness of how they were engaged in, and almost humoured a form of 'role-play' with teachers. Children reported this role-play happening at the start of their French lessons, such as I had also observed. Their talk demonstrated their awareness of how they were required to engage and conform with established expectations and classroom routines and expected to respond. This was made more challenging for them by the infrequency and disjointed nature of what was covered in each lesson. For example:

> *P: French is…we should…well...because we're meant to be like …'what new things are we going to be learning today?'* (Mimics a positive teacher voice) *… then… we can recap the things we have already learned. And it's a challenge to…. for…every time we have it. To see if we can remember what we've already learned…* (other pupils: yeah, yeah- wider agreement, nodding heads).

The infrequent amount of FLL children experienced and its subsequent novelty might however also explain children's previously reported enthusiasm for FLL (e.g., Martin,2012), as revealed by one child:

> P: *French is…well...I like it how we have it less occasionally…because…we get more excited…*

This comment did not, however, receive wider endorsement from others in the activity group. Analysis of further data instead indicated that the sporadic nature of their lessons made for a largely time pressed FLL experience for the majority children. For example:

> *P: we ran out of time a bit*
> *P: it's hard going into it (French) when your brain has been kind of relaxing from it – and we've got to kind of like…. get to work…. we have to use our brains…*
> *P: you've got to kind of like work on the language …click back into it (agreement of others: yeah…yeah)*
> *Ps: in Y3 we used to have it more… In year 4 we hardly had any …. And this year… it's only been the last couple of weeks…we hadn't had French in like ages…it makes it harder.*
> *P: It just makes it annoying that it only happens sometimes*

Such sentiments chimed with those separately expressed by their class teachers, who spoke of the pressures of fitting French in to their timetables during the school year. Comments such as those below, that arose in conversations with teachers during my time in the field, help illuminate how children's FLL experiences were themselves tinged from a broader climate of teacher-performativity:

> *T: French in the curriculum works a bit like with RE and Art. It stereotypically gets squeezed.*
>
> *T: We're really behind with our medium planning… there's no time for the French.*
>
> *T: There's been a big focus on technology this year – it took more time.*
>
> *T: The last two lessons the Year 3 teacher has taken my lessons because of the PE observations I've had to have – and the school's use of Sports Funding….*

Even in School 1, the teacher was concerned to know my opinion of the levels the children were achieving at *'so that I can tell the Headteacher…it helps with my appraisal you know'*.

When revisiting the class in Year 5 in School 3, the class teacher also commented that '*French is sporadic here. There's always something to fit in. Each term there are a number of extra workshops to fit in too. You never know how much curriculum time you're actually going to have'.* This conversation arose after a morning where a timetabled French lesson had slipped to make way for '*so much other work to be finishing'* (history, in that instance).

A notable difference was apparent in how both children and teachers framed their talk about their Multicultural learning week (see Appendix 26, p.385). Even though this learning had taken place earlier in the academic year, children were keen to show me what they had done upon my return, with reminders popping up in classroom conversations such as *'remember when we did…?'* and pictures around the school from that week. This was also mirrored in the talk of teachers and senior leaders, showing me the children's chosen Inukshuk designs with one also under construction in the school grounds. At the same time, and in contrast, teachers checked again whether I really was *'still interested in the French?*'

During the topic-led week, x9 lessons had been recorded in their books, amounting to broadly the same amount of time as was spent with French, otherwise spread out over the year (see Appendix 26, p.385). Such a week, clearly valued and involving the whole school community, provided for learning experiences that appeared memorable and positive, even though it was just one week out of the school year. It highlights how attempted Secondary-style organisation for FLL in primary schools may not necessarily be the optimal way forward for enhancing young children's FLL experiences in the primary phase – neither those of their teachers.

In conversation with the Headteacher, it was apparent that the way French was facilitated through ICU was historic and built upon already established traditions and shared senior leadership values placed upon the importance of introducing children to other cultures, peoples and places. The school, and same Headteacher, had been involved since the 'capacity building phase' set in motion from the Languages for All: Languages for Life strategy (DfE, 2002). The Headteacher revealed their own drive and enthusiasm for international learning opportunities, reflected by their personal passion for travel.

The values placed by senior leadership teams upon curriculum practices was a phenomenon also recognised in the Longitudinal Research report (Cable et al, 2004). In this school, 'French' seemed to have reached a 'half-way' status for children between full curriculum subject afforded the same status as other foundation subjects, and other cross-cutting curriculum areas such as 'Intercultural Understanding'. The then Ofsted inspection requirement to report on how schools supported and facilitated children's cultural understanding and empathy is a further consideration in driving such decision-making in school. The possession and use of such Intercultural Understanding books could be seen as a prudent nod by the school to fulfilling this statutory requirement against which schools were very accountable in high-stakes Ofsted ratings. 'Culture' mattered because it was valued and reported on by Ofsted; FLL in contrast, had no such extrinsic lever, other than being useful to support the school's endeavours with developing children's wider cultural awareness. The extent to which this may yet change further to the new Ofsted Inspection Framework (2020) and its fresh focus on a broad and balanced curriculum and 'deep dives' into specific curriculum areas, including FLL, remains to be seen.

Wider curricular pressures of time, coverage and accountability measures indicated by teachers appeared integral to the challenge of '*squeezing'* French into their teaching, whilst children themselves recognised challenges this posed concerning the continuity of their learning. The Year 5 teacher reported a further tension being the lack of overall 'focus' through which to engage children with French:

T: a couple of years ago we had a French theme day. A company came in. That worked really well. Gave it a focus.

This teacher was herself perhaps conforming to the expectations of the school to cover French during the school year, but to all extents, appeared otherwise a little unhappy at needing to do so, recognising an overall lack of '*focus*' for children's FLL – despite the use of the commercial scheme. The preferred option expressed was for someone else to lead the teaching and/or for this to be perhaps 'themed' and taught in specifically blocked units of time such as the school operated in other areas during each school year be it through a specific curriculum area, or cross-curricular theme e.g.: Shakespeare Week, Multicultural Week, Science Week, Design Technology week.

As French becomes more established in the curriculum as a subject entity, the challenge might therefore be in not losing sight of its original curricula appeal for children (and their teachers) and one of the arguments attributed to its inclusion in the statutory curriculum: children's apparent motivation and enthusiasm for FLL together with the apparent ease of their FLL (e.g., Martin, 2012).Findings suggest that to have a positive impact on children's FLL experience, there may be merit in considering an alternative timetabling model within the traditional organisation of teaching and learning in the primary phase: different weeks through each year could perhaps be designated for more intensive, focussed FLL. This would perhaps seem to be more conducive than mimicking a Secondary-style timetabling for FL. As Sharpe (1992) has already highlighted, the traditional Primary phase of education has some key advantages for FLL that the Secondary phase does not. My findings indicate it may be timely to revisit these and challenge the implicit assumption that 'what (apparently) works' in Secondary MFL will also work if replicated for younger children and teachers in the Primary phase. The current National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) arguably makes some provision for this whereby KS2 is tasked with focussing on 'FLL' and KS3 instead, with 'MFL'; I suggest the two are not synonymous and should not be conflated, even if they do currently and perhaps contentiously, share the same overarching purpose of study in the curriculum document (DfE, 2013).

5.23 Being taught French: routines

Whilst encountering a specifically timetabled French lesson as timetabled might have been an exceptional occurrence, the manner through which French was introduced to children was not. French was assimilated into the structures and routines found to support children's learning in other curriculum areas. For example, the recapping-of-previous-learning drill prefacing most lessons, together with ubiquitous use of specified learning intentions and success criteria, with an additional focus for children in *'getting the writing done'* (a point developed in Section 5.62).

Appendix 27 (p.386) depicts the start of a French lesson in School 3. It illustrates how established, familiar, routine classroom practices were drawn upon and influential in how children encountered FLL, for example *the writing of the LI on the IWB; the handing out of books; the writing down of the LI in a designated exercise book; the lesson involving further writing in books,* such as was found to happen for many classroom-based lessons. Such routines embedded and arguably sought to normalise children's FLL experiences, integrating the otherwise exceptional addition of French as a normal, if homogenised part of '*the working day*'. The vignette also highlights how some children in class, whilst complying with such established expectations, also inserted a degree of 'fun' into repetitive lesson styles, indicating a level of interplay and negotiation between teacher and class. This is a finding to which I return in Chapter 6 (p.209).

Each class-based lesson observed, regardless of subject, began in much the same way. In this way, the 'new' or 'novel' was cloaked in a blanket of familiarity for children making it appear less out of the ordinary, and a more integral, 'usual' part of their curriculum experience. As Appendix 27 indicates, at the very start of this lesson, children did not fuss or appear to make any exception to the fact that they were going to have French with my field notes indicating '*the children waited patiently. The class was quiet'*.

The teacher's comments directed to me in front of the children in class about *'starting with French today'*, today being a '*working day'* and '*I'd be interested to see if you think they're being more fussy now* indicated that starting the day with French might be something of an exception and may not have happened, had I not been there. This could also have accounted for the teacher's comment as to the forgotten written date in French because of *'being in a mad rush last night'*. The influence of my presence as a researcher was tangible and as discussed in Chapter 4 (Methodology), required ongoing awareness and vigilance.

Appendix 27 also highlights two further ways in which children's FLL experiences were fragmented: firstly, through the disjointed content with which children were engaged within the same lesson, not just between lessons, e.g., covering months-of-the year, to countries and colours within the same lesson. The vignette also provides an example of how the teacher, through their apparently random questioning about what countries were called in French, drew on 'top table' learners to help re-establish classroom order. Establishing and maintaining such order appeared to be prioritised above FLL itself. These are findings explored further through the rest of this chapter.

5.3 Disrupted and interrupted FLL

The following section shares findings about the disruptions and interruptions encountered by children with FLL. As observed and experienced, time for children's FLL was less sacrosanct than for other lessons; an example of how children's FLL was 'othered' (developed in section 5.4). Children from designated 'lower ability tables' furthermore experienced more disruption than those from 'higher ability' tables (see Appendix 18, p.349, for class seating plans). Analysis indicated a range of disruptions occurring during all observed FL lessons, including those happening as timetabled and those termed *'pop-up'* French lessons by children (section 5.31). Additional disruptions included children being taken out for English and Maths booster groups, music lessons or social skills support, and specially arranged events such as drumming workshops, photographs, extended rehearsals for the Christmas concert, plus messages delivered from other classes. A notable example, where interruptions proved to be particularly prevalent is shared in the following section. It continues by considering further findings about children's awareness of their limited and disrupted FLL time, learning French '*pieces by pieces by pieces'*, and findings concerning children's awareness of the reduced value placed on FLL under the subheading *'it's not our main learning*'.

5.31 'Pop-up French'

Children's encounters with FLL were mostly found to occur through less formally timetabled time in class. They used the phrase '*pop-up French'* to talk about such occasions where French otherwise '*popped up'* during their time in school. This contributed towards an ad-hoc experience of FLL but one in which the occurrence and use of French was becoming established and normalised as a part of their wider school experiences. As experienced by children and as a researcher, you could never be quite sure whether French would happen as timetabled, or when time would be *found* for French lessons in odd gaps arising within the school day. This contributed towards disjointed and fragmented experiences not just through the sporadic timing for FLL, but also through the content of what the lesson itself then covered. This is illuminated by Appendix 28 (p.391).

This example of a discrete French lesson '*popping- up'* for children within the school day, was one where it had initially been discounted by the class teacher after a week of testing for the class. Having a French lesson was subsequently found to be of use in managing disruptions to the lesson at the time, further checked and endorsed by the (specialist) class teacher with the other (non-specialist) Y3 class teacher. The vignette also exemplifies the varied nature of interaction between the teacher and children on the 'top' and 'bottom' tables offering both challenge and support within a 'whole-class' situation. It also illuminates the increasingly conflicted space in which I found myself as a researcher, between the teacher and the children, as my time in the field developed:

> One child sitting close to where I am quietly starts telling me about their assessments that week.
>
> *'Who's speaking?'* calls the class teacher. *'If that's you* [identifying another child sat close to the one who started to talk to me] *…., I won't be happy'*.
>
> The child and I look at each-other in a guilty and complicit sort of way. We stop the quiet talk.

The vignette illustrates the importance placed on having all the children in class to complete the story, whereas not all the children were required for French. Those children being taken out by the Teaching Assistants were from the lower-ability tables, whereas children from the higher ability tables remained in class. Although their FLL was also afforded greater disruption by the ins and outs, this was less than for those children removed from parts of the lesson. As reported by the teacher, this higher ability grouping of children were largely also those from a more affluent background. In contrast, the lower-ability children taken out for interventions encountered a more restricted overall curriculum diet, for whom 'French' appeared to be deemed of even less importance.

Occurring even within the same class, my findings point towards the existence of a dual-curriculum, where time for FLL was more readily available and valued for higher-ability children than it was for others. This is resonant of Margonis' (2011) reported 'huge polarities' between the education afforded the privileged and the 'education of containment' of others. It also provides nuance to Biesta's (2010) 'functions of *(FL)* education' and the impact upon children from different ability groups and socio-economic backgrounds.

This is further illuminated by Appendix 29 (p.394), where children experienced varying amounts of disruption within the same FL lesson by virtue of their designated ability. Not all children were able to respond to the questions posed to the class because they did not experience all the lesson to be able to do so. It was children mainly from the higher ability tables. 1:1conversations between the teacher and a selected child were modelled for the rest of the class to hear, and presumably also learn. The extent to which other children picked up on that modelling was however not clear, neither the necessity of them doing so. How different children thus encountered French served to exacerbate children's divergent experiences, with arguably richer experiences accessible by designated higher-ability children, in contrast to a more impoverished experience for others.

Whilst seeking to reduce the attainment gap between the outcomes of children by providing additional support and input, such a practice may instead exacerbate social, economic, and educational attainment divides. The challenge for teachers and leaders is thus how to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum offer for all children, whilst also seeking to ensure required progress in the core subjects is made within the set timetabled time for those subjects, rather than by taking children's time away from other curriculum areas.

5.32 Pieces by pieces by pieces

An analysis of the FL content encountered by children appeared to contribute to an overall disjointed experience navigated by children. Illuminated by Appendix 26, children's FLL could move from a focus upon a typical French school day in one lesson, to key features of a town in the next. Even in the same lesson, children could experience seemingly disjointed links between language content, as exemplified by Appendices 28 & 29. Transitions into FLL lessons could also require children to jump between both subject matter and language, arguably conferring further advantage on those children more able to do so. As illustrated in Appendices 28 & 29. children were concerned with King Arthur's round table in a history lesson in one moment, and in the next, needing to '*click in'* to birthday present vocabulary in French. The teacher also appeared unsure whether children were prepared from previous lessons:

> CT: *oooh …I'm not sure we've done all this*

Children's responses within focus group activities indicated further awareness of the fragmented way in which they were engaging with learning French, with wider implications for their FLL. For example:

> P: *we're only learning pieces by pieces by pieces*
>
> P: *yeah… it's like a jigsaw puzzle…with no picture…you have a bit …but don't know where it fits…*

An analysis of children's responses towards the end of Year 5 reiterated notions some children expressed about FLL being distant to them, their learning, and lives right now, and about the infrequency of their learning encounters making learning the language harder. Children also expressed notions of needing to learn the *'whole language'* and this being something they were far from being able to achieve:

> *P: what we're learning now is …well… quite far away… we are very distant from learning the language…. We are only doing it pieces by pieces by pieces at the moment and simple things....*
>
> *P: we're not close to learning the whole language at all…*
>
> *P: We don't always do French…But I don't think I'd like it if we had it more…*

These children expressed a wish to understand how what they were engaging with would contribute to the learning 'the whole language'. Not being confident about the 'whole picture' of FLL or the FL itself, children appeared to be particularly limited in understanding how the pieces of the language 'jigsaw' they encountered in lessons contributed to the 'whole'. This may be partly explained by the extent of commercial schemes used to determine the content and application of children's FLL (see Appendix

26, p.385), with implications both for the extent to which they are used, the nature of what is covered by the schemes and how they are used in support of children's FLL.

The dissonance found in the continuity of the language content to which some children were exposed more than others, through interruptions and disrupted learning, could arguably help explain children's reported feelings of ambiguity or sense of growing frustration with both what and how they were encountering FLL. As captured in the following table, far from reporting FLL as a widely enjoyed experience, children by the end of Year 5, appeared to be more cautious (see Table 9). In completing the activity with children towards the end of my time in the field, this cemented what had been emerging from the process of inductive analysis. I also suggest that children were more likely to have responded more authentically at that stage having come to know more about me and my presence during their time in school than if I had engaged with children in that way earlier on in the research.

Responses by Year 5 focus group children (Middle Ability /Higher Ability) revealed mixed responses and thoughts about FLL:

Table 9: Emojis chosen by children to represent what they felt about their FLL experiences in primary school.

Rank order	Positive	Neutral	Negative
1	Happy	Confused	
2	Excited, Surprised		Embarrassed
3			Angry, Tired, frustrated scared/worried.
	Total no. of responses:		
	9	**2**	**7**

Such a mixed response was of particular interest given that children participating in these focus group activities were representative of the 'top and middle tables' and, as reported by the teacher, the more socially advantaged children. Not only has it been previously reported that primary-aged children mostly find FLL in school 'fun' and are mostly very enthusiastic about it but also, as noted in the literature review (see Chapter 2, p.56.) the limited research that has been conducted with children has largely also only engaged with socially more advantaged children, though via broader, normative research approaches. It could therefore have been anticipated that participating children in this study would also respond in a wholly positive manner. Smaller case-studies such as those by Phillips (2017) and my own research (Schulze, 2010) have conversely indicated that such broad statements are misleading. Findings from this study, employing an inductive methodology with its progressive focussing on children's encounters and experiences of FLL, indicate that even amongst the 'top table' children, disparities between children's self- reported FLL experiences are apparent, and are certainly not all wholly positive. Findings call into question those arising for example from Martin's (2012, p.348) Pathfinder evaluation, which concluded that children were '*generally overwhelmingly positive towards their language learning experiences … children were typically enthusiastic and attentive, and regarded their language lessons as both fun and useful'.* Instead, my findings are more resonant of Woll & Wei's (2019), who reported 81% respondents indicating 'learning a new language takes a lot of time and effort'. Overall, findings indicate this is a much more complex phenomena, necessitating further research that bridges learner psychology and instructed foreign language learning such as that suggested by Sato & Csizér (2021).

5.33 'It's not the most important thing we do'

Findings hitherto presented and discussed in this chapter suggest that FLL, introduced as a new non-core subject area from September 2014 (DfE, 2013) remained low status within the wider curriculum experience of the majority of children in Schools 2 and 3. This was reiterated by the incredulity expressed by staff in School 3 that I was wishing to focus on French (languages) for my research: '*why French?!*'; '*well French is not the most important thing we do….'*; and from a TA about to do a literacy focussed intervention group: '*would you like to come and see what I'm doing with these children instead? They (the rest of the class) are only having French now'*. Combined, these things, shared openly infront of children, served to position French for children as a 'lower status' aspect of their learning; something which children appeared to pick up on. The general sense gained from my time in the field was that what was fundamentally important for schools at least, was that French was at least offered to some children and evidenced on the curriculum and in children’s books over the course of KS2. This was summed up by a Year 3 teacher in School 3 as ‘cover and dip’: ‘*French is an easy one to cover and dip into…you don’t need to know as much from previous lessons and learning’.* This indicates how children’s FLL itself was less of a priority; the main thing was that something happened.

In contrast, ‘French’ was more clearly positioned for children in Schools 1 and 2, further exemplified by the way in which it was displayed within these schools and classrooms in comparison to School 3. ‘French’ displays were apparent throughout the initial two school settings, in all classrooms visited, and in the corridors, for example: photos of school visits to France with written anecdotes from teachers, parents and children attending. In School 1, there was even a designated ‘French’ classroom as reported by the teacher: *‘although I also teach maths here, but the French takes over as you can see!’* In comparison, French was supported for children in much less frequent and less obvious ways in School 3. This was graphically demonstrated through the way in which French was on display for children in the school and classrooms. In contrast with Schools 1 and 2, displays involving French, as with the curriculum for French itself, were harder to locate and much less obvious as illuminated by the following photographs where any displays of French were to be found on the periphery of the classroom, on corner cupboards, semi-hidden behind doors, or even beside the bin. These displays were also teacher-led, focussing on vocabulary such as classroom objects or other nouns such as children had also been found to be writing. The only display involving children’s own work was in the Year 5 classroom, at the back of the room on cupboard doors (see Appendices 30 -32, pp 397-401, including other displays).

Photo 1: French in the corner: vocabulary labels for everyday classroom utensils are displayed on the cupboard where the Year 3 exercise books were kept.

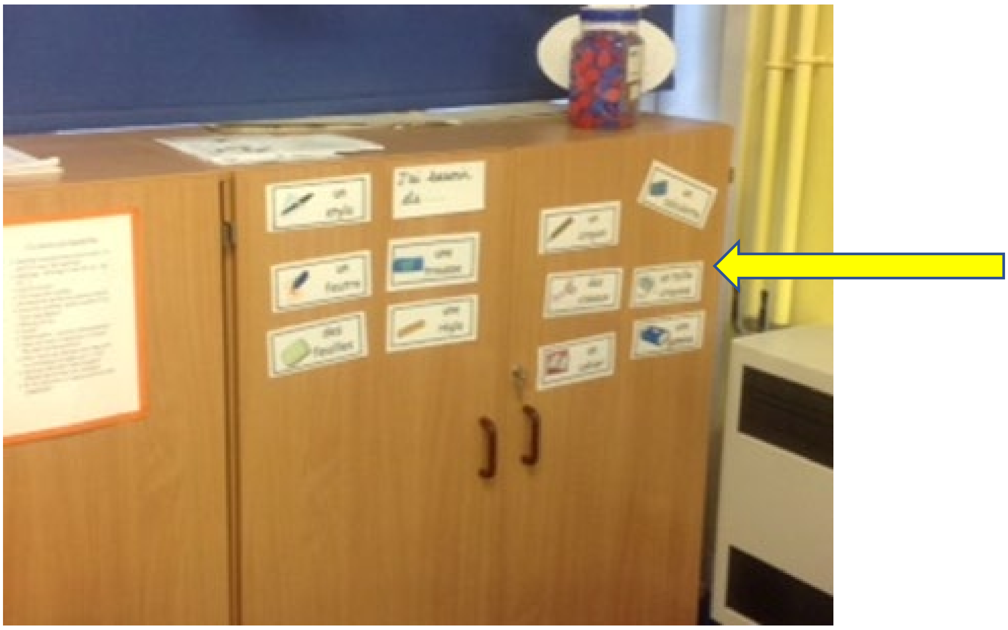


Photo 2: Semi-hidden French vocabulary for colours is displayed on the side of another cupboard in the Year 3 class.

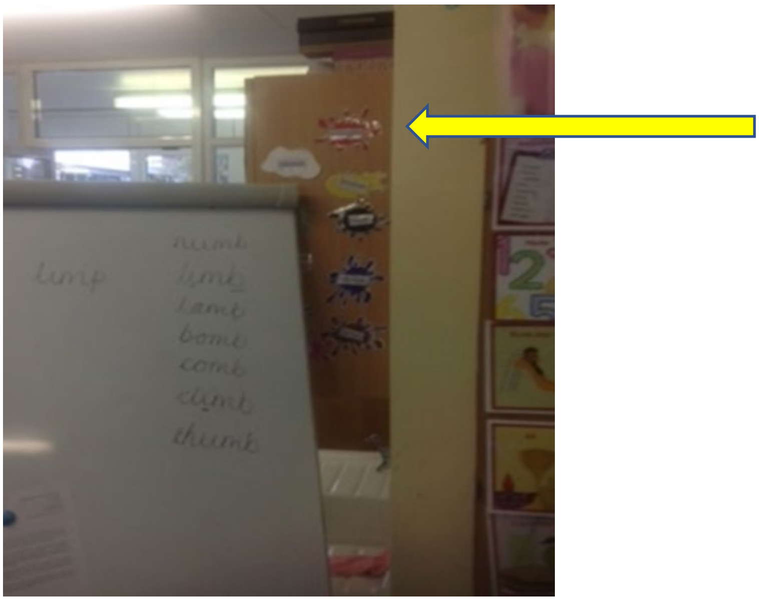
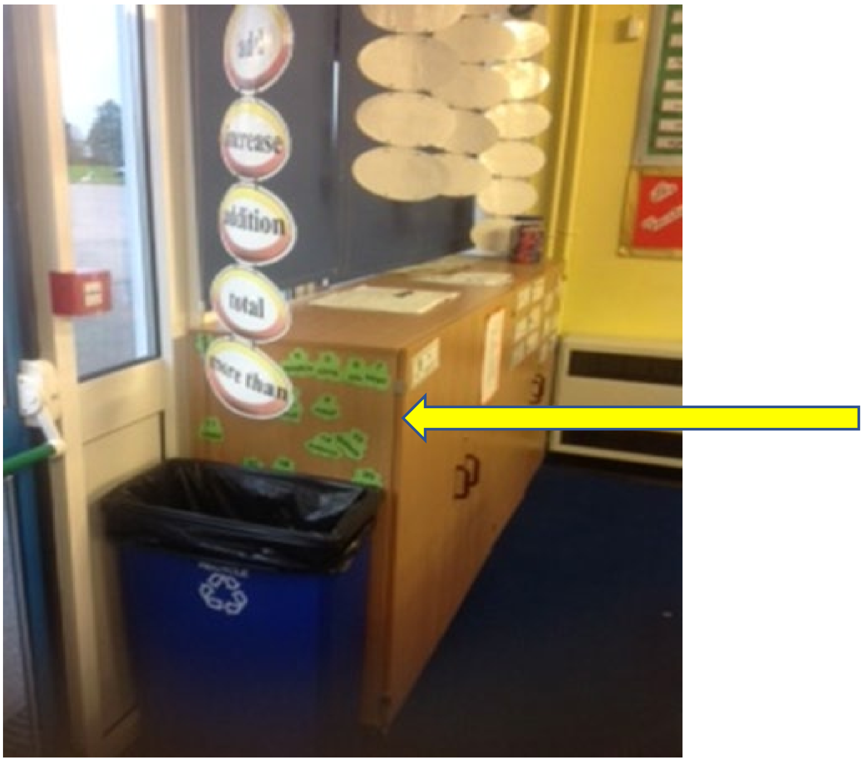

numb
limp
limb
lamb
bomb
comb
climb
thumb

Photo 3: French by the bin: words displayed on the side of a cupboard beside the bin and the outside door in Year 3 classroom.



At no time during my time in the field did I observe any child (or teacher) refer to any of the French displays. Other than being included in the peripheral fabric of the environment, French otherwise remained as a disparate and discrete area of the curriculum with no direct links facilitated with other content or skills the children were learning. Instead, French words dotted around the remaining unused spaces of the classroom were arguably there for filling remaining ‘empty spaces’ and/or adult benefit, seeking to demonstrate visually perhaps, for those that looked, that ‘French happened’.

Being able to see the contexts of three different schools within the methods employed to scope, gather and reflect on data emerging from the field allowed me to set the learning and teaching observed and experienced in School 3 within a broader frame. Apple’s (2012, p.5) salient reminder that learners in school ‘are people whose biographies are intimately linked to the economic, political and ideological trajectories of their families and communities and to the political economies of their neighbourhood’ was useful, as each of the schools participating in, and shaping my research, had a different economic, political and ideological trajectory. Adding to Apple’s reminder however, I would also suggest that learners in school are also people whose learning experiences are intimately linked to the economic, political and ideological trajectories of the *school's* ethos they attend. As Haste (1984) previously suggested, the way in which these factors interrelate are not without some complexity.

5.4 The 'otherness' of FLL

Not only did children's discourse refer tentatively to FLL (e.g 'when we do do French, see section 5.21 p.166) but children positioned French differently to other subjects through other ways in which it was referred. For example, the inclusion of the verb '*do'* within children's conversations in reference to French:

> *'Can I do the date in French on the board? (Child's question to teacher at the start of a lesson)*
>
> *'We do writing in French!' (Child's conversation in focus group activity)*
>
> *'Are we doing French today?' (Child's question to their teacher)*
>
> *'When we do do French' (child in conversation with me)*

This contrasted with how children used language in conversations about other subject areas where reference to *'learning*' or '*having'* was more usual. For example:

> *'We're learning how to write a persuasive letter'* (Child to me when I joined their table)
>
> *'This won't help our learning'* (Child quietly commenting to another child about the choice of doing a '5 a day jive' to break up the writing in their RE lesson)
>
> *'This afternoon we're having Science'* (Child to another as they entered the classroom and saw the pictorial timetable on the board)

Teachers' own discourses about French, to which children were exposed, were also observed to position French on the periphery of children's 'main' learning. For example:

> CT: *We wouldn't usually do French... We're having a bit of a wonky day.* (Talking to the class at the start of a 'pop-up' French lesson.
>
> CT: *let's concentrate on our main work* (responding to a child infront of the class in an English lesson. The child had linked the sound of the English suffix ' ly' with the French word 'les').

> CT (with a grimace directed at the children and me): *You might not think I'm so lovely after this afternoon's lesson – but we'll give it a go!* (At the start of the afternoon to children, after being greeted into class and just before taking a French cover lesson)
>
> TA: *It's only French now* (to me, but clearly audible to the rest of the class)
>
> CT (covering for Y5 teacher): *Easy peasy lemon squeezy. Can't guarantee I'll explain it any better, but I'll give it a go……. Actually…I'm really confused too*. (To children in class, working through a prescribed FL lesson from the commercial scheme used by the school)

When entering the field, I had also experienced this sense of 'otherness' when talking with staff (other than the Headteacher) in this setting about my research focus with FLL (see section 5.22 p.169) e.g., *'French? Why, we do so many other important things here!',* or *'are you really still interested in the French?!'*

This is illustrative of an 'othered' way in which children encountered FLL in the curriculum. The influence of such discourse was endorsed by Haste (1987), as 'the member's knowledge will consequently depend on the nature and quality of the discourse to which he or she has access'. Riley (1996, p.132), also emphasised the role of discourse 'in the maintenance of social reality, in defining positions in the social matrix.' Being exposed to such discourse about FLL and French may therefore be anticipated to have influence not just on the nature of children's FLL encounters and their experiences, but also mine. This was a further aspect which required due vigilance as a researcher, to try and ensure that my focus on children's encounters and experiences and analysis of these were not overly coloured by the impact upon my own researcher experience.

5.41 'A different country book'

A variety of terms were used to refer to FL lessons with children by teachers in School 3. This contributed towards a sense of 'otherness' and fragmentation for children in comparison with other learning. 'French', 'Multicultural Learning,' 'Intercultural Understanding' and 'purple books' were terms found to be used interchangeably with children. This required children to navigate between each term, whilst other books were readily and consistently referred to and understood e.g., 'science; or 'RE'. Whilst 'Intercultural Understanding' was a term used with me by the Headteacher and some teaching staff, children themselves were only sometimes observed to use that term and specifically only when locating, handing out or collecting their Intercultural exercise books. For children it was otherwise *'French'* in their conversational language – and '*doing French'* meant using their Intercultural exercise books to write in.

Some children otherwise spoke in a less sure manner about their Intercultural Learning books. As field notes indicate, when asked about where they recorded and wrote their work, most children in the group chorused: '*French books!'* One child proffered the teachers' phrase, subsequently confirmed by others:

> *P: We've got an Intercultural Understanding book. Basically… it's just a different country book. Sometimes we do a multicultural week and that's what we put in our Intercul….is it intercultural?*
>
> *P: Yes – it's our Intercultural Learning books.*
>
> *P: The purple ones?*

As highlighted in section 5.22 p.169, the term 'Intercultural Understanding' appeared to be an umbrella term to include both FLL and 'multicultural learning'. This provides an example of the way in which a plethora of terms and phrases emerging from various policy documents and strategies over the years (discussed in Chapter 3) were 'blended' within established school practice, subsequently shared with and then requiring navigation by children. Terms such as 'Intercultural Understanding', 'Multicultural learning' and specific foreign languages like 'French' had been grouped together and were used interchangeably with children whilst otherwise each being distinct, having been introduced in policy at different times with various purposes with distinct definitions. It arguably added a further dimension to the fragmented and ad hoc manner in which children encountered and experienced FLL.

On occasions, and illuminated by the following Vignette 1, this multiplicity of terms caused some confusion for children. Children appeared confused by their cover-teacher asking for monitors to hand out their 'French books'. This resulted in a dilemma in trying to meet the teacher's request and help keep the lesson time running smoothly. Notably, this dilemma was resolved amongst the children themselves in conversation with each other (a point to which I return in Chapter 6). The teacher continued with the expectation that 'French books' would be handed out, whilst the children, aware amongst themselves that they did not have books labelled thus, did not immediately know how best to respond without upsetting the teacher. It was the children who appeared to be more flexible in being able to move between the terms introduced and used by their school:

Vignette 1: Resolving the 'French book' issue:

CT: *Do we have monitors for the French books? …….*

[Children look at eachother; no-one responds]

CT: *Yes/ no?……. There's some confusion?... [children murmur)*

[Two children begin to slowly stand up, other children -lower ability tables- start actively looking through a cupboard] The CT waits expectantly looking at the class, waiting. [Silence in class, other than rummaging sounds].

P: (from lower ability table) Is it these books? The purple books?

CT: Yes – the French books.

[children start to talk quietly about whether this means their Intercultural Learning books]

CT: *Let's hand them out. We need to write today's date and the Learning Intention.*

On occasion, the odd reference was made by children linking some cultural aspects and experiences of their FLL:

> P: *…it… puts a different atmosphere in the room…you feel like French…it's hard to explain…..It's a good atmosphere….it's like French culture in the air…different games….videos…it shows a picture of the market and it makes you think of the different food they have…*

Such a response was however exceptional. This example arguably only arose because of a question raised during a focus group activity. Findings suggest that whilst the teaching of the FL was positioned within a wider cultural frame in this setting, it remained less explicit. However, as indicated by the response, an underlying positive notion of culture and language, culture and food, culture and mental imagery is suggested, offering an alternative possibility for children's FLL if more widely embraced: *'it's hard to explain… it's a good atmosphere'*.

The language children used more commonly within their conversations otherwise indicated FLL was more usually associated with people who spoke other languages as '*other'* and talking about *'them*' and '*us'*. For example:

> *P: if we learn French… it can help you if …you like go to foreign countries or places….so you can… kind of… communicate with them.*

Children's apparent limited connections with 'culture' was of some surprise given the school's specific use of Intercultural Understanding through which to include French. It also provides challenge to a purported aim of FLL as stated in the statutory National Curriculum to 'liberate children from insularity' (DfE, 2013). It indicates that unless cultural understanding is explicitly taught, its aims may not necessarily be achieved through the act of engaging with a foreign language itself as has otherwise been suggested by definitions expressly equating language with culture such as by the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis and as is apparent by the objectives in the NC (DfE, 2013) where no express mention of cultural understanding is made through which to help achieve its expressed aims.

Findings suggest that children's FLL experiences otherwise appeared to have little relevance to themselves, more usually distanced through qualified notions of '*if*' French were learned and '*if*' there were travel to foreign places. In this way, children's experiences of FLL also appeared 'othered' and fragmented from their learning and lives more generally, mirroring the way in which it was encountered. Such notions resonate with arguments presented by Mehisto, Marsh and Frigols (2008) about just in case' language and 'just in time' language. My findings suggest merit in engaging with more 'just in time' FLL in support of children's FLL experiences, providing greater opportunity for children to make 'just in time' use of the FL rather than predominantly learn about it, and copy down some language 'just in case' useful in the future.

5.42 'Not our main learning'

Children's FLL encounters were informed by a developing understanding of a curriculum hierarchy. Some subject areas were deemed more important: *'our main learning'*, a phrase used by teachers, teaching assistants and children alike, through which French was distanced and 'othered.' French clearly belonged to the '*other'* learning that children either understood as being '*less important'*, or only of interest for '*some children'*.

The nature of the classroom discourse between the teachers and the Teaching Assistants, and then with me too as I joined this community of learners, was something to which I became increasingly attuned during my time in the field. Whilst noted in Chapter 2 as being recognised as an under-researched area in primary FLL (e.g. Robinson 2014), it is something I have come to view as being extremely powerful in not only the way discourses sought to position the foreign language (French) within the curriculum and wider 'primary school experience' with children, but also served to establish and maintain a strict regard for the established school ethos (where French was on the periphery, and seemed to be being kept there). My researcher notes for example included references about *'school ethos/humour/care – an iron fist in a velvet glove?'* Further examples drawn from my fieldnotes are shared below, where languages arose in conversations during the school day include the following comments made by teachers / TAs with / to children. These were within a whole-class context where French being placed 'on the periphery' of children's learning was evident, or used to help establish classroom rules, routines and expectations and emphasise which subject areas were important and valued instead of the FL:

- Whilst taking the afternoon register in Year 5, class teacher says to the class:
  'What do we say for afternoon? No (not waiting for a response)– *let's revert back to English'*
- Year 3 child to Y3 class teacher in the morning as they enter the classroom*:*
  'Buongiorno!'
  Teacher echoes with emphasis and a smile to the Teaching Assistant (TA)*:*
  *'**oooh** buongiorno!'*
- In-jokes shared between teacher and Teaching Assistant: the TA aloud to the classteacher in front of the class when the classteacher was asking children about a French word:
  'Can I just say… 'facial expression?!' Followed by chuckling.
- Re-establishing a non-negotiable register routine one morning, School 3, Year 3:
  Class teacher: *'We're going in a circle. We will take it in turns to say bonjour to eachother'.*
  Children take it in turns to say: *bonjour*
  Class teacher: *'We also need to say bonjour to the person in front of you on the register'.*
  Children say bonjour to the next person in the register and that child says bonjour back as a response. The register is completed with echoes of '*Bonjour!'*
  'Bonjour'.

- During the register in the afternoon, the word *'bonjour'* is being used by children to respond to the teacher. One child (higher ability) introduces the word *'salut!'* instead. This is used by the next two children before the teacher re-emphasises the word '*bonjour'* and this word is then used by all other children until the register is complete.

Vignette 2:' We had Lee in French!'

- During the start to a handwriting lesson in Year 3 where children were writing out words linked to their weekly spelling lists:

Class teacher: *'What words can we make from 'comfortably?'*

On the board, a list develops:

Comfort
Table
Able
Fort

One child at the front ('lower ability table') calls out: '*Lee!' We had it in French. Lee!'*

Teacher: '*Let's focus on our main work'*.
Another pupil (higher ability table, putting their hand up, then chosen by the teacher to respond): '*or'*.
Teacher's swift endorsement: '*Well done!'*

In each of these last examples, the focus appeared to be on children responding in the expected, or 'required' way, relevant to the respective lesson. Giving a response that did not appear to 'fit the mould' or was expected (e.g., '*lee!*') appeared to be met either with a blank or reproval. It exemplifies the subtle ways in which links children made could be ignored, not understood, with children's experiences being one of segregated and hierarchical subjects, with French fighting to compete for curriculum time. It was notable that for the rest of the lesson from which the above excerpt was taken, the child who had offered *'lee'* chose not to make any other voluntary contributions in a whole class setting. The 'higher ability' child was praised for their 'correct' response whilst the 'lower ability' child was apparently quietly discouraged with a direction to *'focus on our main learning'*. Margonis (2011, p.8) argued that the pluralism of pedagogies can be limited, as these examples from my data exemplify, leading to acts of educational exclusion. As Meade (2000) also posited, far from it being ‘common sense’ that teachers talk and listen to children, this does not always happen - neither in a child- centred ‘hands-off’ approach as in the Early Years, nor in the form of didactic teaching via ‘direct instruction’. This has been endorsed by my findings, where busy, time-pressured teachers were often unable to take the time to talk to and ‘hear’ what children had to say in relation to FLL, regardless of whether ‘specialist’ or ‘non-specialist’.

One way in which French was found to ‘function’ in the curriculum for children was thus arguably as a tool through which children were socialised into ‘existing ways of doing and being’ (Biesta, 2010) and the continuation of the culture and tradition of the school setting (Apple, 1986). This appeared to be happening in quite a stark way through such examples of the ‘less intentional’ curriculum and how French was positioned through the regular classroom discourse of the teacher and/or TA with children, shared and discussed previously. The Year 3 class-teacher also appeared subject to these powerful influences of established, hegemonic practices, adapting their approach from their ITE as a primary-languages specialist to the established practices and requirements within school. As endorsed by Mannion (2007, p.417) the lives of adults and children are interdependent, where their voices are co-constructed.

The suggestion made by Margonis (2011 p.8) that the teacher’s ideal of ‘critical consciousness’ leads them to respond favourably only to students who dialogue in the way expected of a critically conscious activist, while teachers attempt to bring wayward students around to the ideal, is resonant within my findings. The relational give and take which emerges in a relationship is also recognised (Todd; 2003; Biesta, 2006). Margonis (2011) however argued that whenever teachers act upon their ‘knowledge’ of the student, they instead pursue their own desires and not the needs of the students. My analysis indicated that the responses of the teacher could be influenced by their own desires for example, as seen through the classroom vignettes shared in this chapter to get through a certain activity in a certain time; to manage the dynamics of the classroom and any frustration borne from excessive interruptions or other events outside their immediate control; and also in how an ‘ontological attitude’ became apparent, e.g. through the framing of their responses for the ‘whole-class’ and then for children on the ‘top’ and ‘bottom’ tables; how these sought at times to ostensibly ‘cap’ the responses of those on the ‘top tables’ in a much more public way, and in contrast quietly support those from the lower tables in an arguably ‘assimilationist’ way.

This contributed to the differences apparent in what different children experienced, illuminated by the following vignette:

Vignette 3: Field diary notes during a French lesson in Year 3, School 3:

Class Teacher sits with other lower table at front of class.

One pupil is rubbing out writing in their book – appears to be struggling with the first line.

Another pupil gets out their English vocabulary book to check a spelling they need. There is a mix of children working independently and others waiting for help to come to them, or actively helping a friend on their table.

09:45: CT quiet clap to gain attention. Gives a reminder that at 10am it is assembly and they are to finish their current sentence being translated. Teacher admonishes some pupil fussing.

CT: *you have your instruction. Don’t waste time.*

09:50 – the teacher’s voice cuts sharply across the class – this, and the change of tone takes me by surprise. The child who had appeared to be struggling (lower ability table, reportedly going to France for a holiday soon) was standing by the teacher who was sat with the other group.

CT: (loudly, in front of the whole class): *You do NOT need to come and see me about that xxxx. You are FUSSING. You have CLEAR instructions.*

Whole class immediate hush. Child returns to their seat. Very quiet indeed in class and a studious hush – children all keeping their heads down.

One other child - top table - completes their work and walks proudly up to the teacher, smiling, waiting patiently beside the teacher, holding the book up ready to be seen.

Field notes indicate my initial wariness about the response this child may receive, given the previous situation. Some children however appeared better able to ‘read’ the teacher and context better than others as well as be able to complete set tasks. This again afforded further nuance in the fragmented ways in which different children experienced FLL. Findings however resonate with those reported by James & Pollard (2008): relationships between teachers and pupils were the basis of the moral order of the classroom and were used to underpin discipline and behaviour; not learning.

5.43 It's a different language!

Despite what was observed in the field with the examples shared previously, children's responses in focus groups indicated few tangible links with any other aspect of their learning were recognised. This appeared to further exacerbate the fragmented, dislocated manner of children's FLL encounters.

Conversations revealed children's expressed notions and perceptions of the difficulty of making any other connections with or links from their FLL (French) *because* French was an entirely different language to their mother tongue, English; the language of all other aspects of their primary-school learning experiences. For example:

> *Researcher (R): when you do things like directions or time… does that link to anything else you're learning in school...like in other subjects?*
>
> *P: erm ... well… the learning….*
>
> *P: well -we can't really link it with anything else because it's a different language!*
>
> *R: so …are you saying the language itself stops you linking it with other things?*
>
> *Ps:* **(in unison)** ***Yeah!***
>
> *R: although you do the time in English and maths, you've done some of the time in French too? So is that a link?*
>
> *Ps:* ***No.*** (Uttered emphatically as if that were obvious)
>
> *R: so… the language itself still stops there being a link?*
>
> ***Ps: Yes!*** (As if I'm silly not to have known that)

The very fact that FL was different to their mother tongue was reportedly agreed by children as being obvious that it *could* have no other connection with other learning – other than perhaps RE. This was suggested by one Y5 child '*because when we're learning about other religions…and… sometimes they speak differently*'. Children's encounters with FLL in school that focussed on what children could say, understand and write may well have encouraged the perception that the foreign language was entirely separate by virtue of the language itself being different, and did not lend itself to any of their learning in school, unless like with the RE example, there were any tentative links to people *speaking* differently:

> *R: do you think learning French compares with anything else you're learning in school?*
>
> *P: it does link to learning RE sometimes*
>
> *P: because when we're learning about other religions…and sometimes they speak differently…*
>
> *R: ok… so the different religions? …*
>
> *P: umm….. er…. Buddhism? They speak differently.*
>
> *R: It's quite interesting isn't it?*
>
> *P: I don't know…it's just the way um…they believe is right…in their religion.*
>
> *R: so …are languages…do they involve beliefs? When you're learning French, does that change a 'belief' at all do you think?*
>
> *P: um…no…not really.*
>
> *R: do you think learning a language… changes you as a person at all?*
>
> *P: (thinking)…*
>
> *P: I think it'd be weird…about like thinking about me suddenly being French…. learning English and not learning French…I think it would be kinda weird!*

The nature of French lessons themselves also indicated that such learning remained 'stand-alone' in the way it was presented and framed with children across each of the school settings. This was illuminated by Appendix 26 where, what children were covering in French was largely, if not exclusively informed by progression through the commercial scheme at the exclusion of other possible cross-curricular connections made by teachers. The influence of the commercial scheme contributed towards keeping FL entirely separate from other curriculum areas, not least through the focus on vocabulary and 'topic' led content rather than a clear skill-based progression as intimated by the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013). The as yet unchallenged assumption perhaps is, that by teaching and working through such different language content or 'topics/themes' such as directions, or 'the town' (see Appendix 26, p.385) that the skills highlighted in the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) will by default also be learned. Given the prominence and influence of the commercial scheme, findings suggest need for these to foreground the skills as identified in the current NC to support teachers and children in achieving these, rather than be led by topic-based vocabulary.

5.5 ‘Top table’ and ‘lower table’ FLL

Findings have been presented that indicate a ‘dual-curricula’ for children from different socio-economic and ability groupings; one which included *made* time with FLL for some, and where time might otherwise possibly be *found* for others. This endorsed FLL as something for the ‘few’ rather than for the majority. The following section draws this theme together. It presents findings about how parental influence and the extent of writing contributed to such differences in FLL encounters between ‘top table’ and ‘lower table’ children. Findings are presented under sub-themes of parental-influence and ‘*getting the writing done’*.

5.51 Parental influence

The influence and interest of particularly engaged adults, including parents, also with knowledge of the target language (French) themselves and family holidays in France was apparent in some form during my time in each participating school. The length of time spent with School 3 and the same class enabled further insight into subtle influences of engaged adults upon children’s encounters of FLL, in addition to more overt ways such as classroom and school displays and wider whole-class discourse, discussed previously. Such influence affected the nature of children’s FL encounters for example, determining which children got to experience what. The extent of such influence appeared related to the relative economic context of the school community and the individuals within them.

Parental influence with children’s FLL was most pronounced in the very small, relatively affluent state primary school (School 2) whilst in School 1, as discussed previously, it was the unquestioned, accepted norm of a fee-paying clientele. In the larger state junior school (School 3), parental influence was also apparent where for a time at least, Spanish was also offered as an extra-curricular club.

A key driver influencing what children experienced in both School 1 and School 2, seemed to be the degree of parental push for French to be more than just on the curriculum. This finding emerged from data concerning conversations with the teachers, teaching assistants, the senior leadership, and the children, together with what I observed in terms of displays, and the conversations and interactions between staff and children, and between children themselves. For example, both specialist teachers (Schools 1 and 2) were keenly aware of the interest of parents in what they were teaching and how their children were getting on.

Excursions and residential trips to France, developing children's intercultural experiences and practical use of French, were on regular offer at both schools. These appeared keenly supported by parents. For example, displays about these trips in School 2 included photos of parents and teaching assistants, affirming that these were well supported, enhancing the sense of close community in the school. Children were involved in extra-curricular opportunities such as the early morning, before-school French class for the 'gifted and talented' selected children in the small primary school. The children who attended these things during the time I was in the field were all well-presented and spoke confidently of holidays and other opportunities such as musical instrument learning and sports clubs, some also having extra-curricular music lessons provided at the school. They were all well behaved, and in conversation with the specialist teacher, it emerged that each had been purposefully selected by their teachers for these very traits.

In this instance, French appeared useful as one of the tools through which senior management sought to help unite the small school community, to please a key component of its parents striving for the best learning experiences for their children with a keen awareness about the 11+ and Grammar school streaming, and to enable its class teachers to focus on all children's progress and in the core subjects, subject to national and 11+ testing. In so doing, a reciprocal arrangement with those parents who were able to support the school and their children with early drop-offs and later pick-ups/ residential trips was established, conferring more opportunities for the children of those parents/carers able to invest time with the school.

In contrast, the decision to lead an extra-curricular Spanish club in School 3 was instigated by the lead teacher for whom Spanish was her main foreign language, welcomed by the Headteacher. Whilst not possessing the same level of resourcing or experiencing the same amount of parental influence as the other schools, this setting still sought to provide additional FLL experiences for children. Children attending this club were self-selecting but as an after-school club, required the support and permission of their parents/carers. This had bearing on who attended. In total, only 5% of children from the whole school (11/210 on roll) were on the register to attend this club. Most children were in Y5, with some attending in Y6 and from Y3/4. Reasons for their attending shared with me by the older children were reportedly:

to support their GCSEs in due course;

to support the move to Senior School;

because parents were renting a holiday villa in Spain;

because the family had a house there;

and from the youngest child attending '*because I just wanted to come'* (their class teacher led the club).

Most children attending Spanish club were therefore again generally representative of families with greater social, cultural, and economic capital (Bourdieu,1990), where learning another language was valued and enabled either because it was more integral and 'normal' to their home life; and/or seen as a way of enabling children to gain further advantage for their education and outcomes. This illuminates a further way in which children's FLL experiences were revealed to be not only fragmented but also unequal.

5.52 Getting the writing done

The amount of writing with which children were engaged with FLL appeared to compound the fragmentation of children's FLL experiences between designated 'able' and 'less able' learners. The infusion of writing in children's FLL experiences from Year 3 onwards is summarised by Table 10:

Table 10 Skill-based progression apparent from children's FLL observed in School 3:

Year Group	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Main skill	Writing			
Supporting skills	Listening & Speaking, Reading		Reading	

Writing was the predominant feature of all observed FLL lessons.. As reported by the teacher: *'We have to get something into children's books'* (Class teacher, Class 5b, School 3). This finding appears to contradict those reported by Wardle (2021) who reported writing in KS2 FLL to be underdeveloped.

In contrast, children's FLL observed in Schools 1 &2 echoed findings about foreign language learning in English primary schools from earlier literature (e.g., Cable et al, 2010; Graham et al, 2014) (see Table 11).

Table 11: Skill-based progression apparent from children's FLL observed over a shorter time-period in Schools 1 & 2:

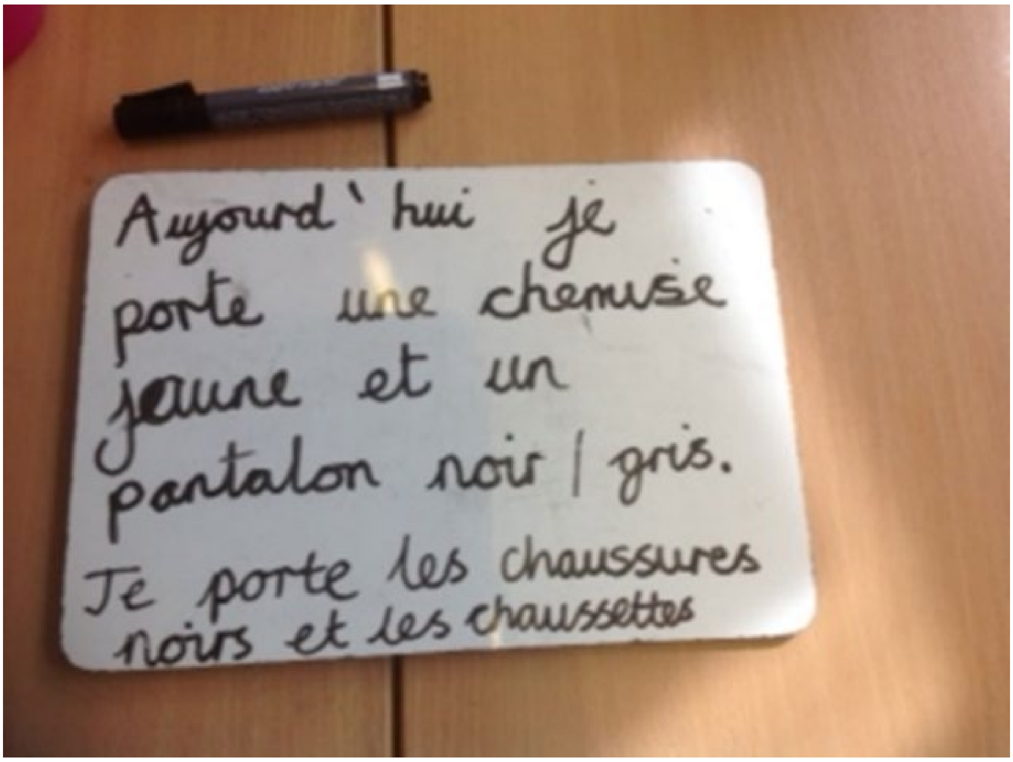
Year Group	EYFS	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Main skills	Listening & Speaking → Reading → Writing						
Supporting skills	Reading → Listening & Speaking						

The effect of an increase in writing upon children's encounters of FLL, was therefore initially less apparent in these more socially and economically privileged settings, than in the larger, state suburban junior school (School 3). In this setting, writing and particularly copywriting, was a key feature of every observed FL lesson in School 3 in both Year 3 and in Year 5, (See Appendix 33, p.403 for examples). The value placed on what is measured (Biesta, 2010) proved in this case to be children's writing in their books; specifically, both its amount and its quality (neatness):

> Year 3 Class teacher: '*We're going to write in full sentences about what you're wearing and impress Mr xxx (*Year 6 teacher in the school*). He thinks Year 6 write in full sentences - so we will show him we can too!*

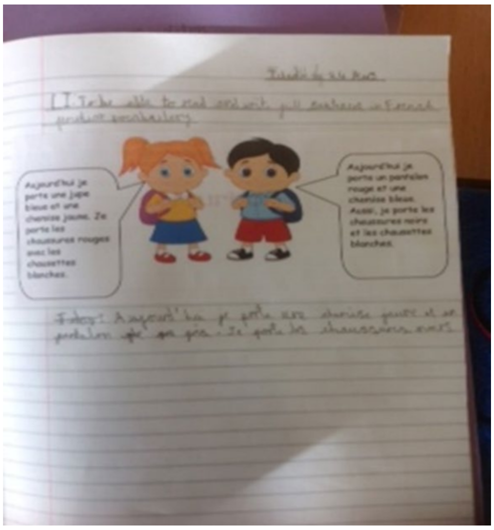
The above illustrates how writing in French was presented to all children in a motivational manner when children were first introduced to FLL in this setting. The following photographic examples of children's written work in a Year 3 lesson further illustrate the value placed on writing and its standard presentation, across each ability group:

Photo 4*:* Child's drafted work, supported by (specialist primary language) class teacher, working within small 'middle ability' focus group to encourage greater emphasis on adapting French sentences from a frame, supported by the teacher. The final sentence remains incomplete to encourage the children to add an appropriate colour choice themselves:



Aujourd'hui je
porte une chemise
jaune et un
pantalon noir / gris.
Je porte les chaussures
noirs et les chaussettes

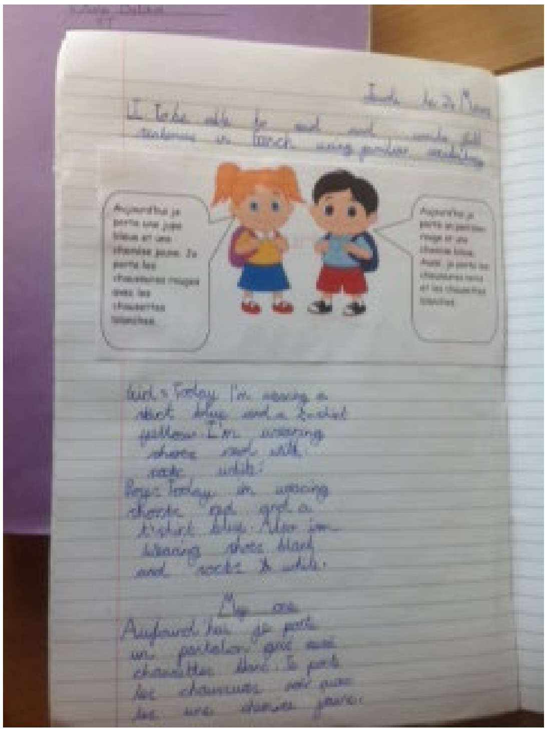
Photo 5: Child's work produced independently of the teacher, working in another middle ability group. The focus is on writing the French sentences, set out in an established way with the date and Learning Intention. This child is writing still in pencil, as they have not yet achieved their 'pen licence' – an honour children strive to achieve during Year 3 in this school setting:



Aujourd'hui je porte une jupe bleue et une chemise jaune. Je porte les chaussures rouges avec les chaussettes blanches.

Aujourd'hui je porte un pantalon rouge et une chemise bleue. Aussi, je porte les chaussures noirs et les chaussettes blanches.

Photo 6: Child's work produced independently, working within higher ability grouping in class. Children were tasked with completing more written work to complete in the time, starting with a written translation of the given French sentences, and then generating their own sentences in French using the same template/writing frame.



Photos 7 & 8: Further examples of children's work from the same lesson, indicating the similarity in learning tasks and learning outcomes for both the middle and higher ability groups, together with the clearly structured homogeneity of what was produced by children:

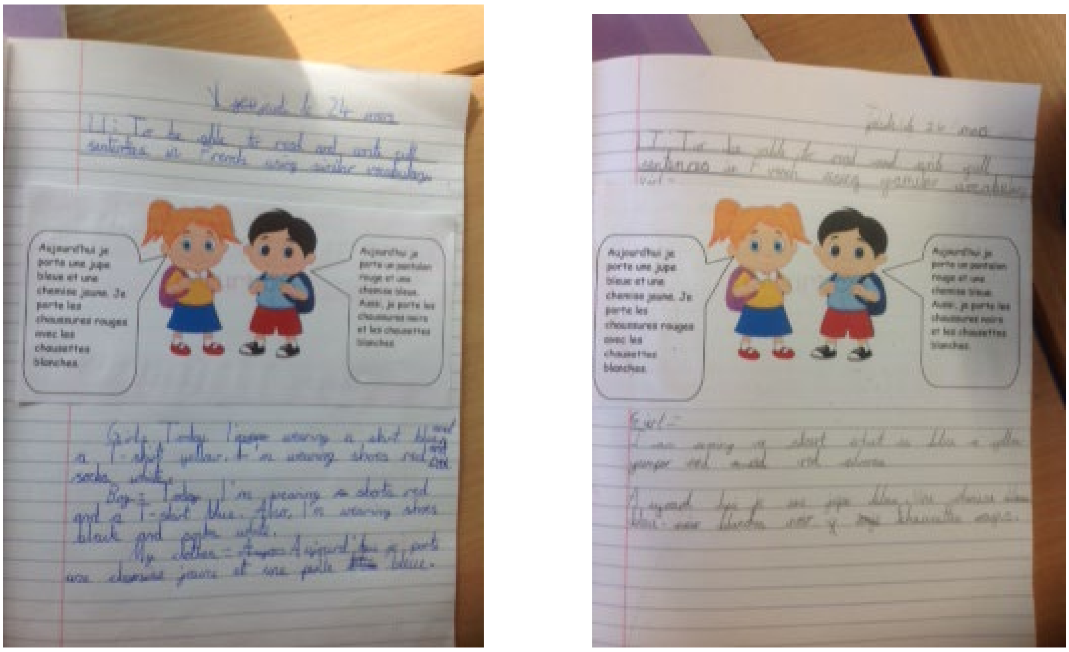
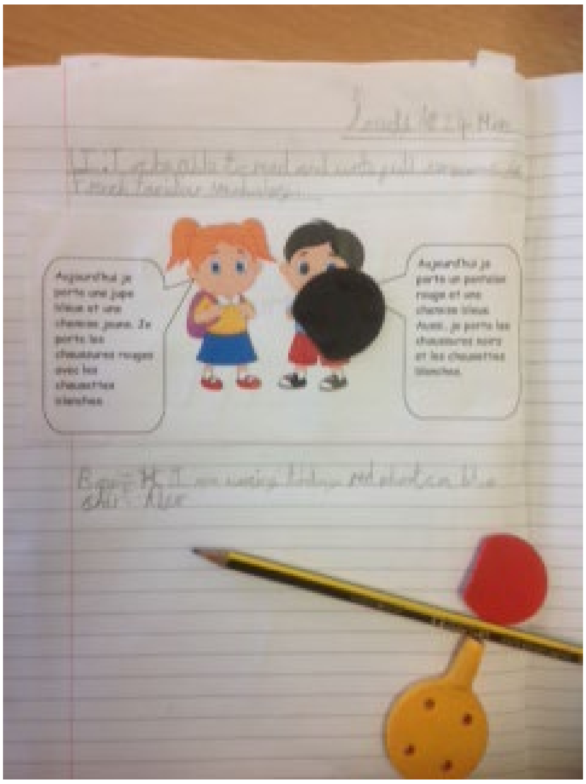


Photo 9: Child's work produced independently working within lower ability grouping. Less has been completed during the lesson time due to the child attending a support session:



Children who struggled with writing were observed to experience challenges with FLL as can be seen in photo 6, and from the below:

Field notes from School 3, Class 3: Child struggles, rubbing head with their hands - appears to be grappling with writing the French sentences into their book.

The novelty of writing sentences in French also appeared to be waning even for higher-ability children by the end of Year 5. This is exemplified by Vignette 6, pp.228-9, drawn from School 3, Year 5, concerning a transition between a FLL lesson and RE. Getting through the writing in the allotted time appeared to be the focus for both teacher and children. Children's time was tightly managed in whole-class manner, where children were required to wait for others to get through the required writing before being able to continue. Children appeared keen to get onto the 'big task' of using the written language, only to find that the task itself then required yet more writing. Field notes indicate my own sense of tiredness at the amount of copy writing: *'I start yawning quietly'*.

Such a tightly managed lesson, focussing on ‘getting the writing done’ provided scope for a non-specialist teacher to provide cover, enabling other school priorities to be met as well as providing for evidence in children’s books. This appears to be at some expense to children’s FLL, particularly to those of lower overall attainment. Findings indicate rather than children being enthused and inspired, the focus is on conforming: *‘ I don’t really know what it means’.* Some twenty years after the PACE project (Pollard & Trigg, 2000), my findings resonate with those reported then, that the sacrifice in England was of pupil creativity and reflexivity, where pupil and teacher boredom was more of a likely feature instead. This may be further evidenced by the extent of copy-written material still apparent in Year 5 (see Appendix 33, p. 403).Instead of having ‘something interesting to tell, creativity and interest in the topic’, found by Trüb (2022, p.247) in her comprehensive study of children’s EFL writing in primary school, my findings indicate that the task demands placed on children, included all those found by Trüb (ibid.), to be those having a negative influence instead: expected text length, time pressure, not having sufficient ideas, limited freedom and guidance.

Viewed through the lens of children’s FLL writing experiences, Alexander’s (2010, p.6) report that children in England may be required to do too much or the wrong things too young appear to be endorsed. Children’s responses, especially towards the end of Year 5, indicated that rather than be enthused about the opportunity to write in full sentences, the value placed on reading and writing could instead be interpreted negatively by children, resonant of the children’s reported feelings of frustration.

> *I get confused and embarrassed.*
>
> *Not everyone reacts the same.*
>
> *Some people feel it’s useless.*
>
> *People can be intimidated by writing and reading a lot.*
>
> *I’ve been to France and it helped a lot. I went to the bakery nearly every day.*

This final comment provided further insight into how some children’s cultural capital was recognised as conferring a useful context over that of their peers in navigating the nature of school based FLL and *‘getting through the writing’*.

5.6 Summary

This chapter has presented findings about children's FLL encounters in primary school. The 'patterns and rhythms' (Margonis, 2011) of the ways in which FLL was organised bore implications for the encounters and experiences of children from different socio-economic backgrounds and differing levels of academic ability. Rather than being an area that 'unified' children's learning experiences my findings suggest the contrary: FLL was only largely encountered with more frequency and coherency by the few. Drawing on the work of Biesta, Dewy and Freire, these findings echo the suggestion made by Margonis (2011, p.8) that humanistic ideals 'limit the pluralism of pedagogies and lead to educational acts of exclusion and assimilation'. Children's FLL encounters appeared framed and shaped by wider socio-economic variables and practices, more resonant of 'pedagogy of containment' (Reay, 2006) for some children, rather than a 'liberation of insularity' as espoused by the aims of the National Curriculum for foreign languages (DfE, 2013). Rather than as something to be learned, French appeared for children to be something more to be completed or 'received' through the way in which phrases like *'we do French'* were used.

Whilst FLL was ostensibly timetabled and delivered as a whole-class activity for children, numerous ways in which some children instead encountered its delivery differently to others both between and within settings were apparent. Findings revealed children from wealthier socio-economic backgrounds and those with higher educational attainment overall had more opportunities and ones more closely aligned with their cultural/social backgrounds and abilities than others. This is resonant of a dual curriculum and Margonis' (2011) argument about the 'huge polarities' between the education afforded the privileged and the 'education of containment' of others. It was shown that this could be in terms of the amount of time and frequency children spent with FLL, the degree to which they experienced disruptions and interruptions to timetabled lessons and the extent of their parental/carer engagement with school. Fragmented experiences between children of reported higher and lower ability were further compounded by the extent of writing involved in each FL lesson. The three overarching aspects found to underpin children's optimal learning experience by James & Pollard (2008) were otherwise largely found to be missing: well-matched learning activities, practical 'hand-on' activities and collaboration. These were somewhat ironically squeezed out by time-pressures, within a broader climate of performativity.

Findings presented in this chapter also revealed ways in which FLL was ‘othered’ for children within the learning environment, where French was presented, both physically and figuratively, on the periphery of children’s learning. Some twenty years after the PACE project (Pollard & Triggs, 2000) children’s FLL experiences within the classroom were still found to reflect those reported: children still largely experienced core subject learning. As a relative newcomer to the statutory curriculum, FLL remained on the fringes of the established curriculum.

The way in which FLL was timetabled and presented within the curriculum was not without implication regarding the nature of children’s early FLL encounters, even though a causal link between both was neither assumed not anticipated (Bruner, 1995). At this early stage of FLL in the statutory curriculum, findings suggest current practices may exacerbate differences for children not just between schools, but also within schools, and within the same class, with implications for children’s continued FL and ultimate success of national aims.

Children with the fortune to attend more ‘privileged’ settings or to find themselves sat at the ‘top table’ were conferred advantage of opportunity and engagement by the processes, routines and structures already established within schools. With Woll & Wei’s (2019) study finding that 90% of studies reported a positive impact on learning a FL through improved attention and mental alertness after only one week of study across English language, literacy, maths and science, the question posed by Driscoll & Holliday (2020) remains wholly relevant to findings in this study: ‘Why then are languages marginalised in schools where students would arguably benefit the most?’

Children’s encounters also suggested they perceived it impossible for French to have many other meaningful links with their other school experiences and learning because the very language itself was perceived as wholly different to the language (English) through which all other learning across the curriculum was experienced. Being a FL was construed as a clear barrier, hindering recognition of any other similarity with actual content or skills involved in children’s learning. This has implication for teachers, policymakers and publishers, highlighting the value and apparent necessity of discussing such links explicitly and overtly with children. It also suggests merit in considering broader ways in which other languages may be incorporated into everyday school life.

The hegemonic legacy of French in each of the schools' curricula appeared unquestioned with French as the default language of choice, despite the opportunity for choice and change offered by the introduction of the new National Curriculum and its aims (DfE, 2013). If learning is not to be encountered as a series of disconnected experiences that lack experiential coherence, according to Hargreaves (1994), specific issues can arise with in-subject coherence where teachers lack specialist subject knowledge. Whereas his example was with science, my findings resonate with FLL, the most recent newcomer to the statutory primary curriculum. FLL placed even further demands both on teachers' (generalist, Secondary-trained and Primary language specialist trained) in-subject and between-subject specialist knowledge. This is turn appeared to exacerbate the degree to which teachers were able to not just make coherent links within the subject area itself, but also between foreign languages and other subject areas, with further implications for the ways in which children encountered FLL in primary school.

Limited time for FLL had further implications. A focus on '*getting the writing done'* thwarted more creative learning and opportunity for children to make links with other learning and experiences. Instead, a more utilitarian, pragmatic, 'transmission' approach for FLL was evident from Y3 until the end of Year 5 (from my time in the field), where children's FLL was mostly constructed *for* them, rather than *with* them, in a nuanced slant on Vygotsky's (1978) social-constructivist theory. This provides some insight into why children in School 3 may have referred to French as something to be 'done' rather than 'learned' where French appeared for children to perhaps be more as something to be completed or received. Viewed through the lens of FLL, Pollard & Triggs' (2000) reported sacrifice in England of pupil creativity, pupil activity and pupil reflexivity remain apparent, where pupil and teacher boredom was more of a likely feature instead. To some extent, findings also echo those of Nias (2000) who reported children being more concerned with task-fulfilment' rather than about their learning. This finding however has history with Holt in 1964 (p.37) already finding that 'for children, the central business of schooling…means getting the daily tasks done, or at least out of the way'. My findings conversely illuminate how some children were concerned about their FLL, to be considered further in Chapter 6.

Variations with what children encountered regarding the 'educational events' (Margonis, 2011) of FLL in primary school appeared to be influenced by children's attributed academic and behavioural status, with an apparent relationship between children's attributed academic and behavioural status and their apparent socio-economic backgrounds. With limited exception, children sat at 'lower ability' tables were also, as reported by teachers, from lower socio-economic backgrounds, itself indicative of wider issues within education. Findings revealed these experiences as not being unique to FLL, but instead influenced by the wider ethos and established policies and practices with the school and classroom. What happened with FLL appeared in line with how all other learning was constructed in each of the settings. FLL was observed in the research settings to have been brought under the umbrella of the existent curriculum practices whereby these were arguably hegemonic in outcome. This diminished the uniqueness and supposed 'specialness' of the pedagogy of and for the teaching of languages to young learners in the primary school such as Sharpe (1992) originally espoused.

In learning to embrace and 'realise' French on the timetable in *'no time'* and demonstrate efficacy to others in so doing, through what could be evidenced in children's exercise books, findings indicate that teachers drew on existent knowledge and pedagogic practice and applied it to their teaching of French from the given commercial scheme. Children's learning of French can therefore be argued to be a broadly hegemonic experience, but only in as much that it appeared to shape how so many learning experiences for children across swathes of their time in school appeared to be constructed and delivered. No evidence emerged concerning the existence of a special and unique primary pedagogy for languages in the primary school (Sharpe, 1992). Instead, findings suggest a lack of any explicit primary pedagogy for languages that either specifically capitalised on the apparent distinctiveness of the YLL or that fully embraced the structures and advantages afforded by the primary school (Sharpe, 1992, 2001; Hasselgreen, 2000; Wray, 2008). Findings indicate instead how FL in primary school was assimilated into the wider ethos and established practices of the primary school, influenced both by subject pedagogies employed for established academic subjects and what appear to have become hegemonic procedural practices in academic lessons: teacher input, some initial practice/dialogue, children write in their books, the lesson draws to a close. This arguably blurs the lines between any notion of a 'primary pedagogy' for FL as similar structures are seen in other subjects and in Secondary lessons too, indicative of an apparent negative influence of 'secondary subject teaching' within the primary phase. I also experienced a sense of tediousness with this repetitive diet through the school day– catching myself yawning at times and developing feelings of empathy and some disbelief when children were required to do yet more writing. It did not appear to be a diet that inspired enthusiasm neither investment in longer-term language learning. FLL was instead used more as a tool through which children were socialised into ‘existing ways of doing and being’ (Biesta, 2010), influenced by the continuation of the culture and tradition of the school setting (Apple, 1986).

These findings contribute to what is known and understood about the existent and growing ‘gaps’ in learning outcomes for children from different socio-economic backgrounds through such curricular and pedagogic hegemonic hierarchy affecting FLL. A re-working of class analysis has occurred in academic fields as highlighted by Reay (2006). My findings, offered through the lens of FLL, concur that this has also had little impact on FLL policy. A negative relationship between social class and academic experiences appear entrenched, still ‘predicated on the myth everyone is offered an equal chance’ (Bowles & Gintis, 1976). My findings concerning children’s disparate and unequal FLL experiences supports a call for a review of current, dominant pedagogical practices in England and the current drive by the Government for simple, ‘what works’ research.

The new Ofsted Inspection Framework (Ofsted, 2020) offers potential for such a change, where, in an about-turn from its previous framework, a call for a greater focus on subject specific knowledge and subject specific pedagogy has been made. Given the influence of the previous Ofsted framework, the new framework may in time redress the imbalance in the curriculum and pedagogies arguably encouraged by its former counterpart. I also suggest it is timely to challenge the apparent influence of Secondary-phase approaches to the teaching and learning of primary languages and consider the existence instead of a special ‘primary pedagogy’ for FLL; whether there has ever been one, whether it is ripe for one to exist and if so, what this should be and why.

Much as in the same way that children’s FLL was revealed to have been presented and experienced in a utilitarian way, with the wider culture of measured external accountability, performativity and scrutinised compliance and with government policy (see Chapter 3) , the school and teachers also appear to have become adept at making use of the ‘right’ phrases within their practices to survive and be perceived to thrive within the climate of school and teacher accountability, with all schools involved in this study graded ‘outstanding’. This echoes Biesta’s earlier warning (2010, p.16) that ‘the danger is that we end up valuing what is measured, rather than that we engage in measurement of what we value'. As this study has found, this has further impact on the nature of children's FLL experiences with implications for future FLL.

Findings shared and discussed in this chapter have sought to illuminate ways in which children's FLL experiences were framed by wider, hegemonic practices in the already established curriculum, which in turn have been revealed to exacerbate the fragmentation of children's FLL experiences both between and within schools. Data has also indicated some of the ways in which some children, 'standing amongst the bombsite of the (FL) curriculum' (Holt, 1994. p.9) sought to maximise and optimise their learning opportunities. This theme of children's agency and collaboration with FLL is detailed in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER SIX

Competent, active agents of FLL: ‘*We’re in it together with friends’*

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data concerning this thesis’ overarching finding: children revealed as competent, active agents of both their own, and other’s FLL in primary school. The chapter reveals how, as a community of learners in class, children were found to draw upon each-other, liaising and negotiating to share and apply knowledge and skills through which to help navigate and support the various barriers and challenges they were otherwise found to encounter with FLL, previously shared in Chapter 5. This chapter reports the holistic way in which children engaged with FLL, drawing on other knowledge and experiences through which to make sense and make the best of opportunities in class. To all extents, children are revealed as heroes of their own, and others’ FLL in primary school.

The chapter reveals children taking the bubbles of opportunity they had with FLL seriously, wanting to understand the FL and be able to understand and complete set tasks. Whilst a causal link between what children encountered and what was ‘experienced’ was neither assumed nor anticipated (Bruner, 1995), findings shared in this chapter suggest a mismatch between how many children themselves engaged with FLL and what they encountered (shared in Chapter 5). The ways in which FLL was incorporated and managed in class appeared to both facilitate *and* necessitate what was found to be a supportive sub-culture of FLL, developed amongst children by children. Analysis indicates ‘top-table’ children demonstrated awareness and empathy with the FLL experiences of others in class, with data shared highlighting how they actively sought ways to support others’ engagement and completion of set tasks; children were otherwise found to be trying to make sense of words and phrases they were introduced to in the FL itself.

This chapter also reports children’s adeptness in identifying and using ‘chinks’ of time through which to collaborate and confer with each-other about the FL and their FLL. This aspect of children’s FLL was found to increasingly operate under the radar of their teachers, amidst a sub-culture of FLL, supported by children’s rapport with each-other. As detailed in Chapter 4, this was something to which I became both increasingly attuned and even embroiled, during my time in the field (also see Chapter 5, p. 174 for one such example).

In focussing upon data regarding children's engagement with what they encountered, I seek to present an understanding of the threads of children's FLL experiences, informed by the sociological lens framing this thesis. As an ethnographic study, I recognise it is not possible to render all the data collated during my time in the field (Gaynor 2018, p.60). Within the ethnographic tradition however, this chapter seeks to provide for a continued, suitably 'thick description' of the field (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995), building upon data already included within Chapters 4 and 5. Data used to illuminate findings are mainly drawn from School 3, the setting with which I spent most time (see Chapter 4, Table 7, p.155). Where data from Schools 1 or 2 are drawn upon, this is highlighted. Findings are illuminated by data drawn from field notes and diary entries, photographs, notes from conversations and those transcribed from focus group activities with children.

Six sub-themes are used to structure this chapter:

- Managing and maximising FLL
- Responsibility and collaboration
- Connecting with the FL
- Seeking to understand the FL
- Alternative possibilities
- Mixed experiences

Each subtheme is explored in turn with evidence drawn from the data to exemplify, explain and illuminate where and how children sought agency in optimising and making sense of the FLL they encountered. Minor themes drawn from analysis are included within each section as minor sub-headings. These are mainly drawn from data arising from the children themselves through which I seek to foreground children's responses and perspectives. This chapter concludes by summarising the key findings presented and discussed in the chapter.

6.2 Managing and maximising FLL

One way in which children were revealed as competent, active agents of FLL was in the awareness and actions taken in seeking to smooth over potential upset and awkward situations regarding FLL. Children actively mitigated for any real or potential upset or threat to the FL lesson. Such awareness and action became most obvious with higher ability children in class, whilst there is no suggestion this is limited to such a grouping. Analysis suggests this was in support of their peers and in facilitating a less disrupted, ‘smoother’ FLL experience for each-other.

6.21 ‘We just want to help’: keeping the peace with FLL

Field notes drawn from an English handwriting lesson in Year 3 illustrate one such example, discussed initially in Chapter 5. Children were asked to generate other words from ‘comfortably’. A potentially awkward situation arose when a child, sat at a table understood as ‘lower ability’ (see Appendix 18, p. 349) excitedly put their hand up, simultaneously calling out a word in French (*‘lee’* sic.) rather than as appeared to have been anticipated, words in English (see Vignette 2, p.190). This was followed by an unusual silence and pause in the lesson. This appeared to indicate a break of some unspoken rule within the class, and was a situation which at the same time, sharpened my own senses and alertness to something unusual having happened. It was another child in class, who seemingly ‘rescued’ the resultant situation for both the teacher and class by stepping into the breach (see Vignette 4):

Vignette 4: Rescuing a potentially awkward situation, from field diary notes

Alert to child’s apparent excitement, my own ears pricked up from the otherwise tightly managed routine of the English lesson. The child’s enthusiastic, spontaneous outburst was greeted by silence from the teacher. It was also greeted by silence from the other children in class. There was an extended pause in the flow of the lesson. The child appeared to have broken some unspoken rule? (Calling out without being asked first was often otherwise subject to a reprimand – was the silence the reprimand?) Another child sat at a table in the middle of the room (middle ability table) put their hand up but also called out without waiting to be asked:

‘I just noticed another one. ‘Or’.

The teacher responded with a prompt ‘Yes! Well done!’ and wrote the word up on the board.

Sitting back down into their chair, the other child focussed on their exercise book, not the whiteboard. Their spontaneous enthusiasm appeared to have shrivelled. At this point, the TA returned to the room. A joint conversation with the teacher happened in such a way for everyone in the class to hear:

CT: 'We've been noticing words we can find in 'comfortably'. Look at the words we've found' – pointing to the whiteboard and reading out the words that had been written up.

TA: 'One of my favourite activities is to look for words like that'. TA moves around the class looking at children's books, offering praise and encouragement for their handwriting before sitting at the table where the child was sat.

No further mention of 'lee' (sic.) or any links with French were observed or heard for the rest of the day.

The above is an example of how a child was able to readily connect both the English and FL (French) where it made sense to them to do so. *'Lee'* (sic.) was a word they had come across and had understood from a previous French lesson and when asked *'what other words can we make?'* it made apparent sense to the child to offer that, even though the languages themselves were different. The child appeared very excited at having made such a link, drawing on wider learning and understanding, through the way in which they spontaneously responded. Even though the teacher was a 'languages specialist', the child's suggestion of a word in the FL (French) within a '*main learning*' lesson (English) appeared unanticipated – apparent through the teacher's response to ignore, misunderstand or otherwise 'freeze out' the first child's excited suggestion, perhaps also in not knowing how best to respond. The 'main learning focus', in an English lesson, was on English words, within which drawing possible links with the foreign language appeared neither welcome nor perhaps understood. This was a further example of the 'othering' of the FL encountered by children, (see Chapter 5, section 5.41, p.185), where children, at the end of Year 5, appeared to perceive no other connection with other aspects of their learning *because* the language itself was different to that used in all other learning. On this occasion, in Year 3, such segmentation of curriculum subjects is something that had perhaps not yet been 'realised' by younger children in the early stages of engaging with FLL.

The teacher's silence may also be explained by the word, offered in French by the child, being both lexically and phonetically incorrect from 'pure' French, and not anticipated from the particular ('lower ability') child in question; my presence in class may also have affected the teacher's response – aware of my interest with children's learning of FL, and less sure of how best to respond; it could also have been as a result of the child calling out – or a mixture of these. The response of the rest of the class – silence- similarly suggested they were aware this interlude posed awkwardness for both their teacher and peer. The wider classroom narrative emphasised the intended learning (English) rather than the alternative language (French), which was side-lined, even in this instance, by a 'languages specialist' teacher. This appeared to be reinforced by the prompt response of the teacher to an all-be-it simple suggestion in English (*'or'*) by the other child, and the ensuing dialogue between teacher and Teaching Assistant. The interpreted effect was to dismiss the child's suggestion and French having any part in that English lesson with the child perhaps learning as an outcome, not to make any such further connection between what they were learning in French and other lessons in class: *Sitting back down into their chair, the other child focussed on their exercise book, not the whiteboard.*

Learning to navigate the social norms and expected classroom etiquette was something I found most children engaged with during much of my time in the field. By having such a shared link with their learning of French ignored in this way, it also echoes sentiments expressed previously by Holt (1994, p.9) about classrooms being places where some children may instead 'learn to be stupid' by not encouraging further such links. This would not be a desirable outcome, especially for children already of designated lower ability. It also highlights how, for some children, their learning appeared to be conceived holistically, in line with Hargreaves' (1994; 2006) notion of experiential coherence, where making links with French in an English lesson appeared a natural response for the child, if not for the teacher. Children appeared to need to learn and navigate what was acceptable, and in so doing, come to learn the 'position' of French in their school day and learning. I suggest the influence of established norms and subject boundaries are more adult, rather than child constructs, where the YLL appeared less confined by such artificial subject boundaries. Intentionally or otherwise, the response exemplified above, appeared to reinforce the importance of 'main learning', at the exclusion of the FL, with children experiencing a process of socialisation into where it was, and was not acceptable to draw on their learning and understanding of the FL (French).

The example also illustrates two facets of children's agency with FLL. Whilst one child was active in making a spontaneous link with other (French) learning in front of the class, a different child's agency arguably served to save the resultant situation for their teacher by helping refocus and move the lesson forward. It also appeared to save the other child from receiving a possible rebuke, helping to 'smooth' the flow of the lesson and thereby also reinforce institutionally approved norms of the school, class, and subject lesson. This adds further nuance to findings reported from literature indicating children's dislike of being told off or being disrupted by others in class (see Chapter 2, Table 14, p. 220).

As revealed in data arising from conversations with children during the focus group tasks, children cared little for fuss and disruption that might upset their teachers. They could be at some pains to support others in class avoid such an outcome too. For example:

> P (and others in agreement): *It's not that nice when they (teachers)get cross…*
> P : *We're a wolf pack. We look out for others.*
> P: *We just want to get it done. Not make teachers angry.*
> P: *Not everyone likes it (French). You can see it on their faces. We just want to help.*

This is partly resonant of Holt's (1994, pp.8-9) recognition that 'even in the kindest and gentlest of schools, children are reportedly afraid, many of them a great deal of the time; some of them almost all the time…afraid of failing, afraid of being kept back, afraid of being called stupid, afraid of feeling themselves stupid'. My findings indicate however, that any such fear appeared to be more about wishing to avoid causing the teacher upset and avoiding potential conflict and tension within the class for others as well as themselves. Such interdependence is endorsed by Emirbayer & Mishe (1998, p.969) who posited that, 'at every step, actors are conceived of not as atomized individuals, but rather as active respondents within nested and overlapping systems'. These findings also point towards Dewey (1980) and Freire (1993) who conceived of education as a social event rather than a matter of passing down knowledge. This is echoed in children's overall FLL experiences, with their agency manifested in navigating and managing the social event of learning through which other learning (including FLL) may then happen, both for themselves and others.

6.3 Responsibility and collaboration

This section presents further findings about such a sense of responsibility and collaboration found amongst children in support of maximising their own, and others' FLL encounters. These are explored through minor subheadings drawn from children's conversations: *'there's always someone there right by your side'* and *'we had a little smile and a chat'*.

6.31 There's always someone there right by your side

The influence of the school's wider values upon children's responses (see Table 12) was apparent in children's and teacher's everyday dialogue. For example: '*be wolf-like'; 'that's you being a dolphin!'; 'Keep on! Draw on that salmon of yours!'; 'I think I worked most on my eagle today'*.

Table 12: School 3's core values:

Wolf	Community spirit, working for the good of all; sharing and collaborating with learning
Dolphin	Having fun and enjoyment with learning
Eagle	Flying high – aiming high; soaring to new heights with learning
Salmon	Perseverance and endurance with learning; not giving up

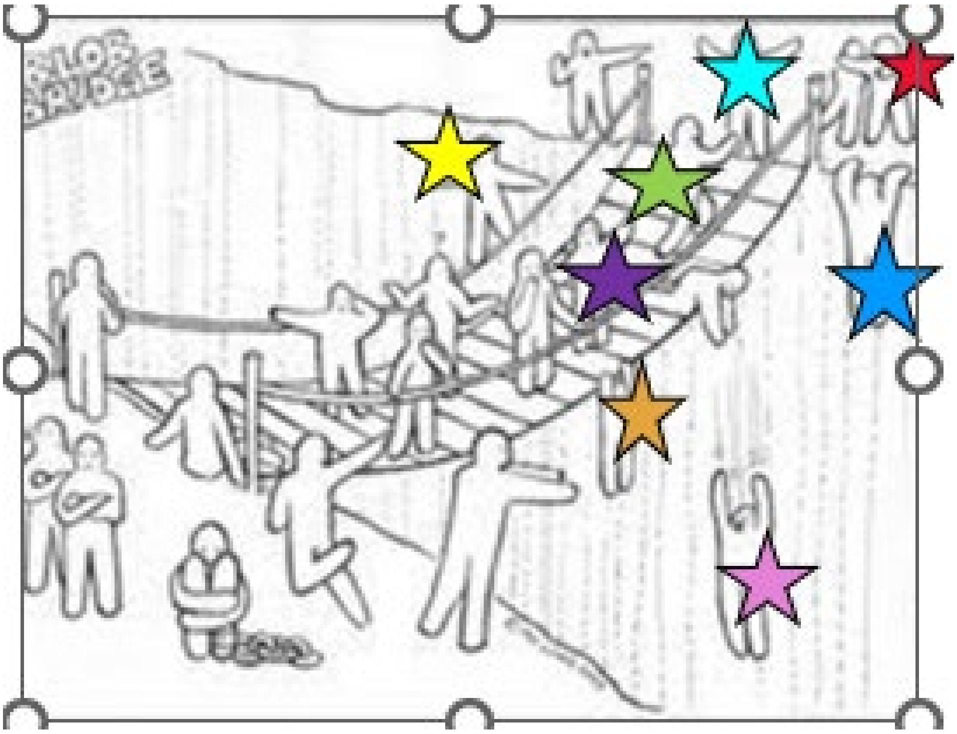
Being a 'wolf-pack' had clear resonance, found to be drawn on the most during my time with the class in Year 3: developing the sense of community, collaboration, and care for eachother. With data emanating from this school setting with such strongly established and reiterated values, their influence in permeating the nature of children's learning experiences across the curriculum, including with French, was apparent; especially the awareness and concern of children from the middle and 'top tables' regarding the experiences of those from 'lower tables'; what may be itself considered a 'problematic situation' such as construed by Mead (1932).

My findings indicate that for most children in class, helping each-other out in their French lessons appeared central, rather than peripheral, to their FLL experiences. Children's conversations as they were completing focus group tasks for example offered further insight into their experiences and how aware they were of others' responses in class:

> *P: you all have to be sat facing the teacher….'cos I sit at the back I can sort of see everyone's face…..and like if they really don't understand it they look like really worried'.*
> *P: It affects how you feel…. Sometimes you feel like…..ooooooh woah!' (*makes a stopping sign, as if given a chance they would want to stop the lesson when they notice this happens).
> *P: And it can make you feel annoyed with yourself…. because you can't actually get out of your seat and go and help them….and you just…. well….you get annoyed with yourself for not helping them*
> *P: Yeah, because you're not allowed to get up. You can't go and help them. Because of the expectations.*
> P: *You don't have to exactly love it…to be…. get on with it…. because I don't love football either…. But it's just the sense of trying…. seeing if you can do it….and it doesn't matter if you don't do well…*
>
> *P: It's why I like French because you know there's always someone there right by your side to give you a hand'.*

Data from focus group activity 3 not only helped confirm themes of mutual support and a shared sense of responsibility, but it also revealed the extent to which children perceived such a shared sense of responsibility for the learning experience of others in class. Children's unanimous choice of the 'bridge' Blob tree diagram to use for this activity, as opposed to the others on offer, was itself supported by their explanation that they could best identify with its representation about FLL being like crossing a bridge from one side (English) to the other (French) together with others. The other discarded diagrams on offer were the Blobs climbing a tree (*'no, not that'*), and interestingly, the Blobs in a classroom (*'definitely not that'*).

Fig. 3 Blob character choices:



Out of 23 possible Blob characters to choose from on the diagram, 8 characters (depicted with the stars in Fig.3) were selected in total by children in each of the focus groups (20 children in total). The responses were personal responses by those children participating and it is recognised that these findings were not representative of all the children in the class, but rather of those by children from the generally socially more advantaged 'middle' and 'top' tables (as reported by the teacher). Analysis of other aspects of my data indicated that some children from lower ability tables might well be choosing other characters if given opportunity to do so e.g. '*I don't like Franch'* (sic.). However, the selected characters and the reasons given for these, supported triangulation with other data from the field.

With 20 children responding to this task, virtually all the characters appear to represent children feeling at least 'half-way' OK as regards their FLL experiences, if viewed in terms of crossing a bridge. The most frequently selected character was that identified by the purple star. Children's responses indicated they viewed this character as supportive, standing securely and squarely on the bridge just a little further than half -way, helping another less-sure character across the bridge with a comforting arm, and stopping together to pause at least for a little while before continuing. This provided a deeper insight into the levels of responsibility and 'collegiate' learning these children from the 'middle and top tables' in Year 5 appeared to experience with their FLL in school, with conceptions of their role in supporting the learning of others.

Table 13: Blob choices and reasons by children in Year 5 (middle and top tables).

Colour Starred Blob	***Number of times selected by children / 20***	***Reasons children gave (if any were offered) for selecting the Blob in relation to their experiences learning French in school:***
Yellow	1	*'Like walking a tight rope. It's exciting and nerve-wracking at the same time. It's easy to fall off'.*
Orange	1	*'I want to know more but not sure how. It's hard'.*
Pink	1	*'I'm happy!'* (Child interpreted the character looking really happy)
Turquoise	2	*'Excited and confident with my French – but confused at the same time.'* *'Amazing!'*
Red	2	*'It's about being with people together. We're in it together with friends.'* *'Everything I've been taught I know, but I don't feel confident on the whole language. I'm prepared to help others.'*
Green	3	*I struggle a bit but I'm ready to make mistakes. There's a handle nearby if you need it to help you.*
Blue	3	*'Sort of keen'. 'It's kind of ok'. 'I'm sort of there but prepared I've got mistakes.'*
Purple	7	*'I'm ok'. 'We help others'. 'Not everyone likes it, so I try and help'. 'Some people just don't get it. You can see it on their faces'. 'I would choose this one because I would if someone was stuck..I wouldn't just carry on and think 'who care's' ..I'd be helping them… like this person looks a bit worried ….I would go and help them..let them reach the end of the bridge'.*

The extent to which children sought to explain their experiences of FLL in tune with their peers in class and/or their own degree of confidence was striking (see Table 13, p.218). FLL for these children seemed to be a very social experience, very much resonant of wider literature in the field (e.g., Dewey (1980); Freire (1993); Pollard & Bourne, 1994) and the thinking offered by symbolic interactionist theory (e.g., Mead, 1932; Blumer, 1969). Children's responses indicated they were much more consciously aware of others in class than even I had noticed from my time in the field. Their own developing self-concept and identity as learners also had a role in helping and supporting others in class. Blumer's (1969) three assumptions that frame symbolic interactionist theory helps shed light on the nature of such conscious awareness, with additional consideration further to findings drawn from my research identified *in italics below*:

1. Individuals construct meaning via the communication process:
   Communication is understood to not just be the spoken word, but also the importance and influence of non-verbal communication and interface with established 'rituals' and routines of the cultural and contextual environment.
2. Self-concept is a motivation for behaviour:
   Self-concept is understood as itself being informed by the response and reactions of others, hence something that is fluid and dynamic rather than something that 'is'.
3. A unique relationship exists between the individual and society:
   This is understood as an organic, rather than static relationship.

Biesta's (2010) third function of education, 'subjectification', is also partially suggested for children sat at the middle and top tables. Such findings indicate that the nature of FLL offered children enabled some of them at least 'to become independent of existing orders; supporting ways of being in which the individual is not simply a 'specimen' of a more encompassing order'. Whilst this was not an overtly intended outcome of the expressed FLL curriculum, it nonetheless appeared to be an unintended, but no less worthy outcome of the way in which some children sought to manage, understand, and report their experiences. The 'practical-evaluative' element of agency, as conceptualised by Emirbayer & Mische (1998, p.971) also provides an understanding of what was found, that not all children had the same capacity to realise 'alternative possible trajectories of action' in response to 'the emerging demands, dilemmas, and ambiguities of …evolving situations'. This affords s further dimension to the fragmented nature of children's FLL presented in Chapter 5.

Children’s experiences of FLL appeared to be influenced by those of others and the wider context in which they occurred. This is illuminated by the position held by Emirbayer & Mishe (1998, p.969), that ‘at every step, actors are conceived of not as atomized individuals, but rather as active respondents within nested and overlapping systems’. This view was first expressed by Mead (1932) who arguably considered ‘agency’ as the capacity of actors to critically shape their own responsiveness to problematic situations, endorsing the notion of ‘sociality’ in the development of conscious awareness: ‘Social meanings and values develop out of the capacity to take on the perspectives of (concrete and generalized) others’ (Emirbayer & Mische, p.971). In Martin’s (2012) evaluation, brief reference to some children expressing concern about others in class being left behind was also indicated, although she focussed on the wider finding about most children enjoying FLL. My findings instead highlight children’s proactive agency with FLL, rather than just being recipients of something they may or may not enjoy.

6.32 ‘We had a little smile and a chat’

A recognition shared by children that ‘talking’ did not really count with their FLL was repeatedly revealed through analysis. Given the reported focus upon oracy in early FLL, apparent from a review of literature (see Chapter 3, p.101), this finding was surprising. Children instead appeared to recognise that it was the writing that ultimately appeared to matter in school, and that for some, this made the FLL experience even more challenging to negotiate and manage than for others. For example, children’s responses and reactions in conversations arising through the focus group activities also indicated a degree of worry whether it was OK to admit they enjoyed the talking and ‘*getting away’* with not doing much writing. They were perhaps aware that their views were at odds with those of their teachers, and the expectations placed on them as ‘higher ability learners’, given the express emphasis on writing in the FLL (see Chapter 5, p.194). Nonetheless, agency was also taken in talking about that with me. For example:

> *P: we enjoy talking in any subject…like in French say, we enjoy talking and telling eachother what we think and just talking about the different things that we hardly even write…we’re just… like…. talking.’*

> *P: especially in Year 3…we always had a talking partner who sat next to us and we always had…. we normally had….um…. before we…er had to do anything…the teacher says…have a talk with your partner to practice using that language…We always um…we always…had a little smile and a chat…because we enjoyed doing that.*

Children's views expressed about FLL encompassed their value in being able to collaborate and talk with others about their FLL, having opportunity to talk in French with others in class and taking what opportunity they could to do so. Such a sense of classroom camaraderie is exemplified by the following vignette, where children both had, and took opportunity to talk and collaborate. Taking opportunity to play around with the sound of the French language also injected some creative fun into their otherwise tightly managed learning, with closer analysis revealing that such instances often involved children's engagement with the sound, or phonology and prosody of the FL.

Vignette 5 also exemplifies what children appeared to 'enjoy' in response to their FLL, as revealed by their perceived body language and facial expressions: collaboration, experimentation, and opportunity to talk. I also tangibly experienced this in the field via a noticeable change in energy-levels in the classroom when such 'enjoyment' was apparent. This was also found to be something of an exceptional occurrence with FLL, making it a more novel experience that stood out from many others, making it even more memorable. This feeling caused your senses to awaken, you became more alert and attuned to the immediate situation around you; noticing that others appeared to be affected in the same manner with a sense of shared 'one-ness' too – almost as a prelude to what Csikszentmihalyi (1994) coined as when an individual experiences 'flow'. My findings indicate that something attuned to 'flow' can also be a powerful, collectively shared experience however, rather than just an individual one.

Vignette 5: *Field diary: Year 3, School* 3 (Timetabled French lesson):

Pupils are standing up and playing a game to be finding something in a specified colour. They are listening and responding to the class teacher. Types of clothing are introduced eg 'Jupe'. This word causes a particular response amongst children. Pupils begin looking and smiling at eachother when they hear this word - showing their enjoyment, becoming more animated, focussed - finding and inventing ways to keep using it with eachother. Children begin to affect different voices, playing around with the word and its sound. More start that too. Several begin to add an action to go with the word: bending their knees and holding out their imaginary skirt in a pretend curtsey (previously learned?) All children in the class are now actively involved with this – the class has come alive. The sound of the word 'jupe' is clearly enjoyed – I hear it articulated in various ways by children in their pairs. It's almost like an in-joke between children – use of a word they find funny and that can cause merriment between them when used.

This reminds me of an experience I had too as a teacher with the German word 'Tschüss!' – This became a kind of 'in joke' with that class too…e.g. end of day I recall children saying 'Tschüss, Tschüss, Orange Juice!' to eachother as a kind of rhyme – seeking to rhyme and match 'Tschüss' and 'Juice' in both their phonic articulation and prosody. That was also a Y3 class. Experimenting and playing with language and its prosody; making it 'theirs'.

In this example, children's enjoyment with playing around with the sound of the word 'jupe' was combined with a physically active, collaborative activity where children were paired with eachother. The teacher was for a time 'out of the centre' of the activity, affording children a little time to experiment and 'own' the new language they were engaging with together. The class made the most of this opportunity. In essence, 12/13 of 16 attributes that can optimise children's learning as reported from children's own perspectives were indicated in this instance, identified in green text in Table 14 below:

Table 14: What children liked with FLL (See Chapter 3, Table 3, p.64)

Children like…	Children dislike:
1. Hands-on learning 2. Active learning 3. Desire to be stretched 4. Independent learning (especially Y6) 5. Taking ownership of learning 6. Variety of activities 7. Break from routines 8. Variety of teachers 9. Having time to complete activities 10. History, art, music, drama	1. Overtalk by teacher 2. Too little time to complete tasks 3. Not enough time to work independently 4. Being rushed and feeling under pressure to achieve 5. Demotivated by long lessons 6. Predictable routines and rhythms of schoolwork 7. Too much writing, copying, working from books and repeating things

11. Working collaboratively with a friend, rather than on their own. 12. Making links between the similarities and differences between different languages 13. Speaking in pairs/groups 14. Novelty factor of languages 15. Mix of L1 and L2 in the classroom 16. Just the right challenge	8. Lack of challenge 9. Dominance of core subjects 10. Teacher-directed activities 11. Being disrupted by other pupils' messing around and being told off 12. Use of the target language 13. Lack of comprehension 14. Learning pronunciation- lots of repetition 15. Memorising lots of words 16. Overuse of games 17. Reading, writing and spelling in the target language 18. Limited progress 19. Lack of challenge/too much challenge 20. L2 classroom only.

This contrasted with what children were found to usually experience with their FLL, identified in red text. In this way, part of what made the 'jupe' experience memorable and enjoyable was because it offered children a different type of FLL experience than usual. It proved a particularly memorable experience for me, as it was at once livelier, with a tangible, palpable new energy very much apparent in the classroom; all children appeared more engaged with a collective, shared sense of 'one-ness' with the activity and learning that was associated with it. Research diary notes reminded me that I began quietly experimenting with the sound of the word 'jupe' too, taking a lead from the children in so doing. Furthermore, focus groups of children in Year 5 also recalled this and some other FLL activities they had enjoyed engaging with as being memorable when conditions such as in this example were met. For example, when sharing memories of previous FLL, children in Y5 focus groups recalled the 'jupe' lesson in Year 3:

P: Jupe! We had fun with that! – that's a funny word

P: Yeah! We like it when we can talk and try things out together

P: It was good when we did some things like that. When we do do French… it's mostly writing.

Activities and occasions such as the 'jupe lesson' supports a notion of 'powerful' learning for children, attuned to collective 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; 2008) and 'experiential coherence' or 'deep learning' (Hargreaves, 1994, p.185). This arguably led to children experiencing FLL, all-be-it-briefly, in a more meaningful and memorable way, attuned more closely to the attributed approach of YLLs (Wray, 2008). It is also more resonant of a 'primary pedagogy' for FLL alluded to in the review of literature (Chapter 3, p. 98). Such an opportunity was also arguably novel, and enthralling because of that (Dörnyei, 1994).

Such 'powerful' learning experiences also appear conducive for realising the transformative state of 'experience' alluded to by Larossa (2002). Findings suggest there is more capacity for 'powerful' FLL for children than may be currently realised, otherwise missed or neglected through adult notions of needing to *'get through the scheme"*, demonstrate *'evidence'* of children's FLL or otherwise pursue FLL teaching approaches that are less suited to YLLs whilst being more attuned and making more sense to an 'older language learner' (Wray, 2008). This is also resonant of Alexander's (2010) broader proposal that, viewed through the lens of children's FLL experiences, children in primary schools in England may be being asked to be doing too much of the wrong thing, too early. Performativity measures for teachers and meeting expectations of '*what's in children's books'* with FLL may ultimately be stifling rather than enthusing children's FLL experiences, of further implication for the achievability of expressed national aims for FLL (DfE, 2013; Gibbs, Online, 2021). Asking children to engage with FLL does not appear to be the issue; rather the nature of why, what, how and when they do so.

With a focus on writing, and '*getting the writing done'* (see Chapter 5, p.194), children's experiences were instead found to be primarily individual than collaborative. Where more collaboration between children was permitted, it appeared to become more positively memorable. Children were otherwise usually observed to have limited opportunity to talk with each other, let alone experiment with the FL together. Where children did take agency to talk, this could instead be 'shut down' by the teacher to maintain classroom order, unless children were able to successfully navigate such talk in a covert manner. This happened even when the talk was about their learning, e.g.:

> *'Who's speaking?'* calls the class teacher. *'If that's you* [identifying another child sat close to the one who started to talk to me about their work] …., *I won't be happy'*.

Teacher responding to a child who proactively added in their age in French when replying to the class register: *'Can I have a j'ai?'*

'We're saying 'bonjour' – teacher response to a child who used 'Salut' instead of 'Bonjour'.

The 'social reality' of the classroom was maintained by the teacher's control of classroom discourse (Riley, 1996, p.132). Through such examples as the above, the key role of the teacher-pupil relationships and collaboration can be seen to matter only as much as it served to maintain moral order and discipline in class (James & Pollard, 2008) more than it appeared to be concerned with an interest in understanding what children were learning in the lesson. In turn, this appears to affirm the power relations suggested by Pierce (1995) where children in school can be both 'subject to' and 'subject of', and where 'wayward students are brought around to the (teacher's) ideal' (Margonis, 2011, p.8). Whilst this limited the extent of what children were able to take agency with, it did not prevent them still seeking ways to do so.

The nature of children's FLL encounters instead served to focus children more on their own individual endeavours such as to *'get the writing done'* and complete allotted tasks individually and quietly, even though they were geographically positioned in collaborative table groups. This itself echoes the work of Holt (1964; 1994) who suggested that children were mainly concerned with task completion instead of learning. My findings have however indicated that teachers, as observed through the lens of FLL, can be concerned with much the same thing if not more so, whereas it was the children who appeared more concerned with managing their *learning.*

6.33 Managing the writing

One example of a child's agency stood out from my data analysis which I include here as an exceptional occurrence, building on discussion from Chapter 5. This concerned a child from a 'lower ability table' whose experience of FLL was observed to be perhaps the most fragmented experience of all the children in class, regularly being taken out for additional work with various TAs., particularly during French. This child was observed to operate independently of others in the class, finding unique ways to navigate their way through their own experience of FLL, with its emphasis on completing written work.

As indicated by Photo 9 (p199), they were unable to complete the writing task set at the start of a French lesson having been taken out for a spelling intervention. Neither did they have time to complete the set work upon their return. Leaving their pencils out on their open book at the end of the lesson was at first sight innocuous, however on closer observation, the placing of these materials on the page appeared much more purposeful. How the child had begun the task was also found to differ from others in class, having been necessitated, through the structures of their school day, to catch-up with what the rest of the class were doing.

The task involved writing a translation of what each of the characters were saying, as written in French in the speech bubbles of the stuck-in sheet. On their return to class, in contrast to all other children in class who began with the girl on the left-hand side (see Photos 4-8, pp.199-200) this child, interestingly also a boy with dark hair as the one in the picture, chose to begin with the boy on the right-hand side. Field notes from this session indicate the child actively sought out and negotiated this choice with the Teaching Assistant. It appeared to have been prompted when the child, after overhearing other quietly muttered whispers by children to them about what they were and weren't doing in an apparent attempt to help their peer, following the child's return to class, went to the TA to check whether they needed to write any translation at all. This child carefully placed a reminder on their book at the end of the lesson as to what they were focussing on, ready for its anticipated completion after lunch. The pencil was left pointing towards their writing; the black eraser placed on the picture of the boy. This was observed to take place independently, without further TA engagement, indicating that this 'lower ability' child otherwise had much in the way of resourceful strategies in navigating such experiences.

Without parental/carer consent to be able to engage directly with the child, I was left reflecting that this child, with different calls on their time and otherwise 'disengaged' from FLL through the way it manifested in the school and class setting, was perhaps operating with a different and more individualised agency to those of others in class. A set of alternative coping skills and strategies were apparent, together with some degree of resilience and proactiveness too, such as taking action to confirm their approach which others in class had also become concerned about on their behalf. It seemed apparent that the more elusive function of education as presented by Biesta (2010), that of 'subjectification,' might also have operated for this child who appeared to be learning how to successfully navigate the additional challenges with FLL they were presented by school and class systems. It furthermore resonates to some extent with Margonis (2011), viewing 'educational events as social fields also allows us to understand how the common classroom, which focuses each student on the material in front of them, creates impotent individuals who disassociate themselves from others'. Further research into the experiences of 'lower ability' children with FLL is warranted.

6.4 Connecting with the FL

In what was found to be the lack, or absence, of teachers recognising or offering opportunity to encourage children to make connections with other aspects of their learning and think about the foreign language to which they were being introduced in school, (see Chapter 5, p.175), children in class were instead found to act themselves to try and make sense of their otherwise disjointed experiences of FLL. One way in which this manifested was via individual children's active and open engagement with the teacher and wider class. Numerous occasions during my time in the field arose when observing whole-class teaching, either through a scheduled timetabled lesson, or '*pop-up'* French, when different children might spontaneously burst out loud with a suddenly realised observation or connection they had made 'in the moment' about the words or phrases being presented or used.

One such example was included in Vignette 3 (Chapter 5, p. 189) where a child was observed to not only instigate opportunity to put up the date in French on the whiteboard when it was not otherwise offered, but to also make a spontaneous, cognitive connection between the French word 'mars' and the more familiar chocolate Mars Bar whilst engaged with putting the date up in French on the whiteboard. The way in which this unfolded in the field suggested it was an immediate, natural, reaction that this child was happy and confident to share publicly. It was also built upon by other children, e.g., suggesting the planet Mars. It was unmissable as an observer in class, being both visible and audible, in front of the whole-class and something 'out of the ordinary' in terms of how children were otherwise observed to comply with behavioural expectations and not call out. It also served to inject some energy and 'fun' into the established routine of each lesson throughout the day, such as happened with the '*jupe*' example. As examples drawn from my data indicated, such outbursts were mainly found to be inspired by a cognitive connection the child had themselves made between a word or phrase in French that was being introduced to the class by their class teacher, such as with the example of the cognate with English, 'mars'. My data also revealed occasions when a child might also make a seemingly spontaneous connection from another lesson with their developing knowledge and awareness of French. Findings indicate that such overt outbursts were most prevalent when the children in my study were younger: in Year 3, rather than in Year 5 where this tendency was still found but had become enacted in a more covert manner instead (e.g.., see Vignettes 9& 10, pp.236-8).

The following section draws on examples from my data to illuminate and discuss such overt agency further. Children's delight and surprise in making connections from French with other words and phrases with which they were familiar in their mother tongue is revealed. Findings conversely indicate that busy teachers, even 'language specialists', can often miss what children otherwise sought to readily share and reveal about their own thinking about the FL they were being taught.

6.41 Surprises

Children were regularly found to draw on cognates between French and English to help them make sense of the unfamiliar vocabulary with eachother. A further example is drawn from a French lesson taught by a 'non-specialist' Primary teacher in Year 5 (Vignette 6). The lesson concerned directions in French and took place in the late summer term, at the start of a hot, sunny afternoon; so hot that the Headteacher purposefully visited each class during registration to encourage all children to drink lots of water during the afternoon. A Y3 class teacher had come to cover this lesson to enable a formal observation of the other teacher's teaching of PE with the other's Year 3 class:

Vignette 6: Year 5 French lesson taught by non-specialist Primary Teacher

The teacher uses the published scheme (Tout le Monde) from which to introduce written key phrases in French on the interactive whiteboard.

The numbered text is revealed by the teacher on the screen. The first is read out aloud by the teacher with an accompanying action. The class sit and watch. I note their reactions.

1) Allez tout droit– accompanied by a go straight on action

   (*Pupils from the 'middle tables' in class calling aloud): Ooh! A Surprise! Thought it would be something like going right*

   Class teacher: there's no 'e'. It's a different word.

2) Tournez á droite

Class watch and listen. No comments or discussion raised about the word 'droite' neither about the previous comment with droit and the similarity between the two.

3) Tournez á gauche

4) Prenez la première rue á gauche

5) Prenez la première rue á driote

6) Prenez le deuxième* rue gauche

** Classteacher c/would not pronounce. Children instead asked for their ideas and support. Some suggestions offered e.g., 'deuksieme'; 'diemme' ... Teacher uses the word as a teaching point with links to 'deux' and where the 'x' wasn't pronounced.*

7) Prenez le deuxième rue à droite

After this introduction, the teacher sets the same task for all pupils:

To copy down the 7x sentences about directions and to write the English translation.

As indicated in Vignette 6, some children vocalised their surprise with 'droit' not being the same as the English 'right', as they had clearly anticipated, in apparent recognition of the similarity of the spelling and sound of the English 'right' and the French word 'droit'. These children had apparently recognised a cognate through which to try and understand what was being presented to them in French, not otherwise recognised by the teacher. They also took agency in proactively sharing that connection both with their teacher and others in class. This link was not dismissed by the (non-specialist) teacher. Links to the English language made from the French language appeared to be more tolerated and understood in class than the other way around (see Vignette 2, p.190). The links were also shared by children from the 'middle' tables; revealed through analysis to be less likely as readily dismissed by teachers than those ideas shared by children sat at lower ability tables, or those whose behaviour otherwise singled them out as '*not being wolf-like*'.

Data analysis indicated the way FLs were taught, and the way children appeared to engage with learning FLs were not always in synchronisation. The nature of the responses children received from teachers for example, also belied an apparent ‘mismatch’ between what children appeared focussed upon with their FLL (links and cognates between French / English) and the focus of their teachers *(‘getting the French done’*). In this vignette, children received some commentary to their surprise from the teacher who pointed out that an ‘e’ was missing, even though there is not a ‘e’ in the English word ‘right’. In this way, the teacher’s commentary indicated an apparent focus on the similarities between the French words (droite / droit) rather than the links the children themselves had made and shared between French and English (droit/right). This finding has implications for children’s school based FLL, including through ITE, teacher development, commercial schemes, and further research if the time and effort put in by both children and their teachers is to be effective.

In the vignette, the teacher also sought children’s assistance with the pronunciation of a French word. I remained unsure whether this was a purposeful teaching point or whether they themselves were unsure of that. The outcome however was that both (cover) teacher and class were observed to engage in brief collaboration about facets of the specified French vocabulary upon which the lesson was based; the only example where this was noted throughout my time in the field; interestingly instigated again not by a specialist languages teacher, but by a ’primary generalist’.

6.42 ‘I know, it’s liver!’

The next example (Vignette 7) is drawn from a whole-class French lesson in Year 3, illuminating how children’s agency with seeking to make sense of the French with which they were asked to engage was again not apparently understood, neither recognised by the teacher. As a primary languages trained teacher, this indicates that there is more to consider beyond confidence with subject knowledge in support of children’s instructed FLL in primary school, as originally suggested by Sharpe (1992). Teachers too can be subject to wider, hegemonic influences. The child’s incorrect French pronunciation amidst a busy lesson may perhaps have been a factor in this, where ‘livre’ was pronounced as the English ‘liver’. A further factor to be considered was perhaps the nature of the child’s spontaneous and unanticipated connection to French which may have been an unwelcome distraction, further to their received instruction to be writing down sentences in French in their books. Again, rather than a recognition of the connections children were making with other aspects of their knowledge and understanding with the FL (French), the emphasis was placed upon *'getting the writing done'* and conforming to established classroom expectations, as recognised and referred to by children in the focus groups.

The extract provides further illumination of the way in which children's agency in class could emanate from their spontaneous responses to the French, which in turn could challenge the teacher's intended flow of the lesson. The extract illustrates a further way in which children's FLL experiences differed according to who they were within the wider context of the classroom. For example, how a child's comments emanating from the 'top ability table' were less readily dismissed from those arising about French from children sat at 'lower ability tables' as has been considered previously. This is despite the comments also being shared in a similarly energetic, confident manner:

Vignette 7: 'Why associate liver with books?'

3 May 2016 School 3, Class 3:

The teacher verbally reminds the children to be writing their French vocabulary and sentences in their exercise books.

Pupil (top table) responds aloud: *'I know! It's liver!'*

CT: *Why would you associate liver with books?*

CT goes to sit with least able children and does not respond further to the other pupil's contribution.

The child resettles to their writing. No further comments are made.

Such responses, not seemingly recognising such comments offered by children, may be due in part to the lack of teacher's subject knowledge or brain plasticity (Phillips, 2017). On this occasion however, the teacher, in her fourth year of practice, was the Year 3 primary class teacher and was one who had reportedly trained as a Primary Languages specialist towards the end of the national funding scheme brought in during the 'capacity building phase' for Primary Languages 2002-2010 (DfES, 2002). Whilst the teacher's main foreign language noted as Spanish, they also had French A-level qualification. In this example, an explanation of subject knowledge could therefore not fully account for such a response. I suggest instead that the perceived need or desire to instil a sense of class ‘order’ was one that took precedence and prevailed in terms of professional decision-making in-the-moment. I suggest it also provides an example of how establishing and maintaining such order to support learning could be counter-intuitive to children’s learning experiences where it instead served to ‘close’ such learning opportunities down, rather than ignite them. I was also very much aware that the teacher’s response and reaction may have been directly or indirectly influenced by my presence and expressed interest in FLL.

Considering such spontaneous comments as a trait more apparent with younger than older children in the primary phase in my data was less surprising. I was with this class the longest of any during my period of data collection with more opportunity for such occurrences to arise when I was with them. There was also an arguable ‘novelty factor’ in French being a fresh, new experience for children which itself could have inspired more such enthusiastic outbursts. However, as my time with the children in Year 3 progressed through the academic year, these occurrences also became slightly less apparent in my notes, and such instances were less immediately observable when I revisited the class towards the end of Year 5. This may indicate how influential the way in which, as observed though the lens of FLL, children are socialised into classroom and school norms and expectations, as suggested by Biesta (2010). It also suggests further support for Wray’s (2008) assertion that children’s ways of engaging with and learning a foreign language develop from a ‘young language learner’ approach to one of an ‘older language learner’, happening ‘at different times for different children’ during the primary phase of education’ (5-11yrs). Whilst Wray was writing about a learner of English as an Additional Language, my findings provide support for this from an instructed FLL perspective.

Surprisingly, my findings indicated that children were frequently left to make and raise such cognitive links to and from their FLL by themselves. An analysis of field-diary data revealed virtually no occasions where teachers were observed, neither heard, to follow up on the links and connections children themselves offered spontaneously in class; nor ask for any. This was the case in classes led by a primary-trained teacher with a languages background, non-specialist trained primary teachers, and in the cases of Schools 1 and 2, with Secondary-trained MFL teachers employed as French specialist or peripatetic teachers in the primary school. This supports Meade’s (2000) assertions that teachers rarely listen and then act on what children have to say, regardless of overriding educational ideology.

The only example arising in my field diary related to a lesson in Year 5, School 3, led by the (non-specialist) Y5 class teacher (Vignette 8):

Vignette 8: Exception to the rule:

CT to the class: *We need to write today's date and the Learning Intention.*

The IWB is activated; its screen is blue, white, red (resonating with the French flag).

mardi, 3 juillet 2018

L.I: to understand French directional language

The teacher looks through the e-scheme of work and finds the desired resource to support the lesson under Tout le Monde, Ma Ville, Lire, vert.

CT: *when might you need this language?*

I note that this is the first time I have explicitly heard a teacher ask a class to think of the purpose and potential use to themselves of the language to be covered by the lesson.

There are a few murmurs from the class but no explicit answer. The question now seems to have been posed in a rhetorical way as the teacher moves on to recapping vocabulary covered in previous lessons related to places in a town.

CT: *let's do place names.*

Class generate vocabulary and suggest these aloud eg: *église, boulangerie, le gare, le cinéma* (CT interjects: *yes that's an easy one! We like that one).* Names are accepted with and without le/la.

CT: *when do you think we'll need this kind of language?* (Repeated question from the start of the lesson – giving children thinking time?)

Pupil: *If we need to tell someone where to go*

Pupil: *if you rent out a room in a hotel*

Pupil: *To ask how to get somewhere*

In the absence of being encouraged by teachers to think of any links or connections with English or any other languages children may be aware of ('Knowledge about Language(s)' and 'Language Learning Strategies' (DfES, 2005), some children nonetheless were ready, able and apparently still needing to make, and offer those as an integral part of their own learning process as YLLs. The was a surprising finding, given the recognised importance of cognitive links and connections to support the learning process as flagged within the cross-cutting strands of the Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages, 'Language Learning Strategies' (LLS) and 'Knowledge About Language' (KAL) (DfES, 2005) and other literature pointing towards the need for children to use their L1 to make sense of the L2 (e.g., Ellis, 1997; Murphy, 2014; Schwartz et al, 2020). Kirsch (2012) however alluded to a finding in her study of children's LLS, revisiting data from her 2002 study, that children developed LLS in the absence of explicit instruction, meaning that this may not after all be such a surprising finding itself; the surprising finding is instead perhaps how teachers are not making more explicit use of children's skills, need and desire to make and recognise such links.

Furthermore, one of the driving reasons for implementing FLL from 7yrs of age in England was the purported cognitive benefits to be reaped from learning a FL (Phillips, 2017) and in the words of Gove (2011, online), drawing on neuroscience: 'learning a foreign language literally makes you smarter'. With an apparent absence of any observed 'reward' neither recognition, my findings may highlight a potentially neglected aspect of FLL in the primary school, meriting further research. Findings indicate that the way in which FLL may be organised and contextualised in the primary school may trouble ideas about FLL helping to 'make children smarter', negating one of the purported benefits of early language learning.

Without an explicit focus on developing children's thinking skills in lessons, analysis revealed how children themselves sought to take agency in seeking to make connections and think about the FL. This resonates with Nsamenang (2005, p.4) who, whilst writing both from, and for an indigenous African perspective, posited that such a perspective was of value in rebalancing that which he viewed as otherwise largely Eurocentric/Western: 'In principle, children are rarely instructed or prodded into what they learn but discover it during participation'. This builds upon Pollard's (1994, p.22) view that children's learning 'must stand upon its own foundations- foundation which can only be secure when the child has been able to control the construction itself'. In turn, this posits Vygotsky's (1978) notions of the teacher as the 'knowledgeable other' more as facilitator (andragog) than provider of knowledge (pedagog) in relation to FLL.

This chapter has so far considered findings concerning children's agency with the types of connections children appeared to make with their FLL and the overt ways in which they were inspired to share these spontaneously with their teacher and others in the wider class. Data also however revealed a further, more subtle, way children took agency with making sense of, and making the best of, their school based FLL. This is presented in the following section.

6.5 Seeking connections from the FL (Covert)

Data revealed numerous ways where, in the absence of opportunity facilitated by the teacher, children in class actively, but quietly, found ways to both seek help from, and help their peers with making sense of the foreign words to which they were introduced both in their timetabled lessons and as French '*popped up'* during their time in class. Children actively sought ways of doing this under the radar of the teacher, in such a way not to draw attention to themselves. The more time that was spent in the field with children in class, the more apparent children's clandestine agency in this manner became. By the time I revisited the class at the end of Year 5, it appeared to have become a well-established practice amongst the class of children. The longer I spent with the children in class, the more aware I became of how increasingly 'covert' such interactions between children were, how numerous these were regarding their engagement with French and how adept some children were in finding the 'chinks' in the day to allow them to help 'let the light in' (Kirby, 2018) to help their understanding.

6.51 Touchez la tête

In contrast to the overt, spontaneous manner in which some children were observed to share their thoughts and ideas with their teachers and eachother in class, data revealed a much quieter and more subtle approach taken by a broader range of children from across designated 'ability levels' through which to check and seek help with their sense making of the FL. Children were observed to operate in an almost clandestine manner that sought to actively avoid teacher attention. This is illuminated by the following 'Touchez la tête' Vignette 9, taken from School 3, Year 3 at the end of a Monday morning, late November, in the time between the end of an English lesson focussing on ways to write persuasively and lunch time:

Vignette 9: ‘It all means touch?’

Children are busy cleaning their individual white boards – rubbing the pen off with their fingers. The class teacher (CT) signals the end of the lesson by raising her hands and wriggling her own fingers. Children respond to this as a routine, raising their own hands and wriggling their own fingers in response as they notice what’s happening. Some children nudge others on their tables to join in. One boy sat towards the front of the class is engrossed in his rubbing out. Other children notice and are looking at each other – making eye contact – various expressions.

CT interjects: ‘*Be nice to the boy…*’ The boy continues more quickly to complete his rubbing out as children are sent table by table to wash their hands, put on their coats and line up at the classroom door.

Whilst waiting for this to be completed, the CT begins a class game of ‘Touchez!’ (a simplified version of Simon Says without being prefaced with ‘Pierre a dit…’. This seems to be reinforcing vocabulary the children have come across before. Some children are looking more closely at the teacher’s actions. Others are busying themselves with their whiteboards and not joining in straight away. More look to be watching out for eachother’s responses and actions instead, checking how to respond.

CT:*’Touchez la tête’* (adds her own action after ‘waiting time’ for children to physically respond)

‘Touchez le nez!’

Touchez les jambes!’

I’m sat on a chair next to children lining up by the outside door. One child in queue (girl, from table near front – lower ability table) whispers to another in the queue (from higher ability table at the back):

‘It all starts with touchez...?’
The other child (girl) whispers back: ‘*It means touch’.*
There’s a shared smile between the two.
The Teaching Assistant (TA) enters with a child from Year 4. The game - and quiet learning conversation between the two girls- immediately stops. The Year 4 child has been brought to show off the improved quality of their (English) work. This is widely praised by the class teacher in front of the whole class. The class leads out to playtime via the outside door. The earlier conversation between the two girls does not appear to resume.

6.52 Ou est le bébé?

Sentiments revealed by children's talk in the focus group activities provided further insight into children's agency in finding ways to make sense of the unfamiliar words to which they were introduced. It also highlights children's recognition of how their FLL was otherwise limited to being able to understand and make connection with each word:

> P: *there are some words we don't really understand and that's because we haven't come across them….and we don't know what they mean.*
>
> P: *…it depends on the task… if you've got quite an easy task it's not a struggle but if it's like in French - yeah in* French (emphasis)- *with a word you don't know…. like school…* [l 'école*] and you can't pronounce it…then you're going to be really struggling.*

Further insight into children's clandestine agency in seeking to understand the FL is shared in Vignette 10. It illuminates an example of children's collaboration and rapport with each other in doing so, comfortably established by the end of their time in Year 5. This is drawn from one of the last days from my period of data collection when seated with a group of children in Year 5, School 3, as they were completing a set task during a French lesson being taught by the other Year 5 class teacher. The liaison between children on this occasion involved me. Children drew on wider experiences through which to understand the French. They also drew on cognates between French and their English mother tongue. Children also took opportunity to draw me in to their clandestine talk about, and understanding of the FL.

Vignette 10: Clandestine collaboration

I move to sit with a table of children. One child soon starts talking quietly to me about the phrase 'ou est' that they are writing down:

My Mum says 'ou est le bébé' because it rhymes. We have a new baby at home. I've just seen it's the same as in these sentences we're writing. Mum's saying 'where's the baby' isn't she?

I nod, smile, agreeing but keeping quiet. I look to see where the teacher is. I do not want to cause any issues for the children neither the teacher.

Teacher is sitting at the desk after her walk around. The child and I share a look – the child seems to have understood my checking that out.

Pupil to me: *It's strange how long the French sentences are (child is looking back at their writing and pointing at the English translations which look much shorter by comparison).*

Pupil- pupil: *I've just written 'prenez blah blah…' but I don't really know what it means.*

Another pupil to pupil: quietly reading aloud their sentences to eachother. Some mispronunciations apparent but still having a go with eachother.

Pupil – pupil: *I haven't done a response for number 2 yet.*

I have become fascinated by the pupil chatter with eachother on the table, the nature of their conversations and apparent rapport and ease with eachother. The way in which they are seeking to make sense of what they're doing with eachother and how the classroom environment makes such social learning contact and reflection amongst children something subversive.

Pupil to me: *I just want to know how to spell 'oui' in French. Is that right?* Showing me their sentence in their book. Another pupil gets out their printed school contact book where some key French words are printed for reference at the back: *It's o,u,i. look! (English pronunciation)*

Pupil: *that's strange oh really? It's almost like 'oi!'* We smile.

Regular Class teacher returns to class from PE observation, the other teacher leaves after a quick conversation with the CT.

Class teacher: *5 more minutes on this and then we have some RE writing to do.* Silent, individual working returns to the class. I feel regret that my time with the group also ends. I also feel empathy with the children this hot, sunny afternoon spent writing out lots of sentences and with more writing yet to come.

6.6 Imagined, alternative possibilities: *I've never been a fan of French*

Findings emerging from analysis identifying children's agency also illuminated children's imagined 'alternative possibilities' as conceptualised by the proposed projectivity-element of agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998) and Mead's (1934) levels of conscious awareness.

Conversations with children during my time in the field and in focus group activities revealed their interests in making connections with languages beyond the one taught in school. Notions of learning '*pieces by pieces'* as discussed in Chapter 5 (p.175) and of the language itself posing a barrier to any other learning were otherwise apparent, because '*everything else is in English'*.

A lack of choice or variation with the language being taught was actively queried by children during the focus group activities with me. Not having such a choice or variation appeared detrimental to how they experienced FLL. Some findings have instead indicated that children 'played the game' of learning French when it was offered, humouring their teachers, rather than being something with which most had any other connection (e.g., *'we're supposed to be like: 'what new learning have we got today'* mimicking a teacher-voice…). In reflecting about the corpus of my data, I was personally reminded of my own experiences teaching French as per the school policy, where I struggled to engage a particular Year 6 boy with his FLL, with the comment from his parents at a parent's evening still ringing in my ears: '*we don't like France or the French'*.

Children participating in the focus groups took active opportunity to express clear preferences for learning languages other than the offered FL, or at least in having some choice or variation with expressed desire to have wider opportunities to find out about other languages in line with other interests. Conversations with children indicated that in some ways, some children seemed to be rather more 'appeasing' the learning of French, which otherwise neither had any bearing on anything else they were learning nor any relation to their other interests or needs in their lives. The need to be compliant with what the school was offering to be 'successful' pupils or for those few who had family holidays in France seemed to be the exception. This indicates a possible need for teachers and policy makers to make the links between different languages more explicit together with making clearer links between the language(s) being learned and their wider curriculum. This would offer support for children in understanding how learning one language can open the door to other languages, also to encourage them to not write-off their language learning experience because it is a language they do not wish to learn / cannot see any merit in learning, other than to comply. For example:

> *P: I've always like wanted to learn Japanese because…I like. Well… um Japanese culture and things like that…*

R: Do you like the Manga things?

*P): **Yes!** And…well…I've…. never been…. a fan of French though…. it's …. not…. my…strong point….*

P: I want to learn Spanish.

R: ok. So, would it be better to be learning another language? ..so… when you're learning French are you really thinking 'I wish it was Japanese' or I wish it was Spanish?

*PS: **[unanimous] yeah!***

R: Do you think learning French will help?

Ps: Yeah (slower and more quietly – children not so sure)

R: do you think learning French will help you reach these other goals you have?

Ps: yeah…. (slowly)

R: is that why you then…just get on with it [learning French]?

Ps: yes…that's it…. (Sounding not so sure)

This excerpt from my fieldnotes highlights the enthusiasm generated amongst children when considering the other languages (if any) they were interested in learning, rather than the specified FL. Children's chatter often related to alternative possibilities for FLL in the way French was otherwise delivered. The excerpt illuminates how children's enthusiasm dwindled when considering whether learning French in school might help them learn other languages. Their responses returned to 'compliant' responses, or those children may give if it is something they have not really considered before and are seeking to 'appease' the adult asking, unsure otherwise how to respond. This reflection encouraged me to review my data again as what I had perhaps been observing over the period of 1 ½ years, was the way in which children learned to comply within a *schooling* - rather than 'education' - system, almost humouring it, suggesting children may possess much deeper and more sophisticated understanding of this relationship that is there to be recognised and embraced.

6.7 A mixed experience

Findings have revealed differences in children's personal FLL experiences, providing insight into individual children's FLL experiences that literature otherwise reporting children's experiences in a homogenous manner, cannot. Children's responses in focus group activities indicated that FLL contributed to a much more eclectic emotional experience for them than those they reportedly experienced with any other subject area (see Fig.4). Whilst the activity was conducted to encourage a broad and open discussion of all/any subject areas that occurred to children at the time, it is nonetheless recognised as a limitation of this particular type of data collection that participating children, in an attempt to perhaps 'please the researcher' and help meet what they perceived as my needs, may well have sought to still refer more often to their FLL (French) as a subject than they may otherwise have done if completing the activity with someone else. As such, caution is applied to these findings:

Fig 4.:

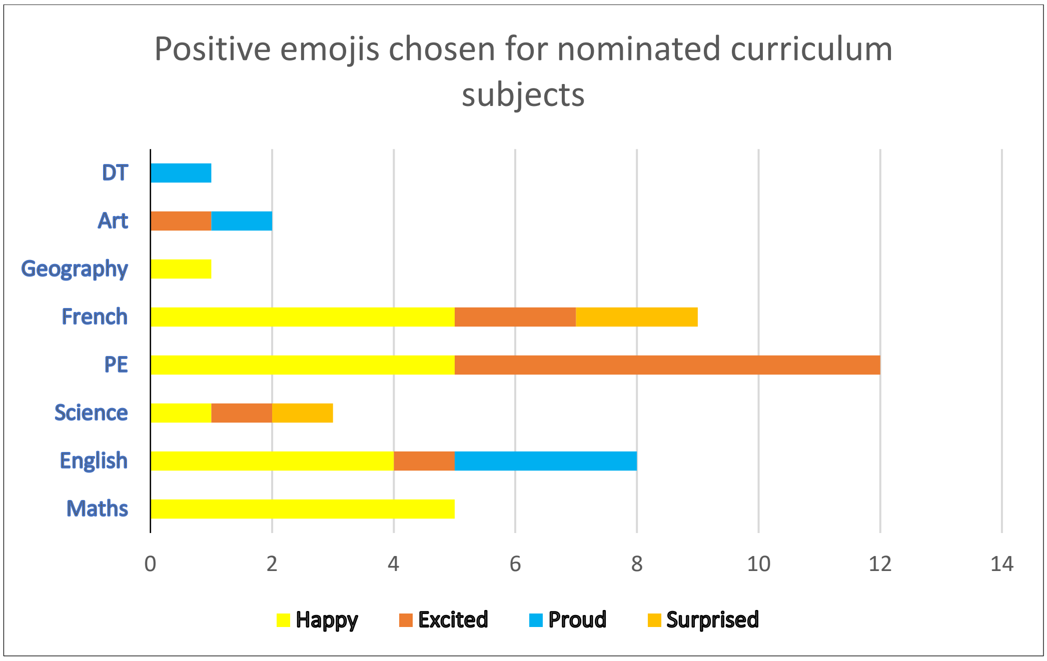


Fig 5.:

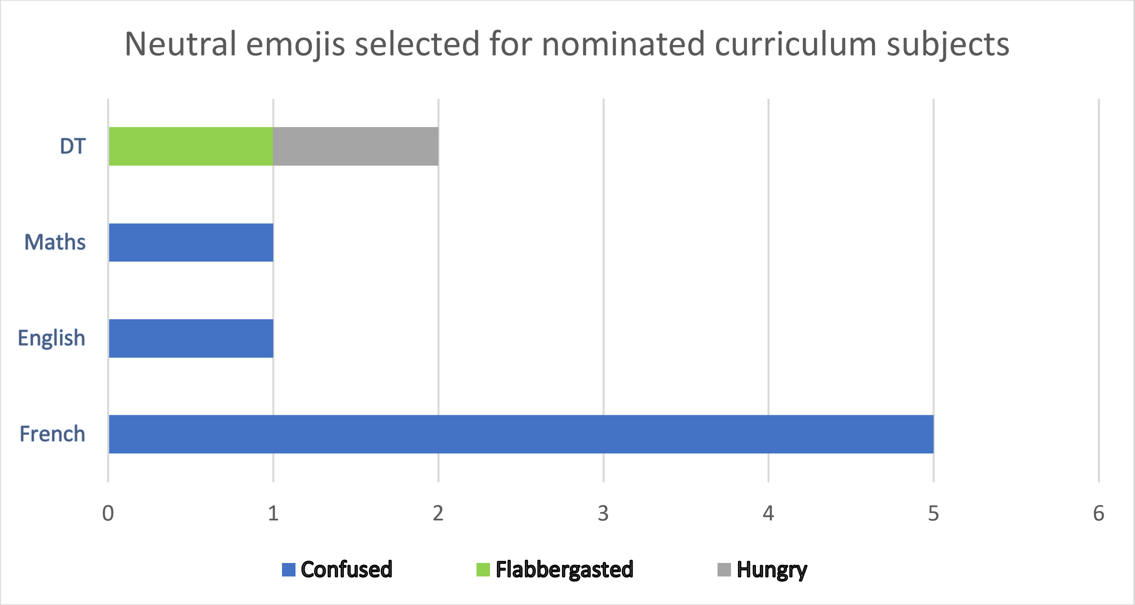
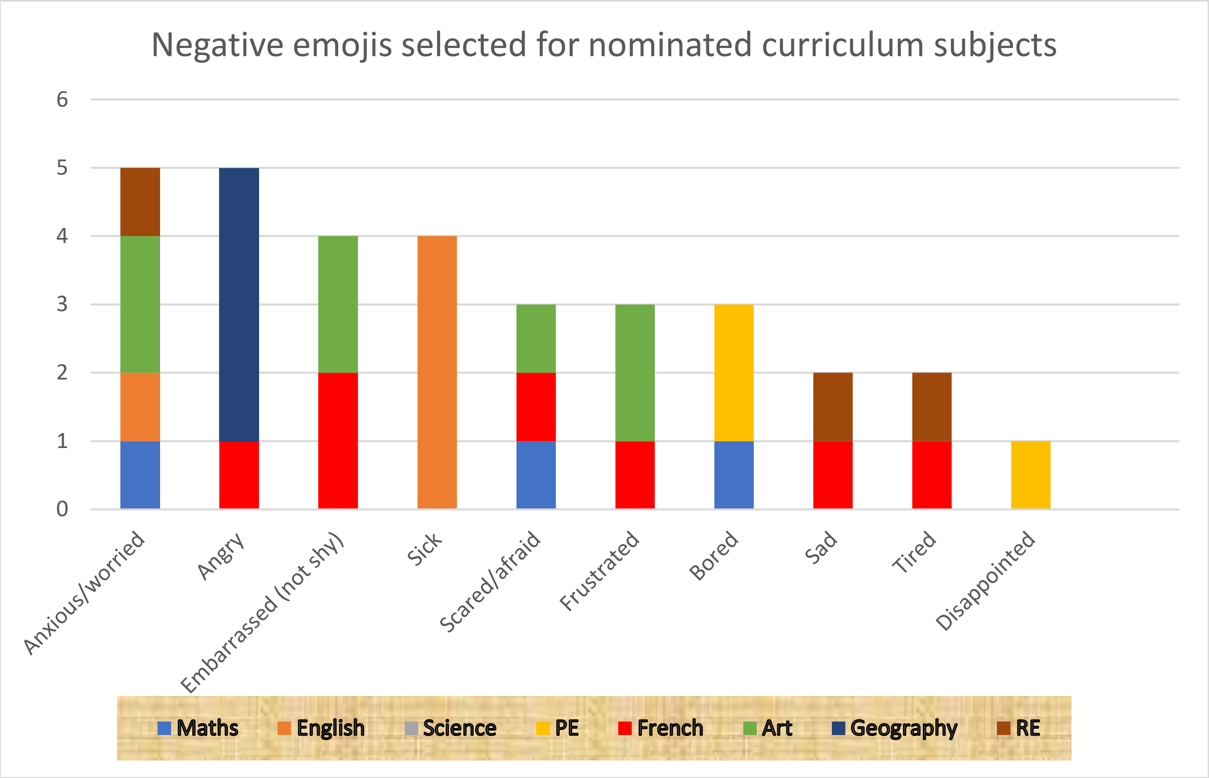

Neutral emojis selected for nominated curriculum subjects
DT
Maths
English
French
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
Confused
Flabbergasted
Hungry

Fig 6.:


Negative emojis selected for nominated curriculum subjects
6
5
4
3
2
1
0
Anxious/worried
Angry
Embarrassed (not shy)
Sick
Scared/afraid
Frustrated
Bored
Sad
Tired
Disappointed
Maths
English
Science
PE
French
Art
Geography
RE

Somewhat concerningly for me as a teacher, ITE lecturer and parent, it was apparent from this data that children overall reported a much greater range of negatively associated feelings regarding their learning in KS2 in general. In total, ten negatively associated emojis were chosen/added by children in comparison with only four positively associated emojis (see Figs. 4,5,6). To a much lesser degree, children's responses to their FLL mirrored this trend, with x2 more negatively associated emojis being selected than positive ones. Whilst most children participating reported more positive feelings towards their learning overall (x42) as may be anticipated from a review of literature and the nature of participating children, there is a not insignificant negatively associated response from these children (x32). When this is taken into consideration along with the possible responses of children who were unable to participate (children from the lower ability tables) it is considered even more compelling that children's conscious awareness (Schmidt, 1994) of their FLL experiences, along with their other learning, is anything other than 'simple,' certainly anything other than wholly positive and certainly not always shared between the all children as has so often been depicted in the past with larger 'broad-brush-stroke' research, even amongst 'top table' children.

It is apparent from this data that whilst a greater range of negatively associated feelings were intentionally reported by participating children, more children - somewhat more reassuringly- associated positive feelings of happiness and excitement – and surprise- in relation to their KS2 subject learning experiences overall than negative feelings. Of note however, is that such positive feelings were reported with just three curriculum subject areas contributing in a greater way than others to such feelings: PE, FLL (French) and English (see Figs.5&6). From this sample, the foundation subjects of music, DT and RE did not feature on children's immediate radar in terms of positive emotions, whilst other foundation subject areas (History, Geography and Art) were only perceived to contribute a little towards some children's positive learning experiences. These findings suggest that for these children, FLL was influential in contributing towards a positive learning experience in school.

Findings concerning the extent to which core subjects (English, Maths and Science) were represented throughout children's responses could be explained by the amount of time afforded these subject areas in the curriculum in comparison with others, and the commensurate amount of time children were exposed to them, together with the value placed on them in the curriculum. PE and French however featured as the top two subject areas reportedly contributing to children’s positive feelings towards their learning experiences (see Fig.6, p.242), indicating in this respect at least, that the broad-brush stroke studies indicating that FLL is a wholly positive experience for children have some resonance. With PE being afforded a much greater and more consistent amount of curriculum time than FLL (French) this suggests however that there was more to children’s responses than just whether they spent more time learning the subject than others. We otherwise may have anticipated children listing all the core subject areas in their top three positively experienced subjects.

These findings provided further opportunity to explore and reflect about my other data from time spent in the field regarding which children were choosing to respond as they did about their perceived learning experiences, and why this may be. In so doing, some clear resonances between what I had observed, seen, and experienced myself in the field and children’s reported feelings in these research activities became apparent, and were as a result afforded greater centrality in this thesis. Whilst it is beyond the scope of this research to consider children’s responses to other subject areas in greater depth, it provides a salient context from which to consider children’s perceived experiences with FLL. It was the only curriculum area reported by participating children as providing for a balance of emotional responses. In contrast to children’s responses about other subject areas, FLL (French) was represented equally in both positive and negative experiences of children’s learning. In comparison, children’s reported experiences of PE were mostly positive, for example receiving 12x positive and only 3x negative responses whereas children’s responses to sum up their learning experiences with Art and RE were largely negative. Findings emerging from this data nonetheless still call into question those arising for example from Martin’s (2012) evaluation and others, which similarly concluded that children were ‘*generally overwhelmingly positive towards their language learning experiences… across all year groups…children were typically enthusiastic and attentive, and regarded their language lessons as both fun and useful’* (Martin, 2012, p.348).

The nature of when and how children experienced the FL in the curriculum could allow for such a variation in children’s responses as opposed to those for other ‘traditionally timetabled’ subjects. The range of emotions expressed by children was not a surprise further to my engagement and reflection from previous time in the field about what I had consciously become aware of and ‘noticed’ (Schmidt, 1994). A further explanation however is that as the children were aware of my overall focus and reason for being in school and had already established at least some relationship with me as a visiting researcher in their Year 3, and then again in Year 5, perhaps seeking to be helpful, they may have sought to provide me with as rich a response as possible about their FLL. However, as outlined in Chapter 4, p.152) the way in which this task was conceived and conducted required children to suggest their own curriculum subjects to elicit which subjects were on their immediate radar (for example music was suggested by no child) and they could add further emojis if they chose to (such as 'flabbergasted' and 'hungry' added by children to help describe their experiences with DT). Children were furthermore happy to indicate negative emotions to represent their FLL; had they sought to more please/appease me as a researcher, I would have otherwise anticipated a wholly more favourable response instead, rather than such a nuanced and balanced one as they sought to provide for FLL.

Such findings from these research activities could also be partly explained by the very age at which these children were asked to participate in these group activities. Given Wray's (2008) argument that children will transition from YLL to older language learner at some point during the primary phase of education (see Chapter 2, p. 41) this data may be influenced by older language learner tendencies rather than those of the YLL. As such, if repeating such activities within ethnographically inspired research, I would seek to complete the same focus group activities at the end of my time with children in Year 3, as well as at the very end of data collection with them at the end of Year 5. This would supplement the rich data collected in the field with children at the time in both year groups.

No child participating in this study chose to use emojis relating to feeling hurt, angry, or shy for any of their curricula experiences in school. This led me to review my own personal reasoning developed in the initial stages of my field research from my observations and experiences as a researcher with some children who I had initially interpreted to be perhaps shy in their engagement with FLL; they were perhaps in comparison feeling more embarrassed, tired, frustrated, scared/worried or any combination of those instead – not shy. For a child experiencing FLL in school it led me to consider again the impact of the wider logistics of their learning and not just concerning the lessons themselves; going in and out of class, catching up with lessons missed, other disruptions experienced during any timetabled FLL, children's interface with other routines and rituals and dealing with other children and various adults with their various ways throughout their school day. This was a perspective that led me to appreciating those proffered emoji responses of feeling tired, frustrated, and embarrassed so very much more when combined with the depth and detail offered by the layered and multifaceted contextual data afforded by my research.

In contrast to the claims emerging from literature that children find FLL fun (e.g., Kirsch, 2008; Maynard, 2011 and Cable et al, 2010; Martin, 2012) findings from my research instead indicate that children's responses were more cautionary and less exuberant. No child chose or asked for the 'fun' emoji to be added to research activity 1 to help describe their FLL experiences in school. This was a word observed or heard only being uttered twice in relation to FLL by one (the same) child during the entire period of my time in the field. This happened firstly in relation to a lesson where children watched a video clip during a Year 3 French language lesson, and then within a focus group interview at the end of Year 5, as illuminated by the following:

- *Ps: we also watched a video though. Like…um…where people were asking other people where this is and where that is ….*
- *Ps: well, I think it's quite fun watching the video but then it was quite fun like learning to write the words.*
- *Ps: it's …well…ok… when it's a bit challenging. It's more challenging than fun.*
- ***Ps: [unanimous] Yes!***
- *P(g): I think it's challenging because lots of people like…. because some … most of the words…they…we learn … we've never really had before.*

My findings indicated that 'fun' may a word attributed to children's purported FLL experiences by adults more than by children themselves, or perhaps may now simply be an outdated expression arising from older studies leading up to the capacity building phase for languages (e.g. Dȍrnyei, 1994; Blondin, et al, 1998; Donato et al, 2000; Hasselgreen, 2000; Tierney & Gallastegi, 2005) that no longer applies in such an overarching manner in relation to the kinds of learning experiences children were instead found to be presented with in my study. Findings from my previous MA study (Schulze, 2010) and from some other more recent literature (e.g., Djigunović, 2012; Martin, 2012; Murphy, 2014) would therefore seem to be further supported and enhanced by this research, indicating after all perhaps a dynamic change in how FLL has been implemented and experienced by children in primary school since the capacity building phase. This data interestingly also resonates with findings from the study by Costley et al (2018) concerning monolingual and bilingual children. Children in their study also commented about 'words and difficulties or challenges with spelling, writing and pronunciation. The notion of 'all children finding FLL fun' is therefore perhaps now better understood as a folklore belief within FLL discourse.

Instead, as has been discussed throughout my findings, in the absence of finding FLL 'fun' in the way it is taught and presented to children in class, it was the children who themselves took agency and found ways to inject some more enjoyment and energy into their FLL through seeking to make sense of the unfamiliar vocabulary to which they were introduced.

6.8 Summary

Findings shared in this chapter revealed how children took opportunity to optimise their FLL by liaising with eachother both overtly and in increasingly clandestine ways to make sense of the FL by sharing connections and links they made with FL (French), seeking clarification and reassurance with eachother. Findings have also revealed how children sought to maximise the opportunities they did have with FLL in collaboration with eachother, such as through extending chinks in lessons to talk about and experiment with the FL. The importance of such collaboration and role of engaging children explicitly with language learning strategies and knowledge about, and of, other languages is indicated. Findings suggest these are undervalued aspects of children's instructed FLL experiences as they often appeared neither recognised nor facilitated. This indicates a potential mismatch between how children sought to engage with FLL and how FLL was managed, with potential implication for achieving overall aims stated for children's FLL in KS2 (DfE, 2013). In the absence of such opportunities, children were however revealed as agents of both their own and others' learning, navigated through the social norms and expectations of the classroom.

Children took agency in making and sharing their own independently made links with words and sounds that were familiar with their mother tongue, English. Such connections appeared to be triggered either through the sound or phonology of the word, eg the '*ly*' of 'comfortably' triggering a connection with the sound of *'lee!'*, associated (even if phonetically incorrect) with 'le or 'les' from a previous experience with learning French, and/or through the look of the word in its written form, for example *'mars'*, or '*droit*'. Children were also observed to recognise and articulate patterns within FL phrases, such as with '*it all starts with touchez…?*' or through prosodic rhyming connections such as with *'ou est le bébé?*' or finding enjoyment with the word '*jupe*'. This was observed to occur despite limited recognition and encouragement to do so by teachers. There was an apparent mismatch between how children engaged with the learning of a FL and the way in which it was otherwise delivered. Considering ways to engage children with the FL both as a 'subject' to be studied and as a 'tool' through which to learn in the curriculum is a suggested way forward in enhancing children's FLL experiences.

Findings have also been presented regarding the almost clandestine way children continued to find ways to collaborate with eachother to help 'make the strange FL familiar' through their own social communities in class rather than with their teachers. Children were found to develop skill at finding 'chinks' in lessons and through the school day to do so, actively avoiding the attention of teachers. In much the same way as Kirsch (2012) had reported (see Chapter 2, p.66), in the absence of explicit instruction or, as in my study, even encouragement to make and/or realise connections, children were nonetheless revealed as heroes of their FLL, making connections and injecting some enjoyment where they could in support of their, and others' learning.

Such findings have resonance with Wray's (2008) assertion that younger children tend to 'just get on with it' – in as much as children 'just got on with' making and sharing their conceptual connections they made, processing and 'making sense' of the words and phrases they were introduced to. In contrast, when children in my study were older, and those children more quickly attuned to complying with classroom expectations and norms may well still be making those connections but may not share them in such an overt manner as to be observable.

The value of helping children make links and connections with other languages and making use of their knowledge about languages to support their FLL has previously recognised in guidance materials. For example, language learning strategies (LLS) knowledge about languages (KAL) were recognised as valuable cross-cutting strands in the KS2 Framework for Languages (DfES, 2005). These are not however explicit in the current iteration of the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) and the commercial schemes observed in operation were also focussed on the specified TL itself. Whilst I was keenly attuned to this given my professional background and experience, these broader aspects supporting children's FLL appeared lost amidst the classes I spent time in the field with, including with language 'specialist' teachers. Younger children within my study expressed their recognition and ability to make and notice such links and connections, even if these were not actively sought neither encouraged nor seemingly valued. Older children within my study in contrast demonstrated their recognition that there was more to FLL than relying on cognates to help, and where there are none, or none that can be recognised, FLL was perceived as becoming a struggle to understand and successfully engage with:

> *'With a word you don't know…. like school…* (l 'école*) and you can't pronounce it…then you're going to be really struggling'.*
>
> *'It's like working with pieces of a jigsaw puzzle….and no picture.'*

Such findings may shed further light on possible reasons for the reported dwindling of children's apparent enthusiasm for FLL after a few years. Whilst this has been a recognised phenomenon in the Secondary phase of education for many years (e.g., Forder, 2015) findings from my study support an understanding that such phenomena are also possible and already present within the Primary phase of education too. Data from the older classes involved in this study indicate ways in which children had become more 'socialised' into the accepted norms of classroom behaviours that were expected, anticipated, and rewarded by their teachers. This did not seem to prevent children making further connections, but both whether, and the ways in which children chose to share those appeared to change during their time in school. There were less overt 'outbursts', having seemingly been 'trained out'.

Such a change could also be attributed to children maturing through their time at primary school, moving from 'young language learner' to 'older language learner' (Wray, 2008). More occasions such as that witnessed in the Year 3 class in School 3 involving a surreptitious, whispered conversation between the two girls, checking out and confirming the use of '*touchez*' with eachother, under the teacher's radar, were observed and noted with older children (Year 5) e.g., the *'ou est le bébé'* vignette, and in the younger classes, with those sat at the higher ability tables towards the rear of the classroom. I suggest that the ethnographic approach taken to my data collection provided for a layered and more nuanced understanding of children's FLL experiences that involved learning to manage a need to make and share connections and cognitive links in such a way as to also conform with classroom expectations and help keep themselves, and eachother, out of trouble (e.g.

child rescuing other child and teacher from the 'comfortably' situation, see Vignette 4, p.211-12).

In contrast, analysis indicated many other occasions in other subjects where children were actively supported and encouraged by their teachers in making connections with and between other curriculum areas and experiences. As revealed by my data, such practices did not appear to have been applied to the teaching and learning of French. In the absence of explicitly taught or encouraged connections with other aspects of their learning, children still made their own connections. Findings suggest because such connections did not always 'fit' nicely into the school day/week, these were not always recognised by busy teachers.

Findings from this study indicate that nurturing, scaffolding, and developing children's thinking skills such as through actively recognising, encouraging, and giving recognition to children's cognitive links with other languages/awareness and children's experiences within FLL remains an area with future potential and promise if the promotion of children's FLL is to be fully realised in practice and outcome. In contrast to what Wardle (2021) reported about limited reading and writing in foreign language lessons and the purported need to focus upon the three 'pillars of language learning': phonics, grammar and vocabulary, data from this study indicates a refocus instead on the value and use of talk within FLL in primary schools would be valuable; both about the FL and with the FL. This finding also chimes with the argument put forward by Phillips (2017) challenging the pedagogical approach put forward in policy and guidance documents where all four language skills are combined. It also indicates that making connections with other languages and cultures through the FL would also enhance what children experienced, strengthening arguments put forward by example by Corsaro 2003, 2005; Ellis, 1997; Ibrahim; 2020; Martin, 2012; Murphy, 2014; Parrish, 2020; Pillar, 2015.

Juxtaposed with data which revealed children's expressed perceptions of the FL as being something of a barrier associated with challenging connotations, other data revealed the phonology of the FL itself could enrich children's FLL experiences, especially when enabled to experiment, try the language out with eachother, being active and creative in the process. On the few occasions where lessons were observed to be less tightly managed and controlled for children, data indicates children's engagement increased. The paradox appears to be that teachers need to be able to 'let go' or alter the way in which children's learning is managed, constructed, and controlled, to afford children time to ‘own’ and experiment with the language to optimise children’s FLL experiences. Data arising from the field indicates that in contexts where teacher performativity and ‘evidence’ of learning (or teaching) are spotlit, children’s learning experiences can become ring-fenced and subdued. Where teachers may feel less confident with their subject knowledge and/or feel other pressures, required to meet other expectations (presented and discussed in Chapter 5), data indicates that what children experienced with FLL could be more tightly controlled and less creative. In turn this appeared to dampen, rather than enthuse children’s learning.

Whilst I did not set out to reveal differences between older and younger language learner, in further support of Wray (2008), my data revealed more instances where older children participating in my research reported the issues of pronouncing the FL (French) harder and more challenging than younger children. This is despite me spending a shorter overall amount of time with the class in Year 5, than when they were in Year 3. This in turn may indicate a further difference between ‘younger’ and ‘older’ language learner, adding to those proposed by Hasselgreen (2000). Of note, is that Hasselgreen’s definition made no consideration of children’s playful engagement with the sound or prosody of the (new) language. My data suggests this could be considered as a further attribute of a ‘young language learner’, perhaps more apparent in the early stages of the primary phase of education (e.g., Years 3-4) than towards their end (Years 5-6).

Findings presented and discussed in my study contribute towards developing a new, nuanced, deeper knowledge and understanding of children’s FLL experiences, addressing a recognised gap in current research literature for FLL particularly with young children in an English state school setting.

The next and final chapter, concluding this study, reviews the extent to which key research questions were addressed and provides a resume of the new knowledge and understanding offered by this study.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a summary of key findings presented and discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. It revisits the gaps in the field of FLL identified by my review (Chapters 2&3) and outlines the contribution this thesis makes. The subsequent section reviews the merits of the theoretical and conceptual frames underpinning this study and its methodological approach. Implications for practice, policy and further research are proposed, considering practical applications for teachers, trainers, parents/carers, and publishers. Inherent limitations of this study are acknowledged, before a final, personal reflection about the impact of completing this study on my own learning and development, both completes the chapter and concludes this thesis.

7.2 Key Findings

This study reveals children's experiences of FLL between 2014-2018, across three schools in SE England. Two overarching questions framed this study: 'What do children experience with FLL' and 'How do children respond to FLL in primary school?' As an inductive study however, other lines of enquiry were also pursued further to the progressive focussing into children's FLL experiences, detailed in Chapter 4. Key findings were subsequently framed by two overarching themes emerging from analysis: children's FLL agency within a disjointed FLL experience.

This thesis reveals children as heroes both of their own FLL, and those of others in class. Despite challenges and barriers experienced with FLL in school, children were found to care about it, take it seriously and find ways through which to optimise their learning by making sense of the language and making the best of the opportunities they had. In learning to navigate what was acceptable to their teachers in class, children tended to operate an increasingly sophisticated subculture of FLL between themselves, under the teacher's radar. Children from the 'top tables' were keen to support their peers. Examples of how children from 'lower ability tables' appeared to operate agency in more individualised ways have also been shared, for example in managing encountered disruptions in '*getting their writing done'*. Viewed through the lens of FLL, rather than the 'fear' that Holt, back in 1964, reported children experiencing, or the 'ways in which the common classroom created impotent individuals who disassociated themselves from others' (Margonis, 2011, p.5), my thesis provides evidence of the opposite.

In the absence of opportunities or recognition within lessons, my thesis has evidenced how children took initiative both individually and collectively in seeking to understand encountered FL vocabulary. They proactively drew on their mother tongue, their own and other children's knowledge through which to make comparisons and try to understand '*all the words*'. This thesis has demonstrated the value children placed on knowledge about other languages, their need to share their thinking and reasoning about what they were learning and determination in finding a way to help meet those needs. My findings chime with those reported by Kirsch (2012, p.26), where she found some children developing language learning strategies in the absence of explicit instruction. Whilst she reasoned that the 'strategic' primary classroom appeared to have played a greater role than FL instruction itself, my thesis indicates that the agency sought by children, and realised amongst children, is also important.

A related, secondary finding presented by this thesis concerns the barriers to FLL otherwise encountered and experienced by children. Children's FLL experience was infused by fragmentation, with disjointed, disconnected encounters serving to dislocate FLL from other aspects of their primary school experiences. In documenting and demonstrating how children were found to be exercising agency in making sense and making the best of their FLL experiences, my thesis makes a unique contribution to the field.

Not only did children show awareness of disparities and challenges experienced by some more than others in class, but findings also revealed how this mattered to 'top table' children, affecting the nature of their FLL experiences. This thesis has demonstrated how the agency children sought in optimising the opportunities they had with FLL was facilitated through the mutual relationships and rapport established by children as a close, class community developed through their time at primary school together.

My thesis has identified six overarching variables affecting different children's experiences with FLL: socio-economic backgrounds; academic ability (in terms of reading and writing in the mother-tongue- English); classroom environments and verbal discourses; lesson and classroom time; the nature of FLL activities. The first of these concurs with recent reports e.g., by Collen (2020) and Wardle (2021): what children experienced differed depending upon the socio-economic context of the school they attended, where those attending the most socio-economically privileged settings ostensibly experienced the most cohesive curriculum experience with FLL in terms of it being *'just the done thing*'. My thesis has however, additionally revealed how children's experiences were further fragmented within the same class, between children of designated higher and lower ability, where children seated at 'higher ability tables' were often reported by teachers to be those from more socially and economically advantaged backgrounds.

My thesis indicates that some elite baggage haunts children's FLL experiences specifically related to how FLL is currently construed for 'the few' with 'trickle down' to others. Far from 'liberating children from insularity' (DfE, 2013), children with greater cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1990) and academic ability were instead conferred greater advantage. These 'higher ability' children had more time and opportunity to engage with the FLL than others, including participation in extra-curricular language clubs. The act of learning a language, together with the FL selected by all participating settings (French) was found to fit more neatly into their wider cultural repertoire and familial norms (holidays in France, preparing for an anticipated grammar-school education for example) than it did for other children for whom FLL otherwise appeared a desirable 'extra', but otherwise not really required. Children sat at 'lower ability tables' not only had less time to engage with FLL, for example by being removed for additional support during any timetabled lessons, but also greater challenge in engaging with the opportunities they did have, with what was found to be a surprising emphasis on writing and working independently.

My thesis has demonstrated how FLL was largely dislocated from children's wider curriculum experiences, where it was positioned on the periphery of *'main work'*, both in the physical classroom environment and through verbal discourse. Lessons, whilst timetabled, did not always take place, or occurred at odd times, when opportune time either presented itself, or was carved out of the day. Children encountered often isolated, interspersed bubbles of FL vocabulary prescribed by commercial schemes, regardless of whether the teacher was 'generalist' or 'specialist'. Vocabulary to which children were introduced pursued the scheme's own agenda, with little bearing on the rest of the curriculum or relevance to the children in class. Counter to the proposition previously made in the KS2 Framework for Languages (DfES, 2005) about FLL not being a 'bolt on extra', this thesis has revealed this to be precisely the way in which many children in my study encountered it, with limited, if any, connections to other subjects, skills, interests, or links with other FLs. Children were instead found to recognise FLL as something '*separate*' to be fitted in and *'done.'*

This thesis has demonstrated that children had little opportunity for collaborative or creative learning with others. Learning tended to be teacher directed with children completing tasks in their books on their own. This is counter to what had been reported by other literature and children's preferences for practical, hands-on FLL activity and collaboration (see Chapter 2 pp. 64-5). Within tightly framed FL lessons supporting the resumption of *'main work'*, there was little room for deviation, extension, or experimentation. On occasions where such opportunity did arise, these appeared noteworthy for children (for example, the shared 'jupe' experience in Year 3, remembered by the same children at the end of Year 5 (see Chapter 6, pp. 220-222). Whilst children's interactions with their teachers were often found to focus on the FL itself, teacher responses conversely largely focussed on 'schooling' children into behaving and responding in the 'approved way', as has been highlighted by Biesta (2006), Margonis (2011), Pollard & James (2008).

This thesis has furthermore revealed a strong emphasis on FL literacy skills, especially copy-writing, which I personally found surprising. Whilst commensurate with policy documentation (e.g., DfES, 2005; DfE, 2013) such emphasis is at odds with other literature (e.g., Collen, 2020, 2021; Mitchell & Myles, 2019; Tinsley, 2017; Wardle, 2021). Comments by a range of participating children revealed feelings encompassing challenge, pressure and tediousness suggesting this is experienced by children, including those of designated 'high ability,' with some negativity, e.g. *'I've just written prenez blah blah…but I don't know what it means'*. Whilst performative measures were complied with, these ironically appeared to be at the expense of learning, reminiscent of Biesta's (2016) musings about endless streams of worksheets and individual tasks that have invaded and 'trivialised education' in the contemporary classroom, depicted by 'busy work'.

My thesis demonstrates a dichotomy whereby FLL was constructed by adults in a way that sought to ensure and assure compliance with school-led and Government expectations (evidenced by the 'outstanding' and 'excellent' national inspection outcomes conferred on participating settings), but where an essential way in which children's FLL could be supported and enhanced was at best missed; at worst, ignored. Children, however, were instrumental in seeking ways to navigate the barriers they experienced or found others to be experiencing. By the end of Year 5, children were recognising some limitations for example, in applying such cognitive links, where these were increasingly found to be ineffectual (e.g., *'with a word like 'l'école', then you're really stuck'*). With some frustrations expressed about *'learning pieces by pieces by pieces'* and missing *'the picture of the jigsaw puzzle',* children had ideas and interests to share about FLL. Teachers however, appeared more contained and constrained by the performative framework within which they operated, where FL remained a low priority subject.

This thesis ultimately suggests that the current ‘map’ for FLL in primary school (policy, curriculum expectations and tasks) tended to be dislocated from the ‘terrain’ of children’s FLL. This is resonant of a broader tension identified by Kohonen (2006, p.16) who advocated the need for ‘language students to see the big picture…of their learning tasks to guide the work of putting together the pieces in the different disciplines and across the curriculum’. My thesis has demonstrated the need, ability, and potential of children to be able to do just this with FLL: the challenge instead appears to be in establishing a curriculum offer and learning culture, that both recognises and facilitates this.

7.3 This study’s contribution

My study makes a major contribution to the field by providing unique insight into children’s FLL experiences, as detailed in section 7.2. It also makes a substantial contribution by adding to the limited body of knowledge of children’s FLL that exists, but otherwise does not cover the same period (2014-2018) or context. Whilst a substantial body of research exists that examines aspects of foreign language teaching and learning in different countries (e.g. Alanen, 2003; Beacco & Byram, 2007; Bland, 2019; Blondin et al, 1998; Djigunović, 2009, 2012, 2020; Enever, 2012; Garton et al, 2011; Gaynor, 2018; Ibrahim, 2020; Kalaja & Barcelos, 2003; Kirsch, 2008, 2012; 2020; Lyons, 1996; Mehisto et al, 2008; Nikolov, 2007; Pinter, 2011; Rixon, 2013), most of these studies have either concerned the learning and teaching of EFL to young learners, or the logistics of policy implementation. Previous studies arising from an English context have furthermore largely involved the Secondary rather than Primary phase of statutory education. Of those national and international studies which did involve younger children, the majority were additionally found to have used normative research approaches that amplified the experiences and voices of the teachers rather than those of the children. Further issues with the actual ages of ‘young language learners’ as included and defined in such research (5-12/13 years) were also found to be problematic where such studies could include much older children, such as those included by Hasselgreen (2000) and Woll & Wei (2019).

In England, not only has there been a particular lack of understanding about young children’s daily experience of learning in the primary classroom (Robinson, 2014; Kirby, 2018) but their experiences of FLL in school has been a further neglected area of research, where, despite its statutory introduction in September 2014, and the British Academy's (2019) assertion that LL (MFL/FLL) is a vital part of school curricula, FLL remains a low priority area of the curriculum (Murphy, 2014; Phillips, 2017; Costley et al, 2018; Holmes & Myles, 2019). Many studies originating in England that arguably continue to inform the field were completed during the capacity building phase for primary MFL during 2002-2011, supported by an underlying keen, rather than critical interest in promoting MFL. These indicated children's enthusiasm and 'general positivity'. Recognised by Mitchell & Myles, (2019, p. 73) this continues to be reported in more recent research. More recent studies found to be informing current policy initiatives (e.g., Ofsted's Languages Research Review, 2021) were conversely found to rely upon knowledge and understanding predominantly drawn from studies focussing on Secondary MFL. I have argued in this thesis, that such application is contentious, requiring more research, thereby knowledge and understanding drawn both from, and for, FLL in the primary phase.

The eventual statutory implementation of FLL in KS2 (DfE, 2013) afforded opportunity for new research to help inform a fresh take on the teaching and learning of a foreign language in primary school. Whilst moves in this direction are apparent (Costley et al, 2018; Holmes & Myles, 2019; Phillips, 2017; Porter, 2020), research that focusses upon children's experiences of FLL however, remains scarce. As evidenced by the call in Holmes et al's (2019) White Paper, with continued challenges regarding the implementation of FLL in the English primary school, the focus otherwise continues as it did during the capacity building phase, on the broader logistics of implementation, rather than what instead may be learned and contributed by engaging with children's experiences of FLL. To date, research engaging with children's experiences and perspectives arguably remains undervalued, largely missing from current FLL discourse and therefore unable to help inform it.

This study has sought to address these identified gaps by engaging in detail with children's FLL experiences in primary school via a longitudinal, ethnographically inspired study. This is itself innovative in the field. It makes a substantial contribution by providing 'rich description' not only of how state educational policy for primary FLL is enacted in state schools, as called for by Enever (2016), but also a more detailed, nuanced understanding of how children themselves appear to experience and respond to FLL in primary school. By foregrounding children's FLL experiences, this study gives 'voice' to an under-researched phenomena and provides new insights into FLL in the primary phase, where children were revealed as active agents of their own and others' FLL, with much potential to yet tap into. My study adds different hues, tones, and splashes of colour to the broad canvas of what is currently known and understood about children's FLL, especially within an English /anglophone context.

The 'substantial progress in one language' that children are expected to achieve by the end of KS2 (DfE, 2013, p.2) is already recognised as problematic, remaining undefined and unsubstantiated (e.g., Murphy 2014; Robinson, 2014). The clear concern is that even before FLL in the KS2 curriculum has been able to become fully and securely established with a clear purpose and pedagogy, it is already being set up by such open-ended curriculum requirements and limited understanding of children's experiences for potential failure as a poorly understood curriculum goal. Research has instead indicated it to be a near impossible task given the current, and ongoing curricular constraints and limited research-informed understanding of children's FLL in primary school (Murphy, 2014; Phillips, 2017). Mitchell & Myles (2019) argue that only slow progress overall is possible, 'even when instruction is consistent and of good professional quality' (Mitchell & Myles, 2019, p.89). My findings trouble notions of 'good professional quality' as adult-centric, itself subject to interpretation, but hitherto uninformed by what is known and understood about what children themselves experience and the perspectives they have to offer. My study adds to this field, indicating with more time devoted to children's cognitive engagement and reflections about both the FLs and FLL, more may yet be achieved. To echo Biesta (2010), it will likely depend on what comes to be valued.

My thesis adds bespoke nuance to Wray's (2008) argument, that children simply get on with FLL without much care whether anything goes wrong. It also adds to what has otherwise been repetitively reported in much literature concerning the 'fun' and 'enthusiasm' with which children apparently receive FLL in primary school (e.g., Cable et al, 2010; Hunt et al, 2005; Kirsch, 2008; Martin, 2012; Maynard,2011; Tinsley & Board, 2016). It also provides further evidence of the influence of peer culture on children's learning experiences (e.g., Corsaro, 2003, 2005; Ferreira et al, 2018; Nsamenang, 2005).

My research makes several methodological contributions to the literature. It endorses the importance of the knowledge and experience brought by the researcher to the ethnography. Undertaking this research was undoubtedly challenging, but if research concerning children's FLL persists in pursuing normative and more methodologically 'easy' approaches, in line with Gaynor (2018, p.212), research outcomes will continue 'to arrive at apolitical 'easy' answers while leaving larger themes of educational fairness and social inequality' underexplored. It also leaves the more intricate themes of children's individuality underexplored within the school and classroom setting.

In exploring how FLL was added as a new, statutory subject to the KS2 curriculum in England, my study makes a further contribution to the field. None of the theoretical models considered in my study concerning the addition of new subjects to established curricula appeared to fit in their entirety and were instead upended (see Chapter 3). FLL was found to have followed a hitherto unique pathway into the statutory curriculum where direct political influence was found to be influential, otherwise missing from the models considered.

7.4 Theoretical and conceptual reflections

The elicited themes (both major and minor) emerged from a process of inductive data analysis combined with the application of both explicit and tacit knowledge assimilated in the field. They are therefore more descriptive rather than prescriptive, used to illuminate the findings that emerged from analysis, rather than to stipulate how the data fits a particular theoretical position (Holliday, 2007). Findings do, however, resonate perhaps unsurprisingly with the overarching social constructivist paradigm within which this study was itself constructed. Symbolic interactionist theory informed my understanding of children's FLL experiences as reported in this study, where people – (including children) – are theorised to interact together based on meanings generated through shared experiences, negotiation and which become socially patterned and sustained through cultures (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934, p.6). Further concepts were drawn upon, framed within the same theoretical paradigm, to help illuminate how children's FLL experiences were found to manifest: Biesta's (2010) functions of education with his concept of 'grown-up-ness' (Biesta, 2019); Hargreaves' (1994) concept of experiential coherence, and Emirbayer & Mische's (1996) definition of agency.

A reflection of the three functions of education suggested by Biesta (2010) interestingly suggests that children's FLL experiences had least resonance with 'qualification', and most with 'socialisation' and 'subjectification'. Whilst children's FLL diet was arguably both limited and limiting, children's FLL encounters socialised them into 'existing ways of doing and being'. With children's FLL experiences often found to be fragmented and 'othered', this however, ultimately appears to have been operating in a way that served to counter the realisation of nationally expressed purposes and aims for FLL. Arendt's (1958/1998) and Biesta's (2019) respective conceptions of 'subject-ness' and 'grown-up-ness' are particularly illuminated by my findings, where 'to exist in and with the world…always raises the question of the relationship between (individual/group) existence and the existence of the world' (Biesta, 2019, p.53).

Findings from my study reside in the 'messy space' (see Chapter 1, Fig. 1), understood as both emerging from and aligning with Biesta's theorised 'middle ground': 'a place where self-expression encounters limits, interruptions, responses – all of which possess the quality of frustration (Arendt, 1958) and the fracturing of immanence (Levinas, 1989)'. Children's initiatives with their FLL encountered limits, interruptions and varied responses from others, where children's 'subject-ness' emanated in their responses to such limits, interruptions and varied responses by others. In considering the three options presented by Biesta (2019) through which children may have been anticipated to respond when their initiatives (actions) encountered resistance (and thereby realise their agency), namely: 'world destruction' – irritation, frustration, enforcing intentions on others; 'self-destruction' -frustration – withdrawal; and 'grown-up-ness', findings from this study revealed evidence of the latter. Responses by some children initially indicated tendencies towards withdrawal from FLL ('self-destruction')– a state which Biesta asserts ultimately leads to 'non-existence', itself resonant of Margonis' (2011) argument about classrooms creating 'impotent individuals'. However, further time in the field provided for a more nuanced understanding where children who ostensibly looked to have 'withdrawn', such as those removed for additional support during FL lessons, were instead found to operate more individually, but with no less initiative or empathy. Data otherwise revealed many children in my study to have been responding with 'grown-up-ness'; aware of, empathetic towards and taking initiative to support both their own, and other's FLL, (see Chapter 6, p.209).

In line with Arendt's (1958) concept of subject-ness, children's FLL experiences, as found by this study, can broadly be conceptualised within all three forms of active life: labour, work, and vita active (taking initiative). Findings presented in Chapter 5 largely framed children's experiences of FLL as 'labour' whereas findings presented in Chapter 6 largely concerned children's experiences of FLL as moving between the forms of 'work' and 'vita active'. In so doing, the lines between each form of active life were, however, found to be blurred, rather than clearly delineated.

Reflecting upon findings concerning children's agency, all three elements proposed by Emirbayer & Mische (1998, pp.970-921) are resonant (see Table 15). It was however the final element, looking at the capacity of children to make 'practical and normative judgements amongst the possible trajectories of action, in response to the demands, dilemmas and ambiguities that emerged in the evolving context and situations' of the classroom, that appear most apparent. Whilst children ostensibly had limited control within the FL lesson, much more was found to be happening 'under the surface', arguably only revealed through the contextual research approach pursued. My findings also suggest that the iterational and practical-evaluative elements proposed by Emirbayer & Mische (1998) are linked:

Table 15: Considered elements and aspects of children's agency with FLL as informed by Emirbayer & Mische's (1998) definition.

Identified element of agency: (Emirbayer&Mische, 1998)	*Examples of children's FLL agency drawn from my study:*
Iterational	Children's responses, behaviours and actions in FL lessons were informed by what they learned from the social learning environment and established structures in the school day. Children learned to be wary of causing upset in class but found ways to navigate this within their own established, social networks in class. (Linked to the practical-evaluative element). This enabled the 'stability' of the established 'social order' in class and school institution to be sustained, and I suggest maintained (thereby contributing to the maintenance of the FLL 'status quo').
Projective	Children sought ways and expressed desires to talk about, think about and make connections with the FL; they expressed hopes and desires to explore more languages than just the one on offer through which to help understand and 'locate' the language and their learning; children's talk included aspects of whether they believed they would need the FL for their futures eg for secondary school; for their next family holiday.
Practical-evaluative	Children (from 'top', 'middle' and 'bottom' tables) were found to become increasingly skilled in this element, where data revealed their ability to make practical and normative judgements in response to the emerging demands, dilemmas and ambiguities of the evolving situations in the FLL lesson.

Children's responses and agency with FLL reported in my study 'begin something' (Biesta, 2019, p.55): 'Through our words and deeds we continuously bring new beginnings into the world' (Arendt, 1958, p.178). Biesta (2019, p.55) warns however that whether such beginnings will have any consequence depends entirely on whether and how others will take up our beginnings, as children's 'capacity for action is not a capacity (they) have or possess but crucially depends on the ways in which others take up (their) beginnings' (Arendt, 1958, p.184). This is ultimately the challenge posed by my research for researchers, for teachers, for children, parents/carers, teacher-educators, publishers, policymakers and for the reader: whether and how will children's 'beginnings', as shared by the 'beginnings' equally offered by this study, be taken up? The salient warning by Bourdieu (2003, p.72) is otherwise that the weight of structural constraints and practices produced by 'habitus 'always tend to 'reproduce the objective structures of which they are a product; they are determined by past conditions'. With FLL emanating from an elite past and for this to have been found to still echo within children's FLL experiences, this arguably poses a particular challenge in establishing FLL for *all* children in KS2 in our national context. Drawing on Nisbet (1972), it is possible to conceive that the change the addition of FLL in the statutory curriculum poses may yet otherwise simply be 'weathered as a crisis, before regression to the familiar and traditional'.

7.5 Implications of the research

Findings presented and discussed in this thesis indicate a timely need to refocus on the learner (child) and children as a community of learners in class, rather than upon teachers and their performativity. Findings also indicate that there is potential, if children's FLL experiences are valued, understood, and acted upon, for all children's FLL to yet be able to thrive in the primary school – and then beyond.

If the high, national expectations placed upon FLL for all children in KS2 to achieve whatever has yet to be defined and understood as 'substantial progress' and for children to be more truly 'liberated from insularity' (DfE, 2013), this research, by exploring children's FLL experiences through an ethnographic, contextual approach, yields a number of timely implications for a range of stakeholders involved in primary education: teachers, teacher educators, policy-makers, parents, researchers and publishers. Overall, it calls for a re-set of, and for, instructed FLL in England, mindful of a purpose and pedagogy that aligns with the distinctive attributes presented by YLLs and the primary phase. It also calls for further such contextualised research, to address the swathe of normative studies that have otherwise been found to marginalise children's experiences. Within a market economy, it is surprising that these essential stakeholders and 'consumers' have otherwise hitherto been neglected.

Implications concern teacher knowledge and understanding of children's FLL and how this may be different to how they themselves may approach it as an 'older' or 'novel' language learner themselves. The 'map' of children's FLL, with learning activities, use of lesson time and formative assessments of children's FLL may otherwise remain mismatched with the 'terrain' of what children have to offer with FLL. If Biesta's (2010) assertion that 'we value what we can measure, not measure what we should value' rings true, there is need for a review of what is currently being measured with children's FLL and why, together with careful consideration of its ultimate purpose if the time and energy spent on these endeavours – such as with copywriting- is to be worthwhile.

There are implications for teachers and teacher educators regarding how the FLL and children's learning more generally is presented and shared with them. My findings support Illeris' (2014) suggestion that the onus should be on *finding* children's motivation, rather than trying to find ways to *create* it. Findings suggest more time would be valuably spent within FL lessons on supporting children's metacognition and thinking skills, as otherwise advocated by arguments concerning the very inclusion of FLL in the statutory curriculum but not otherwise overtly specified within the objectives for FLL in the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013). The 'three pillars of progression': vocabulary, phonics, and grammar, as advocated by Ofsted via Wardle (2021) appear by themselves to be insufficient in supporting children's sustained progression, failing to recognise the importance of explicitly raising children's awareness and use of language learning strategies and drawing on knowledge about (and of) other languages. Whilst a focus on language learning strategies and language awareness were outside this study's focus, it is a recommended area of further study. My findings suggest these are influential aspects through which to engage children in 'early language learning' if their learning is to be founded upon secure foundations, and for it to be sustained. Whilst these areas were previously recognised in the Key Stage Two Framework for Languages (DfES, 2005) my findings indicate the potential merits for children's FLL experiences via their revival together with the additional inclusion of knowledge *of* other language*s*. My findings suggest these would support children's awareness of how learning one foreign language opens doors to the learning of other languages too, more truly helping to 'liberate' them from any 'insularity' (DfE, 2013) and supporting children's 'agency in being able to claim a multilingual identity' (Forbes, et al, 2021, no page) through which greater autonomy may be realised.

Children were revealed to be trying to 'join the dots' and learn in a more holistic way than their FLL was found to be presented; largely as a separate subject area in line with the NC (DfE, 2013), with children left to try and make the connections between the various aspects of their learning themselves. This is resonant of Hargreaves' (1994) argument for experiential coherence, and Holt's (1994) argument about children instead being left to pick up the bricks and assemble the edifice of the curriculum themselves. There is an apparent need for more teachers to be able to recognise and value the importance of such links and to be able to help children make such links, thereby supporting children's cognitive engagement. It also shines a light on the challenges of defining FLL as a separate 'subject' entity, discussed in Chapter 3. Developing and refreshing teacher awareness and use of LLS, KAL and knowledge *of* other languages would be a valuable start in addressing ways of *finding* rather than creating and sustaining children's motivation for FLL, drawing on children's interests in exploring and relating to a wider range of languages. Greater and more explicit recognition of FLL's trio- role as a tool, subject and culture might also provide a salient way to enhance the strategic and effective use of the currently limited time that is made available for all children's FLL in the state primary school, resonating with children beyond those for whom learning a FL 'fits' more readily within their wider cultural sphere. Resonant of Nsamenang's argument (2005, p.4), that children learn from curricula that are 'not compartmentalised into this or that activity, knowledge or skill domain, but are massed together as integral to social interaction, cultural life …and daily routines', the onus in understanding the social cognition and intelligent behaviour of children and their FLL lies in capturing shared routines and participatory, cognitive learning engagement, rather than on their completion of school-based instruments/tasks. This suggests engaging children with greater use of FLL as a 'tool' rather than separate (and unrelated) subject, endorsing Mehisto et al's (2008) argument. My study also endorses Kohonen's (2006, p.17) call for FLL to be aimed at greater student autonomy through 'pedagogically wise ways':

> As language teachers we have an important role in what kind of a journey our students have in their language learning efforts, how they experience their foreign language learning in our classes. Their experiences, in turn, shape their views of their roles in the language teaching–learning process. The ways in which we organize classroom learning, in turn, are likely to impinge on the outcomes of language learning, in a wide sense of the notion. Students are a

> significant resource, a prerequisite, for self-directed, responsible learning aimed at student autonomy'.

Rich (2014) otherwise warned that merely lowering the age of commencement without appropriate investment in the quality of the teaching can lead to an impoverished classroom experience for students and the development of negative attitudes towards language learning. My study indicates 'appropriate investment' is long-term, sustained investment. It conversely also indicates that a renewed focus on 'quality *learning*' rather than 'quality *teaching*' is necessary, foregrounding children's learning experiences, rather than teacher performativity.

As I initially also found with my research, it is easier to focus on what the teacher is or is not doing in the class. The richer learning and understanding however, was to be found in taking time to engage with children's learning through engaging with the children themselves and seeking to understand their experiences. It is harder, it is messier, and it takes longer – but I believe it to be an essential endeavour. Whilst much can be achieved for example through the political and financial investment conferred on MFL during the 'capacity building phase', much can also be lost if this is not managed in a more sustainable way that goes beyond electoral terms, political whim, and performativity.

My findings suggest there is much still to be learned and gained through teaching and research that engages much more directly with children themselves and their experiences; children have much to teach us if we can allow ourselves to be taught. Whilst 'child-centredness' comes with an historic, politicised sting and rhetoric about progressive, left-wing failed policies and poor learning outcomes, I suggest it timely to focus a refreshed lens upon the child and children, in direct support of realising those much needed, high educational FLL expectations for *all* children. With a continued disinterest in children's FLL investment, findings indicate a continued, if not exacerbated gap in potential learning engagement and outcomes between different socio-economic groups of children, and where nationally espoused aims for improved language learning will still be being made some twenty years hence.

My findings suggest that parents/carers might be better informed about the current realities of FLL in primary school, to help be part of the solution in addressing the need for FLL to be a more broadly universal, valued part of *all* children's primary education if all children in England are to reap the rewards of FLL. My research was notably conducted in settings rated ‘Outstanding’ or ‘Excellent’ by relevant national inspection authorities, yet other than perhaps for a select few, children’s FLL experiences were still found to have much untapped potential. This calls for a reappraisal of the ambition we have for children’s FLL and ways in which these are subsequently ensured and assured nationally, regionally, and locally both across a school and within each classroom.

A reappraisal of inclusive approaches to FLL in the primary phase is needed to challenge and reframe prior and persistent hauntings of ‘FLL for the elite’, enabling all children a full, statutory entitlement to FLL. The current NC calls for FLL in KS2 to set the foundations for MFL learning in KS3 but focuses predominantly on performative skills in a particular language. My research suggests there is need for this to be recalibrated to realise a truer purpose and pedagogy for FLL in the primary phase that embraces a multilingual approach and makes space for children’s cognitive engagement and reflections both about the FLs and about FLL itself. This may more truly support progression into KS3 and children’s MFL, rather than seek to replace what has previously (and arguably unsuccessfully) happened in KS3 within KS2, as if primary children, as a distinctive group of YLLs, learning within the distinctive environment and structures of the primary phase, were the same.

There are further implications for publishers of FLL materials for children and teachers in the primary phase. My research suggests resources should include broader knowledge of other languages and peoples who use and engage with these in support of the teaching of FL, including non-native speakers. Just focussing on ‘French’ in ‘France’ for example, at the expense of highlighting how developing knowledge and skills with French links with developing skill and understanding of Italian, Spanish and Portuguese, or drawing on wider French-speaking cultures in Africa, Central America and beyond serves to limit and isolate, rather than broaden and liberate children’s FLL and progress. More resources in support of raising linguistic awareness and developing language learning strategies in a more overt way could also support teachers, children and parents/carers engage with FLL, facilitating ways to value, talk about, discuss and enrich language learning and the use of languages in its trio capacity as tool, subject and culture, within the taught and ‘hidden’ curricula. Resources illuminating non-native speaker engagement and use of FLs are also suggested, providing models that challenge the ‘othering’ of the FL, its use, and its culture, and that may finally help address the ‘elite baggage’ that arguably still saddles children’s FLL.

7.6 Limitations and methodological reflections

As an adult researcher involved in Initial Teacher (Primary) Education, engaged with exploring children's experiences of FLL, clear limitations have already been recognised. This was a fundamental aspect of my study which required repeated reflection about what I was doing, why, how I was seeking to do so, and how I was writing about these, to try and ensure children's experiences and perspectives were not marginalised in deference to my own and/or other adult-centric views. This study would otherwise be subject to the same criticism recognised within my own review of literature. I recognise this as a distinct challenge for my thesis and one to which I repeatedly necessarily reflexively returned throughout the process of its construction and completion. The reader may also judge the extent to which this was successful.

Findings in my study draw from data from across my time in the field. It therefore remains bound by the settings with which I engaged and the range of children's voices and experiences I was ethically able to engage with. This thesis therefore does not entertain to present 'the' truth, but rather a series of 'non-static truths' such as emerged from this study and my own integral role with it. For example, whilst School 3 granted gate-keeper permission to work with all children, a lack of subsequent ethical permission from as many 'lower ability' children's parents/carers limited my ability to spend as much direct time with them as others. As my interest in the FLL experiences of precisely these children increased during my time in the field, this presented a growing ethical tension, compounded by the realisation that to really understand their experiences, there would be need to 'rob' them of further learning time. My study has, as a result, arguably ultimately given greater voice to the experiences of those children who already had greater 'cultural capital', such as I had sought to try and balance through my research. The ethnographic approach however revealed these children to be aware of the divergent FLL experiences in school and how they acted as advocates for each-other and those who were otherwise not represented for example within the focus group activities. Whilst it remains a regret to have been unable to get as close to the perspectives of children on the 'lower tables' as others, I am satisfied with the ethical boundaries within which I worked, afforded sufficient time, learning anew that much research is bound by the compromises negotiated and necessitated during time in the field. A need to engage more intently with the experiences and voices of children otherwise under-represented in such research however remains. I suggest an ethnographic approach is the most valuable, if also challenging one through which to pursue that. Additional time should be built in through which to engage and keep in contact with children's parents and carers in support of obtaining effective, ethical approval and ongoing ethical trust during data collection.

The amount of time spent in the field was central to the integrity of this study and its reported findings. Time spent acquainting myself with the field in the three different settings was an approach I would repeat. Time in the field was also necessary to test out and be convinced about what I understood to be going on. Had I had such luxury of time and circumstance, I would have pursued an 'ideal' ethnography, spending a protracted amount of time in the field. As a working mother, whilst some compromises were required regarding not being able to go out over sustained periods of time, my study was instead enriched by the overall amount of time and how I spent that time in the field (see Chapter 4). For example, being with children from one class to another, at different times of the year and revisiting the same class at the end of Year 5.

The knowledge and understanding I brought to this research will have shaped and flavoured its inception, data collection, analysis, and reporting. It could therefore leave my findings open to criticisms of bias from my own subjective interpretation. Providing as full an account as possible about my background, research approach and data analysis was therefore important. What I observed, recorded, and afforded importance to may well be interpreted differently by others. I recognise however, that this is the case with all ethnographic studies where the researcher is the main instrument of data collection. If repeating such research, I would be keen to explore the use of data analysis tools such as NVivo. As a first-time ethnographer however, I still appreciate the value of grappling with ongoing data analysis 'by hand', coming to understand and appreciate the refined coding and development of emergent themes. I consider it supported an effective and robust analysis of data where there was no choice but to be repetitively, fully immersed in all the data. When retrospectively reporting my analysis and development of themes, I recognise it may appear less 'tidy, 'neat' and perhaps less trustworthy than if it had been developed and reported through use of a computer program. The extent to which that is perceived as a limitation may ultimately also rest with the reader's own predilections. If repeating such research however, keeping track of developing and refined codes in a separate 'analysis field diary' could support greater clarity in both what, how and when codes and themes emerged, were tested, and refined.

7.7 Personal reflection

During the time in which this research was initiated and completed, the world changed. England left the European Union, the Covid-19 pandemic struck, swiftly followed by Russia's 'special operations' in the Ukraine. The world in which my research began was not the same as when it ended. Whilst it was anticipated that engaging with this research would be a transformative, reflective experience, I little anticipated the extent to which it would be so. There has been so much to learn, both about my research and the research process, but also about myself as a researcher, an employee, a mother, wife, sister, aunt and daughter, European citizen and British subject. It has not been painless. Overall, it has been a period of challenge, reflection, learning to notice and appreciate the little things whilst also becoming tougher and more resilient to change. Learning to ring-fence research time has been one of the hardest lessons to navigate through the midst of everything else to be organised, facilitated, managed and attempted. The importance of talking about the research has also been realised, facilitating its recognition and clarity of my own thinking.

As I entered the field as a researcher, I was concerned with seeking ways to help 'make the familiar strange' to myself. During my time in field however, I came to be shown by children's experiences of FLL and their reactions and responses to these, how children were conversely engaged in various ways of trying to 'make the strange familiar' for themselves. It was an act in which, to a certain extent, they were involved together with their teachers who were also found to make use of established, familiar, practices through which to try and include the less familiar teaching of 'French'. My findings endorse not just child and teacher as 'beings and becomings' (Uprichard, 2008), but also the researcher.

Working as a solo researcher and completing this research on a part-time basis also placed various constraints on this study. It was for example not possible to effectively pursue all avenues of potential research. Throughout my research, I became evermore conscious both about what I was and was not noticing and doing. 'Thinking time' was not something that could be rushed or neatly parcelled-up into small units of time. Stepping back to immerse and think about the corpus of data away from hustle and bustle of 'the everyday' was a challenge. Snatches of 'doing-time' were much easier to manage but as my research progressed, the need for 'thinking-time' – let alone the 'writing-time' - became ever-more necessary together with a growing need to talk about my data and decisions I was reaching as a solo researcher, to help 'hear' and trust my own thinking. A vast amount of data was collected during my time in the field and navigating what I did and did not have, combined with reading, ongoing analysis and making decisions about my next steps as my research progressed was a work of art. I have a greater appreciation for why so much prior research was found to have been of the positivist, normative persuasion. It is tidier, neater, easier to fit into other 'life'. But it also misses something more essential, providing instead for 'easier', readier and perhaps more 'simple' answers. This 'something' is what I have come to treasure through engaging with this ethnographic study. Why should research be 'simple' and 'neat' and 'easy to manage' when life and life's experiences are anything but? In exploring children's FLL experiences, I recognise I have been afforded a unique, privileged window into the lives and times of those children, teachers, and settings kind enough to allow me to work with them. My research has been as much about the negotiation, the liaison, the compromise - the messy process- as about its findings, that otherwise require being neatly packaged into the structure of the thesis if to be of wider value.

The complexity involved within an ethnographic study provided for a better match to the complexity of the phenomenon being explored and felt more worthy and respectful of what I was seeking to attempt. Whilst being timetabled on the school's long- and medium-term planning cycle, it was invariably the case that French would 'slip' from the timetable, only to pop-up in other places in often informal ways through general classroom discourse and routine. Had I employed a research approach with methods other than the immersive techniques of ethnography, it is likely that the richness presented by this aspect of children's FLL experiences would have either been entirely missed, overlooked, or framed by an otherwise 'normative' approach, such has been discussed in both the Literature review (see Chapter 3) and Methodology (Chapter 4). As a researcher, maintaining such an 'immersive' approach required strict self-discipline, as the temptation to adopt 'quicker' approaches was certainly recognised throughout each phase of data collection. Instead, I believe my study could have yielded to 'quick-fixes' and surface-level findings, ultimately unhelpful for gaining deeper and more nuanced insight into the studied phenomena.

With 26 years' experience working as a primary teacher, lead teacher of primary languages, teacher-educator, and leader in initial teacher-education, my research has afforded some surprises and fresh insights into children's learning more broadly as well as their FLL. My research has sharpened my awareness of the way in which inequalities inherent in the education system in England manifest themselves, not just between school settings but more concerningly, also within them and the individual classroom setting itself. It was somewhat disheartening to realise that even after all these years and the political momentum and investment of the 'capacity building phase', that FLL has either remained, or is returning to be something of an elite subject area, where even in the same classroom and same lesson, some children are conferred greater access and advantage over others through the fortune of their relative socio-economic backgrounds, levels of ‘parental-power’ and their own academic abilities. My research also developed my awareness that decisions ostensibly made in the children’s best educational interests can instead often be superceded by adult-centric needs and interests. My research also increased my conscious awareness of the differences between the terms ‘schooling’ and ‘education’ and how these terms, not being synonymous, are best applied with critical caution. My research indicated that what children experienced through their FLL appeared largely framed as ‘schooling’, whilst presented by the adult world as ‘education’. I suggest there is merit in critically reappraising the use of each term in educational policy, practice, for teacher education and for research purposes.

Above all, I was both surprised and refreshed anew about the energy, resourcefulness, and resilience of children. My research led me to fresh appreciation, respect and intrigue into the ways in which the children navigated their everyday classroom experiences and sought to make sense of and make the best of their curricular and schooling experiences; how articulate and astute the children could be, able to share considered insights into their FLL experiences and how adept children could be at finding spaces in their otherwise tightly managed time to liaise with each-other and manage the nuances of ‘being schooled’. I was surprised to find out just how much learning children appeared to be doing themselves; at how much learning was being completed by children ‘underground’. I was also surprised by the revealed need for children to have to learn how to do that. Just how much had I also not been aware of as a teacher in the classroom? Just how much more is there to be alert and awake to as a teacher? It made me revisit and rethink my own time in school. I was also surprised anew by just how aware some children were of the experiences and responses of others and the influence that could exert over the nature of their own learning experiences. I suggest that without due accord of, and respect for children’s learning experiences, notions of a ‘world-class education’ as espoused by political leaders will, for children, remain an unachievable aspirational notion, realised only in political rhetoric and perhaps perceived only by some of the adults involved and a few, ‘culturally-capitalised’ children.

Children were, however, revealed in this study to be able and ready FL learners with the potential to be able to make ‘substantial progress’ with skills ready to build upon to work towards that yet-to-be defined aim. Whether this will become a reality will perhaps instead depend not on the extent of children’s FLL abilities, but upon the extent to which the adults involved are able to move out of their own respective comfort zones, rather than keep asking children to do so. The current emphasis on 'traditional' education and school systems otherwise appear to present more of a barrier to, than enabler of, children's FLL.

Throughout my research, I found myself referring to children as either 'children' or 'pupils'. As the reader may already have noted, a mix of both remains apparent within this thesis despite an initial intention to adopt the term 'children' throughout. I purposefully chose to leave the final anomalies between 'children' and 'pupils' in this thesis further to the final stages of proof-reading as on reflection, it raises similarities for me with the noted difference between 'education' and 'schooling'. It is also reflective of the revealed ontological perspectives yielded though the way in which I sought to understand children's experiences of FLL where my labelling of children as 'pupils' appeared to happen more in reference to data about the 'schooling' aspects of FLL, and the use of 'children' more in relation to data about their own responses. It is evidence of the challenge involved in disassociating oneself as an adult involved in teacher-education from the world of teaching towards engaging with children's worlds of learning: ultimately the essence I believe of what we, as teachers, teacher educators and researchers need to engage with and comprehend if we are to stand any chance of getting our adult 'teaching worlds' fit to complement and enhance children's own 'learning worlds.'

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

A summary of children's likes and dislikes about learning in Primary School

Children's experiences and perceptions of learning in the Primary School. *(Taken from studies conducted in England/Ireland involving children aged 6-12 years, by: Chamberlain et al, 2011; Covell, 2010;Hopkins, 2008; Murphy et al, 2012; Nias, 2000; Robinson, 2014; Wall, 2012)*

Children like…	**Children dislike…**
Hands-on learning	Overtalk by the teacher
Active learning	Too little time to complete tasks
Desire to be stretched	Not enough time to work independently
Independent learning (particularly Y6)	Being rushed and feeling under pressure to achieve
Taking ownership of own learning	Demotivated by long lessons
Variety of activities	Predictable routines and rhythms of schoolwork
Break from routines	Too much writing, copying, working from books and repeating things
Variety of teachers	Worksheets and textbooks
Having time to complete activities	Too much reading and writing
History, art, music, drama	Lack of challenge
Working collaboratively with a friend rather than on their own	Dominance of core subjects
Warm, affective climate in the classroom and school	Explicitly teacher-directed activities
	Being disrupted by other pupils' messing around and being told off

APPENDIX 2

A Summary of research approaches concerning learner beliefs about FLL

(Adapted from Barcelos, 2003, pp.26-27).

	Normative	Metacognitive	Contextual
Methodology a) Data collection b) Data analysis	a) Likert-scale questionnaire b) Descriptive statistics	a) Interviews and self-report b) Content analysis	a) Observations, interviews, diaries, case-studies, life stories, metaphor analysis b) Interpretive analysis
Definition of beliefs about SLA	Synonymous with preconceived notions, misconceptions and opinions	Described as metacognitive knowledge:stable and sometimes fallible knowledge learners have about language learning	Part of the culture of learning and representations of language learning in a given society
Relationship beliefs/actions	Good indicators of future students' behaviours, autonomy and effectiveness and language learners.	Good indicators of learners' autonomy and effectiveness in language learning, though admitted that other factors, such as purpose, may influence this.	Seen as context-specific – learner beliefs are investigated within the context of their actions.
Advantages	Allows large samples at different time slots and at outside contexts.	Participants use their own words, elaborate and reflect upon their language learning experiences	Participants' own words are taken into account together with the context of participant actions.
Disadvantages	Restricts participants choices with a set of statements predetermined by the researcher. Participants may have different interpretations about them.	Beliefs are inferred only from participants' statements	Better suited to small samples only; time-consuming.

APPENDIX 3

Competence and Performance Education

Some contrastive aspects of competence and performance models in relation to classrooms and how these may constitute the nature of children's experiences (from Pollard & Trig, 2000, p.65):

	'Competence Education'	*'Performance Education'*
Classroom and pupils	*'Invisible pedagogies' with weak classification and frame*	*'Visible pedagogies' with strong classification and frame*
Autonomy	Considerable	Limited
Space	Flexible boundaries and use	Explicit regulation
Time	Flexible emphasis on present experiences	Strong structuring, sequencing and pacing
Activity	Emphasis on the realization of inherent learner capabilities through subject integrated and learner-controlled activities such as projects	Strong control over selection of knowledge and explicit promotion of specialized subjects and skills
Evaluation and assessment	Emphasis on immediate, present qualities using implicit and diffuse criteria	Emphasis on correct products or capabilities using explicit and specific performance criteria
Control	Relatively 'invisible' with control inhering in interpersonal communications and relationships	Explicit structuring and systems for classification, setting and differentiation through instruction
Pupil products	Pupil products are taken to indicate a stage of cognitive, affective or social development. Teachers 'read' and interpret learner products using specialized professional knowledge and judgement	Pupil products are simply taken to indicate performance, as objectified by grades. Teachers instruct and assess using nationally defined procedures and criteria.

APPENDIX 4

Historic traditions in English Primary education
(Drawn from Blyth (1965, p.20) and Goodson & Marsh, 1996).

1) **Elementary (or 'Utalitarian') tradition:** 'for the poor and unfortunate…a regrettable necessity or a preventative measure to help alleviate crime, disease, disorder'. 'An education of the ordinary people by the ordinary people for the ordinary people'. Deemed to be 'self-perpetuating as most of its teachers were themselves too limited in ability and in education and too insecure both financially and socially to be able to conceive of their task in terms other than those of meticulous and conscientious compliance with the routines that they knew. Nor were they encouraged to do anything else'. Children's response to this often 'puritanical moral mode characteristic of many of these teachers was to 'develop their own traditions of resistance': 'they identified the teachers with the law, the police and the 'boss-class' generally, against whom they carried on a guerrilla warfare' (Highfield and Pinsent, 1952, p.32, in Goodson & Marsh, 1996, p.34). ***Emphasis on the basic skills rather than 'subjects'***.

2) **Preparatory (or 'Academic') tradition:** 'as arising from the nineteenth century, historically related to grammar school education'…'influenced by the revival of universities and increasingly improved standards of teaching and scholarship'. Aimed at upper middle class. ***The growth of 'the subject'***.

3) **Developmental (or 'Pedagogic') tradition**: 'the emphasis of the developmental traditions arising from Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Fellanberg'…also 'the development in England of the infant school'. The work of Froebel and Dewey also promoted this developmental tradition through the use of projects, co-operative activities and ***the elimination of subject divisions'***. This also expanded into some elementary schools, encouraged by the 1967 Plowden Report, often characterised by 'open plan' classrooms; 'open education'. Lasted until late 1970s…since then new era dawning culminating in 1988 Education Act and the focus upon the mastery of basic skills in literacy and numeracy, which had not been achieved as well in open plan classrooms as in conventional classrooms.

APPENDIX 5: Biesta's functions of education (adapted from Biesta, 2010 and MacAllister, 2016):

Function of education	**Description:** *What does this function of education do?*	***Related questions to support an understanding of FLL in the primary phase:***
1. Qualification	a) The knowledge, habits, skills and understanding for pupils to do something in the world after their formal education has been completed. b) The education makes a contribution to the training of the future workforce. c) The education contributes to the political and cultural literacy of the students	*What practical / functional knowledge, habits, skills and understanding are offered to children in their languages curriculum that may be of use to them when they leave primary school / later in adult life?* *How aware are children about what they are learning can support what they may do when they leave primary / school?* *CRITICAL QUESTION ARISING FROM THIS FRAMEWORK: what is the function of education in terms of the knowledge, skills, understanding and habits of children as beings 'now' rather than education viewed as being useful only for 'later'?*
2. Socialisation	The education inserts students into existing ways of doing and being and through this plays an important part in the continuation of culture and tradition both with regard to its desirable and undesirable aspects. This can be a) Intentional (active transmission of cultural norms and traditions) b) Less intentional (the effects of the hidden curriculum).	*How / does the languages curriculum / education enculture children into the community's norms and cultural traditions?* *Are there any examples of where this happens in an intentional way?* *Are there examples of where this happens in a less intentional way, eg through the' hidden curriculum?'* *What impact if any does this have on children's responses and reactions to their learning?*
3. Subjectification	The education enables students to become independent of existing orders; supporting ways of being in which the individual is not simply a 'specimen' of a more encompassing order.	*In which ways does the foreign languages curriculum (education) provide for activities that allow 'those being educated to become more autonomous and independent in their thinking and acting'.*

APPENDIX 6

Goodson's (1996, p.145) four-stage process in the academic establishment of a school subject.

1) **Invention:** may come about from the ideas or activities of educator; sometimes as a response to 'climates of opinion' or pupil demands…Usually over a prolonged period of time in several places.

   AND

2) **Promotion**: by educator groups internal to the educational system, establishing a new intellectual identity and new occupational role.

   (Resonant of Applebee's developing methodology, redefinition of culture and moral wellbeing)

3) **Legislation**: promotion of new inventions – that can be supported and sustained over time.

   AND

4) **Mythologization** : once automatic support has been achieved for a subject, a number of activities can be undertaken. The limits are any activities which threaten the legitimising rhetoric and hence constituency support.

   (Resonant of Applebee's 'institutional changes' through changing educational requirements).

APPENDIX 7

ETHICAL APPROVAL

Education Faculty Research Ethics Review

Application for full review

For Faculty Office use only	
FREC Protocol No:	**Date received:**

*Your application **must** comprise the following documents (please tick the boxes below to indicate that they are attached):*

Application Form	X
Peer Review Form	X
Copies of any documents to be used in the study:	
Participant Information Sheet(s)	X
Consent Form(s)	X
Introductory letter(s)	X
Questionnaire	
Focus Group Guidelines	

Education Faculty Research Ethics Review

Application for full review

1. PROJECT DETAILS

MAIN RESEARCHER	Victoria J Schulze
E-MAIL	vikki.schulze@canterbury.ac.uk
POSITION WITHIN CCCU	Senior Lecturer, Primary Education
POSITION OUTSIDE CCCU	
COURSE (students only)	MPhil (PhD)
DEPARTMENT (staff only)	The School of Teacher Education (Primary)
PROJECT TITLE	PhD scoping: Exploring children's experiences of foreign language learning in the primary school.
TUTOR/SUPERVISOR: NAME	Dr Patricia Driscoll
TUTOR/SUPERVISOR: E-MAIL	Patricia.driscoll@canterbury.ac.uk
DURATION OF PROJECT (start & end dates)	Scoping visits in primary school planned for between 3-5 days between 20th October -14th November

OTHER RESEARCHERS	N/A

2. OUTLINE THE ETHICAL ISSUES THAT YOU THINK ARE INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT.

The main ethical issues involved are as follows; further issues, identified as potential risks to participants are continued in section 7.

1. The scoping study involves children participating in language lessons in primary school; vulnerable participants unable to give fully informed consent.

2. The study therefore requires the co-operation of a gatekeeper (Headteacher) and parental consent for initial access to the children (vulnerable group) taking part in the lessons, and assent of the teacher for my presence and purpose in their class. As I will be in the lesson, there are also implications for the teacher and their professional practice as well as the children's learning (see section 7 below for more detail)

3. GIVE A BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE PROJECT in no more than 100 words. (*Include, for example, sample selection, recruitment procedures, data collection, data analysis and expected outcomes.)* Please ensure that your description will be understood by the lay members of the Committee.

Scoping questions and approaches concerning my proposed PhD for my first review; exploring ways to make the familiar strange.

2 primary schools in Kent will be approached to give consent for me to sit in on foreign language lessons in a range of KS2 classes as permitted by the school's timetable, as unobtrusively as possible.

I will attempt to immerse myself in the foreign language learning experiences of pupils participating in these lessons, making descriptive notes whilst I am there. I will add further thoughts and notes to these as they emerge afterwards, to help elicit deeper thought, reflection and analysis regarding perceived experiences.

4. How many participants will be recruited?	One (two maximum) local primary schools, and their KS2 classes being taught a foreign language; their class/subject teacher and by default, the pupils in these classes.
5. Will you be recruiting STAFF or STUDENTS from another faculty?	~~YES~~/**NO** If yes, which Faculty? **IMPORTANT**: If you intend to recruit participants from another Faculty, this form must be copied to the Dean of the Faculty concerned, and to the Chair of that Faculty's Research Ethics Committee.
6. Will participants include minors, people with learning difficulties or other vulnerable people?	**YES**/NO If yes, please add details. Children in KS2 classes participating in regular foreign language lessons as per their normal curriculum in school.

7. Potential risks for participants:	Please indicate all those that apply.
- Emotional harm/hurt*	**YES**/NO (Mild)
- Physical harm/hurt	YES/**NO**

- Risk of disclosure	YES/**NO**
- Other (please specify)	
*Please note that this includes any sensitive areas, feelings etc., however mild they may seem.	3. The school, Headteacher and class teacher(s) will have professional reputations they will naturally wish to maintain and enhance; this needs careful acknowledgement and managing by me to ensure that no upset or offence is caused to any party. 4. This period of time in school will allow me to help scope my own research ideas; but there is the question of what the school, teacher and pupils, having allowed me this time in their midst, get out of having hosted me. 5. Teachers are very busy professionals, and my presence could cause some tension in taking time away from their teaching and other necessary professional activities. 6. There is potential for teachers to feel under some pressure and anxiety just by my presence in the classroom. This may potentially also affect the flow of their teaching. 7. My presence in class could potentially cause some minor disruption to the learning of children; some pupils may also be initially wary and anxious by my presence.
8. How are these risks to be addressed?	1. Fully informed gate-keeper consent to attend foreign language classes in KS2 will be obtained from the Headteacher. Written consent from the class/subject teachers and verbal assent from the pupils in classes will

	also be sought prior to these scoping visits. In accordance with the school's policy, parents will be notified of my planned presence and purpose in school in advance. This will provide them with opportunity to raise any concerns and withdraw their consent. (Draft letter to parents attached). In liaison with the headteacher in advance of my planned visit, it will be decided from parental responses which languages classes I may, or may not, visit. *If the headteacher deems it necessary, I will also write a letter with information to parents of children in KS2 classes introducing myself and the purpose of my class visits. This will also give parents opportunity to withdraw their consent for me to note anything to do with their child whilst I am in the language class with them. Permission will be sought from parents action will be taken in liaison with the headteacher…* 2. All participants (Headteacher, class/subject teacher, pupils in class, and their parents) will be given opportunity to ask questions relating to my proposed visits, before, during and after my time in their school/classes. 3. Anonymity and confidentiality for the school and all participants will be assured. All will be reassured, and given opportunity to check, that no names will be noted at any stage of any note-taking during the time in school. Codes will be used in place of names, such as CT for class teacher. Most notes to be made are anticipated to be descriptive notes only, concerning the lesson environment, activities, resources, and the ways in which pupils participate and interact. All notes relating to my time in school will be kept securely in an A4 note-book for the duration of my PhD studies, transported in a zipped bag, and then retained in a clearly labelled, secure, box file in my office based in CCCU. All notes will then subsequently be destroyed.

	4. I will offer to be keep both the Headteacher and teacher(s) informed of the progress with my PhD. The children and teachers in the class will be personally thanked at the end of my time in school. 5. I will only visit the school and attend languages classes by prior arrangement and agreement with the school, teacher(s) and parents of the pupils involved. I will sit in a place in class pre-determined with the teacher, and ensure I am there and ready before the start of the lesson to minimise any additional disruption. I will not actively disrupt the lesson at all, seeking to be as much of a ‘fly on the wall’ as is possible. I am accumstomed to being in a school and being unobtrusive. 6. It can feel uncomfortable for a teacher to have another adult in class, feeling potentially like another observation which currently place teachers under increasing scrutiny in their professional lives. Therefore I seek to be as open as possible about my purpose and will use my first name throughout the period of time in school for all. I will also give teachers time to consider where they feel I would be best positioned in class to minimise the impact my presence will undoubtedly still have on them, their conduct, their language, and that of their pupils too. At all times, I would seek to minimise and reduce the potential ‘observation threat’ that a teacher may feel. I will use my first name to all, and as noted below (7), I will attempt to wear ‘non-threatening’ clothes (ie no power suit, and no bright colours). If at any time they would prefer for me not to be present, I will inform and remind them that they can ask me to leave at any stage of the process.

	7. Before joining any foreign language lessons, I will introduce myself to the pupils in class, using my first name, and wearing a more relaxed style of clothing (to distinguish myself from being a teacher, though not wearing jeans as per most school's dress codes). I will explain to the pupils why I seek to join their lessons, and the reason for my writing any notes. All pupils will be given opportunity to ask me questions concerning this, and verbal consent for my presence in their lesson will be sought from them. All pupils will be reassured that no names of individuals will be recorded at any stage of any note-taking.
9. Potential benefits for participants: - Improved services - Improved participant understanding - Opportunities for participants to have their views heard. - Other (please specify)	Please indicate all those that apply. YES/**NO** **YES/**NO The teacher may gain an improved understanding of pupil responses in languages lessons . Another potential benefit for the teacher is an enhanced understanding of the research process and also of the links with the School of Teacher Education/Graduate school; The children may benefit from having a specific interest taken in the languages lessons; there is also opportunity for participants to freely offer their views and thoughts regarding languages learning if this they initiate this. **YES**/NO there are no planned interviews/questionnaires as this scoping is purely intended as quiet, non-participatory observation. YES/**NO**

10. How, when and by whom will participants be approached? Will they be recruited individually or en bloc?	Two schools and languages teachers with whom we as a subject team already have links, will be individually approached directly by me, by email, as soon as Faculty ethical approval is granted. Once their initial, informal approval in principle is gained, I will approach with a more formal application for gate-keeper approval and consent by the Headteacher, again by email. A letter to parents seeking their informed consent will be attached to this email. Specific dates and times of timetabled lessons which I could join will then be agreed in liaison with the teacher via email or phone, whichever works best for them. The hope is that I will gain access to the school(s) in time for w/b 20th October and/or 3rd November.
11. Are participants likely to feel under pressure to consent / assent to participation?	No. There are many reasons why a school would not be able to participate and should this be indicated then I will approach another school. If the Headteacher does grant approval, then the teachers in school may feel under some obligation to allow me into their lessons. For this reason, where possible, potential class teachers are to be approached first to help gauge their consent, before formal gate-keeper consent is sought from the Headteacher. Pupils in the classes where I hope to be a non-participatory visitor/observer will be under more pressure to assent, as they will be partaking in a normal, curriculum lesson for which approval and assent for me to be there has already been granted by the Head, their class/subject teacher and the consent of their parents. Therefore, my approach with them will be as outlined above. (Initial meeting, explanation, time to ask questions, reassurance). Parents will be notified in accordance with schools policy.
12. How will voluntary informed consent be obtained from individual participants or those with a right to consent for them? - Introductory letter	Please indicate all those that apply and add examples in an appendix.

- Phone call	YES/**NO**
- Email	YES/**NO**
- Other (please specify)	**YES**/NO (examples provided: written format as an email attachment for Headteacher; email agreement from teacher(s)) Letter to parents seeking their informed consent **YES**/NO (verbal assent from pupils in class – example of what will be read out and explained to the children in class is provided)

13. How will permission be sought from those responsible for institutions / organisations hosting the study? - Introductory letter - Phone call - Email - Other (please specify)	Please indicate all those that apply and add examples in an appendix. YES/**NO** YES/**NO** **YES**/NO (example for Headteacher gatekeeper consent provided) YES/**NO**
14. How will the privacy and confidentiality of participants be safeguarded? (Please give brief details).	The school's name will be kept anonymous by using general location, context and pupil roll descriptors only in my notes. Similarly no names of teachers or pupils will be recorded at any stage in my notes. Teachers will be referred instead to as CT1 (Class teacher 1) and pupils as P1/P2. All notes will be kept securely in a ring-bound A4 size note book. I will keep this with me and it will be carried in a zipped bag during the school visit.The notes emanating from this period of observation will serve only to inform my research questions and ideas regarding my planned ethno-graphic methodology, and will form part of the evidence I submit for my first review. My notes will be retained for the duration of my MPhil/PhD studies, after which they will be destroyed.
15. What steps will be taken to comply with the Data Protection Act?	Please indicate all those that apply.

- Safe storage of data - Anonymisation of data - Destruction of data after 5 years - Other (please specify)	**YES**/NO (A4 note pad, zipped bag, box file) **YES**/NO (Coding for participants; use of general descriptors for location) **YES**/NO (all notes to be destroyed at the completion of my PhD)
16. How will participants be made aware of the results of the study?	This period of observation is intended purely as a scoping mechanism to help me shape my research ideas, working towards my first review. The outcome of this will be shared with the participating school
17. What steps will be taken to allow participants to retain control over audio-visual records of them and over their creative products and items of a personal nature?	I will offer to share a summary of my notes with the class/subject teacher before I leave the school at the end of the observation period. I will give them opportunity to add any comments and thoughts, and ask any questions arising from these. Similarly, participants will be given opportunity to check whether there is anything noted there that they take exception to, or suggest is wrong, or different to how they feel it should be noted. This seeks to offer them control of their information/ data, and also is a quality assurance mechanism to ensure what I record is deemed 'accurate' by relevant parties, and is not solely reliant upon my own, personal interpretation of events.

18. Give the qualifications and/or experience of the researcher and/or supervisor in this form of research. (Brief answer only)	Researcher: BA(Ed) hons (1995),and MA (Ed) (2012). My MA involved periods of observation, interview and questionnaires in the data collection based in a range of primary schools, with pupils, teachers, students and subject leaders. I have also gathered similar data regarding the evaluation of the TDA funded Integrated Language Learning Project I led in five Primary schools in Medway 2008-10. My supervisor has extensive research experience in a range of school settings and more.
19. If you are NOT a member of CCCU academic staff or a registered CCCU postgraduate student, what insurance arrangements are in place to meet liability incurred in the conduct of this research?	N/A

Attach any:

Participant information sheets and letters

Consent forms

Data collection instruments

Peer review comments

DECLARATION

- I certify that the information in this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief and I take full responsibility for it.
- I certify that a risk assessment for this study has been carried out in compliance with the University's Health and Safety policy.
- I certify that any required CRB/VBS check has been carried out.
- I undertake to carry out this project under the terms specified in the Canterbury Christ Church University Research Governance Handbook.
- I undertake to inform the relevant Faculty Research Ethics Committee of any significant change in the question, design or conduct of the study over the course of the study. I understand that such changes may require a new application for ethics approval.

- I undertake to inform the Research Governance Manager in the Graduate School and Research Office when the proposed study has been completed.
- I am aware of my responsibility to comply with the requirements of the law and appropriate University guidelines relating to the security and confidentiality of participant or other personal data.
- I understand that project records/data may be subject to inspection for audit purposes if required in future and that project records should be kept securely for five years or other specified period.
- I understand that the personal data about me contained in this application will be held by the Research Office and that this will be managed according to the principles established in the Data Protection Act.

Researcher's Name: Victoria J Schulze

Date: 3rd October 2014

APPENDIX 8

Example email used to initially approach class subject teachers, consent form and participant information sheet

Dear

As part of my developing PhD, I need to spend some time out in (languages) classes this term, to simply immerse myself back in to class as a researcher, rather than with my teacher/tutor hat. My study is exploring children's experiences of, and beliefs about, learning foreign languages in primary school. I'm not at the data collection stage at all yet – but this proposed time is to help develop the focus and also my researcher 'hat' too. So I wonder whether it might be possible to come and spend time in some of your languages lessons? (eg some lessons during w/b 10th Nov/17th Nov/24th Nov as best suits).

My aim is to just absorb myself back into being in class again, and see the kinds of things that are going on. I don't want or need to see anything at all out of the ordinary – literally, just the kind of normal lesson that is typical and that is timetabled. I'm not looking for anything special or particular, and crucially I am absolutely NOT looking at observing teaching at all. The only kinds of things I would be noting down for my reference would be anything generic about the time of day, what I notice about the class environment, what the children are learning, what they're doing, ways in which they're engaging in the lesson etc. This is with the express aim of helping me analyse the kinds of things I'm noticing/not noticing as a researcher. I'd be as much of a fly on the wall as I can possibly be, avoiding any disruption to your teaching and the children's learning. Alternatively, if you would actually prefer that I sit with a table of children for example, that is also perfectly fine; I would fit in with whatever suits you and the class best.

My request to visit some language lessons in primary school, to scope my research, has been given ethical permission by the Faculty ethics committee. Is something that you would be happy to support? Obviously, if you have any more questions, do simply ask. I'm attaching a 'participant information' sheet which outlines this proposed time in school FYI too. If you are happy to consent to this proposition, I would then seek permission and consent from the Headteacher, and parental consent too (I want to ensure you are first happy with my proposal!) I also attach a draft letter that can be sent to parents for their approval too before any ' research' visit takes place.

With all very best wishes – and please remember, if this doesn't fit or suit you/the school/classes, then please do know there is absolutely no pressure to have to agree. This is totally voluntary participation (and if you subsequently want/need to re-decide, then that is of course fine at any time too, without any reason being needed).

Vikki

APPENDIX 9

Headteacher/teacher consent form and participant information sheet

Title of Project: Exploring children's experiences of foreign language learning in the primary school.

Name of Researcher: Victoria J Schulze

Contact details:

Address:

F5.05 Primary Education
The School of Teacher Education
The Old Sessions House
North Holmes Road Campus
Canterbury Christ Church University
Kent CT1 1QU

Tel: 01227 767700 x 3157

Email: Vikki.schulze@canterbury.ac.uk

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. ☐
2. I understand that the participation of our school, teachers and pupils is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my permission at any time, without giving any reason. ☐
3. I understand that any personal information that is provided to the researcher will be kept strictly confidential ☐
4. On behalf of the school and its pupils, I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

________________________	________________	____________________
Name of Headteacher	Date	Signature

V. Schulze 8/10/2014 VSchulze

Researcher Date Signature

Copies: x1 for Headteacher x 1 for researcher

Exploring children’s experiences of foreign language learning in the primary school.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (Headteacher and Subject/Class teacher)

A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by Victoria J Schulze (PhD student, Senior lecturer and Programme Director PGCE Primary Education)

Background

I seek to complete a small-scale scoping study intended to help develop my research questions and support ideas and approaches regarding my PhD. The broad focus for this is the exploration and examination of foreign language learning experiences as conceived by pupils in primary school. I am now in the second year of these studies, and this time immersed in school is deemed prudent as I progress towards my next annual review. In particular it is necessary for me to explore ways to help me make, what for me is professionally familiar, more ‘strange’.

What will you be required to do?

I seek to join a class for as much of their school day and curriculum time during a week as is possible. I would like to sit in with curriculum lessons including foreign languages (eg French/Spanish..) as timetabled in the normal school day. Ideally I would like to do this with a Year Three class.

I therefore seek permission from the Headteacher to gain researcher access to the school and to attend such lessons over an agreed period of time before the end of term. The teacher(s) and pupils are not required to do anything out of their normal school and curriculum routine. Indeed, they are instead requested to do as they would normally do. I would seek to arrange and agree in advance such days/times during this period with the class/subject teacher.

Feedback

After the end of my agreed time in school, I will offer a summary of my notes for the teacher(s) and Headteacher to check for accuracy and agreement. If the teacher / Headteacher wishes for anything to be removed or amended, then this will be done to their approval.

Confidentiality

All data and personal information will be stored securely within CCCU premises in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University's own data protection requirements. Data can only be accessed by Victoria J Schulze. After completion of the study, all data will be made anonymous (i.e. all personal information associated with the data will be removed).

Dissemination of results

The experiences coming from my scoping time in school will be used to further inform the development of my research questions and methodological approaches. These will be presented to my PhD panel at the beginning of January 2016.

Deciding whether to participate

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature, procedures or requirements for participation do not hesitate to contact me. Should you decide to participate, you will be free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason.

Any questions?

Please contact Victoria (Vikki) on 01227 767700 x 3157, or, preferably, vikki.schulze@canterbury.ac.uk

The School of Teacher Education
Primary Education
North Holmes Road campus
Canterbury
Kent CT1 1QU.

APPENDIX 10

Parental/carer consent letter and form *(before GDPR)*

Canterbury
Christ Church
University

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am a PhD student at Canterbury Christ Church University, working in the School of Teacher Education (Primary). My study seeks to explore children's experiences of, and beliefs about, foreign language learning in primary school. With the permission of yourselves, in addition to that of the school, teachers and children, I would very much like to come and visit some curriculum lessons, including language lessons, before the end of term. The precise times will be agreed in advance with the school.

This time will help inform my ongoing studies as I work to develop this project. I ultimately hope to gain a deeper understanding of children's experiences of language learning in a primary school setting, and how these compare to their learning of other curriculum areas. I'm interested in whether such experiences exert any influence at all over children's developing beliefs about foreign language learning, and if so, in which ways, and for whom.

Whilst I am sitting quietly in lessons, I will watch and observe how the learning unfolds and what it is like to be in the class. I will be trying hard to see what it might be like from the children's perspectives. I will be making some descriptive notes to help me remember things. No names of children or teachers will be recorded at any time, and complete anonymity will be assured. Obviously I will seek to minimise any potential disruption to the usual lesson and any potential anxiety my presence could cause.

Should you prefer me **not** to note anything at all that relates to your child in these lessons, please can you indicate this on the relevant slip provided at the bottom of this letter and return to the school office **before Monday 30th November**. If you have any questions relating to my proposed time in the lessons of your child, please do alert the school, and I will respond with the school's agreed assistance.

Thank you for considering my request,

Yours sincerely,

VSchulze

Vikki Schulze (PhD student)

FORM A:

I do not wish for the researcher to note anything that relates specifically to my child / children:

Name of child / children: ___________________________ Class/ classes: ______________________

Signed: ____

FORM B:

Questions and queries relating to the researcher being present in my child's language lesson(s).

Name of child / children: ___________________________ Class/ classes: ______________________

Name of parent: ____

Questions/queries:

APPENDIX 11

Seeking Verbal Assent from pupils concerning the proposed research visit in class:

I will seek for this to happen, with the school/teacher agreement, in advance of me joining a languages lesson. This will provide time for the class to see, know and adjust to my presence, and also importantly, for them to have time to think and to have more opportunity to raise any questions or queries they may have.

1. Introduce myself with first name.
2. Explain to the children the purpose of my enquiry and their role: 'I am interested in children's experiences in learning a foreign language in primary school, and I'm developing my research ideas for my (doctoral) study at university. I am trying to see what kind of things you're doing, and what it might be like to learn a foreign language in school for you. If I were a child learning a language in an English primary school, what would it be like?
3. Anonymity: 'Nobody, except for me and possibly my two research supervisors at my University, is going to look at my notes, and no-one will be able to tell whose work it is or who is speaking, or who is doing what as I will not write down any names at all. This time is to help me try and see, hear and feel what it is like to be learning a foreign language in school for you. So, I just want to watch what's going on and make some notes to help me remember things afterwards.'
4. OPT OUT – 'If you feel uncomfortable carrying on with your lesson with me here at any time, just let me or your teacher know. You have the right to do that without any problem. I will then stop.
5. Recording – 'After this time in lessons with you, I am going to keep a copy of my notes, and then probably make a lot more notes on it too when I think about what I've noted down. Is that OK?'

APPENDIX 12

Institutional Ethical Approval

Education Faculty Research Ethics Review

Application for full review

2. PROJECT DETAILS

MAIN RESEARCHER	Ms. Victoria J Schulze
E-MAIL	Vikki.schulze@canterbury.ac.uk
POSITION WITHIN CCCU	Programme Director PGCE Primary FT
POSITION OUTSIDE CCCU	School Governor / Mother
COURSE (students only)	
DEPARTMENT (staff only)	Primary Education in the SoTEd.
PROJECT TITLE	Exploring children's experiences of foreign language learning in the primary school: how do they compare with their other learning experiences in primary school?
TUTOR/SUPERVISOR: NAME	Dr Patricia Driscoll
TUTOR/SUPERVISOR: E-MAIL	Patricia.driscoll@canterbury.ac.uk
DURATION OF PROJECT (start & end dates)	March (asap) – July 2019

OTHER RESEARCHERS	n/a

2. OUTLINE THE ETHICAL ISSUES THAT YOU THINK ARE INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT.

a) This study involves children in a primary school setting; participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent (e.g. children), and in unequal relationships (e.g. compliance with adult requests /people in authority in primary school settings).

b) This study therefore requires the co-operation of a gate-keeper (Headteacher) for initial access to the pupils at school (vulnerable group). It also requires parental consent for initial access to the children (vulnerable group) taking part, and assent of the teacher(s) for my presence and purpose in their class. As I will also be observing in lessons, there are also implications for the teacher and their professional practice as well as the children's learning (see section 7 below for more detail).

3. GIVE A BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE PROJECT in no more than 100 words. (*Include, for example, sample selection, recruitment procedures, data collection, data analysis and expected outcomes.)* Please ensure that your description will be understood by the lay members of the Committee.

One KS2 class in a primary school in Kent, with children from a range of socio-economic backgrounds and offering a foreign language in its curriculum. I will spend up to c.10 days with this class. This will involve being immersed in their school day, observing and making notes about pupils' experiences, including foreign languages.

Pupils from the class will be recruited to participate in a series of short focus groups activities to help explore and triangulate data. c..3x groups of c.4x pupils will be selected, with each representing a mix of both socio-economic backgrounds and educational attainment. 1x class teacher interview r.e curriculum and learning experiences and teacher perception.

This is to allow me time to get to know the pupils, and they, me before conducting the focus-group tasks; important in terms of building some trust and feeling 'comfortable' to participate on their behalf. On my behalf, As such, the precise composition of the focus groups will be deducted and agreed with the teacher after my initial 'general' time spent in class. Similarly, whilst the nature of the focus-group tasks have been outlined with samples provided with this, the precise nature of the questions and tasks that will be followed up with pupils may alter as a result of the generic observations and further information gained about the best ways to proceed with the specific pupils taking part. It is not however envisaged that these tasks would vary greatly from those proposed, merely that I will seek to remain flexible to adapt to best meet the needs and interest of the pupils, rather than impose a fixed- set of non-negotiable research tasks. Should anything further develop then advice will be sought regarding whether a further ethics application would be necessary before proceeding.

4. How many participants will be recruited?	1x school with 1x KS2 class (pupils) and teacher. 12x pupils from the class (3x groups of c.4 pupils) for the focus groups.

5. Will you be recruiting STAFF or STUDENTS from another faculty?	**NO**
6. Will participants include minors, people with learning difficulties or other vulnerable people?	**YES** *If yes, please add details.* Children in a KS2 class, participating in regular school day and foreign language lessons as per their normal curriculum in school; c.12 of these will also participate in small focus group activities.

7. Potential risks for participants:	Please indicate all those that apply.
- Emotional harm/hurt*	***YES**/NO (Mild)
- Physical harm/hurt	YES/**NO**
- Risk of disclosure	YES/**NO**
- Other (please specify)	
*Please note that this includes any sensitive areas, feelings etc., however mild they may seem.	**As detailed:* 1. The school, Headteacher and class teacher(s) will have professional reputations they will naturally wish to maintain and enhance; this needs careful acknowledgement and managing by me to ensure that no upset or offence is caused to any party. 2.This period of time in school will allow me to develop and complete my data collection; but there is the question of what the school, teacher and pupils, having allowed me this time in their midst, each get out of having hosted me *(*see point 9 below)*. 3.Teachers are very busy professionals, and my presence could potentially cause some tension in feeling some time is taken away

	from their core purpose of teaching and other necessary professional activities. 4.There is potential for teachers to feel under some pressure and anxiety just by my presence in the classroom. This may potentially also affect the flow of their teaching. 5.My presence in class could potentially cause some minor disruption to the learning of children caused by novelty or potential excitement; some pupils may conversely be initially wary and anxious by my presence. 6.The focus group activities have potential to cause some disruption to children's other learning, the extent to which will depend on when, where and how they are conducted.
8. How are these risks to be addressed?	1. Fully informed gate-keeper consent to will be obtained from the Headteacher. Written consent from the class/subject teachers and verbal assent from the pupils in classes will also be sought prior to any research. In accordance with the school's policy, parents will be notified of my planned presence and purpose in school in advance. This will provide them with opportunity to raise any concerns and withdraw their consent. (Draft letter to parents attached). In liaison with the headteacher in advance of my planned visit, it will be decided from parental responses which classes I may, or may not, visit. 2. All participants (Headteacher, class/subject teacher, pupils in class, and their parents) will be given opportunity to ask questions relating to my proposed visits throughout the research period.

	3. Anonymity and confidentiality for the school and all participants will be assured. All will be reassured, and given opportunity to check, that no identifiable names will be noted at any stage of any note-taking during the time in school. Codes, such as CT for class teacher, or pseudonyms will be used in place of real names. Most notes to be made are anticipated to be descriptive notes only, concerning the lesson environment, activities, resources, and the ways in which pupils participate, interact and respond. All notes relating to my time in school will be kept securely in an A4 note-book for the duration of my PhD studies, transported in a zipped bag, and then retained in a clearly labelled, secure, box file in my office based in CCCU. All notes will then subsequently be destroyed after successful submission of my thesis. 4. I will offer to be keep both the Headteacher and teacher(s) informed of the progress with my PhD. The children and teachers in the class will be personally thanked at the end of my time in school. 5. I will only visit the school and attend classes by prior arrangement and agreement with the school, teacher(s) and parents of the pupils involved. I will sit in a place in class pre-determined with the teacher, and ensure I am there and ready before the start of the school day / lessons to minimise any additional disruption. I will not actively disrupt the lesson at all, seeking to be as much of a ‘fly on the wall’ as is possible. I am accumstomed to being in a school and being unobtrusive. 6. It can feel uncomfortable for a teacher to have another adult in class, feeling potentially like another observation which

	currently place teachers under increasing scrutiny in their professional lives. Therefore I seek to be as open as possible about my purpose and will use my first name throughout the period of time in school for all. I will also give teachers time to consider where they feel I would be best positioned in class to minimise the impact my presence will undoubtedly still have on them, their conduct, their language, and that of their pupils too. At all times, I would seek to minimise and reduce the potential ‘observation threat’ that a teacher may feel. I will use my first name to all, and as noted below (7), I will attempt to wear more relaxed ‘non-threatening’ clothes (ie no power suit, and no bright colours, whilst respecting the school’s dress-code for adults in school). If at any time they would prefer for me not to be present, I will inform and remind them that they can ask me to leave at any stage of the process. 7. Before joining any lessons, I will introduce myself to the pupils in class, using my first name, and wearing a more relaxed style of clothing (to distinguish myself from being a teacher, though not wearing jeans as per most school’s dress codes). I will explain to the pupils why I seek to join their lessons, and the reason for my writing any notes. All pupils will be given opportunity to ask me questions concerning this, and verbal consent for my presence in their lesson will be sought from them. All pupils will be reassured that no names of individuals will be recorded at any stage of any note-taking. 8. I will liaise with the class teacher to secure an optimal time and place in the school day to conduct the 3x focus groups tasks to minimise any disruption to children’s learning and reduce the need for children to give up any ‘free’ time such as during break/lunchtime, and other stress. These

	activities will be designed to take no longer than 1/2hr to minimise disruption and also to allow for flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances in school. The nature of the tasks is to inspire a shared reflection about children’s experiences, and they will be purposefully designed to try and be non-threatening and enjoyable for children to complete. No undue pressure will be placed on any child to have to participate or respond individually unless they so wish and as instigated by the child themselves within the remit of the focussed group task. Furthermore, I will liaise with the school regarding where the focussed group activities can take place to both afford a quieter, more reflective and relaxed space than the classroom, but also one which is non-threatening, such as in the school library for example.
9. Potential benefits for participants:	Please indicate all those that apply.
- Improved services	YES/**NO**
- Improved participant understanding	**YES**/NO: The teacher may gain an improved understanding of perceived pupil learning experiences and how these compare. Another potential benefit for the teacher is an enhanced understanding of the research process and also of the links with the School of Teacher Education/Graduate school. The children may benefit from having a specific interest taken in their learning experiences and specifically with languages lessons.
- Opportunities for participants to have their views heard.	**YES**/NO: there is opportunity for all participants to both freely offer their views and thoughts regarding their learning and teaching experiences with language throughout the period of data collection, together with bespoke opportunity to participate in focus groups / teacher interview.

- Other (please specify)	YES/**NO**

10. How, when and by whom will participants be approached? Will they be recruited individually or en bloc?	Two schools and teachers, with whom we as a team already have links, will be individually approached directly by me, by email, as soon as Faculty ethical approval is granted. Once their initial, informal approval in principle is gained, I will approach with a more formal application for gate-keeper approval and consent by the Headteacher, again by email. A letter to parents seeking their informed consent will be attached to that email. Specific dates and times of timetabled lessons which I could join will then be agreed in liaison with the teacher/Headteacher. *The hope is that I will gain access to the school(s) in time to complete the data collection as follows (fitting with my work diary rather than school at the moment until we can liaise):* *Immersion and observation: Thurs 15 March, Fri 16 March, Tues 20 March, Thurs 22 March, Fri 23 March, Tues 27 March, Thurs 29 March,* *3x days: pupil focus groups and observations: Mon 23, Tue 24 and Thurs 26 April.*
11. Are participants likely to feel under pressure to consent / assent to participation?	No. There are many reasons why a school would not be able to participate and should this be indicated then I will approach another school. If the Headteacher does grant approval, then the teachers in school may feel under some obligation to allow me into their lessons. For this reason, where possible, potential class teachers are to be approached first to help gauge their consent, before formal gate-keeper consent is sought from the Headteacher. Pupils in the class where I hope to be a non-participatory

	visitor/observer will be under more pressure to assent, as they will be partaking in a normal, curriculum lesson for which approval and assent for me to be there has already been granted by the Head, their class/subject teacher and the consent of their parents. Therefore, my approach with them will be as outlined above: (Initial meeting, explanation, time to ask questions, reassurance). Parents will be notified in accordance with schools policy.
12. How will voluntary informed consent be obtained from individual participants or those with a right to consent for them? - Introductory letter - Phone call - Email - Other (please specify)	Please indicate all those that apply and add examples in an appendix. **YES**/NO: For parental consent (attached) YES/**NO** **YES**/NO : To Headteacher and teacher (attached) **YES:** verbal assent from pupils in class – example of what will be read out and explained to the children in class is attached.

13. How will permission be sought from those responsible for institutions / organisations hosting the study? - Introductory letter - Phone call - Email - Other (please specify)	Please indicate all those that apply and add examples in an appendix. YES/**NO** YES/**NO** **YES**/NO: Email to Headteacher requesting permission and gatekeeper consent is attached.
14. How will the privacy and confidentiality of participants be safeguarded? (Please give brief details).	The school's name will be kept anonymous by using general location, context and pupil roll descriptors only in my notes. Similarly no names of teachers or pupils will be recorded at any stage in my notes. Teachers will be referred instead to as CT1 (Class teacher 1)

	and pupils as P1/P2 or via pseudonyms instead. All notes will be kept securely in a ring-bound A4 size note book. I will keep this with me and it will be carried in a zipped bag during the school visit. The notes emanating from this period of observation will serve only to inform my research questions and ideas regarding my planned ethno-graphic methodology, and will form part of the evidence I submit for my first review. My notes will be retained for the duration of my MPhil/PhD studies, after which they will be destroyed.
15. What steps will be taken to comply with the Data Protection Act? - Safe storage of data - Anonymisation of data - Destruction of data after 5 years - Other (please specify)	Please indicate all those that apply. **YES**/NO **YES**/NO ***YES**/NO * data will be kept for the duration of my studies and up until successful completion of my PhD.
16. How will participants be made aware of the results of the study?	The results from this second period of data will be offered to both the class teacher and headteacher immediately after the research in school is completed, and also again following more detailed analysis for the 'Findings' chapter of my thesis. All participating schools will be offered a copy of my thesis / key parts of my thesis.
17. What steps will be taken to allow participants to retain control over audio-visual records of them and over their creative products and items of a personal nature?	I will offer to share a summary of my notes with the class/subject teacher before I leave the school at the end of the observation period. I will give them opportunity to add any comments and thoughts, check for accuracy of representation, and ask any questions arising from these. Similarly, pupil participants will be given opportunity to check whether there is anything I have noted they take exception to, or suggest is wrong, or different to how they feel it should be noted. This seeks to offer them control of their information/ data shared with me, and

	also is a quality assurance mechanism to ensure what I record is deemed 'accurate' by all participants involved, and is not solely reliant upon my own, personal interpretation of events.

18. Give the qualifications and/or experience of the researcher and/or supervisor in this form of research. (Brief answer only)	Researcher: BA(Ed.)hons, QTS, MA (Ed.) and MPhil (upgraded now to PhD). Supervisor:

19. If you are NOT a member of CCCU academic staff or a registered CCCU postgraduate student, what insurance arrangements are in place to meet liability incurred in the conduct of this research?	

Attach any:

Participant information sheets and letters

Consent forms

Data collection instruments

Peer review comments

DECLARATION

- I certify that the information in this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief and I take full responsibility for it.
- I certify that a risk assessment for this study has been carried out in compliance with the University's Health and Safety policy.
- I certify that any required CRB/VBS check has been carried out.
- I undertake to carry out this project under the terms specified in the Canterbury Christ Church University Research Governance Handbook.
- I undertake to inform the relevant Faculty Research Ethics Committee of any significant change in the question, design or conduct of the study over the course of the study. I understand that such changes may require a new application for ethics approval.
- I undertake to inform the Research Governance Manager in the Graduate School and Research Office when the proposed study has been completed.

- I am aware of my responsibility to comply with the requirements of the law and appropriate University guidelines relating to the security and confidentiality of participant or other personal data.
- I understand that project records/data may be subject to inspection for audit purposes if required in future and that project records should be kept securely for five years or other specified period.
- I understand that the personal data about me contained in this application will be held by the Research Office and that this will be managed according to the principles established in the Data Protection Act.

Researcher's Name: Victoria Schulze

Date: 24.04.2018

APPENDIX 13

Headteacher / teacher consent form and participant information sheet

Title of Project: Exploring children's experiences of foreign language learning in the primary school.

Name of Researcher: Victoria J Schulze

Contact details:

Address:

F5.05 Primary Education
The School of Teacher Education
The Old Sessions House
North Holmes Road Campus
Canterbury Christ Church University
Kent CT1 1QU

Tel: 01227 767700 x 3157

Email: Vikki.schulze@canterbury.ac.uk

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. ☐
2. I understand that the participation of our school, teachers and pupils is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my permission at any time, without giving any reason. ☐
3. I understand that any personal information that is provided to the researcher will be kept strictly confidential ☐
4. On behalf of the school and its pupils, I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

______________________	______________	__________________
Name of Headteacher	Date	Signature
V. Schulze	27/2/2018	VSchulze
Researcher	Date	Signature

Copies: x1 for Headteacher x 1 for class teacher x 1 for researcher

Canterbury
Christ Church
University

Exploring children's experiences of foreign language learning in the primary school.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (Headteacher and Subject/Class teacher)

A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by Victoria J Schulze (PhD student, and Senior lecturer, Primary Education; Programme Director PGCE Primary FT).

Background

I seek to complete a small-scale study intended to inform and complete the data required for my PhD. The focus for this final tranche of research with children in school is the exploration and examination of foreign language learning experiences as conceived by pupils in primary school.

What will you be required to do?

I seek to discretely immerse myself in the regular school day and routine learning experiences of a class in KS2. This will include discretely observing foreign language lessons with them as scheduled. I therefore seek permission from the Headteacher to gain researcher access to the school and to spend such time with a KS2 class over an agreed period of time (c. 10 days) before the end of this academic year, and also where possible and relevant, in the next academic term from September 2018. The teacher(s) and class are not required to do anything out of their normal school and curriculum routine. Indeed, they are instead requested to do as they would normally do. I would seek to arrange and agree in advance such days/times during this period with the class/subject teacher.

Towards the end of my time in class, I would also like opportunity to meet with c.3 groups of 4x pupils from the class. This would be to conduct some short focus group activities with them, designed to explore their perspectives and responses in more detail, and importantly, to help clarify my understanding of the shared learning experiences. In addition, I would welcome the opportunity to talk with the class teacher to share and unpick the apparent nature of children's experiences and their interpretation. I would like to work with children representing a range of socio-economic backgrounds and mix of academic attainment. I would seek to liaise with the class teacher regarding the selection of these pupils, and also to agree when and where such group tasks are best completed to minimize potential disruption and participant stress.

Feedback

At the end of my agreed time in school, I will offer a summary of my notes for the teacher(s) to check for accuracy and agreement. If the teacher / Headteacher wishes for anything to be removed or amended, then this will be done to their approval. The group tasks with pupils affords me opportunity to manage this type of feedback with pupils themselves

Confidentiality

All data and personal information will be stored securely within CCCU premises in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University's own data protection requirements. Data can only be accessed by Victoria J Schulze. All data will be made anonymous (i.e. all personal information associated with the data will be removed and all data will be destroyed after successful completion of the study).

Dissemination of results

The experiences coming from my time in school with the class and with pupil focus groups will be used together with earlier data to inform and also complete my research findings. My draft findings are to be shared with my supervisors and Chair at my next scheduled review meeting (April/May 2018), and ultimately will appear after further analysis in my PhD thesis, currently due to be submitted in December 2019.

Deciding whether to participate

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature, procedures or requirements for participation do not hesitate to contact me. Should you decide to participate, you will be free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason.

Any questions? (These are welcome to be asked at any stage of the research).

Please contact Vikki on 01227 767700 x 3157, or vikki.schulze@canterbury.ac.uk

The School of Teacher Education
Primary Education
North Holmes Road campus
Canterbury
Kent CT1 1QU

APPENDIX 14

Parent/carer letter and consent form

Canterbury
Christ Church
University

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am an academic member of staff working in the School of Teacher Education and Development at Canterbury Christ Church University and I am currently also studying to complete a PhD. My research involves exploring children's experiences of learning a foreign language in primary school and investigating the nature of their developing perceptions and understanding of these, in how they compare with their other learning experiences. With your permission, in addition to that of the school, teachers and children, I would very much like to come and spend some time during the school day with the class, observing their regular learning experiences including with foreign language(s). The precise times will be agreed in advance with the school.

This time will help inform my studies as I work now to draw my data together and complete this part of the research. I ultimately hope to be able to compare and contrast the experiences of children to gain a better understanding of how the foreign language learning experiences of children in primary school compare, in which ways, for whom, and why.

Whilst I am sitting quietly in class during the day, I will watch and observe how the learning unfolds and what it is like to be in the class. I will be trying hard to see and feel what it might be like from the children's perspectives. I will be making some descriptive notes to help me remember things. No names of children or teachers however will be recorded at any time, and complete anonymity will be assured. Obviously I will seek to minimise any potential disruption to the usual lessons and any potential anxiety, or undue excitement, my presence could cause.

Should you prefer me **NOT** to note anything at all that relates to your child in these lessons, or would actually prefer me not to be in your child's class at all, please can you indicate this on the relevant slip provided at the bottom of this letter and return to the school office **before ……….**. If you have any questions relating to my proposed time in the foreign language lessons of your child, please do alert the school, and I will respond with the school's agreed assistance.

In addition, I would like to work with up to c.12 children from the class (in for example 3x groups of 4x pupils) to complete some short, focussed small group activities. Children will be selected in liaison with the class teacher from those that volunteer and are happy to participate. Children may opt out of participating in these activities at any stage. This will involve children in some practical activities that seek to engage them in discussion and reflection as they are completed. Should you prefer your child **NOT** to be included in the opportunity to participate in the short focussed group activities, please can you indicate this on the relevant slip below and return to the school office **before…………**

Thank you for considering my request,

Yours sincerely,

Victoria Schulze (PhD student)

FORM A:

I do not consent to the researcher being present in the foreign language lessons of my child/children.

Name of child / children: ________________________ Class/ classes: _________________________

Signed: ____(parent/carer).

FORM B:

I do not wish for the researcher to note anything that relates specifically to my child / children:

Name of child / children: ___________________________ Class/ classes: ______________________

Signed: ____(parent/carer)

FORM C:

I do not wish for my child / children to participate in the focussed group activities:

Name of child/ children: ____ Class / classes: _________

Signed: ____ (parent/carer)

FORM D:

Questions and queries relating to the researcher being present in my child's class.

Name of child / children: ___________________________ Class/ classes: ______________________

Name of parent: ____

Questions/queries:

APPENDIX 15

Pupil Focus Group Guidelines

- c.3x groups of c.4x pupils recruited from the KS2 class in which time has been spent by the researcher seeking to immerse themselves in the day-to-day school experiences.

- A mix of pupils in each of these groups is desired: from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, and also ability / educational attainment.
- A series of short, practical tasks are to be completed by the groups; as they are completed the researcher will seek to engage the children in a shared review and reflection about their learning experiences and their responses to, and their explanations for them.
- To be conducted in a quiet, safe space conducive to discussion and sharing ideas and thoughts – in liaison and agreement with the class teacher / school.

Activity 1:

The researcher will share some objects/realia/resources relating to previously observed lessons/learning activities, including in foreign languages. These will seek to prompt children's recollections as children select and sort these objects. The researcher will note the nature of these recollections, comments and responses elicited from children in the group.

Activity 2:

Children in each group will be asked to select from a range of visual media , choosing what best reflects their experiences of their learning a foreign language, and also in another area of learning that the children themselves decide. They will be asked to explain their choice, and also why they decided against the other options. This will be noted by the researcher.

Activity 3:

Collage activity: First, a range of similes and metaphors will be shared and explained with children. Next they will be shown a sample collage created by the researcher to represent what she feels like when it is holiday time. After discussion about this, children will be asked to create a collage of their own depicting their own similes and metaphors for their various experiences of learning a foreign language in primary school. As these are completed, the researcher will seek to listen to, and note children's talk and will, where relevant, interject to ask for clarification / further detail to help children explain their thinking behind their creations.

Activity 4:

Blob tree activity: children will be asked to identify where they see themselves in relation to their learning experiences with a foreign language at primary school. They will be asked to highlight their chosen 'Blob', and to provide a thought bubble for them, adding suggested thoughts/questions/comments the 'Blob' avatar might be having.

APPENDIX 16

Draft observation schedule

Lesson observation schedule PhD VS

1. Background setting

School: Lesson / language:

Date and time: Teacher / other adults present:

Year group: No. of children: Girls: Boys:

No. of pupils with EAL / SEN/ PPF:
Which other languages are spoken by pupils in this class?

2. Classroom layout: (sketch / comment including details of any languages material in classroom / setting area).

3. Lesson Focus:
   a) Learning objective / focus
   b) Learning activity:
   c) Specific activities/skills highlighted
   d) Time allocated to the activities
   e) Organisation / grouping

4. Description of classroom tasks and interaction
   a) How does teacher explain what children have to do?
   b) Do pupils appear to understand the task / learning?
   c) Describe what the pupils are doing in the lesson.
   d) What opportunities are there for interacting with eachother?
   e) How do children interact with the teacher?

5. Description of pupil interaction /engagement / relationships
   a) Pupil participation?
   b) Pupil interaction / responses/feedback?
   c) Teacher interaction / responses/feedback?

6. Lesson structure:
   a) LI
   b) Pace? Sequencing?
   c) Progression?
   d) Monitoring/assessment/self-assessment/peer-assessment?

APPENDIX 17

Example (anonymised) email contact with Class teacher (Y3) during data collection

Thu 30/06/2016 11:01
Hi Vikki,

We are making labyrinths in maths and writing about the story Varmints in the morning. Then in the afternoon we are finishing the writing and have a steel drumming workshop.

I can't believe it's this time of year already. Hope you are keeping on top of all the end of term/ exams etc.

We are just about recovered! Just awaiting the outcome now.

Hopefully see you soon if you think Friday will be useful,

From: Schulze, Vikki (vikki.schulze@canterbury.ac.uk) <vikki.schulze@canterbury.ac.uk>
Sent: 30 June 2016 09:10
To:
Subject: RE: Friday?

Hello

Not sure how things are fixed for you and the class this week – whether me coming in for late morning and/or the first part of Friday afternoon is suitable? It's amazing how quickly this term has flown. Our PGs are now finishing final placement and we have a very busy final week coming up with them, and then all the exam boards etc.

Do hope you have all survived and recovered from the big 'O' last week.

Vikki

From:
Sent: Wednesday, June 22, 2016 7:27 AM
To: Schulze, Vikki (vikki.schulze@canterbury.ac.uk) <vikki.schulze@canterbury.ac.uk>
Subject: Friday?

Hi Vicki,

I think I have in my diary about you coming this Friday. We actually have Ofsted in. They came yesterday and are back in today. It's somewhat of an endurance task so I think by Friday (or rather this afternoon) we are going to be completely exhausted.

Would it be possible to cancel coming in this week? I don't think you will get any sense out of us.

Sorry for the short notice. Hope all is well with you,

From: Schulze, Vikki (vikki.schulze@canterbury.ac.uk) <vikki.schulze@canterbury.ac.uk>
Sent: 23 May 2016 12:58
To:
Subject: RE: Thursday pm?

Still very much fine by me as it all helps build up my knowledge and understanding - so thank you indeed,

Vikki

FromSent: Monday, May 23, 2016 12:39 PM
To: Schulze, Vikki (vikki.schulze@canterbury.ac.uk) <vikki.schulze@canterbury.ac.uk>
Subject: Re: Thursday pm?

Hi Vikki,

It is fine to come in on Thursday afternoon.

We won't be doing French though, I'm afraid. We're doing the Big Board Game Day for the NSPCC on Friday, so are doing some 'research' into board games on Thursday afternoon.

If you would still like to come you are more than welcome!

Have a good week,

From: Schulze, Vikki (vikki.schulze@canterbury.ac.uk) <vikki.schulze@canterbury.ac.uk>
Sent: 23 May 2016 11:24
To
Subject: Thursday pm?

Hello Mel,

Just wanting to check whether it’s still ok for me to come in on Thursday afternoon this week? (My work diary won’t allow Friday I’m afraid).

Very best indeed,
Vikki

Wed 27/04/2016 09:38
Hi Vikki,

Of course you can come in. We will probably try and do our French lessons on a Friday afternoon as that seems to fit well with out timetable. However we tend to do a timetable each week as it seems to change!

We have an assessment week next week, so in theory Friday 6th May will work for French. Hopefully we will sort a timetable tomorrow and I can let you know for definite?

After that, Friday 13th May and Thursday 26th May will work!

Then after half term: Friday 24th June and Friday 1st July.

I hope those are helpful. At the moment I don't know if more things will be booked. I've put those dates in my diary so will try and let you asap if things come up!

Looking forward to seeing you,

From: Schulze, Vikki (vikki.schulze@canterbury.ac.uk) <vikki.schulze@canterbury.ac.uk>
Sent: 26 April 2016 12:52
To:
Subject: RE: Research

Hello

Would it be possible to arrange some more dates/time for me to come into class again morning or afternoon when there will/ is likely to be some French happening too this term?

Given that I think this is most likely to be on Thursdays or Fridays from our previous conversation, here are some suggested dates I could make:

Thursday 5th May or Friday 6th May
Friday 13th May or Thursday 19th May
Friday 20th May or Thursday 26th May

After half-term:
Thursday 23rd June or Friday 24th June
Thursday 30th June
Friday 1st July

Do any of these work for you and the school?

All kindest regards now,

Vikki

-----Original Message-----
From:
Sent: Wednesday, March 23, 2016 12:23 PM
To: Schulze, Vikki (vikki.schulze@canterbury.ac.uk)
Subject: Re: Tomorrow

Hi Vikki,

It is absolutely fine. You are in the diary- we are looking forward to seeing you tomorrow!

Best wishes,

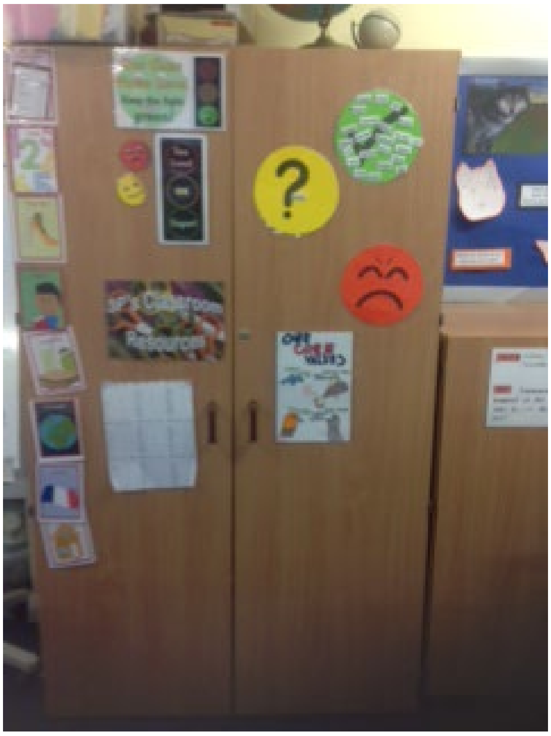
From: Schulze, Vikki (vikki.schulze@canterbury.ac.uk) <vikki.schulze@canterbury.ac.uk>
Sent: 23 March 2016 11:51
To:
Subject: Tomorrow

Hello just confirming that all is still ok for me to come to school tomorrow morning? - Likely to arrive c.9am - afraid I cannot make earlier tomorrow, though will try.

All very best wishes indeed,
Vikki

APPENDIX 18

Classroom and seating (Year 3, School 3)



S[redacted]ore Values

APPENDIX 19

Transcripts of children's talk during focus group activities

Pupil Focus group activity / interview transcript

Date: 4/7/2018

Time: 2:20pm-3pm Time delay – fitting in with class activities. Ethics: HT gave me permission but CT have other priorities/concerns/worries about fitting things in and ensuring all children up to speed. No groups permitted/possible in the morning because of primacy of English/Maths. All interventions happening in the afternoon – the research group activities could therefore only fit around those; time limited; effect: extra pressure as a researcher to 'get' the things you're wanting to…. With this group I was able to work with one group for a longer period of time ((40 mins) - sought to fit in all activities to trial them with the pupils and gain their thoughts/ideas about them as a means to eliciting their thoughts about their foreign language learning experiences.

Location: School quadrant Only place 'free' – out side drumming workshop with some classes/ singing/ background noises on recording indicate all these things. Still within visual location of classs- but a considerable amount of trust afforded me by the school. Again – possible ethical tensions and the need constantly to keep within these ethical boundaries almost self-imposed – because the school not worried. (Almost as a kind of 'what's the issue?' kind of feeling from looks in conversations / responses like 'really?')

Context: Hot, sunny. School busy – songs being sung, teachers calling out, HT walking around school with surveyors et al… 'Top' table minus one (no consent slip received). Issues surrounding classroom based research – ethics – felt as a researcher, as this is excluding some pupils for ethical reasons that ethically actually is also felt as a researcher to undermine the pupils in the class (those not being permitted to participate by non-return of consent; by default more of the children from 'lower' tables and especially the lowest did not have forms returned. There was a clear hierarchy linked to that. Felt a bit powerless as a researcher to do anything about…. Not wanting to engage directly because no permission but as a human being (with professional teacher training) wanting not to have any children 'ostracised'…. Whilst aware they needed permission slip to participate, still felt exclusionary.

R: setting the scene: gaining informed verbal assent.

R: Just generally, have things stayed the same at school since I was here last in Y3 in terms of how your lessons and day to day things are structured? The lessons, where you sit, what you learn… Because I know you still split for things like maths and that? Have those experiences stayed the same?

P group: yeah things are pretty similar.

R: do you learn the same things now that you used to in Y3? Y4?...

Ps: no.

Ps: we learn the same subjects

Ps: but we have different things and tasks that we focus on.

Ps: we have different books that we write in.

Ps: we have higher level things to learn now.

R: do you expect that in Y5? has it got harder now in Y5? Or have you just got more clever?

Ps: it was a very big jump from Y4 to Y5 – yeah – yeah – In Y5 they want to know what your ability is. It was the biggest jump…

R: so in relation to languages … I think you've got a book called MFL or Multiculturalism

Ps: Yeah. We had one of those in Y3, Y4 too.

R: are you going to expect one in Y6 too?

Ps: Yeah!

R: what kind of things go in there then? What so you use that book for?

P(b) : we do it for doing things like the French numbers and the French alphabet.

P(g): sometimes we do it when we have things like multicultural week …like writing up everything, well most things, in there.

P(b) : I just wanted to say in Y3 we did the colours, in Y4 we did the alphabet, and now in Y5 we're doing things like time and directions and all that

R: I saw the lesson you had the other day I think in the other Y5 class?

P: yeah we did have the same lesson.

R: who taught you?

P: Miss……

R: does she always teach you in Y5?

Ps: no –just since about two weeks ago. Last couple of weeks.

Ps: because Y3 were having this like special PE lesson. So xxxxx came to teach us. Miss xxxx needed to teach them [Y3]. She's being trained to teach PE.

R: What is it like being taught by different teachers? Does that happen for other subjects too?

Ps: only for maths. We all switch around.

Ps: Well not really – not everyone does

Ps: well it's quite exciting though to have a different teacher in lessons. To see how they teach differently.

R: ok… and what happened in French yesterday in your lesson? Do you want to talk me through a little bit?

Ps: so….we were learning directions yesterday. So…. How to say ….like…um….. 'to your furthest left' or something like that.

Ps: And we had to make our own sentences. Um…….. yeah….that's all we did. 'Cos it was the end of….

R: was it the end of the day? Did you need to do something else?

Ps: we ran out of time a bit.

Ps: We were learning left and right in the French language.

R: ok

Ps: Which is…..So… left is…er…..um…..'gouche' ….and then…. right is 'droiy'

R: well remembered…well remembered.Yeah?

Ps: we also had like a sheet of paper. We had to follow to…..there was a green square and we had to start in one place and try and direct ourselves to the other side of the page.

Ps: we also watched a video though. Like…um…where people were asking other people where this is and where that is

R: OK. And out of all of those things in that particular lesson what do you think was the best bit? What do you remember doing most? Was it the writing things? Watching the video?…. What was it?

Ps: well I think it was a mix because it's quite fun watching the video but then it was quite fun like learning to write the words.

Rs: To actually write the words…. It can be a bit challenging can't it? Do you like a challenge?

Ps: [unanimous] Yes!

R: OK. I've heard that from other children before that they like a challenge. Some children say they like it because it's fun. Do you find you like your French language learning because it's 'fun?' OR because it's challenging?

Ps:…it's …well…ok… when it's abit challenging . It's more challenging than fun.

P(g): I think it's challenging because lots of people like…..because some…..most of the words…they…we learn….. we've never really had before.

R: Do you think…. I mean…if you are all saying you like getting on with your French….that all the rest of the class respond in the same way as you? What is it like? Because you all know what it's like to sit in there when it's a maths lesson..or it's English …or it's RE or it's science…you know… so when it's going to be French for example what's your class react like? What's your feeling about that?

Ps: Some people might think that it's quite boring…'cos you can see their faces like …[sound 'usshhh'] – laughter from others in the group – so it's a mix.

R: alright. Is that everyone else's perception?

Ps: Yeah you know… it's like very mixed …some people enjoy it…some people like don't mind it… some don't like it

P (b): some people are ..well...just lazy (slight laugh)

R: really? Do you all think that?

Ps: yes. I've always like wanted to learn Japanese because...I like um Japanese culture and things like that...

R: Do you like the Manga things?

Ps(b): Yes! And...well...I've.... never been.... a fan of French though....it's ....not.... my...strong point

P(b): I want to learn Spanish.

R: ok. So there's a thing about languages ..because what you're talking about now is about different languages so what you'd really like to be doing than what you are doing...so when you're learning French are you really thinking 'I wish it was Japanese' or I wish it was Spanish ?

PS: [unanimous] yeah!

R: Do you think learning French will help?

Ps: Yeah

R: do you think learning French will help you reach these other goals you have?

Ps: yeah....

R: is that why you then...just get on with it [learning French]?

Ps: yes...that's it.

R: ok... Um... so what I'd really like to think about is how you feel about it. Because for me as a researcher that's the hardest thing for me to know. I can ask you loads of questions and you can answer and ask questions too...but it's how you really think about it... so I've just got a couple of things that I thought may...or may not... help me do this. And it'd be great if you could tell me if you think they'd help? Or..if you think actually Vikki they're rubbish and you need to do this instead! Alright?

Ps: laughter – yes.

Rs: Because again ...do you know what happens with research sometimes? ..The researchers plan everything ... they do lots of things.... But can often find it really hard to really listen to children. So .. if you've any ideas as to how you think I might be able to find that out please let me know. Alright? So this one... you must have seen these things before? All these little emojis?

Ps: yeah...[pointing out some]

R: so these about about feelings... are you know... there are loads..and if you Google it...there are seemingly millions of emojis. But if you just have a look at those ones there... for you personally... if you think..... like having a maths lesson this morning... sometimes it varies how you feel...but generally that's how I kind of feel...what kind of one would you pick?

Ps: [picking ones out]

Rs: do you want to just put an 'M' beside it for maths then? Should have brought some more pens out... I didn't think about that one.... Any other subject you have any of these feelings about?

P(b): probably English… I'm quite surprised about… Because there's so much writing….like… oh my goodness!...

Ps: yeah. Like when we're doing English and we're asked to write a lot.. I'm kind of like that [facial expression] because like…you don't know whether you're going to fit it in in time

R: ok… is that the worried emoji then?

P: no…scared.

R: The scared one? ([surprise in my voice]

Ps: like at the start I'm like…how the hell am I going to start this…but once I get into it I find it like..much easier.

R: ok. So it's the start of it? Can you Where do you think French would be?

……… pupils completing activity…………happy……confused…yeah confused….

R: do you think learning French compares with anything else you're learning in school?

P: it does link to learning RE sometimes

P {whispering to another…can I use the pen please]

P: because when we're learning about other religions…and sometimes they speak differently

R: ok… so the different religions? Um…do you know any? Religions where they speak differently?

P:….um…..er… Buddhism?...

R: it's quite an interesting thought isn't it? Why do they speak differently do you think?

P: I don't know … it's just the way um…..they believe is right …in their religion

R: so language is about beliefs? When you're learning French, does that change your belief at all?

P: um… no..not really

R: does learning a language change you as a person at all?

P: [thinking]

R: because you're growing up English and speaking English, learning French at school… Do you think it would be different if you were speaking French, thinking and being French and learning English in a French school?

P: I think that would be weird..thinking about me suddenly being French …learning English and not learning French…I think it would be kinda weird!

R: ok

P: yeah….you wouldn't really Like understand why …and learning English and not being English.

R: cos it's a weird thing to think about isn't it? If you had penfriends in France …and… because it could be quite interesting for them to know what you think it's like learning French and for you to know what's it's like to be in school in France learning English? I mean… what would you say to them? What's it like to learn French here at primary school? If you had a penfriend like that?

P: I think..if I was telling them how I felt…if they were French…and I was telling them how I felt learning French …I'd find it…um…. You'd think that it was weird how they'd be speaking it and telling you loads of different things …and.. it would…. they'd feel that it was normal? But we wouldn't feel it was normal?

R: and do you like it when you write? Because I mean…what kind of skills are there when you're learning French? What does it mean…what does it mean you have to do?

P: well some of the skills are… well you have to listen..really well to how you pronounce the words and how you spell them {yeah]

R: ok so you have to listen really well. Do you have to …like use your brain? Does it make you think?

P: yeah yeah

P(g): you use your memory …because if you…if you have one phrase…and there's one word you already know….then you could have an idea what it could be?

R: And that links I think to what you said about thinking?

P: Yes

R: thank you. It's really helpful when you let me know that it's OK what I'm thinking. Because otherwise I could be thinking you're thinking something different. Do you think everyone in class likes speaking? Everyone likes writing?

P: no……

R: what do they think is the hardest thing to do then?

P: I think most people probably find Englsih hard… it depends… in maths some people …well some people are bad at maths others are good at English..

R: so different people like different things are good at different things. Do you notice that in French?

Ps: Yeah

R: Are there different sets of people who are liking it and getting on with it?

Ps: yeah

R: is that the same with other subjects or is it different when French comes around?

P: it carries on throughout the school day because some people have different conceptions of what the activities are like.

R: ok…. Because you've done some different things haven't you…yesterday was definitely writing wasn't it?

P: yeah

R: and I remember seeing a lesson in Y3 which probably seems ages and ages and ages ago.. but it was one where you were doing lots of talking..with talking partners…and I didn't see as much writing then going on?

P: yes because at different times you have to talk about the ideas that you have and then have to tell the teacher what you're thinking

P: I also think that in Year 3 or sometimes in Year 5 that we enjoy like talking in any subject ..like in French say, we enjoy talking and telling eachother what we think and just talking about the different things that we hardly even write ..we're just..like..just talking.

P: especially in Year 3 …we always had a talking partner who sat next to us and we always had…we normally had um… before we…er had do to anything…the teacher says… have a talk with your partner to practice using that language ..we always um…we always…had like a little smile and a chat ..because you enjoyed doing that

R.. so that's quite..well.. that's supporting eachother?

P: yeah

R: And is it like in some lessons as a class you 'bond' a bit more and help eachother out more? Do you find there are some lessons like that? Is French one of those lessons? Or are you telling me it has changed from Year 3 to Year 4?

P: on the subject we've been doing in DT we help eachother ..we were making like biscuit boxes ..we were helping eachother out.

R: I've read some of your like end of year reflections and I've read lots about biscuit boxes!

P: yeah! We helped eachother.

R: Right -= so have we all now managed to complete that activity? Written down something for the subjects you thought about?

P: yes [handing in papers and pens]

R: Now I know you know about metaphors and similies because I've seen you all taking about those in your lessons. And it's quite interesting…some researchers have started to think about comparing learning languages … and I'm thinking about what it's like to learn languages in school. And there's hardly any research on that ….. and even less about what it's like learning languages in an English primary school. So.. having a think about what it's like…I've printed off a few pictures

[explaining pictures and meanings and examples behind them – sharing what other children have told me / what findings I seem to have from my earlier research]

R: so do any of those resonate with you?

P: definitely that one – yeah that one! [R puts three marks down]

R: All of you then went straight for that one! Why is that?

P: It's going into it when your brain has been kind of relaxing ..and we've got to kind of like…get to work ..we have to use our brains, use our hands

R: but is that what you feel like when you're learning French?

P: yea [agreement] because you've got to kind of like work on the language …click back into it

R: do you have French every week?

Ps: no … is Y3 we used to have it more… In year 4 we hardly had any …. And this year… it's only been the last couple of weeks…we hadn't had French in like ages..

18:19

R : so that's why you're making it think that it has to click back in again. Does it make it a bit harder ?

Ps : yes / yeah

R : all right then , is there any picture that resonates with anyone else?

Ps : I think that, yeah I think that – that one because I used to not liking English that much but I like it more now.

R : okay,

Ps : I also think that this is like the task we are doing in the book

R : okay , looking at that . Okie Dokie, yep , anyone else want to talk about the pictures ?

Ps : yes I think that one was used to like the subjects but over the year I would like

R : okay, this one remember im trying to think about French because you don't do it as often as a subject kinda like how does it figure ? how does it feel like ? you know and is it a bit weird when you suddenly you're suddenly in the same class room where you normally speak English and where you learn all sort of other things then suddenly you're in there and your teacher is using a different language or you're using a different language the videos in a different language does that feel weird / strange….

Ps: yeah

R : normal or do you just not think about it , it is just one of those things

Ps – yes when im

R – I have to.. I don't know what it is like

Ps – um when we are like then we haven't had French for a long time we just have English when I turn around they let Danny and Angelo my class in French I get really confused and then I realised that it's a different language

R : yeah and have a look okay and when you do things like directions or time think I have seen in your book you know looking at that does that link to any other subjects you're doing ? I mean does your French look at anything else you're doing or does it just feel separate?

Ps: erm yeah well the learning.

R: you probably haven't really thought about it because I'm asking you to think about things you probably haven't really thought about too?

P:well we can't really link it with anything else because it's a different language

R: so are you saying the language itself stops you linking it with other things?

Ps; Yeah

R: although you do the time in English and you've done some in French too? So is that a link?

P: no

R: so you think the language itself still stops there being a link?

Ps: Yes.

Rs: I've got another thing here that may help us explore this some more. Have you heard of sayings - things like I heard you talking about in class this morning ' buttering someone up' . Have you heard of the saying 'like a bull in China shop?'

Ps: Yeah

R: what does that mean? What do you understand by that? Look - here's a picture to represent that saying that I googled.

Ps: It's where you're being a bit clumsy. Cos the bull is like charging around. They just charge it.

R: Is it like they just get stuck into it without worrying too much too? They make a few accidents yeah? But the bull is still ok?

P: yeah – look at all those plates that are smashed.

R: is there anything about your learning French in school that's a bit like a 'bull in a china shop?' Or, do you think that's just really weird and wacky Vikki instead?!

P: sometimes things go really well, but then they like fall apart.

- Yeah – yeah- yeah from other pupils.

R: what kinds of things go well for you and what about those things where you feel it falls apart?

Ps: You get a bit panicked. You go, there's the teacher, she told you what to do, and will look like you haven't been concentrating and your mind has just like gone blank. And have I done it wrong?

Ps: And I think the bull could also apply to Miss xxx when she can't quite find the video clip

Ps: and sometimes the teachers get things wrong that can make the children kind of nervous. But it is quite funny though.

Rs: [showing new picture] This one's about football - how could we get away from football right now?!... and was it a good result last night?

Ps: - laughter and agreement –

R: so this one is thinking about whether learning languages is like playing a game of football. You don't have to be very good at it …everyone's an equal participant in the game. What do you think about that? For example, we don't have to be very good at it, but it doesn't stop us having a go? You can still play. You're still part of the team.

Ps: I think everyone can at least like try it and then they can find out how good they are at it. Like it doesn't matter how good they are at it but they can still have a go?

Ps: It's the same for me actually. I agree with that. I never used to play football and that's the same with my French. I…..You don't have to exactly love it and be….get it all right but it's just the sense of trying [yeah] seeing if you can do it…and it doesn't matter if you don't do well

Ps: and some people are OK with that and some aren't.

Ps: It's why I like French because you know there's always someone there right by your side to give you a hand

Ps: yeah I agree with you [yeah yeah yeah]

Rs: That's supporting eachother ? What you said about the smiles with eachother?

Ps: Yeah

R: Some people have said learning a language is like building a lego brick wall. You know…where you've got to take one brick at a time and build it up. I don't know what you think of that?

Ps: Yes…because if you rush your language you won't get it right ..and then you'll just get a bit stressed about it

P: it's like if you don't enjoy it and you don't participate..and you TRY to just go with the flow..you could end up with a hole in the wall?

R: and this picture here: language learning is an uphill struggle?

Ps;; ummm….er…..

R: so meaning like it's just hard work…. And you don't really know where the end of the hill is? Does that relate to how you think at all – or do you just think 'nah?'

P: I think it depends on the task [yeah] If you've got quite an easy task then it's not really a struggle but if it's like in French [yeah in French – emphasis] with a word you don't know… like school… and you can't pronounce it ..then you're actually going to be really struggling.

R: earlier you talked about your memory and needing to remember words? [yeah] And this one here actually shows the end of the hill. If the hill is like the language itself …what is the end? What is the goal? If that's French… what are we aiming for?

P: I think it's like if we learn French it can help you if you like go to foreign countries or places…so you can kind of communicate with them

R: so does this matter to you now… or is this something that you think of as being useful for you later? Does it feel like this picture – that it's in the distance?...

P: it's probably in the distance because we are like…well….quite far away…very distant from learning the language…we are only doing it pieces by pieces by pieces at the moment and simple things…I don't think we're quite there yet…no

R: do you think you might all carry on up that mountain? Or find another language mountain instead?

P: I think maybe at Secondary school…

P(b): we're not close to learning the whole language at all… we haven't learned a lot…well we have…we have learned the alphabet and the numbers but we haven't learned word by word everything.

R: Do you know everything in English?

Ps: Yes…well…not… yeah…not everything

R: do you know the language?

Ps: Yeah. There are some words we don't really understand and that because we haven't come across them …and we don't know what they mean

R: do you think you have to know everything perfectly to know a language?

Ps: no. [referring to English]

R: how about thinking about learning a language is like going over a bridge. This is my last activity. [showing activity – handing out] have you come across these diagrams before? [Nooo].

R: takes time to discuss and explain the figures and encouraging pupils to relate /empathise with how different figures may be feeling and why – related to language learning. Where would you be?...

P: some people really try… [pupils completing activity]

P: I think I'd be falling off.

R: why this one and not this one further over?

P: I would choose this one because I would if someone was stuck..I wouldn't just carry on and think 'who care's' ..I'd be helping them… like this person looks a bit worried ….I would go and help them..let them reach the end of the bridge

R: that's a really lovely thing that you've said there. Is that for all of your learning? Or especially with the French?

Ps: it's probably for all of my learning. Yeah. Even if you find it easy you can still help someone

P: I think it's for most of the activities where you're learning something like really new…and like when you understand it but there are others that don't… so you have to go and try and help.

P (g): I was going to say that in most learning..well especially in French I'm not all that confident at all …but I'm not all the way struggling either …I'm having a go.

R: you know… that's the best way for learning a language from my experience. It's actually having a go. There's also something where you know what you probably should be feeling / expected to be feeling and what you say and then really feel are actually different? Have you ever had that at all?

P: it's important to ask for help so your teacher knows you're struggling….

R: is French sth you communicate with? Is is a tool/ like English to talk with and use….or… is it a subject?

P: I think in class you do that…it's a subject. But when we're outside in the playground playing it comes across as just using that language

P: I think it's like a mix of both. It's a subject when you're doing it in class but say…when you've gone to France …it does come across as a tool

P(g): I feel it's a subject because you do it but you don't really think that you're going to be using this…that it's so important to get right …you don't really…really focus…not in my mind. I feel like that once we've done it it's like we've done it and it's still in my brain but it's not very important at the moment

R: ok thank you.

P: I think it's a tool because we sometimes do it as a subject but we also learn it out of a lesson ..well we still use it at school but not in a lesson. Like sometimes in the morning we do it in the register…Missxxxc will ask our name in French and we get to speak French sometimes like that

R: do you still do the wake up shake up kind of things that I saw before when you were in Y3? Have you had any French song there before for example?

Ps: no…

R: how about the 5 a day I saw the other day with you?

P: ooh yes we've done that in French. It's like teaching you the actions…but whilst you're doing the actions you're listening and learning what the words mean and how to pronounce them.

R: so is that the best way to learn?

Ps: it's practical. Yea [yeah]

R: learning French in primary school sounds like:…..

P: words… a bunch of letters mixed up together

Sometimes some French people speak lie REALLY quickly if you're like outside a room where they're talking it would sound like a blur. Cos it's fast.

When we do learn French it puts a different atmosphere in the room …you feel like French… it's hard to explain…

It's a good atmosphere… it's like French culture in the air..different games…videos…it shows picture of the market and it makes you think of the different food they have…

Smell…it's not really lovely but it's not really disgusting either… it's kin of in the middle…

For looks … you could like look at different people. Some people could look quite confident…but others would look quite worried …. You can tell by people's faces if they enjoy it or understand it.

R: do you notice that? Are you all really aware of that when you're all sitting at your desks?

Ps: yes – [quickly]

Ps: yes because you all have to be sat facing the teaching cos I sit at the back I can sort of see everyone's face..and like if they really don't understand it they look like really worried.

R: does that affect how you feel?

Ps: sometimes …you feel like …''ooohh woah…'

P: And it can make you feel annoyed with yourself …because you can't actually get out of your seat and go and help them..and you just…well you get annoyed with yourself for not helping them

P: yeah because you're not allowed to get up. You can't go and help them. Because of the expectations.

R: any other ideas of pictures /questions to help?

Ps: you could maybe use a climbing wall…[yeah] …

Ps: you could also have a brick wall .. a bit like you said…getting over it

Ps: you could have a picture of someone running and going over hurdles …it's not that easy… it's a bit like skipping…and you can just trip up.

Ps: You might get so caught up in your running that you forget that there's actually a hurdle in your way.

R: what are the hurdles in learning a language?

Ps: the steps you don't understand. Where you don't understand…. The running is the smooth path where you're all ok/

END OF INTERVIEW: CUT SHORT BY BEING CALLED BACK TO CLASS. THANK YOUS. AND NEXT STEPS.

Thoughts about analysis:

School routines/organisation

- Very strong ethos permeates everything. Clear values – shape and influence thinking/responses/actions – trained and brought up with these. Not only applicable to school but to wider lives too. Unique to and in this setting. As a professional have never come across anything like that before.

French input/content/lessons

- Timetabled. Resourced. Scheme. Pupil books. All class teachers teach. Supported by HT.
- Sporadic / bitty / deference to other subjects/ themed weeks/needs of teacher training – PE teaching for example /

Making links with other areas

Feelings / reactions expressed – what it's like…

- Wishing they could be learning other languages
- 'humouring' the fact that at school they are learning French
- Deeply aware of the needs of others in class – Being aware of other's reactions / facial expressions – how that in turn can affect their own feelings.
- Very aware how mixed the reaction and response is between themselves as a class.
- that the learning experience for them is very much a social one and the constraints imposed by school / class routine and expectations can act as a barrier (sitting down, not able to help others – which they say serves to make themselves annoyed at *themselves* - blaming themselves for not being able to; not looking / showing any awareness from the conversation /their actions what it is that is stopping that from happening) The power of the social/cultural norms operating within the classroom. And how accepting children are of these (conditioning / compliance/working within a system)

- Perceiving that the French they are learning is ‘piece by piece by piece’ – that they are ‘a long way off’ learning the language.

Social awareness / maturity – that surprised me as a researcher

- Bull in China shop image: ‘could also be for Miss xxx when she cannot find the right bit of the video’….
- Voicing need and deep wish/desire to help others – that this is very much part of those children’s learning experiences and feelings in lessons.

Transcript from pupil focus group interview following up with pupils after their French lesson the previous day.

4/7/18 1:30-2:15pm

Location – same as previous

Setting up the voice recorder with the children.

R: Do you want to just practise talking…..All OK?….. Allllriiiight. Now hopefully it won’t be too windy here and things won’t fly away…… Are you all OK with the sunshine here too?

Ps: Chorus of *Yeah…yes…..yes*

R: Ok. So I’ve noticed that you’ve got books that you use for writing in AND that it’s not always in English? What are those books called?

Ps (g): *Umm… we’ve got French*

Ps (b) : *we’ve got science*

Other pupils: English, maths, history……..art…..

R: Which books do you write in a different language in? UNSURE ABOUT INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING PHRASE?

Ps(gs): French!

P (b): We’ve got an Intercultural Understanding book. Basically it’s just a different country book. Sometimes we do a multicultural week and that’s what we put in our Intercul…..is it intercultural?

Ps (g); Yes – it’s our Intercultural Understanding books.

R: Ahh. I had a quick sneaky look in there because is that where you did something about Canada?

Ps: Yes we did.

R: I know you had a French lesson yesterday with Ms XXX. Does Ms XXXX normally teach you French?

Ps: No …. It's just when….um……. Not usually. She's only done it twice.

R: Ok… so who normally teaches you? DISJOINTED LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Ps: Ms xxxx (class teacher)

Ps: Ms xxx used to teach us before Christmas (other Y5 class teacher).

Ps: And in maths we change classes.

R: (Directed to a couple of pupils in the group) You will need to move up there? (Noticing some pupils in apparent discomfort)

Ps: (quietly): aah – ooh….ouch!

R: Hold on. RECORDING STOPS TO SORT OUT THE ISSUE OF ERUPTING ANTS. The area where we were sat had become alive with ants emerging to fly off. There was nowhere possible to sit out there and a new location had to be sought. Ultimately space on the edge of the field was located, under the shade of a tree. PRACTICAL METHOD ISSUES

CONTINUED RECORDING:

R: We're a bit further apart here but if we pass this voice recorder around to whoever is talking then that should help. Is that ok? I'd like to make sure that everyone's voices get heard.

Ps: Yes. (Lots of background noise from open classroom doors and music drumming group on other edge of the field makes conducting the group interview and listening to the recording difficult; no available space inside because taken up with TA-led intervention groups).

R: So… yesterday's French lesson was all about directions…….. what do you have to be able to do to learn French?

P(g): Um well you have to like understand that word? LEARNING FRENCH IS ABOUT WORDS AND REMEMBERING THEM AND WRITING THEM AND BEING ABLE TO PRONOUNCE THEM OK IF ASKED TO DO SO IN CLASS

P (b): You have to be able to understand what they mean.

Ps: You have to be able to remember words and not mix them up with swear words.

Ps (g): you have to be able to understand their accent.

R: there's a lot of things involved isn't there?

P (g): You need to be able to get the right pronunciation

Ps: oooh yeah….

P (g): and it's hard…if…you're…you need….to well…. the letters and sounds….

R: So….is when you learn French at the school …does it feel different and do you think it's different to any other learning ?

Ps: Definitely! It's harder.

P (b) : it's a tiny bit harder and takes a bit longer.

R: ok…..

P(g): it's challenging

R: is it more challenging than other things you learn?

Ps: yes!

P (g):Basically when you like learn and are born in a certain country you learn that language. And then even if you're born into a different language you learn that same language………

R: Ok… so just imagine you COULD have been born for example in France…

Ps: and you then speak French?

R: yes – and instead you could be learning English?

Ps: Ooh!

P (b) – Er.. I'm not sitting there. Look there's an ant there.

R: Come and sit yourself up here. How about there? (noises as child settles into new place and others shuffle around to accommodate that).

Where were we? Talking about whether learning French is like anything else you learn?

Ps: No…

Ps: Sort of

Ps: it's completely different.

P(b): well I would say it's similar to English cos you learn like English and you write like sentences too

P (g); But I think it's really different. Like topic work?

Ps(b): yeah… slightly… every topic is a bit different.

R: So English you have like every day don't you? Do you have French every day too?

Ps: Chorus of 'noosss'.

R: ok then so it is a bit different in that way?

P (b): Well I mean we've had it every week. *SPORADIC – PROS and CONS of THAT*

Ps: no we haven't – that's just recently.

P(b): well no… not every week.

P (g): it's quite occassional

R: Having French like you say occasionally, does it make it better or worse for you?

Ps: I think it makes it better

P (g): well sort of…

Ps: I think it makes it better cos it makes you learn more and more

P (b): yes well I think it would make it better if we had it more often… because then…well… I dunno….I'd make sure I'd like remember the stuff from last time

P(g): if you learn French…..if you're not very good at learning French…it wouldn't really help…cos if you go on holiday and you can't find summink (sic) …everywhere is written in French…and if you like needed information… you could have like…

P (b) (interrupting) : you could have like a satnav

P(g): … you could have like an information booklet and it's written in French you wouldn't be that easy.

P (b) yeah but what if you are French?

R: … so… what did you want to add? (To another pupil who was waiting to talk)

P(g): French is….we should…..I like it how we have it less occasionally.. well..occasionally…because…we…..get more excited…because we're meant to be like …what new things are we going to be learning today… then we can recap the things we have already learned. And it's a challenge to…. for…every time we have it. To see if we can remember what we've already learned…..

R: Ok… thank you. Has everyone said what they would like to about that now? Anyone else? (Checking. Pupils OK to move on).

R: DO you think… you talked about, um…when you were learning like..if you were going to go on holiday..um… is that happening now, or do you think you're possible learning French for things in the future?

Ps: For the future!

Ps: Yes in the future. (agreement in the group)

(Lots of background noise – clapping and other voices from the school afternoon)

P(g): It's for the….well… we're learning it …for..well these days and the future. We…. Um…. Well we need it just in case we go somewhere..like France…

R: Do you think it's ok to learn French 'just in case?'

P(g): Um I think it's good…because if we needed to ask for directions or something like that we would..we could ask them in their language as we're in their country

P(b) : but not everyone has a French holiday

P (b): or somebody that asks you for something like a French person on holiday here

R: so you can help them?

P: yeah.. you'd feel a bit unsafe …but if you were an adult ..if you were playing a video game and somebody online spoke another language…. (noise interference)

R: have you ever done that? It's about being safe online isn't It? (further noise interference)
FRENCH ISN'T FOR EVERYONE – HOLIDAYS _ FOR THE FUTURE – JUST IN CASE (NB. MARSH, MEHISTO & FRIGOLS 2008)

R: (introduces the emoji activity): Notes here relate to any comments recorded about children's conversations including languages as they completed the tasks:

P(b): English – I'm scared. But I'm going to put confused for French what do you think? (to another pupil)

P(g): well I'd say surprised….becaauuusse….you get surprised with new things with French.

P(b): I definitely think confused.Because I don't really understand sometimes what they're saying. And sometimes embarrassed when I have to say some French out loud. LINKS TO WRAY (2008)

R: does anyone else think like that too?

Ps: yeah..

P (g): but not when you get it right though. You feel like fantastic then.

P(b) : yes you're right but when you get it wrong everyone stares at you.

R: what helps you feel that it's OK to 'have a go?'

Ps: the support you get from your friends.

R: you know that's what your friends in the other class said too…how you work together to support eachother. Do you all feel that? That you all support eachother?

PS: yes. It's being a wolf. The wolf spirit.

P(g): excuse me…..excuse me…. Where I think I got bitten by an ant… it really hurts.. PRACTICAL METHOD ISSUES

R: do you want to go and show your teacher? I think that would be better? If it's making you feel unhappy and stopping you with this?

P(g): (sits still doesn't want to leave)

R introduces pictures to represent feelings about learning. (Teacher shouting in the background).

P(b): I learned Spanish when I was in Year 3 – with Ms xxx. But she's not here any more. So I always get mixed up with French. Which is which. Because they can be really similar. It used to be like an after school club.

R: but that doesn't happen any more?

R introduces similes and metaphors (links with their learning in English)

P(b); it's not really like being a bull in a china shop but it is like being in a ball park. There are so many balls and not much space to turn around in.

P(g): well like the bull you might make mistakes but we can fix the broken plates? By correcting yourself and asking for help?

Pupils in this group all discounted the football game picture and the pushing the boulder up the hill picture. 'No it's not really ever like that'.

P(b): (with reference to the mountain picture which captured children's interest evidenced by the number of voices and raised number of children in the group having something to say at once):

My end goal is to like talk to people…and go to friends and I would be able to understand people's language and talk to them at the same time.

I think if I could get to the middle of the mountain I'd be happy with myself….but if I did get to the top of the mountain I'd be like 'wooooooh!'

My goal is to just get French right whenever I say it.

When you reach the top with the mountain one and the boulder one it's like reaching the top Steps to Success – ooh I get the pushing the boulder up the hill now.

(Pg): if I was here (pointing to bottom of the mountain) I would be determined.

Recording is cut off – children called back to class to finish other work in time before home time.

Children's responses and answers noted from focus group interviews about their experiences learning about other countries, people and languages

General comments offered by children:

I get confused and embarrassed.

Not everyone reacts the same.

Some people feel it's useless.

People can be intimidated by writing and reading a lot.

I've been to France and it helped a lot. I went to the bakery nearly every day.

Limited time and limited progress

In Year 3 we did a lot. The teacher was French.

Year 3 was simple. We weren't pushed.

We don't have enough time.

We did it like 3 or 4 times in Year 4.

You don't come to school just to learn stuff to forget it

We've done more in Year 5 later in the year.

I think it's more exciting now.

Ms xxx is now teaching us on Mondays. We develop interesting language and even have some advanced stuff. (Could not help with sharing an example of these things for me).

Empathy and understanding of the teacher's role:

Sometimes we don't respect or appreciate the planning and lessons we have. Teachers put in as much as possible. They put in powerpoints.

Teachers sometimes get it wrong. But that reassures me. It's OK if you don't get it all right.

It makes me feel relieved. It helps that when they get it wrong.

When teachers get it wrong it makes me nervous.

Tenuous links with other areas?

It links with English – like, 'uniform' is not an English word but we use it.

It helps in history?...yeah ……. And RE…..religions that are popular in other countries.

Learning French in Primary School, to me, is :

(prompts given: Sounds like /Smells like/ Tastes like/ Looks like/Feels like)

Rasping before we say a word.

Raucous.

Like a parrot screeching.

We take it.

It's a bunch of mixed words and letters.

A bit like a blur – really fast

Looking at all the different faces of people in class. Some are confident. Some are glum.

The room changes, there's a different atmosphere.

Thinking of food.

Notes from informal Year 5 teacher conversations (unrecorded)

Time pressure recognised:

French in the curriculum works a bit like with RE and Art. It stereotypically gets squeezed.

We're really behind with our medium planning.

There's been a big focus on technology this year – it took more time.

The last two lessons the Year 3 teacher has taken lessons because of the PE observations – and the school's use of Sports Funding.

Preferences for French to be blocked on the timetable:

Would be good for French to be blocked. Pupils respond better – it gives a buzz and puts an emphasis on it. Even though it's good to revisit little and often.

Recognition that not all children relate to French : there is no real point to its teaching, no real-life meaning to what is taught

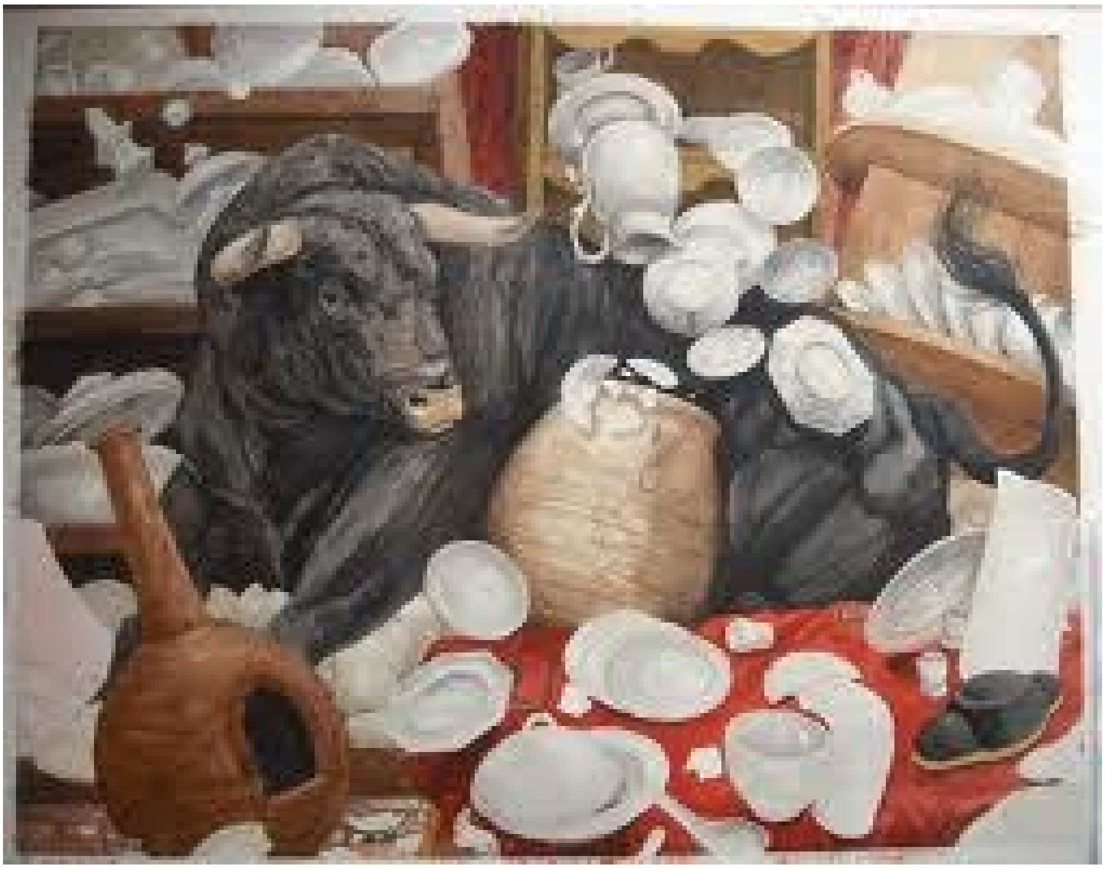
Children get on best with things they can get involved with and have real-life meaning. Like writing the letter to Pfizer. They had a point – is it cost effective sending 30 scientists to one school? Also to the refugee child from Bosnia.

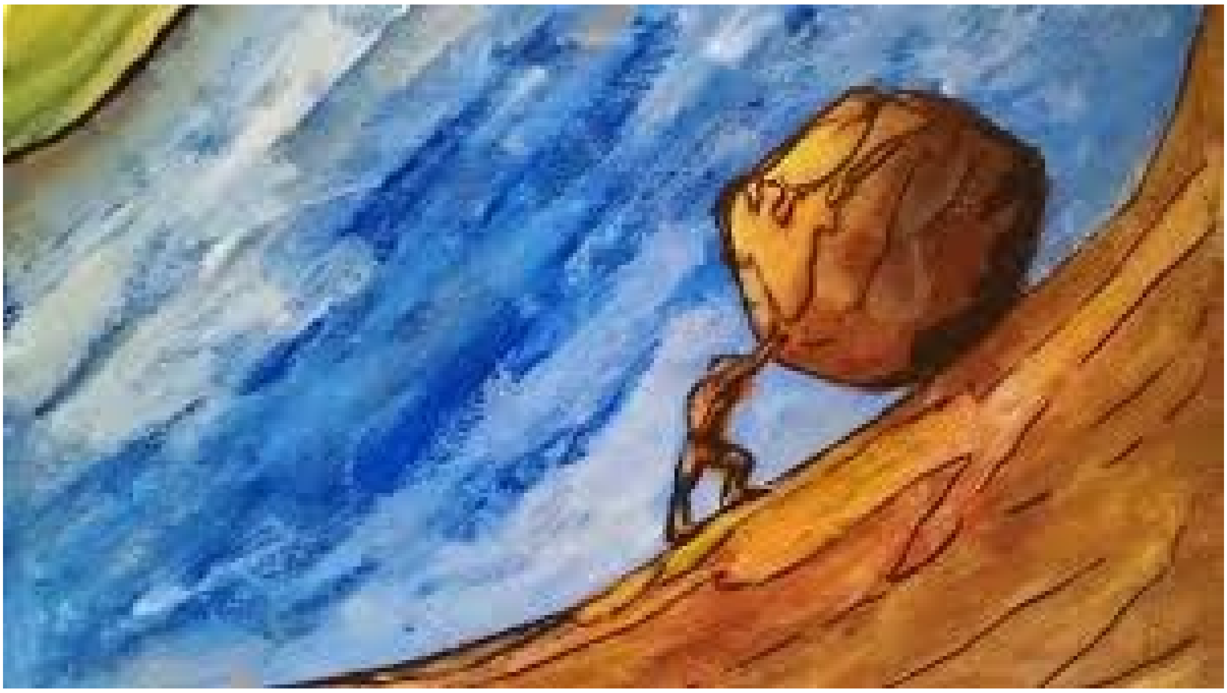
Not all children relate to French – it often slips from the timetable.

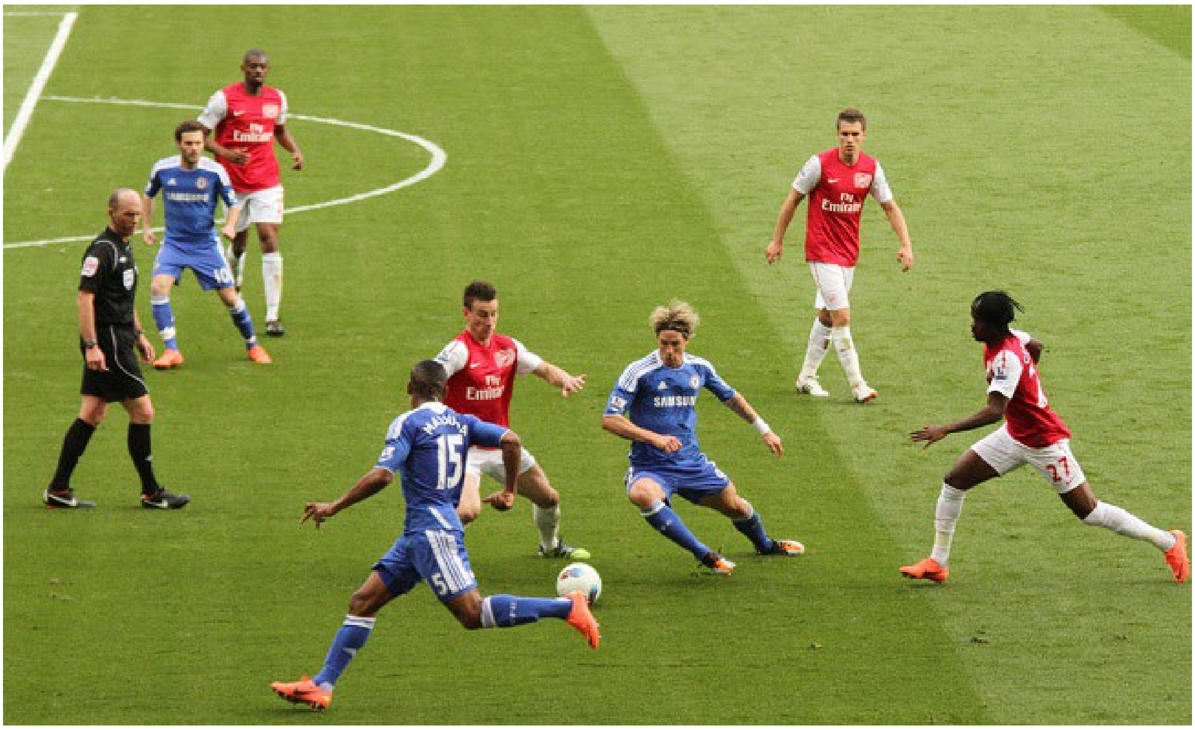
But it keeps it novel I suppose.

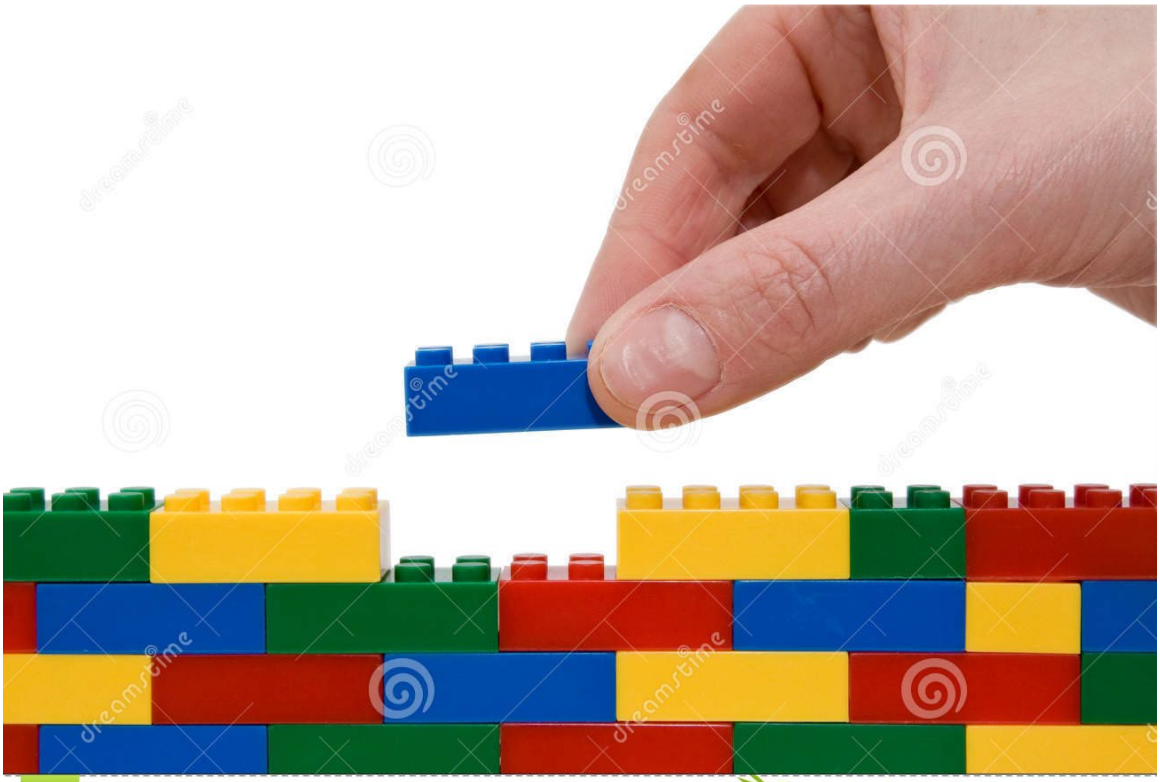
APPENDIX 20

Simile/Metaphor prompt pictures









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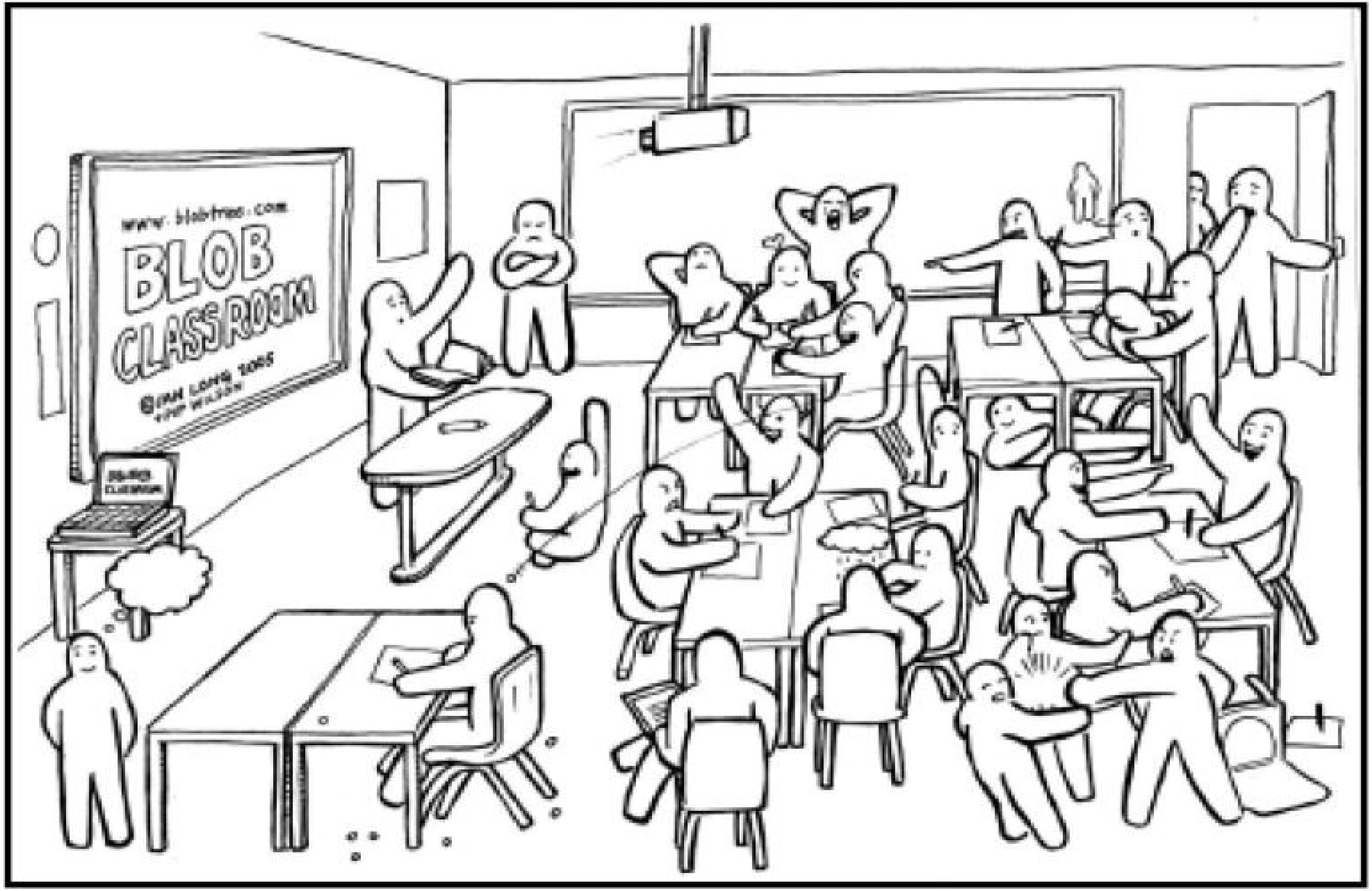
APPENDIX 21: Blob diagram samples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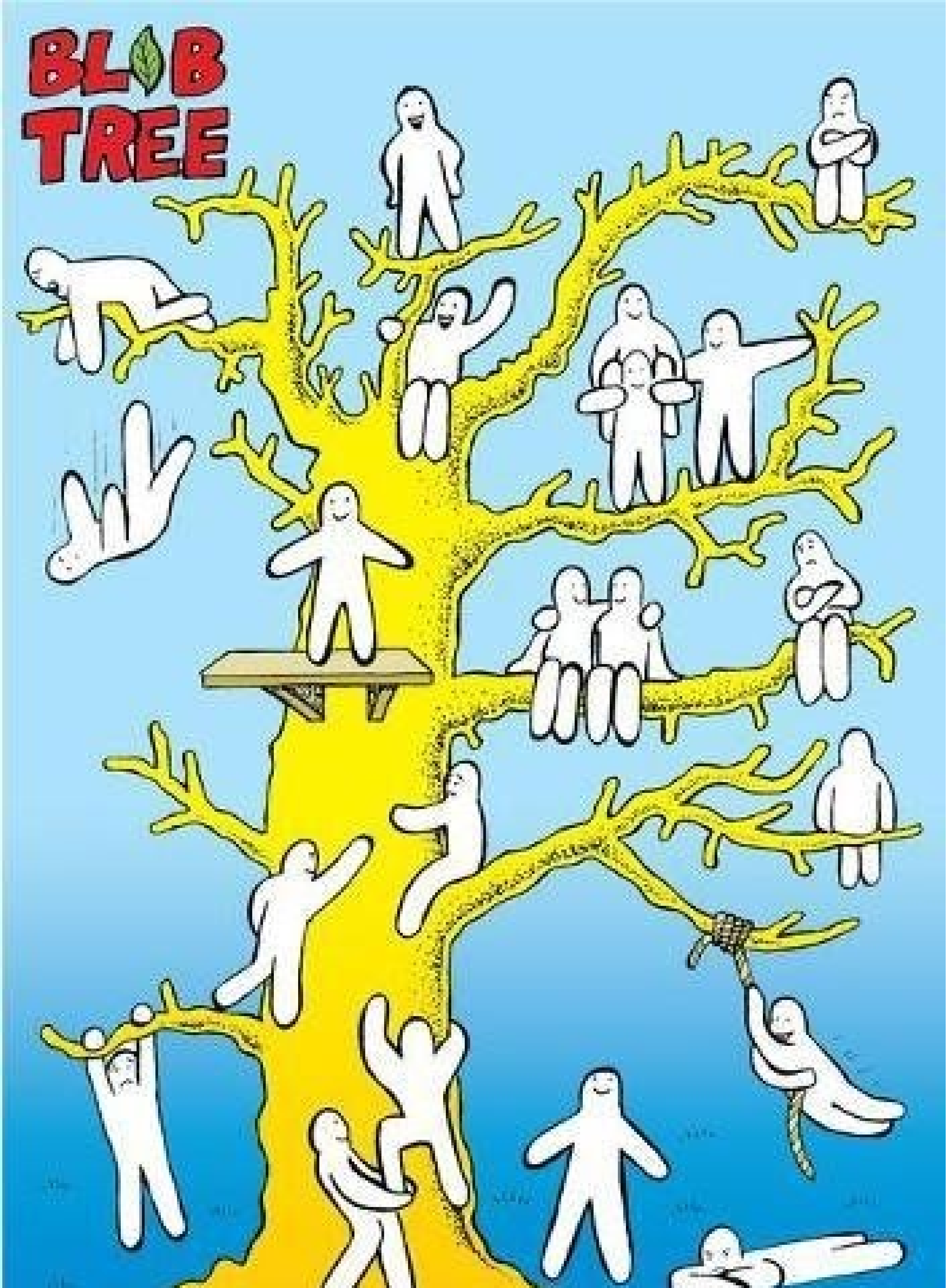
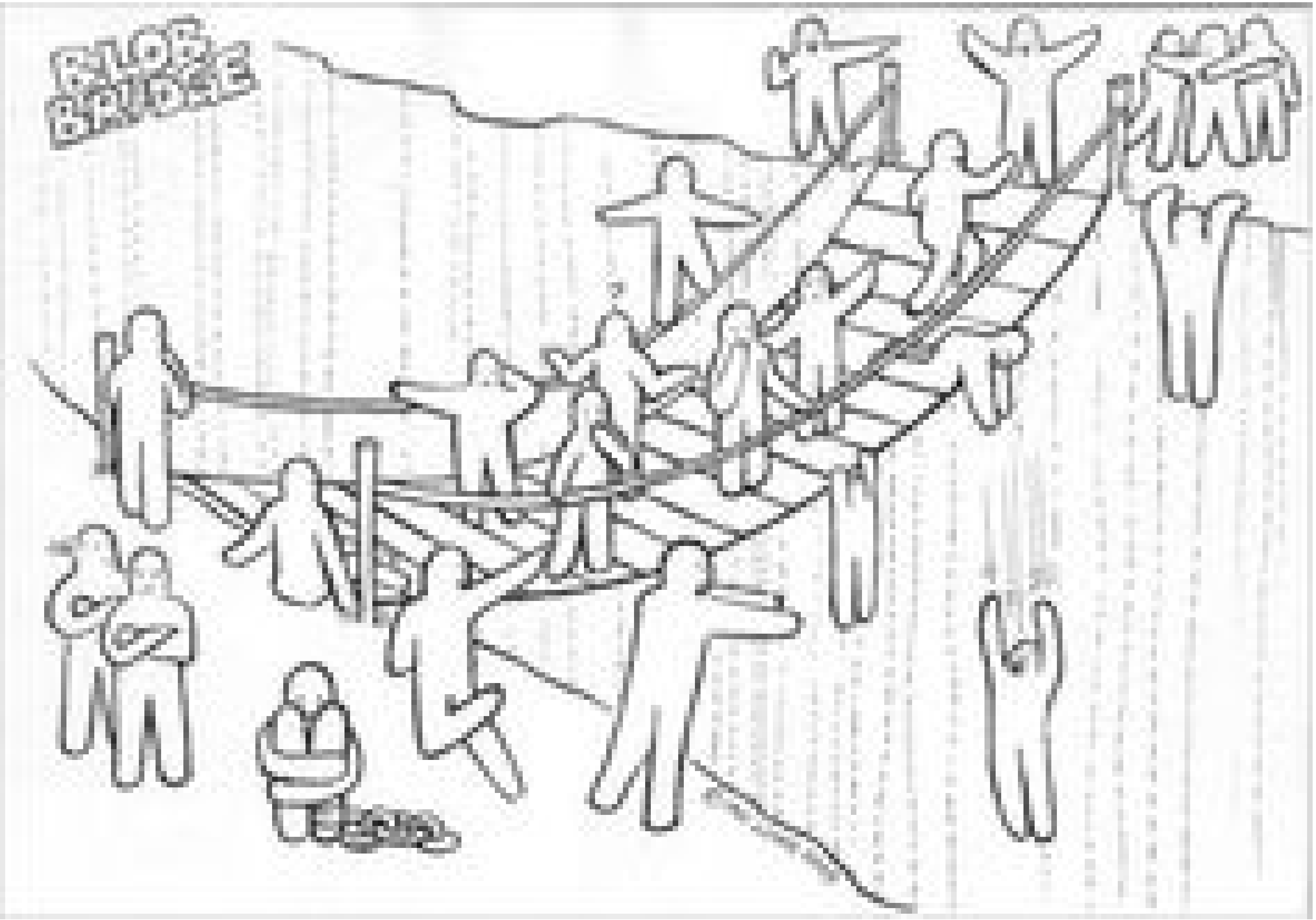
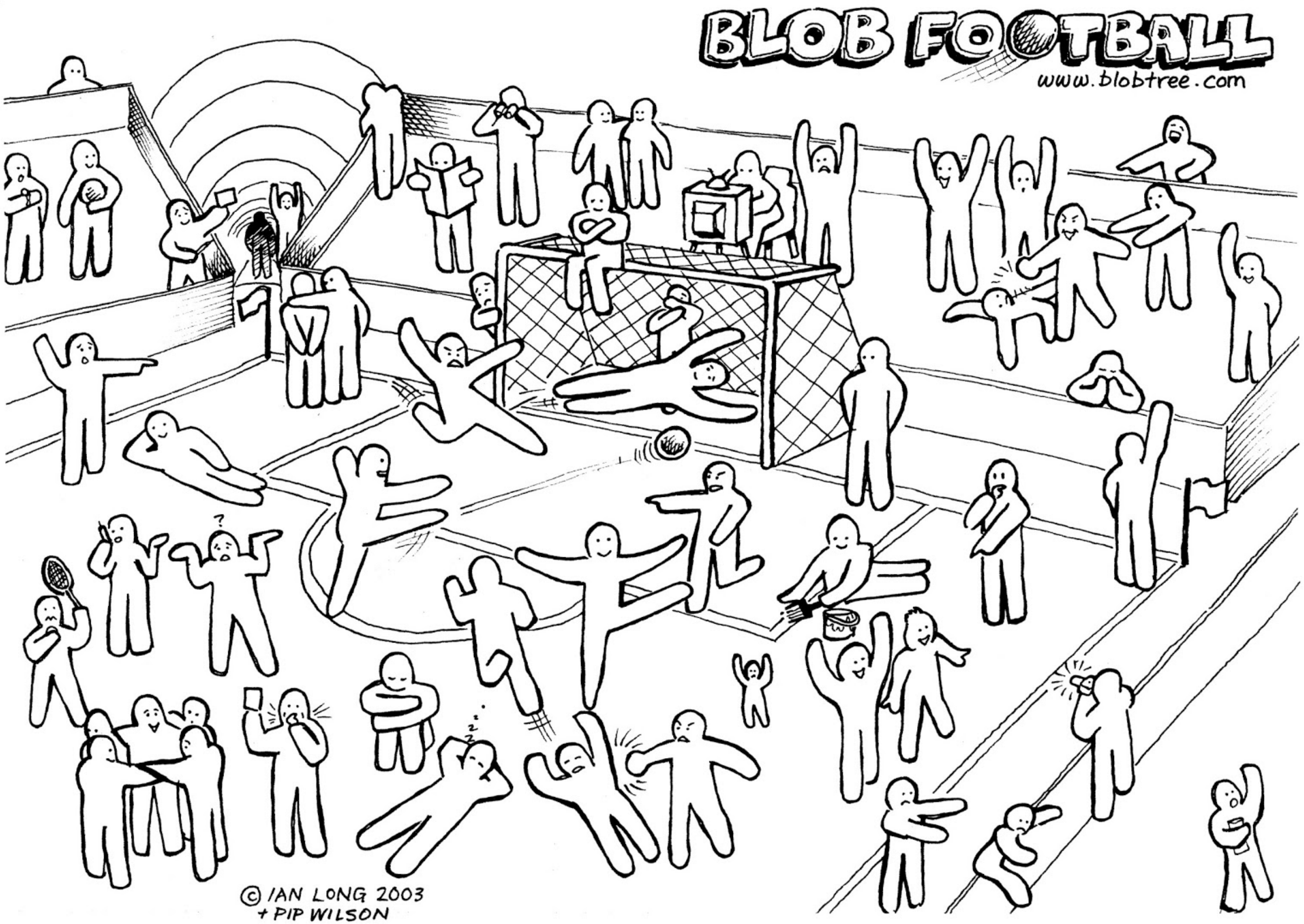

BLOB TREE



BLOB BRIDGE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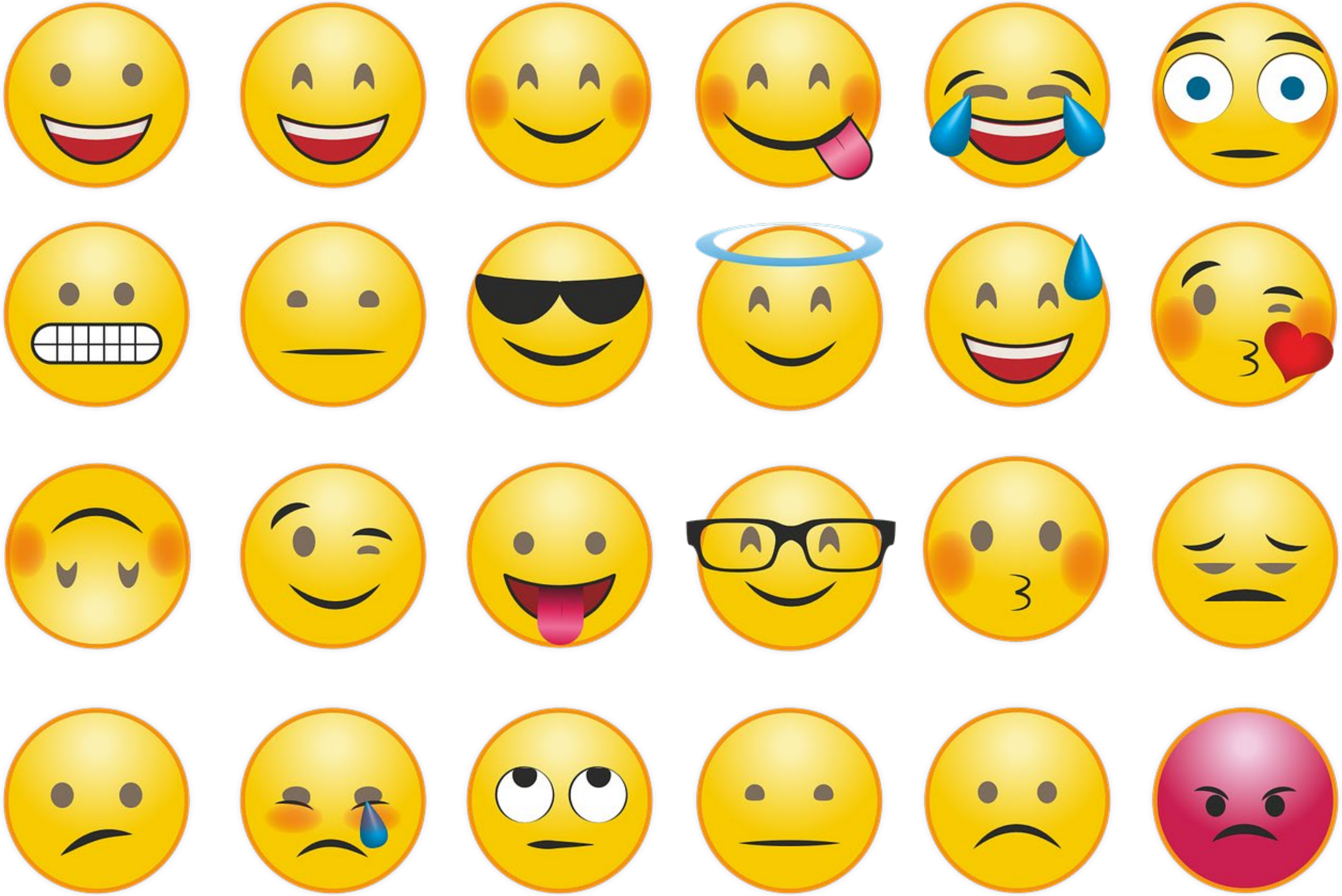
APPENDIX 22

Emoji samples and choices



Pupil Focus Group Activity (completed with 4x groups of 5/6 pupils)

Feelings about subjects / areas you are learning in school

Happy	**21**	**Sad**	**2**	**Angry**	**5**	**Surprised**	**4**
Maths (x5) PE (x5) French(x5) English (x4) Geography Science		RE French		Geography (x4) French		French (x2) History Science	
Embarrassed	**4**	**Scared/Afraid**	**3**	**Frustrated**	**3**	**Tired**	**2**
French (x2) Art (x2)		Maths Art French		Art (x2) French		RE French	
Hurt	**0**	**Bored**	**3**	**Excited**	**12**	**Confused**	**7**
		PE (x2) Maths		PE(x7) French (x2) Science English Art		French (x5) English Maths	
Anxious/worried	**5**	**Sick**	**4**	**Disappointed**	**1**	**Aggressive**	**0**
Art (x2) RE Maths English		English (x4)		PE			
Proud	**5**	**Hungry**	**1**	**Flabbergasted**	**1**	**Shy**	**0**
English (x3) Art DT		DT		DT			

Number and Range of children's emoji responses selected to represent how they felt about their learning experiences in KS2 (subjects nominated by the children themselves during the course of the activity). ***Pupil Focus Group Activity 1 (completed with 4x groups of 5/6 pupils)***

Positive emojis chosen	**Subjects**	**Total number of times selected**	**Negative emojis chosen**	**Subjects**	**Total number of times selected**	**Neutral emojis chosen**	**Subjects**	**Total number of times selected**
Happy	Maths (x5) PE (x5) **French** **(x5)** English (x4) Geography Science	**21**	**Anxious/worried**	Art (x2) RE Maths English	**5**	**Confused**	**French (x5)** English Maths	**7**
Excited	PE(x7) **French (x2)** Science English	**12**	**Angry**	Geography (x4)	**5**	**Flabbergasted**	DT	**1**

	Art			French				
Proud	English (x3) Art DT	5	**Embarrassed (not shy)**	French (x2) Art (x2)	4	**Hungry**	DT	1
Surprised	French (x2) History Science	4	**Sick**	English (x4)	4			
			Scared/afraid	Maths Art French	3			
			Frustrated	Art (x2) French	3			
			Bored	PE (x2) Maths	3			
			Sad	RE French	2			
			Tired	RE French	2			
			Disappointed	PE	1			
TOTAL		42			32			2

Subject areas contributing towards children's positive and negative feelings about their learning in KS2:

Rank order	**Subject**	**Number of positive responses**	**Rank Order**	**Subject**	**Number of negative responses**
1	PE	12	1	Art	7
2	FLL (French)	9	2	French	7
3	English	8	3	English	5
4	Maths	5	4	Geography	4
5	Science	3	5	Maths, PE, RE	3 each
6	Geography, History, Art	1 (each)			

APPENDIX 23

Stages of data analysis and example coding

	Initial coding	Refined coding	Subsequent coding
Stage of analysis	Immediate coding	'Sensitizing concepts' (Blumer, 1954).	Towards a 'stable set of categories' (Hammersley& Atkinson, 1995, p.213)
Research Phase	(Phase 1: Schools 1& 2)	(Phase 2: School 3, Year 3)	(Phase 3: School 3, Year 5)
Participants and settings	S1, S2 – School 1, School 2. YR, Y4: Year group (eg Reception; Year 4) KS1/ KS2: Key Stage CR- classroom T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6 - Tables 1,2,3,4,5,6 CT -Class Teacher TA- Teaching Assistant Ch 1 (child 1 etc) Child(ren)/Teacher Teacher/child(ren) Child(ren)/child(ren) Child(ren)/me Me/child(ren) Whole Class	HA(g1): higher ability girl, table 1 HA(b2): higher ability boy, table 2 CT (3) Class teacher, year group CT(3a) Class teacher, year group and higher ability group they took for Maths and English CT3(b): Class teacher, year group ad lower ability setting they took for Maths and English. Higher ability (HA) Medium ability (MA) Lower ability (LA) Ch/T T/Ch Ch/Ch Ch/me Me/ch WhClass	P1, P2, P3: Pupils at tables 1,2,3 etc Higher group (HA) Medium group (MA) Lower group (LA) Ch/T T/Ch Ch/Ch Ch/me Me/ch WhClass
Codes	The done thing Special treatment Some/others Joining in Repeating Waiting patiently School culture	'I know!' Calling out Rubbing head Awkward atmosphere Smiling faces Furtive glance Restless children Sitting 'out' / trying it out Pleasing the teacher Following rules/expectations/directions Writing down	Rapport Whispers People's faces Surprises A struggle/struggling Feeling annoyed / feeling.. Partnership Following the rules Wanting to help / helping Writing
Threads and Themes	School ethos Expectations Gifted & Talented Less able Curriculum Resources Activity Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing Physical reactions and responses Verbal reactions and responses Written reactions and responses Routines Waiting	TR: Teaching Resource (teacher using to teach FL) LR: learning resource (children using to support FLL) AL (Activity Listening) AS (Activity speaking) AR (Activity reading) AW (Activity writing) Incidental FLL Curricular links to/from FLL Other links (OL) Challenge Interruptions / Disruption Intervention Pop-up Order Routines Waiting Drift Ethos Expectations/ethos/behaviour/compliance Bolt-on Fun/enjoyment	Routine Pieces by pieces Hidden Curriculum Supporting and helping Avoidance Humouring what's happening Compliance Cover and Dip Order and routine Expectations Awareness and empathy (of others' experiences and responses) Challenge + (challenge perceived positively) Challenge – (challenge perceived negatively) Waiting Getting the writing done Time pressure Fitting French in Scheme-led

		Fun? Pressure – frustration? Co-operation Pleasing the teacher Keeping out of trouble Classroom community	Under the radar Fun

APPENDIX 24

Defined themes and threads

Defined coding: 2x key themes and supporting threads	
Fragmentation:	***Agency:***
Fitting French in	Connections
French on the periphery	Compliance
Pop up French	Under the radar
Getting French done	Pleasing the teacher
Cover and Dip	Awareness, empathy and support
Time – pressure/boredom	Emotions
Access; disparity- Higher/lower groupings	Liaising, sharing, asking
Whole class?	Community of learning
Hegemony	Making sense
Hierarchy	Making most of /best of- experimenting
Getting the writing done	Understanding learning
	Challenge +/ -
	Coping
	Managing learning
	Getting through writing
	Suggested alternatives

APPENDIX 25

FLL organisation and delivery in each school setting

	School 1	**School 2**	**School 3**
Socio-economic status and geographical location	**Prep school in semi-rural setting**	**Small state primary school in the heart of a small rural village**	**2-form entry state junior school in a suburban residential location**
Target Language	French	French	French
Teacher	Specialist, Secondary-trained French teacher employed on the regular teaching staff; teaches all children throughout the school. Also teaches some maths.	Peripatetic (visiting) subject specialist, native French speaker, Secondary trained. Employed to supplement and enhance French teaching for the more able children in KS2 and whole-class lessons for KS1 and EYFS. Class teachers in KS2 take 'regular' French for rest of their class.	Class teachers (primary trained, non -specialist) teaching French to their respective classes as a part of the curriculum. For one year of my time in the field, supported by a Primary-trained specialist lead teacher. (Whose main FL was Spanish).
TAs		Not directly involved with French lessons.	Directly involved with all learning, including French, though usually involved with leading other group interventions timetabled at the time. (English/Maths/social skills).
Resources	Rigolo scheme of work; supported by some of the teacher's own resources to supplement this. French folders.	Selection of the teacher's own, picking and choosing from various commercial schemes including Tout le Monde and her own authentic materials. French folders; additional exercise books for 'gifted and talented' children.	Tout le Monde. Purple A4 Intercultural Understanding exercise books
Specific Curriculum time	1hr each week timetabled for all children in KS2. Up to 20 mins with KS1 each week.	30 mins each week timetabled for all children in KS2.	30 mins each week timetabled for all children in KS2. (Usually in the afternoons alongside other foundation

	(Can be any time of day, relevant to timetabling teacher availability) Was found and evidenced to be a regular feature of the timetabled week.	Additional time for 'gifted & talented' children in KS2. 10-20 mins with EYFS and KS1. (Can be any time of day, relevant to timetabling specialist teacher availability) Does not always happen for children remaining in class	subjects and intervention groups led by TAs). In reality, subject to 'slippage'.
Cross-curricular links			Annual 'Intercultural Understanding' topic week eg Canada.
Extra-curricular opportunities	French drama club and performances.	Regular weekly early-morning class for selected gifted and talented, plus extra small groups taken in the school day timetabled for gifted and talented selected from each junior class.	Weekly after-school Spanish club was offered for a time, led by subject lead teacher, until leaving for another position.
Wider enrichment	Annual skiing trips to France organised for the whole-school.	School /class day trips to France and an annual residential trip to France.	One-off Year 5 day-trip to France planned as an end of year treat.

APPENDIX 26

Contents of Y5 Intercultural Understanding exercise book 2017-18 (*as written by a child into their ICU book, taken directly from a ‘middle’ ability child’s book, where a match with dates and Learning Intentions was checked against others in class from across the ability spectrum):*

Date	***Learning Intention:***	***What was recorded?***
mardi 12 septembre	To be able to correctly pronounce the French alphabet (a-f)	Photocopied sheet
vendredi le 29 septembre	To be able to correctly pronounce the French alphabet (g-l)	Photocopied sheet
Le vendredi 12 janvier 2018	To understand a typical school day in France	Photocopied sheet with gap fill exercise
Multicultural learning week: Canada		
Monday 5 February	Written facts about Canada	
Monday 5 February	Answers to Atlas questions about where Canada is.	
Monday 5 February	Photocopied map of Canada, coloured and labelled.	
Tuesday 6 February	Aurora borealis picture and some written sentences	
Tuesday 6 February	Canadian flag and poem copied out and responded to	
Wednesday 7 February	Draft Inukshuk design	
Wednesday 7 February	Inukshuk design and picture	
Thursday 8 February	Written reflection about Multicultural Learning week	
Friday 9 February	Completed written reflection about Multicultural Learning week	
23rd April 2018	To be able to ask ‘what is the time’ in French	Photocopied sheet from scheme of work.
vendredi 4 mai	To be able to listen to and understand native speakers and briefly explain what they said	Photocopied sheet from scheme of work completed.
lundi 8 mai	To be able to write words within a town accurately	Lists of copy written nouns eg le cinema, le theatre, le piscine, la bibliotehque
mardi 15 mai	to be able to recognise and say different places within a French town	Word search and gap fill exercise (photocopied sheet)
mardi 19 juin	To be able to understand the structure of sentences in French which explain places in a town eg’ il y a un café dans mon village’.	Lots of copy written sentences
mardi 3 juillet	To understand French directional language	Copy written lists of sentences and a couple of children’s own sentences using the same structure.

APPENDIX 27

23/3/16 Y3 French lesson with a specialist class teacher

It is 9:10 am and the last day of term before the Easter holidays. The school day has just begun. One pupil is sat in the corridor space outside the classroom working with the TA on a spelling intervention. The rest of the class are completing their early work: multiplication practices and responding to the teacher's marking of their work from previous lessons. On the white board is a pictoral timetable for the day: Register / French / Break / Maths / Lunch / Music / Hometime.

Class teacher (CT) aloud to me, so that children can also hear: *We're starting with French today – we have a working day today even though it's the last day of term.*

A pupil is tasked with handing out their purple exercise books whilst the teacher writes the Learning Intention on the Interactive whiteboard (IWB), to be copied down by the children.

L.I: to be able to read and write full sentences in French using familiar vocabulary.

CT: *hang on! We haven't done the date in French – that's me in a mad rush last night.*

She writes the date to the IWB in French. Children are all writing the date in French and the LI in their books.

CT directed to me, but in a way to be overheard by the class again: *I'd be interested to see if you think they're being more fussy now*. I feel that I am being positioned alongside the teacher in her role rather than an impartial observer with the children. Perhaps I am naiive to think that being impartial is possible….It feels like a barrier in my way to establishing myself as a researcher with the children. I begin to think that a lot of what might be going on is a 'show' or an act for me, and that each participant side (teacher / pupil) is seeking to find out the role I am to play in their own act and whether it can be trusted? It makes me feel a little uncomfortable and awkward.

Pupil to teacher: *Did you mean to write 'read and write full sentences?' Shouldn't it have an 'in' in it*?

CT: *No. Because the 'in' is here (pointing to the sentence). We are writing 'in' French.*

Another pupil: *Can I do the French date on the white board?* (using pre-made coloured laminated paper)

Teacher agrees and child selects appropriate laminated cards to put up on the white board.

Pupil: It's like mars- the planet. (referring to the French for 'March' as she places it on the board).

I note in my book the link the child is making between the French word and a word known from another familiar context to them. Also that the children feel able and are happy in this environment to offer their ideas and thoughts openly in class like this. The teacher does not respond to the link.

Another pupil: *No! Mars Bars!!* (general pupil laughter). – I note that pupils are offering further links from other familiar contexts. A rapport between pupils within class is apparent.

Teacher: *Come on now. It's time to write, settle and think about our learning today.*

The teacher seems more concerned with re-establishing classroom order than following up on the thinking that some children have already displayed – or perhaps the issue was the way in which it was shared – out loud and uninvited and potentially disruptive? The teacher re-establishes the focus she requires. The time pressure is apparent.

Teacher: *what are countries called in different languages and why?*

Pupil (with Swedish parent): *I know what Swedish people call Sweden and England.*

Another pupil: *I'm going to France this holiday so I may need to use it.*

Classteacher moves on and involves pupils in a whole-class game. Pupils are standing up and playing finding something in a different colour. They are listening and responding to the class teacher. Types of clothing are introduced eg 'Jupe'. Pupils are smiling and showing their enjoyment – they have particular fun with this word and previously learned action to go with it to help them remember it: bending their knees and holding out their imaginary skirt in a pretend curtsey.

Children are tasked to work in pairs to use colours around the classroom. 2 pupils on one of the 'top tables' remain sitting down. One noticed my glance when I looked over and promptly stood up to join in as the teacher had directed (such can be the power of an adult look in this setting); the other remains sitting not having noticed, looking tired and still. Other children in class are busily chatting and helping eachother – the other pair eventually return to sitting and talk in a focussed way.

The next phase of the lesson involves the teacher talking in longer French sentences to the whole class. Pupils are asked to put their hands up to translate what she has said.

CT: *We're going to write in full sentences about what you're wearing and impress Mr xxx (Year 6 teacher in the school). He thinks Year 6 write in full sentences - so we will show him we can too!*

Class smiles and appear happy to oblige with this motivation to impress the Year 6 teacher hitting home for most.

CT: I'm going to challenge you to write about what you'll be wearing at the weekend too!

CT hands out photocopied sheets to each pupil. Pupils start sticking these into their books. A familiar routine and there is minimum fuss with the glue sticks. Children are to:

1) Translate given sentences in to English and
2) Write sentences about what they're wearing in French.

TA sits with bottom table. She talks through what is on the photocopied sheet. The Teacher monitors rest of the class, reminding and encouraging them, calling out the name of one (girl) who had already written a full sentence in her book for special praise and as a way to encourage the others to get a move on.

The one child who had previously not responded in the game went up to the teacher to check what they should be doing. Other children whisper and mutter amongst themselves whether they did / didn't need to translate the sentences in French.

One child (boy, top table – the child who had announced to the class they were going to France this holiday) begins to fret over the small and unfamiliar words in the text. The teacher notices and walks over.

CT: look at the whole text to work it out. What does the 'et' mean?.......... ' And' – yes, that's it.

CT sits with other lower table at front of class. One pupil is rubbing out lots in their book – appears to be struggling with the first line.

Another pupil gets out their English vocabulary book to check a spelling they need. There is a mix of children working independently and others waiting for help to come to them, or actively helping a friend on their table.

09:45: CT quiet clap to gain attention. Reminder that at 10am it is assembly and they are to finish their current sentence being translated. Teacher admonishes some pupil fussing.

CT: *you have your instruction. Don't waste time.*

09:50 – the teacher's voice cuts sharply across the class – this, and the change of tone takes me by surprise. The child (going to France) was standing by the teacher where she was sat with the other group.

CT: (loudly, in front of the whole class): You do NOT need to come and see me about that xxxx. You are FUSSING. You have CLEAR instructions.

Whole class immediate hush. Child returns to their seat. Very quiet indeed in class and a studious hush – children keeping their heads down.

One other child (girl) completes her work and walks proudly up to the teacher, smiling, waiting patiently beside the teacher.

I note in my diary and reflect about the way in which some children can 'read' the teacher better than others. There seems to be an underlying dynamic going on in and with the children in the class that I seek to better understand. There seems to be a lot going on with their relationships and 'standing' in the way they are/not able to operate in lessons. Is the experience of learning French helping, hindering, or challenging this for some children more than others?

Some children appear more compliant than others in French lessons– the extent to which they seek to fit in with expectations. There are those in class that seem to be either:

a) 'Pleasers' - wish to please regardless – pupils who seem unquestioningly compliant.

b) 'Thinkers' and make a choice to either accept the rules/organisation, or question and reject it? At times they comply, at others, they don't. Various things seem to influence their decisions. This is interesting.

c) ‘Users’ – those that comply for purposefully extrinsic personal reasons eg going to France / have a holiday there / family has a flat there. If there is no perceived ‘use’ or related intrinsic interest, their compliance and engagement is more limited.

09:55: TA takes out come children from class. *Say goodbye to your teacher. You won’t see her again for 2 weeks.*

09:58: Children are lining up in silence and in alphabetical order.

CT: *NO TALKING!*

Children walk in to assembly led by the teacher, all in silence.

CT to me: *We wouldn’t usually do French at that time. We’re having a bit of a wonky day.*

I am left wondering why she felt need to say this to me - simple explanation, or as a kind of apology for the shouting that had happened? To voice any underlying frustration with me being in class and her feeling required to be teaching some French when she otherwise wouldn’t have done? Again, I become very aware of the way in which the researcher relationship is one that is always under review and development and the way in which it is constantly negotiated and delineated.

APPENDIX 28

FLL through the less-intended curriculum

Taking advantage of the 'less intended' curriculum; routines & repetition with some implicit differences for children on the 'top' and 'bottom' tables.

It is late Spring-time on a warm and sunny Friday afternoon. It is the start of the afternoon's lessons. The door is open from the Year 3 classroom to the playground. It is propped open by a brightly coloured plastic chair; a spare one of the same chairs otherwise used by pupils in class. A row of containers on the windowsill contain rocket seeds – supporting a science experiment with seeds from space (this is the time of Major Tom, the first British astronaut in space and the school is keenly engaged in some of its educational by-products). Alongside it, a flower and dye experiment catches my eye; both support the school-wide science week that happened the week previously. This current week has been an assessment week for Years 3, 4 and 5 in school. It is quiet and calm. Children are sat in silent rows on the playground outside, waiting to be called in for the afternoon after their lunch break.

The classteacher enters the classroom from the corridor and greets me:

'We're having a relaxed day today!'

I've arranged to be in school this particular afternoon, as the teacher indicated they would be having French timetabled this afternoon. I glance towards the whiteboard at the front of the classroom. There is a picture timetable of the day at the bottom of the board. It highlights that this afternoon will be 'History'. Not French.

The children file quietly in from the playground and sit at their tables. There are smiles and 'hellos' from children as they pass where I sit, positioned towards the back of the classroom today. Each child works through an individualised multiplication challenge they retrieve from their trays under their desks. One child enters the classroom late with an ice-pack to their head; one child sitting close to where I am quietly starts telling me about their assessments that week.

'Who's speaking?' calls the class teacher. '*If that's you* [identifying another child sat close to the one who started to talk to me]*…., I won't be happy'*. The child and I look at each-other in a guilty and complicit sort of way. We stop the quiet talk.

The register is taken. The class teacher calls out: *'Qu'elle age as-tu?*' and proceeds to ask each child that question in turn, as a means for them to respond to the register.

Pupils start responding to the register with *'j'ai sept / huit ans'* as relevant, and the teacher finishes each ritualised, repetitive dialogue with '*trés bien'*.

Another child is asked, (sat at the nearly 'bottom table') '*qu'elle age as –tu?*' The teacher is greeted with silence. The teacher waits. The teacher smiles encouragingly at the child. The child eventually responds hesitatingly, but accurately in French. The teacher carries on.

Another child ('top table') responds confidently, having been observed seeming to anxiously anticipate their turn in the register – attentive, hands clasped: *'sept ans et demi!'* The child looks in my direction. This child appears to want to impress and share what else they knew. The teacher's voice invades my thoughts:

CT: '*Can we have a j'ai?'*

Pupil, turning their attention from me straight back to the teacher: '*J'ai sept ans et demi'.*

CT: '*Trés bien'*.

The class teacher carries on. This slightly extended response proves to be a one-off; others in class return to the 'standard' response echoed by everyone else.

Interaction between the teacher and another child catches my attention, which was otherwise wandering with the repetitive nature of teacher's questioning and children's responses. The age question is posed to the next child (sitting at the 'bottom table'). He looks down. The teacher quietly says the required response word for word to him. He echoes these, quietly and finishes with a shy smile shared with the teacher. It is a very personal –virtually private- conversation and interaction between teacher and child, in a situation otherwise managed for others in a very obvious, public 'whole-class' manner.

Following afternoon registration, the class moved on to complete a shared read of the book, 'St Arthur'. During this time, a number of interruptions were experienced involving children being taken out by various Teaching Assistants for scheduled interventions to support identified learning needs, and also upon the return of children from these to the class. This caused a number of stops and starts:

Between 1:20 and 2:00pm a total of 6 interruptions are noted and at 2pm, three more children called for other interventions, shortly followed by another TA calling for three other children. There followed a short exchange between the class teacher and assistants:

CT: ‘Oh no! I’m losing children left, right and centre. We’re trying to finish the story!’

TA: ‘oooh…..er….[smiled] …sorry’.

At this point the class teacher opened the door adjoining the other Year 3 class and conferred with the other Year 3 class teacher. She returned, announcing to the class:

CT: ‘The other class are doing playscripts in French with ‘qu’elle age’.

She explained to the class that they would therefore also now do French as it was not possible to finish the class story with so many children going in and out.

APPENDIX 29

Impromptu French lesson

The history books are closed; replaced by the impromptu French lesson:

The children wait patiently for the teacher to find and start the relevant unit of work from the commercial scheme of work on the computer, and then project it on the class Interactive Whiteboard. They seem used to this happening. The class-teacher voices some frustration with sorting out the technology to the class. Some children smile and nod their heads, others wait, quietly fiddling.

A cartoon clip suddenly plays to those in the class: 'joyeux anniversaire, Aurelie!'

All eyes are on the cartoon.

CT [pausing the clip after a few minutes]: *what do you think is going on?* [she plays the cartoon on further].

CT: *how old is she?*

Pupil: *Eight?*

CT: *no, she's seven years old*. [The cartoon plays some more].

CT: *oooh… I'm not sure we've done all this* [commenting on the nature of the vocabulary being used in the clip]. CT writes the phrase 'voici un cadeau' on the whiteboard. She translates it together with the children into English. She continues playing the cartoon clip.

CT: *what do you think? What is she asking him?* [referring to the two cartoon characters]. *It's the same word we had before … une araignee.*

The class show signs of becoming more interested as the clip livens up with the cartoon character being presented with a spider as a present from her brother; the teacher asks whether the next present will be a nasty one again? This has the children's attention. All eyes are on the clip. [Another child going out with a Teaching Assistant leaves more slowly – seems reluctant to miss the video clip]

Pupil: *did he just say this is a present?!*

CT: *yes, good girl, he did*. [Encouraging smile. No reprimand for calling out].

At the end of the clip and class Q&A, the class teacher writes the following two phrases on the board: 'Je n'aime pas' and 'J'aime'.

CT: *what's the difference?*

Hands up from children on the top tables. CT waits and adds: *What would we say if 'she likes' or 'she doesn't like?'*

Pupil [from top table]: *elle n'aime pas* (pronounced with a clear 's' sounding at the end of 'pas').

CT: *good girl! Elle n'aime pas* (emphasis placed on the 'pas' with a silent 's').

[A girl (middle table) leaves the classroom to go to the toilet.]

The class teacher hands out a small printed A5 piece of paper to each child remaining in the class, whilst explaining what children are to do.

[Two other children are taken out by a Teaching Assistant; others return]

CT to the class: *does that sound easy peasy?*

General *'yes'* emerges from the children.

Classroom monitors hand out children's Intercultural Understanding exercise books and the teacher finishes handing out the pre-printed worksheets.

[Another visitor enters the class, an elderly gentleman with links to the school. There is a special comfy chair at the back which is in the class especially for him. The teacher and class greet him as he moves to sit down with a smile and reciprocal greeting].

The teacher reminds the children to be writing their French vocabulary and sentences in their exercise books.

I go and sit at a (lower ability) table and one pupil starts talking quietly to me (unprompted):

Pupil: *I'm not very good at Franch (sic.) I don't like it at school. I like English best.*

Me: Why are we doing French in school do you think?

Pupil: *Because we have to learn it. We don't always do French. We sometimes don't do it. We always, always, always do English…..It just makes it annoying that it only happens sometimes…. But I don't think I'd like it more if we had it more often, like English.*

The lesson finishes with the teacher writing a sample sentence in French on the board. Children then clear away, sticking their sheets into their books, completing the date in French and the Learning Intention from the board. They are getting ready for Friday afternoon assembly. Just before the class line up, the elderly gentleman visitor, who had been sitting quietly at the back of the classroom stands up to leave, talks quietly with the teacher.

CT (to the class): *Mr XXX says if you go to Winchester you can see the round table.*

The class leave to go to the assembly, with happy murmurs about the St Arthur story.

Children and teacher are looking forward to getting to the end of the story, which the interruptions and subsequent surprise French lesson paused.

The story has clearly captivated their interest and given importance both in their curriculum time and through the nature of the classroom discourse through the afternoon’s session. The French appears swiftly forgotten; its use to help manage an otherwise disrupted afternoon now over.

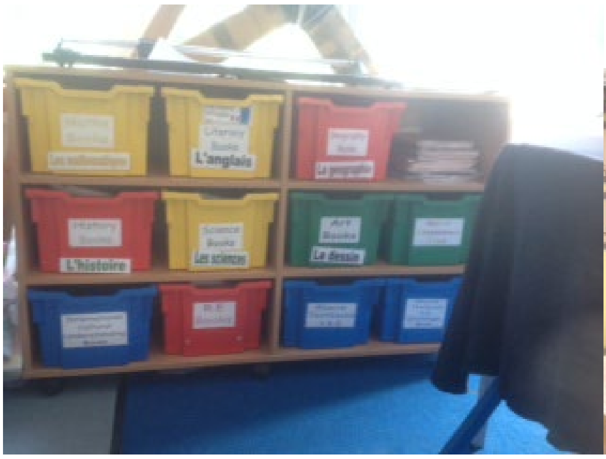
APPENDIX 30

Classroom displays including the FL (French) in Year 5, School 3

Evidence of French within the classroom environment: written labels; some evidence of children's work from earlier in the year, making use of nooks and crannies in the environment; making use of the periphery: *'Cover and dip'*.

Mes lettres

Mes lettres


Literacy Books
L'anglais
L'histoire
Science Books
Les sciences
Art Books
Le dessin

Decode
Explain
Retrieve
Interpret
Choice
XI
L
C
Les crayons

vin

velo

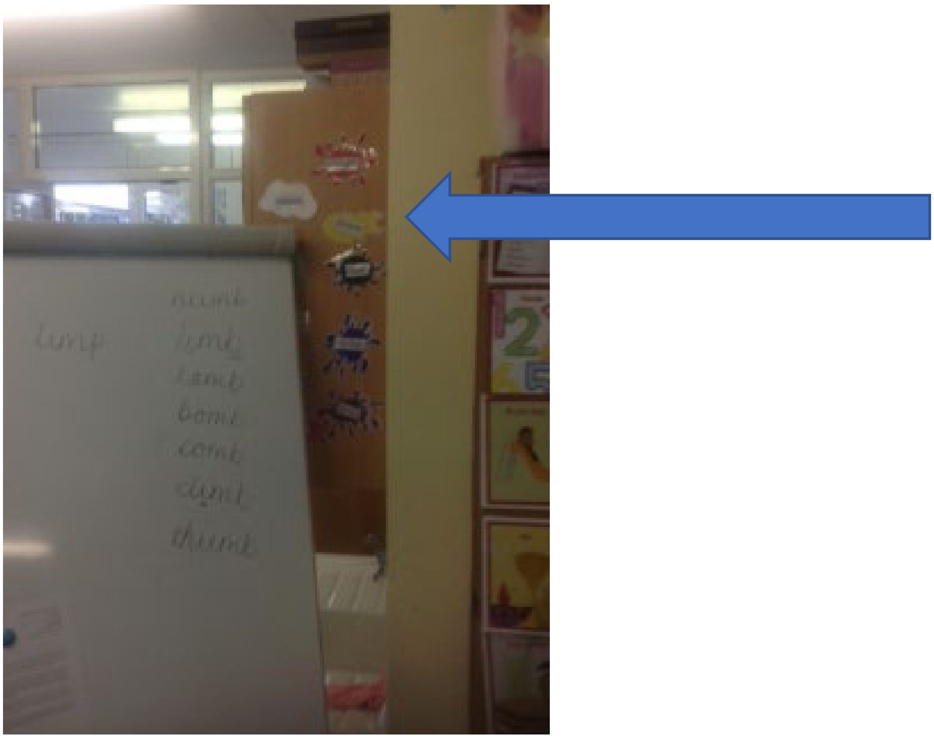
Bb bay
Cc say
Dd day
Ee euh
Ff eff
Gg jhay
Hh ash
Ii ee
Jj ghee
Kk kah
Ll el
Mm emm
Nn enn
Oo oh
Pp pay
Qq ku
Rr air
Ss ess
Tt tay
Uu oo
Vv vay
Ww double vay
Xx eex
Yy
Zz zed

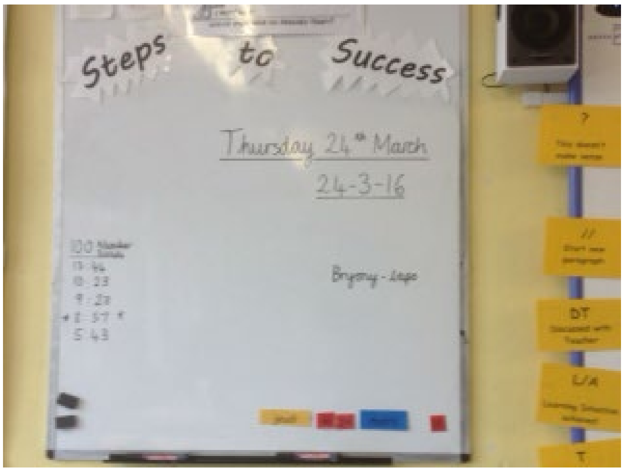
Calm Down
Walk away
Energy Saving Reminder
If you are the last to leave the room, please turn off the lights!
La salle de classe

APPENDIX 31

Classroom displays of French in Year 3, School 3

Evidence of French within the peripheral fabric of the classroom environment: on cupboard doors, behind doors; by the waste bin.


lump
numb
limb
lamb
bomb
comb
climb
thumb


Steps to Success
Thursday 24th March
24-3-16

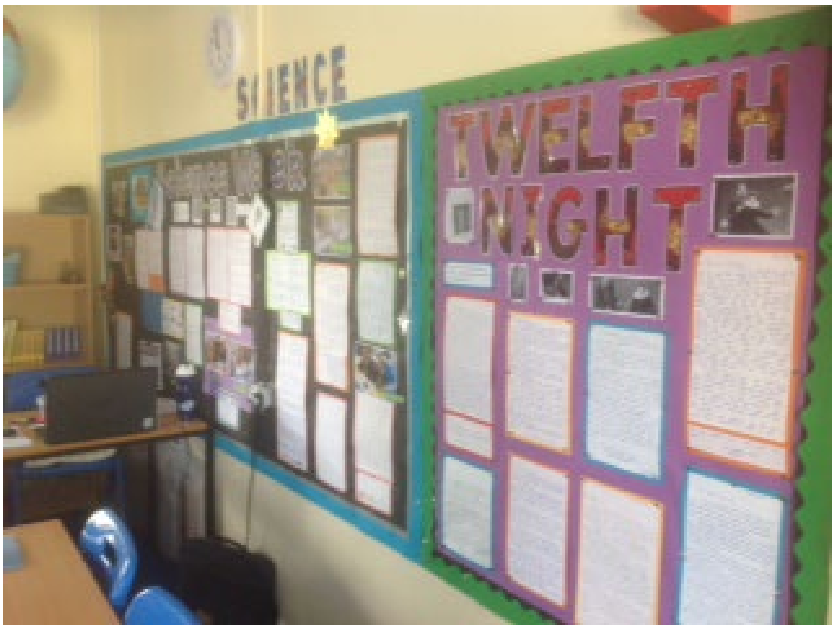
The Class White Board during the French lesson. The (small) date in French is highlighted at the bottom in the yellow, red and blue word tiles. The Learning Intention was written on the top of the photocopied sheet children were given. This was copied out by all children into their exercise books.

decrease
addition
total
more than

J'ai besoin de……
un stylo
un feutre
des feuilles
une règle

APPENDIX 32

Other curriculum displays in School 3

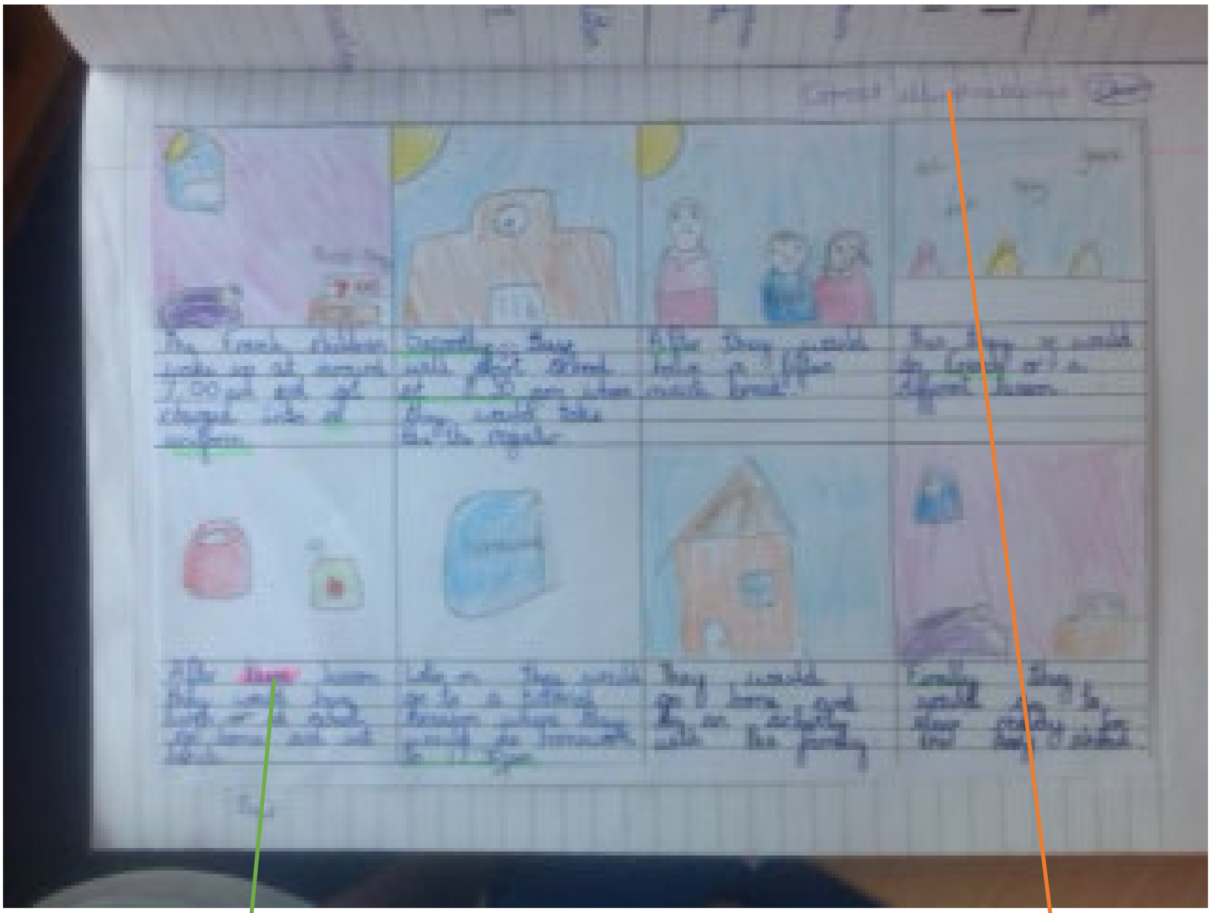

SCIENCE
TWELFTH NIGHT

APPENDIX 33

Year 5, School 3 examples of children's writing (copy-writing) in their books (same class of children from Year 3).

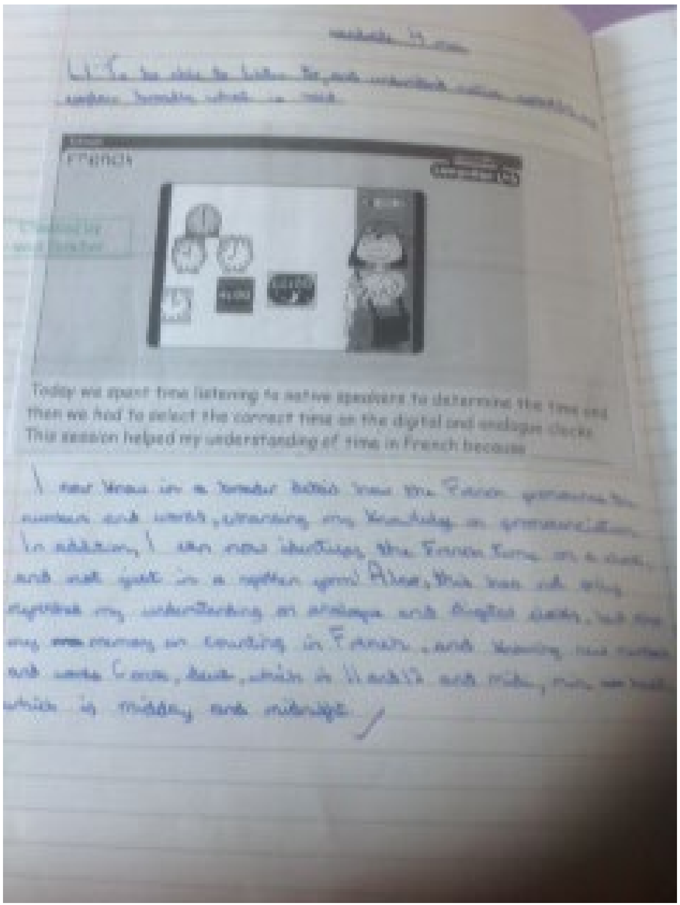
The same activity for all children remains apparent; a focus on the quality of handwriting and presentation remains apparent; copy-writing vocabulary and sentences remains apparent.

Cultural context evident: writing (in English) about similarities/differences between the school day in France/England, having watched a video clip from commercial scheme of work.



Teacher highlights in 'pink for think' (marking policy) grammatical error with the incorrect choice of 'there'.

Teacher writes 'Great Illustrations' and awards the child a merit point for that.

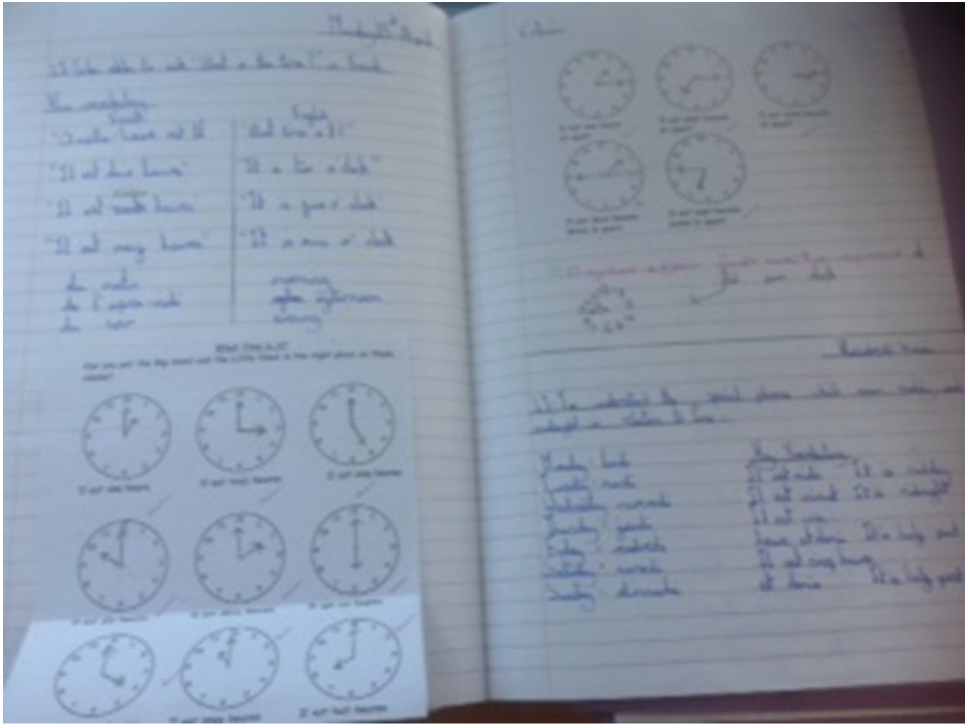


French

Today we spent time listening to native speakers to determine the time and then we had to select the correct time on the digital and analogue clocks. This session helped my understanding of time in French because

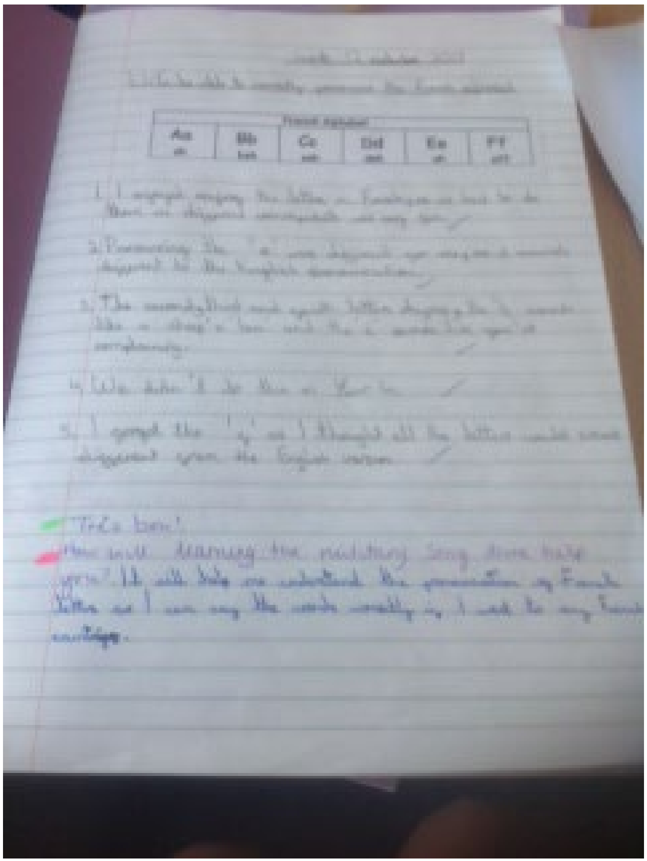
The requirement to record learning is apparent even with active, practical lessons. In this instance children were tasked with responding to the following:

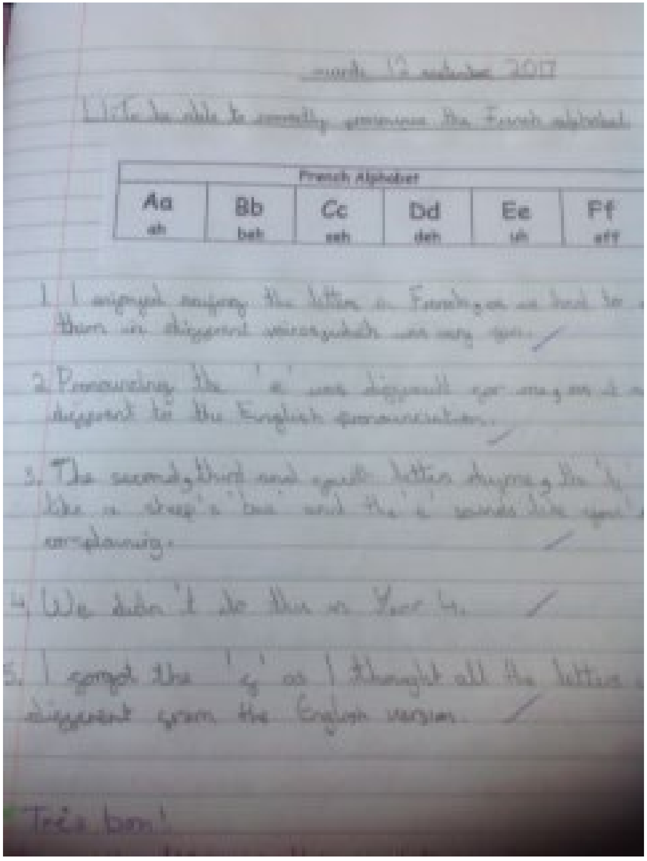
‘Today we spent time listening to native speakers to determine the time and then we had to select the correct time on the digital and analogue clocks. This session helped my understanding of time in French because….



Follow-up lesson several weeks later.

The first FLL lesson in Year 5, focussing on the alphabet. Samples from children's books indicate the similarity in written recording and presentation.


French alphabet
Aa
Bb
Cc
Dd
Ee
Ff

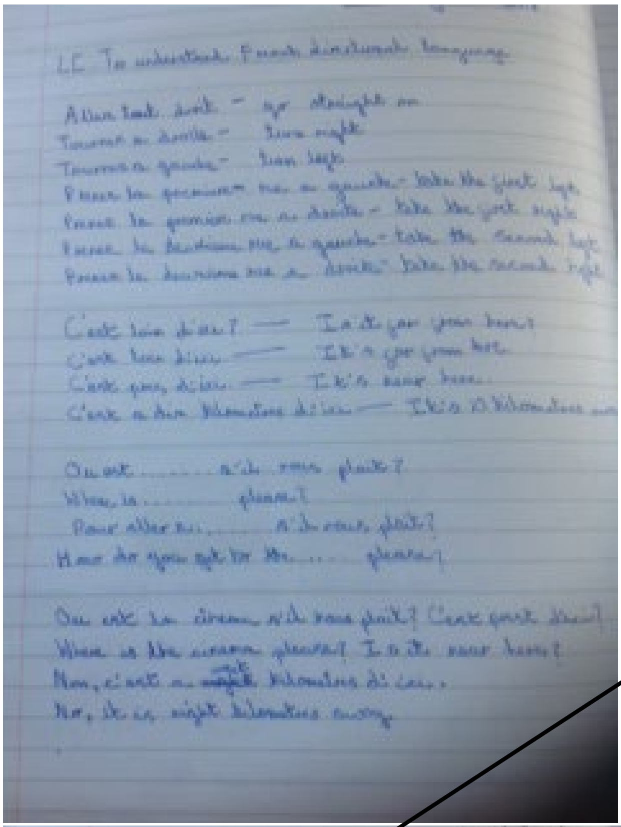

French Alphabet
Aa ah
Bb beh
Cc ceh
Dd deh
Ee uh
Ff eff
Très bon!

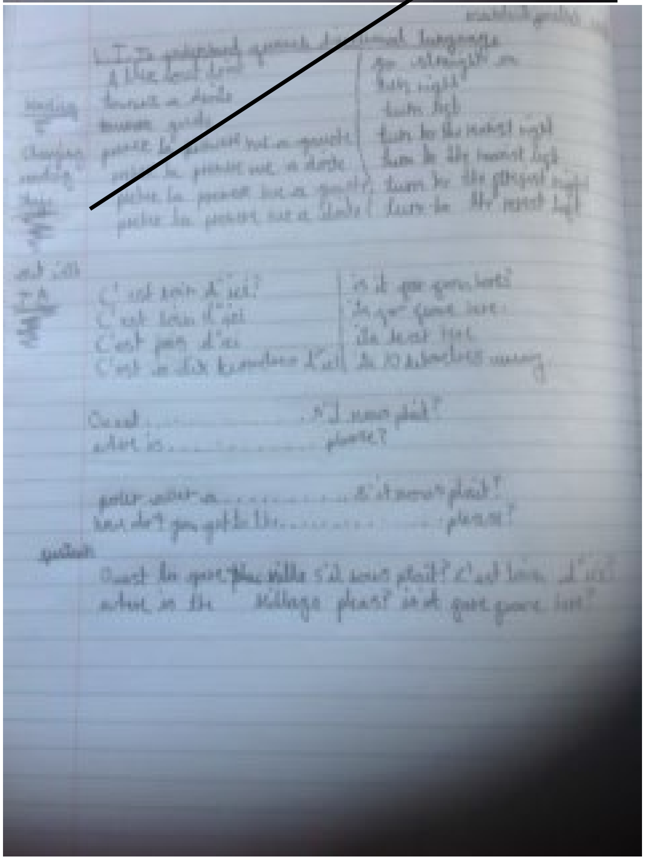
Teacher's 'green for go' response in French: *Tres bien!*

'Pink for think' comment: *How will learning the military song tune help you?'*

Child's response: *It will help me understand the pronunciation of French letters. I can say the words correctly if I went to any French country.*

This provides an example of the times when teachers, at the start of the school year, have perhaps started out with good intentions, seeking opportunities like this to model French writing and prompting children to think about helpful language learning strategies. As they reported however, and as observed during my time in the field, other curricular time pressures and priorities took over, combined with a lack of monitoring/checking of FLL by senior leaders.





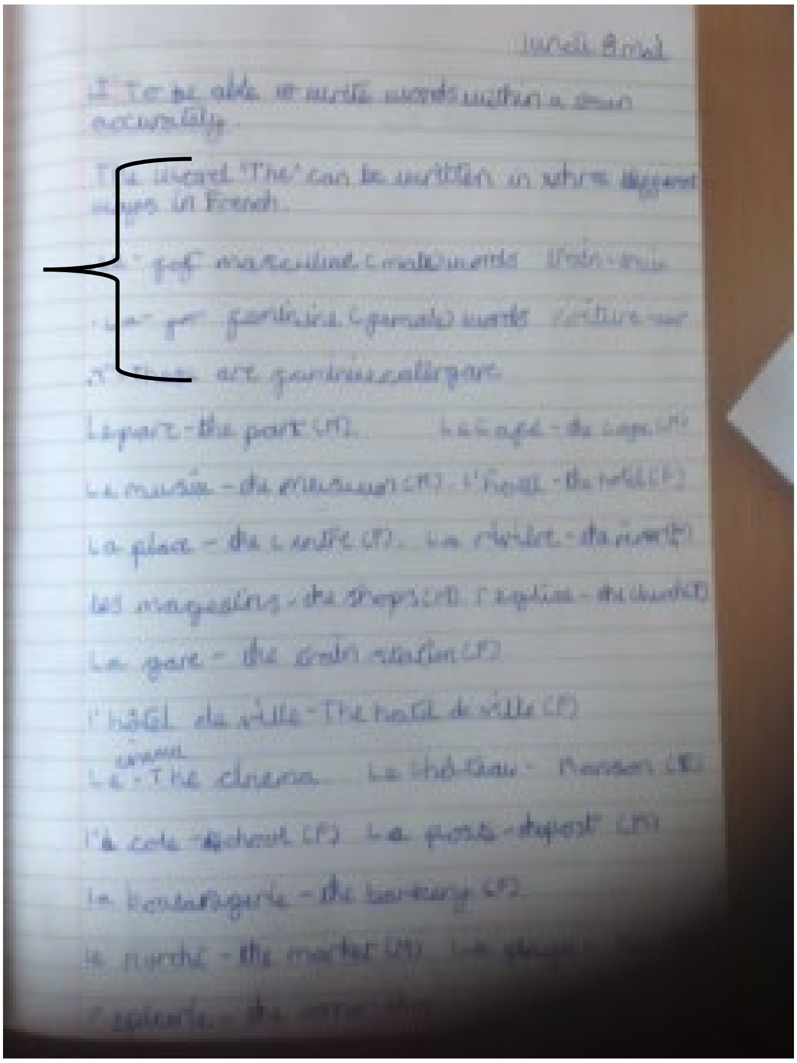
Learning Intention: to understand French directional language.

Examples of children's work from 'top' (photo 6) and 'bottom' tables (Photo 7) indicating the similarities between what children are asked/expected to copy-write. The difference here is that the work in Photo 7 was started, but then interrupted and completed later.

Notes written in the margin of Photo 7 indicate the child was taken out for reading, there is a note that the child's reading stage needs to be changed, and then there is another note indicating that the child was taken out with the TA (teaching assistant). Despite these interruptions, it is interesting to note:

1) That the nature of interruptions were required to be noted in the exercise book (evidence and reporting culture – AND - ensuring due support and understanding about the child's needs as regards why the written work took longer to be completed)
2) Once completed, the quality and quantity of the work is not too dissimilar : THIS IS FACILIATED THROUGH SUCH COPY-WRITTEN MATERIAL. IT IS EASIER TO SUPPORT 'MAKING UP TIME' WITH WORK THAT NEEDS COPYING TO COMPLETE. NB/ actual learning? Or, 'Looking like' learning?.... What value does the child /teacher see in completing such work?

Grammar point evident, as copied by the child from the Whiteboard. Of note is that the plural *'les'* is omitted from the explanation– even though as can be seen in the examples copy-written by the child, that a plural example *'les magasins'* is included. This point was not picked up by the teacher nor the children in this lesson, as my field notes indicate.



Follow-up lesson still focussing on understanding French directional language. Error correction evident (in' pink for think' marking) where both une/la or une/le have both been used in the sentence construction. This indicates a misconception / misunderstanding about the use of a/the in French, despite copy-writing an explanation about 'the' in the previous lesson. This would in turn indicate that some activities are more 'looking like learning' rather than actual learning – or, where the child is starting the process of understanding this for themselves.

E.g. one of the child's sentences here is written thus:

'Il y a ***une le ecole*** *dans mon village'.*

Both une/le occur, and are mismatched in terms of correct gender (feminine 'une' matched with masculine 'le') and the 'le' has not yet been understood as needing to be shortened to l' due to the noun starting with a vowel 'ecole'. The writing in the books thus looks neat and impressive – when shared with Primary ITE student teachers, they were all very impressed that children could write such sentences; I suggest that children could be capable of learning so much more if ways can be found to enhance teacher expectations of what children can achieve and develop children's thinking about and engagement with their FLL, and not just going through the motions of evidencing use of lesson time via what is written.