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English Language Support for Migrant Students in Irish Post-Primary Schools: An Exploration of Policy & Practice

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2010

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Summary

This thesis presents an empirical exploration of language support for English as a Second Language (ESL) students in Irish post-primary schools. The presence of large numbers of ESL students can be attributed to the unprecedented large-scale migration into Ireland since the 1990s. The arrival of so many students presented schools with new challenges. The Department of Education and Skills (DES) provides a special teaching allocation for language support but many schools struggle to devise programmes which develop students' English language proficiency while drawing them into curriculum subject learning.

To find out what the varied landscape of language support in Irish post-primary schools looked like, I developed an empirical plan to explore provision and practice in schools. Data were collected to investigate language support in a small number of schools in the Dublin area. The research presented in this thesis complements the work of the Trinity Immigration Initiative's (TII) English Language Support Programme (ELSP), which conducted a larger survey of provision of in post-primary schools.

My research was undertaken from a broadly Gramscian perspective, which describes how dominant cultural ideology can be reproduced in education systems, which in turn maintains the disadvantage of minority cultural groups. This thesis also draws on research from the rapidly expanding fields of educational linguistics and of the education of children from migrant backgrounds. One key argument which runs through this thesis is that of the 'gap' between the kinds of knowledge presented by the school system, as well as the culture of school in general, and the knowledge and experience of disadvantaged and/or minority students. ESL students have the additional challenge of a linguistic 'gap'. The thesis explores how pedagogical approaches can bridge the gap, and indentifies how such approaches can and should form part of a school's language support provision.

The empirical research was divided into 2 phases. Phase 1 was a preliminary exploration undertaken in ten schools in the Dublin area. I interviewed principals, ESL coordinators, ESL teachers and mainstream teachers about their ESL students and their language support programmes. The data collected show that provision varies widely in schools. While each school environment is different, some identifiable facets of a successful language support programme emerged. However, most of the schools were struggling to open up access to education for their ESL students; only very few schools in my sample appeared to have established successful language support programmes.

Phase 2 consisted of three case studies; I collected data from three schools over the school year 2008/2009, which were analysed to compare and contrast how the schools developed their language support programme, how the students responded to it and what happened in the classroom to make provision successful or unsuccessful. There was a wide variation in the level of support the three schools offered to ESL students.

Of the three schools, only one appeared to be offering its ESL students a programme which effectively drew them into the mainstream curriculum while developing their English language proficiency. The other two schools either failed to use DES teaching allocation for the intended purpose of English language support, or did so in an inadequate and haphazard way.

The conclusion refers back to the literature of chapters 1 and 2 to establish the characteristics which contribute to successful language support and educational provision for migrant students in the Irish post-primary school setting. The one successful school was characterised by, inter alia, a supportive principal, a defined language policy, a flexible language support timetable which was frequently revised, an ESL coordinator who had developed expertise in the area and a student-centred/learner autonomy pedagogical approach across the mainstream and ESL classrooms.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would sincerely like to thank Professor David Little. Words are not enough to thank him for, to begin with, choosing me as the PhD candidate for the Trinity Immigration Initiative (TII), and then for the wonderful support from the moment I commenced my research and throughout the three years of the project. David is an expert in the field of learner autonomy, and he certainly practised this approach in his supervision of my thesis. As a result I was able to make mistakes, take new knowledge on board, and learn what I needed to learn in order to carry out and compile my research. I have taken giant leaps forward in terms of my understanding of the world. David's perspectives on learner autonomy are so vital for the future of education. I sincerely hope this thesis does him and his ideology justice. Every supervision meeting was inspirational. Thank you David, from the bottom of my heart – I can still hardly believe I have written a PhD. Thank you for giving me that opportunity.

Carol Spöttl and Janice Schiestl – I really would not be here at Trinity College without the encouragement and support you both gave me when I applied for the PhD candidacy. You are both extraordinary role models to me, as well as being very, very dear friends. Your faith in me at the start of my academic career had given me the foundation to advance and follow my dreams. And I have had so much fun with you along the way!

Dee McGarry, thank you so much for your friendship, openness, support and dedication to the cause. In sharing so much of your knowledge with me, I have developed as a teacher and researcher. You have been a huge influence on my thesis, as well as being among the first of my friends here to make me feel so welcome and at home in Ireland.

I would like to offer a sincere thank you to Leslie McCartney; your support, wise words and practical help have meant a lot to me over the past three years.

Stergiani Kostopoulou and Zach Lyons – a big thank you to you both for your shared dedication to the English Language Support Programme. Well done on your hard work!

Thank you to everyone who made TII a possibility; the overall project will benefit so many in Ireland. Thank you to Sarah and Seeka at CLCS for your help, and to Professor Jeff Kallen and Doctor Lorna Carson for a challenging upgrade interview! Thanks to library staff – I very much appreciated all your help!

I can still remember the exciting feeling of starting my undergraduate degree at Leeds University. Many lecturers there opened my mind and ignited a desire to do further study in the field of

linguistics, among them Professor Brian Richardson, Doctor Diane Nelson and Doctor Lee Davidson. I enjoyed all of your courses and they led me to this PhD. I would also like to thank Professor Ivo Hajnal at Innsbruck University for his support during my *Magistra der Philosophie*, which paved the way for this present research. Bill Bryson's *The Mother Tongue* inspired me to study linguistics – thanks Bill.

Ten schools and many ESL students participated in my research – I owe you for the opportunity you gave and learned so much from being in your schools, talking to you all and spending time in your classrooms.

Many friends have helped me throughout the three years, mainly by reminding me to take breaks! Thank you for all the times we met for lunch or a cuppa – these meetings really nourished my soul and kept me sane: Alana, Lindsey and Jenny. Thanks for all the chats and visits: The Doyle Family, my family in France, Wendy, Claire, Laura DB, Ayme, Emma, Rebecca, Donald, Katrine, Louise, Ying, Gerry, Nicola & Harry, Nicola Z, Matthew, Eddie, Sladja, Muirne, Elaine, Heidi and Bronagh. Special thanks for your support to Chuck, Colette and Karita. Anna Z, thank you for the encouragement to go for it when this all started out.

Victoria, Michael, Beth, Jacob and Freya – thank you for all the fun times on my visits home. Charlotte, thank you so much for visiting me. Uncle Andrew, thank you for showing me what is possible. Aunty Margaret (and the boys) and Uncle Vincent, thank you for visiting me each time I am home.

Mum and Dad – your faith in me has helped me reach for the stars! That my happiness has always been first and foremost to you, regardless of how I achieve it, continues to give me the strength to follow my own, individual path and hope you are proud of me along the way.

Gavin, thank you for your patience and your belief in me and my work. Thank you for teaching me all that you have over the past year and a half, for your inspiration, for your unwavering emotional investment in my thesis and for always wanting the best for me. I love you.

This thesis is dedicated to those who I lost along the way; Mary Clifford and Michael Fionda.

Thank you.

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Introduction

Migration into Ireland is a recent phenomenon; in the 1990s and the early part of this century thousands of migrants arrived due to various reasons, such as the economic boom, changes in policy regarding asylum seekers and expansion of EU membership. The arrival of unprecedented numbers of migrants naturally had an impact on Irish schools. Thousands of children who speak an L1 other than English arrived in classrooms, in front of teachers who struggled to deal with the challenges these students brought. These students arrive with varying levels of English language proficiency and so schools must provide English language support to enable them to access their education.

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) provides funding for such students in the form of a per capita teaching allowance so that schools can provide English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers and develop a language support programme to complement mainstream learning. From 2000 until its closure in 2008, Integrate Ireland Language and training (IILT) was commissioned to support ESL teachers in both primary and post-primary schools. This thesis concentrates exclusively on the post-primary (second level) school system. Support for post-primary teachers and schools was not as developed as the primary sector and so the Trinity Immigration Initiative's (TII) English Language Support Programme (ELSP) was established to complement and advance the work which had been begun by IILT. Among the ELSP's aims were to survey language support provision in a number of Irish post-primary schools; the findings were published as a report in 2009 (Lyons & Little).

This PhD thesis builds on the ELSP's findings and is a first attempt to focus in detail on what happens in the classroom. Research shows that English language support is delivered in Ireland's schools in an ad hoc manner resulting in unsatisfactory educational outcomes for the ESL students and dissatisfaction for many of the professionals involved. Built on growing research in the Irish context, this study provides a further survey of ten schools from the Dublin area, and an in-depth case study analysis of three schools. The case studies focus on policy, the whole school environment and how both of these factors interact and are interpreted as classroom practice. It is important to note that that is, in reality, very little research on the Irish context and therefore international research perspectives are particularly important.

This thesis is written on the basis of a conviction that national education systems should be governed by principals of equality of entitlement and of access to education, and of responsive pedagogy. At the same time, every effort is made to ensure that this does not prejudice the interpretation of the data.

Chapter 1 looks at society level pedagogy and presents Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony, which provides the theoretical framework. The chapter draws on his approach to the relationship between the distribution of power and social control (Gramsci, 1971: 12-13). My research highlights the unintentional cultural reproduction inherent in the education system (Nowlan, 2008: 255). Bourdieu (1991) and Freire (1970) explore concepts of social capital and critical pedagogy respectively, by analysing the influential role of education in a society, its potential to change society (Freire), and its potential for excluding minority groups from education, thereby preventing these groups from participating fully in society while maintaining their lower socioeconomic status (Bourdieu). The chapter also draws on Barnes (1976), who described the gap between schools and disadvantaged students. A key concern throughout this thesis is with the role of language support in bridging this gap for ESL students.

Lentin & McVeigh (2006) and Fanning (2007) address current trends in immigration and racism, and suggest that a cultural bias against migrants' participation in Irish society can be identified across many sectors.

In **Chapter 2** I move on to address pedagogy in the classroom. Little & Lazenby-Simpson (2004), Devine (2005), Nowlan (2008) and Lyons & Little (2009) look at concepts and issues involved in educating minority language students within the Irish school system. The conclusion many of these researchers arrive at reveals how provision for ESL students is inadequate and inconsistent. This chapter also draws on existing research in the field of minority language students in mainstream education (Willig, 1985; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988; Ramírez, 1992; Thomas & Collier, 1997; Cummins, 2001; Ferguson, 2006). Much of this research is directed at identifying characteristics of successful language support programmes. Cummins (2000), Collier (1987), Skutnabb-Kangas (1988) and Tosi, (1988 & 1984) look at educating minority language students in mainstream schools, and make the distinction between basic communication skills (everyday fluency) and language needed to access the education process, and the positive impact of valuing first language and culture. Using these studies as a springboard, I extract a framework of characteristics of a successful programme relevant to the context of Ireland's post-primary schools. This framework provides the survey and case studies with criteria for evaluation.

Chapter 3 explains the empirical research structure. It sets the thesis in the context of the TII, first of all describing the scope of the ELSP. It then describes the overall research objectives of the empirical component: to build a picture of practice in schools in the Dublin area and to see if examples of best practice are evident in three schools. I draw on a number of sources in general educational research to develop Phase 1 – a survey, and Phase 2 – the case studies.

In **Chapter 4** I present and analyse the data which were collected in schools in Phase 1 during the early months of 2008. The findings from the survey are presented first of all school-by-school; I provide background information about each school, a summary table of the key points raised by each participant (principal, ESL coordinator, ESL teacher and mainstream teacher), and an overview of the language support programme. In the discussion I analyse the data from all ten schools and compare the findings to similar research presented in Chapter 2.

Chapter 5 presents the findings from Phase 2: case studies of language support and educational provision for migrant students in three schools (which were also participants in Phase 1). First of all I describe the participant profile of each of the schools, before moving on to describe approaches to meeting the needs of ESL students. Then the chapter illustrates the procedure the schools followed when ESL students came to the school, from initial assessment to organisation of the timetable. The considerable part of the chapter is devoted to observations; of students (in their classroom and via assessment), of practice (via lesson observations) and of the school environment (via general observations). The analysis is drawn together in an overview of the approach each school takes to language support, under the headings of 'leadership and ethos,' 'flexibility,' 'curriculum,' 'teachers' and 'pedagogy'.

1 Gramscian Perspectives

1.0 Introduction

Children from migrant backgrounds in Ireland are entitled to educational opportunities equal to those of their peers (Little & Lazenby Simpson, 2009), which means an education that enables them to "operate at their fullest potential, to equip them with tools and the sense of opportunity to use their wits, skill, and passions to the fullest" (Bruner, 1996: 67). This study draws on a multi-disciplinary framework to evaluate how Ireland's post-primary schools facilitate access to education for those students from migrant backgrounds who have English as a second language (ESL[1]). The range of disciplines this study draws on is broad, as is usual in this field, "educational linguistics is a cross-over field where a diverse range of expertise from linguistic disciplines engages with aspects of educational policy, provision and practice" (Leung, 2010b): including Second Language Acquisition (SLA), minority language students' education, immigration, power relations within society, racism and interculturalism, and critical pedagogy. Given the range of sources, one underpinning theoretical perspective is required to provide both the foundation and the core argument running though the study. In this thesis, Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony (Gramsci, 1971) unites the strands of argument and underpins my principal research questions.

The topic of educational linguistics is *problem-oriented* (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988; Hult, 2008: 10; Leung, 2010b), and both socially significant and controversial. The challenges and opportunities of immigration for the Irish educational context in recent decades reflect issues faced by many national contexts with diverse school populations (Skutnabb-Kangas 1988: 9; Devine, 1999: 6). Overall, the thesis is concerned with *how best to enable ESL students to learn* in the Irish post-primary school. The focus is on English language support; how post-primary schools establish and develop ESL programmes, and how practice is driven by both policy and provision. The English language support programme in a school brings to light countless interrelated components of the whole school approach and attitude towards the education of migrant students. A programme which develops proficiency in English is both empowering and necessary:

[1] Leung (2010b) adopted the commonly used acronym EAL (English as an Additional Language) to refer to "the educational policy, provision and curriculum practices associated with language minority students" and I use ESL (broadly synonymous with EAL) in the same way throughout this thesis, as well as to refer to the students themselves.

> If [migrant students] want to get a good education...and if they want to participate in the social, economic and political life of their country, they have to know the official language.
>
> Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988: 10

In the course of my research on the links between education and society I have drawn on Gramsci's approach to the distribution of power and social control (Gramsci, 1971). Accordingly, this opening chapter explores how Gramsci's theory of hegemony can be applied to Ireland's ESL context, describes how underlying structures and assumptions in education and society can have an unfavourable impact on a student's future, and then moves on to examine how Ireland's Department of Education and Skills (DES) operates in this context. I also consider the role of individual schools/educators in interpreting DES policy. Based on initial findings, I argue that rather than providing equal education for ESL students, Ireland's schools often do not bridge the gap between such students and the education system they are expected to engage with. The chapter closes with my main research question.

1.0.1 Gramsci's cultural hegemony

Hegemony is defined as the implicit control or influence of one group over another: "The apparatus of state coercive power which 'legally' enforces discipline on those groups who do not 'consent' either actively or passively" (Gramsci, 1971: 12-13). Hegemonic control is in contrast to situations of forced domination or violent control: "[Hegemony means] the consensual basis of an existing political system within civil society" (Adamson, 1980: 170), or "coercion plus consent" (Ives, 2004a: 30). Power and social control are secured via the fixing and distribution of public knowledge (Tosi, 1988: 90), and this means that selected groups in a society are privy to valuable knowledge (such as school knowledge or qualifications, cf. Bourdieu, 1991) which can be used to maintain a higher social status or positions of power, while those without access to the information are unable to effectively participate in social structures, which affects their life and their position within that society.

A contemporary analyst who is observing minority students in a school system considers the circumstances which display characteristics of hegemony thus:

> [H]egemonic leadership of one group is still characterized by the exercise of power, but this is not founded on the overt use of the system to impose its interests on those other groups. Instead, it relies on its covert ability to combine the interests of other classes or groups with its own interests. When this is achieved the hegemonic group has succeeded in extending its cultural control to include all state institutions and will therefore present itself as the sole authorized representative of all the different interests of a socially and culturally diverse society.
>
> Tosi, 1988: 91

Responding to Italy's '*questione della lingua*' with the theory of hegemony, Gramsci draws attention to the role of language in politics (Ives, 1998 & 2006: 62; Gramsci, 1984), valuing language as a commodity, which encompasses symbolic status, and as a means with which to distribute knowledge (cf., Bernstein, 1997). Gramsci was a student of linguistics and his interest in language influenced his theory of hegemony (Ives, 2004a: 3-4). He recognised that high-prestige and lower-prestige speech communities existed (see Gramsci, 1985: 164) in the same way that the class system is reflected in the dialects and accents of present day UK and Ireland; minority languages within Ireland may similarly be perceived as lower status than English.[2] Gramsci compared language to other institutions of society, claiming that it could be exploited as a marker of status. Drawing on his theory I suggest that the dominant socio-cultural group in Ireland (the white, Catholic, English/Irish speaking middle-class) reproduces its norms via the education system, and that language and associated cultural differences are significant barriers which divide and exclude minority groups from accessing knowledge in the school. This exclusion limits the potential of those groups, which may include students from a low socio-economic background, Irish national ethnic minority groups (Travellers), Irish-born ethnic/linguistic minority groups, as well as ESL/migrant students. Their potential is limited by the education system, which on the one hand promises equal access while on the other hand withholds adequate support on an official and/or school level. Thus, their potential as citizens of a democratic society, which the education system is intended to foster, is inhibited by their educational experience.

Gramsci associated language with hegemony by commenting on attitudes towards language varieties and culture in a way which reflects how the status of minority languages may be viewed in Ireland today, as when he writes:

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[2] Or Irish, in the Irish speaking communities and schools.

> Language is transformed with the transformation of the whole civilisation, through the acquisition of culture by new classes and through the hegemony exercised by one national language over others.
>
> Gramsci, 1971: 452

For Gramsci, there is little distinction between language as a 'social structure' and other social structures (which may predetermine an individual's potential) and he advanced theories on the nature of language being closely linked to culture, nationality and history (Ives, 2004a: 19). One commentator on Gramsci's writings compares 'language' to 'hegemony' as follows:

> [L]anguage, like hegemony, is not something that is ever completed. Instead, language is a process...like hegemony, this process of turning chaos into coherent structures is necessary and important...That is not to say that all coherence and structure is preferable to all forms of chaos. In fact, it is precisely the chaos and the lack of coherence among the world views of various subordinated and oppressed social groups in modern capitalist societies that enables bourgeois ideology to dominate.
>
> Ibid: 23-24

The ideas expressed here are developed from Gramsci's time as a student of linguistics; his lecturer at Turin University, Professor Matteo Bartoli, directed much thought to the question of how one group within society could secure power over another without resorting to violence, instead imposing "customs and modes of thought" on the dominated group (Ives, 2004a: 28). There is much in Gramsci's writing about empowering dominated groups so that they may gain status in society. Gramsci was concerned, for example, about educational reforms in Italy which abolished the teaching of standard grammar (which in the context of Italy's search for a national language meant teaching children the standard language; most inhabitants of Italy spoke mutually-unintelligible dialects) – his concern was particularly directed at children from subordinated social groups (Ives, 2004a: 43) and the disadvantage this lack of knowledge might bring them, as a knowledge of the standard grammar indicated an educated background (ibid: 90). This process draws comparison with the Irish ESL context and the learning of standard English; if schools are failing to facilitate the acquisition of English for school purposes, then ESL students will not have equal access to the curriculum.

Laclau & Moffe (1985) observed that the notion of hegemony encompasses the idea of a 'collective will', or the construction of a social-cultural unity (as noted by Ives, 2006: 64), where the non-dominant social group may express democratic requirements in a process which is not attributable to an existing structure – thereby acting *against* hegemonic control. Gramsci focuses on this element of free will and social mobility, and argues against economic determinism (Ives, 2006: 65). Leung (2010b) points out that "in so far as people are not completely subservient to

structure, human enactment promises the possibility of modification of structure in the process of enactment and reproduction," thus recalling debates about 'agency' and 'structure' (Giddens, 1979: 50 & 2006: 8; Bryant & Jary, 1991). In this case 'structure' refers to factors such as an ESL student's L1, social class, culture, religion and ethnicity, and 'agency' refers to the free will and capacity to act against hegemonic control. According to these arguments, the Irish post-primary education system has the potential to support structures which may limit migrant students' volition, or may support and enable their capacity to question existing structures and assumptions.

My interpretation of Gramsci's theory of hegemony focuses on its relevance to education, and links power relationships to the transmission and accessibility of knowledge. My grasp of hegemony in this context owes much to Tosi (1988) and his discussion of the exercise of influence of one group over another within one society (Tosi, 1988: 90-91). He defines and elaborates on the meaning of hegemony with its relevance to education as:

> [T]he organization of consent through invisible cultural dominance rather than visible political power. Thus Gramsci's approach and the current concern of sociologists of education converge in their common attempt to interpret the role of educational changes in order to understand the mechanism of control which is exercised through social and cultural reorganisation.
>
> Ibid: 91

Educational sociologists and applied linguists have applied Gramsci's theory of hegemony to the context of compulsory schooling, developing arguments in relation to the availability of school and educational knowledge (Tosi, 1988; Fischman & McLaren, 2005).

1.0.2 Hegemony and Ireland's ESL students

The role of schools in a society was observed by Gramsci to be fundamental in forging the spirit by which the dominated groups would, in the future, be able to transcend their predetermined (by existing structures) socio-economic status and reach their full potential as citizens in society (Gramsci, 1985: 42). In order for this to happen, Gramsci suggested that existing structures should be demolished to allow new standards, a new psychology and new ways of living and thinking to develop, thus paving the way for a more just distribution of power; not only political and economic but also intellectual power (Gramsci, 1985: 41). Gramsci was explicit in his belief that the state's responsibility to educate children should include, along with foundation skills such as reading, writing and mathematics, the teaching of 'rights and duties', by which he means developing the capacity to challenge the 'common sense' notions learned from the social environment (Gramsci, 1971: 322; Dewey, 2007). These notions can be related to the current

educational situation in Ireland; schools' capacity to cope with the arrival of unprecedented numbers of ESL students over the past two decades is brought into question. ESL students:

> [M]ay have difficulty accessing education without support because of a limited command of the language through which the curriculum is delivered. This is likely to be the case for those who have recently arrived in Ireland, but may also apply to children who were born in Ireland or are living here for a longer time whose home language is not English.
>
> Nowlan, 2008: 253-254

Lyons & Little (2009), Nowlan (2008) and Devine (2005) recognise that Ireland's ESL students face significant obstacles in accessing education: social, cultural and religious barriers, as well as linguistic ones. Research into these issues benefits not only ESL students but also English and Irish L1 students who, while having been born in Ireland to Irish parents, may face similar obstacles due to their social and/or economic disadvantage, and lay the foundation to prepare all students for participation in an increasingly diverse society. During this research I came across underlying pedagogy, policy and practice that result in unfavourable outcomes not only for ESL students but also for Irish-born students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, for English L1 students with learning difficulties, for students who are susceptible to underlying gender bias - in short, for most categories of students in an Irish post-primary school. In response to the changing economic and social conditions in Ireland, "the received wisdom or 'common sense' of education as it was practised when we were at school may no longer be appropriate" (Daniels, 2001: 2).

Irish newspapers report negative perspectives on the situation in schools and support for migrant students: "46% of teachers aware of racist school incidences" (Irish Times, 2010a), "Clearly the whole system needs a thorough review, and not one simply based on cost-cutting imperatives" (Irish Times, 2010b), "Proficiency in the English language is of critical importance to migrants... but there is inadequate support for schoolchildren" (Irish Times, 2010c), "Current government policy in this area has nothing to do with meeting children's English language needs..." (Irish Times, 2010d) and "Language support in schools 'essential' to avoid ghettoes" (Irish Times, 2010e) are quotations from articles current in the press at the time of writing.

1.0.2.1 Immigration growth

To set the context for this study, an explanation of the scale of immigration and changes of social profile is necessary: "Irish society has undergone rapid, unprecedented change in recent decades, with dramatic economic growth, globalisation and increasing migration as major contributing factors" (Nowlan, 2008: 253). In the 1990s and the early part of this century thousands of

migrants arrived due to reasons such as the economic boom, change in policy regarding asylum seekers and expansion of EU membership.

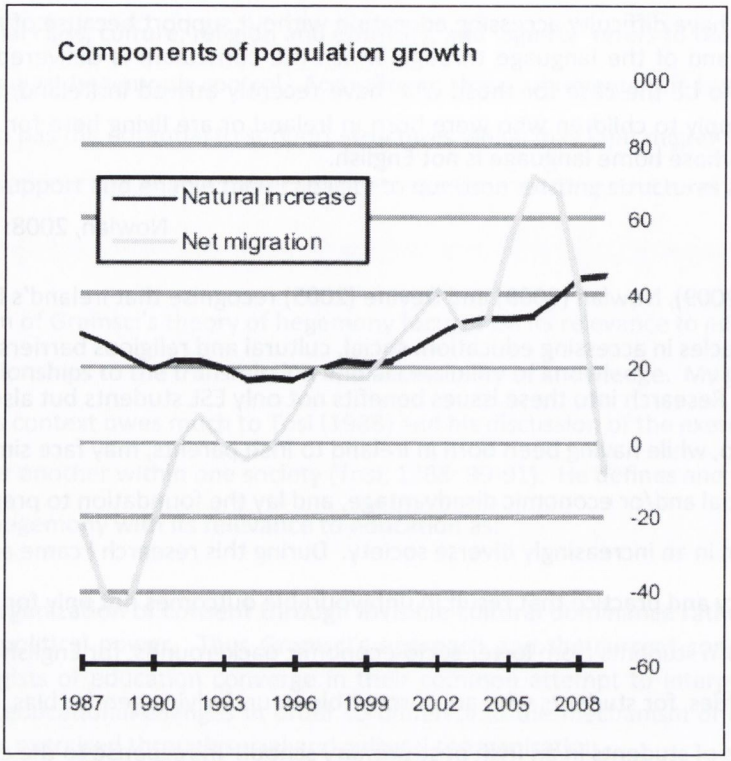

Figure 1-1 Migration in Ireland 1987-2009 (CSO, 2009)

Ireland was traditionally a country of emigration and so the sudden impact of immigration on the post-primary school system has been significant. An estimated 17,000 migrant students enrolled in post-primary schools in 2006/07 (Ryan, 2007) and up to 28,000 in the school year 2009/10 despite the drop in net migration; around 60% of these migrant students have a mother tongue other than English. All children of school age have the right to state education, and the Department of Education and Skills (DES) offers guidelines stating that "...schools with an enrolment of fourteen or more non-national students with English language deficits are entitled to an additional teacher" and that each ESL student is entitled to a maximum[3] of two years of language support (DES, 2003 & 2009a). Overall, language support teachers (in both primary and post-primary schools) have fallen to 1,550 down from 2,180 in 2008/09, in response to education budget cuts (Irish Times, 2010c) despite the fact that Ireland will remain multicultural (TII, 2010).

[3] Exceptions to this limit exist, though the process of application for an extension is often complicated and time consuming in schools.

1.0.2.2 Non-national students in Irish post-primary schools

Practice in place for many ESL students maintains the privileges and power of dominant cultural ideology, at the cost of provision of equal chances for Ireland's new migrant students. This practice is not overtly enforced but, as Gramscian hegemony illustrates (Gramsci, 1971 & 1985; Cummins, 2000: 31-53; Ferguson, 2006: 40) quietly negotiated via procedures where educational structures exclude groups who fall outside the dominant culture, by promoting an assumption where biculturalism and bilingualism are viewed as deficits (Ward, 2006), and via a state of confusion which leads to a tolerance and perpetuation of 'worst' practice.

Gramsci, displaying foresight ahead of his time, recognised the dangers of preventing children from speaking their own language[4] or dialect (Ives, 2004a: 43-44): he was concerned with the effects this would have on the child's intellectual development and instead praised the advantages of a child learning several languages or varieties of language. I observed a tendency in Irish schools to encourage monolingual instruction via the suppression of L1 in favour of exclusive use of English, apparently based on the belief that L1 obstructs L2. Chapter 2 develops these arguments further by presenting an outline of research into Second Language Acquisition (SLA).

Educational disadvantage is found in many contexts, and many minority groups are addressed in the literature. A common thread of argument is the recognition that students who are raised in an environment similar to the school environment have an unquestionable advantage in achieving success within that school system. This suggests that:

> In a whole series of families, especially in the intellectual strata, the children find in their family life a preparation, a prolongation and a completion of school life; they 'breathe in', as the expression goes, a whole quantity of notions and attitudes which facilitate the educational process properly speaking. They already know and develop their knowledge of literary language...
>
> Gramsci, 1971: 31

Gramsci identified, at the beginning of the twentieth century and from a prison cell, key concepts which are relevant to the education of ESL students in Ireland's post-primary schools. There is a gap between students who are brought up in an environment which promotes values and knowledge similar to those expected of the typical school environment, and students who are not. ESL students are largely at a disadvantage when it comes to accessing the mainstream curriculum because their background experiences, culture and L1 are unacknowledged. The ESL

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[4] Anecdotally, some teachers have been known to ban the L1 in Irish schools and even recommend that parents speak only English at home.

student often brings many resources, inter alia a rich experience of language and of culture, into the classroom, which are not recognised by the national curriculum in Ireland, a curriculum which reflects the environment and experiences of white, Catholic and middle-class Irish-born students (Devine, 2005; Nowlan, 2008; Irwin, 2009). Gramsci could have been speaking of ESL's own '*questione*' when he wrote:

> The individual consciousness of the overwhelming majority of children reflects social and cultural relations which are different from and antagonistic to those which are represented in the school curricula...
>
> Gramsci, 1971: 35

To conclude, Nowlan's (2008) findings confirm such challenges:

> Just as society is changing, the education system needs to change in order to ensure that the schooling provided to all people prepares them for life in an increasingly pluralist society. The needs of all students must be met, including those who are not from the majority ethnic group (i.e. Irish, white and Roman Catholic).
>
> Nowlan, 2008: 253

1.1 Education and society

1.1.1 Bourdieu and 'cultural capital'

Much research into inequalities in the education system draws on Bourdieuian theory, specifically that of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1997; Robbins, 2005). Wacquant (1998) elaborates the theory thus: rather than education acting as an equalizer in a prejudiced society with all participants afforded equal opportunity, success in education is based on the cultural experiences, social ties and economic resources that each student has access to (ibid: 216; Mills and Gale, 2007: 433). In other words, in order to succeed in school a student must draw upon these experiences, social ties and economic resources – their 'cultural capital'. Bourdieu (1997) described 'capital' thus: "the set of constraints, inscribed in the very reality of the world, which governs its functioning in a durable way, determining the chances of success for practices" (ibid: 46). This recalls the concept of 'structure' I touched upon earlier in the chapter (page 8).

Bourdieu specifically defines cultural capital as being "convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and it may be institutionalised in the form of educational qualifications" (1997: 47), thereby linking cultural capital to education and economic gain. Nowlan (2008) draws on Bourdieu's ideas of cultural capital, arguing that "society was stratified according to the possession of cultural as well as economic capital" (Nowlan, 2008: 254). What does this mean for an ESL student in Ireland? Nowlan develops this point, reflecting that "minority language

students in particular, may be discriminated against within the education system since they lack the means to acquire the particular cultural capital which is necessary in order to do well at school" (ibid.) and also therefore to participate equally in society after school. Bourdieu is interested in social inequality, and he turns much of his attention to education, language and symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1991), particularly how subordinated groups progress (or not) in society (Mills and Gale, 2007: 434). In education systems, he observed how children draw on their existing capital to extract educational knowledge:

> The notion of cultural capital initially presented itself to me...as the theoretical hypothesis which made it possible to explain the unequal scholastic achievement of children originating from the different social classes by relating academic success, i.e., the specific profits which children from the different classes and class fractions can obtain from the academic market, to the distribution of cultural capital between the classes and class fractions.
>
> Bourdieu, 1997: 47

Thus, Bourdieu recognised that schools simply reproduce inequality; the following quote illustrates how this reproduction results via a hegemonic process:

> [T]he development of this system [the education system] involves a certain kind of objectification in which formally defined credentials or qualifications become a mechanism for creating and sustaining inequalities, in such a way that the recourse to overt force is unnecessary. Moreover, by concealing the link between the qualifications obtained by individuals and the cultural capital inherited by virtue of their social background, this mechanism provides a practical justification of the established order. It enables those who benefit most from the system to convince themselves of their intrinsic worthiness, while preventing those who benefit least from grasping the basis of their own deprivation.
>
> Thompson (Ed.) in the introduction to Bourdieu, 1991: 24-25

Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' ("a set of *dispositions* which incline agents to act and react in certain ways" [Thompson in Bourdieu, 1991: 12]) is a useful one for this study; in his introduction to Bourdieu (1991), Thompson develops the definition to include reference to how social power is maintained via a process where practices, perceptions and attitudes are generated and considered as the norm ('common sense'; [Gramsci, 1971: 322]) so that conscious enforcement isn't necessary – again recalling hegemonic mechanisms. These dispositions (beliefs, values, conduct, speech, dress and manners [Mills & Gale, 2007: 436]) are acquired via early childhood experience and unavoidably reflect the surrounding social conditions (ibid.); in an educational setting this means that for an ESL student, considerable obstacles (cf. 'structure'; Giddens, 1979; and page 8 of this thesis) to success are faced due to disparity in background from the dominant group. The acquisition is unconscious and therefore "not readily amenable to conscious reflection

and modification" (ibid: 13). The education process in Ireland hardly encourages this conscious reflection, as studies by Lyons & Little (2009) and Nowlan (2008) suggest.

In schools, where the culture of the dominant group is promoted, educational differences and failure are often misrecognised as resulting from a lack of academic talent, when in reality they stem from class differences or cultural diversity (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977 & 1979: 22-23). And so, while success at school is celebrated by the dominant social groups as based on merit, Bourdieuian theory shatters the illusion of a meritocracy and instead suggests a concern that schools merely reproduce dominant ideology by simply refusing to recognise that the established order is problematic (Bourdieu, 1993a: 123; Mills & Gale, 2007: 438).

Many students may be permanently labelled academic failures (Hyland, 1999: 32): "If intelligence continues to be defined and measured in a linear norm-referenced way, then there is no way up for those who are repeatedly told they are unintelligent and failures" (ibid.). Such practice may be a result of the 'exclusive' origin of Ireland's post-primary schools, when schools were open to only a small number of wealthy families (ibid: 33). The tendency to stream students in some Irish schools is another legacy of this and Nowlan (2008) points out that many ESL students are placed disproportionately in lower stream groups. Research shows that such students do worse in state examinations than students of a similar ability level in mixed-ability classes (Hyland, 1999: 33), so the practice is another form of hegemony, reinforcing disadvantage.

A key argument in this thesis (see Gramsci's perspective, page 11 above) is that of the unfair advantage of students already raised in the habitus reflecting the education system, and particularly those possessing the 'language of education' (cf. restricted/elaborated codes [Bernstein, 1971]). Bourdieu observed that linguistic capital is unequally distributed, that the education system adds value to the linguistic capital of the dominant group (Bourdieu, 1991: 51-57), and that developing familiarity with the language (or language variety) with the 'most' linguistic capital (academic English) depends on prolonged exposure (ibid: 61-62). Therefore, both family and education are principal factors in acquiring the language required to access education. So, as I have previously observed, those with a family habitus which is analogous to the school environment have a clear advantage over those whose family habitus does not reflect the dominant culture (see also my discussions on pedagogy in the classroom, page 38). The education system plays a decisive role in instructing the student which language, or which form of language, is legitimate (Bourdieu, 1991: 48-49).

Bourdieu observed the fate of immigrants (and of other 'deprived' classes) in the school system, focusing on how the inherent inequalities in educational processes can lead to conditions

favouring 'delinquent culture', often a response to educational failure (ibid: 266). Many teachers voice fears of the 'ghettoisation' of migrant groups in Irish schools as a result of inadequate immigration/integration policy across all spheres (Irish Times, 2010e). Bourdieu observes:

> [B]ecause school systems tend to distribute pupils in classes that are as homogeneous as possible with regard to academic criteria, and, correlatively, with regard to social criteria, so that the peer group tends to have an influence which, as one moves down the social hierarchy...contradicts...the effects that may be produced by the educational process...
>
> Bourdieu, 1991: 97

Regarding linguistic capital, in Irish schools academic English has been 'fixed' as the only legitimate form: "In order for one mode of expression among others...to impose itself as the only legitimate one, the linguistic market had to be unified and the different dialects (of class, region or ethnic group) have to be measured practically against the legitimate language..." (Bourdieu, 1991: 45). And in doing so, the education system as a 'system of reproduction' legitimises and reproduces the cultural values of the dominant group (Bourdieu, 1993a: 212). Bourdieu argues that legitimisation is a form of racism: "IQ racism is a racism of the dominant class that differs in a host of ways from what is generally called racism...This racism is characteristic of a dominant class whose reproduction depends to a large extent on the transmission of cultural capital" (Bourdieu, 1993b: 177). The product of such a process is a kind of justification of privilege and an assumption of superiority, with educational qualifications presumed to be markers of intelligence (ibid.).

Educational practices which legitimise one culture over another display this 'IQ racism' where intelligence is measured against 'fixed' cultural norms of the dominant group, and such practices can be devastating for a student from a minority group:

> Educational classification is a euphemized version of social classification, a social classification that has become natural and absolute, having been censored and alchemically transmuted in such a way that class differences turn into differences of 'intelligence', 'talent' ...in educational classification, a social discrimination is legitimized and given the sanction of science.
>
> Bourdieu, 1993b: 178

Bernstein (1996) extensively explored the disadvantages faced by children from lower socio-economic backgrounds, observing the position of power and privilege which remains in the hands of the middle-class (ibid: 20). He also theorised the 'language device' which embodies the rules of communication, or rather the way to communicate according to context. These rules are learnt as transmitted via our cultural surroundings, as Halliday (1978) and Bernstein (1996: 27) suggest,

much in the same way as cultural reproduction operates; "Thus, from this point of view, the relative stability of the rules may well have its origin in the concerns of dominant groups" (ibid.).

According to Bourdieu's theories ESL students do possess rich cultural capital, that of their varied linguistic abilities and cultural experiences which are distinct from the often (more) homogeneous linguistic and cultural experiences of students born in Ireland (not ignoring the differences in social background of these students). Research shows that "Bilingual students' linguistic abilities are not valued as cultural capital... there is a danger that stereotypes will emerge and become self perpetuating, resulting in lower expectations on the part of both students and teachers" (Nowlan, 2008: 262). Mills and Gale (2007) summarise these issues: "For marginalized groups, the cultural capital of their families, the ways in which they see and experience the world, is not highly valued in schools or at least by the schooling system in general," (ibid: 435); I argue that this opinion is true across many areas of the Irish ESL context.

1.1.2 Freire and 'critical pedagogy'

> Education as the practice of freedom – as opposed to education for the practice of domination – denies that [people are]...abstract, isolated, independent, and unattached to the world; it also denies that the world exists as a reality apart from people.
>
> Freire, 1970: 62

Fischman & McLaren (2005) observe and explore links between Gramsci and Freire. Critical pedagogy examines social injustices and supports democratic education. Critical pedagogy theory argues that schools exist to:

> [E]xpand human capacities in order to enable people to intervene in the formation of their own subjectivities and to be able to exercise power in the interest of transforming the ideological and material conditions of domination into social practices which promote social empowerment and demonstrate democratic possibilities.
>
> Giroux & Simon, 1988: 10

Freire (1970) argued in his theory of critical pedagogy that a 'culture of silence' is maintained (often unintentionally) by school systems. The silence prevents the disadvantaged from acquiring the cultural and critical awareness necessary for equality. An education system which positions itself away from authoritarian models towards a more student-centred approach based on students' own life experience and a reciprocal teacher-student relationship has the potential to shift the unequal power distribution in a society to offer all citizens opportunity to participate in democratic processes: "Critical pedagogy is an approach through which students and teachers engage in learning as a mutual encounter with the world" (Nieto, 1999: 103). This reflects the

learning theories (explained in Chapter 2) which focus on students as co-creators of their learning experience.

Such an approach is particularly relevant as a response to increasing diversity in schools (Gogolin, 2002). While diversity has always existed in Irish schools (on socio-economic background and gender grounds, for example), recent immigration has uncovered insufficient provision for a diverse student body within the education system: "second language learners, who were seen as the 'barium meal in the X-ray', showing up deficiencies in the schooling system that affected the progress of many other students" (Bourne, 2003: 26). Critical pedagogy is concerned with the potential role of education as a true preparation for future citizens: "The social and political dimensions of schooling, the need to understand and transform schools and society, and the key role that educators in these processes play are core themes shared by many critical educators" (Fischman & McLaren, 2005: 426). Those who challenge critical pedagogy claim that it lacks "coherent and testable theory" and that it isn't applicable "to the reality of classroom experiences" (Knight & Pearl, 2000: 198). However, I argue that such an approach can be transformative (Cummins, 2001: 169-172) and that it recognises democracy as a journey rather than a destination (Knight & Pearl, 2000: 198).

Pedagogy itself can be defined in many ways, and in this context may be referred to as "a deliberate attempt to influence how and what knowledge and identities are produced within and among particular sets of social relations" (Giroux & Simon, 1988: 12). Knowledge (which may be in the form of cultural and social capital [Bourdieu, 1997: 47-53]) is fixed as desirable (usually by the dominant group) and transferred to the general population via:

> [A] particular curriculum content and design, classroom strategies and techniques, a time and space for the practice of those strategies and techniques, and evaluation purposes and methods. All of these aspects of educational practice come together in the realities of what happens in classrooms.
>
> Giroux & Simon, 1988: 12

McGregor (2009) puts forward the perspective that:

> [E]ducation is a 'gatekeeper' to the paths of either social reproduction or social transformation...educational change is inextricably bound up with social changes that are shaped by many powerful external forces.
>
> Ibid: 384

In Chapter 2 I focus on the classroom perspective of pedagogy; I concentrate here on the view that what happens in classrooms influences and is simultaneously influenced by the political and cultural setting. Is there an assumed superiority of capital representing the white, Catholic, middle-class dominant group in Irish schools or among some individual teachers?

> The role of teachers in critical pedagogy is relevant to those teaching diverse groups of students ...teachers must find ways of creating space for mutual engagement of lived difference that does not require the silencing of a multiplicity of voices by a single dominant discourse; at the same time teachers must develop forms of pedagogy informed by a substantive ethic that contests racism, sexism and class exploitation as ideologies and social practices that disrupt and devalue public life.
>
> Giroux & Simon, 1988: 16

Freire's concept of 'banking education' (1970: 53-54) compares education to an act of simply depositing knowledge into the (blank?) mind of the student, and in doing so establishing an unequal power relationship, with the 'giver' of the knowledge in a position of higher status. Students simply memorise and repeat the information, completely passively and removed from active inquiry. Freire argues that banking education both forms and maintains unequal power distribution in society and hinders students' creativity (ibid: 1970: 54). While critical analysis and inquiry, as well as active participation in the learning process, are often claimed in schools as established methodologies, studies point to the fact that many modern curricula maintain at least some elements of a banking education approach (Halsey et al., 1997). Teachers in Ireland often complain that exam pressure (along with lack of resources) can cause a reliance on simply filling students up with text book facts and past exam papers, which mirrors what Freire is saying regarding depositing information.

Diametrically opposed to banking education is Freire's proposal of 'problem-posing' education, which emphasises intention and consciousness in the process of engaging cognitive interaction rather than simply transferring information: "In problem-posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves," (Freire, 1970: 64, emphasis in original). In doing so people can picture themselves as participating in society's ongoing transformation and their own "becoming" (Freire, 1970: 65), removed from the determinism of hegemonic, cultural reproduction and fostering a setting where 'agency' can prevail over 'structure'. Freire believed that education paves the way for transforming society (Freire, 1974: 29-31) and that the building blocks of democracy are developed by those emerging from this 'problem-posing education' which cultivates a critical consciousness (Freire, 1970 & 1974: 39). The whole approach stresses that the educational

process is founded on negotiation *with* the minority group, and isn't imposed *on* them (Freire, 1970: 30 & 36), promoting authentic dialogue and facilitating discovery:

> A revolutionary leadership must accordingly practice *co-intentional* education. Teachers and students (leadership and people), co-intent on reality, are both Subjects, not only in the task of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge. As they attain this knowledge of reality through common reflection and action, they discover themselves as its permanent re-creators.
>
> Freire, 1970: 51 (emphasis in original)

Discourse on critical pedagogy often focuses on what is considered to be a successful outcome; "schools continue to reproduce social inequality and suppress alternative knowledge frameworks" (McGregor, 2009: 347).

I have made reference to the argument that research into ESL prompts measures that benefit all students by fostering more student-centred educational processes. Many of the problems which obstruct students' opportunities in school reflect problems that existed before the recent migrants' arrival. ESL students and students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds share similar obstacles in accessing education and both groups are consistently at the lower end of achievement in international studies (OEDC, 2006). The shared linguistic obstacles include accessing academic content via academic language, which the difference being that native speakers of English speak a different variety of the standard/academic language, while ESL students speak a non-native L1. ESL context highlights issues already present in school systems (see Bourne discussion above p. 17); Freire suggests that adopting a critical pedagogy benefits all strata of society, "this pedagogy ceases to belong to the [minority group]...and becomes instead a pedagogy of all people" (ibid: 1970: 36). In a passage resembling a description of how, in hegemonic contexts, consent is negotiated via subtle means, Freire illustrates how a 'banking education' approach suits the needs of a dominant group in society:

> [T]his concept is well suited to the purposes of the [dominant group]... whose tranquillity rests on how well people fit the world [they]...have created, and how little they question it. The more completely the [dominated group]...adapt to the purposes which the dominant minority prescribe for them...the more easily [they] can continue to prescribe.
>
> Freire, 1970: 57

1.1.3 Education and cultural reproduction

In his writings, Gramsci suggested that reproduction of cultural norms occurs in many education systems (Gramsci, 1985: 40), and discussed structures to counteract this. He was concerned with knowledge as a social commodity and critically questioned who should have the task of fixing the 'rights of knowledge' (Gramsci, 1971; Adamson, 1980: 210): "For Gramsci linguistic relations are not only representations and historical traces of past and present power relations but are also paradigms for other relations of cultural influence and prestige" (Forgacs & Nowell-Smith's introduction in Gramsci, 1985: 165).

While early research in the field of ESL emphasised the role of L1 and L2 in a child's education, trends have developed towards an emphasis on context, societal relations and political power (Ferguson, 2006: 40; Cummins, 2000). Students from migrant backgrounds face obstacles to their participation in a society, not least because immigration is often viewed as an inconvenience causing problems for the dominant majority group (Tosi, 1988: 81). Cummins emphasises how the migrant student is disempowered by education institutions throughout the world (Cummins 1998: 138), and much literature claims that this disempowerment is a reflection of the habitus of the individual educators (Nowlan, 2008), of institution-wide and national policy/legislation (Lentin & McVeigh, 2006; Kuhling & Heohane, 2007) and of the society in which the educational institution is set. The DES recognises the role disadvantage plays in preventing groups of students from accessing mainstream education: "[educational disadvantage prevents] students from deriving appropriate benefit from education in schools" (DES, 1998). Therefore, disadvantage (referring here to a wide range of socio-economic factors that lead to disadvantage) prevents many children from actively participating in and contributing to the education process.

1.1.3.1 Ireland and cultural bias

There are many studies which identify racist attitudes in Irish society in general, as well as in the education system (Lentin and McVeigh, 2006; Keogh and Whyte, 2003; Devine, 2005; Nowlan, 2008): "Ireland lies far behind other European countries in addressing racism in terms of anti-racist legislation" (Tannam, et al., 1998: 11). Theories of racism in the Irish context highlight a tendency to give with one hand while taking away with the other; this contradiction is discussed by Lentin & McVeigh (2006: 5-6), and in this thesis I observe several instances that show how this tendency is reflected in the education system. One could argue that opening the doors to its schools but failing to provide the support necessary to access the curriculum is representative of Ireland's migration policy: a policy characterised by legislation which is "intended to *control* rather than liberate those people who are the subjects of Irish racism" (Lentin & McVeigh, 2006: 2). The issue of race is 'problematized' and 'common sense' legislation (see Gramsci, 1971: 322, for

discussion of 'common sense' notions) seeks to manage "'the problem' of racial and ethnic difference" (Lentin & McVeigh, 2006: 2).

Diversity in the Irish population is not new: "Minority ethnic groups, including the indigenous Traveller community, as well as relatively small immigrant Jewish, Italian and Chinese communities, for example, have been part of Irish society for a long time" (Nowlan, 2008: 255). So, the recent influx of immigrants doesn't initiate or uncover a new problem, it reveals existing problems in the education system. Discrimination in schools reflects the inequality within the broader society: "school practices are understood to be influenced by their location within the broader social and policy contexts, as well as by the individual actors in schools – students, teachers and parents" (Nowlan, 2008: 254), and much recent research in the field of diversity in Irish schools has concentrated upon such issues (Devine, 2005). Highlighting the role of teacher, school and the DES is significant – they all play a role, have major influence on students' education and all share responsibility for ESL programmes.

Keogh and Whyte (2003), in their study on the experiences and aspirations of immigrant students in second level schools, draw attention to the fact that within their sample schools no Traveller students were participating in the Senior Cycle (Keogh and Whyte, 2003: 1); there was a history of disadvantage in Irish schools before the new migrants arrived.

Racism in Irish society reflected as institutional racism in schools is revealed by, on the one hand, a tendency to 'provide for' minorities (as mentioned above, page 6, and in Lentin & McVeigh, 2006: 5-6) – observe the current wave of 'intercultural' and 'anti-racist' education initiatives (NCCA, 2006), and on the other hand reluctance to fully implement educational programmes which enable migrants to learn. There is evidence to suggest that debate in Irish society tends to reinforce the unequal distribution of power (Guerin, 2002: 92), and attitudes in the media are visibly racist (McVeigh, 2002: 21). Policy reflects the white, Catholic hegemony in its viewpoint that racism is "caused by the 'strangeness' of incoming immigrant groups (rather than by the 'host' society)" (Lentin, 2002: 229).

Gramsci advances a linguistic theory within that of his cultural hegemony, addressing the issue of consent from the subordinated classes and how it is achieved by the dominant social groups. A state with many languages may experience friction, and it is that very friction which can often be unintentionally exploited by the ruling classes in order to maintain control, because the minority language groups do not form one unified group and may not have proficiency in the national language; "[the dominant social group]...can govern even when the democratic majority have interests that are systematically opposed to the government because that majority is divided and

fragmented" (Ives, 2004a: 48). And so, in Ireland the significance of a lack of adequate language provision in the school system prevents those students accessing education, maintaining an underclass of immigrants and their families:

> Educational inequalities both affect and are affected by such national discourses. These discourses interact with State policy in relation to immigration and citizenship, which serves to maintain a racialised, stratified system at the top of which are Irish citizens with full civil, social and political rights (Loyal 2003; Ruhs 2005).
>
> Nowlan, 2008: 256

1.2 DES and ESL policy

Irish schools perform averagely well according to international evaluation studies such as PISA (DES, 2004: 5). School is compulsory from the age of six until 16 (or after three years of post-primary education). The post-primary (second level) education system (starting at 12 years of age) consists of two levels, the Junior Cycle and the Senior Cycle. At the end of the three year Junior Cycle students take the Junior Certificate. Upon completion of the Senior Cycle students take the Leaving Certificate which forms the basis of entry to third level education. Students and schools are free to decide if they want to participate in the Transition Year, which is interposed between the two cycles (Smyth et al., 2007: 146) and has a more vocational emphasis. Second level education is further divided into secondary, vocational, community and comprehensive schools, which all follow the state curriculum (DES, 2004: 6). Post-primary schools are owned and managed by religious bodies, Boards of Governors or Vocational Education Committees (in the case of VECs) (ibid: 13).

Training for teachers is offered by specialist colleges for primary level teachers, while second level teachers complete an undergraduate degree and then a postgraduate course in education (one year full time) at one of the Irish universities. Courses differ from university to university, and this system has been criticised as providing inadequate preparation for post-primary school teachers (Eurydice, 2009: 78). Whether the postgraduate education course provides prospective teachers with any grounding in educating the diverse classroom and ESL students varies from establishment to establishment. However, anecdotal evidence collected during my interviews with teachers (including many newly qualified teachers) suggests that diversity in education is either not covered, or is covered in a deficient manner:

> The narrow vision of 'Irishness' which was promoted continues to permeate both the education system and society, as evidenced by the continued dominance of the Catholic Church in areas such as school ownership and teacher training, and the persistently ethnocentric curriculum (Lodge and Lynch 2004).
>
> Nowlan, 2008: 255

The structure for Irish post-primary schools and the training background for those teaching in them need to be considered in the context of what the DES has established to be desired educational goals. Defining what 'education' means in general for the Irish post-primary school sector, how schools are supported to deliver this education, and how ESL provision fits into this context follows in the next section.

1.2.1 DES mission statements

The mission statements published by the DES on its website address cutting edge issues in contemporary education, and offer an optimistic view of a student's prospects within the Irish education system. Starting with one of their more global statements, DES implies that long term investment is valuable and critical if education is to fulfil its role of preparing students for future participation in society: "It is recognised and accepted that education is a critical driver of economic success and social progress in modern society" (DES website, accessed 20 March 2009) – later updated to "plan for education that is relevant to personal, social, cultural and economic needs" and which promotes "inclusion" (DES website, accessed 9 July 2010). Furthermore, according to its mission statements, DES is prepared to respond to a changing and more diverse society, with the same view that such a long term investment is worthwhile "in achieving the objective of an inclusive society where all citizens have the opportunity and the incentive to participate fully in the social and economic life of the country" (accessed 20 March 2009). Nowlan (2008: 256-257) cites a 1998 paper in which the Irish government recommend that schools respect and promote respect for diversity of students and their families regarding values, beliefs, traditions and languages. DES continues to identify current and future challenges at the forefront of its remit:

> The mission of the Department of Education and Skills is to provide high-quality education, which will:
>
> - Enable individuals to achieve their full potential and to participate fully as members of society, and [c]ontribute to Ireland's social, cultural and economic development
>
> In pursuit of this mission, the Department has the following...goals:
>
> - To promote equity and inclusion
> - To promote quality outcomes
> - To promote lifelong learning
>
> DES website, accessed 20 July 2010

Such goals certainly recognise education as the foundation for a democratic society in which students emerging from the system are able to contribute to Ireland's economic and cultural progress. They also establish the education system as a reflection of current society, which is a diverse society. Furthermore, the DES emphasises the individuality of each student, which bodes well for the recent ESL students who often have very different needs – needs which must be met if an equal education for all, as stated above, is to be achieved:

> Each child is entitled to an education and learning environment, which facilitates the nurturing of her/his educational potential, in all its richness, and diversity. ...The school environment should be a caring one in which each child's right to a joyful and safe childhood is guaranteed at all times.
>
> DES, 1995: 14

Consequently, one of the questions this thesis asks is whether the DES meets these goals, particularly in the context of ESL students' educational provision. Nowlan refers to an education system where, "Despite stated intercultural aims, the approach to diversity continues to reflect a hegemonic Roman Catholic, nationalistic culture" (Nowlan, 2008: 255), a research based observation which seems to contradict the goals stated above. Repeatedly in this thesis I draw attention to the discrepancy between DES stated goals and policy, and actual practice.

1.2.2 DES and school structures

In this sub-section it is appropriate that 'structure' refers both to the organisation of a school and to the "bodies of valued knowledge and the patterns of their use" (Leung, 2010b), for the analysis which follows centres on the limitations of both. Gramsci himself observed that "Ministers of education are placed in office because they belong to a political party, not because they know how to administer and direct the educational function of the state" (Gramsci, 1985: 39). The Department of Education and Skills is responsible for "general regulations for the recognition of schools, prescribes curricula, establishes regulations for the management, resourcing and staffing of schools" (DES, 2004: 7) and these duties are centralised. However, in recent years the DES has restructured itself and assigned certain responsibilities to external agencies such as the State

Examinations Commission (ibid; Devine, 2005; Smyth et al., 2007: 145), the intention of this move being to allow the DES to concentrate on policy issues and allow schools' management to direct the implementation of individual policy, establish their own ethos and organise the delivery of each student's education. These last three points are significant when assessing the guidelines issued for English language support (see below) and when analysing how these guidelines are implemented in schools, because an evaluation of provision for migrant students must scratch beneath the surface of simply locating one 'problem' or 'inadequacy', and look at all of the actors who influence such students (DES, school management and teachers).

Ireland's schools and the way in which they are organised lend themselves particularly well to hegemonic control due to this partially decentralised structure – not one actor is responsible for policy and practice, and so behaviour which may not be effective go unquestioned. The responsibility for running a school in Ireland is given over to (predominantly and historically) religious bodies (O'Flaherty, 1999), as is teacher training. Sisamakis (2006) summarises the establishment of Ireland's education system on religious grounds due to historical events, which lead to the relative freedom enjoyed by Irish schools when organising their timetable, subject provision and so on (Sisamakis, 2006: 44). On the one hand individual schools need a degree of flexibility when implementing a policy according to their own ethos and structures. However, a major shortcoming is that schools can get away with maintaining inadequate provision standards due to the lack of rigidly enforced guidelines. This means practice can vary widely across schools.

Furthermore, the role of religious bodies as administrators in the education system has led to concern, particularly "the exemption that denominational schools currently enjoy from equality legislation, allowing them to discriminate in terms of student admissions and teacher appointments in order to protect their ethos" (Nowlan, 2008: 256), which means that a school can exclude an ESL student on the grounds of their religious background – a practice which has received heavy criticism (UNCERD, 2005). Devine draws our attention to the long history of domination by the church in the education system: "The moralisation of the young, through religious instruction, continued to be perceived to be 'a fundamental part of the school course' and in line with the overall principles of the curriculum, was to be implemented in an integrated and child centred manner" (Devine, 1999: 21). Furthermore, "[t]here is evidence to suggest that the greater the religious involvement in second-level schools, the higher will be the participation rates of the middle to upper-middle classes in such schools," (O'Flaherty, 1999: 62). Given the majority stake the Catholic Church has in post-primary schools in Ireland, there is further potential for reproduction of dominant group social and cultural norms.

Analysis of recent, context-specific literature came across criticism of the way official DES policy is constructed and disseminated, and of the non-uniform way in which many schools and teachers implement the policy (Devine, 2005; Nowlan, 2008; Ó Riagáin, 2009), while other studies propose solutions and recommendations (Little, 2008; Lyons & Little, 2009; Little & Lazenby Simpson, 2009; also discussed from page 63 in Chapter 2).

1.2.3 Circular 0053/2007 and Circular 0015/2009

> The aim of language support is to ensure that each child has sufficient language skills not only to benefit from but also to contribute to the educational activities taking place in the school.
>
> Mary Hanafin, T.D., Minister for Education and Science (now Skills), February 2005

At present, the DES distributes 'circulars' to communicate to schools updates in policy,[5] new policy initiatives and general business. It is up to the individual school to decide on the best way to implement the policies as set out by the DES; the School Inspectorate examines whether the implementation meets the original demands of DES policy via a series of evaluations, either whole school or for each subject department.

DES response to the changing levels of diversity in society, and therefore in the student population, began in 1999 by making funding available for English language support (Nowlan, 2008: 253). Circular 0053/2007 (DES, 2007) is entitled "Meeting the needs of pupils for whom English is a second language" and this three page document was issued by DES in 2007 to address a situation which had necessitated intervention since the arrival of Ireland's new migrants at least a decade or two earlier. Earlier documents (see DES, 2003) set out availability of funding available to support ESL.

Circular 0053/2007 is a starting point for my research, and the provision guidelines it states were a starting point for schools and teachers looking to establish and develop ESL programmes (see Ó Riagáin, 2009, for discussion of the Circular's elements). According to the Circular, its purpose is "to assist schools in providing an inclusive school environment to meet the needs of pupils for whom English is a second language and outline the resources that are available to assist schools in this task" (DES, 2007: 1). It goes on to provide limited guidelines on the subject of creating an inclusive school environment, without saying how such guidelines should be carried out: "The school's commitment to creating an inclusive school environment should be evident in the school

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[5] Leung (2010b) uses the term 'policy' "to refer to formal and quasi-policy statements as well as other discursive expressions found in official guidance and professional discussions" and I have used the term in a broadly similar way.

plan, the promotion of parental involvement, the provision of equality of curriculum access, the facilitation of professional development opportunities and in whole school and classroom practice" (ibid.).

The circular offers a brief description of the role of an ESL teacher: "Language support teachers are appointed to assist schools in providing additional language support teaching for pupils" (DES, 2007: 1). Many such teachers describe a situation of confusion, isolation and often blurred boundaries between a school's ESL programme and its special needs[6] department (Nowlan, 2008: 261). And while the Circular requests that ESL teachers collaborate with parents and other teachers, there is no mention of provision of teaching periods or structures to help achieve this collaboration. However, many mainstream teachers appear not to inform themselves about matters related to ESL, even though the circulars clearly state that mainstream teachers are responsible for ESL students in their mainstream lessons (DES, 2007 & 2009a).

References to ESL students as sometimes having "significant English language deficits" (DES, 2007: 2) reflect the viewpoint that ESL students themselves possess the 'problem', a common perspective which is identified across the literature (Cummins, 2000). Overall, to summarise provision as stipulated by Circular 0053/2007: limited instructions to provide for second language issues, teaching materials and training are provided by IILT, per capita teaching allowance (equal to one part-time teacher for under 14 students and one full-time teacher for over 14, which is usually implemented as 2 hours of language support per week, for two years), and DES recommends that language support should take place in small, withdrawal groups (Ó Riagáin, 2009).

Both circulars (DES, 2007 & 2009a) have the potential to maintain hegemony within the school system when implemented by many schools and teachers. At present, policy hasn't fostered a centralised, approved framework which educators can refer to in order to tackle the challenges of educating ESL students, meaning that adequate support is left to more informal initiatives, often from individual teachers. The other side of the same coin is how individual teachers can remain unaware of provision due to lack of dedication to their own professional development, and therefore a school can simply lose out on or misuse DES allocation.

The circulars, however, are not intended to be a comprehensive set of guidelines. While this is advantageous, as previously mentioned, in allowing for flexibility in programmes and adapting the

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[6] (DES, 2009b & 2010) Special education needs are met by DES by providing learning support/learning resource teachers, and Special Needs Assistants (SNA).

provision to best suit each individual school, initial research shows that rather than being used as an advantage, this lack of clear guidelines is being used instead as a justification for not implementing an adequate ESL programme. Gramsci notes the impact of not having a single, agreed-upon and clearly defined shared script (Tosi, 1988).

Circular 0015/2009, intended to replace the previous one, came in response to the recession and subsequent budget cuts across many spheres of Irish life. It is too soon to comment on the new Circular's impact in schools. At time of writing, the 2009 – 2010 school year had just finished, and so changes to a school's ESL programme as influenced by the new Circular were evident only to a limited degree. A review of Circular 0015/2009 indicates (in summary):

- ESL teachers capped at 2 per school
- Clear guidance that ESL should have its own policy within a school
- The DES post-primary assessment kit should be used
- Schools with 14–30 entitled students receive allocation for 1 teaching post; schools with 31-90 entitled students receive allocation for 2 teaching posts
- Schools with over 90 entitled students may submit an application for more teaching hours, however the process has been made more complex and bureaucratic

Early feedback shows that many schools have lost teaching allocation equal to a full-time teaching post from their ESL programme, even though student numbers have remained the same or increased. Some schools reported more difficulties in appealing their allocation for students who fall outside the 2 year limit. The most significant changes appear to be a limit of language support teachers (usually two per school), limiting definitions of which students are eligible to receive language support, and increased bureaucracy when applying for language support allocation.

The goals set out by the circulars do reflect best practice, but policy and practice are not in harmony. I investigated this point further in my preliminary survey (see Chapter 4) and there are no simple answers as to why this discrepancy prevails; I attempt to address the complex interaction between all actors, and between 'structure' and 'agency' in this thesis.

1.2.4 Prospects for ESL students in Ireland

This sub-section discusses Irish context research and findings. Lyons & Little (2009) and Little & Lazenby-Simpson (2004) identify the specific challenges faced by ESL students:

- ESL students arrive at any time in the school year
- Students present with varying levels of the English language and experience of English language learning
- Students present with extremely diverse educational experience
- Lack of expertise of ESL teachers
- Older age group have more to learn if they are to catch up with English-speaking peers

In addition to these challenges, my exploratory research and review of the literature have highlighted, for example, inadequate teacher training (for ESL and mainstream teachers[7]), language support limited to 2 years, impact of age of post-primary students on learning English, often unstable accommodation of students, state exam pressure and lack of cross-curricular resources. Many studies also reveal the practice of placing students in low-ability groups or, in Ireland, in the Transition Year programme, irrespective of ability or age (Nowlan, 2008).

Nowlan's study (2008), and emerging literature in the field, has identified gaps in ESL provision in the Irish post-primary system and contributes to emerging literature which addresses educational policies for Ireland's migrant students and practice in schools (Devine, 2005; IILT, 2007; Little, 2008; Lyons & Little; 2009; Ó Riagáin, 2009). An area widely identified as being insufficient is the amount and length of ESL allocation: "Student entitlement to language support (effectively two hours per week for two years) was widely held to be inadequate" (Nowlan, 2008: 260). Lyons & Little's survey (2009) showed that ESL students fare badly due to poorly coordinated English language support and lack of communication between ESL and mainstream teachers. Other areas of concern identified by Nowlan (2008) include inadequate teacher training which hasn't equipped Ireland's teachers for the diverse classroom context (ibid: 253; Kearney: 2008).

Ireland's ESL provision, as it stands, seems to be offering its students compensatory education (Tosi, 1988: 83), often spoken of in the same breath as special needs education (indeed, due to the often minimal amount of teaching hours provided by DES, and schools' interpretation, special needs education and English language support are often one and the same thing). While some schools manage to interpret DES guidelines in such a way as to provide for an education based on multiculturalism and building on students' L1, this is usually attributable to one or several individuals in the school who use their free time to develop more sophisticated programmes. This highlights the need both for teachers and schools to take responsibility for professional development and for DES to take responsibility for dissemination of information.

Inspectors' evaluation reports from between September and December 2009 (DES website, accessed 15 August 2010) reveal 5 main criticisms in their assessment of English language support (I could only find mention of English language support in whole school evaluation reports, although an ESL specific report is due later in 2010). While some schools were praised for displaying at least some characteristics of what DES consider best practice, such as use of Integrate Ireland Language and Training (IILT) resources, the five main causes for concern were: i)

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[7] Availability of teacher training, dissemination of teacher training courses available, and uptake of the teacher training which does exist are all problematic.

misappropriation of allocated hours (DES allocation for English language support wasn't fully utilised and funding simply disappeared into the school system; the phrase "not all of these hours are used for their intended purpose" was employed), ii) lack of school policy to address English language support and teaching a diverse student population, iii) no post of responsibility to recognise role of staff involved with ESL students, iv) ESL classes not organised in the best interest of the students (for example, students being in age inappropriate groups), and v) lack of mechanisms to facilitate communication with parents.

Assessment of ESL students' English language proficiency is essential for accurate needs analysis (Genesee, 1994: 212). Anecdotal evidence and research show that assessment is haphazard and employs tools unsuitable for the context, if it takes place at all: "A wide range of procedures for initial assessment were reported, none of which represented the breadth and depth of assessment regarded as international best practice" (Nowlan, 2008: 261). IILT initiated the development of a post-primary assessment pack, which DES published after the closure of IILT. The packs were eventually delivered to schools in March 2009 with promises of in-service training. The English Language Proficiency Benchmarks (IILT, 2003a), developed by IILT, were circulated in 2000 via in-service seminars and a revised version was published in 2003. However, I found them to be widely neglected in terms of usage in the classroom, often due to lack (or perceived lack) of dissemination and training from the DES.

Regarding the two year limit for English language support, the oft-cited assumption that once a student sounds reasonably fluent in English, then she/he will be able to fully access the mainstream curriculum is evident in the way DES offer support. "In contrast to the 2 to 3 years needed to reach proficiency in basic L2 skills, Cummins found that a period of 5 to 7 years of study in the second language is required to reach native-speaker levels in school language" (reported in Collier, 1989: 516). Chapter 2, page 49, of this thesis explores the issue of 'how long?' and there are many studies addressing the issue that the two year limit on ESL provision for an individual student is a misjudgement of what is expected of an ESL student in mainstream education: "For school purposes, language acquisition also must include the vocabulary and special uses of language for each subject area, such as metalinguistic analysis of language in language arts classes and many other learning strategies associated with the use of language in each content area" (ibid: 510). The most recent circular (DES, 2009a) alludes to more emphasis on mainstream support (rather than withdrawal). However, there is little point in mainstreaming ESL, or of expecting mainstream teachers to 'take over' ESL support if they are unprepared, unable or unwilling to take responsibility for ESL students in their classroom or for the language component of their subject (Keogh & Whyte, 2003: 48; Devine, 2005; Kearney, 2008, Nowlan, 2008: 253).

1.3 Conclusion

In this study, I argue that cultural reproduction is an often unintended consequence of the education process, and I focus on this phenomenon in Ireland, highlighting how the education system reflects existing inequality in society as a whole. The goal of language support is to provide students from migrant backgrounds with equal access to education.

Such students do possess what Bourdieu (1997) refers to as 'capital' – both cultural and linguistic. However, their versions of capital, and the associated life experiences which helped build their capital, are not automatically valued by the education system. In fact, this gap between the capital valued by the school and that of the ESL student is a significant obstacle in accessing education. Gramsci (1970) and Bourdieu (1991 & 1997) describe how children raised in an environment which is rich in the capital promoted by the education system will thrive in that system. If a student's background doesn't include the accepted cultural capital of the educational and societal context of their current environment, gaining access to such capital is difficult unless schools bridge the gap using the student's existing capital as a starting point. Hegemony describes the process whereby dominant ideology is reproduced in systems where such processes can go unquestioned and therefore prevent the gap being bridged. Freire (1970) describes how a tendency towards 'banking education' fosters such an environment which doesn't facilitate innovation and critical analysis, and studies show that elements of this 'banking education' are apparent in Irish post-primary schools.

Freire (1970) also put forward his philosophy of a 'critical pedagogy' which can act against the determinism of hegemonic, cultural reproduction. His 'problem posing' pedagogical approach fosters a context where 'agency' can prevail over 'structure' (Giddens, 1979). Active participation in learning, critical analysis and empowerment in the classroom are characteristics of such an environment, underpinned by what Gramsci proposed as alternatives for existing paradigms of cultural influence and prestige (Forgacs & Nowell-Smith's introduction in Gramsci, 1985: 165).

Language, or linguistic capital, is significant in this context in two ways; first, ESL students must develop proficiency in English, and second they must engage in the kind of academic English through which curricular content is transmitted. Addressing these two perspectives is difficult in light of the observations of a tendency towards 'banking education', among other processes which prevent the gap being bridged. Educational differences, such as a different kind of linguistic capital or cultural knowledge, can be viewed as lack of educational talent, thus promoting further reproduction of disadvantage. This study looks to identify if this underlying grasp of educational processes is facilitated by schools and their ESL programmes, and if not, to consider how best to work towards bridging the gap.

1.3.1 Moving from society into the classroom

As a researcher in this area I often found myself examining my role. Whether it is simply to describe what *is*, or – in the emotive context of my study – whether I should also study and suggest *what ought to be* (García et al., 2006: 11). Inevitably, I have addressed both of these perspectives within the scope of my thesis. Through my experience of observing and often participating in school environments, I have found that though I started as an 'outsider', I discovered that through the very act of situating myself within a minority setting and the demands of developing skills which enable me to have a critical orientation towards my research experiences, I became someone more inclined to belong 'in the middle' (ibid: 10). From such a perspective, making evaluations and suggestions is inescapable, and if not as a researcher then as a teacher it is my duty to stay in touch with the world as it is while keeping an eye on the imagined ideals of the future (ibid: 11). However, my study is firmly situated within the current policy and structures which define the Irish education system, and every effort has been made in the interpretation of the data to let the participants speak for themselves.

Gramsci draws our attention to the significance of a *'questione della lingua'* being a central concern in public discourse – in his case the question of a standard Italian language, and in Ireland's case the 'problem' that minority language students pose for the school system (see also page 20 in this chapter for discussion on how this concern reflects cultural bias in society). For Gramsci, "the problem of language figures in the discussion of hegemonic relations between classes...the development of the national state, and the relations between state and civil society" (Mansfield, 1984: 59):

> Every time that the question of language surfaces, in one way or another, it means that a series of other problems are coming to the fore: the formation and enlargement of the governing class, the need to establish more intimate and secure relationships between the governing groups and the national-popular mass, in other words to recognize the cultural hegemony.
>
> Gramsci, 1984: 147

Moving from the societal concerns of this chapter towards the classroom based approach to pedagogy of the next, this thesis is concerned with identifying characteristics of best practice in a school's ESL programme (based on official policy [DES, 2007 & 2009a]) which lead to a successful outcome, within existing structures, for the students concerned. So, the question is not whether English language support, and therefore access to education, is provided in agreement with what the literature claims to be best practice; rather, we should ask: "Under which circumstances can the Irish education system, within the structure of its current organisation, provide a fair chance to the ESL student so that she/he may succeed in school?" The National Council for Curriculum

and Assessment (NCCA) define the challenge thus: "how to ensure that an education system originally designed to serve the needs of an elite few can be re-shaped to meet the needs of a broader, more diverse group of learners" (NCCA, 2005).

1.3.2 Main research question

In the opening paragraphs to this chapter I established a target for this study: to address the question of how schools can enable ESL students to learn (both curricular content and English language). Therefore, I address the following research questions in my thesis:

- What are the characteristics of effective ESL educational provision, within the framework of current Irish post-primary school structures?

My literature review reveals several broad areas which point to best practice in the wider context of educational provision for language minority students in mainstream contexts, and the following subordinate questions focus on these areas:

- Do the main actors (teachers, schools and the DES) facilitate ESL programmes which:
  - address the demands of the curriculum and the linguistic challenges of school?
  - build on students' prior experience?
  - develop proficiency in the target language of instruction (English)?
  - develop content knowledge in the mainstream subjects?
  - prepare students for state examinations?

I refer to literature which covers 'best practice' (leading to high degree of success – HDS [Ferguson, 2006: 22]) and 'worst practice' (Willig, 1985; Collier, 1989; Ramírez, 1992; Cummins, 2001). My research took place at a point in time which presented specific challenges and limitations; what happens when the goal posts keep moving, as in times of economic instability (Lingard et al., 1993) with new and reduced DES provision (see pages 28 & 74 of this thesis)? To answer these questions the following chapter reviews research relating to second language learning and teaching, classroom pedagogy and the education of minority language students (international and Ireland specific findings) in order to draw together an idea of what a framework for a successful ESL programme might look like in Irish post-primary schools.

2 Pedagogy in the Classroom

2.0 Introduction

This chapter follows on from the previous discussions of pedagogy and society to examine what 'pedagogy' means in schools and in the classroom. I address what happens at the 'chalk face', the interface between the ESL student and educational processes. These processes include the acquisition of academic English alongside the development of content area knowledge, as well as linguistic interactions between the student, their teachers and their school. I ask how learning is best enabled for ESL students, and then address how language support and mainstream learning are most effectively facilitated in the Irish post-primary school setting.

The first part (2.1) of this chapter relates to the linguistic demands and learning processes at various stages of the curriculum. It highlights the differences between academic language and language varieties which many students are more accustomed to. I consider the role of L1 and the complex 'how long?' question, and conclude with a look at some pedagogical approaches which support successful second language acquisition (and learning in general).

The second part (2.2) moves on to describe the evolution of ESL in Ireland, focussing on school and classroom based responses. I explore issues such as the B1 'cut-off' point and conclude with an analysis of provision and practice.

The third section (2.3) concludes with an analysis of the boundaries of Irish policy and draws conclusions of best practice regarding possible policy, provision and practice for ESL students within the boundaries of Irish post-primary schools. This acts as the rationale for the empirical study which follows in the subsequent chapters.

2.1 Migrant students, language and education

This sub-section examines the nature of the challenge faced by ESL students entering mainstream education. The task of acquiring the language of education is complex, as students must acquire the specific academic English varieties required for school, while progression throughout post-primary schooling moves towards more and more abstract uses of language (Collier, 1989: 512). At the same time students are engaging with the subject knowledge transmitted by the language; "We cannot make a clear distinction between the content and the form of the curriculum, or treat the subject matter as the end and the communication as no more than a means. The two are inseparable" (Barnes, 1976: 14). L1's role in mainstream education, the issue of how long language acquisition takes, and general second language acquisition (SLA) theories are also drawn into the argument.

2.1.1 Communicative demands of school

What are the linguistic demands of the mainstream curriculum? The role of dialogue in developing the academic genre of language leads on to a discussion on Vygotsky, his theories on learning and the role of social interactive communication. The gaps inherent in the school system, highlighted by differences in language variety, are briefly presented and is followed by an examination of language and the teacher.

Dialogue and academic genre

> Language is at the centre of human life. We use it to express our love or our hatred, to achieve our goals and further our careers, to gain artistic satisfaction or simple pleasure. Through language we plan our lives and remember our past; we exchange ideas and experiences; we form our social and individual identities.
>
> Cook, 2001: 1

The quote above underlines how language (including spoken, written and thought) is a central marker of people as individuals. Children begin to acquire language at home and dialogue is a catalyst which provides a driving force towards language use and the negotiation of meaning (Mercer, 2000; Mitchell & Myles, 2004: 191). Dialogue aids the construction of knowledge as children start to make sense of the world around them, a process which shifts to another level when a child starts school where the language for many (perhaps most) children is very different to the kind of language they experience at home (Maybin, 2007: 159). The role of language in education is fundamental; "Learning to communicate is at the heart of education" (Barnes, 1976: 20).

Register is defined as "the constellation of lexical and grammatical features that characterizes particular uses of language" (Schleppegrell, 2001: 431). I have noted that post-primary level school language is progressively more abstract: "The language of schooling undoubtedly becomes more complex at post-primary level, increasing in complexity and abstract quality as a student progresses through the years" (Barnes, 1975: 83). On a cognitive level, students must engage with abstract subject content and concepts, via discursive thinking:

> Because second language students find it difficult to learn new language skills which refer to abstract concepts, cognitive operations or experiences which are not yet part of their intellectual repertoire, they should first be given opportunities to learn language in conjunction with experiences that are compatible with their current abilities and knowledge. In this way, learning new language skills to talk about what is already known or has already been experienced will be facilitated. Once learned, these new language skills can serve as tools to acquire and master other concepts and skills. The interdependence between language and cognition becomes especially important in the higher grades, where more and more of the academic goals become abstract and dependent on language for their acquisition...
>
> Genesee 1994: 4

Socially, the ability to understand the language used in the classroom means not only to understand the content being expressed, but also to understand the socially appropriate nature of the kind of language used, as Kress et al (2005) argue:

> They [linguistic signs] need to be understood rationally, and to understand them thus is also to understand them as an enactment of *social* relations. In addition, signs have regularities of use. The more work a culture has put into a semiotic resource, and the more it has been used in social life, the more fully and finely articulated and 'regularized' it will have become.
>
> Kress, et al., 2005: 19

Thus, familiarity with socially appropriate language is another task faced by all children entering education (as aspect of the 'hidden curriculum' [Barnes, 1976: 17]), and a particular challenge for those students who are in the process of acquiring English as a second language (defined as any language other than L1, cf. page 46 below).

Vygotsky, classroom pedagogy and language development

Vygotsky's theories highlight the relationships between the learner, their internal world (thought), the educational setting, and how these relationships are mediated, with dialogue/speech being at the centre of the development of thought A study by DaSilva-Iddings & Jang (2008) cites research carried out on Vygotsky, stating that social/cultural influences are not simply factors in cognitive development, rather they are sources of such development, and:

> [I]n the educational setting certain physical and symbolic artifacts (e.g., linguistic and numeric systems, books, pen, papers, diagrams, charts, and so forth) mediate the relationships between individuals as well as between individuals and their material and mental worlds and have the goal to help students develop conceptual knowledge.
>
> Ibid: 572

The relationships between speech and thought, social and internal dialogue, are exploited in classrooms which successfully engage students in the learning process. From a Vygotskian perspective this means that dialogue and learning are connected to the development thought and drive the development f the higher cognitive functions. Students acquire language and simultaneously construct their knowledge of the world (inside and outside of school). On a functional level, a child manipulates (their level of) language in order to engage with their environment and 'narrate' their activities, to organise their learning, to drive their learning and to negotiate more learning (Mercer & Littleton, 2007). Social speech is internalised as its function changes (Vygotsky, 1986: 86) to private speech and inner speech (Barnes, 1976: 19). When inner speech is developed, the kind of discursive thinking necessary for second-level education can be facilitated. Students can drive their learning on by drawing on a capable other.

Much discussion on Vygotsky and pedagogy centres on his 'Zone of Proximal Development' (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978; Daniels, 2001: 56-68), "the discrepancy between a child's mental age and the level he reaches in solving problems with assistance" (Vygotsky, 1962: 103). ZPD is a metaphor Vygotsky uses to describe the process of learning/development within a dialogic framework; dialogue is the means by which learning happens. The theory proposes that learning takes place in a theoretical space which bridges the gap between a learner's prior knowledge and experience of the world towards internalising new concepts and knowledge presented to them by the outside world and:

> [T]he distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.
>
> Vygotsky, 1978: 86

Vygotsky's ideas of pedagogy have implications for language learning in the school context. Daniels (2001) defined Vygotsky's pedagogy as "referring to forms of social practice which shape and form the cognitive, affective and moral development of individuals," (ibid: 1). This definition is broad but is appropriate to the overall theme of this thesis, with classroom pedagogy being a reflection of society-level pedagogy, in turn reproduced in school and so on (recalling hegemony).

Vygotsky argues that pedagogy is never politically indifferent, "it has always adopted a particular social pattern, political line, in accordance with the dominant social class that has guided its interests" (Vygotsky, 1997: 348, cited in Daniels, 2001: 5). Underlying assumptions, which stem from such social patterns, can inform the deficit perspective which in turn informs curricula, provision and teaching (Ward, 2006). As it stands (Lyons & Little, 2009), provision in many schools offers little opportunity to build on a school's diversity as a resource: "Curricula rarely offer studies that build on diversity as a resource and rarely give prestigious recognition to the knowledge and culture of language minority children" (Lo Bianco, 1996: 587).

Bernstein, Barnes, inequality in schools and 'bridging the gap'

I concluded Chapter 1 by emphasizing the significance of bridging the gap between an ESL learner's prior knowledge and the mainstream curriculum. I observed many classrooms (chapters 4 and 5) where the knowledge presented fell outside of the students' ZPD. As Barnes (1969) points out, "A pupil's understanding of a new topic depends upon bringing what he or she knows already to bear upon it...Meaning does not lie in words but in the cultural practices of those who use them" (ibid: 26). Bernstein argues that pedagogic practice is "a fundamental social context through which cultural reproduction-production takes place" (Daniels, 2001: 6). I link this concept to the Irish context and observe how practices within the education system might be so deeply ingrained that they are simply regarded as rational, valid and 'common sense' (Gramsci, 1971: 322) without reflection or questioning, such as the practice of assuming a deficit perspective regarding students' L1s.

Scientific and spontaneous (or everyday) concepts are embodied in another of Vygotsky's theories; scientific concepts are those which developed as the result of school instruction, and "[s]pontaneous concepts are the result of generalization of everyday personal experience in the absence of systematic instruction" (Karpov, 2003: 65). The concepts reflect, to some degree, Cummins' BICS/CALP distinction (Cummins, 1980 and see page 42 below). Bernstein's horizontal and vertical discourse theory also draws comparison with Cummins' distinction, though both concepts describe only the broadest theoretical perspectives of classroom discourse. Bourne elaborates the theory:

> Bernstein thus sets up his own strong classification between pedagogic (vertical) discourse and informal local discourses (horizontal). Pedagogic discourse is not 'disembedded' from this position, but is embedded in a different context and system of practices... This means that school contexts must inevitably differ from informal contexts in crucial ways. Not only is the vertical discourse of schooling strongly classified, it is strongly framed. School discourses are goal focused, curriculum oriented, sequential and hierarchical, driving towards socially set ends. Thus, within them there is limited opportunity for local classroom negotiation, either for teachers or pupils.
>
> Bourne, 2003: 5

This quote suggests how the student's capacity to engage with the mainstream curriculum and therefore with their own educational processes is dependent on their capacity to engage with the teacher (see page 40, following, for more detail on teachers and language); the teacher should mediate the development from the child's natural and spontaneous ability (and knowledge) towards the scientific concepts required in order to cope in mainstream education: "The development of a scientific...concept, a phenomenon that occurs as part of the educational process, constitutes a unique form of systematic co-operation between the teacher and the child" (Vygotsky, 1987: 186, cited in Daniels, 2001: 55).

A dialogic pedagogy[8] (often referred to as synonymous with 'Critical Pedagogy;' [Freire, 1970; Cummins, 2007: 686]) promotes learning processes by fostering language development as a means to mediate meaning of the often new environment of the school, prepare and express their thoughts on subject knowledge: "A central feature of dialogic pedagogy is a teacher-student relationship that stresses mutual respect" (Cummins, 2007: 686). Vygotsky's ZPD (1986) and research around the topic illustrate the key role of supportive dialogue.

Barnes also observes how the pedagogical difficulties of addressing each student's individuality can be met to some degree by a pedagogy which encourages student participation and open questions:

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[8] Dialogic pedagogy can be defined as interpretive (see page 48), collaboratively constructed, dialogue led learning based on meaningful communication (Wells, 1999).

> The pedagogical problem in a room full of pupils is how to enable all of them to bring to mind relevant knowledge and understanding, and to 'recode' it in terms of the new framework offered by the teacher. That is why pupils' participation in the formulating of ideas in speech or writing is of crucial importance, since this is the readiest means by which the teacher can ensure that their resources are brought to bear on the issue so that the new can modify the old.
>
> Barnes, 1969: 26

Barnes recognised that disparity between what the teacher thinks she/he is communicating and what each individual child takes away from the classroom, "*because what each pupil brings to the lesson will be different*" (Barnes, 1976: 21-22, emphasis in original). Each child brings a personal history and has already acquired a great deal of complex knowledge before starting schooling (Kalantzis & Cope, 2000: 121). Barnes (1976: 79) made the distinction between 'School Knowledge' and 'Action Knowledge' and emphasised the role of talk in reshaping the child's own knowledge (Action Knowledge, cf. spontaneous concepts) in order to acquire what the teacher is trying to communicate (School Knowledge, cf. scientific concepts).

Teachers and language

Studies suggest that the average amount of time a teacher leaves for the student to answer a question in the Irish post-primary classroom is *less than one second* (according to Pauline Kelly of Second Level Support Services, ESLTA seminar in 2009). The DES has noted a dominance of 'teacher talk' in the Irish classroom (2006: 31). The 'silent period' hypothesis states that "[o]nce they [L2 learners] discover that others are not speaking their language, many children enter a 'silent period', during which they produce few or no utterances in the presence of speakers of the second language" (Ritchie & Bhatia, 2008: 45). This means that ESL students may be excluded from any engagement with education due to an incorrect assumption that when undergoing the silent period they are not undergoing learning.

In the classroom, the individual teacher introduces students to language use in school while mediating the language and content of the mainstream subjects. The degree to which a teacher is able to fulfil their role in educational dialogue can be subject to the demands of the situation, which includes exam pressure, limited budget or limited time to get through a set amount of information, and audience – which may be mixed ability, multi-lingual or with behavioural problems (Kress et al., 2005: 20). While many teachers manage their teaching practice in such a way that their students are provided with adequate access to language and content, situations vary and a large number teachers do not engage in the kind of dialogic pedagogies required to best promote students' development of language and content knowledge. Dependence on this classroom routine, which involves a teacher's question (initiation), a student's response

(response) and then teacher's feedback (follow-up), suggests that meaning is not necessarily collaboratively constructed between the teacher and students,[9] rather the traditional 'banking education' (Freire, 1970) is predominant. The exploratory talk which leads to learning (Barnes, 1976: 18) is not well facilitated under these circumstances and instead the traditional power relationship where the teacher represents the overall authority is maintained. ESL students may also face obstacles in acquiring the foundations and rules of appropriate use (Schleppegrell, 2001: 43; cf. the 'hidden curriculum' [Barnes, 1969: 21]).

Teacher expectation may influence the kind of language produced by the teacher and elicited from the students; some studies show that in low-ability classrooms (if a school 'streams' its students) teachers 'water down' the curriculum and aim for low grades in state exams (Kress et al., 2005: 83). The implication for ESL students here is significant, as exposure to the kind of authentic language required for school is essential if students are to engage in the level of abstract thinking required of the later years of post-primary schooling. As studies show that Ireland's ESL students are often overrepresented in low-stream groups (Nowlan, 2008; Lyons & Little, 2009), the effects of such low teacher expectation may have the opposite outcome to the often-misguided intention of simplifying the language to aid understanding and support English language acquisition, and lead to their (self) labelling as a 'low achiever'. Scaffolding (which aims to present information in steps [Mitchell & Myles, 2004: 195]), rather than a watering down of the language of school, is a more appropriate approach. Another danger is the perception of 'ability' which, rather than being a neutral and objective label, is a subjective and often culturally loaded assessment of a student's potential:

> Although we see 'ability' as produced by teachers and students in the context of their interaction, that context is, of course, made up of the products of other forms of agency. These include a discourse which produces dominant 'commonsense'[10] understandings of differential levels of intelligence: school and departmental 'traditions'; student cultures; the institutions established by national, government policy; and the discourses associated with them.
>
> Kress et al., 2005: 84

An easily overlooked aspect of the communicative potential of a classroom is the seating plan. Underlying assumptions about communication are often reflected in the physical arrangements in

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[9] Some researchers propose that the IRF routine is an effective teaching methodology, others are more critical. See Wells, 1999: 167-208.

[10] 'Common sense' recalls Gramsci's theories, especially the idea that common sense ideologies go unquestioned and therefore the dominant cultural ideologies may continue to be reproduced (Gramsci, 1971: 322)

the classroom, which can affect the students' possibilities for collaborative knowledge construction. The post-primary classrooms I observed tended to be arranged in such a way that the teacher and her/his desk was placed at the front of the room, and the students' desks were placed in narrow rows facing the teacher and whiteboard (Chapter 5). Kress et al. (2005: 24) argue that "room layout can be seen as an expression of the teacher's preferred special and social relations with the students." Such arrangements can place barriers between the teacher and the students who need the most help. For ESL students who need help with understanding, there is quite literally no space for the teacher to attend to their questions and give individual attention. Furthermore, according to Vygotsky's theory of the *zone of proximal development*, learning takes place when a student is stretched via dialogue with teachers and more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1986; Maybin, 2007: 158). Such a classroom layout discourages engaging with one's peers and dialogue with the teacher. The discussion of my data (Chapters 4 and 5) lends support to the claim of Kress et al. that in the classroom "the effects of policy, of the social composition of the school, of the professional formation of the teacher, can all be 'seen'" (ibid, 2005: 35). When the classroom is arranged to favour group work and collaborative learning, with small group tables, the teacher adds 'facilitator' to their role and pedagogy is student-centred (ibid: 40), which is the kind of approach that can help bridge the gap between students' knowledge and school knowledge.

Language and knowledge are also mediated via classroom displays. The way a teacher organises these is representative of power relationships in the classroom: "classroom arrangement and display provide pedagogic resources; they are part of the technology of teaching and serve to transmit to students pedagogical practices...that govern a school..." (Kress et al., 2005: 39). Analysis of how teachers exploit display space in their classroom is as relevant as analysis of spoken language and written textbooks, and I include observation of visual displays in the case study (Chapter 4). "Visual displays...are thus a 'pedagogical tool', a medium to communicate qualities and expectations of the teacher or school in a language that is to be lived as an identity-building and identity-confirming experience" (ibid.), and display work serves not only as an extension of the linguistic content of the lesson, but also as a reminder of subject content knowledge.

2.1.1.1 BICS/CALP and literacy

The acquisition of literacy is "enormously important for children and for society in general, because it leads to more abstract, explicit, rational, scientific thinking," (Maybin, 2007: 159; Olson et al., 1996). Literacy is an expected outcome of education: "Literacy is at the heart of education's promise" (Kalantzis & Cope, 2000: 121). Anthropologist Brian Street (1995) argues that school

literacy is far from neutral; rather it reflects a particular culturally valued 'essayist' literacy; different kinds (or registers) of literacy exist and children must develop competence in academic literacy in order to succeed in the school setting (Street, 1990: 32-35). Collier suggests that reading is a "better predictor of students' academic performance in the second language at the secondary and postsecondary levels" (1989: 521); later on in the case study plan for assessing ESL students I use this fact to justify using only reading and writing assessments(see page 94).

Analysis of school language is inevitably analysis of the formal register typically mediated through the written language of the textbook; "Academic genres draw on written norms, so a focus on school-based language inevitably foregrounds grammatical differences that reflect the fact that many school tasks involve use of written language" (Schleppegrell, 2001: 435). The difference between everyday language and the language associated with literacy is often described as a progression from participatory, situational and objective towards abstract, 'intellectualised' and distanced uses of language (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000: 218). Cummins coined new terms and a new framework for thinking about this distinction after working with language minority students in the late 1970s: BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) (see Cummins, 1980 & 1999-2003). While there has been some argument over this distinction (Gee, 2000: 64-66) on the grounds that language is never 'decontextualised', the distinction is still used (COE, 2009: 8). The terms are defined thus:

> CALP is defined as those aspects of language proficiency which are closely related to the development of literacy skills in L1 and L2. Basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) in L1 such as accent, oral fluency, and sociolinguistic competence may be independent of CALP for a variety of reasons and it is not being suggested that these latter skills represent a unitary dimension.
>
> Cummins, 1980: 177

Cummins later elaborated his theory to clarify that the BICS/CALP quadrant doesn't refer to a dichotomy but a potential infinity of intersecting continua; "One can accept the perspective that literacies are multiple, contextually-specific, and constantly evolving (as I do) while at the same time arguing that in certain discursive contexts it is useful to distinguish between conversational fluency and academic language proficiency" (Cummins, 2008).

As proficiency in reading and writing is significant for schools and state assessment, successful acquisition of such skills for ESL students is an urgent challenge. Introduction to complex texts and extensive reading (of materials which appeal to students and relate to their backgrounds) is paramount, yet much of what I observed in ESL classrooms includes oral work (frequently simply

the teacher speaking), and written work involving gap-fill grammar exercises unrelated to both school content and the students' lives.

Language can be a barrier in access to education for many groups of students, and especially for ESL students, from two perspectives; students must acquire English as a second language while simultaneously acquiring academic language. Furthermore, students' experiences and knowledge is often quite different to the knowledge presented by the school and this gap must also be bridged if schools are to develop students' acquisition of school knowledge based on their pre-existing learning.

2.1.1.2 Cross curricular language and academic texts

Another reason why the challenge of language acquisition becomes more complicated in post-primary school is the division of the curriculum into specialist subject areas, as well as the specifics of the language conventions (register, style, vocabulary). Much research in this area originates in the UK. While research which is specific to Ireland is more difficult to find, some research in the area exists and more is emerging; Farr (2008) is one researcher who focuses on language use in the Irish classroom.

The Council of Europe's work (COE, 2009) has addressed this concept of the language in each subject; the issue was also highlighted in the Bullock Report (1975: 529):

> In the secondary school, all subject teachers need to be aware of:
> - the linguistic processes by which their pupils acquire information and understanding, and the implications for the teacher's own use of language;
> - the reading demands of their subjects, and ways in which the pupils can be helped to meet them
>
> To bring about this understanding every secondary school should develop a policy for language across the curriculum. The responsibility for this policy should be embodied in the organizational structure of the school.

The implication is that language should be taught across all subjects and that all teachers share a responsibility for this. This responsibility should be shared across the whole school via defined policy (Lyons & Little, 2009; Smyth et al., 2009: xv, xvi, 80 & 118). The different language genres required for participation in the various mainstream subjects do not develop without conscious exposure and instruction:

> The specific language-based competences needed in the different subjects do not automatically transfer from the pool of already existing language competences (mainly from language as a subject acquisition), nor do these competences suffice, provided they exist and can be validly identified. Rather, they have to be specifically developed, trained and expanded through conscious teaching efforts in each and every subject... through the formulation of explicit requirements in the respective curricula and through ways of checking their stage of development (in terms of different types of assessment).
>
> COE, 2007: 15-16

Curriculum subjects differ in their use of language; the first broad distinction made in some literature is between the science based subjects and the humanities/arts subjects. These categories fall loosely into Barnes' categories (1976) of 'transmission' based teaching and 'interpretive' based teaching. 'Transmission' based teaching involves the 'banking' style of education (see Freire, 1970 and Chapter 1, page 45) and tends to be represented more in the science subjects, as well as in the foreign language classroom. In empirical research in the 1970s conducted in Leeds, Barnes discovered how "[i]t is possible to show that the way in which teachers think about what constitutes knowledge is often linked to what they think learning and teaching are" (1976: 139). Teachers' beliefs that knowledge about science and foreign languages exists outside of their students' everyday experiences lead to a teaching approach which is characterised by a perception of the learner as incapable of accessing and organising such knowledge, and which places emphasis on memorizing established facts. Barnes goes on to observe the tendency of the arts subjects veering towards the 'interpretive' model where knowledge is viewed as being something to organise and reorganise via interaction (Barnes, 1976: 139-145). The 'interpretive model' suggests 'problem-posing' education (Freire, 1970). However, all subjects have the potential to be taught with approaches under the 'interpretive model' description.

Lexical choice in academic texts varies according to the nature of the subject, but commonalities exist in the high density of words of Latin or Greek origin, for example (Cummins, 2009), the technical nature of academic lexical choices and high representation of nouns per embedded clause (Schleppegrell, 2001: 440, 438-439). Overall, academic texts are characterised by "using lexicalized and expanded noun phrases, marking discourse structure with linguistic elements that are typical of written academic discourse, and choosing grammatical features that project an authoritative stance..." (Schleppegrell, 2001: 434). For a more thorough analysis of features which distinguish academic texts from other genres see Schleppegrell (2001) and Kostopoulou (forthcoming).

Science-based subjects are characterised in theory by enquiry based language and procedures, but in the Irish classroom teachers tend to dominate the science class in the second level classroom (Wilson, 1999: 128). Teacher talk can take up to 75% of the average lesson, and when students have the opportunity to produce language this rarely goes beyond labelling (ibid: 129). Language demands of the work produced by students vary from writing up experiments, answering questions from the text book, to copying notes. However, the writing expectations of Science present problems for students, primarily because there is limited opportunity to practice extended writing in the appropriate scientific genre (Wilson, 1999: 132).

Art and Design is a subject many teachers perceive as being language reduced. However, it is wrong to assume that there is no language to acquire in this subject. As well as the art production processes, which involved labelling art specific objects and actions, the art curriculum in Irish schools has an Art History component which requires students to produce extended texts, conduct research into areas of art history and describe artefacts and paintings, using subject specific vocabulary and appropriate structure (Hickman, 1999: 166-174; NCCA website).

2.1.2 Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

> Despite research efforts to strengthen pedagogical methods and teacher preparation programmes to address the needs of newly arrived immigrant English language learners (ELLs) included in English-dominant classrooms, these students continue to be underestimated in their abilities to learn.
>
> DaSilva-Iddings & Jang, 2008: 567-568

Two commonly cited questions are addressed in the following subsection; what is the role of L1 in learning the L2? And how long does it take students to acquire L2 for school? The section moves on to review SLA research and effective pedagogy. By applying it to the Irish context I identify classroom methodology and techniques underpinned by appropriate pedagogy which are suitable for Irish ESL programmes.

The role of L1

In this context, L2 means any language acquired after the start of acquisition of L1 (Mitchell & Myles, 2004: 5). Therefore, referring to English as a second language is appropriate in this study, even though for many ESL students, it may be the third or fourth language in their repertoire. Research in this area often compares second language learning to first language acquisition. While some processes are common to both first and second language acquisition, the subjects are usually dealt with in distinct research areas, "the environmental circumstances for SLL [second language learners] differ systematically from first-language learning..." (Myles & Mitchell, 2004: 12).

> One important finding in that lack of continuing L1 cognitive development during second language acquisition may lead to lowered proficiency levels in the second language and in cognitive growth.
>
> Collier, 1989: 511

Research shows that L1 plays a role in L2 acquisition; Gramsci observed what is a common thread in this second chapter, reminding us that the prior knowledge (L1, in this context) of the student serves as the foundation for further learning (L2, in this context); "without including experiences of pupils' lives outside school – that is, in their neighbourhoods and within their families – the problem of teaching...will be inadequate" (Ives, 2004a: 11; see also Ives, 2004b; Gramsci, 1971: 35-6). Cummins conducted research into the role of L1 in the acquisition of an L2 for school (1980) and found that L1 maintenance and bilingual education offer cognitive advantage to immigrant students and their chances of success in school (Cummins, 1980; Collier, 1989). Perhaps a fitting way of addressing the L1 issue in this context is to view the students' L1s as part of their prior knowledge.

Skutnabb-Kangas (1988) and the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Human Rights, Section 2 (UNESCO, 1996) call for L1 instruction as a right for all minority students. Where there are large groups of students from the same linguistic background, such an approach is appropriate. According to European rights, minority language groups do have a right to L1 educational provision, provided that the group are indigenous members of the state, and not migrants (Extra & Yagmur, 2004: 83-89). Therefore, ESL students in Ireland are not officially granted L1 provision. Furthermore, one of the defining characteristics of the Irish ESL context, and one with significant implications for policy and pedagogy, is the linguistic heterogeneity of the ESL students. So, while explicit L1 instruction is appropriate for many minority education contexts, Ireland's post-primary schools are comprised of such an unequal distribution of L1s as to make this impossible. This situation is not unique: Tingbjörn highlights the issue and names it the 'small group problem:' "perhaps the most complicated and difficult factor within immigrant education" (Tingbjörn, 1988: 114). Cummins (2001) addressed the 'small group problem' and suggests an underlying assumption useful for the L1 in the Irish context:

> It should be noted that an additive orientation does not require the actual teaching of the minority language. In many cases a minority language class may not be possible, for reasons such as low concentration of particular groups of minority students. Educators, however, communicate to students and parents in a variety of ways the extent to which the minority language and culture are valued within the context of the school. Even within a monolingual school context, powerful messages can be communicated to students regarding the validity and advantages of language development.
>
> Ibid: 662

So, L1 can be encouraged, acknowledged and used as a resource. A further issue often used in Ireland to support anti-L1 arguments is the poor grasp of L1 some students have, particularly in literacy; again Skutnabb-Kangas illustrates how common an observation this is: "A poor competence in the original mother tongue (which is a result of the neglect of the mother tongue in institutions earlier on, i.e. as a result of earlier oppression) is then often used to legitimize additional oppression" (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988: 17-18). This is suggestive of how the ESL students' capital is undervalued, leading to their own negative identification with their L1, which is then used to further justify a school's decision to ignore/deny L1 (see page 163 for example in a case study school); circumstances which demonstrate Gramsci's hegemony.

Studies show that a "minority child's first language (L1) has functional significance in the development process and should be reinforced by the school" (Swain & Cummins, 1979: 5). However, whether bilingualism is advantageous or a disadvantage depends on the social background of the student. Studies reveal substantial advantages of being a bilingual from a majority cultural group, in terms of general intellectual development and abstract thinking skills (see Swain & Cummins, 1979: 11-12 for a summary of early findings), while the benefits are negated if the bilingual child in question belongs to a minority group with a low social status (ibid: 12-13). This latter factor is of huge relevance to Ireland's ESL students. It is accepted in research that the status of L1 and L2, socio-economic status of learners and the nature of the school programme all impact on L2 acquisition and success for minority language students in mainstream settings (see ibid: 13)

Research shows that acquisition of L2 literacy is related to the stage of L1 literacy (Ovando et al., 2006: 167-168) for language minority students, and that these skills have the potential to be transferred as the language learner develops proficiency in L2. This issue is linked to the question of the degree to which L1 interference influences second language acquisition, and whether second language learners build on L1, or learn via direct access to an underlying (Universal) grammar (Chomsky, 1965; Thomas, 2004):

> If second language learners have continuing **direct** access to their underlying Universal Grammar, first language influence will affect only the more peripheral areas of second language development. If, on the other hand, learners' only access to Universal Grammar is **indirect**, via the working example of a natural language that the first language provides, then the first language influence lies at the heart of SLL.
>
> Mitchell & Myles, 2004: 20 (emphasis in original)

I have previously talked about the context of learning and the dynamic that causes learning to happen, drawing on a Vygotskian perspective. Here, I am focussing on the different matter of what happens when looking at the systematic structure of cognitive processes, from a Chomskian perspective. The two perspectives do not overlap and here I am focussing on different issues.

Cummins (1980) was among the first to propose such an underlying proficiency with regards to second language and language skills (pp. 179-180), which he referred as an interdependence of CALP across languages. For the ESL learner in a mainstream subject classroom this means L1 plays a significant role in maintaining skills such as reading, analysis of content, abstract thinking and so on, during the acquisition of L2. Cummins stated that, "Because L1 and L2 CALP are manifestations of the same underlying dimension, previous learning of literacy-related functions of language (in L1) will predict future learning of these functions (in L2)" (ibid: 179).

Apart from many teachers' beliefs that L1 use may impede second language acquisition, there are wider, societal 'concerns', such as how "immigrants are clinging to their first languages and cultures, and resisting second-language acquisition and acculturation... second-language development is poor because immigrants insist on using their first language," (Nguyen et al., 2001: 159). However, research shows us that rather than immigrants clinging to their L1s, the opposite is true; immigrants' use of L1 decreases both with time and down the generations (ibid.). There is certainly widespread agreement in the literature that L1 use or instruction does not interfere with L2 acquisition (Cummins, 1980).

Research suggests that L1 use/maintenance/instruction, or at the very least acknowledgement of L1 is a pre-requisite for achieving both the related goals of success in mainstream education and second-language acquisition. Studies suggest that L1 acknowledgement should contribute to at least a part of a child's school lessons, therefore addressing the linguistic gap between home and school.

How long?

"Quick fixes do not work in education..." (Collier, 1992: 188): Ireland's ESL students are generally entitled to just two years of ESL support, often consisting of no more than a few withdrawal

periods per week of haphazard English grammar instruction or work with TEFL materials, while ongoing support is assumed to be taking place in the mainstream classroom. Collier (1980, 1987, 1989), Cummins (1981) and Ramirez (1991) dominate literature which addresses the 'how long?' issue. Starting points for this research address whether it is easier to learn a second language for schooling when you are older or younger, what level of proficiency is adequate for mainstream subject content learning, as well as the 'how long?' question (Collier, 1989: 509).

Research in the area often refers to 'age on arrival' and 'length of residence', usually abbreviated as AOA and LOR, and defined thus:

> Age on arrival (AOA) refers to the age at which an individual entered the country in which the second language is spoken. It also marks the age at which the immigrant's exposure to the second language began... Length of residence (LOR) is defined as number of months or years of L2 exposure, both inside and outside the formal classroom.
>
> Collier, 1989: 514

The students in the schools I observed were aged between 12 and 18, so the question of whether older learners take longer than younger learners is significant. The 'critical period hypothesis' (Lenneberg, 1964) theorised that there is a biological, age-defined limitation of the development of language, usually set before the onset of puberty. In terms of L1, the theory states that humans are genetically predisposed to acquire language via exposure and interaction only for a defined period of time. After this period, complete language acquisition is impossible according to this theory (by complete the theory means that *all* of the characteristics of language rather than just, say, acquiring nouns without functional language or syntax) (summarised in Singleton & Ryan, 2004: 32).

For second language acquisition, positions in research vary from stating that younger learners (i.e. early childhood, before the onset of puberty) have an advantage in successfully reaching near-native/native targets of second language proficiency, to the opposite view which claims that older learners are more successful. The position which hinges most directly on the critical period hypothesis states that after a certain age (around puberty) learners face qualitative disadvantages in the second language learning process. Some state that that older learners are only better than younger learners (and vice-versa) in some respects/in the long/short term (see Singleton & Ryan, 2004: 61 for a summary). While studies arrive at varying conclusions, only a number of the findings are significant for my study, drawn from Singleton and Ryan's (ibid: 115-116) synthesis of the research. The common assumption that younger learners are more successful second language learners is not supported by the literature, which is positive news for ESL students in

Irish post-primary schools. Regarding academic language, "[o]n the question of a differentiation in terms of basic communicative versus cognitive-academic skills, it is impossible to make a definitive evaluation" (ibid: 115). While, students who begin to acquire a second language in early childhood may achieve higher levels of proficiency in the long run, in general, the research suggests that students at second level possess no major biological barrier affecting second language acquisition.

ESL students may have arrived in Ireland between the ages of 12-18, or may have arrived during primary schooling, but not usually below the age of 11 (if a student had arrived prior to this age, ESL support is usually complete by the time the student arrives in post-primary school due to the two year cap). AOA is one important factor, though studies such as Cummins (1981: 146) show that LOR and the degree to which L1 is developed prior to arrival as significant too. Research concludes that provided language minority students reached norm levels in L1, schooling and cognitive development before arrival in Ireland, they have an advantage over younger students in terms of length of time it takes to acquire an L2 for schooling, "Older learners acquire L2 CALP more rapidly than younger learners because their L1 CALP is better developed," (Cummins, 1980: 185). In more detail:

> [S]tudies have consistently shown a clear advantage for older learners in mastery of L2 syntax and morphology as well as in the cognitive/academic types of L2 skills measured by conventional standardized tests...In relation to age and L2 learning it is predicted that older learners, whose CALP is better developed, will acquire cognitive/academic L2 skills more rapidly than younger learners; however, this will not necessarily be the case for those aspects of L2 proficiency unrelated to CALP.
>
> Cummins, 1980: 180

Research in the 1980s (Cummins, 1981; Collier, 1989) found that students take 2 -3 years to reach proficiency in BICS. This finding explains why some students *appear* fluent, but still struggle with their school work (Collier, 1989: 516) – a common concern of teachers. Some studies suggest that acquiring CALP in the second language can take between 5 and 7 years (Cummins, 1981; Collier, 1987) while other studies propose that adolescents need from 7 – 10 years of L2 schooling in order to catch up to peer norms. However, caution is vital when analysing the results of such studies regarding control for the specific modes of classroom pedagogy employed (see following paragraph). What can be extrapolated for the Irish context is that CALP is acquired at a slower rate than BICS, and that acquisition of proficiency in academic English is likely to take longer than 2 years.

The teaching methodology assumed by these studies tends to take for granted that a non-interactive and non-dialogic pedagogy is used in the classroom. Studies tend not to report the teaching methodology used. This was a consideration when developing my empirical research plan. Mitchell and Myles (2004: 9) remind us that any theory put forward must show "systematic procedures for confirming or disconfirming the theory, through data collection and interpretation" and state "clear and explicit statements of the ground the theory is supposed to cover," and previous studies provide a useful and thorough starting point on which to base future, larger scale (larger than this current study) empirical research takes teaching methodology and interaction into account.

The structure of ESL provision in Irish schools is reflected in the following quote, applied to the adolescent age-group:

> Most students received 1 to 2 hours of ESL instruction daily for 1 to 2 years and were immersed in the main-stream for the rest of their classes. Thus, these studies provide an analysis of how students perform when they are immersed in the second language in school with a small amount of ESL pullout instruction. In this situation...it was projected that the...adolescent arrivals would take 7 to 10 years to reach the 50th NCE.
>
> Collier, 1989: 524

In recognition of the many complicated and interrelated issues which affect the rate of second language acquisition (Spolsky, 1989), studies show that although motivation and personality type are key factors there still may be apparently unexplained obstacles to progress, which find their roots in more complex sociological factors:

> [C]urrent ethnographies of second language communication and of second language socialization offer a great deal of evidence about how the learning context, and the learner's evolving style of engagement with it, may affect the *rate* of SLL. The patterning of learning opportunities, through communities of practice with structured and sometimes very unequal power relationships, has been invoked to explain learners' differential success even where motivation is high.
>
> Mitchell & Myles, 2004: 255-256

We can conclude from research findings that ESL students typically need more than two years of support to acquire academic English and the value placed on L1 within the school setting plays a role in successful L2 acquisition.

The target learner group of this thesis is not homogeneous. Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research is not a homogeneous area of study; it addresses many factors which influence the acquisition of a second language. Here I apply the theories of SLA and theories of pedagogy that interact with SLA (Little, 1991; Dam, 1995). This section will cover SLA first, and then the related issues of effective language learning in the classroom and school.

SLA

The key question here, and significant for this entire thesis is; how is second language acquisition best enabled in the given context? Krashen argued in 1982 that language acquisition "occurs only when comprehension of real messages occurs, and when the acquirer in *not 'on the defensive'*...The best methods are therefore those that supply 'comprehensible input' in *low anxiety situations*, containing messages that the students really want to hear," (ibid: 6-7, emphasis added). His research attracts criticism for not emphasising the role of output and other research counteracts that dialogue is both a driving force for second language acquisition (Swain & Lapkin, 1998) and a support for content knowledge learning.

Krashen's observations suggest that in order to facilitate use, the second language classroom must respect the 'silent period' (see also page 40 above), offer comprehensible input and maintain low levels of anxiety for the students. Krashen (1982) refers to the 'difficult step' from theories on how one (best) acquires a second language to the actual practice of teaching (ibid: 57), and reflects a realistic viewpoint that considers it a difficult task to encourage proficiency via the language learning classroom alone:

> Quite simply, the function of the second or foreign language classroom is to bring a student to a point where he can begin to use the outside world [or mainstream classroom] for further second language acquisition...in other words, all second language classes are transition, and no second language class can be expected to do the entire job.
>
> Ibid: 160-161

Successful language learning is the goal for both students and their teachers in the ESL setting. However, many teachers are puzzled by a student's perceived lack of progress, especially if another student with similar background (in terms of AOA and LOR) seems to be making rapid progress in acquiring English. SLA research addresses the differences in personality traits which lead some learners to be more successful than others:

> Successful learners are those who reflect critically on how they engage with native speakers and who are prepared to challenge the accepted social order by constructing and asserting social identities of their own choice.
>
> Ellis, 1997: 42

The above sentiment is suggestive of the prevailing ideology of Chapter 1, which cites Gramsci and Freire and their respective notions of empowerment and critical pedagogy, as well as implying learner autonomy. In essence, language learners' ability to construct an identity which promotes the belief that they have rights and therefore can participate in society is vital in promoting language acquisition (Ellis, 1997: 42). The notion of the importance of social context and learner identity can be applied to the student's relationship with the educational setting.

Studies using corpus linguistic techniques have been useful in providing detailed and accurate information on how language is used in the classroom (both oral language and in written texts [O'Keefe & Farr, 2003]). Among the rationale behind the use of corpus linguistic data-analysis techniques is the potential benefit of providing a foundation for classroom pedagogy which promotes the most frequently used vocabulary and structures, so that educators can emphasise the key linguistic routines which are useful to students:

> Work in corpus linguistics has led to the increasing recognition that formulas and routines play an important part in everyday language use by native speakers... Analysis of second language data produced by classroom learners, in particular, shows extensive and systematic use of chunks to fulfil communicative needs in the early stages...Studies of informal learners also provide some evidence of chunk use.
>
> Mitchell & Myles, 2004: 17-18

Much research suggests that the output of second language learners is systematic (Mitchell & Myles, 2004: 15-16), which means that 'interlanguage' (Selinker, 1972) is systematic and even errors are patterned. Interlanguage is defined as second language learners' utterances in the target language, "the variable learner systems of increasing complexity that develop during the process of acquisition in a second language" (Romaine, 2003: 410). So, when we talk about 'how long?' a learner takes in their L2 development, we also need to take into account the stages of development: "learners' development follows a common **route**, even if the speed (or **rate**) at which learners actually travel along this common route may be very different" (ibid: 16, emphasis in original).

Research which acknowledges the stages of development (Mitchell & Myles, 2004: 34) has pedagogical implications in the ESL classroom; "What is striking is that, not only do children acquire a number of grammatical morphemes in a fixed order, but they also follow fairly rigid

stages during the acquisition of a given area of grammar" (Mitchell & Myles, 2004: 35). Research by McGarry (ongoing) proposes that such knowledge of the stages of acquisition can be used as pedagogical prompts, or stepping stones, which teachers can use to locate stages in progress of proficiency, and which students can use as motivational markers.

While the exact nature and order of the stages of development are disputed, their existence is consistent in both the research and across samples of learners from different language backgrounds (Mitchell & Myles, 2004: 43). The sheer number of L1s present in many Irish classrooms means that teachers cannot draw directly on students' mother tongues, but findings on the order of acquisition can be used to provide ESL programmes with a structure relevant to all students (Fionda & McGarry, 2010). The concern that knowledge of L1 is required to support students and analyse their errors is unfounded based on such findings: "Error Analysis thus showed clearly that the majority of the errors made by second language learners do not come from their first language" (Mitchell & Myles, 2004: 38). Therefore, the ESL teacher can draw on the commonalities of second language acquisition to provide the multi-level and multi-lingual classroom with a common structure. Tools and approaches (but not materials because the order of acquisition is not a chronological issue) can also be developed to encourage learner autonomy and record progress (Fionda & McGarry, 2010). This approach recognises that 'errors' are in fact steps along the way towards target proficiency, and is supported by theories which discourage the use of overt correction techniques (Mitchell & Myles, 2004: 57).

Second language acquisition is complex, individual and affected by many interdependent factors. These factors include, according to Spolsky (1989), social context, attitude, motivation, age, personality, capabilities, previous knowledge and learning opportunities. It is difficult to see how a theory could both combine all of these factors, and be tested objectively. However, for the context of my research, these variables offer useful points of reference in searching for and observing characteristics of a school's language support programme which lead to effective language learning for mainstream integration. Furthermore, the complexity is a useful reminder of the need for flexibility and student-centeredness in language support programme design, as the following sub-section details.

Effective ESL classrooms

Much of the research I have drawn on in Chapters 1 and 2 observes the necessity of building on students' prior knowledge of the world, as when Krashen points out: "Good teachers also take advantage of the students' knowledge of the world in helping comprehension by discussing topics that are familiar to the student" (Krashen, 1982: 66). Dam (1995) emphasizes the need to employ a range of methods which activate students' interests. The ESL teacher should, first and foremost,

be student-centred, which means basing any programme on the knowledge that children learn best when their prior experiences are acknowledged:

> From the teacher's point of view, planning and providing instruction on the basis of children's existing competencies and using experiences and knowledge that are familiar to the learner provides a solid foundation for extending the children's skills and knowledge in new directions. From the second language student's point of view, learning on the basis of established skills and known experiences provides a reassuring context in which to acquire new skills and concepts.
>
> Genesee, 1994: 3

Little suggests meaningful use of the target language from the beginning of the teaching/learning process in order to promote acquisition (Little, 1996: 8) and reminds us that not only ESL students but all students at Irish schools are language learners: "It is impossible to learn a language without at the same time using whatever knowledge of it we already possess, however slight; and all users of a language, native as well as non-native, continue to learn that language for as long as they are involved with it" (Little, 1995: 176). In fact, promoting the second language learners' use of the target language provides the essential thrust needed to both kick-start and propel second language acquisition forward:

> [T]he great variety of interlanguage forms produced by second language learners cannot be sensibly interpreted unless we pay attention also to the speech acts that learners are seeking to perform, and to the ways they exploit the immediate social, physical and discourse context to help them make meaning. Further, it is argued that these meaning-making efforts on the part of the learners are a driving force in ongoing second language development...
>
> Mitchell & Myles, 2004: 131-132

As I have said, many teachers have concerns that newly arrived ESL students remain silent for long periods; Integrate Ireland Language and Training guidelines (IILT, 2007: 8) suggest teachers allow for a 'silent period' (see page 40 above) during which students shouldn't be pushed into producing language. Many studies on the silent period suggest that students are actively learning throughout the period (DaSilva-Iddings & Jang, 2008), as long as the language environment offers comprehensible input:

> Language emerges as a mediated and situated activity from interactions between a learner and his or her surrounding context. From this perspective, then, the emergence of language cannot be understood without considering the physical, social and symbolic context in which learners are engaged.
>
> DaSilva-Iddings & Jang, 2008: 571

Collaborative learning can benefit all students by encouraging dialogue, facilitating knowledge development within students' ZPD, and facilitating activation of their prior knowledge. It is particularly beneficial in the multilingual classroom: "Because native speakers... are present in each cooperative group, these peer teachers stimulate higher levels of linguistic and content accuracy, including interaction at challenging cognitive levels" (Ovando et al., 2006: 97-98).

Motivation and autonomy are key concepts which underpin student-centred approaches:

> In humans, intrinsic motivation is not the only form of motivation, or even of volitional activity, but it is a pervasive and important one. From birth onward, humans, in their healthiest states, are active, inquisitive, curious, and playful creatures, displaying a ubiquitous readiness to learn and explore, and they do not require extraneous incentives to do so. This natural motivational tendency is a critical element in cognitive, social, and physical development because it is through acting on one's inherent interests that one grows in knowledge and skills.
>
> Ryan & Deci, 2000a: 56

Intrinsic motivation is the "inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one's capacities, to explore, and to learn" (Ryan & Deci, 2000b: 70) and it is this kind of motivation which a learner autonomy approach fosters in the student-centred classroom. Learner autonomy means "that the learner accepts responsibility for his or her learning" (Little, 1995: 175). A pedagogy based on the principles of learner autonomy supports the goal of reaching a level of proficiency where the learner can engage with subject content knowledge when (usually) unsupported in the mainstream classroom and achieving levels of communicative ability whereby they can negotiate their own learning:

> Communicative efficiency in the target language community depends on learners having the independence, self-reliance and self-confidence to fulfil the variety of social, psychological and discourse roles in which they are cast. It depends, that is to say, on their achieving a substantial degree of autonomy as language users.
>
> Little, 1995: 27

The challenges faced by many ESL teachers in meeting the needs of all of their students are complex:

> The need for language learning to harness the individual motivational agenda of each student might suggest that the engagement of intrinsic motivational processes is incompatible with group or whole-class organizational structures, since students naturally come equipped with different interests, desires and life experiences.
>
> Ushioda, 1996: 45

Dam (2003) highlights the role of the teacher in promoting learner autonomy, reminding us that fostering such a culture within the classroom is the responsibility of the teacher. She defines learner autonomy as "developing a capacity on the part of learners to accept responsibility for their learning," (ibid: 135). In the Irish ESL classroom, learner autonomy is all the more important for those students who access very limited and infrequent English language support, meaning there is a huge percentage of the school day with the potential for autonomous language learning and engaging with authentic language use. In order for this to happen, the often infrequent contact with allocated ESL teachers should be directed at teaching the students how to become autonomous, using appropriate resources, so that the ESL classroom is seen as a place where students are given tools which support their participation in the mainstream classroom.

Learner autonomy approaches can bridge the gap for ESL students between their prior knowledge and the knowledge their school expects them to acquire: "By definition, the autonomous learner tends to integrate whatever he or she learns in the formal context of the classroom with what he or she has already become as a result of developmental and experiential learning" (Little, 1995: 175). ESL students need to become autonomous learners of content knowledge and of the L2 (English in this context), meaning that there are two discrete dimensions to learner autonomy in the ESL context – both pedagogical and communicative (ibid: 176). As Little (1995) notes:

> In formal educational contexts learners do not automatically accept responsibility for their learning - teachers must help them to do so; and they will not necessarily find it easy to reflect critically on the learning process - teachers must first provide them with appropriate tools and with opportunities to practise using them.
>
> Ibid: 176-177

Little encourages teachers to select areas within which learner autonomy can be promoted inside their own specific context:

> [The teacher] must decide, in other words, whether and to what extent it is possible for the learners to determine their own learning objectives, select their own learning materials and contribute to the assessment of their learning progress. In this she will be guided by such factors as the institutional framework within which she is working, and the age, educational background and target language competence of her learners.
>
> Ibid: 179

Regarding specific classroom strategies and the role of dialogue, Little's suggestions reflect literature on the subject of effective ESL classrooms, such as that from Ovando (2006):

> [A]ll autonomy projects will necessarily tend to create the circumstances in which learners are engaged in activities that require them to use the target language for genuinely communicative purposes, and thus allow them an equal share of discourse initiatives. In this way the target language becomes, in the fullest possible sense, the medium of teaching and learning. Project work, group work and pair work will arise from matters of genuine concern to the learners, and as a consequence will tend to make sparing use of role plays and simulations.
>
> Little, 1995: 179

Effective ESL classroom practice is characterised by meaningful, curriculum based content, teacher-student and peer collaboration, encouragement of interaction and engagement via multiple teaching strategies, ICT and building on students' prior knowledge (adapted from Ovando et al., 2006: 146). The characteristics of sheltered content teaching (though perhaps when embedded in a mainstream context with specialist support from ESL educators), where students from diverse language backgrounds are provided with academic subject based language support, constitute a model which offers insights useful for the Irish context, specifically claims that "it provides students with access to academic subject matter through comprehensible language and context" (ibid: 149). Key characteristics of sheltered content instruction strategies are the use of varied instruction techniques, frequent understanding checks, modelling (step-by-step model of what is expected of students), hands-on work, realia and visuals, demonstration, multimedia, time-lines, bulletin boards, previewing new vocabulary, word banks, clear and slower speech, student interaction time, linking concepts to students' backgrounds and clear continuation from lesson to lesson (Echevarria & Graves, 2003; Ovando et al., 2006: 150-151). Lazenby-Simpson notes the value of embedding second language learning in the mainstream school system; "It is clear that second language learning must be embedded in and run concurrently with mainstream learning: only in this way is it possible to promote the integration of newcomer pupils while at the same time avoiding excessive loss of time in introducing them to curricular learning" (2003: 198).

Ovando et al. (2006: 144) suggest three strategies which form the foundation of successful ESL programmes: metacognitive strategies (planning for learning, monitoring one's own work, and evaluation), cognitive strategies (engaging with content alone or in groups) and social/affective strategies (collaboration, asking questions). Dam (1995: 5) makes the following recommendations for developing learner autonomy, which echo Orvando's preceding suggestions in their focus on collaborative learning: focus on learning rather than teaching, encourage the learner's engagement with the learning process and map out working methods.

Key issues and characteristics emerge and can be summarised by one word - empowerment:

> Empowerment theories seek to make ESL children more powerful...The empowerment model is best represented in the work of Cummins (1986) and the ideologies of minority language rights (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995) but also in various forms of either pluralism or multiculturalism.
>
> Lo Bianco, 1996: 587

Lo Bianco (1996: 587) and Lazenby-Simpson (2003: 202) stress the key role of 'empowerment' for ESL programmes and learners. The emphasis on empowerment recalls Gramsci's (1971, 1985) theory of cultural hegemony (Tosi, 1988) and Freire's Critical Pedagogy (1970). Empowerment is the product of a pedagogical approach which engages with what the learners can already do and with what they already know, using these existing resources as a starting point for a phase of learning, while also giving learners responsibility for managing their learning process. Such an approach taps into the learner's intrinsic motivation. SLA research, especially in the field of learner autonomy, emphasizes the learner's role in negotiating learning processes in much the same was as so empowering approaches, with the teacher guiding the students and providing pedagogical tools, as well as facilitating the students' use of L2 from day one. Programmes which run though the whole school, rather than isolated ESL sessions, have been much more successful than long term withdrawal, allowing students to successfully engage with academic content from day one (although only when mainstream teachers are adequately trained; Leung, 2009).

Effective whole school ESL planning

ESL in Ireland is offered on a 'withdrawal' basis; "where children are withdrawn at times from the mainstream classroom for special instruction...in the L2" (Siegel, 2003: 193). However, the validity of the term was brought into question from what I saw, as in most of the schools I attended ESL students were provided with language support lessons when the rest of the students in their teaching group attended a lesson from which the ESL students were exempt

(usually Irish[11]). Nevertheless, in Ireland ESL is generally not offered in the mainstream setting. Whether withdrawal or in-class support offers the most pedagogical benefit is argued in the literature. Blair and Bourne (1998: 102-103) observed that schools which practised withdrawal gave the following reasons as justification for doing so: to allow students to become slowly familiar with new environment and to develop students' proficiency in English to at least post-beginner level. Some schools identified good practice for withdrawal, such as providing it on a short-term basis only (some schools were concerned that withdrawal leads to students becoming dependent on language support staff), flexibility, maintaining close links between language support and mainstream teachers, and basing the withdrawal lessons on the curriculum. The study observed a widespread belief that beyond an initial reception period, language support was more successful if offered in the mainstream classroom setting (ibid: 103). One note of caution however; Leung has noted that when 'withdrawal' is abandoned, specialist ESL teachers decline and disappear (Leung, 2009: 226).

Ireland's ESL students are effectively 'immersed' in English at school. However, the effectiveness and success of immersion programmes depends upon the status of the students and the languages involved: "such [positive] results are to be found only where the students in question are native speakers of the language of the majority community and are being immersed in another language" (Singleton & Ryan, 2004: 203). The outcome is very different if, as is the case with the ESL students in post-primary schools, the students do not speak the language of the majority as an L1; "Where the language of immersion is the majority language and the students are speakers of a minority language, it is claimed, negative results can ensue for both languages," (ibid.). What students take from education is dependent on what they bring to it and it is the responsibility of the school to bridge any gaps.

Teachers should be encouraged to base their lessons on mainstream subject knowledge, as well as to underpin their methodology with techniques of explicit vocabulary development and content explanations. Such techniques also direct teachers away from explicit correction (which may be de-motivating for students [Mitchell & Myles, 2004: 176 – 183]) and may not work, in any case.

Research suggests that whole school ethos is reflected in the success of the ESL student population and in the promotion of positive relationships between both the staff and students, and between students from all linguistic/cultural backgrounds:

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[11]See DES (1994) for the rules regarding Irish exemption.

> In both cases the learners' success in being accepted was central to access to language learning opportunity; and this success derived partly from their own actions, partly from their respective communities' willingness to adapt and accept them as legitimate participants.
>
> Mitchell & Myles, 2004: 244

Ovando at al. provide a useful summary of strategies useful for supporting L1 in the ESL classroom, involving, availability of books and resources in multiple L1s, reassuring parents that use of L1 at home is beneficial, encouraging use of L1 (where possible) in and outside of the classroom among peers, and celebrating cultural events from a wide range of backgrounds (ibid: 155). The key whole school pedagogical perspectives which equate to an effective ESL programme are beneficial to students from all backgrounds, and in fact are necessary in cases where students are living in a multicultural environment. In Ireland post-primary schools are the last opportunity of compulsory education before all young citizens go out and work or pursue further study in an unchallengeably diverse society.

2.1.3 Discussion

ESL students must acquire English as a second language for everyday functional use and also acquire academic English required for discursive argument, engaging in academic content and asserting their identity in school and their relationships:

> Traditionally, knowledge has been delivered through transmitting predetermined cultural norms and traditions that could be reproduced by students when solving problems.
>
> Farr, 2008: 26

Traces of hegemony are evident in this Irish researcher's quote, consistent with the literature I reviewed in Chapter 1, showing a tendency in Irish schools for cultural bias. Studies show that factors such as gender, socio-economic status and ethnic background may mark the student as different from the dominant ideology which is imposed via the curriculum (or 'hidden curriculum' [Barnes, 1969: 21; Maybin, 2007:159]). These variables can negatively affect the likelihood of successful engagement in education (cf. 'structure' from Chapter 1 [Giddens, 1979]).

I have emphasised the role of dialogue and language development in schools, stemming from the work of Vygotsky, both as a means for mediating and constructing knowledge, and as a process by which students acquire the specific kind of language (that is, context reduced, abstract language, often in a formal register) required to succeed in formal education. Bernstein is among many leading researchers who have observed and commented on the reality that much failure in education can be attributed to the difference between the kinds of language a child acquires

while growing up in the home environment and the language variety which is valued in schools, a difference usually associated with children from lower socio-economic backgrounds (1997). This 'gap' must be bridged by schools: "The myth of verbal deprivation is particularly dangerous, because it diverts attention from real defects of our education system to imaginary defects of the child," (Labov, 1970; cited in Barnes, 1976: 169). Students' ability to 'code-switch' between different genres and registers of language is a goal of modern 'multiliteracies' approaches to teaching (Lo Bianco, 2000; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Healy, 2008), which seek to bridge the gap from language varieties which students know and language varieties valued by the school.

2.2 Review of Irish education research

This section of the thesis explores the development of ESL in Irish post-primary schools, starting with official DES responses and moving on to the establishment and subsequent closure of Integrate Ireland, Language and Training (IILT). The section moves on to look at context specific research and proposes how 'best practice' can be developed within the context of boundaries posed by the existing structures of education and policy in Ireland, as well as by the make-up of Ireland's immigrant population.

2.2.1 ESL in Ireland

From 1999, the DES has provided financial assistance and teacher allocation to schools for their ESL students (Nowlan, 2008: 253 and see page 26 of this thesis). In 2000, the DES asked the recently founded Refugee Language Support Unit at Trinity College, Dublin's Centre for Language and Communication Studies (CLCS) to support the teaching of ESL in schools by developing materials to be mediated via in-service training (Lyons & Little, 2009: 1-2). In 2001 the unit was renamed Integrate Ireland Language and Training (IILT). Over the years since then (and until its closure in 2008) IILT offered in-service training and materials to both primary and post primary level. However, most progress was achieved in the primary sector due, in part, to the holistic nature of the primary structure (Little & Lazenby-Simpson, 2004: 91).

Progress had nevertheless been made at post-primary level, and was continuing at the time of closure. IILT based its linguistic analysis of the post-primary curriculum on the work of the Council of Europe (COE), specifically the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (COE, 2001). The CEFR is, among other things, a descriptive framework of language proficiency levels (COE, 2001) designed to develop "language teaching in Europe by finding a way to compare the objectives and achievement standards of learners in different national (and local) contexts" (Morrow, 2004: 6) and one of its functions is to provide a common starting point for language proficiency, syllabi, needs analysis, materials and assessment (COE, 2001 and Little, 2006). It

seeks to describe "in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively" (COE, 2001: 1). Using the proficiency levels from A1 to B1, IILT developed the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks to be used in ESL programmes as a curriculum to support students until they reached the B1 level (Little, 2006: 181). B1 is defined globally as:

> Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
>
> COE, 2001: 24

B1 was chosen as the exit level because after this level students have the tools to develop English in a mainstream setting (if supported there). However, it is not a level at which students can access mainstream education at a level equal to that of their peers and do well in exams. Beyond B1 the student can further their second language acquisition (via supported participation in the mainstream) as the descriptors illustrate:

> I can understand expended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument...I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.
>
> CEO, 2001: 27

Such linguistic skills are developed by ESL students as their English L1 peers are also developing them, as the goals are shared with mainstream curriculum goals anyway.

IILT developed a version of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) with 'I can' checklists based on the Benchmarks (IILT, 2004; Little, 2009). The two main functions of the ELP, as a pedagogical tool and as a means of reporting proficiency and intercultural experience (Little, 2007), together with its tripartite structure of a language passport, language biography and a dossier of work, promote and support many of the goals of an ESL programme: to value the full range of the learner's language and cultural competences, to promote learner autonomy, to encourage self-assessment and support recording of teacher assessment. It also serves as a pedagogical tool to support the learner in the process of language learning (COE, 2000: 2).

The COE promotes language learning/teaching, alongside developing inter-cultural awareness and acknowledging plurilingualism (COE, 2001; Morrow, 2004: 4-5; Beacco & Byram, 2007). It is not difficult to see the relevance of these goals to the ESL students of my research: promoting communicative competence, promoting understanding and tolerance, and promoting language teaching approaches based on communicative needs and learner autonomy) are common goals of successful language support anyway.

While the support resources (for example: *A Resource Book for Language Support in Post-Primary Schools*; IILT, 2007) disseminated by IILT are adapted to the context of Irish ESL programmes and address many of the needs of ESL teachers, widespread use at post-primary level has not been achieved; many ESL teachers have never heard of the ELP. Information and training on the ELP was disseminated via IILT in-service training and via the IILT website. However, both of these services have been withdrawn, though the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) has placed some of the materials on their website (www.ncca.ie/iilt).

The NCCA published support guidelines for the primary school sector on English as an Additional Language (EAL – adopted from UK usage, synonymously used alongside ESL), and in the post-primary sector published Intercultural Education in the Post-Primary Schools (NCCA, 2006), a set of guidelines on how to adapt teaching towards a more intercultural approach. The NCCA states its goals as "enabling students to respect and celebrate diversity, to promote equality and to challenge unfair discrimination" (NCCA, 2006), and provides advice on issues such as classroom planning, whole school planning, interculturalism across the curriculum, and includes a brief section on supporting second language learning in the mainstream.

Second Level Support Services (www.slss.ie) began to offer seminars addressing the ESL context in 2009, sometime after the closure of IILT, with its objectives listed as supporting integration, sharing practical teaching and learning strategies and offering training on ESL resources. Prior to this, and addressing the need for an association to support ESL teachers, the English Language Support Teachers Association (ELSTA, see: www.elsta.ie) was founded in 2006 by teachers. Run on a voluntary basis by its National Executive, ELSTA uses its limited funding (from membership fees and the Teacher Professional Network) to offer training workshops, a discussion forum and an annual conference with expert speakers.

The DES established the AIM (Accessing Intercultural Materials[12]) section on its website with the following preamble; "AIM will tell you about the educational resources available for newcomers -

[12] http://www.education.ie/home/home.jsp?pcategory=10856&ecategory=51922&language=EN

parents and students. It will also be useful for teachers and researchers and others interested in the area of integration and intercultural education." It includes relevant circulars and reports on inclusion, ESL entitlement, and information for parents in eight languages. The DES and the Department of Integration launched an 'Intercultural Education Strategy' on 16 September, 2010, after completion of this thesis[13].

The DES published a 'Post-Primary Assessment Kit' (developed by IILT) in 2009. Schools can use the kit to assess skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening, across levels A1, A2 and B1, and it must form the basis of the application for an extension of support for students who have already had two years of ESL lessons.

2.2.2 Surveys of Irish ESL provision

Discourse on provision of mainstream lessons in L2 appears occasionally in the Irish media because Ireland is officially a bilingual state (English and Irish/Gaelic). A media article entitled 'Gaeilgeorí better at maths in Irish' suggests that native Irish speakers "may not be displaying their true numerical ability when tested in English" (Craig, 2009: 9). In the original University of Limerick study (Ní Ríordáin & O' Donoghue, 2008) researchers found that students achieved consistently higher scores when tested in their L1. The findings suggested that tests in English speaking post-primary schools should initially be presented in Irish to reflect the true ability of the students' mathematical ability. The media do not appear to address this same issue for language support students.

Studies on students from immigrant backgrounds in Irish schools have appeared since the end of 1990s. According to research, ESL students do not fare well; students who speak a language other than English at home still face a gap in achievement:

> The immigrant students in Ireland are a heterogeneous group. There is a gap in achievement between those students who speak English at home and those who do not. Ireland aims to provide 'inclusive, high quality education for all students'.
>
> OECD, 2009: 9

Conclusions of such studies agree with the English Language Support Programme's 2009 study (Lyons & Little, 2009) which widely criticises both provision and practice.

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[13] http://www.education.ie/home/home.jsp?pcategory=10856&ecategory=51881&language=EN

Provision

According to the literature, DES provision, as outlined in Circulars 0053/2007 and 0015/2009, is widely criticised by teachers and principals (Nowlan 2008: 260; Lyons & Little, 2009). However, anecdotal evidence suggests that this criticism is sometimes aimed at perceived provision, rather than actual, as many teachers are uninformed about the role of language support.

Research addresses what the ideal definition of 'language support' should be in Ireland. Keogh & Whyte (2003) refer to European and human rights philosophies in their observations that provision for migrant students means not simply asking the students themselves to 'fit in', but rather a long term and sustained effort on the part of policy makers and schools to include and value a diverse student population:

> It means that every effort should be made to provide them with the support they need to achieve their potential and the same standard of education as their peers, without forcing them into a situation where they have to deny their ethnic and cultural heritage, traditions and beliefs.
>
> Ibid: 8

A major criticism of DES allocation is the limited time allowed for ESL classes. According to the Circulars (DES, 2007 & 2009a) ESL students are entitled to "effectively two hours per week for two years" (Nowlan, 2009: 260). This amount of provision is widely regarded as inadequate (Nowlan, 2008; Lyons & Little, 2009) given that most mainstream teachers (as well as many ESL teachers) have not developed expertise in supporting migrant students (see page 68 below). Support is usually 'capped' at 2 years, and this limitation is the foundation of many complaints, both anecdotally and in the literature (Nowlan, 2008). ESL students are often grouped in a year band much younger than is appropriate for their age (Smyth et al., 2009: 24) and my exploratory research lead me to believe that this may be a common practice.

Research suggests that ESL lessons in Irish schools take place in often constantly changing locations (at worst, cupboards, partitioned sections of the school gym, storage areas etc.) (Nowlan, 2008; Lyons & Little, 2009). Kress et al. (2005) offer the following description of the practical difficulties and the pedagogical implications a teacher (Stephen, mainstream English teacher) faced when having no set room for a lesson:

> This constant moving between floors frequently resulted in his lessons starting late and in the students' confusion over which room they were supposed to be in. This practical inconvenience was a problem, but the teacher faced a still more complex problem – how to teach English without a sense of 'place'. Two of the classrooms he taught in were organised by other teachers to actualize versions of English that focused on media studies, not a focus shared by this teacher. The third 'classroom' in which he taught was the school's break-time canteen and snack area. In each of these spaces the desks were arranged differently...Each of these arrangements placed the teacher and students in a different pedagogical relationship to one another. Hence the relationships between Stephen and his students were constantly being reconfigured...
>
> Kress et al., 2005: 38

Schools struggle to find funding for ESL students if they arrive during the school year, after October enrolment. This means that schools miss out on the capitation grant (as students must enrol before October in order for schools to avail of this) (Keogh & Whyte, 2003: 46). The process of applying for ESL allocation leads to difficulties in allocating ESL hours with specialist teachers, as teaching allocation is awarded on a temporary basis, varying from year to year (Nowlan, 2008: 260). This means that teachers are reluctant to take on ESL hours due to the possibility that the hours will be withdrawn the following year.

As stated above, IILT offered resources which were specifically aimed at the Irish ESL post-primary context, before closure. Since then many teachers rely on context-inappropriate TEFL materials. Before the issue of the Post-Primary Assessment Kit (IILT, 2009), teachers also used inappropriate assessment procedures (Keogh & Whyte, 2003: 47) and many still do.

Teachers' attitudes

Teachers are generally reported as saying that they are "struggling to meet the needs of their bilingual [ESL] students in a context of limited training and resources" (Nowlan, 2008: 253). Discriminatory attitudes and lack of the necessary knowledge required to best provide ESL support, as well as the other everyday pressures of a school, mean that teachers' perceptions of their role and attitudes towards the students are biased by the often difficult working conditions. Kearney (2008: 111) highlights how teachers' attitudes towards ESL students may be unfavourable; as many as 70% of the teachers she surveyed reported negative attitudes towards migrant students.

Pre-service teacher training in does not have a compulsory module on language awareness or on teaching students from migrant backgrounds. However, students who have completed the post-graduate teaching qualification report that some non-compulsory courses are available. Pre-service training in the area is generally considered to be inadequate, yet in 2003 Little noted the need for such provision (ibid: 21) given the situation (especially at second level) that all subject

teachers play a role in mediating the language of the curriculum. One might expect pre-service teacher training to address the disproportionate underachievement of minority language children, but this is not the case, similar to other national contexts (Cazden, 2000: 251). Little (1995) reminds us that if a programme is to be effective and students are to develop learner autonomy then adequate teacher training and development of their own autonomy are prerequisite to students' success. The OECD recognises teacher training for ESL teachers and mainstream teachers as a key challenge for Ireland (OECD, 2009: 40-41).

Because ESL allocation varies from year to year, and due to the way allocation is awarded to a school, teachers' attitudes vary, with many teachers working with an ESL group simply because they have a space on their timetable. Teachers' eagerness is dampened by conditions which mean that they work in isolation from the mainstream subjects (Nowlan, 2009: 261). While the Circulars (DES 2007 & 2009a) indicate that ESL and mainstream subject teachers should work together, timetable constraints often prevent this. Mainstream teachers often feel ill equipped for dealing with the language in their subject and mediating content knowledge to ESL students (Keogh & Whyte, 2003: 48). Devine (2005) observed the pressure teachers often feel regarding the balance between provision for ESL students and Irish-born students, as well as the increased workload.

Achievement of ESL students

Nowlan draws on relevant national and international statistics when she argues that "children whose home language is not the dominant language of the classroom achieve less well than their peers academically," (2008: 257). The OECD report observed similar findings for students in the Irish context (2009: 9)

The common practice of assigning ESL students to a low ability stream or placing them in the Transition Year (Nowlan, 2009) based on the results of English language assessments (or perceived English language proficiency), a practice which is in itself discriminatory (Tronya & Siraj-Blatchford, 1993:2), is reflective of historical educational elitism (Cummins, 1984). Dedicated teachers often have to fight for a student to be moved to a higher band which better reflects their educational ability. The practice of placing ESL students into special needs classes can condemn a student to educational failure and is not in line with what educational equality is meant to offer.

As well as achieving positive results in the mainstream classroom and in English language proficiency, another goal of schools for their ESL students should be to foster positive social relationships between all students. Studies show that, at present, at post-primary level students

from an immigrant background are more likely to suffer from bullying and/or racial incidents than their peers (Smyth at al., 2009: 28).

Challenges for ESL in Ireland

Keogh & Whyte (2003) provided an early snapshot of the growing diversity in Irish second level schools. They employed a case study approach and observed a steady increase of immigrant students in four schools from 1998 to 2001. They highlighted the often challenging living environment for many immigrant students, mostly from an asylum seeker background, who may frequently be forced to move house, or live in shared accommodation making study impossible (ibid: 18-23). They also highlighted the range of prior educational experience, especially the difficulties faced by those students who either had not been to school in a while, or who had no previous experience of schooling at all. Such factors should be taken into account by any teacher facing a classroom with students from migrant backgrounds.

The dissemination of information is a key issue. Keogh & Whyte (2003) state that schools "need to have accurate and readily accessible information on...social and educational entitlements of non-nationals," (ibid: 53). Significantly, the information schools are seeking does exist (in terms of the circulars, which are sent directly to schools as well as being available for download on the DES website). There is a clear discrepancy between the information the DES distributes and the information which reaches schools. It reflects a tendency of policy to state what *should* be happening and then assume that it will happen.

2.3 Conclusion

This subsection begins to draws together research into best practice while filtering the findings through the framework of Irish post-primary educational structures. The following subsection draws an outline of issues relating to best practice.

2.3.1 Drawing the research together

In identifying broad trends of failure for students from minority ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, many studies have developed case studies which investigate characteristics of successful teaching and learning strategies, as well as successful whole school approaches. Blair & Bourne (1998) listed key findings under the headings useful for my later data analysis: leadership and ethos, relationships in schools, expectations and commitment, and curriculum enrichment. Analysis of their results produces key characteristics for school effectiveness, defined as decreasing incidences of academic underachievement in national assessments, school dropout rate and more broadly "the success in attainment by students" (ibid: 16).

Under 'leadership and ethos' (ibid: 6) the study identified strong and determined leadership from the principal as a crucial foundation to effectiveness, as well as an understanding of social and political factors affecting minority students, and putting equality into practice even at the risk of being seen as unpopular by staff. Under 'relationships in schools' (ibid: 6-7) maintaining links with the community and providing a platform for parents and students are consistent features of the effective schools surveyed, and a policy detailing clear procedures for dealing with incidence of racial bullying was regarded as essential for all staff and students to be aware of and adhere to. Under the 'expectations and commitment' (ibid: 7-8) heading, students, parents and staff are expected to maintain high expectations of the school and of the students, with all students "treated as potential high achievers" (ibid: 8), and schools must have in place clear systems for targeting, tracking and monitoring progress, and encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning (cf. learner autonomy, see page 57). A strategy employed by the more successful schools surveyed in this study is an initiative which paid special attention to raising literacy standards. Under the final heading, 'curriculum enrichment' (ibid: 8-9), the study identified the need for the whole school to display a sensitivity to the cultures, languages, religions and histories of the student population and to draw from a diverse range of sources to support the curriculum (across all subjects). Regarding L1, students are encouraged to use it, when possible, during the settling in period and for longer term learning.

Blair and Bourne (1998) identified how second level schools' responses to English language needs varied from school to school, as in Irish schools. However, they also suggested reasons for the variation; "A great deal seemed to hinge on the type of lead provided by the Head of Department...or on highly motivated and committed individual teachers" (ibid: 93). The study also finds common ground with my research on the availability of language support across schools, revealing that in the second level schools surveyed, only limited language support staff and resources were available. As a consequence, "It was therefore crucial for mainstream teachers and departments to take responsibility themselves for the language development of all their pupils" (ibid.). Many principals in their study were concerned that mainstream teachers believed language development to be the sole responsibility of the language support section of a school.

Keogh & Whyte (2003) offer guidelines for schools to consider when addressing the needs of their immigrant students, falling under the categories of 'background', 'financial', 'teaching and resources', 'language and culture' and 'integration' (ibid: 45). Nowlan suggests that good practice entails the following characteristics: strong/supportive school leadership, a whole school approach, ongoing promotion of language and literacy, intercultural and language awareness

training in pre-service teacher education, and effective communication between schools, students and parents (2008: 257).

Flexibility is a vital component of an effective ESL programme, "Since students and contexts vary, in developing strategies to ensure that bilingual students reach their potential, a balance should be achieved...allowing schools the flexibility to adapt solutions to the needs of particular communities and individuals" (Nowlan, 2008: 257). Flexibility should be embedded into a school's ESL policy; for example, in the issue of timing when applying for support: "Some flexibility in the timing of resource allocation would assist schools dealing with the arrival of newcomer students during the school year, particularly substantial numbers of them" (Smyth et al., 2009: 69). Second, the way provision is administered and funded should be made more flexible to allow for support in both the mainstream classroom as well as in ESL 'withdrawal' lessons, plus time used for teacher communication.

A whole school ethos which promotes diversity as an asset rather than a deficit, and acknowledges cross-curricular language in school policies (each department and whole school) is imperative to ensure successful participation of ESL students not only in the language support classroom but in each of the mainstream subjects: "In addition to English language support, non-English speaking students need support in keeping up with other subjects..." (Keogh & Whyte, 2003: 54). Pastoral care aimed at preventing absenteeism and school dropout is the responsibility of all school staff. School leadership which is committed to providing long-term solutions and support to ESL teachers and students is considered essential (Smyth at al., 2009: 35). Nowlan (2008) and my own exploratory research suggest that schools are likely to have more successful ESL programmes if they have a principal who delegates responsibility to an appropriately trained member of staff, while offering support.

The length of ESL support is controversial in light of recent changes in provision (DES 2007 & 2009a, see page 26 of Chapter 1). The suggested B1 cut-off-point seems reasonable pedagogically, as analysis of the CEFR shows that once a student has fully achieved level B1 in reading, writing, listening and speaking the student can further their second language acquisition via this participation in the mainstream. However, there are a number of complexities. First, B1 is a proficiency level at which the student can participate in lessons in order to engage in further language development; it is *not* a level at which students can access mainstream education at a level equal to that of their peers and do well in exams. Nor does attaining this level suggest that students are no longer in need of support, rather that support must continue in the mainstream classroom setting by mainstream teachers. As Nowlan points out, "there is a need for long-term strategies of support provision beyond the achievement of an initial level of fluency," (2009: 258).

Second, students may take less than 2 years to achieve B1.3, or many more years, according to individual factors such as level of English on arrival, AOA, LOR, prior educational experience, and so on. Research suggests that students do benefit from longer ESL support (Smyth et al., 2009: 24).

The requirement that support continues in the mainstream classroom means that pre-service and in-service teacher training must be transformed and modules which demonstrate the significance of language across the curriculum and highlight issues in educating a diverse student population be made compulsory. Nowlan suggests that "differentiated, individualised teaching methods should be the norm so that students with varying needs and from diverse backgrounds can benefit," (2008: 258), and it is straightforward to see how all students can benefit from such an approach, not only students from migrant backgrounds. Banks (1995; and paraphrased in Smyth et al. 2009) cites four areas of necessary training for schools and individual teachers regarding the provision of education to culturally diverse student populations:

> 1. a knowledge of the major paradigms in multi-cultural education;
> 2. a knowledge of the major concepts in multi-cultural education;
> 3. a historical and cultural knowledge of major ethnic groups; and
> 4. pedagogical knowledge about how to adapt curriculum and instruction to the unique needs of students from diverse cultural, ethnic, and/or social class groups.
>
> Smyth at al., 2009: 24

Given the importance of literacy in schools it seems appropriate to insist on focussing on cross-curricular literacy skills in ESL programmes (ibid: 24). Thorough initial assessment, which takes into account the varied backgrounds, educational experiences and linguistic proficiency, as well as L1 skills where possible, should form the start of a student's ESL programme (after allowing for the 'silent period' which some students undergo, see page 223 below) (Nowlan, 2008: 257).

Regarding L1 support, Ireland's complicated context (as discussed above, page 46), including 150 languages by some estimations (Lyons & Little, 2009: 5; Smyth et al., 2009: 25), means that using L1 as the language of instruction is not possible, and I repeat a quote from Cummins to support this judgment: "It should be noted that an additive orientation does not require the actual teaching of the minority language," (2001: 662). In light of the issues, it is imperative that the overall ethos of an ESL programme, and the whole school, reflects the perspective of valuing the students' L1s, encouraging their use both at home (in contrast to the often seen practice of instructing parents to speak only English at home to avoid confusing their child) and at school.

The role of the ESL teacher should be clarified and defined, at a policy level and in individual schools, and the features of this role should be communicated to the whole staff. Both circulars

(DES 2007 & 2009a) define the ESL teacher's role as an addition to support from mainstream subject teachers: "It is recommended that pupils receive additional language support teaching in the classroom or in small withdrawal groups in addition to the support they receive from the class teacher," (DES, 2007: 3) and "EAL support teachers are appointed to assist schools in providing **additional** EAL support teaching for pupils. The EAL pupil remains the responsibility of...the subject specialist teachers at post primary level who will work closely with the EAL support teachers," (DES, 2009a 2, emphasis in original). However, there is a feeling among ESL teachers that mainstream staff members often shun responsibility.

It is practice in Irish schools to produce well defined, written policy documents for each of the mainstream subject departments and in other aspects of the school, such as an 'anti-bullying policy' and a 'whole school ethos policy'. Smyth el al. (2009) and OECD (2006) observe that countries with successful ESL programmes tend to have clearly defined goals, which suggests not only that the goals of ESL could be made clearer in Ireland at a policy level, but also that individual schools with a documented ESL policy would put the programme on a par with mainstream subjects, promote awareness of ESL across the whole school, and benefit students by facilitating a consistent approach.

Such an approach is likely to benefit all children attending Irish post-primary schools in preparing them for life in an environment that will remain intercultural:

> The successful integration of new arrivals is essential for ensuring social cohesion in the host countries. Settling into the new educational system of the host country is an integral part of this integration process. Schools have a central role to play in the process of helping newcomer students to overcome difficulties associated with settling into the new education system and society in general (OECD, 2006) as well as in helping to develop a more inclusive, intercultural classroom environment and providing children with the knowledge and skills they need to participate in an intercultural society.
>
> Smyth at al., 2009: 26

Research agrees that provision for immigrant students still has a long way to go before it is on a par with stated national policy (Nowlan, 2008; Lyons & Little, 2009; Smyth et al, 2009). Provision is often unsystematic and practice is inconsistent, often resulting in unintentional disempowerment of ESL students. An ESRI study of nationwide Irish schools identified the negative impact that the 0015/2009 Circular may have on ESL students (Smyth, et al., 2009), especially regarding the new criteria for allocation. According to new criteria fewer students are eligible for support, and more students are required for fewer than before teaching periods.

A key idea in the quest to provide equal educational opportunities for ESL students is to recognise that in doing so schools would need to naturally evolve and offer preparation to all students for "life in an increasingly pluralist society" (Nowlan, 2008: 253). Nowlan (2008) states that while the provision of teaching hours for ESL students is a good thing, "there is a need for a re-examination of both the curriculum and the structure of the education system to account for the changing ethnic profile in Irish society" (ibid: 263). Quite simply, "Language support practices vary widely and do not reflect international best practice," (ibid: 253). Lyons & Little (2009) agree, describing language support as "poorly coordinated" and "downright haphazard" in many cases.

2.3.2 Framework for an effective ESL programme

The following table is a summary of the characteristics of effective ESL provision, derived from the literature review I carried out in this chapter. 'Successful' is difficult to define; I regard a successful programme as one promoting equal educational access and opportunities for ESL students across the whole school, and which enables learning while developing English language proficiency. The headings for the framework are based on the work of Blair & Bourne (1998), Keogh & Whyte (2003), Nowlan (2008) and Lyons & Little (2009).

The framework presented in the table below establishes a point of reference against which the schools participating in my research can be measured. The framework sets out areas to be attended to rather than criteria. The following chapter uses the research presented in Chapters 1 and 2 as a foundation for developing the two-phase empirical research plan.

Leadership & ethos	• Defined school ESL policy • Strong leadership from principal • Whole school awareness • Awareness of DES policy and resources • Parental involvement • Financial commitment and appropriate use of funding • Evidence of integration • Procedures for dealing with racial bullying
Flexibility	• Flexibility in ESL policy • Timetable for ESL allocated teaching periods given status in whole school planning of master timetable • Flexible use of ESL allocation • (Flexibility in administrative requirements for ESL allocation from DES and improved dissemination/controls of DES ESL guidelines)
Curriculum	• Culture, language, religion and history of student body valued • ESL materials and lessons based on curriculum
Teachers	• ESL and mainstream teachers coordinate support together • ESL and mainstream teachers trained in supporting language (Adequate teacher training)
Pedagogy	• Routine and context-appropriate assessment • ESL students progress monitored and results shared among ESL and mainstream teachers • Learner autonomy approaches • Commitment to raise literacy levels • Students' prior knowledge and L1 valued in each classroom

Figure2-1 Framework of best practice

3 Empirical Research Structure

3.0 Introduction

Chapter 2 discussed how ESL 'best practice' is defined in international contexts and described the Irish context in light of emerging surveys which identify deficits in policy, provision and practice (Keogh & Whyte, 2003; Lodge & Lynch, 2004; Devine, 2005; Nowlan, 2008; Lyons & Little, 2009; Ó Riagáin, 2009; Smyth et al., 2009). In the early stages of this research preliminary exploration highlighted issues which language support teachers identify as urgent needs, including lack of materials and resources, unclear definition of English language support, timetabling complications, limited teacher training, pressure to prepare students for state exams, segregation from mainstream teachers, students arriving at different times during the year, and addressing multi-level classes. These initial findings, which are supported by the review of literature in both chapters 1 and 2, guided the development of the main research question (see page 33 of Chapter 1). My research slots into a larger research project, the Trinity Immigration Initiative's English Language Support Programme (ELSP) project (see below, page 78).

Given that I wanted to observe how policy guidelines can be interpreted and implemented in a variety of ways, I employed an empirical case study design with two main tiers of data collection. Phase 1, a survey, was designed to identify *how* the policy can be implemented in schools. Phase 2, a case study, provides an in depth analysis of programme effectiveness and investigates the language support classroom and other aspects related to ESL students across the whole school setting.

Phase 1 (January – April 2008) involved collaboration with 10 Dublin schools to develop a survey of their ESL programmes, and resulted in data collected from circa 40 semi-structured interviews with school staff. Analysis of these data resulted in a description of the landscape of Dublin post-primary schools and the various ways of implementing an ESL programme based on DES provision (DES, 2007).

The second phase (school year 2008/09) involved in-depth case studies of three Dublin schools. The three schools provide a range of student population size, number of ESL students and different stages in the evolution of an ESL programme. Data was collected from school staff, ESL students and parents of ESL students, as well as during classroom and whole school observations.

Phase 1 is linked to the main research question and has two main aims:

- To describe the ESL programmes of 10 Dublin post-primary schools, addressing the various interpretations of the DES provision
- To generate recommendations for further areas of study, which will establish the foundation for Phase 2 of the research

The aims of Phase 2 reflect to some extent Ramirez's study of the effectiveness of bilingual programmes (1992; Cummins, 1992) and take elements from other studies (Blair & Bourne, 1998; August & Hanuke, 1998, Smyth at al., 2009):

- To determine the effectiveness of the three schools' ESL programmes
- To isolate characteristics of the whole school environment and the ESL programme that may explain the effectiveness, or otherwise of the programmes

The data collection instruments were developed building on substantial research by IILT (2007), and aimed to provide a global evaluation of the whole school environment. Cummins (2001) reviews characteristics of educational institutions which promote bilingual children's success and stipulate four key areas to be covered when evaluating a programme:

> These characteristics reflect the extent to which 1) minority students' language and culture are incorporated into the school program; 2) minority community participation is encouraged as an integral component of children's education; 3) the pedagogy promotes intrinsic motivation on the part of students to use language actively in order to generate their own knowledge; and 4) professionals involved in assessment become advocates for minority students rather than legitimizing the location of the "problem" in the students.
>
> Cummins, 2001: 659

3.0.1 Trinity Immigration Initiative: English Language Support Programme

Trinity Immigration Initiative (TII) unites research projects in a number of disciplines with the common goal of exploring the implication of diversity in Ireland for policy and practice, and one of the six research projects funded by TII is the English Language Support Programme (ELSP). Launched in 2007, the ELSP was designed to complement the work of IILT (page 63), and concentrates on the post-primary sector. However, since IILT's closure, the ELSP's task has taken on added significance in providing support which had previously been offered by IILT (Lyons & Little, 2009). The ELSP identified a number of aims (ibid: 3-4), among them:

- To survey current practices of English language support
- To develop subject-specific support materials at levels A1, A2 and B1, according to the IILT Benchmarks, and distribute the materials via a freely available website
- To expand the European Language Portfolio

In 2009 Lyons & Little published a substantial report covering the first aim, and this thesis complements their research. The report's survey drew pessimistic conclusions concerning the way students from immigrant backgrounds are offered English language support. A common thread in the report is the unreliable application of teaching allocation. The report found that a great majority (92% - Lyons & Little, 2009: 17) of teachers surveyed were given random periods of ESL simply to fill up their timetable, while very few had any training in teaching an L2. Very few schools surveyed had a specific ESL policy, only 37% of schools offered their ESL students a dedicated teaching room, and communication between ESL and mainstream subjects and teachers was minimal (ibid: 2009). Over three quarters of teachers surveyed found their school management unsupportive of ESL students' needs.

In summary, the report identified 12 key challenges for ESL in Irish post-primary schools, in the areas of: 1) language support coordination and provision, 2) teacher training, 3) ESL students overrepresented at resource-poor schools, 4) classroom issues, 5) school management structures, 6) teacher attitudes, 7) parent/home issues, 8) intercultural education, 9) lack of ICT facilities, 10) extramural administration, 11) exemption from Irish, and 12) frustration. My case study research uses this report as a foundation for further research.

My research began in October 2007 with meetings set up by the TII ELSP team, at three Education Centres in Dublin: Drumcondra, Blackrock and Dublin West. The meetings were promoted to teachers beforehand via education centre staff. Each meeting ended with an invitation to teachers to a meeting in November 2007 at Trinity College, where teachers volunteered to participate in my research.

3.1 Research objectives

The main objective of this thesis is to develop a framework of 'best practice' characteristics which define successful ESL educational provision in Irish post-primary schools, and to see to what extent examples of best practice are evident in current practice in three schools. My research is based on the theoretical framework described in the previous two chapters, stemming from broader concerns of pedagogy and society, narrowing to pedagogy in practice. I have taken what the literature in corresponding international contexts identified as best practice while at the same time taking the structures of the Irish post-primary school, current resources and policy into account. I have identified the main functions of a successful ESL programme: to address the demands of the mainstream curriculum and linguistic challenges of the school environment, to develop proficiency in English, to develop content knowledge in the mainstream subjects, to value and build on students' prior knowledge (including L1) and to prepare students for state assessment (see page 75). Phase 2 in particular is founded on the conclusions from Chapter 2

that a successful ESL programme depends upon certain features being present on both policy and practice level. These features are collected under 5 headings: leadership and ethos, flexibility, curriculum, teachers and pedagogy (see pages 70 and 76).

Here I outline the structure of the two tiered empirical research. Phase 1 is a survey of ten Dublin schools and their ESL programmes. Its function is both exploratory (the findings were used to develop Phase 2) and to observe ESL practice in schools, as well as the variability in implementation of policy. During Phase 1 I identified three schools which would be prepared to facilitate further research and designed a comprehensive case-study plan (Phase 2). Phase 2 is a case study of 3 schools, allowing for three visits of two to three days (longer at Southbank School) at a time over the school year 2008-2009. Interviews, observations, assessments and analysis of school data were all used in this phase. The outcomes of Phase 2 are qualitative and semi-longitudinal data which were drawn together as evidence for the degree of success of each school in offering ESL provision. Figure 3-1 (below) provides a diagrammatic overview of the research design and process.

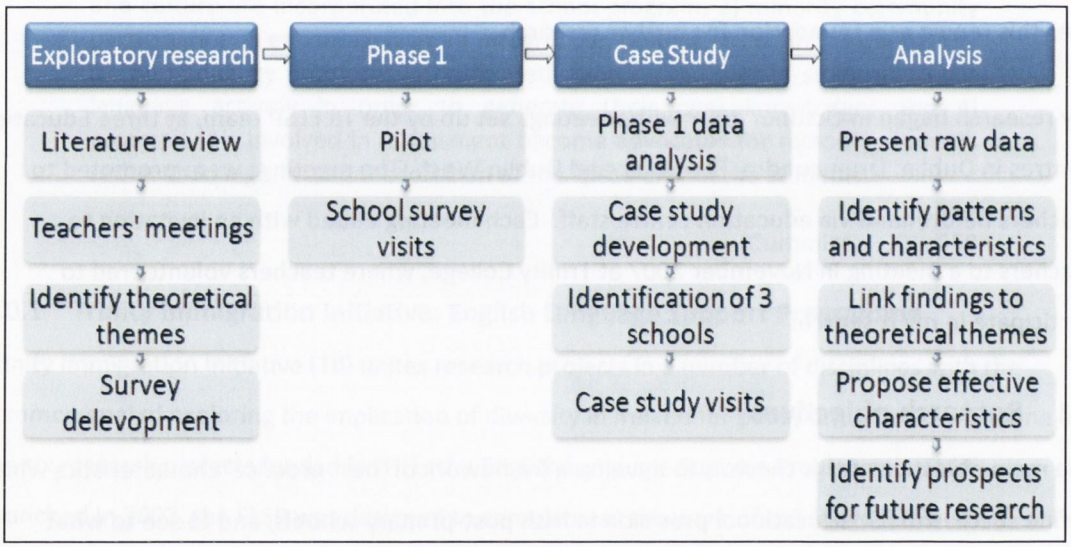

Figure 3-1 Empirical research plan

3.2 Educational research

3.2.1 Qualitative research in educational settings

Phase 1 is ethnographically oriented while Phase 2 employs an ethnographic methodology, which is defined as a qualitative process applying continuous record-keeping and participatory involvement in the classroom (Chaudron, 1988: 46). Bryman (2004) discusses how reliability and validity in qualitative research vary in the impact on findings, and in my research participants were liable to hold varying perspectives on the workplace and programme that they are giving an account of, thus affecting credibility of my results. By interviewing multiple participants in each

school setting in an attempt to uncover as many perspectives as possible, thereby looking for commonalities which may be more reflective of the facts, credibility (which Bryman compares to validity [2004: 273-274]) is enhanced. Nowlan (2008) suggests that the relevant stakeholders in the Irish context are students, teachers and parents, as well as the policy makers, and this study builds on her findings to include these relevant actors. Phase 1 took place in ten schools and with between 3-4 participants (principal, ESL coordinator, ESL teacher, mainstream teacher) at each school, so the maximum number of interviews possible was 40, and with scope for each participant to speak for between 10-40 minutes (up to one teaching period).

Qualitative research usually involves one of two different interview types, unstructured and semi-structured (Bryman, 2004). I used the semi-structured format as I wanted to guide the participants while giving them the option of elaborating on their answers to provide novel insights which might not be elicited by strict guidelines. Authenticity (Bryman, 2004: 276) is relevant in terms of fairness (whether I equally represent all participants' viewpoints) and the goal of educational authenticity (whether I consider the impact of sharing the participants' viewpoints with the aim of helping everyone better understand the others' perspectives).

For both phases I followed the routine: exploratory talks with school personnel, research ethics approval,[14] semi-pilot phase (omitted in Phase 2 because the Phase 1 pilot provided enough information for both phases), school visits and then initial analysis (transcription in Phase 1, and recording of data collected in Phase 2). After development of the first draft of the interview guidelines, I collected pilot data from two schools. I timetabled these visits very early in the interview schedule to allow myself time to modify the guidelines before going into the rest of the schools. The pilot schools are number 6 and number 9.

Outline of research methodologies

My presence in the schools meant that a degree of subjectivity was inevitable. I endeavoured to be the 'good researcher', which means establishing a rapport, appearing concerned and curious yet remaining as unobtrusive as possible, and all the while delivering the questions in a naturalistic yet professional manner (good researcher attributes based on Woods, 1986).

In order to gain access to schools and to teachers with busy schedules, a rapport between the research participant and myself needed to be developed. I was unlikely to gain access without setting up a friendly relationship, and I am unlikely to be informed of participants' real viewpoints

[14] Ethics approval was sought from and granted by the School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences, Trinity College, in January 2008, for Phase 1 and in August 2008 for Phase 2.

without this relationship either. Interviewing sets the context of data collected firmly in the social situation as experienced by the participant (Kvale, 1996: 14) and the emphasis of my interviews at this stage was on the participants' experience of ESL provision.

Bryman (2004) suggests a frame for developing semi-structured interview guidelines, which I used in developing my guidelines because the framework corresponds, with little adaptation, to the schedule of my research (Figure 3-2):

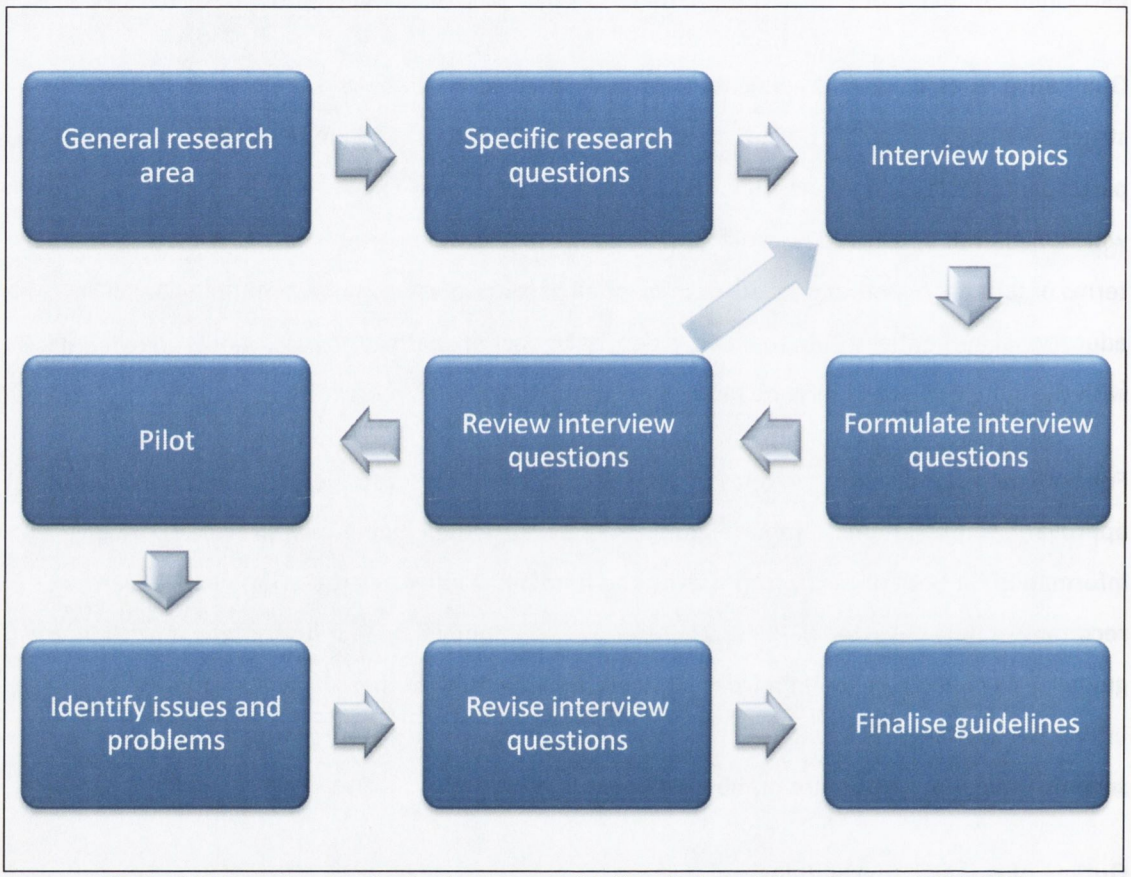

Figure 3-2 Frame for developing interview guidelines (adapted from Bryman 2004: 326)

I structured the guidelines to facilitate a naturalistic interview style and to facilitate a logical flow to the interview. I followed suggestions from many researchers in the field of social research (Spradley, 1979; Kvale, 1996; Patton, 2002; Charmaz, 2006). I began each section with an 'introducing question' or 'background question' with the intention of making clear to the participant what kind of information I was interested in. To encourage the participants to respond in a way that permits them to offer all relevant information, without self-censorship, much research suggests the use of indirect questions (Tuckman, 1994).

I decided against fixed-alternative questions, opting instead for each question to allow for an unlimited response from the participant. Studies of the open-ended question point to the advantages and suitability of my semi-structured interview guidelines; among the advantages are

allowing the participant to provide their own response, flexibility, encouraging cooperation and helping to establish rapport (Kerlinger, 2000; Cohen et al., 2006). Employees of a school have little time on their timetable for a researcher to demand lengthy interviews (Myers & Newman, 2007) so each interview was designed to fit into one teaching period (40 minutes).

Moving on to Phase 2, case study research leads to a narrative description of the educational setting, interpreting the data collected to produce a general overview or simplification of procedure and practice (Bassey, 1999). Defining a case study is difficult, and researchers vary in their explanation. Yin (2003) defines a case study thus:

> [A]n empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. In other words, you would use the case study method because you deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions.
>
> Yin, 2003: 13

Bassey's summary (1999: 28-29) suggests that for my purposes an evaluative and explanatory case study is appropriate, because my research takes place in the educational context and links to wider social theory (based on the ideas I emphasised in chapters 1 and 2),

To construct as comprehensive a case study as possible, I employed a variety of data elicitation tools designed to address the ultimate issue of 'whether doing x, y and z will lead to promotion of both curricular and English language provision for ESL students'. Much case study research follows a similar pattern, where a statement such as "Do *y* instead of *x* and your pupils will learn more" (Bassey, 1999: 49) is tested and the results analysed.

Case studies locate their methodology in grounded theory. Such an approach means that at each stage of the data collection I simultaneously analysed the data as I was collecting it, in order to inform or modify further steps, as well as to compare the data received from the different schools (Charmaz, 2006: 6).

The data collection methods include many typically employed in similar research; interviews, observations and reading existing documents from the school (Travers, 2001: 2-4; Bassey, 1999: 81-82). When interpreting the data collected from a case study, it is important to define criteria for analysis (Yin, 2003) and I used the framework established in Chapter 2 (page 76). The strength of the validity of case study research lies in the use of multiple sources of evidence to establish a description of the case and to identify patterns. Establishing the desired 'case study investigator skills' is essential when it comes to collecting reliable, unbiased data, as Woods (see page81 above) described, and Yin (2003) suggests:

- A good investigator should:

  - ask good questions
  - be a good listener
  - be adaptable and flexible
  - base the case study on a firm grasp of the theoretical issues
  - be unbiased, sensitive and responsive

Since the 1970s many studies have researched programme effectiveness in the ESL context (Collier, 1992). Many studies aim to compare programmes which offer instruction in the students' L1 to programmes which use only the target language, or varying levels of both L1 and L2. The Ramirez report (1992) is one such study which ascertained that students who participated in late-exit immersion programmes (they received L1 instruction as well as L2 support for a defined period of time) show advantages in acquiring L2 for schooling across time. However, such studies tend to take place in contexts where there is a high concentration of a shared L1 and therefore are not well adapted to the Irish context. Collier & Thomas (1989) study a context of ESL provision similar to the Irish situation where the students represent a large number (over 60) of L1s (so L1 instruction is not an option). The kind of methodology employed was not necessarily stated in such studies. Establishing the kind of ESL support being offered can be difficult to establish, first of all because programme types and labels are not well established or defined in Ireland. And second, because there is no standard pedagogy employed in Irish ESL programmes. Many studies of ESL programmes overlook this aspect.

3.3 Phase 1: Survey

This subsection deals with the process of Phase 1, from the initial contact with ESL teachers to developing a means of accurately and comprehensively describing the ESL programmes in a sample of schools.

3.3.1 Overview

The survey examines the ESL programme in ten self-selected schools in County Dublin by means of a set of semi-structured interviews (see Table 3-1). The survey was developed with volunteer teachers from the ten schools in initial meetings within the context of the TII English Language Support Programme project. From these meetings, key areas of concern were identified and elaborated into the guidelines for the semi-structured interviews. In each of the ten schools, three or four members of staff were interviewed: the principal, the ESL coordinator (if such a position existed in the school), an ESL teacher and a mainstream teacher.

3.3.2 Participants

During my preliminary school visits and pilot visits I took note of a typical school environment and of the demands on a typical member of staff during the day. There was much background literature to warn me of the changeability of a school's schedule and the inevitable waiting around for teachers to finish their classes (Wellington, 2000).

Initial Teachers' Meetings with Trinity Immigration Initiative

The November 2007 meeting gave an outline of the project's aims, key deliverables and introductions to individual project strands. I used the meeting as an opportunity to establish a rapport with the teachers and to present the rationale behind the survey.

School	Students total	Denomination	School type[15]	Staff total	Boys/ Girls or mixed	ESL students total	ESL students with entitlement	ESL students in programme
01	350	Inter-denominational	VSS	28	M	157 (45%)[16]	Not stated	Not stated
02	504	Inter-denominational	Voc	55	M	12 (2%)	12	12
03	467	Catholic	VSS	35[17]	M	33 (7%)	Not all	Unknown
04	303	Catholic	VSS	26	G	28 (9%)	18	18
05	555	Inter-denominational	Voc	?	M	?	Not stated	Not stated
06	640	Inter-denominational	C&C	30	M	45 (7%)	Not all	45
07	293	Catholic	VSS	27	G	102 (35%)	Unknown	Over allocation
08	450	Catholic	Voc	42	G	14 (3%)	8	Over allocation
09	783	Inter-denominational	C&C	63	M	130 (17%)	32	50
10	425	Inter-denominational	C&C	33	M	42 (10%)	Most	Most

Table 3-1 Survey schools profile

[15] C&C: Community & Comprehensive Schools. Voc: Vocational/Community Colleges. VSS: Voluntary Secondary Schools.

[16] This is a linguistically oriented, fee-paying school and many students are born outside of Ireland, however they are not necessarily all ESL students.

[17] Allocation = 28 teachers.

3.3.3 Survey design

My review of research in educational settings and of qualitative interviewing, along with the exploratory teachers' meetings, form the background underpinning my data elicitation tool – the semi-structured interview guideline. Consultations with teachers before and during the development of the survey guided me towards how best schools could facilitate my visits, and led me towards specific areas of questioning.

3.3.3.1 General research area and specific research questions

The aim of the interviews was to answer the broad question: how are schools providing English language support for ESL students? Sub-questions which develop my argument are:

- What problems do individual participants and their schools have at the chalk-face of ESL programmes?
- What procedures have schools implemented to overcome problems with the programme?
- How does DES policy translate to their school context?
- What recommendations do participants have for improving ESL provision?
- Does current ESL provision achieve its goal of enabling ESL students to participate in mainstream subjects and therefore gain access to education?

3.3.3.2 Interview topics and questions

The interview topics were developed from data collected at the teachers' meetings, as explained above. The guidelines were arranged in order, from context setting issues to issues closely related to participants' job, and conclude with open-ended questions. Table 3-2 sets out the topics:

School Principal
General background information for school profile
Allocation of resources and teaching hours (including timetabling)
ESL teachers and teacher training
Definition of ESL programme and DES policy
Intercultural issues
Open question to provide opportunity for general comments on, criticisms and praise of the ESL programme
ESL Coordinator
Allocation of resources and teaching hours (including timetabling)
ESL teachers and teacher training
Assessment procedures
Materials and procedures inside the classroom
Coordination with mainstream staff and subjects
Definition of ESL programme and DES policy
Open question to provide opportunity for general comments on, criticisms and praise of the ESL programme
ESL Teacher
Allocation of resources and teaching hours (including timetabling)
ESL teachers and teacher training
Assessment procedures
Materials and procedures inside the classroom (including timetabling)
Coordination with mainstream staff and subjects
Definition of ESL programme and DES policy
Open question to provide opportunity for general comments on, criticisms and praise of the ESL programme
Mainstream Subject Teacher
Materials and procedures inside the classroom
Coordination with mainstream staff and subjects
Definition of ESL programme and DES policy
Open question to provide opportunity for general comments on, criticisms and praise of the ESL programme

Table 3-2 Interview guidelines

With these topics in place, I used the above table as a working document to be 'fleshed out' by the interview questions. In the final interview guidelines, I avoided jargon and defined the sections with different titles to those in the table above – this was as an aide memoire to myself during the interview to use non-specialist language with the participant. (See the final interview guideline, Appendix A, page 224).

General background information for school profile
This section was appropriate only for the school principal.

Allocation of resources and teaching hours
This section deals with how ESL students' needs are met in terms of allocated ESL hours, teachers, group size and how their timetables are organised by the school. Information collected from these questions contributes to the categories 'leadership and ethos' and 'flexibility' (see page 76).

Nowlan (2008) and Lyons & Little (2009) are among many researchers who stress the importance of uniformly organised programmes, and the questions in this section were designed to discover the underlying assumptions which underpin the perceived status of ESL within a school. The temporary nature of teaching allocation (Nowlan, 2008: 260) leads to difficulties in maintaining a dedicated ESL staff from year to year, so questions in this section elicit details about how schools manage to overcome this difficulty.

Under 'flexibility', Smyth et al. (2009: 69) dictate how best practice is necessarily defined by a degree of flexibility to meet the demands of students with varying educational needs and who arrive at various times throughout the school year. Furthermore, because exploratory research reports the non-uniform organisation of language support across Irish schools, this section elicits descriptive data on ESL programmes to facilitate comparison of the survey schools with pre-existing research findings.

ESL teachers and teacher training
The issue of maintaining ESL teaching staff is discussed in the section above. Teacher training in general was indentified in my literature review as a key challenge for ESL in Ireland (OECD, 2009: 40-41) and furthermore, surveys indicate that many schools employ under-qualified and pre-service teachers to 'use up' the ESL allocation (Nowlan, 2008; Lyons & Little, 2009). The issue of mainstream teachers' roles in the development of academic language is often brought into question, as one characteristic of a successful programme is that language learning is supported in the mainstream setting (Gogolin, 2008).

Questions in this section elicit data of a descriptive nature about the level of ESL staff qualifications, and underlying pedagogy which mainstream teachers bring to the classroom.

Assessment procedures

Linked to the 'pedagogy' heading in the framework of best practice (page 76), context-appropriate assessment is highlighted in the research as a shortfall in many Irish schools (Keogh & Whyte, 2003: 47). Fair assessment is a necessary foundation for ESL programmes in order to ensure, among other things, that ESL students are not inappropriately consigned to low-level ability bands (Nowlan, 2008).

Classroom approaches

Also linked to the 'pedagogy' heading, as well as 'curriculum', these questions determine whether classroom methodology offers an approach which bridges the gap between ESL students' knowledge and knowledge valued by the school. Gramsci (1970) and Bourdieu (1991) attribute much educational disadvantage to underlying pedagogy which fails to acknowledge and bridge this gap.

Coordination with mainstream staff and subjects

Strategies which are successful in maintaining links with the mainstream staff help to promote access to mainstream education by giving ESL teachers information about subject topics upon which they can base their language support lessons. All children have a right to education (Bruner, 1996: 67) and in Ireland ESL students' dual challenge involves developing proficiency in English as well as acquiring subject content knowledge along the way – something many schools do not yet address (Keogh & Whyte, 2003: 23). This section of questions elicits descriptions of best practice or evidence of the difficulties in facilitating mainstream/ESL links.

Definition of ESL programme and DES policy

This section asks how schools devise their ESL programme, how they see the role of the ESL programme, how they use DES provision, and whether they have developed a policy of their own (see the heading 'Leadership and Ethos', page 76). The DES circular (the 2007 issue at the start of the survey) states that schools must back the language support programme with policy and planning documents, and research shows that schools with a defined policy tend to provide better access to education for migrant students than schools without (OECD, 2006; Lyons & Little, 2009: Smyth el al., 2009).

Intercultural issues

A whole school approach to ESL is essential according to the literature (Ovando et al., 2006: 192), and the questions in this section elicit evidence of cultural sensitivity in the school's approach to addressing ESL students' needs.

Open question to provide opportunity for general comments

The final questions deal any other issues which the participants feel relevant.

Final guidelines
See Appendix A, page 224.

3.3.4 Limitations of the survey

My research focuses on County Dublin and Dublin inner city, for many reasons (logistical, self-selection of sample, time limitations) and therefore the tendencies which emerge from my data are not necessarily representative of Ireland in general (Cooke [2008] observed that generalisations cannot always be made from studies in capital cities). The sample of schools was self-selected, which means I had no say in which schools I worked with – they simply volunteered their interest in accommodating a researcher for one visit. Therefore, the sample represents only those institutions where there was, initially, interest in the area of ESL, and/or some kind of need to help evaluate/develop their own ESL programme.

Each school environment is unique and so the quantity of data, as well as the individual ESL programmes and structures of each school, all differed and had implications when comparing the data across the sample. In addition, I had little control over the interview environment and so the data provided by the participants might be influenced by factors such as whether they felt we could be interrupted.

3.3.5 Procedure

The visits took place between February and April 2008, each lasting one day. The interviews took place in the participants' schools and participants were asked to provide a quiet room/office for the interviews. I tried to arrange chairs so that the participant and myself were seated facing each other, and I placed the digital voice recorder close by but out of view. At the start of each interview I confirmed that they had read and signed the consent form.[18] After each school visit I transcribed the interviews as soon as possible after the event, and stored the data ready for analysis.

[18] See Appendix A, page 227.

3.4 Phase 2: Case studies

3.4.1 Overview

For Phase 2 I analysed the survey data to identify two pieces of information: three schools which would facilitate access and ongoing participation in the TII project (schools names remain anonymous), and key areas of focus for the case studies.

3.4.2 Participants

Participants for Phase 2 remain the same as Phase 1 (principals, ESL teachers and mainstream teachers), with two exceptions; I also included ESL students and their parents in the data collection plan.[19] The students were assessed using the IILT Post-Primary Assessment Kit (IILT, 2009) and existing records of their progress and class work would be used if class teachers permitted. The parents were invited to talk to me, or to fill in a questionnaire at home.

3.4.3 Data collection

3.4.3.1 Case study data elicitation instruments

Participants included:

- School staff and teachers**(T)**
- ESL students **(S)**
- Parents **(P)**

Brackets after each data elicitation tool indicate designated participant(s) for each procedure:

- Learner English proficiency self-assessment questionnaires (deals with their perceived capacity to cope in mainstream subjects) **(S)**
- Teacher ESL student English proficiency questionnaires **(T)**
- Open, unstructured interviews with school staff on the workings of the ESL programme in their school **(T)**
- Classroom and school observation on materials and policy **(T) & (S)**
- Open, informal interviews with parents about attitudes to ESL provision **(P)**
- Learner interview/questionnaire about ethnographic background **(T) & (S)**
- Teacher questionnaire identifying what works/suggestions for enhancement of materials (pre- and post-TII materials) **(T)**

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[19] Research ethics approval for Phase 2 was sought from and granted by the School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences, Trinity College, in August 2008, Appendix 2, page 258.

Additional review of existing data provided by schools:

- Examination of results data from tests employed by the school **(T) & (S)**
- Collection of policy documents **(T)**
- Collection of examples of teaching materials **(T)**
- Statistics of ESL students **(T) & (S)**

The research instruments/structure may be modified during the process if the researcher or the participants feel, after careful review between the visits, that a procedure is not working/is not appropriate. The school year is divided into three terms, and these three terms provide a natural division for the reviews.

3.4.3.2 Case study theoretical framework

The following figure shows how I linked the overall case study plan to the significant themes and characteristics of best practice which emerged in Chapters 1 and 2:

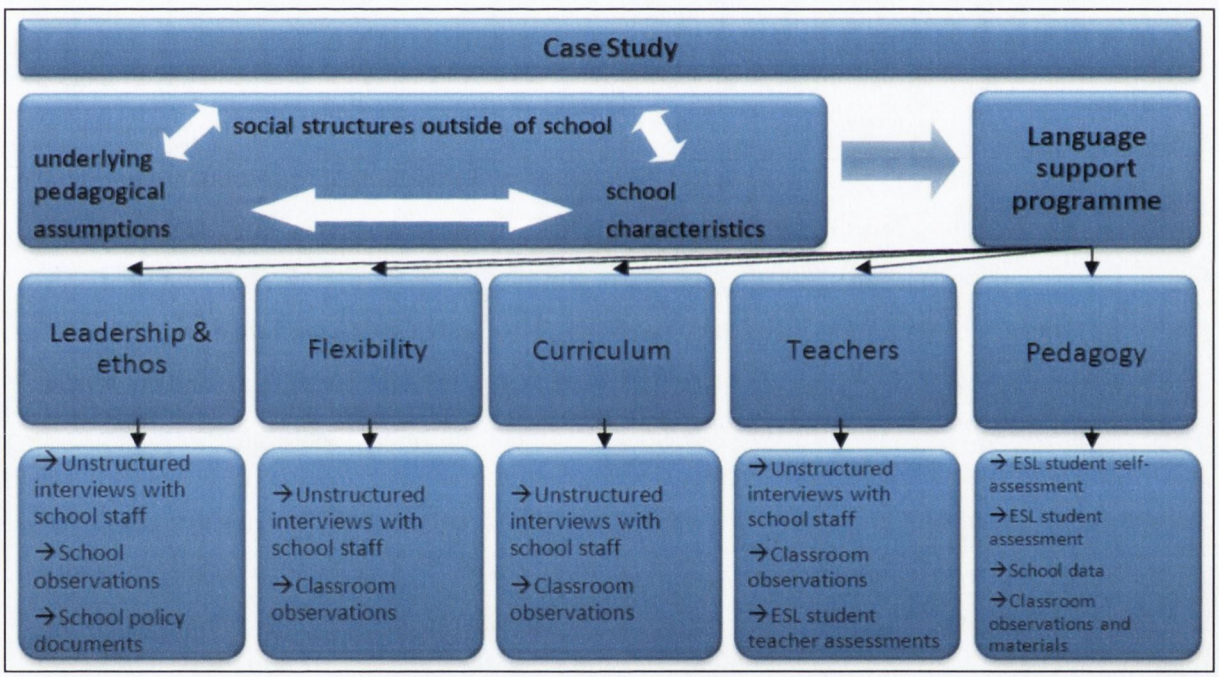

Figure 3-3 Case study framework

Chapter 2 concluded with a framework of five headings which builds both a picture of best practice characteristics and a basis for evaluating a school's language support programme. With these five headings in mind, the case study data elicitation instruments (listed above on page 92) are each linked to one or more of the categories. A key concern of this thesis is whether schools can and are bridging the gap between the knowledge of a diverse student population and expected school knowledge in a way which facilitates learning and promotes English language proficiency, thus providing the education which all children have a right to.

3.4.4 Limitations of the case studies

Limitations as for Phase 1 are also relevant in Phase 2. In addition, with only three schools involved, findings can only speculatively be applied to other contexts.

Using pre-existing school records (class work, exam results and so on) means that I cannot control the circumstances under which such data was originally collected from the students, nor can I ascertain the validity of test procedures, tools and results. However, it is important to collect such data because they represent the schools' and teachers' assessment of their ESL students. Furthermore, their success in schooling and in gaining access to third-level and employment opportunities after school hinges on such results (Collier, 1992: 194).

I assessed the ESL students using the Post-Primary Assessment Kit (IILT, 2009). However, I used two different versions over the course of my case study, the pilot version and the published kit. My familiarity with the marking scheme developed over the course of my research too, and so the results serve only as indicators of students' English language proficiency over time at individual schools, and not across the three survey schools. Furthermore, I cannot control for students' level of familiarity with test procedure, prior experience of school or literacy. In general it is difficult to identify patterns and control for patterns in ESL students' prior experience of schooling (in L1) and their exposure to L2 within the Irish context, as circumstances vary widely. I also concentrate on assessing only the students' reading and writing proficiency, and not their speaking and listening skills. Due to time constraints I decided to concentrate on reading and writing because these skills are most frequently employed in state assessments and are a valid indicator of abstract thinking skills (Collier, 1992: 195) in educational settings.

My increasing involvement with the school means that I participated to varying degrees as my data collection progressed. While this is important in terms of establishing a level of trust with the participants, it also means that unavoidably I participated in the ESL programme simply by being present in the classroom.

3.4.5 Procedure

The case study started with a pre-school year interview with the gatekeepers to develop a schedule. The gatekeepers were either the school principal or the person responsible for ESL coordination. Three visits of between three to five days each took place employing a variety of data elicitation tools (at Southbank School the visits were spread more widely over the school term, see page145).

Day 1	Arrive before start of classes to go over plan with relevant contact person Classroom observation to record materials used and class dynamic Post-class interview with ESL teacher to evaluate materials and resources Participation in classroom with carefully selected learners to build up a learner profile Learner self-assessment
Day 2	Arrive before start of classes to go over plan with relevant contact person Interview with staff member reading assessment of English language proficiency Collection and recording of data available at school regarding ESL students, E, performance in mainstream, school policy documents Interview with staff member to discuss organisation of ESL in general
Day 3	Arrive before start of classes to go over plan with relevant contact person Observation in school regarding ESL resource, space given to intercultural awareness Collection of materials used in the ESL classroom and in the mainstream classroom where relevant

Table 3-3 Case study procedure

The data were analysed superficially between the proposed visits, for the purpose of reviewing and modifying procedure. In-depth analysis of the data took place in year three of my PhD research.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented the design of my empirical research, which had two phases. The data elicitation tools are presented in full in the appendices.

Phase 1 was a survey of ten schools, employing semi-structured interviews with up to 40 participants (three or four in each school). The data were collected in the form of digital recordings which were then transcribed. Analysis involved identifying trends in the participants' answers, and the data obtained were collated to generalise the trends across the ESL programmes of the survey schools. Presentation of the trends serves two ends; first as an initial description of ESL in the survey schools, and second as the basis of the Phase 2 plan.

Phase 2 employed a triangulated approach to obtaining data. The data elicitation tools (i.e. the case study plan, see page 92) build a much more comprehensive picture of ESL programmes in three schools. I began each case study with an initial interview with a contact from each school to negotiate the best terms and procedures for my visits. The case study involved three visits to

each school, with each visit lasting approximately three days. During each visit I followed ESL students and ESL teachers, with more limited contact with other school personnel and parents. My contact with the participants involved, for example, English language proficiency testing, interviews, observation of classroom practice and recording existing class work and assessments. The data obtained from Phase 2 generate trends in best practice for a whole school approach to language support.

The data were collected with an overall aim of finding out what provision for language support was. Observation is a very complex issue, and while detailed background reading was conducted before designing my data collection plan I was guided primarily by the context of each of the three schools. I was not in a position to conduct detailed classroom analyses, nor to make demands for unlimited access at each of the schools. Wellington (2000) pointed out the obstacles to conducting research in an educational setting, and I noted myself how in order to gain any access at all I was required to be sensitive teachers' limited time and suddenly changing schedules and not to disturb teachers and students in a lesson setting, among others. In addition, the context of these Irish schools was unique in that up to 60 L1s may be present within one institution, and so to remain fair and unbiased towards all potential groups of ESL students I conducted my research sensitively using the English language rather than employing translated materials/interpreters.

The following two chapters present, analyse and interpret the data from Phase 1 and Phase 2.

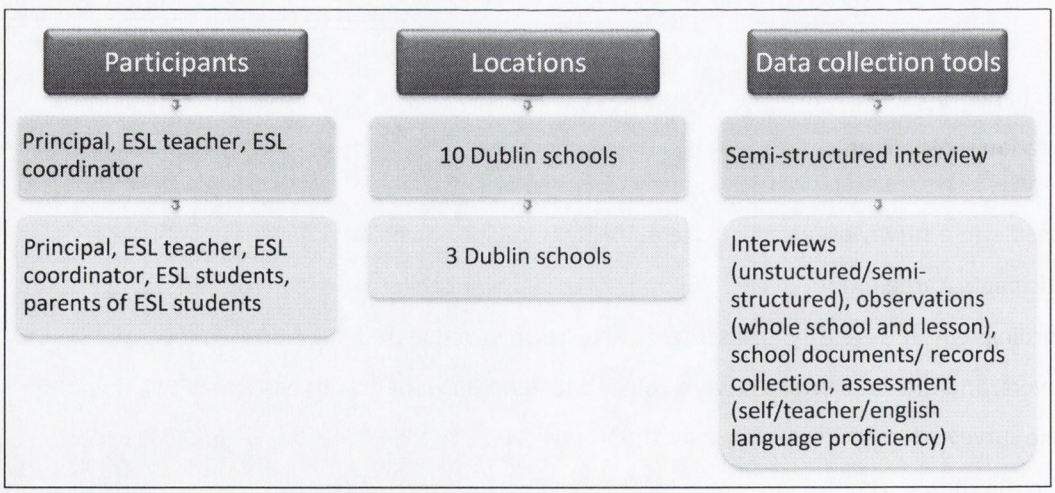

Figure 3-4 Summary of participants, locations and data collection tools

4 Phase 1 Survey Findings

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter I present data collected from the ten Dublin schools which participated in my survey. Section 4.1 presents data from each of the ten schools in order. Each sub-section of 4.1 deals with one school, first presenting background information,[20] then a brief description of the school, and a table of data collected by the survey (see following paragraph). After each table is a short prose summary of the school's language support programme.

The data from the semi-structured interviews is summarised in table form and the ideas expressed are founded on the participants' ideas and opinions (and are therefore not necessarily fact). The tables present the data under the following headings; ESL structure, ESL team and ESL policy.

The chapter closes with a summary of the main trends in the findings, arranged under the same headings as the tables ('ESL structure', 'ESL team' and 'ESL policy'), and a conclusion which draws together the findings in reference to the theoretical framework established in chapters 1 and 2.

[20] Some of the background information was provided by Murphy (2006).

4.1 School profiles

4.1.1 School 1

Students in total	**350**
ESL students	**157**
Students entitled to English language support	**not known**
Students receiving English Language support	**30**
School type	**VCC**
Co-educational/single sex	**co-educational**
Disadvantaged status[21]	**no**
Denomination	**inter-denominational**

Table 4-1 School 1 background information

School 1 is an international school, offering the Irish curriculum with an emphasis on modern European languages. The school charges a fee and is located in an affluent area of Dublin. It rates very high in the national ranking. The sizeable campus is welcoming and all staff share a large staffroom. There are around 30 teachers.

The school deals with higher than average numbers of students born outside of Ireland, but this does not necessarily mean they are typical ESL students; many of them have been educated privately in international schools in their country of origin or other countries where they have lived, and so are used to accessing their education through English. This school is unique in the survey due to its emphasis on foreign languages and its status as an international school.

The school has always provided some kind of language support programme because of the traditionally international student cohort. In more recent times, since the introduction of the ESL circular, the school was allocated specific ESL hours for the first time and created the role of one full-time ESL teacher. At present, coordination is provided by the learning support team. Mainstream teachers are accustomed to having ESL students in their classroom, and participation in mainstream subjects is considered to be part of the students' English language acquisition process.

[21] All based on Murphy (2006).

Participant	ESL structure	ESL team	ESL policy
Principal	• **Timetable**: Developed by the pastoral care team guidance team, the ESL teacher and head of Learning Support • **Resources**: School subsidises DES allocation • Average class size: 3-4. • Students receive 1-4 ESL periods per week depending on proficiency in English	• **Allocation of teachers**: Most ESL hours are provided by the school's full-time ESL teacher • **Teacher training**: Most of the staff have TEFL experience and support ESL students in the mainstream classroom	• DES circular: ESL programme was set up prior to issue • **School policies:** English policy deals with ESL requirements • English language and the Irish curriculum must come first • Integration into the mainstream is a top priority
ESL coordinator	• **Timetable**: Delegated to ESL teacher • **Allocation of resources**: Plans for one ESL classroom next year	• **Coordination**: By the Learning Support coordinator • **Teacher training**: Experience and a TEFL qualification are preferred when looking for an ESL teacher	• **DES circular**: Applying for funding from year to year makes planning the ESL programme very difficult • **School policies**: Coordinator and ESL teacher in the process of developing an ESL policy
ESL teacher	• **Timetable**: Negotiates with mainstream teachers which lessons students may be withdrawn from • Tries to avoid taking students out of same two mainstream classes in a row • Avoids exam subjects' practical lessons • **Resources**: classes take place in the careers library • ESL teacher purchased all materials • **Assessment**: ESL team uses a written	• **Coordination**: The ESL coordinator and ESL teacher work together in one office and so have regular contact • **Teacher's role:** Teaching English, assisting in social and academic integration • Support exam students • **Teacher training:** No qualification in teaching English L2, H.Dip in English • **Inside ESL classroom:** No use of English Language Proficiency Benchmarks or ELP • Linking ESL to the	• **DES circular**: not useful

	grammar-based assessment test • Progress is tracked with class tests and homework	mainstream is a key challenge, especially for the exam years	
Mainstream teacher	• **Linking to whole school**: informal communication takes place in staffroom	• **Inside the classroom**: Would like differentiated materials for use in the mainstream class-room which support ESL students	• **DES circular**: DES allocation should provide time for teachers to liaise with the ESL team

Table 4-2 School 1 data

The school principal was well versed in second language acquisition theory across the mainstream and insisted that the mainstream classroom was the best place to develop language skills. He delegated responsibility for the ESL programme to the learning support department, which had always coordinated language support. The school funded the majority of the language support programme from general school funds. However, the ESL teacher funds teaching materials herself. While there was no specific policy aimed at ESL, there were plans to develop one based on assessment, class content and mainstream needs of ESL students. The principal believed that the English department policy dealt with ESL. The general ethos is supportive of bilingualism, while stressing that the Irish curriculum is central for future integration of all students.

The school maintained small class size in English language support, at around three to four students. Students received between one to four periods per week, depending on their assessed needs; students with lower levels of proficiency were provided with extra support, and around exam time Junior Cert and Leaving Cert students were given extra support. Teaching materials were sourced from TEFL resources and lessons took place in a windowless office. The learning support coordinator and the one full-time ESL teacher planned the timetable and content of the lessons together. Students were assessed using a basic grammar test (although the school planned to use the Oxford Placement Test (Allen, 2004) from the next academic year). The ESL teacher provided all of the allocated ESL lessons. This teacher did not have a qualification in teaching English L2. However, most teachers at this school had experience and/or a qualification in teaching either TEFL or ESL.

There appeared to be some disparity between what the principal believed to underpin the language support classroom and how the ESL teacher viewed her role. The teacher tended towards a TEFL approach, although mainstream teachers did support the language development process in their classrooms.

4.1.2 School 2

Students in total	**504**
ESL students	**12**
Students entitled to English language support	**12**
Students receiving English Language support	**12**
School type	**vocational**
Co-educational/single sex	**co-educational**
Disadvantaged status	**disadvantaged**
Denomination	**interdenominational**

Table 4-3 School2 background information

School 2 is a large institution, located in a visbly disadvantaged area of Dublin. The school building is run-down, but the classrooms and staff quarters are bright and well maintained. The large staff appeared to maintain a supportive relationship with each other and with the principal. Motivation was high among the teachers despite the low national ranking of the school.

The number of ESL students was comparatively low. However, the unofficial ESL coordinator has ambitions to promote the school's language support programme to attract more ESL students to enrol.

Participant	ESL structure	ESL team	ESL policy
Principal	• **Timetable**: Organised by the vice-principal • Students are withdrawn from Irish • **Resources**: students receive 2 hours per week in small groups	• **Coordination**: one ESL teacher coordinates on an unofficial, part-time basis • **Teacher's role:** ESL teacher has most of his hours allocated to mainstream	• **School policies:** No official school policy due to small number of students
ESL teacher	• **Timetable**: ESL teacher's mainstream subject clashes with ESL periods • **Resources:** some ESL hours split between 2 teachers, confusing for beginner ESL students • There is no ESL room • **Linking to whole school:** due to inflexible timetable ESL students are withdrawn from subjects other than Irish • Isolation from mainstream staff • **Assessment**: OPT and IILT test	• **Coordination**: ESL teacher has one period per week for administration • **Teacher's role**: ESL teacher expressed an interest and was therefore given ESL teacher role • Suggests schools get together and share ideas • **Teacher training**: has a TEFL qualification • Suggests ESL training for whole school • **Inside ESL classroom**: The English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and the European Language Portfolio have not been used due to lack of time • The *Headway* series	• **DES circular:** simply a summary of what schools had developed already, without setting out any specific guidelines to follow • Planning the ESL programme is extremely difficult due to fluctuating numbers of ESL students from year to year
Mainstream teacher	• **Linking to whole school**: has little contact with ESL team	• **Coordination**: teacher would like to be involved • **Inside the classroom**: unhappy with progress made by ESL students	• **DES circular**: suggests more time for liaison between ESL and whole school

Table 4-4 School 2 data

Because the number of ESL students at this school was relatively low at the time of my visit, the ESL programme was not well established. However, this school highlighted how ESL students can be overlooked because they are not represented in large numbers at a school. For example, due to the small numbers the principal could not give priority in the timetable to ESL classes, and so the allocated hours were divided between two mainstream teachers (one main ESL teacher and unofficial coordinator, and one teacher who picked up the remaining ESL allocation). Because ESL lessons were arranged around the teachers' mainstream subjects, students were withdrawn from mainstream subject lessons other than Irish.

The main ESL teacher described low levels of support for ESL from the rest of the mainstream staff, who perceive it under the same umbrella as learning support. Links between ESL and mainstream staff were inadequate according to the teachers interviewed. The mainstream teacher argued that a platform to share content of both mainstream and ESL lessons would facilitate better communication. This teacher reported difficulties in the mainstream classroom in maintaining the balance between supporting the ESL students while dealing with the demands of other students in the class. The teacher also described how unprepared the ESL students were for state examinations and that the ESL programme did not bridge the disadvantage gap.

4.1.3 School 3

Students in total	**467**
ESL students	**33**
Students entitled to English language support	**not provided**
Students receiving English Language support	**not provided**
School type	**VSS**
Co-educational/single sex	**co-educational**
Disadvantaged status	**not given**
Denomination	**Catholic**

Table 4-5 School 3 background information

School 3 is located in a pleasant residential area in County Dublin. The school building is welcoming and the circa 30 staff share a large, well-resourced, friendly staff room. The ESL programme was coordinated by one full-time ESL teacher who was in the initial stages of collating suitable resources.

Participant	ESL structure	ESL team	ESL policy
Principal	• **Timetable**: principal tries to keep ESL teacher's timetable exclusively for ESL • **Resources**: tries to offer full ESL timetable if needed • Students withdrawn from Irish • After the 2 year cap, students do not receive any ESL support, against the principal's wishes	• **Allocation of teachers**: one full-time ESL teacher	• **DES circular**: wants to extend support after 2 years, but could not • Bureaucracy involved in applying for teachers has a negative impact on the school's capacity to retain ESL staff • **School policies:** school ethos is to be 'inclusive' and so ESL students are covered under the whole school policy
ESL teacher/ coordinator	• **Timetable**: If the full-time ESL teacher is teaching an ESL class, other ESL students are permitted to use the room for homework • Develops ESL timetable alone, using the already complete master timetable, then fits her ESL hours around Irish • Students banded according to year group • **Allocation of resources**: Average class size is 6 students, five times per week (10 times for beginners) • Classes took place behind the stage of gym until recently • **Linking to whole school**: difficult to find time • **Assessment**: Self-developed oral test and IILT test pack	• **Coordination**: teacher coordinates ESL unofficially. There are plans to offer this teacher a role of responsibility • In future will be given 3 periods for coordination • **Teacher training**: attends TII seminars • Researches teaching methodology and self funds teaching resources • **Inside ESL classroom**: no time to use ELP or the Benchmarks • Used IILT (2006) book to guide ESL programme • Teacher funds ESL materials	• **DES circular**: did not refer to circular when developing programme • **School policies**: Racial bullying was a major issue addressed recently • A policy is needed to improve parental involvement
Mainstream teacher	• **Linking to whole school:** No time to coordinate with ESL teacher	• **Inside the classroom:** one third of students in classroom are ESL students	• **DES circular:** Two years of language support not enough

Table 4-6 School 3 data

School 3 identified many problems with ESL provision and had invested a lot of time in needs analysis as a foundation for developing the programme in the future. The principal devoted one full-time teacher to ESL (who is also unofficial coordinator), on the grounds that the teacher must be available to work around the students' timetables and not the other way round. Students were also offered full withdrawal from mainstream subject lessons if the ESL teacher believed this was appropriate (in cases of absolute beginners). However, any students who had passed the two year limit were no longer offered language support even if they still required it. The principal lamented this fact and blames lack of resources. In general, the timetable remained flexible to allow for students arriving during the school year.

ESL classes took place until recently in a space behind the stage of the school gym/assembly hall shortly before my visit. This space was used to store broken tables and chairs, and often a PE class was happening at the same time as a language support lesson. However, a school extension with well furnished semi-permanent cabins has given the ESL teacher a new classroom with one PC and plans to link to the internet. The ESL teacher assessed each student (using her own collection of language learning materials) and used the results to track progress. Classes were banded according to year group.

The school had plans to upgrade the ESL teacher's role to a post of responsibility. This means that the teacher will officially be ESL coordinator, with non-contact periods to do administration and to communicate with mainstream teachers.

The principal and ESL teacher stressed the complications involved when ESL students have a learning difficulty, which may be difficult to diagnose. Another key challenge for the school was communicating with parents and translating important documents. All participants complained that the ESL programme did not prepare ESL students adequately for state exams.

4.1.4 School 4

Students in total	**303**
ESL students	**28**
Students entitled to English language support	**18**
Students receiving English Language support	**18**
School type	**VSS**
Co-educational/single sex	**girls' school**
Disadvantage' status	**disadvantaged**
Denomination	**Catholic**

Table 4-7 School 4 background information

School 4, while officially rated as disadvantaged, is located in a pleasant residential area in Dublin, close to the city centre. The school is positioned low in the national ranking. There were just under 30 teachers and one main ESL teacher, a pre-service student. The ESL programme was noticeably segregated from the other subject departments. At the time of my visit the principal was pessimistic about the future of the school's ESL programme.

Participant	ESL structure	ESL team	ESL policy
Principal	• **Timetable**: organised alongside the master timetable • Students withdrawn from Irish • **Resources**: 1-3 students per class, twice per week	• **Allocation of teachers**: students usually see only one ESL teacher • Four members of staff on the Learning Support team, their timetables are filled up with ESL, but hours mostly allocated to one pre-service ESL teacher • **Coordination**: limited coordination by Learning Support team	• **DES circular**: unable to provide language support to students who reach 2 year limit • teaching hours per week are not adequate
ESL teacher	• **Timetable**: beginners are given up to 14 classes per week • Difficult to incorporate students arriving mid-year • **Resources:** ESL lessons take place in the Learning Support room	• **Coordination**: timetabled by the Learning Resource coordinator • **Teacher training**: unqualified teacher who is pre-service[22], with TEFL experience • **Inside ESL classroom**: some students have one-to-one lessons • Benchmarks are used with some students, but not ELP • Teacher uses state exam papers for Junior Cert and Leaving Cert year students	• **DES circular**: unaware of DES circular
Mainstream teacher	• **Linking to whole school**: no time to coordinate	• **Inside the classroom**: focus on exam year students is an advantage	• **DES circular**: more time is needed for ESL and whole school liaison

Table 4-8 School 4 data

[22] 'Pre-service' is common terminology in Ireland for unqualified teacher (usually hoping to start a teacher training qualification).

One pre-service teacher taught over 90% of the ESL lessons at this school, with the remaining hours making up space on the learning support team's timetables. However, the principal confided that he would not be able to offer the ESL teacher a position next year due to the instability of ESL allocation. There was no official coordination; the learning support team simply consulted the master timetable and withdrew students when their group had Irish.

Students received lessons in small groups two to seven times per week, depending on level of proficiency (based on self-developed class tests) and the teacher based her lessons on mainstream subject textbooks and exam papers. The teacher relied on students to bring in work they needed help with, but found it difficult as each student had different mainstream teachers for any given subject and therefore different tasks which they needed to work on.

Integration was a problem at this school, with cultural as well as linguistic barriers leading to segregation. Both the ESL teacher and the mainstream teacher expressed concerns about developing a whole school approach and ESL programme from scratch, finding suitable materials and relating ESL to mainstream subjects. The mainstream teacher I interviewed was not satisfied with the progress made by ESL students, because of the tendency to leave language development to the ESL teacher rather than taking care of the non-national students from a whole school perspective. The teacher argued that much more mainstream subject based work should be provided on the ESL programme.

Rather than mainstream support, the principal would like to offer a Transition Year style programme for ESL students before they participate in the third year.

4.1.5 School 5

Students in total	**540**
ESL students	**not provided**
Students entitled to English language support	**not provided**
Students receiving English Language support	**not provided**
School type	**vocational**
Co-educational/single sex	**co-educational**
Disadvantaged status	**not given**
Denomination	**non-denominational**

Table 4-9 School 5 background information

School 5 is a welcoming and modern building with a warm atmosphere and friendly staffroom. There was an active student committee which displayed its news in the school reception, and a lot of evidence of extracurricular activities and staff/student involvement.

Shortly before the survey interview school 5 was instructed that they would be officially inspected, and therefore my visit for the survey interview was adapted to suit the sudden change in the school's schedule. Instead of semi-structured interviews, I observed the weekly ESL department meeting and took notes which gave me an idea of the structures set up by this school. While not as comprehensive as the semi-structured interview, observations of the meeting gave me an insight into the ESL programme in practice.

Participant	ESL structure	ESL team	ESL policy
ESL teacher	• **Timetable**: devised by coordinator and worked around students' timetables • **Assessment**: Every student assessed using school developed test and progress chart across all ESL teachers • **Resources**: 2 dedicated teaching rooms • Internet access had been requested • **Linking to whole school**: all staff are welcome to attend the weekly ESL meeting	• **Coordination**: ESL coordinator collects information about the students and files student profiles for use by school staff • One period per week is used for ESL staff meeting • **Teacher's role**: 6 members of staff involved in ESL • **Teacher training**: most ESL teachers have a qualification in teaching English aL2 • **Inside ESL classroom**: resources shared between all ESL teachers and lists (updated regularly) clearly displayed in ESL coordinator's files • Teachers fund their own materials	• **School policies**: ESL mission statement defines the assessment policy, progress chart of English language proficiency, teaching approach and the school's global goals in fostering an intercultural environment • The ESL team translated documents (notification of school trips, notification of holidays, permission requests, admissions policy etc), into as many of the L1s of ESL students' parents as possible (not stated where they found the translators). • The mission statement addressed how to involve parents in their child's education

Table 4-10 School 5 data

School 5 had a well developed ESL programme, which was visibly linked to the whole school. The six ESL teachers were also mainstream teachers who elected to be part of the ESL programme, and therefore they maintained links between the curriculum subject departments and ESL.

Characteristics of the programme which appeared to contribute to its success included the development of a policy/mission statement (which was available to all school staff so that they were aware of the role of the ESL department) and the weekly ESL department meeting, where the team discussed updates to their policy, concerns about individual students, shared resources and discussed relevant training. All staff knew the regular time and location of the ESL meeting and were welcome to either attend or pass on issues to the ESL coordinator. Assessment procedures and progress checks were uniform across the ESL team. The results were collated and added to students' profiles.

4.1.6 School 6

Students in total	**640**
ESL students	**45**
Students entitled to English language support	**not provided/known**
Students receiving English Language support	**45**
School type	**community**
Co-educational/single sex	**co-educational**
Disadvantaged status	**disadvantaged**
Denomination	**interdenominational**

Table 4-11 School 6 background information

School 6 began to consciously set up an ESL programme the year of my survey visit, with the creation of an ESL coordinator role. The ESL coordinator 'inherited' this system at the start of the year of my survey. While unable to make any major changes until the summer (when the new timetable would be organised) the coordinator was actively surveying the ESL programme currently in place, attending seminars and training sessions relevant to the area, and working with feeder primary schools to prepare for the ESL students arriving in the next academic year.

Most members of mainstream staff had nothing to do with ESL, were not aware of the existence of an ESL coordinator and appeared to have little interest in the area. There was a prevailing impression that the ESL classroom should improve general English skills, without necessarily addressing the mainstream curriculum.

Participant	ESL structure	ESL team	ESL policy
Principal	• **Timetable**: students withdrawn from Irish • **Resources**: difficult to manage resources due to unpredictability of numbers and arrival times of ESL students	• **Allocation of teachers**: experienced staff with gaps in their timetable • **Coordination**: divided between Learning Resources, the English department and Special Needs • **Inside ESL classroom**: Irish specific culture is barriers to access	• **DES circular**: 2 years ESL on a withdrawal basis is inadequate • Lack of recognition for initial English proficiency level •
ESL Coordinator	• **Timetable**: Students receive 2-3 lessons of ESL per week • **Assessment**: Testing procedure in process of being developed • **Resources:** Class size varies • Lessons take place in standard classrooms	• **Coordination**: plans to survey the incoming ESL students • **Teacher's role:** 5 members mainstream teachers with free periods provide ESL • **Teacher training**: most do not have a qualification in teaching English L2	• **School policies**: A first draft ESL policy has been written • DES circular: unhelpful
ESL and mainstream teacher	• **Linking ESL to whole school**: no time during the school day to liaise with mainstream teachers • **Assessment**: no specific ESL entrance/placement test, though students do sit an entrance test with the rest of the student body	• **Teacher training**: ESL teacher is a mainstream English teacher with no qualification for teaching English L2 • **Inside the classroom**: no time to develop materials • Since attending TII's teachers' meetings, the ESL teacher has begun to work with mainstream subject texts	• **DES circular**: unaware of DES policy and provision

Table 4-12 School 6 data

The principal and vice-principal's opinions about language support appeared to be based on misinformed theory (such as banning students' L1s at home and in the classroom). The vice-principal organised the timetable so that language support amounted to either learning support or to a supervision session for all students with an Irish exemption. The coordinator's survey asked about L1, home country, previous schooling, and teachers were asked to include a rudimentary evaluation of their English language proficiency with room to comment. The data collected were to form, in theory, the basis of an ESL policy and as a needs analysis for resources and materials. However, this was not happening at the time of my survey visit.

There was no uniform assessment procedure. There was no defined location or policy. Some language support allocation was used in the learning support department where teachers were unprepared to teach curriculum-based English as a Second Language. The ESL teacher I spoke to was self-motivated. He sought and attended training sessions and was beginning to implement a curriculum-based approach to ESL. He worked closely with the newly appointed ESL coordinator (who was given very little administration time for this new role, on top of his other roles as guidance counsellor and IT teacher). There were no visible links between ESL and the rest of the school.

Inside the classroom, due to the blurred boundaries between ESL and other students who were also withdrawn from Irish, teachers appeared to believe that they were left with no option other than to simply supervise a homework session. With the exception of two or three interested teachers, staff asked to cover these sessions simply monitored the ESL students (often alongside anyone else exempt from Irish), who were occupied with their homework or basic reading exercises while the teacher in charge completed other tasks, such as marking work from their mainstream subject.

4.1.7 School 7

Students in total	**293**
ESL students	**102**
Students entitled to English language support	**not given**
Students receiving English Language support	**more than allocation**
School type	**VSS**
Co-educational/single sex	**girl's school**
Disadvantaged status	**disadvantaged**
Denomination	**Catholic**

Table 4-13 School 7 background information

School 7 is classified as disadvantaged, and is located in a visibly underprivileged area of Dublin. It rates low in the national ranking.

The ESL programme was coordinated by one teacher, and there was a lack of communication between members of the ESL team, and between ESL and mainstream staff. The language support programme appeared to be relatively well established.

Participant	ESL structure	ESL team	ESL policy
Principal	• **Timetable**: unsure from year to year of the teacher allocation • 'Immersion' timetable for some students • **Resources**: the school takes resources from elsewhere to provide for students after two year limit • Groups of between 3-4 or 9-10 not unusual • **Links with whole school**: Mainstream staff complain that ESL students 'suddenly' turn up in their classroom	• **Allocation of teachers**: students usually see only one ESL teacher • Four members of staff, but hours mostly allocated to one pre-service ESL teacher • **Coordination**: there is one unofficial coordinator • **Teacher training:** most ESL teachers have a TEFL qualification	• **DES circular**: provision is unpredictable and makes planning impossible • Believes the 2 year cut off point is inadequate • Does not support students for Leaving Cert • **School policies**: ESL students covered under the whole school ethos as set out by the religious trusteeship behind the school
ESL coordinator	• **Timetable:** developed at start of school year by ESL coordinator • Beginners receive most of the language support allocation • Support for exam students is emphasised • Students are withdrawn from Irish and mainstream subjects • **Resources**: one ESL room • **Linking ESL to whole school**: Mainstream staff are consulted to some extent when developing ESL timetable • **Assessment**: Students are assessed with OPT, and results determine how	• **Coordination:** no official role of responsibility • 1-2 periods per week for administration • The team meet infrequently (both formally and informally) • Allocation of teachers: 4 ESL teachers • **Teacher training:** all selected due to previous TEFL qualification • **Inside the classroom:** use of Benchmarks had just started • Students could not relate to ELP so use was discontinued • Second-hand, mainstream textbooks used in ESL lessons	• **DES circular**: unaware of policy • **School policies**: no official ESL school policy; the coordinator sees the function of ESL as integrating students and enabling them to participate in the mainstream

	many hours they receive • OPT repeated to track progress		
ESL teacher	• **Timetable**: students banded according to year group • Linking to whole school: no time to liaise	• **Allocation of teachers**: selected after expressing interest in programme • **Coordination**: no time to meet other ESL team members • team communicate via a folder system (teachers record work done with their students) • **Teacher training**: has a TEFL qualification and an MA in intercultural studies • Inside ESL classroom: • had not used the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks, but supports use of the European Language Portfolio • develops own activities based on mainstream textbooks	• **DES circular**: more time should be allocated to linking ESL to the whole school • **School policies**: intercultural training should be provided on a whole school basis. • Policy should clarify whole school responsibility
Mainstream teacher	• **Timetable**: problems caused by the inconsistent ESL timetable, and the infrequent attendance of ESL students • **Linking to whole school**: being provided with a clear timetable for each child would increase the transparency ESL	• **Inside the classroom**: not satisfied with the progress made by ESL students in her classroom, due to the language barrier	• **DES circular**: regards the irregular distribution of ESL students across schools as problematic, leading to unfair pressure on certain schools as well as in her mainstream classroom

Table 4-14 School 7 data

While the ESL programme was established and regarded itself as being on the way to success, the principal added that evaluating and developing it further were impossible as plans for the following year could not be formed until language support allocation had been confirmed. The principal criticised the unpredictable nature of ESL and was fearful that allocation could be completely withdrawn from one moment to the next by the DES.

Due to the relatively large numbers of students, the programme offered support to students who were not officially entitled to ESL classes. Such students were pulled into existing ESL groups. Classes of between three and ten students took place in a standard classroom, and teachers based their lessons on exam work (for third and sixth year students), the ELP and mainstream subject textbooks. DES allocated teaching hours are not divided evenly between the students, and so typically beginners would receive 60-70% of the allocated teaching hours (based on initial assessment using Oxford Placement Test [Allen, 2004]), and as they make progress this percentage would decrease to 20-30%. In order to determine whether students were ready to participate in more mainstream lessons, ESL teachers used their time in the classroom to informally evaluate students' readiness.

Due to the high frequency of ESL lessons, students were withdrawn from the mainstream subjects more frequently than at other school I visited. The ESL coordinator tried to limit the amount of lessons a student missed in each subject. However, mainstream teachers complained that ESL students attended their lessons only infrequently and requested that they have access to the timetable so they can prepare for these absences.

The unofficial ESL coordinator and most team members were highly motivated and, relatively speaking, well qualified to offer language support. However, links with the rest of the school seemed minimal and the role of ESL within the school appeared to be misunderstood. The mainstream teacher and one ESL teacher viewed students as a 'problem'. The catholic religion dominates this school, both visually and in the curriculum.

4.1.8 School 8

Students in total	**450**
ESL students	**14**
Students entitled to English language support	**8**
Students receiving English Language support	**4-6**
School type	**vocational**
Co-educational/single sex	**girls' school**
Disadvantaged status	**disadvantaged**
Denomination	**Catholic**

Table 4-15 School 8 background information

School 8 is located in a disadvantaged area of Dublin and while the school has a low ESL student population, it has a high population of students from the Traveller community. Although low on the national ranking, the school has a good rate of progression to third level education.

The ESL programme was 'in progress'. There was one main ESL teacher, a pre-service teacher who taught all of her part-time hours in ESL. Approximately 40 members of the teaching staff were divided between two staffrooms, making communication difficult.

Participant	ESL structure	ESL team	ESL policy
Principal	• **Timetable**: developed by vice-principal • Students withdrawn from Irish • 2-4 students per class • **Resources**: funding for extra ESL classes taken from general school funds	• **Allocation of teachers**: one pre-service teacher and two Learning Support teachers • **Coordination**: no official coordinator	• **DES circular**: ESL immersion would be ideal • **School policies:** no policy has been developed
ESL teacher	• **Timetable:** 6 hours per week is the typical allocation per student • ESL group stays with the same teacher for all allocated hours • **Linking to whole school**: Uses unpaid hours to liaise • **Assessment**: TEFL textbook tests and the IILT tests are used	• **Coordination**: one part-time teacher takes most of the ESL classes • **Teacher training**: Self-funding an evening TEFL qualification • **Inside the classroom**: Infrequent use of ELP • TEFL textbooks and mainstream homework form the basis of class work • **Teacher's role:** Pastoral care is a huge part of the role	• **DES circular**: unaware of DES policy and provision
Mainstream teacher	• **Linking to whole school**: little contact due to time limitations	•	•

Table 4-16 School 8 data

The principal developed the ESL timetable with the vice-principal. ESL students were withdrawn from Irish. Procedures related to ESL appeared to be ad hoc and not based on a defined policy. The unpredictable nature of both the arrival of ESL students and of the capacity to recruit regular staff year to year meant that uniform procedures had not been developed, the principal argued.

There was no uniform welcome and assessment for ESL students. The principal claimed to assess students on an individual basis but didn't elaborate on which assessment tools were used. There were four first year students who received regular language support. However, I identified at least four more who had an entitlement but who were in learning support classes instead.

Teachers (ESL and learning support) were selected due to availability of space on their timetable, which means no mainstream subject staff taught on the programme. The bulk of the ESL hours were given to the part-time pre-service teacher, with any spare hours used to fill up the learning support timetable. The learning support team (two teachers) were motivated but unprepared to incorporate ESL provision into their learning support curriculum. There was no official time for ESL staff to liaise with mainstream staff, and so the part time teacher liaised on a voluntary basis in her own time. None of the teachers were trained in teaching English L2. The part-time teacher was self-funding an evening TEFL course.

In the classroom, ESL groups were small (four students) and took place in a small office/learning support room. The group of students received six periods per week. The part-time teacher used TEFL materials, the ELP and mainstream class work as the foundation of language support lessons. The students knew her well and were able to 'open up' in the ESL classroom, but the teacher was concerned that this gave the students a false sense of security, and that they would continue to have problems socialising and engaging in a learning dialogue in their mainstream lessons.

4.1.9 School 9

Students in total	**780**
ESL students	**130**
Students entitled to English language support	**32**
Students receiving English Language support	**50**
School type	**community school**
Co-educational/single sex	**co-educational**
Disadvantaged status	**disadvantaged**
Denomination	**interdenominational**

Table 4-17 School 9 background information

Exploratory visits to the school pointed towards several indicators which set this school apart from the other nine in the survey: open door policy displayed by all staff, eagerness of staff members to be interviewed or observed, inviting staff room with friendly atmosphere, and ESL policy and class listings displayed on staff notice board. The existence of a well resourced ESL room, accessible to ESL students even outside their official ESL lessons and provided a 'safe haven' for students when they had a free period, needed help with homework or had a general query. The ESL coordinator holds an M.Phil degree in Applied Linguistics and the organisation of the ESL programme was delegated and fully supported by the principal. The principal was keen to recruit staff who were interested, dedicated and who had relevant experience. The principal was also as flexible as possible regarding timetabling and worked closely with the ESL coordinator where possible.

Participant	ESL structure	ESL team	ESL policy
Principal	• **Timetable**: developed by ESL coordinator • Students withdrawn from Irish and other mainstream subjects • 6-8 students per class • **Resources**: funding for extra ESL classes (if required) taken from general school funds • Students not entitled to language support are placed in ESL classes with students who are entitled • ESL room available to students when they have a free class • **Linking to whole school**: ESL staff should maintain contact with the mainstream staff by retaining some mainstream hours	• **Allocation of teachers**: ESL coordinator teaches majority of her timetable as ESL • Principal requested ESL teachers who were interested and preferably taught a language as their mainstream subject • **Coordination**: post of responsibility for ESL coordinator	• **DES circular**: arrived after school had set up their programme • mainstream hours of staff involved on the ESL programme need to be covered • language support contracts unstable • **School policies:** Comprehensive policy developed by coordinator
ESL coordinator	• **Timetable:** 5 classes per week the typical allocation per student • Students without entitlement are pulled in to enrich existing classes • Highlights the complicated timetabling issue, and need for cooperation from principal • **Resources**: ESL coordinator's English classroom, adapted for use as ESL resource room. • **Linking to whole school**: informal, unpaid time • ESL notice board in staffroom • **Assessment**: students write an extended writing text for coordinator and she	• **Coordination**: teacher does receive periods for administration but uses many free periods for ESL coordination • ESL teachers meet informally to discuss students and issues • **Allocation of teachers:** 6-7 teachers involved, 3 take on the majority of the allocated hours • **Teacher training**: most ESL teachers have a TEFL qualification • **Inside the classroom**: Materials are developed by teachers, based	**School policies:** covers - Aims, Objectives, Factors to be taken into account, Timetabling, Grouping, Assessment, Methodology and Content, Homework, Liaison and Teacher Training

	holds a spoken interview for all new ESL students	on the curriculum • Use of ELP and Benchmarks infrequent	
ESL teacher	• **Linking to whole school**: an obstacle; teachers rely on students to alert them to mainstream curriculum needs • **Assessment**: Ongoing assessment occurs via regular testing and homework to track students' progress	• **Inside the classroom**: Multi-level, age appropriate ESL groups • Teachers often have to teach in rooms which are set up to promote learning Irish or other languages • **Teacher training**: IILT provided in-service training, which all members of staff found useful	• **DES circular**: critical of the lack of funding for more resources, such as additional teaching rooms • request more support and training specifically directed at ESL
Mainstream teacher	• **Linking to whole school:** informal chats with coordinator	• **Inside the classroom**: uses differentiated teaching	•

Table 4-18 School 9 data

The ESL timetable was developed at the same time as the school's master timetable, although the process was very complex because exact numbers of ESL students were not known and teaching allocation was unsure before term started. The coordinator requested that certain teachers who are suitable for the language support programme were 'blocked' against Irish classes and so were available to teach around the students' timetables. The timetable was then revised several times (sometimes on a weekly basis) until numbers 'settled' in December (although it was ongoing on a less regular basis throughout the entire school year) – a huge time investment. However, this flexibility was a strength of the programme which ensured ESL remained student-centred and catered for students arriving during the school year. Students were banded according to age group and where possible level of English proficiency.

Each new student was welcomed to the school personally by the ESL coordinator in her non-contract time, after being alerted to their arrival by the principal and/or tutor. At the start of the school year, all new ESL students were invited to participate in a reception programme where they were assessed using a free-writing exercise.

ESL teachers designed their own materials based on the curriculum to teach groups of around six students. The coordinator met frequently with staff from other subjects to find out if they had specific needs which could be addressed in language support classes. There was an ESL notice board in the staffroom with timetables for each year group, ESL policy and lists of ESL teachers.

There was one main language support classroom (the coordinator's mainstream English room), decorated with posters and photographs reflecting a diverse cultural identity, and well stocked with authentic texts, encyclopaedias, reference books, L1/English bilingual dictionaries, three reconditioned laptops connected to the internet and ESL students' work folders.

School 9's progressive ESL programme appeared to be attributable to four features: a supportive principal, ESL policy, ESL coordinator position, teacher expectations and expertise. Such features allowed a flexible and dedicated team to adapt the DES guidelines to the individual needs of the school and their students.

4.1.10 School 10

Students in total	**425**
ESL students	**53**
Students entitled to English language support	**not provided**
Students receiving English Language support	**53**
School type	**community**
Co-educational/single sex	**co-educational**
Disadvantaged status	**not stated**
Denomination	**not stated**

Table 4-19 School 10 background information

The neglected school building is set in a residential area in Dublin. The staffroom is unwelcoming, but staff members are friendly. ESL and learning support are regarded as one department.

Teachers interviewed said that there was a division between the few very motivated teachers and the majority of staff who were indifferent to language support, so the whole school approach to ESL was lacking coherence.

Participant	ESL structure	ESL team	ESL policy
Principal	• **Timetable**: ESL hours fund one full-time position, remaining hours are given to 3 teachers • Hours divided between the ESL students according to their need • Students withdrawn from Irish and religion • **Resources**: 1-2 classes per week	• **Coordination**: no official coordinator – the full-time ESL teacher and Learning Support team deal with coordination	• **DES circular**: Mid-year arrival of ESL students makes applying for funding difficult • **School policies**: No ESL policy – dealt with by Learning Support policy
ESL teacher	• **Timetable:** coordinates the timetable, with assistance from the Learning Support team, after mainstream subjects have been timetabled • Students taking Junior and Leaving Cert allocated more hours • **Resources**: language support room small but well resourced with a PC • **Linking to whole school**: Little time to communicate with other teachers • **Assessment**: IILT resource book	• **Coordination**: no official post of responsibility • **Teacher training**: no official ESL qualifications • Teachers mainly selected from Learning Support team • **Teacher's role:** Pastoral care is significant • **Inside the classroom**: ELP not considered suitable • Some initial use of Benchmarks • *Headway* TEFL textbooks and internet sources used for ESL materials • Mainstream exam materials used with 3rd and 6th year students	• **DES circular**: unaware of DES policy and provision
Mainstream teacher	• **Linking to whole school**: little contact due to time limitations	• **Inside the classroom**: feels unprepared for dealing with language needs of subject	•

Table 4-20 School 10 data

The principal developed the ESL timetable with the learning support team. He allocated one full-time member of staff to the needs of language support so that the timetable could be arranged around when the students are withdrawn from Irish and sometimes religion. Exam year students and beginners received extra classes. A strength of this school's programme was the employment of one teacher who maintained consistency for the students, and could develop skills to meet the needs of the programme. There was some uniformity in the welcome and assessment of ESL students.

Because the full-time ESL teacher not only taught a full timetable but also had to maintain and coordinate the programme, communication with other teachers was problematic. Furthermore, because language support was defined by the learning support policy, other teachers remained unaware of the role of ESL. The teacher had initiated use of 'Mainstream Teacher Feedback' forms from the IILT resource book (2007). The learning support team met weekly, so some ESL issues were communicated there.

There was a language support room, which was small but well resourced with a PC and posters related to ESL, students' work on display and welcome signs in many different languages. In the classroom there were about four students per ESL class. Materials came from a range of sources, including TEFL textbooks, online worksheets (some related to the curriculum) and mainstream subject exam based activities (for Junior Cert and Leaving Cert students). The teacher had also started to track students' progress using the Benchmarks (IILT, 2003a). The teacher stressed that pastoral care and students' personal difficulties with school often took up a huge part of each lesson, due to what she described as the extra obstacles which ESL students face in accessing education.

4.2 Discussion

Background information

The schools participating in the survey represent an almost equal distribution of the three school classifications: there are three in the Community and Comprehensive School category, three in the Vocational/Community Colleges sector and four Voluntary Secondary Schools.

The average student population of the ten schools is 470 (all numbers are rounded to the nearest whole number), with two schools of considerably higher student populations (640 and 780) and two schools of much smaller student populations (both 300). Seven of the schools were co-educational and three were single sex girls' schools. Determining total teaching staff totals was complicated, as numbers varied within each school according to whether one is asking for official DES allocation of teaching hours, actual teaching staff, permanent, part-time or full-time, Special Needs Assistants (SNA),[23] teachers in training and many more possible interpretations. Irrespective of the various interpretations, the survey recorded each principal's estimate of the numbers of staff. Taking these facts into consideration, 38 is the mean number of teaching staff.

60% of the schools were allocated 'disadvantaged' status according to Murphy (2006). Assigning a school this status involves assessment of a school's catchment area:

> This scheme was introduced in 1984 in disadvantaged areas and schools seeking disadvantaged status were assessed and prioritised as to need on the basis of socio-economic and educational indicators such as unemployment levels, housing, medical card holders and information on basic literacy and numeracy.
>
> DES, 2008

50% of the schools were on the north side of Dublin, 50% were on the south side.[24] Traditionally, the north side of Dublin is perceived as less affluent than the south. However, only two of the disadvantaged schools in the survey are in the north side, the other four disadvantaged schools are in areas of the south traditionally associated with poverty and lower social status (anonymity prevents from adding more details).

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[23] (DES, 2009b & 2010) Special education needs are met by DES by providing learning support/learning resource teachers, and Special Needs Assistants (SNA).

[24] I have not stated which schools are located on the south or north sides, to protect anonymity.

4.2.1 ESL policy

DES circular

Out of the ten schools involved in the survey, nine either specifically criticised DES policy as set out in the circular as being 'unhelpful' or did not use the guidelines stated to a great extent (or at all) when setting up their programmes, other than when applying for teaching allocation.

A major criticism was the haphazard allocation of DES-provided ESL teaching hours to teachers who may not be qualified or interested in the programme. A little under half of the schools employed teachers on their ESL programme simply to fill up free periods on the timetable, and only around half of the ESL teachers interviewed were to qualified to teach English L2 and/or were pre-service students. Due to the uncertain nature of DES policy – whereby staff allocation can change from year to year – schools find it difficult to attract suitable staff onto their ESL programme. The principals agreed that qualified teachers are reluctant to give their whole timetable over to ESL, or to sign on to a contract as ESL teacher at a school when there is no guarantee that their position will exist the following year. The complicated bureaucracy involved in applying for ESL teaching allocation and also for students who arrive during the school year, or students who fall outside the 2 year 'limit', is also difficult for schools.

School ESL policy

Two schools had developed an ESL programme policy, which covered issues such as aims, assessment, timetable, group size, classroom content and liaison with mainstream subject teachers. Three further schools were developing ESL programmes at the time of my interviews, and were therefore in the process of evaluating their present systems. In the five remaining schools, principals felt that the needs of ESL students were met by other policies already in place, such as the general school ethos or mission statement, or in the English department's policy.

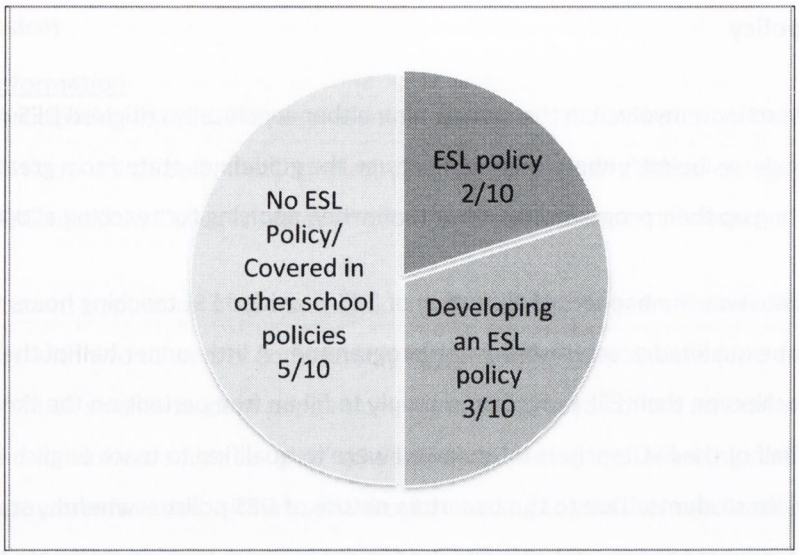

Figure 4-1 ESL policy in Phase 1 schools

Resources

Resources involve the staff, room space and financial means made available for the running of an ESL programme. With so many variables in mind, the average number of hours a typical student is provided with per week was simply impossible to ascertain; many schools did not know, or the number changed throughout the school term. In most cases, students received ESL support when their teaching/tutor group was timetabled for Irish. In one school, all students exempt from Irish were placed in an ESL lesson together (this includes Irish-born, English L1 students exempt from Irish). Irish as a mainstream subject is usually allocated four to five teaching sessions per week. A rudimentary calculation gives the average of three ESL class periods per week (figure arrived at by using the numbers provided by eight of the school principals).

Three schools took the students' level of proficiency in English into account, allocating more frequent ESL hours to those students with lower proficiency and placing students with higher proficiency levels in a higher percentage of mainstream subject lessons.

One-to-one classes were not favoured by most participants, and motivation for having larger ESL groups includes maintaining the dynamic of the mainstream classroom to aid integration, facilitating peer learning and avoiding the high stress factor of one-to-one teaching (for both teacher and learner). Again, a rudimentary calculation using the approximate figures from the data suggests that four is the average class size, though this figure varies a great deal.

Approximately one third of ESL classes in the survey took place in a specially allocated ESL/learning support classroom, a third in normal classrooms and a third in rooms not normally

used for teaching due to their small size or location (for example, behind a screen in the sport hall). Two schools allocated newly-built temporary structures to the ESL programme which, while separate from the mainstream subject teaching rooms, did provide a new, bright teaching environment dedicated to ESL which teachers and students could decorate with ESL appropriate posters and class work. One school assigned their ESL coordinator's tutor room as the ESL homeroom, keeping all of the resources and copies of the students' work there, as well as offering an 'open-door policy' where ESL students could come in at any time to do their homework or read from the small ESL library even if mainstream/ESL lessons were going on.

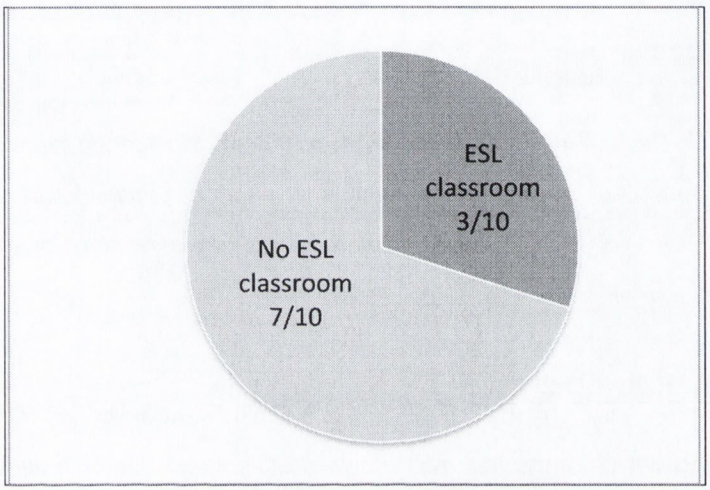

Figure 4-2 ESL classroom in Phase 1 schools

Many ESL teachers described the use of mainstream subject rooms as problematic because of the displays of subject appropriate visuals, which may include teaching aids for other languages. Apart from being distracting to the ESL teacher's present lesson goals, teachers often felt that this emphasised the inferior status (whether perceived or actual) of ESL. In schools I often saw ESL teachers carrying supplies of ESL materials around with them while rushing from classroom to classroom, and taking time in order to 'set up' the planned lesson.

Materials were often sourced from other school departments (for example used subject textbooks), or the ESL set-up grant was used to fund, for example, a set of *Headway* books or other TEFL materials, which most teachers felt did not meet the needs of the ESL classroom. Most ESL teachers funded all or some of their own materials (see Figure 4.3 below).

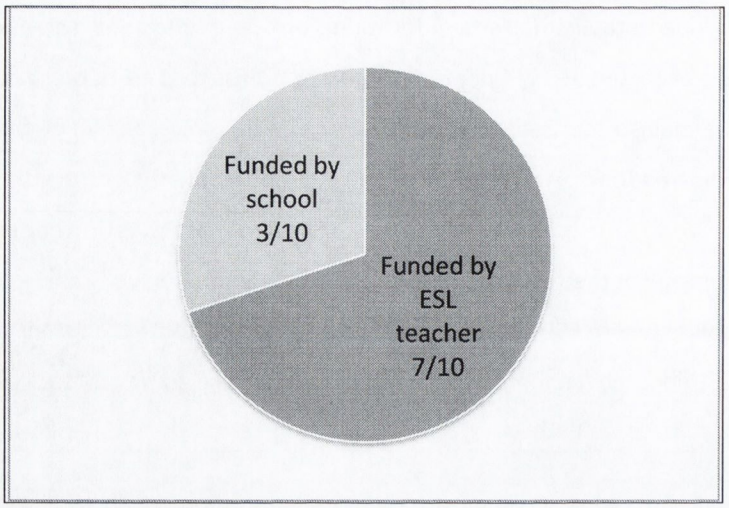

Figure 4-3 ESL materials funding in Phase 1 Schools

Wherever possible, the majority of the schools attempted to provide the same ESL teacher for each ESL group. Two schools gave students many more periods per week than they were entitled to, which meant that a group of ESL students were taught by two or more language support teachers during the week.

Linking ESL to the whole school

ESL was often not recognised by the school staff as a department or service within the school; mainstream subject departments were not informed or kept up to date on the language support programme, and frequently mainstream staff were not aware that there was an ESL coordinator or ESL teacher. Many teachers were not aware that their own subject should be covered by the ESL programme. There was a perception that ESL meant one of two things; either the provision of general English language skills, or extra support for the English mainstream curriculum. There was a marked division between the ESL team and mainstream staff in many schools.

Three of the survey schools were noticeably successful at communicating the function of the ESL programme, employing a combination of some or all of the following strategies:

- ESL team meeting once a week, at a time when all staff know that the ESL teachers will be available to discuss the programme and individual students
- A 'suggestion box' for staff to make enquiries and suggestions to the ESL staff
- An ESL section on the staff room notice board, listing ESL students, groups and staff members
- ESL coordinator being assigned non-contact periods for administration and availability to mainstream staff
- Use of IILT's mainstream teacher feedback form (IILT 2007: 27)

Assessment of English proficiency

Of the ten survey schools, three employed the Oxford Placement Test (OPT – Allen, 2004), which targets adult learners in a TEFL rather than ESL context (Allan, 2008). The employment of the test was usually diagnostic, as results were used to determine suitable materials for use in class rather

than to band the students according to proficiency levels, as this simply was not possible in most cases.

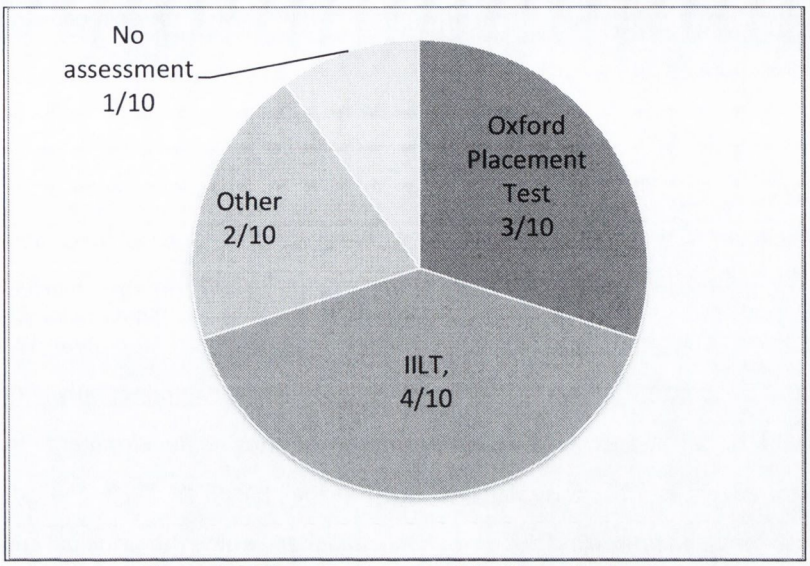

Figure 4-4 ESL assessment tools in Phase 1 schools

Many ESL teachers felt unqualified to construct an ESL course and so relied on the OPT to provide some foundation for areas of grammar which the students needed help with. Several of the schools used the *Headway* series (published by OUP, several authors and editions), and adapted the progress tests from the teachers' books to give initial, formative and summative assessment.

ESL students

The unpredictability of ESL student numbers, both before and during the school year, was highlighted by the participants as a major obstacle when setting up their ESL programmes. Referred to again and again throughout these findings, participants revealed that the students often move around a lot and end up living far away from their school, or move schools due to their temporary living situations. In addition, these students may live in conditions which are unsatisfactory concerning home study, support for homework and adequate sleep/dietary needs. The bureaucratic process of applying for help for such students meant that either existing resources were stretched to accommodate their needs, or that the students were simply mainstreamed without initial support.

4.2.2 ESL structure

This section deals with statistics relating to the composition of the schools with reference to ESL students and the schools' organisation of the ESL programme.

ESL students

The percentage of ESL students in the survey schools varied to a great extent, from 2% to 45%.[25] The average for the survey schools is 15%. As migrants have traditionally tended to settle in the larger cities, ESL students enrolled in Irish post-primary schools are not expected to be spread equally over Ireland.

Timetable

The development of the ESL timetable within the schools' master timetable was a complex and non-uniform feature of the survey schools. The survey schools delegated this responsibility to various individuals/departments within their school: the pastoral care team, learning support team, the vice-principal, the sole ESL teacher, or the ESL coordinator. The majority of schools developed their ESL programme *after* the master timetable was compiled; only in one school did the ESL coordinator have access to the master timetable during its development. In this case, the ESL coordinator gave a list of requirements to the principal, based on ESL intake estimates and existing ESL students, and detailing the demand for teachers which the principal could keep in mind when compiling the master timetable. With some compromise, the timetables were then developed together. More typical of the survey was a system where ESL hours were slotted in against staff members' free periods, often clashing with mainstream subjects which the ESL students could have participated in. Even when a satisfactory ESL timetable was arranged, a large degree of flexibility was needed to cope with the fluctuations in ESL demand. For many of the schools, due to their structures, such flexibility was not implemented. All the schools participating in my research banded students according to their age group rather than their proficiency level in English.

[25] The figure of 45% is for an international school in Dublin, which is therefore expected to have a high intake of students not born in Ireland. Furthermore, many of these students had been previously educated in English speaking educational settings.

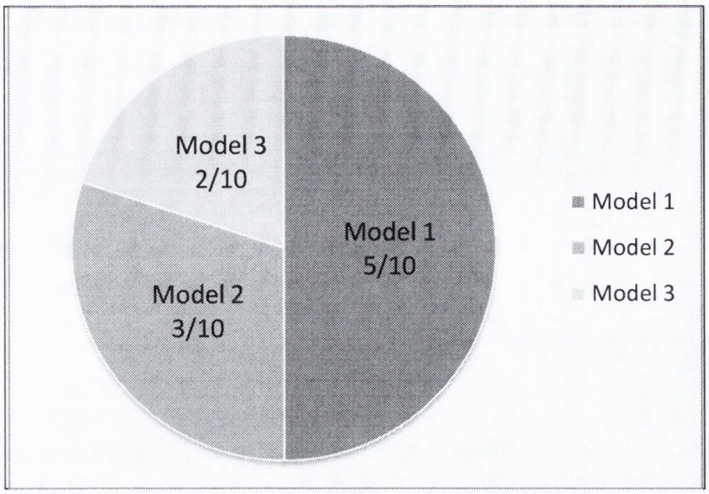

Figure 4-5 ESL model types in Phase 1 schools

Three models of English language support in schools emerge from the survey data (Figure 4-5), which parallel Schellekens' (2007) three models for English language support common in further education institutions in the UK:

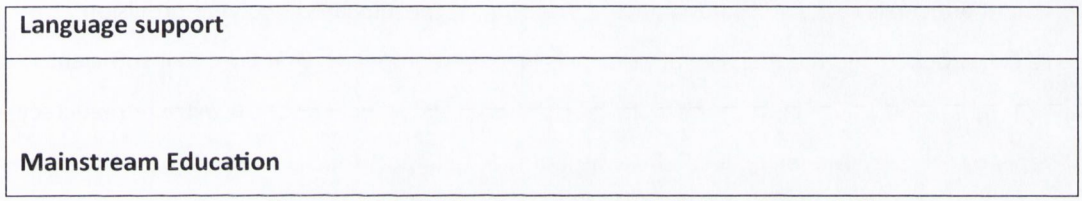

Figure 4-6 Model 1 (adapted from Schellekens, 2007: 180)

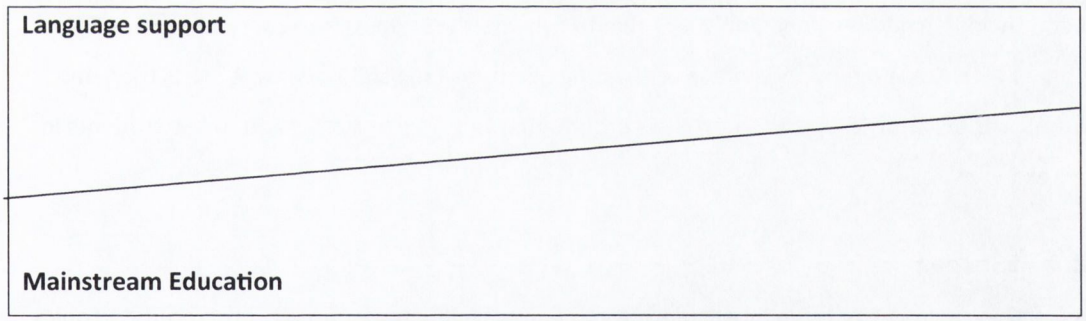

Figure 4-7 Model 2 (adapted from Schellekens, 2007: 180)

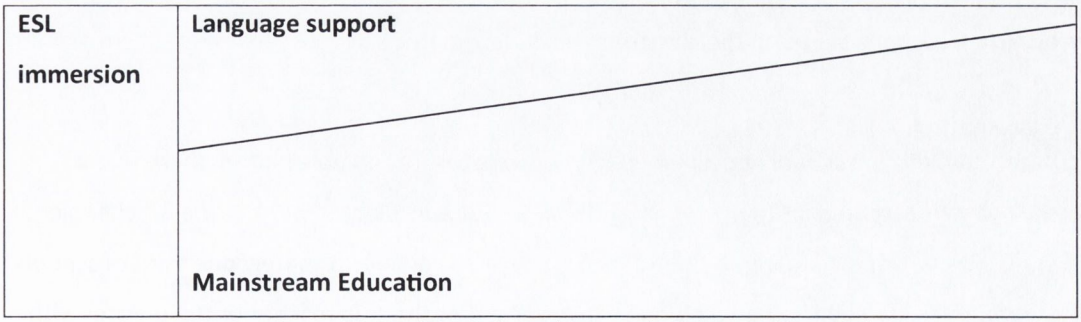

Figure 4-8 Model 3 (adapted from Schellekens, 2007: 181)

Schellekens observes that Model 3 is the most successful in facilitating entry into the mainstream classroom, which is the primary goal of ESL in the Irish post-primary context. This claim is also implied by IILT's model (see below):

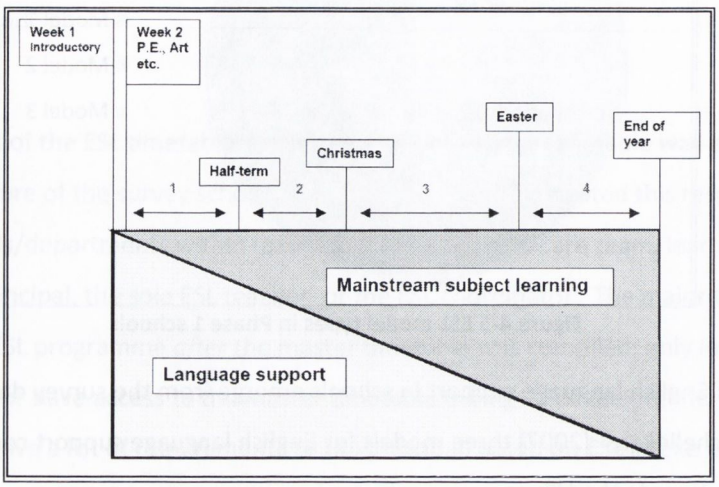

Figure 4-9 IILT model for language support (IILT, 2007: 31)

Two school principals revealed that many students outside the allocated two year provision receive ESL support, and the majority of principals highlighted the two year limit as insufficient. While this guideline was becoming more flexible, the principals highlighted the extra bureaucracy that applying for extra hours and justifying continuing ESL support for students.

Examinations

Most principals said that they didn't feel able to provide the support necessary to provide ESL students with the same opportunities for passing exams as English L1 speakers. Less than one third of schools interviewed adapted their programme to give extra provision to ESL students in their exam years.

4.2.3 ESL team

This section reviews the team involved in carrying out the language support programme. Topics covered are coordination of ESL, teaching staff involved, training the ESL team, and how the team perform their responsibilities in the classroom (including materials).

ESL coordination

Establishing whether a school had a named ESL coordinator was complex; often there was a member of staff carrying out the responsibilities of an ESL coordinator without the official role and status. However, according to the principals interviewed, approximately one third of schools' ESL programmes are coordinated by the ESL teacher (either the sole teacher or the teacher with the most language support hours), just over one third by an especially assigned ESL coordinator. Two schools assigned a team made up of, for example, learning support and head of English

among other members of staff, and one school had nobody assigned to the role (see Figure 4-10 below):

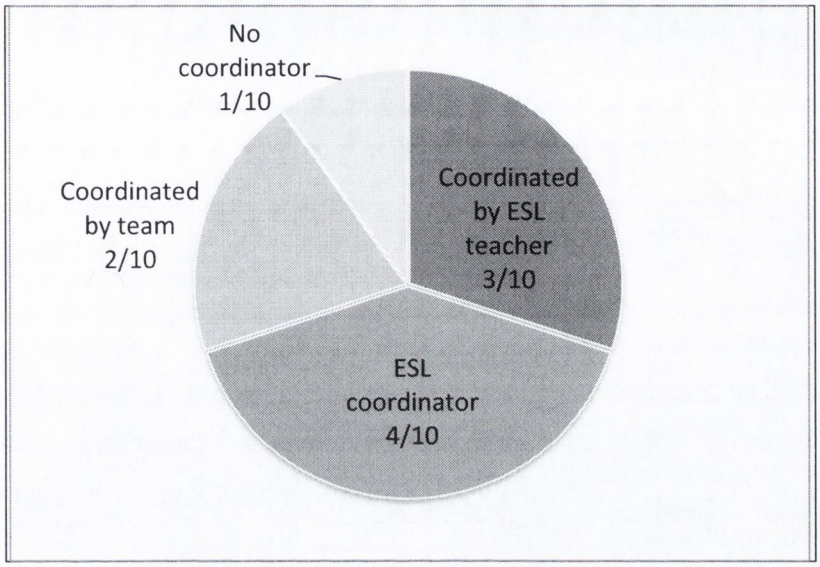

Figure 4-10 ESL coordination in Phase 1 schools

Of the schools with a clearly defined ESL coordinator, the functions carried out by this person covered all or a combination of the following:

- Timetable
- Initial assessment
- Development of a specific ESL policy
- Pastoral care
- Creation of a syllabus and directing the teachers' use of materials
- Paperwork related to ESL students
- Creation of ESL after school activities

Teachers

Most principals exercised a policy, whether intentionally or not, of employing the school's mainstream English teachers as ESL staff. Several principals exercised a policy of allocating ESL hours to teachers without the required number of hours which make up a full-time teaching contract, to new staff members or substitute teachers/pre-service teachers. Few schools specifically employed a teacher because of qualifications and/or interest in the area of teaching English L2. One school principal underscored the value of asking the mainstream foreign language teachers to undertake ESL hours, transferring their language teaching skills to the ESL context. 50% of teachers interviewed had a qualification in teaching English L2. One principal overtly requested that existing staff express an interest in teaching on the ESL programme if they wanted to participate, and as a result the team was highly motivated.

The majority of the teachers interviewed had participated in an in-service seminar provided by IILT and found it very useful but requested further training. Teachers and principals stressed that support was inadequate regarding teacher training in general.

ESL classroom

For the majority of ESL teachers interviewed, the purpose of the language support programme was to support the students' grammar development. Many wanted to provide mainstream subject-related support but felt unable to, either due to lack of communication with the mainstream teachers, lack of appropriate materials, lack of training or uncertainty as to whether that was what they were 'supposed' to be doing.

Few teachers addressed the mainstream subjects using authentic texts. Teaching a group of students with varying levels of English language proficiency was a challenge; especially as many of the teachers employed on ESL programmes had little background in L2 teaching anyway.

4.3 Conclusion

Language support in Ireland is characterised by such misunderstanding which has led to haphazard allocation of teaching hours meant for language support in general, often underpinned by a lack of school policy; only two of my survey schools had developed and promoted an ESL policy. The two schools with a policy appeared to benefit from relatively established and organised language support programmes; the case study phase reported in Chapter 5 examines the effect of having a policy in more detail. The majority of the survey schools were offering unsystematic language support which can lead to an overall compensatory education which may oppose ESL students' equal education rights (Bruner, 1996; Little & Lazenby Simpson, 2009). Without the foundation of a policy, on a par with other subjects and departments within a school, it seems attempts to meet the needs of ESL students fall at the first fence.

While within the schools their own policies define and are defined by their ethos, DES circulars offer external guidance and information on resources (Nowlan 2008: 260; Lyons & Little, 2009). School principals are expected to implement external guidelines into practices within the school that all teachers who have contact with ESL students (therefore all teachers?) can draw upon in the classroom. Perhaps simply the knowledge that language support is funded, what the school's policy is and that its role is to support mainstream access would suffice. As well as a defined policy, the role of an ESL coordinator increases the status of a school's language support programme and that the majority of the survey schools had not developed such a role is symptomatic of lack of commitment to ESL students. The framework proposed at the end of

Chapter 2 (page 75) is drawn from research which links successful language support provision to strong leadership.

The perceived status of language support programmes (and of ESL students) fostered by a school is evident in practice; in most of the schools timetables were organised at the convenience of teachers and other subjects, rather than organising a schedule which is best for the student. Language support programmes should integrate students into the mainstream as quickly as is beneficial for students (IILT, 2007: 31). However, most of the schools employed models which were inflexible and unchanging over the school year, and kept students from the mainstream classroom unnecessarily.

Class size varied, but most schools were sensitive to the fact that ESL should imitate the larger group setting of the mainstream – a practice which could potentially benefit students in terms of offering opportunity for peer collaboration, for example. However, descriptions about what happens inside the classroom showed such collaboration to be rare. The perceived status of ESL is also evident in the rooms assigned to the programme; the majority of schools didn't have a set ESL classroom.

While the DES fund language support in schools, the funding is often allocated to other departments in the schools and not used for language support. The participants were, for obvious reasons, reluctant to elaborate.

Every child has the right to education and in this context access to mainstream learning is paramount, so the lack of communication between ESL staff and mainstream subject teachers is a significant concern. The survey participants described how such communication was rare and often in the teacher's own time (lunch breaks, for example), which meant that language support teachers did not have the necessary information needed to use their own school's mainstream subject themes as the basis for ESL lessons.

The DES provision appears to favour a 'one-size fits-all' approach, especially for students who still require help beyond the 2 year 'limit'. Most of the survey schools also appeared to favour a 'one-size-fits-all' approach in designing their programmes, allowing for little flexibility on how allocation is shared among students according to need and allowing for few changes to be made throughout the school year. Such flexibility *is* possible in practice and is investigated in the case study phase.

There are three significant findings which emerge from the survey. One is that the status of language support appears to be undermined by structures and practice, and that these structures and practices go unquestioned. Furthermore, many language support teachers are not qualified to teach any language as an L2, and many teachers were not qualified to teach at all, which is suggestive of the low status of language support in many schools.

The second significant finding to emerge is the separation between language learning and mainstream content knowledge learning, contrary to theories that the two are inseparable (Barnes, 1976: 14). This is evident both in the lack of communication between ESL and mainstream teachers, and in the TEFL based approaches in the language support classroom. Enabling ESL students to learn means removing the obstacles to mainstream access (Devine, 2005; Nowlan, 2008; Lyons & Little, 2009) and structures within the survey schools appeared to be driving language support further away from mainstream learning.

Flexibility (or lack of it) is the third significant finding. The inflexibility appears in three strands of the findings; in use of allocation, in accommodating ESL students who arrive during the school year or who need extended language support, and in an inflexible pedagogy which doesn't stretch to the kind of student-centred approaches which draw on ESL students' linguistic and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1997).

The main aims of the survey were twofold:

- To describe the ESL programmes of 10 Dublin post-primary schools, addressing the various interpretations of the DES guidelines
- To generate recommendations for further areas of study, which will establish the foundation for Phase 2 of the research

My findings are broad; they represent only the first, shorter phase of my empirical research and are somewhat (and necessarily) superficial. The case study phase examines the issues in more detail. Schools 6, 8 and 9 indicated a willingness to participate in the case study phase and the findings are elaborated in the following chapter.

5 Phase 2 Case Study Findings

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the case study data from the three schools which participated in my research beyond Phase 1. After an introduction, which sets out background information about the participating schools, the data collection period and the structure of the chapter, I move on to present, describe and analyse the data collected at each school.

The purpose of the case studies was to establish a relationship between how the whole school constructs provision for ESL students, and these students' success in the school setting (which may include the following factors, among others: increase in English language proficiency, performance in the mainstream classroom, using L1 as a resource, parental involvement, confidence, and participation in extracurricular activities). I refer to the framework set out in Chapter 2 (page 75) in my analyses.

English language support is a linchpin in any Irish school's approach to provision for migrant students and was the starting point of each case study. From there I drew in relevant elements of the whole school environment which contributed to its success (or not) in providing education to ESL students. The objective of language support at post-primary level is to open the door to mainstream subject learning so that students' fundamental right to education is realised, while developing their English language proficiency to a level which in turn enables these students to access education. In previous chapters I outlined the significance of a whole school approach to language support, identifying five factors which influence a school's capacity to provide for ESL students: leadership and ethos, flexibility, curriculum, teachers and pedagogy. I refer back to the main research question of this thesis, which asks what the characteristics of effective ESL educational provision are in the Irish post-primary context; the case studies explore this question and relate the findings to the five headings. The case studies involved:

- describing the whole school approach and procedures which may impact on the ESL students' educational opportunities
- observing how the curriculum is approached and adapted at each school
- recording classroom methodology in the three schools as indications of prevalent approaches across the post-primary sector
- evaluating the effectiveness of the three schools' ESL programmes

I carried out case studies in three schools, which have been given pseudonyms to protect anonymity. The following table provides summary descriptions:[26]

Name	Total number of students	Total number of migrant students	Total number of students in Language Support Programme
Parkend School	640	50	Not known
Linthorpe School	450	20	4
Southbank School	780	130	80

Table 5-1 Case study schools

Parkend School (School 6, see page 112) is a large co-educational school on the outskirts of Dublin, near an industrial zone. The model illustrated at Parkend was that of a large school with a relatively high percentage of students from migrant backgrounds, limited and disorganised language support, low teacher expectations and unmotivated ESL staff.

Linthorpe School is a girl's school located in a visibly disadvantaged area of Dublin. This school had relatively low numbers of ESL students in receipt of language support and an indiscriminately applied, uncoordinated language support programme which was accorded low status. The school was also characterised by low teacher expectations, instances of racial bullying, inconsistent leadership, and unqualified ESL teaching staff. The survey referred to this school as School 8 (page 120).

Southbank School comprises a large total student population with a relatively high presence of students from migrant backgrounds. The model Southbank demonstrated was a well developed language support programme with a motivated ESL coordinator and ESL teaching team. My relationship with Southbank School was somewhat closer than with the other two schools: as a result of my research during Phase 1 the school invited me onto their teaching team. I taught at the school at least one day per week for the duration of the school year 2008-2009 and I was able to gain considerably more access to students, teachers and classrooms. Southbank School's desire to add a researcher in the area of English language support to their teaching team reflected its dedication and openness to developing provision for migrant students. As a result of my position at the school, the research visits took place during extended periods throughout the school year, and not during much briefer visits as with the other two schools. The survey referred to this school as School 9 (page 123).

[26] Numbers are approximate to protect the identity of the schools.

The following table details the procedure of the case study. Each school is different, and so there was much variance regarding level of access permitted and availability of records.

School	Details of case study tools used for each visit
Parkend School	**Visit 1 (7– 10 October 2008):** classroom and school observation, assessment of ESL students using Post-Primary Kit (IILT, 2009), formal interview with 5 staff members, informal interviews with many staff members
	Visit 2 (12– 16 January 2009): collection of notes and information on the ESL programme and ESL students, school observations, informal interviews with the ESL coordinator and an in-depth interview with the vice-principal
	Visit 3 (30 March – 3 April 2009): reapplication of the assessment of the ESL students (IILT, 2009)
Linthorpe School	**Visit 1: (30 September – 3 October 2008)** student self-assessment questionnaires, classroom and school observation, student assessment (IILT, 2009[27]), formal interview with 3 staff members, informal interviews with many staff members, ESL student feedback from 5 mainstream staff, ESL student assessment by ESL teacher, ESL teacher assessment of materials used
	Visit 2 (19 – 23 January2009): student self-assessment questionnaires, classroom and school observation, student assessment (IILT, 2009), collection of school records on ESL students
	Visit 3 (23 – 27 March 2009): student self-assessment questionnaires, classroom and school observation, student assessment (IILT, 2009)
Southbank School	**Visit 1 (September – December 2008):** learner English proficiency self-assessment questionnaires, teacher assessment questionnaires, classroom and school observation, assessment of ESL students (IILT, 2009), more than 15 members of staff gave informal feedback, six were interviewed according to the interview framework of open, formal interviews on the workings of the ESL programme in their school, informal chats with school principal
	Visit 2 (February - March 2009): classroom and school observation frameworks
	Visit 3 (May – September 2009): classroom and school observation and assessment of ESL students using IILT text pack. This visit extended to the beginning of the 2009-2010 school year

Table 5-2 Case study dates and procedure

The case study data are presented according to the following structure:

- Participants
- Narrative of whole school and ESL approaches
- Classroom observations
- ESL student assessments
- ESL student observations
- Teacher interviews
- Overview

[27] During the first visits, a pilot version of the assessment kit was used in all three schools.

5.1 Participants

I determined a protocol of contact with the participants via an interview at the start of the school year (with either the school principal or ESL coordinator) and I presented a proposal for the schedule of each visit. Each school made suggestions for procedures which would facilitate my research goals without overt interruption to the teachers and students.

Please note that all names of participants have been changed and, where I felt necessary, other details which are not significant to my findings in order to protect anonymity. Students were given culturally appropriate pseudonyms.

The following tables summarise information on the migrant student population from each of the schools and the staff who formed the ESL teaching teams at each school. Again, because each school provided such varying information, the table headings for each the school differ.

5.1.1 Students

5.1.1.1 Parkend School

Name	Nationality	L1	Years of learning English	LOR	English Proficiency [28]	Stream [29]	Year group	Number of ESL classes per week
Jumoke Abi	Nigeria	Yoruba	11	7	6	H	2	**3**
Kehind Aluk	Nigeria	Yoruba	12	5	6	H	6	**3**
Foluke Ana	Nigeria	English	12	3	6	H	4	**3**
Fayola Anyaoku	Nigeria	Yoruba	15	4	5	H	4	**3**
Ifama Anyaoku	Nigeria	Yoruba	9	4	4	F/O	2	**3 (1 to 1)**
Jero Bandel	Nigeria	Yoruba	13	1.5	6	H	2	**3**
Morta Kairyt	Lithuania	Lithuanian	9	3	6	H	6	**3**
Eugen Cazacul	Romanian	Romanian			2	SEN	1	**2 (1 to 1)**
Danukas Paulauskas	Lithuania	Lithuanian	8.5	3.6	4	H	4	**3**
Donatas	Lithuania	Lithuanian	8	3	?	H	3	**3**
Madu Ekah	Nigeria	English	7	1	5	O	6	**3**
Zuna Euba	Nigeria	English	15	1	?	O	3	**3**
Oni Euba	Nigeria	English	15	1	?	O	3	**3**
Iggi Mekon	Eritrea	Tigranian	10	8	4	O	5	**2**
Ianvara Giorgadze	Georgia	Georgian	4	4	?	O	3	**3**
Kal Hewra	Kurdistan	Kurdish	8	8	4	F/O	4	**3**
Aco Kuslev	Macedonia	Albanian	2.5	3	6	H	2	**3**
Andon Kuslev	Macedonia	Albanian	2.5	3	6	H	2	**3**
Dima Laban	Belarus	Russian	6	2	5	F/O	4	**3**
Fola Michi	Nigeria	English	15	8	4	O	5	**2**
Klym Matey	Ukraine	Ukrainian	7	4	6	O	4	**3**
Ivas Matey	Ukraine	Russian	3	3	2	H	1	**3**
Taiw Mensa	Nigeria	English	12	6	5	SEN	4	**3**
Tobi Mensa	Nigeria	Lingala	14	5.5	6	F/O	2	**5**
Haruna Osei	Nigeria	English	6	1	5	F/O	5	**2**
Weke Osei	Nigeria	English	12	1	5	SEN	4	**3**
Pamela	Lithuania	Lithuanian	3	2.5	3	H	3	**3**
Jem Paras	Philippines	Pilipino	13	4.5	6	SEN	5	**2**
Dolin Palak	Poland	Polish	10	3	6	O	6	**3**
Voyt Pawla	Poland	Polish	6	2.5	3	O	3	**3**
Ion Satine	Latvia	Russian	5	5	3	H	3	**3**
Afina Turov	Kazakhstan	Russian	6	6	6	SEN	4	**3**
Kofrny Zumi	Lithuania	Lithuanian	3	3.5	6	H	2	**3**

Table 5-3 Parkend School student profile

[28] According to teacher assessment taken prior to my case study and collected by the ESL coordinator. The scale is a rudimentary one which the school invented and provided descriptors for: 1-6, 1 = beginner, 6 = native.

[29] H = Higher level stream, O = Ordinary level stream, F/O = Foundation level or Ordinary-Level stream, SEN = Special Educational Needs/learning support stream.

5.1.1.2 Linthorpe School Students

Name	Age	Nationality	L1	AOR[30]	LOR[31]	Year group	Time in ESL programme
Elizabeth Adamson	15	Nigerian	Yoruba	5	10	3	1 year in primary school
Charlotte Gold	15	Philipino	Dutch	14	1	3	None
Abebi Fashanu	13	Nigerian	Yoruba	7	6	2	1 year in primary school
Farrah Tahan	13	Iraqi	Arabic	11	1.5	2	1.5 years
Igme Langit	14	Philipino	Pilipino	11	3	2	None
Bayo Solaja	15	Angola	Portuguese	13	1.5	2	1.5 years
Grazyna Urboniene	15	Lithuanian	Lithuanian	14	1.5	2	1.5 years
Husna Nasir	13	Pakistani				1	
Ruta Navickienė	15	Lithuanian	Lithuanian	14	0.5	2	0.5 years
Malena Chiba	13	Swedish				1	
Hakim Tahan	17	Iraqi	Arabic	16	1.5	6	1.5 years
Rasa Petrauskienė	18	Lithuanian	Lithuanian			6	
Sade Shagari	18	Nigerian	Portuguese	11	7	6	1 year in primary school
Niele Žukauskienė	18	Lithuanian	Lithuanian	16	2.5	6	None
Ana Popescu	17	Romanian	Romanian	16	1	5	Some learning support
Adela Popescu	17	Romanian	Romanian	16	1	5	Some learning support
Urbi Dosou	16	Nigerian	Yoruba	10	6	5	
Gerda Okoye	17	Nigerian				5	
Innya Obaraku	16	Nigerian				5	
Luminita Lonescu	15	Romanian	Romanian	9	6	6	

Table 5-4 Linthorpe School student profile

[30] Age on arrival

[31] Length of residence

5.1.1.3 Southbank School Students[32]

Name	Age	Nationality	L1	AOR	LOR	Year group	Band (H, O, F/SEN)[33]	Time in ESL programme
Tala	15	Philipino	Filipino	14	1	2	H	1 year
Sara	14	Latvian	Latvian	14	1	2	H	1 year
Ezajasz	14	Poland	Polish	13	1	1	O	
Kaja	14	Czech	Czech	12	2	1	O	
Anja	13	Poland	Polish	11	2	1	O	
Ehioze	17	Congo	Lingala	13	2	2	F/SEN	
Manila	13	Philipino	Filipino	12	1	1	O	1year
Salomeya	13	Liberia	English	11	2	1	O	2 years
Tricia	15	China	Mandarin	14	1	1	O	
Ofim	15	Polish	Polish	12	2	1	O	2 years
Karol	13	Polish	Polish	12	1	1	O	1 year
Tullia	14	Romanian	Romanian	12	2	1	O	1 year
Kelly	14	S. African	English	13	1	1	O	1 year
Aalem	15	Egyptian	Arabic	14	1	1	F/SEN	
Ryszard	14	Polish	Polish	11	3	1	F/SEN	
Mirek	14	Slovakian	Slovakian	14	0	1	F/SEN	
Iraina	16	Lithuania	Lithuanian	14	2	3	H	
Aba	16	Nigerian	Yoruba	14	2	3	F/SEN	
Mehrab	17	Iran	Kurdish	13	4	3	F/SEN	
Adomas	17	Lithuanian	Lithuanian	15	1	3	F/SEN	
Lesedi[34]	16	South Africa	Zulu			3	F/SEN	
Hasti	16	Iran	Kurdish	12	4	3	F/SEN	
Saha	15	Indian	Malayalam	13	2	3	H	
Aboli	15	Indian	Malayalam	13	2	3	H	
Luminita[35]	16	Romanian	Romanian			3	F/SEN	
Anelie	17	Polish	Polish	15	2	3	H	
Odessa	17	Ukrainian	Ukrainian	15	2	3	H	
Kinga	15	Polish	Polish	13	2	2	O	
Adisa	13	Nigeria	Yoruba	11	2	2	O	2 years
Maks	14	Polish	Polish	11	3	2	O	4 years
Edina	15	Slovakian	Hungarian	13	3	2	H	3 years
Oseye	17	Nigeria	Yoruba	16	1	5	-	1 year
Peter	16	India	Malayalam	16	1	5	-	1 year
Vincent	16	Cameroon	French	15	2	5	-	2 years

Table 5-5 Southbank School student profile

[32] There are 130 students from migrant backgrounds in Southbank School. However, the data I collected here refers only to students in the ESL programme who were assessed during the case study, or students who filled in a student information questionnaire. The following chart shows a breakdown of students according to country of origin.

[33] H = Higher level stream, O = Ordinary level stream, F/SEN = Foundation level or SEN stream.

[34] Lesedi arrived in Ireland during early primary school years – exact details unknown.

[35] Luminita belongs to the Roma population and, while she has been in the country several years, only started to frequently attend school one year ago.

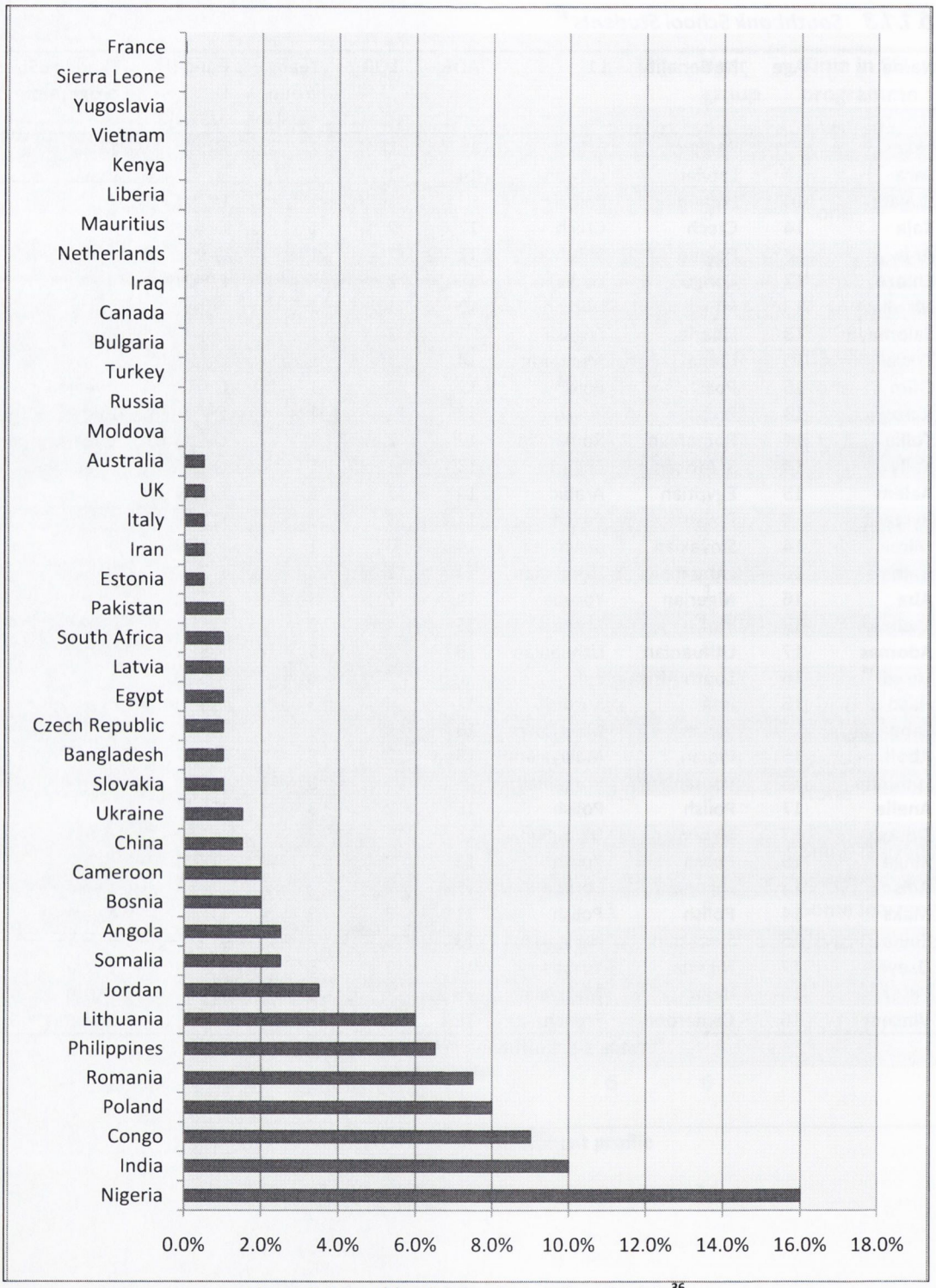

Figure 5-1 Southbank School countries of origin[36]

[36] This table refers to ALL English L2 students at the school. The first 14 countries are represented in the student population in percentages lower than 1%. I requested such information from all three schools, but the other two did not provide it.

5.1.1.4 Profile of students at Parkend, Linthorpe and Southbank schools

Parkend School

The number of ESL students accounted for up to 7% of students at Parkend School. Officially, 5% of the total school population were eligible for language support. An additional 21 students came from migrant backgrounds and the school viewed them as in need of additional language support (but not provided for by DES allocation). Students appeared to be overrepresented in the lower ability bands due to the 'streaming' system. 30% of eligible ESL students were placed in the lowest two streams; 43% of the migrant students in total were placed in the lowest streams. Teachers also raised their concerns over some students' ability to participate if they had been placed in the higher streams, mirroring literature which observes low teacher expectations of ESL students in many cases (Nowlan, 200).

Linthorpe School

While only four students at Linthorpe School were actively receiving English language support I identified twenty ESL students in the school in total and according to their LOR, a further five students were entitled to support. I spoke to almost all of the ESL students, who formed approximately 4 % of the 450 students at Linthorpe School.

Linthorpe School's students had, on average, been in the country for 1.3 years (with much variation). There was wide variation in the students' level of English proficiency (both at the time of my case study and upon arrival in Ireland, although the latter was self reported as the school had not recorded this) and prior education levels. My contact with the students concerned mainly the four in receipt of language support from the second year group. Other students, particularly those in sixth year and therefore about to take the state Leaving Cert exam, attended exam preparation classes with the learning support[37] team. I observed some of these classes as the school viewed them as part of their support for ESL students.

[37] (DES, 2009b & 2010) Special education needs are met by DES by providing learning support/learning resource teachers, and Special Needs Assistants (SNA).

Southbank School

The third case study had the largest population of ESL students. Almost 20% of students at Southbank School came from a country outside Ireland (approximately 130 students). There was wide variation of AOA, LOR, English language proficiency, previous schooling, socio-economic status and so on. The school had previously been designated 'disadvantaged', reflecting the area of low socio-economic status in which it is located. Many members of the student population (both ESL and English L1) are from backgrounds which are traditionally at risk of academic failure.

Each summer, when the school receives its allocation for the ESL students entitled to language support (around 60 students in 2008-2009) other students who are no longer entitled but still in need of support are drawn into the language support programme, which means that an additional 20 were included in the number of ESL students receiving language support. This additional pressure on already scarce resources was possible for many reasons (see page 166).

I was able to assess and interview 60% of the ESL students, based around the students' timetables and availability of a classroom. This ensured minimal disruption to the students' lessons.

Students at Southbank were 'streamed' into three ability bands, according to Maths and Irish ability (as determined through consultation with the feeder primary schools and according to entrance test results). This system has implications for ESL students who may have little or no prior experience of Irish. The ESL coordinator informed me of the struggles she faced when requesting that an ESL student be moved into a higher stream. Asking for students to be moved up a stream from any other year group remained a logistical problem. The principal was, however, supportive and tried to facilitate this process along with the year heads.

5.1.2 Teachers

5.1.2.1 Parkend School

Position and subjects taught	Teaching qualification	Post H.Dip experience	ESL qualification	Length of time at Parkend School	Weekly total of ESL classes taught
English, history, Learning Support	H.Dip	6 years		5 years	4 with TY
History, economics, RE	H.Dip	10 years		6 years	5
English, history	H.Dip	n/a		6 years	4
French, German	H.Dip	15 years	part of H.Dip	10 years	4
Home economics, SPHE	n/a	3 years	TEFL certificate	2 years	4

Table 5-6 Parkend School ESL teachers

5.1.2.2 Linthorpe School

Teacher Reference	Position and subjects taught	Teaching qualifications	ESL qualifications	Length of time at Linthorpe School	Weekly total of ESL classes taught
ESL teacher 1	Substitute and 'TEFL' teacher (English/CSPE)	None	CELTA	1 month	5
ESL teacher 2	H.Dip student (English/History)	None	CELTA	1 year	1

Table 5-7 Linthorpe School ESL teachers

5.1.2.3 Southbank School

Position and subjects taught	Teaching qualifications	TEFL/ESL qualifications/ experience	Length of time at this school	Weekly total of ESL classes taught
English/History	PGDE (H.Dip)	1 week TEFL/1 year teaching	1 year 5 months	10
PE	BA with QTS		11 months	7
ESL coordinator, English	H.Dip	Over ten years	13 years	22+
English/ Spanish	H.Dip		3 years	10
ESL	none	Over 6 years	7 months	8
ESL	none	none	7 months	9
Irish	H.Dip	TEFL	5 years	9
Irish	H.Dip	TEFL	4 years	8
English/RE	H.Dip		3 years	3
H.Dip student (Maths/ Biology)	none		11 months	2
H.Dip student (German)	none		7 months	4
H.Dip student (English/ History)	none		7 months	2

Table 5-8 Southbank School ESL teachers

5.1.2.4 Profile of teachers at Parkend, Linthorpe and Southbank schools

Parkend School

Teachers at Parkend School who were connected with the ESL programme were all experienced, post-H.Dip staff members. Many had experience with special educational needs because of the relatively high number of students at the school in this category. There didn't appear to be a 'main' ESL teacher, and because of the nature of the ESL timetable (where all students exempt from Irish participated in the allocated language support teaching period, or where ESL and Learning Support were considered to be one and the same) the teachers didn't necessarily organise and prepare a language support lesson for the students. Rather, they provided homework supervision or Learning Support (DES, 2010 & 2009b).

Linthorpe School

The most significant conclusion about both ESL teachers at Linthorpe School was that neither teacher had qualified teaching status, although one teacher had enrolled at a university and during the case study period was based at the school for the teaching practice element of her Higher Diploma in Education (H.Dip). Furthermore, both teachers had CELTA[38] qualifications in teaching English L2, which isn't appropriate to ESL and mainstream curriculum based pedagogies. Such qualifications are suited to the TEFL context and tend towards an approach suited for development of general competency in language for the purpose of small-talk, 'getting around' and mastering grammatical forms/verb tenses. The principal believed there to be some advantages in the decision to employ these teachers; in theory, as pre-service teachers they did not have a full, mainstream timetable and so the principal believed they could work around the students' timetables. However, in practice I observed many occasions where the ESL lesson was cancelled due to cover being required for a mainstream lesson. Furthermore, while it was believed that using teachers without full mainstream timetables would enable the language support programme to be based around the students, this did not happen and only the four second year students were provided with regular language support, apparently because this was easiest to organise.

[38] See website http://www.ihdublin.com/ihdublin/Main/CELTA.htm for more details.

Southbank School

At Southbank School, twelve teachers worked on the language support programme, five more than the previous year due to an increase in hours (22 additional hours). However, eight teachers taught the majority of the language support classes (over 80%), all chosen for their interest in the area and capacity to teach an L2. The ESL coordinator informed the principal which teachers would be suitable for teaching language support, and then the principal endeavoured to slot in gaps for these teachers against Irish classes, so that the ESL teachers could work around when the students were free.

Both the principal and the ESL coordinator recognised that language teachers are a good choice as ESL teachers and so over one third of the ESL teachers were either mainstream language teachers, or had experience teaching an L2. Many had experience teaching abroad in the TEFL context, but unlike the teachers at Linthorpe were able to draw also on their experience as mainstream teachers. Two postgraduate students with specialisations in either mainstream subjects or ESL gave language support lessons for at least one day per week each (more during the weeks leading up to Junior Cert and Leaving Cert examinations) including after school lessons, to meet the demands of a flexible programme.

The ESL coordinator dedicated almost 70% of her timetable to language support, in theory. However, she worked almost an extra 16 hours per week in some cases (the equivalent of not taking any free periods at all); if ESL students encountered problems, if new students arrived in the school, if ESL parents wanted to contact a staff member, and in many other circumstances.

5.1.3 Parents

Parkend School

Although I sent out questionnaires, via the ESL coordinator, to twenty parents, only two replies were sent back to me. One parent was consistently satisfied with the progress made by her child at school, with the exception of English language support. The other parent was less satisfied overall, and particularly so with the way the school facilitated parents contacting the school. The response rate was very low for this part of my case-study and this is suggestive of the relationship the school has with parents.

Linthorpe School

I asked the four ESL students for their assistance in establishing the most convenient way to make contact with their parents. Two students asked that I give them a copy of my questions and their parents would answer in written form at home. One parent agreed to come into the school and be interviewed; the fourth parent agreed to be interviewed by phone.

The parents' perceptions of language support and of their children's schooling in general was positive, although two factors may limit the reliability of my results: my research took place near the beginning of the school year, when the parents had been used to a previous part-time teacher who worked almost full-time hours (using her own time to keep parents informed, attend training, contact mainstream teachers about the students and organise school trips for the ESL group) and second, the parents appeared unwilling to criticise the school and the teachers. After considering these limitations, the summary of their opinion was positive regarding the students' progress at school and with language support.

Southbank School[39]

The principal acknowledged that communication with parents is not one of the school's strong points. However, I was able to shadow the school's Polish speaking special needs (SN) assistant on the annual Polish Parents' evening meeting and put my questions to the parents there. Around 12 parents attended the meeting, and were provided with translations of important school documents, including the students' journal. The school principal also attended, although most of the communication was in Polish. Parents were told about the school's weekly Polish classes (taught by the Polish SN assistant, who was a qualified teacher and teacher trainer in her native country but whose qualifications are not recognised in Ireland), which are financed by school funds for students who plan to take the Polish Junior Cert and Leaving Cert.

Parents were generally satisfied with the amount of contact they had with the school. They found it easy to contact the school, perhaps due to the Polish SN assistant who made herself available outside her contracted hours. Most parents were content with their child's progress at school and with English language support. All students were happily settled in the school. The obvious limitation is that only Polish parents attended.

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[39] Please note, no summary table exists for Southbank School.

5.1.3.1 Profile of parents at Parkend, Linthorpe and Southbank schools

Tables

Children	Country of origin	Languages at home	Parents' profession/job	People living in the home	a	b	c	d	e	f
1 daughter in year 2	Lithuania	Lithuanian, Russian	Father: Builder Mother: Cleaner (qualified nurse in Lithuania)	Mother, mother's partner and daughter	1x term	4	3	4	3	3
1 daughter in year 2	Lithuania	Lithuanian, Russian	Mother: Dressmaker & cleaner	Mother, mother's partner and daughter	other	5	1	5	5	3
1 daughter in year 2	Angola	Portuguese, French	Father: student and preacher Mother: Junior Cert student	Mother, father and five children	other	5	1	5	5	5
2 daughters (year 2 and year 6)	Iraq	Arabic	Mother: housewife Father: student (qualified engineer in Iraq)	Mother, father and two daughters	other	5	5	5	5	5

Table 5-9 Linthorpe School parents' profile

Children	Country of origin	Languages at home	Parents' profession/job	People living in the home	a	b	c	d	e	f
1 child	DR Congo	French, English	Mother: stay at home mum	Mother and children	1 – 3 x month	4	3	2	4	3
1 child	Poland	Polish	Mother: cleaner Father: plumber	Mother, father and two sons	1 x term	5	5	5	3	5

Table 5-10 Parkend School parents' profile

Scaled questions

a. How often do you have contact with your child's school?
   1 x week □ 1-3 x month □ 1 x term □ 1-2 x year □ other □

b. Are you happy with your child's progress at school?
   ☹ 1 2 3 4 5 ☺

c. Are you happy with the amount of contact you have with the school?
   ☹ 1 2 3 4 5 ☺

d. Is it easy to contact a member of staff at your child's school?
   ☹ 1 2 3 4 5 ☺

e. Are you happy with the English language support provided by the school?
   ☹ 1 2 3 4 5 ☺

f. Is your child happy at the school?
   ☹ 1 2 3 4 5 ☺

The parent responses I collected tend towards a positive evaluation of their child's educational provision. But, what is perhaps more telling is the limited response rate, reflective of the difficulties the schools have in arranging communications with parents. Research shows that parental involvement is one feature which amounts to effective educational provision for all students, and particularly ESL students (Smyth et al., 2009: 35). Such difficulties in facilitating and maintaining parental communication are obstacles which schools can (and should) surmount by having a policy and procedure in place to identify the barriers and encourage all school staff to minimise the gap between parents and school. No school facilitated substantial contact with parents.

5.2 Description of whole school and ESL approaches

This subsection describes the overall approach and policy of each school, and then moves on to initial assessment, placement and timetabling procedures. I also include analysis of the 'whole school checklists' adapted from IILT's (2007: 11) checklists and provide a visual overview of whole school features which contribute to ESL students' education (see appendix B, page 247). I made the checklist observations on my first visit to each school very early in the school calendar.

5.2.1 Overall approach and policy

Parkend School

The ESL coordinator made a great deal of progress in the summer prior to my case study in developing initiatives designed to meet the needs of the ESL students (he is also guidance counsellor, careers counsellor and an IT teacher). However, at the start of the school year other responsibilities left little time for implementation, and lack of support from school management also stood in the way. During the previous two summers, the coordinator had collected information which would form the foundation of an ESL policy; the document identified the unsatisfactory way in which the school had been addressing the needs of these students, with a view to reviewing the ESL programme. However, one year later the policy still went unnoticed by the school management.

The school had purchased '*English in Mind*', levels A2 – B2 (Puchta et al., 2004) to be used in the ESL lessons. However, because there is no central role of responsibility for ESL it had been difficult to discover who was teaching the allocated ESL hours. The 'ESL Coordinator' didn't have access to the timetabling process and was unsure of the exact allocation and how it was being used – such negotiations with the vice-principal were lengthy and failed to ascertain exact provision.

The ESL lessons which I observed displayed typical characteristics of a language support programme which the literature has identified as unsuccessful and inadequate. ESL and Learning Support were confused, and ESL periods were viewed as simply a 'free period', an idea which was further reinforced by the presence of English L1 students who had an exemption from Irish. The vice-principal justified such practice on the grounds that by incorporating the English L1 students the school can offer more 'time on task' to the ESL students than allocated by DES and therefore increase exposure to English support. One could, in fact, claim that there is no ESL programme in place at Parkend School. Consequently, because the ESL lessons I observed were in fact simple 'free periods' or 'homework sessions', there was no obvious structure to record and analyse, which in itself reveals much about the implementation of the DES guidelines and the ESL structure as interpreted by this school.

Additionally, this practice reflects the decentralised ESL programme in operation at the school with an 'official' ESL coordinator who does not have access to the timetabling procedure at the start of the school year. Observations on content are difficult to make, due to the lack of a specific lesson structure as explained above; this is not to say that the teachers involved were unwilling to at least attempt to meet the needs of the ESL students. Rather, the teachers involved were simply unsure of how to address the educational challenge of English language learners.

The IILT checklist (2007: 11 and see Appendix A, page 324) could provide a starting point to guide Parkend School towards steps to improve their language support programme; it asks whether schools have implemented a number of strategies associated with best practice, such as providing welcome notices in all of the L1s in a school, or provision of a welcome pack, for example. During my observations, the school warranted ticks in the 'no' column for almost all of the options. Efforts towards creating an inclusive school environment included just a few instances of classroom/school displays which reflect a diverse student body.

Linthorpe School

Numbers of ESL students were perceived to be low at this school and this was the reason given as to why there was no specific policy to address these students' needs. The school stated in its mission statement (on its website, though details have been changed to protect the anonymity of the school) aims to "appreciate and acknowledge differences and value every student's involvement" and to "encourage correct relationships founded on Christian justice." While the former statement mentions difference in a positive light, many of the ESL students do not practice the Christian faith and therefore may feel themselves excluded from this aspect of school life. The school does not overtly prevent non-Christians from enrolling at the school; its admissions policy promotes inclusiveness, and respect for diversity of language, culture and beliefs.

However, in the case of over-subscription of applicants for enrolment, siblings of current students, parish entitlement and ethos considerations are given priority; a common policy which could potentially be used to refuse admission to ESL students. Parents are requested to state religious background in their application for enrolment. Students are expected to participate in religion class unless parents provide a letter to exclude their child from this subject. While this is relatively easy for parents to do, religious insignia was visible throughout the school building.

The policy which deals with procedure for responding to bullying at the school did not explicitly deal with racial bullying. However, it prohibited students from making malicious remarks about students who are 'different' (in terms of ability, colour, religion or culture). The policy defined racism in terms which labels ESL students as 'other' and sets out actions in the case of such bullying as a procedure following the steps: student asked to stop the problem behaviour, parents/guardians informed, suspension and then specialist help to change the behaviour. Issues with racism are therefore viewed as a problem located within the student who demonstrates such behaviour and dealt with as such, without any attempt to resolve whole school issues which may underlie the behaviour.

The Learning Support department was responsible for the organisation of ESL lessons, as school management interpreted ESL policy as falling under its remit. Their policy classifies ESL students as one of several categories who may need additional resources and support in the school due to student deficits (under the same banner as students with emotional difficulties and the spectrum of learning disabilities). The Learning Support teachers were dedicated but apprehensive about how best to provide for the ESL students.

Linthorpe School received ticks in the 'no' column for many of the options on the checklist (see Appendix, page 324). Efforts towards creating an inclusive school environment included a few instances of classroom/school displays which reflect a diverse student body, extra funding and the creation of a multi-cultural club.

Southbank School

The school's ESL policy[40] covered ten areas: Goals, Language/Social Integration, Issues, Timetable, Groups/Group Size, Assessment, Classroom Content, Homework, Communication and Teacher Training. The policy document is extensive and comprehensive, and was drawn up by the ESL coordinator with the full support of the principal.

[40] Exact wording has been changed to protect the anonymity of the school.

The goals of Southbank's language support programme were to facilitate students' acquisition of English and of cultural knowledge, as well as to include ESL students no longer entitled to support. The policy identified access to the curriculum, extracurricular activities and social opportunities within the programme's remit. Four approaches were outlined: the language support programme should reflect the multicultural nature of the school's population and society (regarding choice of how to interpret the curriculum), value students' prior experiences and first culture, encourage learner autonomy, and promote a positive relationship between the student and the school.

Regarding language acquisition, the policy referred to the CEFR and summarised key points of the relevant levels (A1 – B1) for teachers who may not be familiar with the scale. It also set out a target for achieving the levels, specifically that all students reach A2 within four months of arrival, and B1 by the end of their second year. The policy pointed out that students' cultural experiences prior to arrival in Ireland may be very different, that parents may not be able to help students to settle into school life, and that students may experience a possible drop in self-esteem.

The policy recognised several issues which limit or somehow otherwise represent complications for the language support programme. The first was the matter of how DES teaching allocation equates to actual teaching hours per student; students were officially entitled to 90 minutes (about two teaching periods) per week for two years, which Southbank's policy highlighted as inadequate. The policy also recommended that students at A1 level of proficiency be withdrawn for many more periods per week, and that all ESL students should receive at least one period of ESL instruction per day.

The policy highlighted the range of linguistic backgrounds of the ESL students, and was underpinned by the view that L1s should be viewed as a resource. A more significant concern for teachers on the language support programme, according to the policy, was the limited experience of some students' formal education, which the policy advised may have implications for literacy and numeracy.

The policy also gave special attention to the exam year students, the reasoning for not streaming language support classes according to English proficiency level (so that the language support timetable can fit around the students' mainstream timetables and so that students can attend ESL classes with students their own age), the importance of holding classes in the ESL classroom as much as possible and the availability of resources in that room.

Guidelines on classroom content were stated in the policy, as follows:

- active use of language to be emphasised rather than 'grammar teaching'
- student-centred approaches
- literacy skills to be developed as a priority
- use of authentic texts, particularly use of mainstream curriculum textbooks/teacher's handouts/presentations/prescribed texts and films and so on
- development of dictionary skills

Finally, the policy advised teachers to share their expertise via in-school workshops, in the absence of official training, and to liaise with mainstream subject teachers wherever possible. The ESL coordinator consulted mainstream staff about their specialist area and the language needed to access content, often producing materials with teachers about their own subject to be used in the ESL classroom. Such consultation was a mutually beneficial relationship; the ESL teachers benefitted from authentic, context related materials and the subject teachers gained awareness of the needs of ESL students through dialogue with the coordinator.

My checklist observation at Southbank School (see Appendix, page 325) revealed an already developed language support programme visible throughout the school. Immediate features of the school's commitment to an inclusive environment included the provision of materials and translations available to parents and students (in Polish), the notice board in the staffroom displaying comprehensive information about the language support programme, and availability of books from a wide range of cultural backgrounds.

5.2.2 Initial assessment, placement and timetable

Parkend School

In general, all students at Parkend went through the same 'streaming' process; they were assigned to a stream (either Higher Level, Ordinary Level, Foundation/Ordinary Level or Learning Support) based on the result of an entrance exam and in consultation with primary school teachers and principals. For the learning support groups, students took mostly Foundation Level state examinations, class size was smaller and the students had two teachers in the classroom for some subjects.

Prior to the start of the school year 2008-2009, the appointed 'ESL coordinator' prepared a document designed to collect information about the ESL students and their English language proficiency (according to their English teacher and based on a rudimentary 1-6 scale). While the information gathered was useful, without access to the timetabling procedure, the ESL

coordinator was powerless to base the ESL programme on the information. The document contained the following questions:

Student's Name: _____ Class: _____
Country of origin? _____ 1st language: _____
How many years are you in Ireland? _____
How many years have you studied English? _____
How many extra English classes do you have each week? ____
What classes do you miss to attend your extra English? _____
Teacher's report:
On a scale of 1 to 6 how do you rate this student's knowledge?
(1 this is very basic, practically nothing. 6 Is very good, almost perfect)
1 2 3 4 5 6
Briefly what are this student's language needs?
_____ _____

Figure 5-2 Parkend School's ESL student profile questionnaire

Linthorpe School

All students at Linthorpe were assessed prior to enrolment using the Cognitive Abilities Test, Level E (for students aged 11 years and six months to 14 years of age). The test was developed to assess verbal, non-verbal and quantitative reasoning and is widely used. Results from previous years had not been kept (due to a change in the guidance counsellor who administers the assessments) so I was unable to access the results of the ESL students.

The guidance counsellor informed me of the difficulties the school faced in assessing students with English as a second language; Angolan student Bayo Solaja was highlighted by her teachers as having potential learning difficulties. The counsellor, school principal and learning support department searched for alternative assessments and found a Portuguese language diagnostic test for learning difficulties (they were not clear about its source and could not detail the procedure). The test uncovered moderate learning difficulties, specifically in the area of reading. I wonder about the validity of the result given the student's limited contact with Portuguese in the two years prior to her taking the assessment. However, the episode indicates an element of flexibility, in attempting to respond to the challenges of a diverse student population, and of misunderstanding, in terms of the inappropriate measures taken (which may have a potentially detrimental impact on Bayo's future education plans).

As I have noted, only ESL students from the second year were offered language support. Other students entitled to language support were instead offered learning support or not provided with any additional resources. The reason for such action (or inaction) appears to be inflexibility regarding the ESL timetable. I observed that the timetable was in effect organised around when

the four ESL students in second year had Irish class; any student who was not available at this time was excluded. While the school was given only a very limited ESL allocation, students received either a disproportionately lower or higher share of language support lessons which was unrelated to individual students' needs. I also observed several occasions where the ESL lesson was cancelled because a teacher was required to supervise a subject lesson.

The four students in receipt of language support received 6 periods a week (five periods with a pre-service student, and one with a current H.Dip student). All four students carried an entitlement to language support, as they had been in Ireland for less than two years. However, the school received only two allocated hours from DES, which is 0.09 of a full-time teaching position.

Southbank School

The school arranged an induction period during the first two to three weeks in order to provide students with exposure to school routines and rules. The induction programme's goals were to facilitate acquisition of 'survival' English necessary for the students to at least be present in the normal classroom and make simple requests.

During this time the ESL coordinator met with each student and carried out initial assessments. This involved asking those students with any literacy skills whatsoever to carry out a free-writing exercise. The procedure was as follows: the coordinator engaged in small talk with individual or small groups of students. For students new to the school, the coordinator introduced herself and scaffolded instructions to the task, talking through the process of choosing a writing topic. With students who were used to the procedure she talked about the last time the student completed such a task, reminded them of the topic of the piece and asked what they would be interested in writing about this time. After a free-writing topic was set (typically a childhood memory, description of their home or narrative about Christmas/other festival) students had approximately twenty minutes to write their piece without pausing. If they had difficulty finding a word in English they were instructed to write the word in their L1 or simply to leave a space. After completion, the ESL coordinator used her judgement and experience as a teacher of English L2 to identify the students' levels and needs. The results were used to guide how much language support was required by each student and/or to initiate learning support enquiries (if special educational needs were suspected). During mid – late September 2008 (after the three week induction programme) some students were also assessed using a pilot version of the Post-Primary Assessment Kit (IILT, 2009), with the intention of employing the published version of the kit when available.

During the induction period students were withdrawn from sometimes the majority of their lessons, apart from Art, Maths, PE and Home Economics (in which lessons students could participate and begin socialising with their tutor group and acclimatising to the mainstream environment even with little English language proficiency). During this time the ESL coordinator began developing the ESL timetable, which she had initiated in the summer (August 2008). The process began alongside development of the master timetable. As I have said, the ESL coordinator requested that certain teachers be timetabled against Irish for particular tutor groups wherever possible. The resulting master timetable (still work in progress as this stage) was provided to the coordinator who began slotting in the allocated 99 teaching periods accordingly. The 99 periods were not used equally in one week – the induction period meant that extra periods were used at the beginning of the year, and other periods were 'saved' to provide extra support to the exam students (years three and six) in the four weeks leading up to their exams. The ESL timetable was then revised several times before its pilot version was given to ESL teachers and displayed in the school staffroom from September 2008. Several major and minor revisions followed. The times of my visits coincided with at least ten revisions to the ESL timetable (due to new arrivals, changes in the tutor group system, changes in the needs of individuals or groups of ESL students), with many more minor revisions needed (new students joining an existing group, for example). Throughout the school year, if a teacher was concerned with a student's progress in maths or science, extra help was timetabled on the language support programme, given by a specialist maths/science teacher.

In February 2009, a 16 year old Chinese student arrived at the school without any English whatsoever, and an 'emergency timetable' was drafted. Because ESL allocation had already been applied for prior to the start of the school year (in fact, the original application had been submitted in the previous school year, May 2008), the school was unable to apply for additional teaching hours to meet the needs of this student and so existing resources were drawn upon. Students frequently arrive throughout the school year. It suggests that schools which cannot or do not draw from the existing resources to support newly arrived ESL students simply abandon them in the mainstream setting.

After the induction period, the ESL timetable began and this was communicated to the whole school via notices in the staffroom and tutor registers. Students were banded according to year group, but only where possible were they grouped according to proficiency – the grouping procedure tended towards age sensitivity. Mixed ability strategies were the norm, as stated in the policy. The timetable was regularly revised with the target of mainstreaming the student for the majority of the time as quickly as possible, in consultation with the ESL coordinator, ESL

teachers, mainstream teacher and sometimes also the head of year. However, because support was lacking in some mainstream classes (often due simply to large class size) students were offered some ESL periods per week on an ongoing basis. Students were grouped according to the policy, which stated that because the goal of language support was to prepare students for full mainstream participation, groups should be large enough to imitate to some extent the mainstream setting, while being small enough to provide individual support. A range of between four to eight students was suggested. The ESL coordinator drew students who were no longer entitled to language support into existing ESL classes to maintain a viable group size, and as a way around the two year 'limit'.

5.3 Lesson observations

I formally observed around twenty lessons at each school. Where repetitive lesson structures occur, I present only a representative selection of observations (in tables, found in Appendix B). The following section analyses the content and structure of the lessons.

5.3.1 Parkend School

I observed almost twenty lessons in Parkend School; a representative sample of lesson content and structures are presented in Appendix B (page 236), and are described here. While I viewed a comparable amount of lessons to the other two schools, the range of lesson structure and teaching approach varied much less and so the analyses which follow reflect the lack of variety, making a detailed commentary difficult.

ESL lessons

The five ESL lessons I observed were with groups of students who were exempt from Irish and who were timetabled for a lesson when their mainstream group took Irish. Therefore, ESL students and English L1 were present in the same classroom. As a result of this, these periods were used as 'homework' sessions; teachers either corrected other class-work while the students did their own homework assignments from mainstream lessons, or the teacher provided help with the homework if the students requested it, while monitoring the classroom and asking if the students needed help. Therefore, as I have previously noted, a typical lesson structure was not evident.

The underlying pedagogical assumption appears to be that ESL is simply a free period in which students can complete homework. The poor coordination of language support was evident at this school, which many studies have observed can lead to misappropriation of allocation (Nowlan, 2008; Lyons & Little, 2009). Also highlighted is the significance of a supportive school leadership. The appointed ESL coordinator at Parkend School completed training, prepared policy documents,

engaged with students to form needs analyses and secured funding to buy materials, all prior to the start of the school year (August 2008). All of his efforts went overlooked as soon as the school year began and the vice-principal simply organised the 'language support' timetable in such a way as to offer supervision for all students exempt from Irish while ignoring the defined purpose of ESL teaching allocation.

Mainstream lessons

A 'Banking Education' approach was predominant in the classroom (Freire, 1970: 53-54). The lessons frequently followed a format which involved the presentation of knowledge by the teacher (by reading a text or asking students to read a text) and then a test of some description asking students to reproduce facts from the text. I observed this approach many times during my case study visits to this school, and Parkend's mainstream lesson 1 (Appendix B, page 268) is a typical example. Students were tested on a previously read section of a novel and then had to write answers to a 20 question test (referred to as a comprehension test) containing 'who', 'what', 'when' and 'where' questions. Students were given approximately 80 seconds per answer, and were not permitted to consult the novel. The questions elicited facts about the novel (such as 'when did a character in the novel carry out a particular act?' or 'who did another character meet on an afternoon walk?') but appeared unlikely to facilitate understanding or to initiate dialogue about the themes in the novel.

The spelling test consisted of items such as the characters' surnames, specialist vocabulary and place names, all of which are unlikely to be repeated outside a discussion on the novel in question. The one ESL student present for this lesson appeared to be struggling; both tasks in fact were unintentionally set up for this student to fail, particularly the spelling test which was pitched at a level beyond the student's capability (I assessed this student at post-beginner level during my first phase of collection at the start of the school year; the student was excluded from the school on the grounds of behaviour issues some time after this visit).

Teaching approaches which conflict with learner autonomy approaches (page 57) and inherently exclude ESL students were common at Parkend. There were several examples of the teacher interrupting an ESL student's attempts to answer a question or ask a question, which highlights the 'teacher centred' approach.

Lesson 3 (page 269) followed a similar format, but instead of working from a novel the students worked exclusively from a textbook, and the maths class (Lesson 5, page 270) followed a similar structure, starting with a class test which took up almost the whole lesson. Attempts to initiate dialogue usually consisted of a teacher asking a closed answer question, and were characterised

by very little time given to the student to think of a response. Lesson 2 (page 269) engaged in the kind of teaching practice which fosters a dialogue between teacher and student, and which in turn facilitates content learning via an enquiry based, 'problem posing' pedagogy (Freire, 1970).

The underlying pedagogical assumptions predominant at Parkend School appeared to be dependence on a teacher-centred, teaching-by-testing, IRF routine (see page 169) and a textbook based approach, with only very few exceptions, all of which reflect the findings of O'Keefe and Farr (2003) on the Irish classroom. Students were given little opportunity to engage with the knowledge they were presented with, and dialogue in particular was largely restricted (particularly in light of the preponderance of class tests I observed, which required that students work in silence). Such approaches tend to exclude many groups of students, as well as ESL students. Bridging the gap between a student's world and the world of knowledge presented by the school (Bernstein, 1996; Barnes, 1976) to therefore enable learning is facilitated by pedagogical approaches which are not favoured by Parkend School in general; and so slotting in an effective language support programme means working against these structures, perhaps explaining why the ESL coordinator's efforts failed before the first step.

5.3.2 Linthorpe School

I observed over 20 lessons in the course of my case study visits (50% ESL lessons and 50% mainstream/learning support lessons). While, in theory, this school does not 'stream' the students into ability level classes, I observed a noticeable tendency to place the ESL students in Learning Resource lessons, with fewer students and a higher percentage of students with behaviour problems. This observation, however, cannot be confirmed and reflects only the lessons I viewed on the days of my data collection visits.

ESL lessons

Freire's 'Banking Education' approach (1970: 53-54) was a predominant feature of the lessons I observed here, both in the mainstream and ESL classroom. The ESL lessons could also be compared to the 'transmission' model (page 45 and Barnes, 1976: 139-145) where the teacher presents information about the (English) language as a finite set of rules about which discussion is discouraged. The lessons were given by an unqualified teacher who drew exclusively on TEFL learning tasks (from an adult textbook series) designed to develop competence in grammar exercises (see, for example, ESL lessons 1, 2 and 3, Appendix B, pages 271, 272 & 276). The teacher made rudimentary mistakes when presenting prescriptive grammar 'rules' to students. Such rules were dictated to students in a confusing manner (see Lesson 2, page 272) and often if a student did ask a question (which frequently could have been an opportunity to engage in dialogue) it was ignored or answered with a dismissive response. The teacher equated students'

memorization of a rule or filling in a gap-fill style task as a sign that students had learned the rule and most of the tasks designed by the teacher focussed on presenting and testing language structures out of context (see Figure 9-2 and Figure 9-3). The exchange involving 'John cooking dinner' inefficiently attempted to teach students the past perfect tense, and the teacher was noticeably relying on the answer section of the textbook. Frequently, the students answered a question perfectly correctly, though perhaps using a different structure to the one being presented during a particular lesson. However, the teacher rigidly adhered to the answer key and informed students that their answers were incorrect.

The content of the learning activities in lessons with the main ESL teacher was not drawn from the mainstream curriculum and represented communicative situations which the students were unlikely to encounter (see lesson 2, for example, page 272). I observed only one lesson which focussed on a mainstream subject (lesson 5, page 279), given by the previous year's main ESL teacher who continued to teach one lesson per week (though not every week, due to study commitments).

Despite the newly built and refurbished staff room having among the best ICT facilities I had seen at any of the schools visited during Phase 1, the main ESL teacher had prepared the students' worksheets without using the computers. The worksheets were handwritten (in often unclear handwriting) and photocopied, and featured inauthentic, random sentences as examples of use and as gap-fill tasks (see Lesson 3, page 276; Figure 9-4 and Figure 9-5).

The underlying pedagogical assumption which appeared to drive ESL lessons at Southbank was a TFEL based methodology approach, encouraging a rigid notion of language development and grammar, and, as with Parkend School, a dependence on teacher-centred, teaching-by-testing, IRF routine (see page 169) and textbook based methods. Students' opinions and attempts to engage in dialogue were often belittled by the inexperienced and untrained teacher, and their lessons were frequently cancelled as priority was given (by the vice-principal) to supervision of mainstream lessons. Use of language becomes more and more complex in post-primary school (Collier, 1989: 512) and language support in this setting should encourage access to mainstream subjects by gradually scaffolding the required language/content to ESL students; this practice did not happen in the ESL lesson at Linthorpe which means the ESL students were not being given the opportunities afforded by efficient language support. Time in the ESL classroom was effectively time away from mainstream education, instead of time in a programme intended to support it.

Mainstream lessons

The mainstream lessons I observed displayed higher incidence of disruptive student behaviour than at the other two schools. Lessons were, in theory, mixed ability, although many students were placed in learning support/resource lessons (smaller groups, specialist teachers for special educational needs).

Many of the learning support lessons observed were groups of about three students who worked independently on homework, coursework or past exam papers (Lessons 2 and 4). The experienced teacher was a specialist in learning support and appeared sympathetic to the needs of the students; students benefitted from the attention of the small-group setting which focussed on their upcoming Leaving Cert examinations. While not officially language support, the approach was similar to some of the examples of 'best practice' at Southbank School; lessons were directed at familiarising students with exam language, practising writing skills and were led by students' needs. Other lessons (Lessons 3 and 5) veered towards the banking education approach (Freire, 1970) and were comparable to the typical lessons in Parkend School; while Lesson 3 had only a small group of students, the lesson structure required that students work independently without collaboration with each other, and was dominated by teacher-talk and 'teaching by testing'.

Lessons 1 (page 283) and 6 (page 287) were given by experienced teachers who provided a well-planned lesson structure and attempted to engage students in dialogue and scaffold knowledge. Students were encouraged to find answers by analysing the information in small groups while being supported by the teachers. However, much of the time in the lesson was taken up by the teacher dealing with disruptive students and therefore the pace was slow. The ESL student in Lesson 1 appeared to have finished the work before many of the students, but was unable to advance onto another task until the rest of the class had caught up, and in Lesson 6 the student appeared to encounter difficulties in understanding, but was unable to ask for clarification straight away as the teacher was dealing with the disruptive students.

The underlying pedagogical assumptions which appeared to drive the mainstream lessons varied between 'banking education' (Freire, 1970), IRF routines which typically do not promote learner autonomy, and very few attempts to create a student-centred classroom. However, in general teachers often seemed to be engaged in managing disruptive classroom behaviour (which, according to teachers, was caused by lack of coherent disciplinary procedures and support from school management).

5.3.3 Southbank School

I observed more than 20 lessons in the course of my case study visits (50% ESL lessons and 50% mainstream/learning support lessons).

ESL lessons

Many lessons occurred simultaneously in the ESL classroom (as many as three teachers and groups at a time), and typically involved a mixed level of English language proficiency. A student-centred, learner autonomy approach was evident, most lessons were based on mainstream subjects and commitment to literacy was emphasized.

Towards the beginning of the school year, lessons were directed at students' identities, interests and needs; in Lesson 1 (page 289) the aim of the lesson was to gather basic personal information about the students. The lesson content was driven by an email exchange between friends, one of whom had just moved away to another country; a situation which was familiar to the students in the class, meaning they were visibly engaged in a discussion about the email writer's circumstances. The email genre was frequently used by students in their lives outside school (and was used in later lessons to bridge the gap between a literacy genre the students were familiar with and a more formal genre typical of exam questions – see Lesson 3, page 293). Lesson 5 is another example which highlights Southbank's commitment to drawing on a wide range of language and literacy genres; even first year students were encouraged to critically compare and contrast the differences between a tabloid article and broadsheet article, on subjects which they were familiar with and interested in. Teachers seemed genuinely committed to basing the ESL lessons on the students' interests.

Lesson 2 (page 291) was a typical lesson structure. Starting with an experiential phase (students followed a simple poem framework filling in information about themselves) to activate prior knowledge, moving on to a personal phase (students and teacher looking through Leaving Cert prescribed poems and poetry from other sources) to discuss the poetry genre and students' experience of poetry, a critical phase where the teacher encouraged the students to reflect on the issues (such as vocabulary and understanding) and possible problems regarding examination questions on poetry, and then concluding with a creative phase (students discuss how to solve problems, answer questions and then produce a text response). In this particular lesson students produced visual representations of the poem instead of the usual text response, and then engaged with ICT to edit a movie based on their interpretations of their chosen poem.

Basic school subject vocabulary was presented to students from lower year groups near the start of the school year, as in Lesson 4 (page 293). As the year progressed these students were

presented with progressively more challenging concepts; Lesson 7 is an example which moved from the students' immediate classroom environment to the towns around them (the teacher gave students the opportunity to base their answers on their current home towns, or a town from their country of origin). Students' text responses were scaffolded by a writing frame to lead the students to literacy step by step. Later still in the school year (Lesson 8, page 298) the same group of students were presented with more challenging poetry (from Junior Cert exam papers of the level students would have to deal with 2 years after the lesson).

The walls of the main ESL classroom displayed a wide range of posters from many cultures and genres (posters relating to films and books the students must study, celebrities the students were interested in, local celebrities, writers and poets from Ireland and so on), as well as photographs of the students and their work. Lesson 8 (page 298) is an example of how students engaged with the visual displays; work from the lesson was collected and given prominence by its display on an interactive poster which students frequently referred to at the end of a lesson.

Southbank also offered an after-school ESL programme for students who either required extra support who or could not be withdrawn from mainstream lesson during the day (because they did not have Irish exemption, for example). Lesson 6 (page 296) describes a typical after-school ESL lesson. The teacher asked students to suggest a useful activity or subject area, set up tasks based on their answers, then students worked independently on different subjects and tasks while the teacher divided her attention between them.

There was much evidence of the ESL programme's commitment to literacy; the students in Lesson 10 (page 305) were presented with a variety of reading and writing tasks designed to facilitate engagement with abstract texts and concepts (students could also chose to write part of their answer in their L1, Figure 9-24). Lesson 11 (page 306) describes a frequently employed method which also requires students to engage with their literacy skills (in this case, writing). It uses a checklist approach based on morpheme acquisition studies to give students immediate feedback on their own writing and to self-direct their corrections. In that lesson the students worked with photocopies of texts they had written in a previous lesson. The students then proofread their own work to find errors (they had build up an awareness of their own typical errors and tried to locate these first). The teacher then proofread the work to locate any other errors (but did not correct them) and the students produced a corrected version of the text, or looked for exercises to help with a particular language structure which they had frequent problems with. Learner autonomy was emphasised in this lesson by the ESL coordinator/teacher who had previously worked with the students on this process and had facilitated, step by step, their capacity to work independently.

Literacy skills, and the kind of abstract thinking skills which develop over time at post-primary school and in close interaction with literacy, were scaffolded to students and supported via use of visual representations of students' ideas. Lesson 8 (Figure 9-20) describes an effective way of giving students the chance to produce a visible outcome of their understanding of poems, to organise their ideas before taking steps towards text responses. Lesson 14 (page 314) shows how the ESL programme encouraged younger students to read; students had free choice regarding choice of book (they could bring in a book from home or select a book from the large collection in the ESL classroom), could read and write in English or L1, could take as much time as they wanted to read a book, and had to produce only brief texts which would remain uncorrected and then displayed on an interactive poster (to encourage students to focus on enjoying reading rather than worrying about producing a long response).

Learner autonomy is emphasised in Lesson 13. A newly arrived Mandarin Chinese speaker arrived after Christmas and the ESL team assembled a one-to-one programme for him. One teacher developed a portfolio based on the ELP, with Mandarin translations (by a Mandarin L1 speaker) and focused on the student's personalised subject timetable. The student's mainstream teachers had been introduced to the portfolio and were invited to contribute key-words, texts and feedback on the student' progress. I also observed several other lessons where teachers encouraged students to research subject content knowledge in their L1, to write/plan a text in their L1, or to translate a text into L1 (for example, Lesson 6, 8, 10, 11, 13 and 14, pages 296-314).

ICT played a significant role in almost every lesson I observed, as the ESL coordinator had secured funding to buy several reconditioned laptops. Students regularly used the laptops to produce work or to research subject content. When the Mandarin Chinese speaker joined the language support programme with no English, the student downloaded several Chinese language translation tools for his use during one-to-one lessons.

The lessons appear to have benefitted from the school's defined policy and supportive school leadership which in turn has led to a student-centred approach based on mainstream subject content. There are many characteristics which are generally considered to be 'best practice'.

Mainstream lessons

Lessons 1, 3 and 6 (pages 316, 318 and 321) describes a typical lesson structure, characterised by enquiry-based and practical learning approaches in Southbank's science and maths lessons. Teachers typically corrected homework assignments with the groups, and then used board-work to present a new problem/concept. Students were involved in suggesting solutions (in the case of science lessons, this involved a practical experiment). One teacher encouraged the students to

believe she had been lying about the outcome of an experiment and so the students were keen to prove her wrong, and in another science lesson the teacher compared the salt (which students had to extract from sea water) to the salt students put on their fish and chips.

Several lessons revealed a tendency of teachers at Southbank to move away from dependence on textbooks; in Lesson 2 the teacher presents content knowledge via videos, students' notes and discussion, while summarising the main points on the board. During this lesson the teacher repeatedly linked the lesson content to the students' experiences (asking them to compare the transport system of Paris to the local system). Lessons 5 and 8 (pages 320 and 323), too, show a move away from textbooks.

The aim of Lesson 7 (page 322) contrasts with mainstream Lesson 1 at Parkend School (page 268); the lesson aims are similar (to engage students in a novel prescribed by the English syllabus) though the methodologies employed were very different. While both lessons were based on a section of a novel, Southbank's teacher engaged the students in a dynamic dialogue about the text they were reading, used visual aids to help students remember significant parts of the book, and linked concepts to students' own lives.

One or two lessons at Southbank contradicted the general student-centred ethos, however, these were in the minority of the lessons I observed. Lesson 4 (page 319) was characterised by confusing board-work and almost exclusive teacher-talk time.

The underlying pedagogical assumptions mirror the approaches taken by the ESL lessons, which suggests that the overall student-centred ethos of the school promotes characteristics of 'best practice' in teaching and that the ESL programme is a continuation of the school's dedication to all students.

5.4 ESL student assessment

0 – 11% = A1.1	34-44% = **A2.1**	67-77% = **B1.1**
12-22% = A1.2	45-55% = **A2.2**	78-88% = **B1.2**
23-33% = A1.3	56-66% = **A2.3**	88-100% = **B1.3**

Figure 5-3 Assessment conversion scale

The assessment kit is available to view online[41] and the sets I used are included in the appendices (Appendix B). Because the tests produce results according to the CEFR scale[42], the results are in non-numerical format. I wanted to capture a numerical result so I should show overall progress, and so I converted the total number of possible marks into percentage values. The table above is not necessarily an accurate representation of the relationship between the percentages and the CEFR Benchmarks. I also converted the student self-assessment and teacher assessment checklists into percentage values of the total number of marks the participants selected.

5.4.1 Parkend School

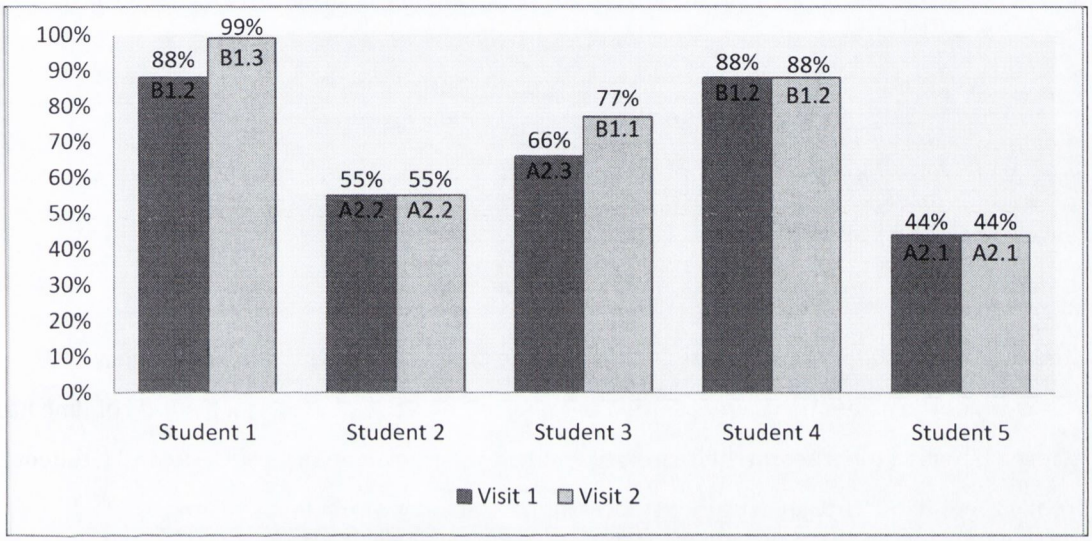

Figure 5-4 Parkend School reading assessment

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http://ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Inclusion/English_as_an_Additional_Language/IILT_Materials/Post-primary/EAL_Post_Primary_Assessment_Kit/EAL_Post-Primary_Assessment_Kit.html

[42] See COE, 2001: 23 for description of language proficiency descriptors.

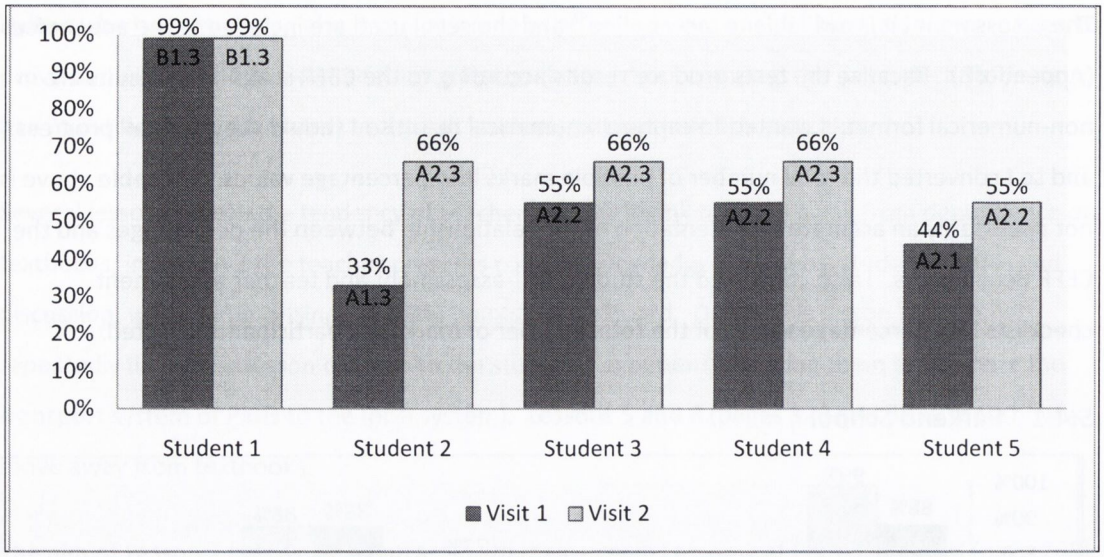

Figure 5-5 Parkend School writing assessment

Students at Parkend School appeared to make some progress in their writing proficiency. However, as the assessments were carried out only twice at this school, a long period of time had elapsed between the assessments. One student had progressed one whole CEFR level (Student 2, from A1.3 to A2.3), though the other students advanced only within the A2 band.

Students made limited progress in their reading proficiency; their reading levels appeared to stay the same or to have increased only slightly. These results correspond to the analysis of the lesson observations at Parkend School; there is no visible ESL programme in place which means students are expected to cope in mainstream lessons without support, and students were not encouraged to read long texts. The mainstream lessons too were unlikely to engage the ESL students in mainstream learning and literacy.

Due to availability of students and teachers at Parkend School I could not collect data with the student self-assessment questionnaire nor the teacher assessment questionnaire.

5.4.2 Linthorpe School

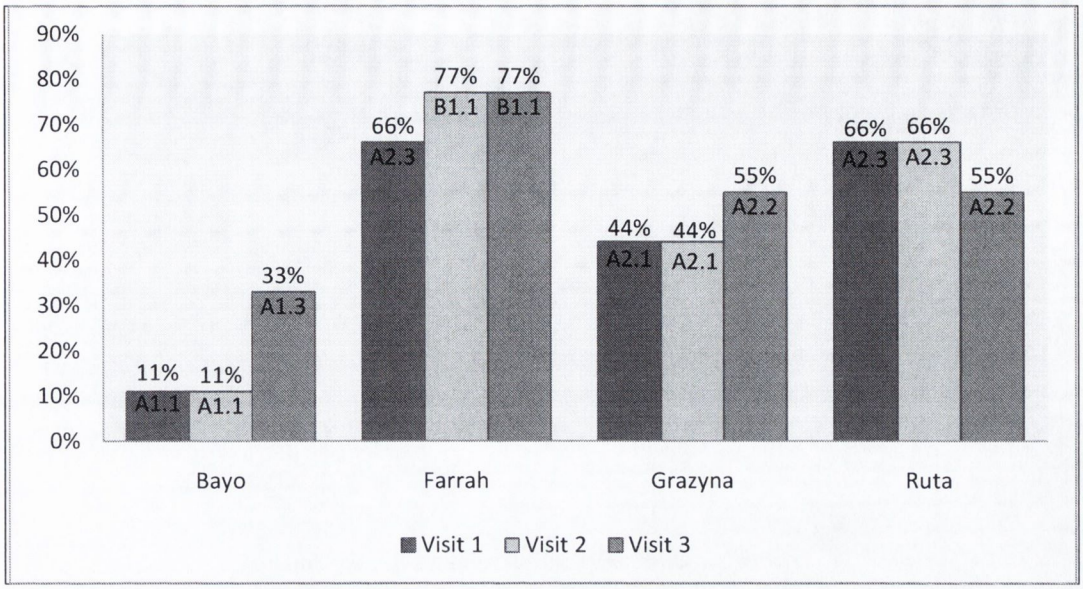

Figure 5-6 Linthorpe School reading assessment

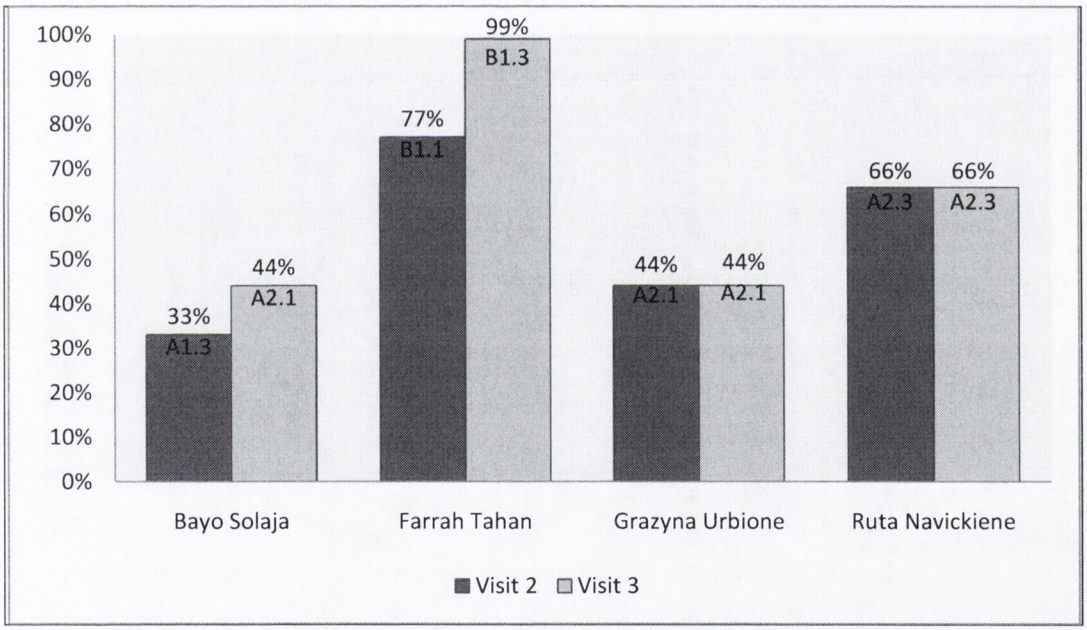

Figure 5-7 Linthorpe School writing assessment

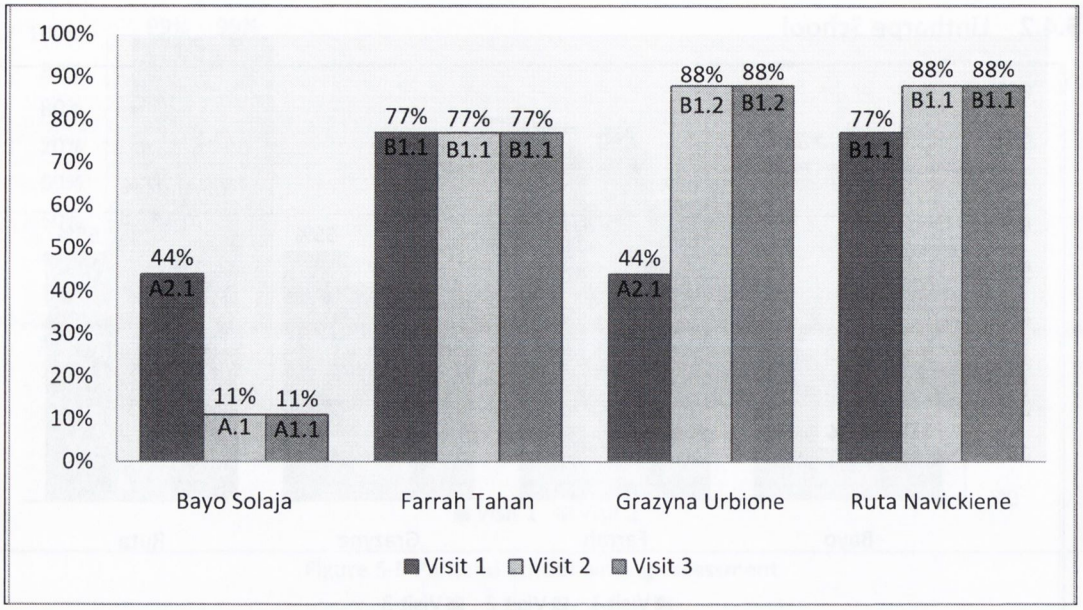

Figure 5-8 Linthorpe School student self-assessment

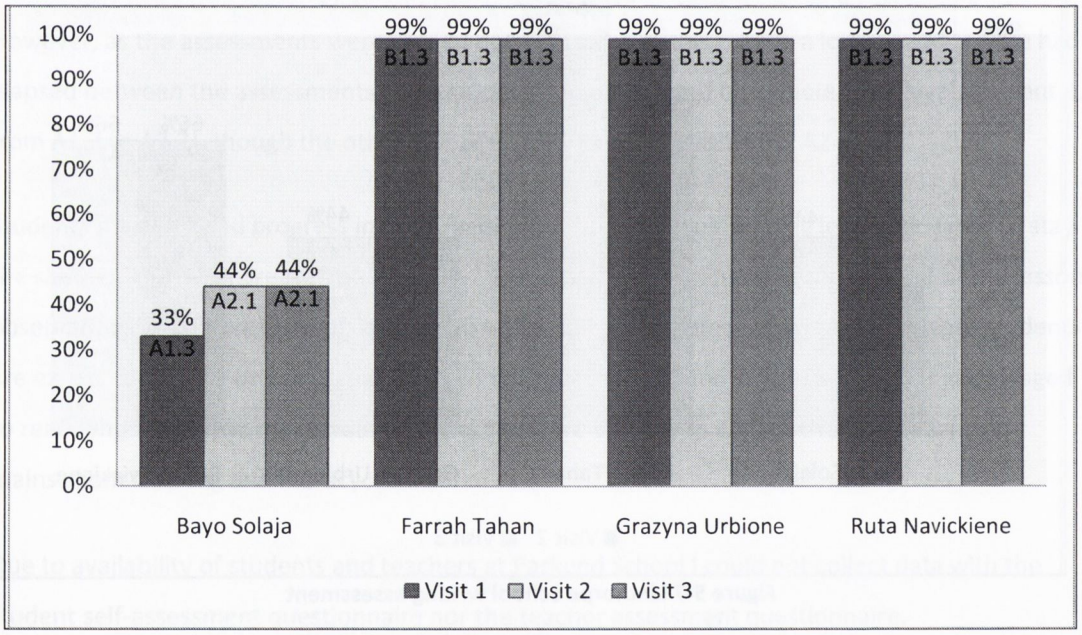

Figure 5-9 Linthorpe School teacher assessment

The reading and writing assessments show that over the course of one academic year the students who received language support remained at the same level of their English language proficiency. In the reading assessment (Figure 5-6), one student performed at a lower level of proficiency at the end of the school year, and three students had improved. In the writing assessment two students performed at a higher level of proficiency by the end of the school year.

The ESL students appear to have made little progress over the course of the academic year, according to these results. They seemed nevertheless to be confident in their level of English. ESL teacher 2 completed the teacher assessment forms, and appeared to have high expectations of three of the students. However, when I asked the teacher to explain on what basis she awarded the levels, I realised she had assigned these assessments to the students' BICS rather than academic language. The teacher seemed to have unrealistic expectations and was genuinely perplexed if students did not do well in the mainstream given that they were able to engage in small talk in the ESL classroom. Bayo Solaja's confidence appeared to decrease as the school year progressed, despite her proficiency in reading and writing English steadily increasing. Her teacher had low expectations of her ability.

5.4.3 Southbank School

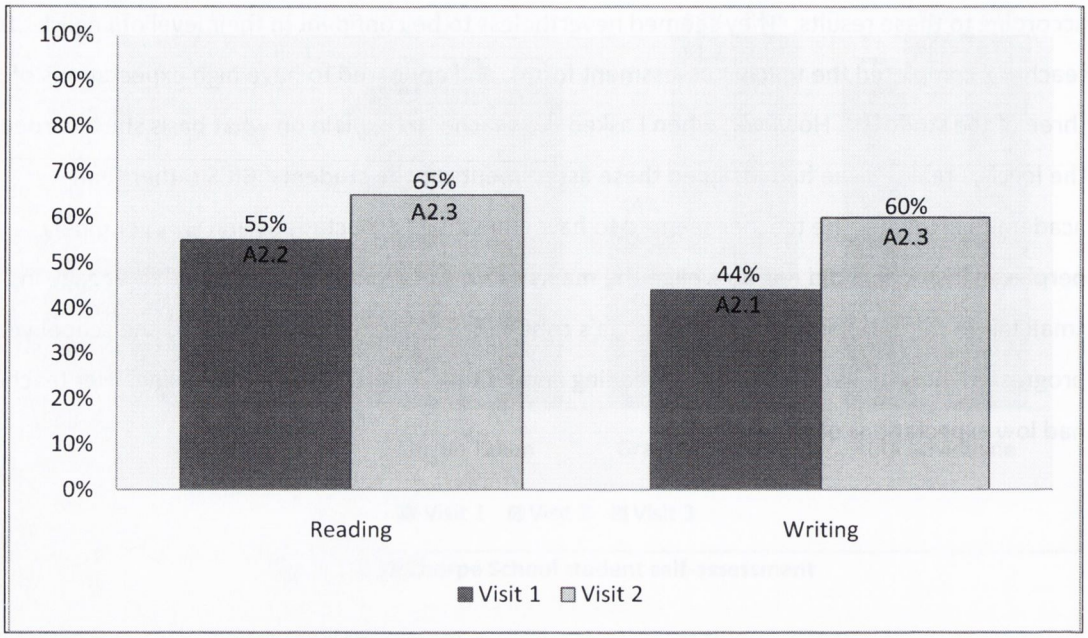

Figure 5-10 Southbank School student assessments average

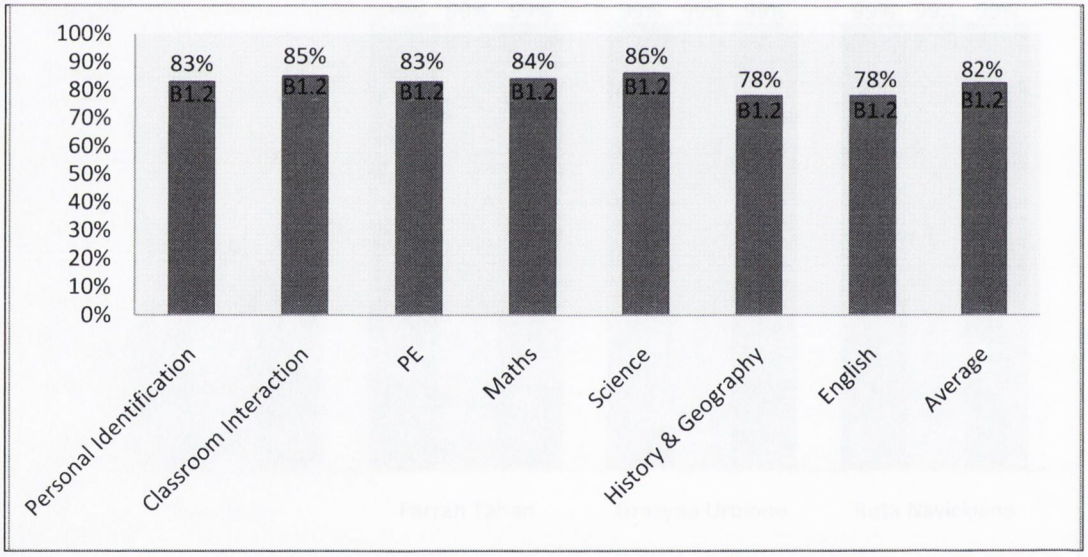

Figure 5-11 Southbank School student self assessment average

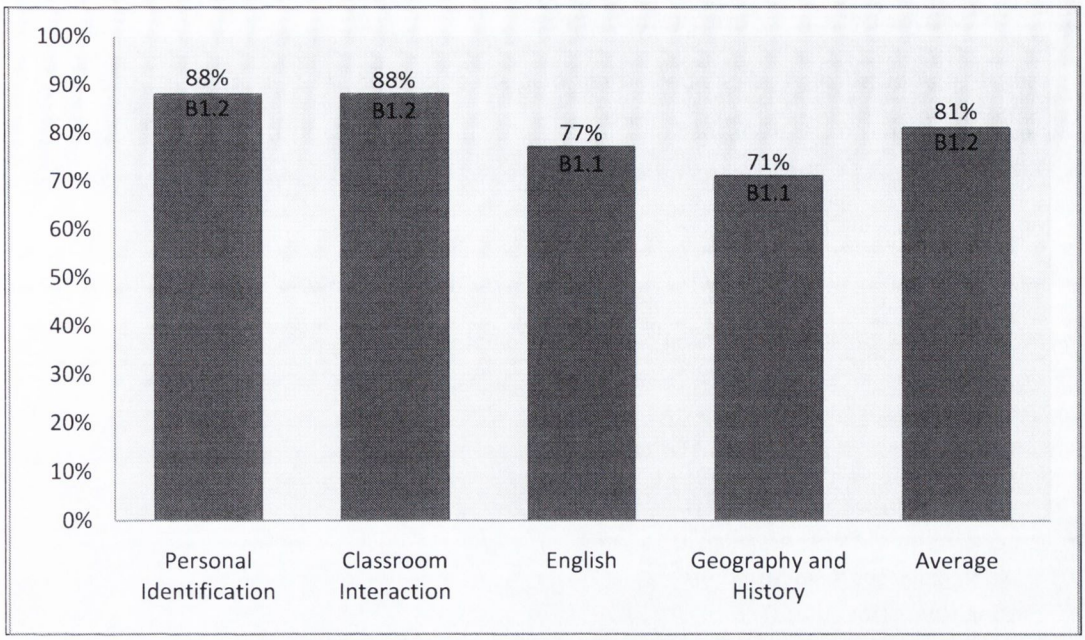

Figure 5-12 Southbank School teacher assessments average

Southbank School is characterised by high teacher and student expectations. The teacher assessment checklists cited subject specific language descriptors (see Appendix B, page 250) and so the results here reflect their analyses of students' academic English across many subjects and genres. Numerous teachers provided subject specific checklists (Figure 5-12).

Because I assessed a large number of students at Southbank School (around 30 students at each visit) the results graph above presents average results. Some students had been in the language support programme for a short time at the start of the school year 08/09 and others for up to four years, and so the rate of progress made by students varied. However, the average results show that ESL students made progress in the development of their English language proficiency.

The results appeared to be linked to the success of the language support programme and to the methods routinely employed by mainstream teachers which engaged students simultaneously in language and content knowledge development, facilitated learner autonomy and were underpinned by high teacher expectation.

5.5 ESL student classroom observations

I observed students from each school in their mainstream and ESL lessons, to detect student engagement with the classroom setting. In the context of these case studies, such a close researcher-participant relationship with these students allowed me access to information which would provide evidence of their access to the school system, interaction with mainstream subjects and with various school structures. To obtain this information I observed first of all their classroom during several randomly selected lessons and looked for examples of (based on IILT, 2007):

- social interactions in the classroom
- use of English with peers
- engagement with others in group work
- following teacher's instructions
- asking for clarification
- taking cues from other pupils
- completing tasks assigned during class
- evidence of previous learning retained and used

To augment any conclusions I make from such observation, I also asked mainstream teachers and ESL teachers for their perspective on the students' needs and ability in the classroom using the following question framework (IILT, 2007):

- Is there evidence of this student mixing/working with other students?
- Has this student ever volunteered information in class?
- Has this student asked for clarification or help in class?
- Can you see evidence of this student making progress in class generally?
- In your estimation is this student familiar with this subject?
- Have you got insights into what this student already knows in this subject?
- What is creating the most difficulty for this student at this time?
    - Listening comprehension
    - Reading comprehension
    - Specific vocabulary
    - Writing
    - Interacting with peers
    - Homework

5.5.1 Parkend School

Eight teachers gave feedback on up to twenty ESL students. Teachers reported that the students worked collaboratively with other students in the classroom when necessary. Some students regularly volunteered information in class; most were making progress in their mainstream lessons and most showed familiarity with mainstream subject content. However, there was evidence in the teachers' responses that other students found it more difficult to ask for clarification in class, to volunteer information/answers and to relate their knowledge to prior experience of school.

The data in this section of the case study are very limited for Parkend School in comparison to the other two schools. This fact confirms the mainstream subject teachers' disengagement with the language support programme.

5.5.2 Linthorpe School

I tracked the four ESL students in receipt of language support throughout the school year. Their names are: Bayo Solaja, Farrah Tahan, Grazyna Urboniene and Ruta Navickiene.

Bayo Solaja

In my observations in both ESL and mainstream classrooms, there was little evidence of social interactions in the classroom. Bayo was usually silent and sat alone or, if in a mainstream classroom, sat with another ESL student (with whom she had built up a relationship in the previous school year and at the ESL summer school[43]). While the student never volunteered information nor raised her hand to ask for help, she would frequently (once or twice per lesson) take completed tasks to the teacher's desk for correction and feedback. As this school arranged the desks in pairs, there was little opportunity for interaction; most lessons I observed followed a 'chalk and talk' structure. In all lessons observed there was evidence of Bayo following the teacher's instructions and completing the assigned tasks. However, the pace of the mainstream lessons I observed was usually limited to one task per lesson as there was a higher percentage than average of behavioural problems and learning difficulties. On several occasions when asked a question in front of the whole class, the student did not know the answer and was helped by her peers.

According to mainstream teachers, Bayo struggled to cope with school. Her history teacher reported limited evidence of mixing with other students, and answered all other questions in the

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[43] In August 2008 the principal employed two teachers to facilitate a 'summer school' running 4 weeks for these students.

negative, highlighting reading, specific vocabulary and writing as creating the most difficulty. Her geography teacher agreed with the areas creating the most difficulty and added listening comprehension and interaction with peers as further problems. This teacher painted only a slightly more positive picture of Bayo's interaction with the mainstream classroom; there was some evidence of mixing with other students and of progress in class, little evidence of familiarity with the subject and previous knowledge of the subject, and no evidence of the student's volunteering information or asking for clarification.

Farrah Tahan

Farrah's teachers reported high levels of engagement with mainstream subjects and in the classroom in general. In all cases she received positive comments, with the exception of familiarity with the subject where her Geography teacher expressed some concern. However, progress in the subject was more than satisfactory.

Further observations I made were equally positive regarding successful involvement. I noted several examples of Farrah asking for clarification (up to six times per lesson on matters such as spelling and word definitions), answering teacher's questions and generally engaging with the teacher and task. Farrah usually sat with other ESL students.

Grazyna Urboniene

Although placed in a class which generally had fewer students than a mainstream lesson, and higher percentage of behavioural issues and learning difficulties, this student displayed evidence of being capable of a higher ability group (completion of tasks before other students, taking the initiative in classroom discussions, asking questions and giving answers to reveal understanding). All of her mainstream teachers gave feedback to suggest high levels of involvement. There was some concern about the student's previous knowledge of the subject, which may be due to the difficulties in ascertaining previous schooling and subject areas covered in her home country. Grazyna's teachers highlighted reading comprehension, specific vocabulary and less urgently writing skills as areas to be addressed.

My observations coincide with the mainstream teachers' analysis of Grazyna's interaction with mainstream subjects. I recorded many evident examples of social interactions in the classroom (most of the time through sitting with another ESL student), many examples of asking for clarification (up to five times per class), completion of tasks well before the majority of the rest of the students in the class and evidence of personal learning strategies. Typically Grazyna used her peers to first of all gain clarification on a task if she didn't understand, before approaching the teacher by raising her hand – she showed no reserve at speaking in front of the whole class, often talking at length to clarify her own request (for example, alerting the teacher to the correct page

and paragraph, or a word she didn't understand). In one lesson (mainstream English) she achieved 100% in a comprehension test.

Ruta Navickiene

I observed Ruta in several classroom contexts, both mainstream lessons and ESL/learning resource. One notable observation was that this student sat with another ESL student 100% of the time. Regarding interaction with mainstream subjects, in general she displayed several examples of successful learning. She frequently engaged in dialogue with the teacher, and appeared self-motivated able to complete tasks independently. She appeared to be both distracted by the presence of her friend and very disruptive towards her.

5.5.3 Southbank School

I observed up to 30 ESL students in the mainstream setting, across a range of subjects. I noted many examples of ESL students working collaboratively with other ESL and English L1 students, when the lesson plan allowed for such group work. ESL students appeared to have no limits in terms of asking questions in class and volunteering information, apart from in the lower bands (which tended to be characterised by more frequent disruptive behaviour/refusal to answer questions than the higher bands). Only in the minority of lessons did I feel that ESL students (and English L1 students) were denied the opportunity to participate and be listened to.

5.6 Teacher Interviews

5.6.1 Parkend School

The teacher interviews indicated a somewhat confusing picture, as the teachers themselves often contradicted each other regarding procedures for ESL, length of time students receive language support and so on. For example, some teachers believed students receive language support for up to the two year limit, and some teachers believed the support continued for longer. This may be related to the lack of definition of language support at Parkend School.

Most teachers criticised the need to form multi-level groups, as lessons were organised by age and not level of English language proficiency. Teachers pointed to difficulties in creating lesson plans for multi-level classes and tended to disagree with the way groups are organised. One teacher expressed frustration at the presence of all students exempt from Irish in language support classes:

> Priority should be given to those with poorest language skills rather than those with exemption from Irish who may have good English.

Teachers focussed on the exam year students in their responses, as provision of language support for these students gave the most cause for concern. Teachers felt inadequately trained and supported. One teacher cited the amount of provision allocated to the school as problematic:

> Very few ESL students get the adequate amount of ESL classes they need to be capable of sitting state exams. The resource hours awarded to schools by DES are below minimal – many students who need ESL classes don't get them.

Teachers wanted in-service training specifically in the areas of materials development, meeting cross-curricular needs and construction of a set syllabus (they were unaware of IILT materials). One teacher highlighted the need to create a core of ESL teachers at the school, who could then be trained in language support. Many teachers who worked in language support at Parkend School were happy to work with ESL students, but criticised provision, organisation of the timetable, lack of training and lack of resources.

Typically for this context, teachers struggled to coordinate with other mainstream staff. Communication existed on an informal basis, in the teachers' own time. All of the teachers suggested using some of the allocated hours for a regular language support staff meeting.

Contact with parents was also criticised. Staff indicated that ESL parents were approached and offered the same contact opportunities as other parents, and that perhaps an approach which targeted ESL parents and their linguistic barriers to communication would be preferred.

I also interviewed the vice-principal, who was responsible for organising the timetable and distributing the allocated ESL teaching periods. The vice-principal appeared to believe that ESL students benefitted from extra allocated teaching periods if English L1 students were invited onto the programme, and that ESL hours were synonymous with low status supervision time. He advised parents to speak as much English at home as possible because of his assumption that speaking L1 at home would hinder a child's English language acquisition. He arranged the timetable by finding out which students were exempt from Irish, and then matching a teacher to a period when the rest of the group had Irish class.

5.6.2 Linthorpe School

I interviewed five teachers for the case study, and more allowed me to observe them in the mainstream (without being interviewed due to time constraints). Teachers' main objection regarding the organisation of language support at Linthorpe School centred on communication between mainstream subject staff, learning support and language support staff. Communication

was informal and took place in the staffroom during staff breaks or lunchtime, if it took place at all. While other departments had time for administration meetings, language support staff did not. Many staff members were unaware of the presence of ESL hours or the function of the ESL programme.

Teachers would like to see more support from the DES, particularly in the form of funding for an initial reception programme for newly arrived ESL students, and extra support for students in their third and sixth year (when students must take state exams). Teachers also suggested an increase in the weekly teaching allocation per student, and they complained about the complicated procedure of extending support for students who had already received two years.

Learning support staff suggested DES provide in-service training in teaching English L2 language so that all teachers can bring this awareness in to their classroom. The teachers also suggested training in materials development, cross-curricular needs, methodology for multi-level groups and a period per week to cover ESL administration. One teacher made the following comment on the ESL situation in schools in the area:

> While individual schools are making huge efforts to integrate ESL students it should not be left up to them alone. [There] needs to be a lot more support from DES in terms of hours for students, teacher training and time allocated to teachers for planning in school.

Both ESL teachers relied on a TEFL textbook. One teacher (who teaches usually just one period per week of ESL) also used mainstream subject textbooks for reading and writing tasks, as well as identifying keywords. Both teachers had to buy the ESL materials themselves, but had secured funding for further materials from the school. One teacher suggested that subject specific ESL materials would be useful.

ESL teacher 2 took the opportunity to provide me with a back catalogue of materials used with the same group of students over the past 12 months while the students were completing the IILT assessment, including a tentative attempt at using the European Language Portfolio, much use of grammar gap-fill exercises from TEFL textbooks, authentic texts (use of real post-cards to elicit a written text), working with films (supported by between five and ten simple comprehension questions invented by the teacher) and role-plays (students act as shopkeeper and customer, for example). Such activities are more suited to the TEFL context, although some attempt to link the ESL lesson to the mainstream was evident in the use of subject textbooks. The teacher expressed concern at the lack of available materials for addressing what goes on in the mainstream lesson,

particularly in understanding oral classroom instruction. ESL teacher 2 (the 'main' ESL teacher for 2008-2009) relied primarily on the Headway TEFL series.[44]

Last year the group of three second year students all started to use the European Language Portfolio. However, motivation to keep using it waned towards the end of the year (on the part of both the students and the teacher) due to, according to the teacher, the time constraints and complications regarding explaining the key concepts (such as 'self-assessment'). The teacher found the Benchmarks ineffective in describing the levels of the students. At the start of the school year assessment consisted of checking class work. However, due to the school's involvement with my research project the IILT tests were eventually introduced and employed.

5.6.3 Southbank School

The team of language support teachers were enthusiastic about working with ESL students and were all selected after having shown an interest in the language support programme. Most of the teachers taught either a foreign language as a mainstream subject (and were therefore able to employ some teaching methods from their mainstream repertoire which promote L2 acquisition), or had experience teaching English in TEFL contexts which, while not entirely context appropriate, gives a foundation to build on while incorporating mainstream content.

Unlike the other schools, teachers at Southbank School recognised that multi-level groups are the appropriate means to meet the needs of ESL students in order to maintain age appropriate groups, and teachers felt adequately supported by the school principal and ESL coordinator (especially regarding the coordinator's supply of resources and availability to assist). Teachers also regarded it as a benefit that students were grouped according to year group, so that links to the students' mainstream subjects and topics within each subject could be used as the lesson base. Such grouping also better facilitated collaborative peer learning.

Regarding training, many of the teachers had previously undertaken the IILT seminars, but lamented their discontinuation. The areas of cultural issues, supporting grammar acquisition alongside English proficiency development, developing ESL programmes and settling students in were suggested as ideal further training topics. A necessity, according to the teachers, was administration time for ESL (and mainstream) teachers to meet on an official basis (rather than using up teachers' free or preparation time). Teachers felt this was a significant area for improvement in order to develop comprehensive programmes which would avoid overlap when

[44] The Headway series are listed as adult textbooks on the OUP website, and were developed for the TEFL context. See: http://www.oup.com/elt/global/products/headway/

students met more than one ESL teacher (a common occurrence at Southbank School because most ESL students received at least five sessions per week).

The ESL teachers also suggested that training should be available for mainstream teachers, in assisting them to integrate ESL students in the classroom and to open up access to their subject area (teachers suggested differentiated methodologies, scaffolding and cultural awareness). Such suggestions revealed sensitivity to the issues around best practice in ESL, in accordance with what the literature identified as such (Leung, 2009).

5.7 Overview of approaches to language support

The mixed-methods approach of my case study design, as well as comparing what the three schools had to offer when evaluated against what my literature review led me to define as best practice (see pages 75 & 76, Chapter 2), shows how well each school is doing in respect to equal education for students from immigrant and ESL backgrounds. The findings are discussed here under the headings; leadership and ethos, flexibility, curriculum, teachers and pedagogy.

5.7.1 Leadership and ethos

Parkend School

Parkend School was in the process of developing a policy which was based on a comprehensive survey of the ESL students present in the school. However, dissemination and awareness of the policy failed as soon as the vice-principal arranged the timetable without consulting the ESL coordinator. The school principal was well versed on the subject of ESL and indicated a strong tendency towards using established mainstream staff on the language support programme, in order to promote integration into the mainstream rather than 'othering' ESL students. However, these ideals often did not filter though into practice. The vice-principal appeared unintentionally unsupportive of the programme, particularly in light of decisions made to include English L1 students in the ESL lessons, and by giving advice to parents to avoid speaking the L1 at home. Such advice, while not intentionally harmful, reiterates the viewpoint that migrant students belong to a 'lower prestige' community (Gramsci, 1985: 164).

From a whole school perspective, I observed little awareness of the language support programme. Needs analysis and student information were available but not displayed anywhere in the staff room. Mainstream teachers appeared to view ESL as synonymous with learning support. Parental involvement appears to be minimal, and occurs only when a student is considered to be 'in trouble', as with the English L1 students in the school, or during the scheduled parent teacher meetings. The lack of any real language support programme is suggestive of the kind of 'chaos' or

lack of structure which Ives (2004: 23-24) claims maintains the disadvantage of underprivileged groups, such as migrant students.

Linthorpe School

Linthorpe had no defined language support policy, stating instead that the whole school policy covers all students and that language support is covered by learning support. While the principal appeared to back language support, avenues of communication between language support and the whole school were limited. Awareness of the role of language support was generally low or non-existent among the staff.

Parental involvement did occur when the pre-service student was working part time at the school, prior to my Phase 2 research. The teacher regularly phoned the ESL students' parents to discuss progress and arrange extracurricular activities (though in her free time). However, during the year of my case study the main ESL teacher did not speak to the parents regularly.

Because the school was allocated only 0.2% of full-time teaching hours for language support, the school principal reallocated other school funds for an ESL summer camp, headed by two teachers. However, some funding for ESL was directed towards a native English speaking student and towards learning support. Some students who were eligible for language support did not seem to be receiving any.

I saw instances of racial bullying, and observed how the students in the ESL programme did not socialise with other students when they are in the mainstream classroom. Other students from ESL backgrounds (but who had been in Ireland since early primary school) did socialise with Irish students. When instances of racial bullying occurred (between ESL students) there was no specific procedure in place to deal with the students involved.

Southbank School

In contrast to the previous two schools, Southbank's comprehensive and well developed language support policy identified many of the issues which the literature highlights, and teachers showed sensitivity to the needs of ESL students.

The existence of such a well researched and readily available policy (as displayed in ample space on the staffroom's ESL notice board) was possible with the support of the school principal. The principal at Southbank School included ESL in her whole school planning and timetabling, giving the programme the same value as any other school subject, which reflects the school's tendency to value the ESL students with the same respect as native Irish students (while other schools

tended to take a 'deficit' perspective, regarding ESL students' varying English language proficiency as a 'problem').

Because the language support programme was so valued, it was also highly 'visible' within the school and to the mainstream staff. On a seemingly superficial level, this visibility began with the above mentioned space allotted to ESL on the staffroom notice board, and continued with the ESL coordinator's tireless consultation with mainstream staff.

Parental involvement was an area showing promise of improvement at Southbank School; the principal's stated that regardless of background, communication between them and the school reached the level of 'parent teacher' evenings but could be developed further.

The ESL coordinator spent considerable time applying for extra funding where available, and the school principal made funds available wherever possible to assist with resources. All allocated ESL funding was used by the language support programme.

Within the classroom and around the school there was much evidence of integration. I wasn't aware of procedures in place specifically for racial bullying; though I did see evidence that it was not tolerated and was dealt with in an open manner should any suggestion of racism arise.

5.7.2 Flexibility

Parkend School

At Parkend, there was very little flexibility in the school's provision for ESL students. The logistical difficulties in arranging the allocated teaching time on the master timetable appeared to have prevented the time being used at all.

Linthorpe School

There also seemed to be little flexibility in Linthorpe School's approach to language support; students were simply given an ESL lesson if they were in the second year (at the time of this research) and when the rest of their group had Irish. I often observed that an ESL lesson would not take place if the vice-principal needed the teacher to substitute for a mainstream subject at the last minute.

Southbank School

Flexibility was the key word at Southbank School. The English language support policy maintained that flexibility was paramount in meeting the needs of ESL students; working around their timetable and not the teachers' (as evidenced in the compilation of the ESL timetable, see page 164), in maintaining age appropriateness in the ESL groups (and not creating 'easier to teach'

same level groups) and in the use of DES allocation throughout the school year which tailored the language support programme to the evolving demands during the school year.

The needs of the ESL programme were considered before the compilation of the master timetable, and both teachers and teaching periods were made available in ways which facilitated the ESL programme as much as possible. The subsequent and frequent revisions to the language support timetable also reflected the flexibility of the school.

5.7.3 Curriculum

Parkend School

ESL lessons at Parkend were simply homework supervision lessons, or were based on the TEFL model. Infrequent attempts to work with ESL students appeared to focus on grammar needs, rather than addressing the mainstream curriculum.

In the mainstream classroom, lessons reflected a largely 'chalk and talk' routine with little opportunity for fostering learner autonomy, for collaborative peer learning or dialogic learning procedures. The classroom observations (see page 166) revealed that little opportunity was taken by teachers to reflect the diverse student population in approaches taken to the curriculum.

Linthorpe School

ESL lessons at Linthorpe based their curriculum on TEFL textbooks, usually with a grammar focus. One teacher (who had headed the programme in the previous year, during Phase 1 of my research) used the lessons to look at students' mainstream subject work, using the ELP, but this teacher saw the class only once a week at most during Phase 2.

Students were encouraged to speak only English in the classroom and engage in a largely Irish-centric curriculum. However, the school had set up an 'intercultural club' and held an annual day of celebration where students from immigrant backgrounds could bring in dress and food items. Whether such an approach was actually integrated into the whole school ethos or simply just paid lip service to the idea of integration is another matter.

The ESL lessons which I observed showed characteristics of 'worst practice' (see, for example, Ovando et al., 2006: 10). These issues include materials being used which are unsuitable for the context, untrained/pre-service teachers delivering ESL lessons, ambiguity in defining the function of the ESL lessons, the presence of Irish-exempt English L1 students, and pre-existing cultural/linguistic knowledge of the ESL students not being acknowledged.

Southbank School

Within the ESL classroom at Southbank School, the course of studies followed by each ESL student drew heavily from the mainstream curriculum. The varied ESL syllabus engaged students with the language needed to access finding their way around and settling into school life, and then gradually the kind of language needed to access subject specific knowledge.

Regarding the school, or rather the teachers' interpretation of the mainstream curriculum subject areas, there was evidence to suggest that the ESL students' L1s and cultures were acknowledged and used as a resource. On many occasions the language teachers would refer to the students' L1s and in the humanities, other countries were used as examples to compare and contrast with the students' present home – Dublin. However, there was room for improvement in this area.

5.7.4 Teachers

Parkend School

Teachers at Parkend School who were directly involved with ESL students expressed frustration at their own lack of knowledge and general lack of support and resources in facilitating English language development. Furthermore, there was limited communication between teachers about ESL students. Within the mainstream, however, many students appeared to integrate and perform at an acceptable level according to the teachers' expectations.

Linthorpe School

At Linthorpe, ESL and learning support had a limited degree of communication, but I didn't see any evidence of formal communication between mainstream teachers and ESL staff. Again, when this did take place it was of an informal nature, during the (hourly-paid) ESL teacher's unpaid periods. As the bulk of the ESL lessons were based on TEFL grammar work, communication with subject teachers in order to link ESL to the mainstream curriculum was not regarded as a priority.

The mainstream teachers seemed to believe that language acquisition takes place only in the ESL classroom. Because some ESL students were placed in smaller, learning support groups for some lessons there was extra time in some classrooms to deal with language and literacy issues. However, most teachers were unqualified in teaching English L2. Those with a qualification had experience in TEFL rather than ESL.

Southbank School

The ESL teachers at Southbank demonstrated exemplary enthusiasm in working on the language support programme. They were dedicated to expanding and sharing expertise, developing materials and fostering learner autonomy and English language proficiency, as demonstrated by the predominance of authentic texts, collaborative and dialogic teaching approaches, and communication between teachers.

5.7.5 Pedagogy

Parkend School

At Parkend School, there was no routine assessment in place for the ESL students, although a makeshift scale had been employed and used by teachers based on students' observable language skills (perhaps only of the students' BICS?). ESL students faced the same entrance assessment as English L1 students. It is difficult to evaluate the pedagogical underpinnings of this school's language support programme because there was not an established programme in place.

Linthorpe School

The students at Linthorpe School were not routinely assessed in ESL in relation to the mainstream curriculum and their capacity to engage with the language of their subjects; instead TEFL based grammar tests were used. While the ELP had been used in the previous year, there was clearly a very teacher-led approach. During my Phase 2 research the ESL classroom was exclusively led by teacher-talk, with students having little opportunity to talk. Student participation was stifled by an inflexible IRF routine (page 169).

Efforts to raise literacy levels did not include the use of L1 as a starting point, although the school's career's guidance counsellor did try to assess one student for learning difficulties using an L1 assessment. However, this was some years after the student's last learning experience in her L1 and the school had not facilitated its maintenance since then. The L1s of the students were not used as a resource in any of the lessons I observed. Emphasis in the ESL classroom appeared to be on BICS and superficial grammar knowledge.

Southbank School

In contrast, the ESL coordinator at Southbank School went to great lengths to provide context-appropriate initial assessment, and then routinely administered the assessment. She also adopted the IILT test kit (2009) when it became available. The coordinator monitored students' progress via the free-writing task, by consulting teachers, and by examining the students' class work.

The ESL coordinator had developed an expertise in the field of learner autonomy (see pages 171 and 172), and so the pedagogy at Southbank School displayed many facets of this approach to language teaching. One of her initiatives was the grammar checklist, which allowed students of differing levels to be in charge of their own learning and develop their academic writing skills (see above, page 172).

The ESL classroom was well stocked with literature from every genre and covering all corners of the globe. Students were encouraged to use the materials for private reading, or teacher assisted

reading, which reflected the school's dedication to academic literacy. Many students had arrived at Southbank with no prior experience of literacy, and the ESL staff developed approaches for such students.

The ESL policy referred to Cummins' BICS/CALP distinction (1980: 177), thus drawing attention to the school's commitment to increase its ESL students' levels of both everyday and academic English, and to clarify for teachers the difference between the two kinds of language use.

5.8 Discussion

In Chapter 1 I outlined the main research question for this study; one of the aims was to determine how schools in Ireland could best provide for migrant students. I looked at language support within the structures of existing policy, practice and whole school management.

The fundamental issue of access to education (Bourdieu, 1991) is raised by my classroom observations. The teaching approaches (predominant in Parkend and Linthorpe schools) appear to rest on the underlying pedagogical assumption that ESL students have a deficit. Much of the literature I reviewed recognised many barriers to access, in addition to linguistic, that migrant students face, namely social, cultural and religious ones (Devine, 2005; Nowlan, 2008; Lyons & Little, 2009) and a 'deficit' perspective is unlikely to address such barriers and bridge the gap between ESL students and mainstream curriculum knowledge.

The literature reports a tendency to attribute educational differences and students' failure to 'lack of academic talent' (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979: 22-23; Bourdieu: 1993b: 178; Hyland, 1999: 32) when in fact such difficulties stem from class or cultural differences. The case study schools offer many examples of such a tendency, even in Southbank School where the ESL coordinator struggled to move students into more appropriate streams. The practice is particularly pronounced in Parkend and Linthorpe schools where students were routinely assessed using inappropriate tools (such as TEFL based tests). The cultural capital of the dominant group forms the basis of state examinations, which in turn bestows the valuable capital of qualifications on those likely to further reproduce the dominant culture, in turn making such processes seem 'common sense' – hegemony in action.

Nieto's theory that "[c]ritical pedagogy is an approach through which students and teachers engage in learning as a mutual encounter with the world" (1999: 103) is reflected in practice at Southbank School and is particularly evident in the classroom observations. The classroom at Southbank is characterised by learner autonomy approaches, engaging dialogue between teacher and learner, and between peers, and a genuine attempt to draw on all students' inherent capital.

The interpretation of the curriculum at Southbank (particularly in the ESL classroom) includes exploration of themes which embrace a range of cultural sources, encouraging debate around racist and sexist ideologies; the teachers involved welcome diversity as a resource rather than trying to ignore it (Giroux & Simon, 1988: 16).

The classroom observations show varying degrees of dialogic teaching practice (using dialogue is also a powerful tool in negotiating participation in the classroom, see page 39); both Parkend and Linthorpe tend towards a classroom characterized by minimal opportunity for dialogue, both between peers, and between students and teacher. At Linthorpe School several teachers attempted to encourage students to engage in dialogue, but attempts appeared to be unsuccessful in the face of disruptive behaviour from the students (and lack of procedures and support from school management in dealing with such disruptions). The ESL classroom at both schools failed to facilitate the kind of curriculum-driven dialogue required by this context, given that dialogue and 'exploratory talk' are the driving force for both language acquisition and the construction of knowledge (Barnes, 1976; Vygotsky, 1986; Genesee, 1994: 4, 8; Mercer, 1995; Little, 1996; Mitchell & Myles, 2004: 191). Introducing students to the academic language needed, rather than forcing use or assuming understanding, is paramount for many groups of students but especially for ESL students who may use a different language at home (Maybin, 2007: 159). Dialogic practices appeared to underpin practice in the ESL lessons at Southbank School. The approach mirrored what happened in the mainstream classroom at that school, which employed problem-solving approaches, much dialogue between teacher and group, and between students, and tended towards inductive reasoning. Overall, in the other schools students appear to have limited opportunities to engage in the kind of language required to both facilitate adequate English language proficiency and to familiarise students with academic language.

The 'banking education' (Freire, 1970: 53-54) approach is predominant in Parkend and Linthorpe schools, which maintains disadvantage. These schools show a higher percentage of lesson time devoted to simply reading from textbooks. The underlying assumption at these schools is that knowledge is in the hands of the teacher and the textbook writers, whereas an approach which borrows from 'critical pedagogy' leans towards sharing pedagogical processes with all of those involved; a recognition that teachers and textbooks represent only one perspective on knowledge, and a focus on viewing all students' knowledge as a resource that everyone can benefit from (ibid: 36). Such mechanisms are proposed by Gramsci as counteractive to the hegemonic reproduction of the dominant value and knowledge system (1985: 40).

The Southbank classroom is characterised by a student-centred approach which facilitates learner autonomy and motivation (Little, 1995: 27 & 1996; Ushioda, 1996: 45), with the ESL teachers sharing the power to decide on lesson topics and activities, and asking learners to accept responsibility for their progress (Dam, 2003). Southbank's drive to open up access to its migrant students appears to have been initiated by one educator, the ESL coordinator, with full support of the school principal. Freire observed that this is typical; progressive education tends to depend on the efforts of just one person (Freire, 1970: 42 & 56).

All three schools predominantly arranged their classrooms in rows of desks facing the teacher/whiteboard (either long rows or rows with gaps between pairs of students), which reflects the assumed status of teachers and students, expressing the relationship they are expected to have (representing "banking education" [Freire, 1970]). Such a layout discourages dialogue and peer interaction, places a barrier between the student and teacher and promotes the IRF routine and teacher talk time (DES, 2006: 31-31).

Southbank created an ESL classroom, dedicated first and foremost to language support students (when not being used for a full timetabled class of 30 students, ESL students were welcome to sit in, ask for help or do self study), resourced with relevant literature and visual displays. The provision of a room meant that the language support programme offered students a consistent point of reference and they could always find help. In contrast, Parkend and Linthorpe schools, while using mainstream classrooms, failed to offer a regular ESL space.

I observed a tendency for teachers to confuse what Cummins termed 'BICS' and CALP' (see page 42). At Linthorpe School teachers indicated that students' progress in English was satisfactory even though the results of my assessment (using the IILT 2009 assessment kit) showed the students to be making little progress. In informal interviews at Parkend and Linthorpe schools teachers' responses tended to be accompanied by examples of informal and slang language, revealing an assumption that students were also therefore automatically prepared to deal with academic English. In the ESL classroom at these schools, students were not presented with any significantly extended texts, and so a commitment to literacy standards was not evident. In contrast, the ESL classroom at Southbank School provided a wide range of reading texts; students were regularly presented with texts from the mainstream curriculum and were given the opportunity to read purely for pleasure, in both L1 and L2. The opportunity for students to use their L1 appeared to have positive results at Southbank, as documented generally in the literature (Cummins, 2001; Baker, 2006, Orvando et al., 2006: 134, 167-168).

Southbank School in general displayed an 'additive orientation' to L1 (Cummins, 2001), where Parkend and Linthorpe appeared to have an underlying assumption that use of L1 is a barrier to L2 acquisition. Schools and teachers can communicate to students that their L1s are valuable and encourage students to use their L1 as a resource even when large numbers of languages are present in a school and when teaching staff do not know the L1s in question (Cummins, 2001: 662). Southbank School appeared to have developed procedures and classroom approaches along these lines, such as making books available in students' L1s, providing representations of many cultures in classroom displays and asking students to write/read/research in L1. Parkend and Linthorpe schools actively discouraged L1 use, which appeared to leave many students with difficulties during a longer 'settling in period' than at Southbank School.

Blair & Bourne (1998; 6) identify strong leadership as a significant factor in a school's approach to successful provision. Across the three schools, different levels of leadership were evident. Parkend appeared to have a haphazard approach to delegating leadership. Language support at Southbank was supported by a principal who awarded the ESL coordinator status. The principal at Linthorpe School appeared to have good intentions towards ESL but the vice-principal coordinated the timetable and appeared to give ESL little value.

Unstructured language support restricts access to education (Lyons & Little, 2009). At present many mainstream teachers are not supported or are not able to offer truly inclusive education and so language support is a scaffold students require. The largely middle-class teaching cohort in Ireland (Nowlan, 2008) means that there are gaps between students and their teacher (Bernstein, 1971) which can only be resolved by reflection, on the part of the teacher, to raise awareness first of all that such a gap exists, and second to acknowledge that it is the responsibility of the school to bridge the gap. The language support programmes at Parkend and Linthorpe seem to be informed by a deficit perspective which is founded on teacher beliefs that they are unable to teach students because of problems located within the students themselves.

The length of language support received by students differed at each of the three schools, although all three recognised that two years are not enough. Only Southbank School had developed a system where students over the two year limit were drawn into existing ESL classes and of successfully applying for extensions for some students, though such procedures were completed in the ESL coordinator's unpaid time. Language minority students typically require more than two years of language support to catch up with their L1 speaker peers – some studies suggest up to ten years (Cummins, 1981; Collier, 1989). Collier cited a case similar to the typical Irish language support system of one to two hours of language support per day for two years, and found that over seven years of support was required (although teaching methodology was not

reported) (1989: 524). A more flexible and easily extended time limit on language support (such as the system Southbank School has unofficially set up) is appropriate in the Irish context. An approach which recognises the role of mainstream teachers in offering support is an appropriate further tool in a school's long term plan; language support which draws students into mainstream subject content is regarded as best practice (Cummins & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988; Bourne, 1989; Nowlan, 2008; Cummins, 2000 & 2001; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000).

Mainstream awareness of language support is indicative of the right first step to educational provision for migrant students (Lyons & Little, 2009; Smyth et al., 2009: xv, xvi, 80 & 118). Features at Southbank such as the staffroom notice board with regular updates (which are also reprinted as memos in the tutor registers) and full timetables, creation of a role of responsibility [45] and support from the principal all contribute to the language support programme's visibility in the school. At Parkend School even the ESL coordinator was unsure about which students were receiving language support and when/if classes took place.

A language support programme which aims to link its lessons to the mainstream subject themes must remain in contact with mainstream subjects (as individual schools focus on different themes within the mainstream curriculum), both about the requirements of each mainstream subject and about the needs of individual students. However, all three of the case study schools reported difficulties in arranging official liaison time between subject and ESL teachers. Given the significance of anchoring the ESL curriculum in mainstream subject knowledge in order to prevent gaps in developing ESL students' education, policy should address schools' difficulties in facilitating such contact.

We know that teacher expectation has a huge impact on the way teachers present curriculum knowledge; on the language students are exposed to by teachers, and on students' performance (Kress et al., 2005: 83; Bernstein, 1991). Linthorpe School in theory promoted mixed-ability lessons, although I observed a tendency for ESL students to be placed in smaller, learning support classes, with high incidence of disruption. At Parkend School, students were streamed, and I observed a tendency for ESL students to be put into lower streams – a typical practice in Ireland (Smyth et al., 2009: 24). At Southbank School, students were streamed according to their ability in maths and Irish, though ESL students seemed to be represented across all ability bands. However, the ESL coordinator admitted that is was difficult to move students into ability-appropriate bands.

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[45] Which comes with an allowance of time for administration.

The ESL teacher profiles reveal a lack of teaching expertise in the case of Linthorpe School (and across many of the schools I surveyed in Phase 1). The findings of Lyons & Little (2009) and Nowlan (2008) suggest this is widespread and further devalues the status of language support programmes and students within a school. Pre-service teachers cannot draw on experience or training in order to provide the quality teaching required draw on the curriculum while developing proficiency in English L2, which leads to a "compensatory education" (Tosi, 1988: 83). Nowlan (2008) suggests teacher training for all teachers in Ireland is in need of revision. Until such changes take place, ESL teachers in theory can build up expertise as they have done in Southbank School. However, because language support teacher positions/allocated hours vary from year to year teachers often cannot dedicate time to professional development. The role and status of ESL coordinators appears to have a significant impact on the success of a school's language support programme; Southbank School awarded its coordinator a post of responsibility which involves a minor reduction in teaching hours, but this still did not cover the actual amount of work required to run the language support programme. In contrast, Parkend School had an ESL coordinator in name only; the teacher assigned the title was regularly overruled in timetabling decisions by the vice-principal, was not given information about the allocated ESL lessons and was not able to launch any of the initiatives he had researched and developed prior to the start of the school year. Linthorpe School had no coordinator and as a result the ESL hours were regularly reallocated by the vice-principal in favour of substituting for mainstream lessons. Teachers at Parkend were often given ESL teaching periods simply when they had a space on their timetable:

> [T]eachers seemed to drift in and out of language support teaching. There was evidence of language support hours being allocated to teachers who did not have a full timetable allocation in their own subject area, regardless of interest or expertise...
>
> Nowlan, 2008: 260-261

All three of the schools attempted to acknowledge the increasing diversity of their student population. However, such attempts were often simply 'scratching the surface'; consisting of once off events instead of embedding recognition across whole school planning (teaching practice, curriculum interpretation and so on). Such events may actually have reinforced ideas that the 'other' is even 'stranger' and the opinion that racism is "caused by the 'strangeness' of incoming groups" (Lentin, 2002: 229). Southbank's attempts were characterized by a deeper effort towards making concepts such as 'inclusion' and 'diversity' norms which affect all students across all aspects of school and social life. The underlying non-secular ethos in Irish schools (see Lewis et al., 2010 and http://www.countmeout.ie/faq/ accessed 9 July 2010) is an evident obstacle to truly inclusive education. The DES's aims to "plan for education that is relevant to

personal, social, cultural and economic needs" and which promotes "inclusion" (DES website, accessed 9 July 2010) and updated from the original "Meeting the diverse educational needs of an increasingly multicultural society" (accessed 20 March 2009). However, stating such aims does not mean that they will be achieved; the case studies schools were struggling to uphold DES goals.

Freire highlights the trend in progressive and critical consciousness education that often only one individual, from the dominant group, initiates a transformation within the educational process for minority groups (Freire, 1970: 42 & 56). I found this in my early exploratory visits to schools; often just one teacher drove the success of the language support programme. Freire also describes how teachers are unintentionally a part of the process which simply reproduces the culture of the dominant group: "Education as the exercise of domination stimulates the credulity of students, with the ideological intent (often not perceived by educators) of indoctrinating them to adapt to the world of oppression" (Freire, 1970: 59). Enlightened teachers recognise and try to bridge the gap between their students and the habitus of the school.

Inside the language support classroom, as well as in the mainstream, how schools enabled learning while developing the L2 differed, as well as the opportunities offered for engaging in meaningful communication (Little, 1996: 8). Many syntheses of studies on successful SLA strategies point to: students not being 'on the defensive', allowing for a silent period (see page 40), valuing students' L1 (Cummins, 2001), input and output in L2 promoted (Mitchell & Myles, 2004: 15-16), flexible policy so that needs and characteristics (age, motivation, attitude, personality, previous learning) of individual students (Spolsky, 1989) can be met, freedom to make 'learner errors' which actually represent L2 progress (McGarry, forthcoming) and a reception programme/procedure (Nowlan, 2008; Blair & Bourne, 1998). Orvando et al. further add curriculum-based content, peer collaboration, multiple teaching strategies and building on students' prior knowledge to the list of essential components of language support (2006: 146). To varying degrees, these characteristics underpin the students' experiences at Southbank School, and to a much lesser degree at Parkend and Linthorpe.

All three schools recognised the additional support required by exam year students (third and sixth year), and Southbank School actively drew on available ESL resources to help students reach their potential in exams (exam results were published very shortly before the final draft of this thesis, and ESL students had performed very well). Bourdieu (1993b) views scholastic qualifications as adding to a student's cultural capital (on top of their existing capital related to L1 and first culture), and Southbank viewed language support (including English language proficiency and school examination results) as an additive process, rather than Irish culture replacing the students' own identities.

Students arriving at various times of the school year had implications for both policy and practice, and was common in all three case study schools. Regarding practice, Southbank School's flexible approach to language support enabled it to adapt the programme to meet these students' needs. Parkend and Linthorpe appeared to ignore such students on the grounds that the DES did not provide for late arrivals. As I have emphasised throughout this thesis, all three schools observed that the bureaucratic processes involved in applying for provision for such students were difficult. Parkend School (and to some extent Linthorpe School) appeared to use teaching periods allocated for language support in order to provide supervision periods for any students (even English L1 students). The DES evaluation reports cited this practice as among the five main causes of concern (see page 29 of this thesis). The haphazard approach to language support in Ireland (Lyons & Little, 2009) reflects a tendency to resign responsibility and to place the 'blame' for failure 'elsewhere'.

There appears to be a tendency to impose the habitus (see P. 13) of the dominant culture (Ives, 2004a: 28) via a curriculum which requires a depth of cultural knowledge that students born outside Ireland are not party to. The bias of the habitus of teachers and school culture in general is evident in the approach taken to language support in Linthorpe School and Parkend School. The more successful Southbank School identified external structures which disadvantage the migrant student and which are tirelessly being resisted by the teaching team and school principal. The interests of the dominant cultural group are accepted as 'common sense' and imposed on the other groups present in the Irish classroom (which includes the group 'migrant/ESL students'), via mechanisms which include the authoritarian state institutions that 'fix' which knowledge is valuable for the school system (Tosi, 1988: 91).

Best practice and the DES circulars recommend a defined policy and evidence of commitment to an inclusive school environment (DES, 2009a) as essential components of a successful language support programme and of a whole school approach; only one of the case study schools had a policy. 'Whole School Evaluations' as carried out by DES regularly identify the lack of a school policy as a problem (DES website, accessed 15 August 2010). In fact, in Phase 1 of this study the majority of schools had no specific ESL policy (Lyons & Little, 2009; and see Figure 4-1); only two schools had a policy in place and a further three out of ten 'were developing' a policy.

The predominant ethos of both Linthorpe School and Parkend School is one which appears to promote the 'chalk and talk' or 'banking' style of education (Freire, 1970: 53-54). Gaining equitable access to education requires a long-term strategy to initiate the changes in consciousness which are needed if inclusive education is to become the norm. However, such

changes are unlikely to happen (Mills & Gale, 2007: 13) while the education processes taking place at the chalk face do not encourage conscious reflection. Such awareness of the mechanisms of cultural reproduction can improve access and educational outcomes (ibid: 444-445).

I have emphasised the joint responsibility of both those in charge of policy and those in charge of practice when evaluating the system of educational provision for ESL students; the disparity between what appears to be an appropriate policy and actual practice reflects a tendency in Irish integration policy to 'give with one hand and take away with another' (Lentin & McVeigh, 2006: 5-6). The current ESL policy which emphasises mainstream content knowledge as well as systematic language support *would* be suitable if teaching practice was based on a pedagogy which encompasses the knowledge and potential of all students. Teaching practice *would* naturally base itself on such an underlying pedagogy *if* other policy established a framework of pre-service teacher training and ongoing professional development within a structure which gives time and other resources so that schools can evolve alongside changes in society. It appears to be a mutually dependent relationship. There needs to be an educational transformation to establish such pedagogy where policy and practice are in harmony.

The following summary tables are based on Leung (2010a) and summarise the policy stance, outcome, provision and pedagogy at each of the schools.

Parkend School

Policy Stance	Equal entitlement & access to mainstream curriculum for all; required language – English; ESL students' needs must be identified
Desired Outcome	Monolingual competence in English; laissez faire on minority bi/multilingualism
Assumptions	Maximum exposure & effort in English; L1 seen as a barrier to L2
Mainstream Provision	English-medium universal curriculum; no dedicated English language (L2) curriculum provision; no ESL oriented assessment; no statutory ESL teacher specialism required; tendency to be staffed teachers with free periods; ESL becomes homework supervision
Pedagogy	TEFL approach; special needs education-approach; beyond early stage - mainstreaming

Linthorpe School

Policy Stance	Equal entitlement & access to mainstream curriculum for all; required language – English; recognise difference; encourage Christian values
Desired Outcome	Monolingual competence in English; laissez faire on minority bi/multilingualism
Assumptions	Maximum exposure & effort in English;
Mainstream Provision	English-medium curriculum; no dedicated English language (L2) curriculum provision; no ESL-oriented assessment; no statutory ESL teacher specialism required; tendency to be staffed by unqualified teachers;
Pedagogy	TEFL approach; special needs education-approach; beyond early stage - mainstreaming

Southbank School

Policy Stance	High achievement for all; equal entitlement & access to mainstream curriculum for all; required language – English; L1 acknowledged
Desired Outcome	Competence in English; L1 acknowledged; literacy standards developed
Assumptions	Maximum exposure & effort in English; pupils' L1 as learning aid; intensive specialist teaching at early stage; mainstream links
Mainstream Provision	English-medium curriculum; dedicated English language (L2) curriculum programme; ESL oriented assessment; tendency to be staffed by specialist ESL teachers
Pedagogy	Learner autonomy approach; dialogic learning strategies; adapted use of English in mainstream curriculum activities; eventual full mainstreaming; focus on literacy; student-centeredness

6 Conclusion

Introduction

This conclusion has five broad themes: gaps in the system, the successful characteristics of Southbank School, how definitions of educational practice mean it should be normal practice to address gaps in the system anyway, why schools/educators hold back from such practice, and how pedagogy can foster critical analysis of cultural reproduction.

Gaps in the system

A key argument in this thesis has to do with gaps, and how to bridge them. On the one hand ESL students in Irish post-primary schools are entitled to equal educational opportunity and DES goals cite inclusiveness as an underlying assumption. However, on the other hand studies show how ESL students' education is not equal to that of their peers, and reveal a disparity between what the DES policy states should happen and practice in schools.

Another gap is between the school environment and the knowledge/culture valued there (the 'hidden curriculum' [Barnes, 1976: 17]), and the experience, knowledge and culture of ESL students. This gap exists between schools and groups of students from disadvantaged/lower socio-economic backgrounds too, but ESL students have an additional gap – a linguistic one.

The haphazard implementation of language support means that some schools have established programmes which do little to bridge the gap; some practice may even widen the gap further. There is a great disparity between stated policy, practice in schools and the outcomes achieved by ESL programmes. Many policy makers and individual educators unintentionally drive haphazard language support due to misconceptions of underlying pedagogies (Cummins, 1994: 37). For the ESL students the outcome translates into an inequality in their access to education, restricted acquisition of English and of cultural capital, denial of L1 and first culture, and the absence of opportunities to engage with and participate with society. Research into the Irish context (Nowlan, 2008; Lyons & Little, 2009) confirms the existence of the disparity, as does research addressing broader perspectives outside Ireland (Gogolin, 2008; Cummins, 1994, 1997, 2000).

In Chapter 1 I established a theoretical framework which explained how broader societal structures govern the reproduction of dominant ideology at the expense of minority/disadvantaged groups, who remain unable to access important 'capital' (Bourdieu, 1991 & 1997). Access to the kinds of capital valued by dominant groups leads to equal participation in a democratic society. However, those groups of people who do not have access to such capital, by virtue of their background, are unlikely to be able to access it. The arrival of thousands of English L2 students in Irish schools has highlighted the injustice of such processes; the challenge

for policy makers, schools and individual teachers is to foster structures which allow critical reanalysis of existing, habitual and 'common sense' structures, thus bridging the gap for those who traditionally struggle with education because they do not have access to the required capital.

Gramsci (1971) observed how dominant social status is maintained via hegemony and Freire (1970) suggested a restorative educational theory which seeks to empower those who are marginalised, therefore bringing equality to education. I presented arguments and theories which underlined that students' prior knowledge plays an essential role in the language learning process; valuing a students' prior experience (in this case L1) is essential in order to provide adequate education for ESL students in Ireland. Bernstein (1971) elaborated on the continuity of environment for the middle-classes and the school setting, which leads to an advantageous 'head start' for those students and an unfair exclusion for students from outside the (native) middle-glass group: "there is not a serious clash of expectations between the school and the middle-class child...There is little conflict of values between the teacher and child and...the child is predisposed to accept and respond to the language structure of communication" (ibid: 29).

Southbank School's characteristics

Despite the preponderance of gaps between policy and practice in many Irish post-primary schools, one of my case study schools *had* managed to establish a comprehensive language support programme which went some way to proving the existence of a model which promotes equality in education for migrant students. Southbank School illustrates a structure which shows what can be achieved with existing provision while also achieving policy aims of equality, and at the same time brings to light further areas for improvement (both in terms of what a school can do and in terms of how official policy can help).

In Chapter 2, after a discussion of Second Language Acquisition theories and of language support for migrants, I drew together a framework of effective ESL provision for the Irish context, under the following headings; leadership, flexibility, curriculum, teachers and pedagogy. Under each heading were several factors which my review of the literature suggested would foster equality in education for migrant students, which means to develop English language proficiency and to facilitate mainstream curriculum learning.

First and foremost, Southbank School's language support programme was enthusiastically supported by the principal. This meant that the programme's significance and remit could be promoted across the whole school, giving it visibility and ensuring funding for resources. The programme's teachers were qualified and interested in teaching ESL, and their availability to teach language support was facilitated by the principal. The creation of an ESL coordinator role

was pivotal in the language support programme's efficacy; the programme was coherent, a policy was developed, no student was forgotten, students were provided with support beyond the two year limit, funding and training could be researched and sought, and so on. Such support (from both the principal and the coordinator) meant that the language support programme could maintain flexibility throughout the year, accommodating students' needs rather than having to adhere to a fixed structure. Such a student-centred approach filtered into the classroom, where autonomy was fostered and language proficiency was developed by getting students to engage with mainstream curriculum content knowledge; i.e. a meaningful communicative environment was evident. Chapter 2 discussed how a key pedagogical perspective of the ESL classroom should be the requirement to develop the second language as the result of authentic, communicative needs of the school environment. Furthermore, the ESL classroom should be based on mainstream subject content (see IIILT, 2003a), in line with the functionalist approach to language learning:

> The functionalist tradition is well established in SLL theory. Its fundamental claim is that language development is driven by pragmatic communicative needs, and that the formal resources of language are elaborated in order to express more complex patterns of meaning.
>
> Mitchell & Myles, 2004: 154

The way Southbank School developed and ran its language support programme is indicative of an underlying pedagogical approach which aims to bridge the gap between migrant students and Irish schools, and between shortfalls in policy and practice.

Normal practice

When I reviewed the communicative demands of school in general, my findings led me to acknowledge that the gaps between academic language and the genres of language many (if not most) students are accustomed to can present significant obstacles to learning to *all* students, not just ESL students. Thus, the role of the teacher in scaffolding (Chapter 2, page 41) knowledge to students, and as a consequence introducing them to academic language at a pace which is tailored to students, seems an inherent and natural part of every teacher's duty.

Chapter 2 reviewed how access to education depends on language; it is important to enable all children to be fluent in the language of schooling. However, this 'Academic English' is a variety of language which is reproduced by culturally dominant structures, as reviewed in Chapter 1, and is a variety which many students (both ESL and non-ESL) do not have access to, therefore an ingrained bias in the education system is fostered which benefits those who belong to culturally dominant groups. This makes the challenge for ESL students much more complex than simply learning

English – they must also be engaging with subject knowledge from the beginning and acquiring school language.

Educational failure, rather than indicating a lack of academic talent, often has its roots in a student's lack of familiarity with academic language; anecdotally teachers have been heard to abdicate their role in bridging the gap between students from disadvantaged/minority backgrounds, instead blaming factors such as students' backgrounds for their educational failure. Southbank School's student-centred approaches appear to be widespread across the whole school, allowing students to employ the strategies they learn in language support and apply them in the mainstream setting, and vice-versa.

Why schools and teachers hold back

Practice which is beneficial for migrant students is, therefore, not above and beyond the normal expectations of a teacher anyway. So why do schools and teachers persist in practice which doesn't bridge the gaps between school and the students who really need it? Wacquant observed that while education has the potential to act as an equaliser in society, as long as educational capital depends upon the cultural experience, social ties and economic resources that each student has access to (1998: 216) then many students will miss out. Gramsci's theory of hegemony describes how culture is reproduced, and it appears that the school system's typical refusal to employ the kind of characteristics displayed at Southbank School is indicative of this reproduction.

Several features of policy and provision in the Irish context get in the way of practice in schools, such as the bureaucratic complexities of applying for an extension of support, and the difficulties in retaining ESL teachers from one year to the next. Such structures present challenges in Southbank School.

Critical reanalysis

So, the gaps which exist and maintain inequality in the school system are highlighted by the presence of migrant students. Southbank School displayed an underlying pedagogical approach which is student-centred, fosters learner autonomy and draws migrant students into mainstream learning while developing their English language proficiency (reflecting the 'best practice' suggested by my review of research in Chapter 2). Other schools could adopt such a framework, but in Chapter 1 I reviewed research which describes how cultural reproduction may underpin why policy, schools and individual educators hold back from a more critical approach to pedagogy which can interrupt cultural reproduction and promote educational equality. As Freire writes, "In problem-posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves," (Freire, 1970: 64) and such an approach

can foster a context where 'agency' prevails over 'structure' (Chapter 1, page 8). In order for this to happen, existing educational structures would need a comprehensive overhaul – teachers are unlikely to be equipped to provide migrant students with adequate support based on the oft called for one-day in-service training session, for example. True equality in education means providing more resources to address the needs of vulnerable students. In Ireland many educators recognise that the needs of ESL students are not being met, although there is widespread confusion in deciding which programme design would best meet the needs of ESL students requiring access to mainstream education:

> [I]ncreasing awareness of the mechanisms at work in the reproduction of disadvantage in education may help by offering a measure of freedom to those manipulated by these mechanisms (Bourdieu, 1998) and improve access, participation and educational outcomes for marginalized and disenfranchised groups.
>
> Mills and Gale, 2007: 444-445

In conclusion

The outcome of my study is a broad generalisation identifying processes which can counteract the observed inequality in ESL educational provision and contribute to models of best practice adapted to the Irish post-primary context. What Bassey describes as educational research corresponds to these aims of my empirical research: "Educational research is critical enquiry aimed at informing educational judgements and decisions in order to improve educational action" (ibid., 1999: 39). Findings of research into this context tend to uncover pedagogy, policy and practice that result in unfavourable outcomes not only for the ESL student but also for the Irish-born student from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

The finding that a student-centred, learner autonomy approach works to bridge the gap between migrant students and what the school expects from them suggests that such approaches should be common practice in schools anyway; as should a commitment to literacy. Effective ESL classroom practice is characterised by meaningful, curriculum based content, teacher-student and peer collaboration, encouragement of interaction, ICT , building on students' prior knowledge and teachers who adopt flexible approaches which allow them to meet the needs of ESL students (adapted from Ovando et al., 2006: 146). Language support should be viewed as a place where students are given tools which support their participation in the mainstream classroom. Policy can facilitate such approaches by recognising the need for a long-term commitment to ESL students, beyond a two year cap, and by making the bureaucratic processes more straightforward.

Fundamentally, what is happening regarding ESL provision in Irish schools is an inconsistency between official policy, practice in schools and the outcome achieved by ESL programmes. For the ESL students this outcome translates, quite simply, into an inequality in their access to education. This observation agrees with other research into the Irish context (Nowlan, 2008; Lyons & Little, 2009) and research addressing broader perspectives outside Ireland (see, for example, Skutnabb-Kangas, 2002; Cummins, 2000):

> Education as pluralism means that you don't have to be the same to have similar opportunities: not identical opportunities, but the same kinds of opportunities measured in terms of access to material resources through employment, political participation and senses of belonging to a broader as well as localised community...Pluralism means that the mainstream – be that the culture of the dominant groups or institutional structures as education – is itself transformed. Instead of representing a single cultural destination, a monolithic cultural position, it is a site of openness, negotiation, experimentation, and the interrelation of alternative frameworks and mindsets.
>
> Cope & Kalantzis, 2000: 124

There appears to be a tendency for policy and practice to be significantly divergent, and for policy to be interpreted in such a way to bring about fragmented provision. Tosi provided an analysis of Gramsci's work which I have interpreted as addressing these issues:

> Gramsci would say that... as long as the professionals are not in agreement about educational solutions, the system maintains the control of the ideological dispute and neutralizes its political opposition. This is certainly one way in which the hegemonic control of education...succeeds in preserving the privileges of the monolingual majority.
>
> Tosi, 1988: 95

In conclusion ESL students are, in many cases, not being offered a system which both helps them to access education while developing proficiency in the language of instruction. I argue that schools and teachers (mainstream and ESL) share responsibility for language support underpinned by a DES policy which facilitates the provision and practice it sets out to promote: "Until the DES forges a more flexible policy that takes account of international findings, large numbers of newcomer students in our post-primary schools will continue to be at serious risk of educational failure" (Lyons and Little, 2009). Southbank School shows what is possible under existing conditions, while suggesting improvements to official policy which would assist schools in developing their language support programmes.

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Times (2010c) Ireland 'to remain multicultural' well into the future
Times (2010d) INTO condemns English language cuts
Times (2010e) Language support in schools 'essential' to avoid ghettoes

8 Appendix A

8.1 Contents

8.1 Phase 1 interview guidelines

8.2 Phase 1 participant information and consent forms

8.3 Phase 1 interview transcriptions (provided on disc)

8.2 Phase 1 interview guidelines

The semi-structured interview guidelines are presented here in the following order:

- Principal
- ESL Coordinator (if the school has one)
- ESL Teacher A (in school where no ESL coordinator is present)
- ESL Teacher B (in school with an ESL coordinator)
- Mainstream teacher

All participants were asked the following questions before the start of the interview:

- Have you read and signed the consent form?
- Do you understand the interview procedure?
- Do you understand that this interview will be recorded, and that the contents are 100% confidential?
- Do you have any questions before I start?

8.2.1 Principal

General Background Information

1. Type of school?
2. Religious affiliation?
3. Number of full time subject teachers?
4. Number of students?

Newcomer/International Students and English Language Support

5. Number of newcomer/international students?
6. Number of newcomer students entitled to English Language?
7. Are there students who have received their 2 year provision still in receipt of English Language Support?

If yes, how do you organise this?

8. What is the average class size for English Language Support lessons?
9. How many hours of English Language Support does a newcomer student get each week?
10. Are all of these hours with the same teacher?
11. If students do see more than one teacher for English language support, what are the advantages and disadvantages, if any? From teachers' AND students' perspective.
12. How is English Language Support timetabled within your school?

ESL Team

13. Is there a full time English Language Support Coordinator?

If no, have you got a teacher with special responsibility as English Language Support Coordinator?

If no, who coordinates English Language Support?

14. Do you have any full time English Language Support teachers?

If yes, how many?

15. How many of the full time subject teachers are involved in English Language Support?

English Language Support Policy

16. Are you familiar with Departmental Circular 0053/2007 - Meeting the Needs of Pupils for whom English is a Second Language?

If yes, how helpful is it on a scale of 1-5?

17. Has the school developed any documents or policies as guidelines regarding English as a Second Language?

Final Thoughts

18. What strategies would you pass on to other principals about how to deal with English language support and newcomer/international students?
19. A general question now: What are the key issues regarding newcomer/international students and English language support at your school?

8.2.2 ESL Coordinator

Newcomer/International Students and English Language Support

1. Number of newcomer/international students?
2. Number of newcomer students entitled to English Language?
3 Are there students who have received their 2 year provision still in receipt of English Language Support?
If yes, how do you organise this?
4. What is the average class size for English Language Support lessons?
5. How many hours of English Language Support does a newcomer student get each week?
6. Are all of these hours with the same teacher?
7. If students do see more than one teacher for English language support, what are the advantages and disadvantages, if any? From teachers' AND students' perspective.
8. How is English Language Support timetabled within your school?
9. Who timetables English Language Support timetables at your school?

ESL Team

10. Do you select the teachers on your English Language Support programme?
11. Why are they selected?
12. Do you or any of your team have a qualification in teaching English as a non-native language?
13. Do you have any full time English Language Support teachers?
If yes, how many?
14. How many of the full time subject teachers are involved in English Language Support?
15. Do the English Language Support staff ever meet as a group?

The ESL Classroom; Teaching and Testing

16. Do you have a preferred group size?
If yes, what is you preferred group size and why?
17. Do you assess the students upon their arrival?
If yes, how do you assess the students?
How do you use the results of the assessment?
18. How do you track the progress of the English language support students?
19. If students are withdrawn from mainstream classes for their English language support, how do you determine when it's time for them to go back?

The ESL Classroom; Materials and Resources

20. Do you have an English language support room?
If yes, do English language support classes take place in this room?
If no, do they take place in a normal classroom?
21. Are you familiar with the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks which IILT suggest?
If yes, do you use them?
If you don't use them, why not?
22. Are you familiar with the European Language Portfolio, which IILT suggest?
If yes, do you use it?
If you don't use it, why not?
23. Are you familiar with the IILT materials for teaching English as a second language at post-primary level?
If yes, do you use them?
If you don't use them, why not?
24. Would you benefit from more training on IILT materials and resources?
25. What would you like more training on?
26. Where do you get classroom materials for your English language support lessons?
27. How do you relate English language support lessons to the mainstream curriculum?
28. Do you talk to the mainstream subject teachers about the English language support students and lessons?
If no, why not?

English Language Support Policy

29. Are you familiar with Departmental Circular 0053/2007 - Meeting the Needs of Pupils for whom English is a Second Language?

If yes, how helpful is it on a scale of 1-5?

30. Has the school developed any documents or policies as guidelines regarding English as a Second Language?

31. Who participated in the development of this policy?

Final Thoughts

32. What advice would you pass on to other ESL Coordinators about how to deal with English language support and newcomer/international students?

33. A general question now: What are the key issues regarding newcomer/international students and English language support at your school?

8.2.3 ESL Teacher – A

Newcomer/International Students and English Language Support

1. Number of newcomer/international students?
2. Number of newcomer students entitled to English Language?
3. Are there students who have received their 2 year provision still in receipt of English Language Support?

If yes, how do you organise this?

4. What is the average class size for English Language Support lessons?
5. How many hours of English Language Support does a newcomer student get each week?
6. Are all of these hours with the same teacher?
7. If students do see more than one teacher for English language support, what are the advantages and disadvantages, if any? From teachers' AND students' perspective.
8. How is English Language Support timetabled within your school?
9. Who timetables English Language Support timetables at your school?

ESL Team

10. How were you selected to be an English language support teacher?
11. What are your main areas of responsibility as an English language support teacher?
12. Do you or any of your team have a qualification in teaching English as a non-native language?
13. Do you have any full time English Language Support teachers?

If yes, how many?

14. How many of the full time subject teachers are involved in English Language Support?
15. Do the English Language Support staff ever meet as a group?

The ESL Classroom; Teaching and Testing

16. Do you have a preferred group size?

If yes, what is you preferred group size and why?

17. Do you assess the students upon their arrival?

If yes, how do you assess the students?

How do you use the results of the assessment?

18. How do you track the progress of the English language support students?
19. If students are withdrawn from mainstream classes for their English language support, how do you determine when it's time for them to go back?

The ESL Classroom; Materials and Resources

20. Do you have an English language support room?

If yes, do English language support classes take place in this room?

If no, do they take place in a normal classroom?

21. Are you familiar with the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks which IILT promote?

If yes, do you use them?

If you don't use them, why not?

22. Are you familiar with the European Language Portfolio, which IILT promote?

If yes, do you use it?

If you don't use it, why not?

23. Are you familiar with the materials for teaching English as a second language at post-primary level?

If yes, do you use them?

If you don't use them, why not?

24. Would you benefit from more training on IILT materials and resources?
25. Where do you get classroom materials for your English language support lessons?
26. How do you relate English language support lessons to the mainstream curriculum?
27. Do you talk to the mainstream subject teachers about the English language support students and lessons?

If no, why not?

English Language Support Policy

28. Are you familiar with Departmental Circular 0053/2007 - Meeting the Needs of Pupils for whom English is a Second Language?

If yes, how helpful is it on a scale of 1-5?

29. Has the school developed any documents or policies as guidelines regarding English as a Second Language?

30. Who participated in the development of this policy?

Final Thoughts

31. What advice would you pass on to other English language support teachers about newcomer/international students?

32. A general question now: What are the key issues regarding newcomer/international students and English language support at your school?

8.2.4 ESL Teacher – B

ESL Team

1. How were you selected to be an English language support teacher?
2. What are your main areas of responsibility as an English language support teacher?
3. Do you have a qualification in teaching English as a non-native language?
4. Do the English Language Support staff ever meet as a group?

Newcomer/International Students and English Language Support

5. What is the average class size for English Language Support lessons?
6. If students see more than one teacher for English language support, what are the advantages and disadvantages, if any? From teachers' AND students' perspective.

The ESL Classroom: Teaching and Testing

7. Do you have a preferred group size?

If yes, what is you preferred group size and why?

8. Do you assess the students upon their arrival?

If yes, how do you assess the students?

How do you use the results of the assessment?

9. How do you track the progress of the English language support students?
10. If students are withdrawn from mainstream classes for their English language support, how do you determine when it's time for them to go back?

The ESL Classroom; Materials and Resources

11. Do you have an English language support room?

If yes, do English language support classes take place in this room?

If no, do they take place in a normal classroom?

12. Are you familiar with the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks which IILT promote?

If yes, do you use them?

If you don't use them, why not?

13. Are you familiar with the European Language Portfolio, which IILT promote?

If yes, do you use it?

If you don't use it, why not?

14. Are you familiar with the materials for teaching English as a second language at post-primary level?

If yes, do you use them?

If you don't use them, why not?

15. Would you benefit from more training on IILT materials and resources?
16. Where do you get classroom materials for your English language support lessons?
17. How do you relate English language support lessons to the mainstream curriculum?
18. Do you talk to the mainstream subject teachers about the English language support students and lessons?

If no, why not?

English Language Support Policy

19. Are you familiar with Departmental Circular 0053/2007 - Meeting the Needs of Pupils for whom English is a Second Language?

If yes, how helpful is it on a scale of 1-5?

20. Has the school developed any documents or policies as guidelines regarding English as a Second Language?

Who participated in the development of this policy?

Final Thoughts

21. What advice would you pass on to other English language support teachers about newcomer/international students?
22. A general question now: What are the key issues regarding newcomer/international students and English language support at your school?

8.2.5 Mainstream Teacher

Background

1. Which mainstream subjects do you teach?
2. What is your average class size?

ESL Students

3. Are you happy with the progress made by the students who attend English language support?
4. For each of the subjects you teach, which areas of English language do international/newcomer students have the most problems with?

ESL Service

5. What do you want/expect from the English language support service?
6. Do you have opportunity to liaise with the English language support teachers?

If not, why not?

If yes, how?

7. How do you feel the school could make coordination easier between English language support and mainstream subjects?
8. Are newcomer/international students withdrawn from your class?

Do you agree with this system?

If you could suggest another system, what would it be?

9. Does the current system prepare students for participation in mainstream subject lessons?

Final Thoughts

10. What advice would you pass on to other mainstream teachers about newcomer/international students?
11. A general question now: What are the key issues regarding newcomer/international students and English language support at your school?

8.3 Phase 1 participant information and consent forms

8.3.1 Letter to school principal

Dear (Mr/Ms.) (Principal name),

Trinity Immigration Initiative

Project on English Language Support in Post-primary Schools

I am writing to request permission for Rachael Fionda (PhD student) to visit your school and collect information as part of our research project on English language support in post-primary schools. One of your teachers (teacher's name) suggested that your school would be interested in participating in the project.

The purpose of our project is to research and contribute to the provision of English language support in post-primary schools. Part of our research involves working with schools to describe how the present language support programme works. To this end we hope to carry out short, informal interviews with school principals, English language support coordinators and teachers, and subject teachers.

Please find enclosed further documents for your information. If you have any questions the two researchers engaged on this project, Dr Zachary Lyons and Ms Rachael Fionda, will be glad to answer them. They can be contacted by phone at (phone number) and (phone number).

Please find enclosed:

1. General background information about the research project
2. Yes/no consent form for participants to complete and sign before each interview
3. Copies of information and consent forms for teacher, English language support coordinator and mainstream teacher.

Yours sincerely,

Professor David Little

General background information about project

The Trinity Immigration Initiative (Trinity College, Dublin) aims to research and contribute to the provision of English Language Support in post-primary schools. As part of this programme we are carrying out a survey of English language support and our aims are to develop a practical and cost-effective approach to the teaching of English as a second language in post-primary schools, including sharing best-practice guidelines, assessment resources and teaching materials.

In order to do this, the research involves working with schools to describe how the present system of language support works. It is hoped to carry out surveys and case studies at the chalk-face by talking to school principals, to English Language Support co-ordinators and teachers, and to mainstream teachers.

Because the English Language Support System and the challenges it faces are so recent, we are not looking for perfect models but rather we are hoping to obtain a realistic, authentic and accurate picture of the challenges faced by schools, principals and which can be used in a positive, beneficial and useful way to the advantage of all those involved in the future of English Language Support.

Your participation involves being interviewed for approximately 20 minutes by Rachael Fionda, PhD student working under the supervision of Professor David Little. The interview is 100% voluntary and you may withdraw consent at any time. The information gathered by the interview is 100% anonymous and confidential to the project team members.

Rachael Fionda will visit your school at a convenient time to you arranged by the school principal.

Please read and complete the enclosed information, and feel free to contact Rachael Fionda at fiondar@tcd.ie with any questions you may have.

8.3.2 Consent form

Dear Participant,
Please read and tick the following statements, and bring this consent form with you to the interview.

1. I agree to take part in the survey of English language support programmes in post-primary schools in Ireland.

Yes ☐ **No** ☐

2. I understand that Rachael Fionda is conducting the interview under the supervision of Professor David Little, Centre for Language and Communication Studies, Trinity College, Dublin.

Yes ☐ **No** ☐

3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw consent at any time.

Yes ☐ **No** ☐

4. I understand that the information gained in the interview will be 100% anonymous and that neither my name nor the name of my school will be used in any public documents without my consent.

Yes ☐ **No** ☐

5. I understand that all data will be subject to the full Data Protection Act provisions and that the data will only be used for the purposes of this research.

Yes ☐ **No** ☐

6. I give permission for my interview to be recorded by digital-recorder.

Yes ☐ **No** ☐

Signed **Date**

Please print name

8.4 Phase 1 interview transcriptions

The complete transcriptions of the Phase 1 survey interviews are provided on a disc attached to the back cover of this thesis.

The disc contains the transcriptions arranged as follows:

Appendix 1 – supplement: contains the transcriptions in order, per school

School 1: principal, ESL teachers, mainstream teacher

School 2: principal, ESL teachers, mainstream teacher

School 3: principal, ESL teachers, mainstream teacher

School 4: principal, ESL teachers, mainstream teacher

School 5: principal, ESL teachers, mainstream teacher

School 6: principal, ESL teachers, mainstream teacher

School 7: principal, ESL teachers, mainstream teacher

School 8: principal, ESL teachers, mainstream teacher

School 9: principal, ESL teachers, mainstream teacher

School 10: principal, ESL teachers, mainstream teacher

9 Appendix B

9.1 Contents

9.1 Phase 2 case study data collection instruments

9.2 Phase 2 lesson observations (also on disc)

9.3 Phase 2 whole school checklists

9.4 Post-primary assessment kits (on disc)

9.2 Phase 2 case study data collection instruments

The data collection instruments are arranged thus:

Instruments for Students

- Self Assessment Grids
- Student Background Data

Instruments for School Observations

- Whole School Observation Checklist
- Lesson Observations
- Classroom Observation of Individual Student

Instruments for Teachers

- Teacher Assessment of Student
- Semi-Structured Interviews with School Staff
- Mainstream Teacher Feedback

Instruments for Parents

- Semi-Structured Interviews Parents

Consent and Information Forms

- Consent Form for School Staff
- Consent Form for Parents
- Consent Form for Students
- Project Background Information
- Review Form for School Staff

9.2.1 Students

Student self assessment grids

★	★★	★★ ★
With a lot of help	With some help	With no help

Please tick ✓

About me

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★ ★
A1		• I can understand short questions about myself			
		• I can use the alphabet to find words in a dictionary			
		• I can answer short questions about myself			
		• I can say a short sentence about myself			
		• I can write some information about myself			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★ ★
A2		• I can understand when my friends talk about everyday things			
		• I can read short texts about everyday life			
		• I can ask and answer questions about life & myself			
		• I can talk about what I did today			
		• I can write short descriptions of everyday life			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
B1		• I can understand most things people say to me			
		• I can read about other people's lives and cultures			
		• I can talk about my experiences and interests			
		• I can give a short talk about my life and culture			
		• I can write a comparison of my life in the past and now			

Classroom interaction

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★ ★
A1		• I can understand important school rules			
		• I can read the names of rooms in the school			
		• I can ask for help			
		• I can describe a game I play with my classmates			
		• I can copy words and sentences for my subjects			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★ ★
A2		• I can understand instructions my teacher says in class			
		• I can read simple texts about school			
		• I can talk with a my classmates during group work			
		• I can describe a school routine			
		• I can write a short descriptions of my classroom			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★ ★
B1		• I can understand presentations by my classmates			
		• I can read texts in my subject textbooks			
		• I can talk with my classmates about what we do at school			
		• I can give a talk in class about my life			
		• I can write in my school diary and plan my learning			

Physical Education

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
A1		• I can follow simple instructions			
		• I can read the names of sports			
		• I can explain that I want to play a game			
		• I can name some sports and sport equipment			
		• I can write about a sport			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
A2		• I can follow most instructions for games			
		• I can read the main rules of sports I like			
		• I can ask about the rules of a sport or game			
		• I can describe the rules of a sport I like			
		• I can write about my favourite sport			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
B1		• I can understand a television programme about a sport I like			
		• I can read about my favourite sport in the paper			
		• I can talk with my classmates about particular sport event			
		• I can give a talk about a sport event			
		• I can write an explanation of the rules of a sport			

Mathematics

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
A1		• I can understand numbers and important maths words			
		• I can read about simple maths problems in my textbook			
		• I can ask for help if I don't understand			
		• I can use maths words to explain a problem			
		• I can write important new maths words			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
A2		• I can understand explanations of simple maths problems			
		• I can follow simple problems in my textbook			
		• I can work with my classmates to solve simple problems			
		• I can use maths words to explain a problem			
		• I can work through problems in my textbook			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
B1		• I can understand most explanations in maths class			
		• I can read and understand most problems in my textbook			
		• I can discuss maths problems and process			
		• I can explain a maths problem			
		• I can write an explanation of a maths problem			

Science Subjects

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
A1		• I can understand some science words and phrases			
		• I can understand labels on science diagrams			
		• I can use some science words in group work			
		• I can say some important science words			
		• I can draw and label a simple science diagram			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
A2		• I can follow simple science experiment instructions			
		• I can read simple texts in my textbook			
		• I can answer simple questions in class			
		• I can describe a simple science experiment			
		• I can write a description of a simple science experiment			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
B1		• I can understand most experiments and presentations in class			
		• I can follow written instructions for experiments			
		• I can give my own ideas in group work			
		• I can describe an interesting scientific process			
		• I can write about a science project			

History and Geography

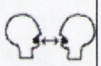
Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
A1		• I can understand some important words			
		• I can recognise key words and information in a text			
		• I can use key words in group work			
		• I can name key words			
		• I can add missing information to maps and time-lines			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
A2		• I can follow simple explanations if I know the main words and ideas			
		• I can find important information in my textbook			
		• I can express my ideas in group work			
		• I can talk about important people and events			
		• I can write about important people and events			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
B1		• I can understand most explanations and presentations			
		• I can read about interesting people and places			
		• I can take part in class discussions			
		• I can give a short talk about familiar topics			
		• I can write and give my views on familiar topics			

English

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
A1		• I can understand key words and phrases			
		• I can recognise key words and information in a text			
		• I can give short answers to simple questions			
		• I can say some important words in class			
		• I can write new words and put missing words into a text			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
A2		• I can understand a short text if I know the key words			
		• I can read a short story from my textbook			
		• I can take part in group work and ask questions			
		• I can give a short summary of a story or poem			
		• I can write a simple letter or dialogue			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
B1		• I can follow a short play or presentation			
		• I can understand texts and recognise their purpose			
		• I can work with my classmates to write a play			
		• I can give and explain my views about a text			
		• I can write a story of a poem, story or film using my own well organised notes			

Student background

1. **Ages and Year groups**

   Year 1 ☐ Year 2 ☐ Year 3 ☐
   Year 4 ☐ Year 5 ☐ Year 6 ☐

   11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐

14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐

2. Length of time in the school

Less than 1 year ☐ 1 year ☐ 2 years ☐
3 years ☐ 4 years ☐ 5 years ☐

3. L1

Albanian	☐	Lithuanian	☐
Amharic	☐	Mandarin	☐
Arabic	☐	Mende	☐
Bajun	☐	Moldovian	☐
Berber	☐	Orominga	☐
Bosnian	☐	Pilipino	☐
Bulgarian	☐	Portuguese	☐
Cantonese	☐	Romanian	☐
Croatian	☐	Romany	☐
Czech	☐	Russian	☐
Dyula	☐	Serbian	☐
Ewe	☐	Slovak	☐
French	☐	Somali	☐
Fulani	☐	Tagalog	☐
Igbo	☐	Tigrinya	☐
Kikongo	☐	Twi	☐
Kpelle	☐	Ukranian	☐
Kurdish	☐	Vietnamese	☐
Lingala	☐	Yoruba	☐
Other	☐	Please detail _____	

4. Country of Origin

Albania	☐	Liberia	☐
Algeria	☐	Libya	☐
Angola	☐	Lithuania	☐
Bosnia	☐	Moldova	☐
Bulgaria	☐	Nigeria	☐
Cameroon	☐	Philippines	☐
China	☐	Romania	☐
Czech Rep.	☐	Romany	☐
DR Congo	☐	Russia	☐
Ethiopia	☐	Sierra Leone	☐
Ghana	☐	Somalia	☐
Ivory Coast	☐	Ukraine	☐
Kurdish-Iraq	☐	Vietnam	☐

Other ☐ Please detail _____

5. Time in Ireland

Less than 1 term	☐	1 year	☐	2 years	☐
3 years	☐	4 years	☐	5 years	☐

6. Previous ESL support

Less than 1 term	☐	1 year	☐	2 years	☐
3 years	☐	4 years	☐	5 years	☐

9.2.2 School

Whole school observation checklist

	Yes	No	Notes
New ESL students receive a 'starter kit			
Parents of ESL students receive a 'welcome' booklet from the school			
Lists of ESL groups displayed in staffroom			
Space in staffroom for ESL notices in General			
Notices, display material etc. acknowledge and provide positive images of different ethnic groups			
The reception area has multilingual welcome notices			
Funding is available to support ESL programme			
Classroom and library material reflect positive images of ethnic and cultural diversity			
Food served I the school cafeteria includes items that meet the cultural and dietary needs of the students			
Games and hobby activities in the school can adjust flexibly to support inclusion			
Special events are scheduled throughout the year to mark all cultures and heritages present in the school			
Anti-racism education is included as a natural part of the curriculum			
Maps or posters show diverse student population			
National holidays and holy days of the student population are acknowledged			
Photographic displays represent the diverse student population			
Intercultural days and events are organised			
Library makes books available representing the different cultures at the school			
Buddy system operates in the school			
Ecumenical prayer/spiritual support and opportunities available			
Parents offered English courses (free of charge)			
Parents of ESL students invited to participate in the school			
Pictorial/translated documents available for ESL parents			
Interpreters available for ESL parents			
There is a planned assessment procedure for assessment of each new student			
The student's English language proficiency is assessed in relation to the Language Proficiency Benchmarks			
An assessment portfolio on each student deals with psychological issues, learning difficulties and academic support			
Misc.			

Table 9-1Whole school checklist

Lesson observations

Year group _____

ESL or mainstream (which subject?) _____

Teacher

Location

Time & date _____

Class size_____

Description of lesson structure
Description of learning items/activities
Materials used (collect samples and attach to field notes)

Classroom observation of individual students

Name : _____Year: _____ Date:_____

Subject: _____ Subject teacher: _____

(The number of times that the pupil carries out the following responses/initiations etc. can be indicated with a series of √ or marks.)

Activity	No. of examples (√)	No response	Poor response	Good/average response
Evidence of social relationships in the classroom				
Use of English with peers				
Engagement with others in group work				
Following teacher's instructions				
Answering teacher's questions				
Asking for clarification				
Taking cues from other pupils				
Evidence of personal strategies for dealing with classroom learning				
Completing tasks assigned during class				
Evidence of previous learning retained and used				
Comment:				

9.2.3 Teachers

Teacher assessment of students

Self-identification

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
A1		• Can understand short questions about him/herself			
		• Can use the alphabet to find words in a dictionary			
		• Can answer short questions about him/herself			
		• Can say a short sentence about him/herself			
		• Can write some information about him/herself			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
A2		• Can understand when friends talk about everyday things			
		• Can read short texts about everyday life			
		• Can ask and answer questions about life & him/herself			
		• Can talk about what he/she did today			
		• Can write short descriptions of everyday life			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
B1		• Can understand most things people say to him/herself			
		• Can read about other people's lives and cultures			
		• Can talk about his/her experiences and interests			
		• Can give a short talk about his/her life and culture			
		• Can write a comparison of his/her life in the past & now			

Classroom interaction

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
A1		• Can understand important school rules			
		• Can read the names of rooms in the school			
		• Can ask for help			
		• Can describe a game he/she plays with friends			
		• Can copy words and sentences for school subjects			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
A2		• Can understand instructions the teacher says in class			
		• Can read simple texts about school			
		• Can talk with a his/her classmates during group work			
		• Can describe a school routine			
		• Can write a short descriptions of his/her classroom			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
B1		• Can understand presentations by classmates			
		• Can read texts in his/her subject textbooks			
		• Can talk with his/her classmates about what they do at school			
		• Can give a talk in class about his/her life			
		• Can write in school diary and plan learning			

Physical Education

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
A1		• Can follow simple instructions			
		• Can read the names of sports			
		• Can explain that he/she wants to play a game			
		• Can name some sports and sport equipment			
		• Can write about a sport			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
A2		• Can follow most instructions for games			
		• Can read the main rules of sports he/she likes			
		• Can ask about the rules of a sport or game			
		• Can describe the rules of a sport he/she likes			
		• Can write about his/her favourite sport			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
B1		• Can understand a television programme about a sport he/she likes			
		• Can read about his/her favourite sport in the paper			
		• Can talk with classmates about particular sport event			
		• Can give a talk about a sport event			
		• Can write an explanation of the rules of a sport			

Mathematics

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
A1		• Can understand numbers and important maths words			
		• Can read about simple maths problems in textbook			
		• Can ask for help if he/she doesn't understand			
		• Can use maths words to explain a problem			
		• Can write important new maths words			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
A2		• Can understand explanations of simple maths problems			
		• Can follow simple problems in textbook			
		• Can work with classmates to solve simple problems			
		• Can use maths words to explain a problem			
		• Can work through problems in textbook			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
B1		• Can understand most explanations in maths class			
		• Can read and understand most problems in textbook			
		• Can discuss maths problems and process			
		• Can explain a maths problem			
		• Can write an explanation of a maths problem			

Science Subjects

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
A1		• Can understand some science words and phrases			
		• Can understand labels on science diagrams			
		• Can use some science words in group work			
		• Can say some important science words			
		• Can draw and label a simple science diagram			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
A2		• Can follow simple science experiment instructions			
		• Can read simple texts in textbook			
		• Can answer simple questions in class			
		• Can describe a simple science experiment			
		• Can write a description of a simple science experiment			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
B1		• Can understand most experiments and presentations in class			
		• Can follow written instructions for experiments			
		• Can give my own ideas in group work			
		• Can describe an interesting scientific process			
		• Can write about a science project			

History and Geography

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
A1		• Can understand some important words			
		• Can recognise key words and information in a text			
		• Can use key words in group work			
		• Can name key words			
		• Can add missing information to maps and time-lines			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
A2		• Can follow simple explanations if he/she knows the main words and ideas			
		• Can find important information in textbook			
		• Can express ideas in group work			
		• Can talk about important people and events			
		• Can write about important people and events			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
B1		• Can understand most explanations and presentations			
		• Can read about interesting people and places			
		• Can take part in class discussions			
		• Can give a short talk about familiar topics			
		• Can write and give views on familiar topics			

English

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
A1		• Can understand key words and phrases			
		• Can recognise key words and information in a text			
		• Can give short answers to simple questions			
		• Can say some important words in class			
		• Can write new words and put missing words into a text			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
A2		• Can understand a short text if he/she knows the key words			
		• Can read a short story from textbook			
		• Can take part in group work and ask questions			
		• Can give a short summary of a story or poem			
		• Can write a simple letter or dialogue			

Level	Skill		★	★★	★★★
B1		• Can follow a short play or presentation			
		• Can understand texts and recognise their purpose			
		• Can work with classmates to write a play			
		• Can give and explain views about a text			
		• Can write a story of a poem, story or film using own well organised notes			

<u>Semi-structured interview with teachers</u>

1. Position _____
2. Total teaching experience [years] [months]
3. Qualifications- degree subject(s)_____

Institution_____

Teaching Qualifications_____
Institution_____
Other

4. Length of time at current school [years] [months]
   Employment contract
   Permanent ☐ EPT ☐ TWT ☐ Part-time ☐
   Substitute ☐ Other ☐ _____
   Subjects taught_____
   ESL responsibility_____

5. ESL classes taught [total per week]
   How many per year group?
   Year 1 ☐ Year 2 ☐ Year 3 ☐
   Year 4 ☐ Year 5 ☐ Year 6 ☐

6. How is ESL organised? (tick all that apply)
   Students are withdrawn from Irish ☐
   Students are withdrawn from other subjects ☐ _____
   Support in the mainstream classroom ☐
   Initial immersion period (how long?) ☐ _____

7. How are students assigned to groups? (tick all that apply)
By age and level ☐ By age but not level ☐
By language level but not age ☐ By neither age nor level ☐
I agree/disagree with the way groups are organised, because_____

8. What support have you had for your role on the ESL programme?
In-service ☐ _____
Seminar ☐ _____
School based ☐ _____
Informal ☐ _____
Self-funded ☐ _____
The training I have received is/is not adequate, because_____
What further training/support would you suggest for teachers who teach ESL students?

What would further training/support offer?
English as a non-native language ☐
Materials development and use ☐
Cross curricular needs/subjects ☐
Classroom methodology for multi-level groups ☐
Cultural issues ☐
Periods per week for admin ☐
Periods per week for meeting ESL team ☐
Periods per week for meeting mainstream staff ☐
Other (provide details) ☐

9. Are there any people from ethnic minorities /bilingual speakers working in the school?
   Yes ☐ No ☐
If yes, in what capacity?

Does the school have an anti-racist or intercultural education policy?

Yes ☐ No ☐
Why/why not?

Does the school have an anti-racist or intercultural education policy?
Yes ☐ No ☐
Why/why not?

How is contact organised there between the school and the parents or guardians of ESL students?

10. How are mainstream teachers made aware of language support pupils' needs?
ESL notices ☐
ESL promotion to whole school ☐
Communication with mainstream ☐
Other?

11. How many language support teachers are there in your school?
One ☐ Two ☐ Three ☐
Four ☐ Five ☐ Five + ☐
Is there one ESL teacher with a special responsibility in the area?
Yes ☐ No ☐
Is this a formal, paid position?
Yes ☐ No ☐
How does this work?

How much contact do you have between the other teachers providing language support?

For approximately how long do most pupils go on receiving language support?
<1 year ☐ 1-2 years ☐ >2 years ☐

12. Do you feel that the support your school receives from the Department of Education and Science for ESL is adequate? Please comment.
Yes ☐ No ☐

Overall, do you have any positive and/or negative comments to make?

Mainstream teachers' feedback

Name of teacher: _____
Name of student: _____
Year: _____
Subject: _____
Date: _____

	YES	NO	SOMETIMES
Is there evidence of this student mixing/ working with other students?			
Has this student ever volunteered information in class?			
Has this student asked for clarification or help in class?			
Can you see evidence of this student making progress in class generally?			
In your estimation is this student familiar with this subject?			
Have you got insights into what this student already knows in this subject?			
What is creating the most difficulty for this student at this time?	**Please tick √** ☐ Listening comprehension ☐ Reading comprehension ☐ Specific vocabulary ☐ Writing ☐ Interacting with peers ☐ Homework		
Please indicate any particular areas that would benefit from language support in the next 6 – 8 weeks (If appropriate, name of textbook and chapter would be helpful)			

9.2.4 Parents

Semi-structured interview/questionnaire

1. Age, year group and gender of child(ren)

age	year group	gender
age	year group	gender
age	year group	gender
age	year group	gender
age	year group	gender
age	year group	gender
age	year group	gender

2. Your profession
   Mum
   Dad
   Other carer _____

3. Country of Origin

Albania	☐	Liberia	☐
Algeria	☐	Libya	☐
Angola	☐	Lithuania	☐
Bosnia	☐	Moldova	☐
Bulgaria	☐	Nigeria	☐
Cameroon	☐	Philippines	☐
China	☐	Romania	☐
Czech Rep.	☐	Romany	☐
DR Congo	☐	Russia	☐
Ethiopia	☐	Sierra Leone	☐
Ghana	☐	Somalia	☐
Ivory Coast	☐	Ukraine	☐
Kurdish-Iraq	☐	Vietnam	☐
Other	☐	Please detail _____	

4. Languages spoken at home

Albanian	☐	Lithuanian	☐
Amharic	☐	Mandarin	☐
Arabic	☐	Mende	☐
Bajun	☐	Moldovian	☐
Berber	☐	Orominga	☐
Bosnian	☐	Pilipino	☐
Bulgarian	☐	Portuguese	☐
Cantonese	☐	Romanian	☐
Croatian	☐	Romany	☐
Czech	☐	Russian	☐
Dyula	☐	Serbian	☐
Ewe	☐	Slovak	☐
French	☐	Somali	☐
Fulani	☐	Tagalog	☐
Igbo	☐	Tigrinya	☐
Kikongo	☐	Twi	☐
Kpelle	☐	Ukranian	☐
Kurdish	☐	Vietnamese	☐
Lingala	☐	Yoruba	☐
English	☐	Other	☐ _____

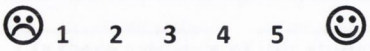
5. How often do you have contact with your child's school?

1 x week ☐ 1-3 x month ☐ 1x term ☐ 1-2 x year ☐
Other ☐

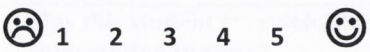
6. Are you happy with your child's (children's) progress at school? (please circle)



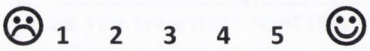
Are you happy with the amount of contact you have with the school?



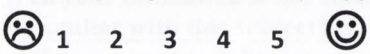
Is it easy to contact a member of staff at your child's (children's) school?



Are you happy with the English language support provided by the school?



Is your child (are your children) happy at the school?



6. Any other comments you would like to make?

9.2.5 Consent and information forms

Information and consent for school staff

You are invited to participate in this research project which is being carried out by *Rachael Fionda.* Your participation is voluntary. Even if you agree to participate now, you can withdraw at any time without any consequences of any kind.

The study is designed to investigate the English as a Second Language provision at your school, particularly the areas of *assessment*, *policy*, *diversity in the classroom* and *materials*.

If you agree to participate, this will involve you will be involved in short, informal interviews – simply answering questions and raising points about the English as a Second Language lessons in your school. Rachael Fionda may also spend time in the English language classroom. Rachael appreciates the demands of teaching and therefore her presence will be as unobtrusive as possible. Interviews are designed as informal, quick chats that will take around ten minutes each. Rachael's visits will take place at three times during the school year, at times convenient to the school's schedule.

Anonymity is maintained at all times, and the visits will be flexible to allow for unforeseen changes in your school day. Any information or data which we obtain from you will be 100% confidential and your identity will be protected at all times. You will benefit directly from participating in this research by receiving reports and updates on the research findings.

If you have any questions about this research you can ask me.

Signature of research participant

I understand what is involved in this research and I agree to participate in the study.

_____ _____

Signature of participant **Date**

Signature of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

_____ _____

Signature of researcher **Date**

Consent form for parents

Dear parents,

Please read and tick the following statements.

1. I understand that Rachael Fionda will interview me and my child about English language support class and school in general and sometimes be in the classroom.

   Yes ☐ No ☐

2. I understand that my and my child's participation is voluntary and that we can stop at any time.

   Yes ☐ No ☐

3. I understand that the information from the interview is 100% confidential.

   Yes ☐ No ☐

Signed **Date**

_____ _____

Please print your name:

_____

Thank you,

Rachael Fionda

Consent form for students

Dear Pupil,

Please read and tick the following statements

1. I understand that Rachael Fionda will interview me about my English language support class and school in general and sometimes be in my classroom.

   Yes ☐ No ☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can stop at any time.

   Yes ☐ No ☐

3. I understand that the information she will get is 100% confidential.

   Yes ☐ No ☐

Signed **Date**

_____ _____

Please print your name:

_____

Thank you,

Rachael Fionda

Project background information

Trinity Immigration Initiative: English Language Support Programme at Post-Primary Level

The Trinity Immigration Initiative of Trinity College, Dublin, is a major research programme in diversity, integration and policy. The English Language Support Programme is one branch of this fully funded project.

Our aims are:

- To find out how English language support helps students to get the best out of their education.
- To work with schools to improve English language support.

In order to do this, my research means that I will visit schools and spend some time in the classroom, talking to the children (without disturbing their education) about their English language lessons.

Your child's teacher will know me and will have given consent to my visit. I will also get to know your child and the other children in the classroom.

I am a school teacher, as well as a student at Trinity College, and I have worked with children for many years. I have also designed a Child Protection Policy for my research, so your children are in safe hands when they are working with me.

I hope you and your children will benefit directly from my research, by contributing to developing the best English language support possible for your child and enabling your child to get the best out of their education.

Thank you.

Review form for schools

Rachael's last visit to my school/classroom took place on (date) _____

- I was happy with the way Rachael carried out her research:

(please tick)

Yes ☐ No ☐

- I am happy to maintain my consent for further visits:

(Please tick)

Yes ☐ No ☐

- May I suggest that during the next visit, Rachael:

(please list any changes you would like me to make in the way I conduct my research)

_____

_____

_____

Thank you.

9.3 Lesson observations

9.3.1 Parkend School

9.3.1.1 Mainstream lessons

Lesson 1

Class content	Date: WS 7.10.08 Teacher: English Subject: English Details: 2nd year, (F/SN), 10 students (1 ESL)
• **The basic lesson structure consisted of:** – **a comprehension test on a Junior Cert prescribed novel (15 minutes)** – **a spelling test (10 minutes) and** – **turn-taking reading the novel out loud (10 minutes)** • **Comprehension test consisted of 20 'who, what, why or where' questions, for example:** • **Spelling test consisted of 14 items from the relevant chapters of the novel, nouns, proper nouns and verbs** • **In the reading aloud section of the lesson, the teacher randomly selected students to read a paragraph of the novel**	
Comments	• While the other students in the class managed to complete all 20 questions, the ESL student present completed only 6. His answers contained with many spelling errors, sentence elements missing or tense errors • ESL student failed to correctly achieve any positive result in this task • ESL student was selected to read and managed to read a noticeably shorter part of the text in comparison to the other students, and he visibly struggled with most vocabulary items. The teacher aided him by giving him one chance before correcting him
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• 'Teaching by testing'

Lesson 2

Class content	Date: WS 7.10.08 Teacher: English/History Subject: History Details: 2nd year, (O), 22 students

- **The basic lesson structure consisted of:**
  - **students copy text from the board (summary of the reformation)**
  - **discussion**
  - **work with the textbook**

- **Teacher talked about the key themes and events of this period of history while the students were copying the text**
- **Students initiated a class discussion and teacher posed problems to facilitate the discussion**
- **Students read aloud from the textbook and teacher highlighted key ideas and initiated more discussion**
- **There was an equal balance of teacher talk-time and students talk-time**

Comments	• There was an equal balance of teacher talk-time and students talk-time
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Dialogic teaching practice via student initiated discussion • Equal status of students and teacher

Lesson 3

Class content	Date: WS 7.10.08 Teacher: History 2 Subject: History Details: 2nd year, (F/SN), 11 students

- **The basic lesson structure consisted of:**
  - **students reading aloud a text written for homework, other students listening and the teacher providing feedback**
  - **reading aloud from history textbook**
  - **comprehension questions from textbook**

- **While the students were reading aloud from the textbook, the teacher frequently checked understanding by asking comprehension questions and explaining content**

Comments	• The teacher feedback consisted primarily of one or two positive reinforcement statements
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Teaching by testing • Banking education style (Freire, 1970) • Authority of textbooks

Lesson 4

Class content	Date: WS 12.1.09 Teacher: Home Economics Subject: Home Economics Details: 2nd year, (O), 8 students (2 ESL)

- **The basic lesson structure consisted of:**
  - **Teacher giving instruction on blanket sewing activity (such as where to find materials and basic safety rules)**
  - **Students continuing their individual blankets**

- **Teacher called students to her desk one by one during the lesson to give individual feedback, answer questions and go over written work in the design portfolio each student had to produce alongside the blanket**

Comments	• Students worked mostly independently with little peer collaboration
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Authority of teacher

Lesson 5

Class content	Date: WS 12.1.09 Teacher: Maths Subject: Maths Details: 6th year, (O), 22 students (5 ESL)

- **The basic lesson structure consisted of:**
  - **Class test on algebra (30 minutes)**
  - **Board work – diagram of a graph with keywords explaining the symbols**

- **While the 4 questions in the test consisted of equations to be solved, the instructions were given in English, using specialised vocabulary:**
  - **Complete on sheets of paper and factorise the following**
  - **Give the following equation (i.e. find the three values for x)**

Comments	• ESL students completed the work at the same rate as the English L1 students • One of the ESL students completed the test noticeably more quickly than the rest of the class and was observably bored throughout the remainder of the test • 3 Nigerian ESL students were segregated from the rest of the students; desks were arranged in pairs facing the whiteboard at the front, the 3 Nigerian students were sitting apart from the other students at the back around one table
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Teaching by testing

9.3.2 Linthorpe School

9.3.2.1 ESL lessons

ESL lesson 1

Class content	**Date: WS 30.9.08** **Teacher: ESL teacher 1**
• **Grammar gap-fill exercises** • **Teacher gave out a hand-written and then photocopied sheet with exercises** • **Students to fill in the simple past tense of a given infinitive in a series of sentences invented by the teacher**	

Comments	• There were 3 ESL students and 1 Irish student (who was exempt from taking Irish (DES, 1994)) • Much of the teacher-student interaction was limited to the Irish student and most of the teacher-talk was directed to this student • The students were using a TEFL textbook (*Headway*, intermediate level)
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• ESL/Learning Support confusion • TEFL oriented/grammar teaching approach • Maximum exposure to English structures • Maximum time on task (L1 ignored) • High status position of teacher • Banking education style (Freire, 1970)

ESL lesson 2

Class content	**Date: WS 30.9.08** **Teacher: ESL teacher 1**

- **General small-talk, teacher asked students how they are**
- **Teacher handed out photocopy of Headway Intermediate, Unit 14 – focus on past perfect tense**
- **Teacher highlighted the past perfect verb tense forms and described at some length the text book's presentation of tense**
- **Teacher used white-board to present the following sentence: 'When I got home John cooked dinner'**
- **Teacher then elicited response from the students with the prompt, "When I arrived home, was the meal already done?"**
- **Teacher wrote the following diagram on the whiteboard:**

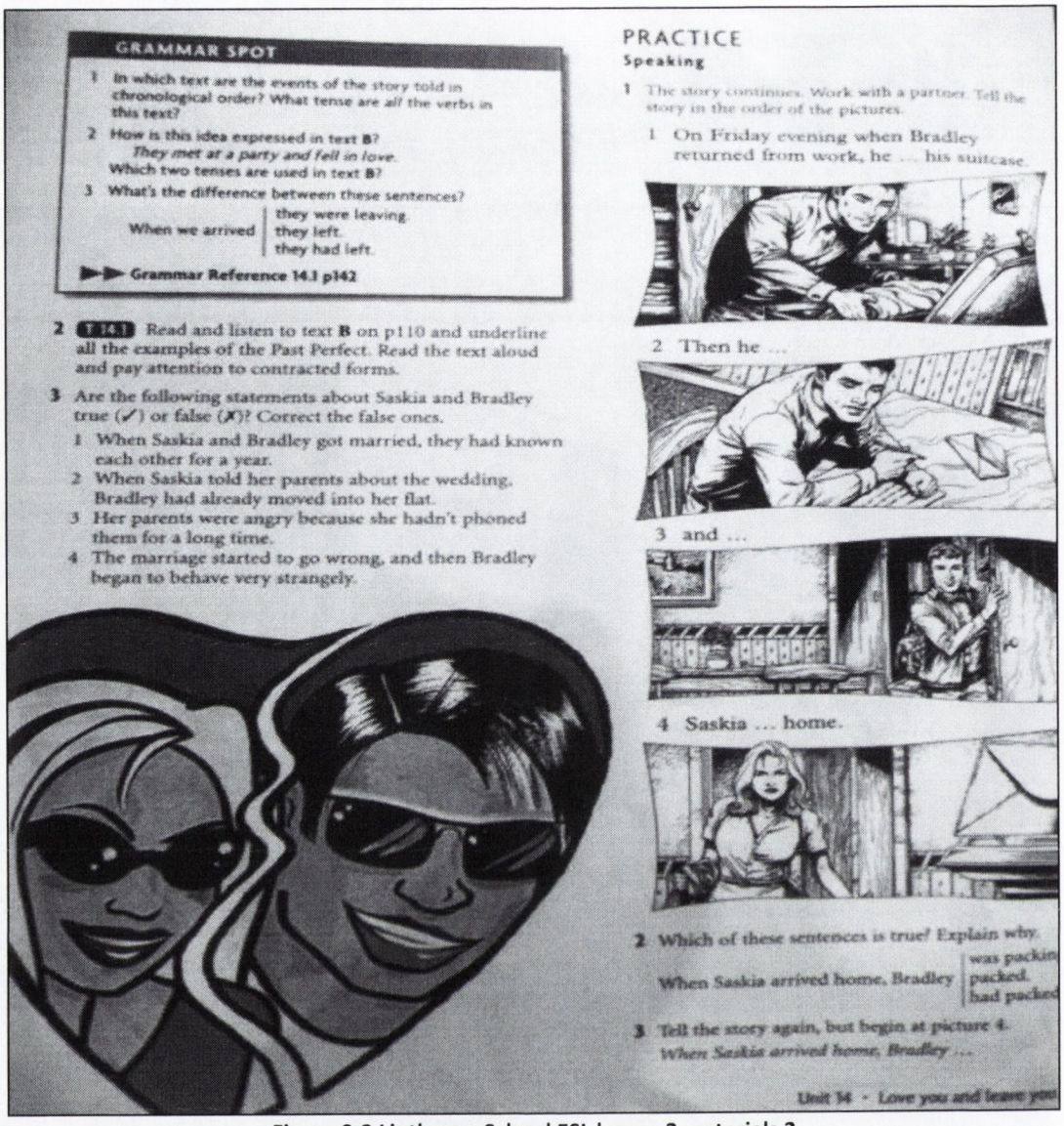
Verbs **past tense** **wrote**	**had packed**

- **Teacher prompted the students to start the role-play from the textbook which they must turn into a story.**
- **Teacher interrupted the students when they were doing the role-play by maintaining small-talk and answering the tasks set to the students**
- **Students read out their stories elicited by the Headway activity at the end of the lesson**

Comments	• Tables arranged in pairs • Teacher interrupted the students if they required more than a second or two to answer prompts • The bulk of the teacher/student dialogue was between the teacher and the Irish-born, English mother tongue speaker • Teacher didn't manage classroom seating, and so the 2 Lithuanian speakers sit together, which means that they can use their L1 as a resource, but did exclude the Arabic speaker, who sat alone. If teacher suggested Lithuanian students do pair work with another student, the students refused • Arabic L1 speaker worked with English L1 speaker; the latter student completed most of the set task. The English L1 speaker then adapted the task into another activity (which was a creative writing task rather than a language learning task), which she then presented to the class. Teacher didn't steer the task back to the original language learning task
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• TEFL oriented/grammar teaching approach • Maximum exposure to English structures • Maximum time on task (L1 ignored) • High status position of teacher • Banking education style (Freire, 1970)



Figure 9-1 Linthorpe School ESL lesson 2 materials



GRAMMAR SPOT

1 In which text are the events of the story told in chronological order? What tense are all the verbs in this text?

2 How is this idea expressed in text B?
They met at a party and fell in love.
Which two tenses are used in text B?

3 What's the difference between these sentences?

When we arrived	they were leaving. they left. they had left.

Grammar Reference 14.1 p142

2 T 14.1 Read and listen to text B on p110 and underline all the examples of the Past Perfect. Read the text aloud and pay attention to contracted forms.

3 Are the following statements about Saskia and Bradley true (✓) or false (✗)? Correct the false ones.

1 When Saskia and Bradley got married, they had known each other for a year.
2 When Saskia told her parents about the wedding, Bradley had already moved into her flat.
3 Her parents were angry because she hadn't phoned them for a long time.
4 The marriage started to go wrong, and then Bradley began to behave very strangely.

PRACTICE

Speaking

1 The story continues. Work with a partner. Tell the story in the order of the pictures.

1 On Friday evening when Bradley returned from work, he ... his suitcase.

2 Then he ...

3 and ...

4 Saskia ... home.

2 Which of these sentences is true? Explain why.

When Saskia arrived home, Bradley	was packin packed. had packe

3 Tell the story again, but begin at picture 4.
When Saskia arrived home, Bradley ...

Unit 14 · Love you and leave you

Figure 9-2 Linthorpe School ESL lesson 2 materials 2

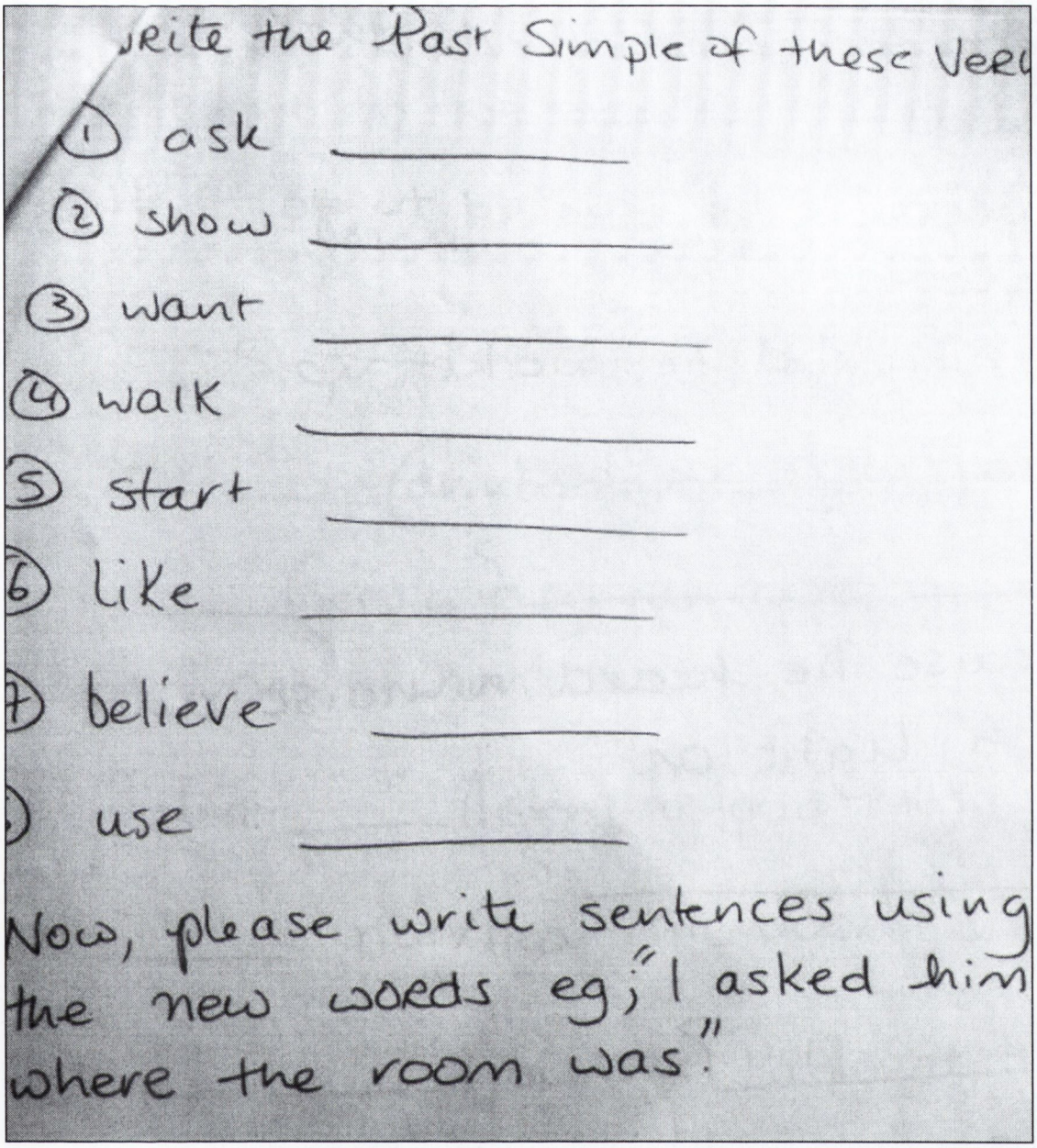


Figure 9-3 Linthorpe School ESL lesson 2 materials 3

ESL Lesson 3

Class content	**Date: WS 19.1.09** **Teacher: ESL teacher 1**

- **The basic lesson structure consisted of:**
  - **teacher-talk, classroom and lesson organisation**
  - **language learning activities based on past tense simple irregular/regular verbs**

- **Teacher initiated the lesson with information about the timetable and location of ESL lessons. This evolved into small-talk, with the teacher talking for the majority of the time and the students participating with one word or short sentence answers.**
- **Irregular past tense activity involved a handwritten and photocopied 5 page handout with instructions such as:**
  - **Irregular verbs – past tense - write the infinitives!**
  - **Please write the past form of these irregular verbs**
  - **Write the past simple of these verbs**
  - **Write the questions to these answers**
  - **1. They were in bed.**
  - **?**
  - **2. Because he heard a noise and saw a light on.**
  - **?**
  - **3. 50p.**
  - **?**

- **One 'instruction' was a statement of past tense use without explicit instruction on how to complete the activity below:**
  - **The Past Simple describes an action or event in the past**
  - **1. I ( ) meet Tom yesterday while I (wait) for a bus.**
  - **3. Julia (listen) to loud music, so she not/hear the doorbell**

Comments	• 4 students (1 English mother tongue speaker with special needs, 1 ESL student absent • Most of the teacher-student time was taken by the English L1 speaker • Teacher actively sought out this student when asking questions
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• ESL/Learning Support confusion • Teaching by testing • TEFL oriented/grammar teaching approach • Maximum exposure to English structures • Maximum time on task (L1 ignored) • High status position of teacher • Banking education style • ESL student identity – diffident (Leung, 2010b)

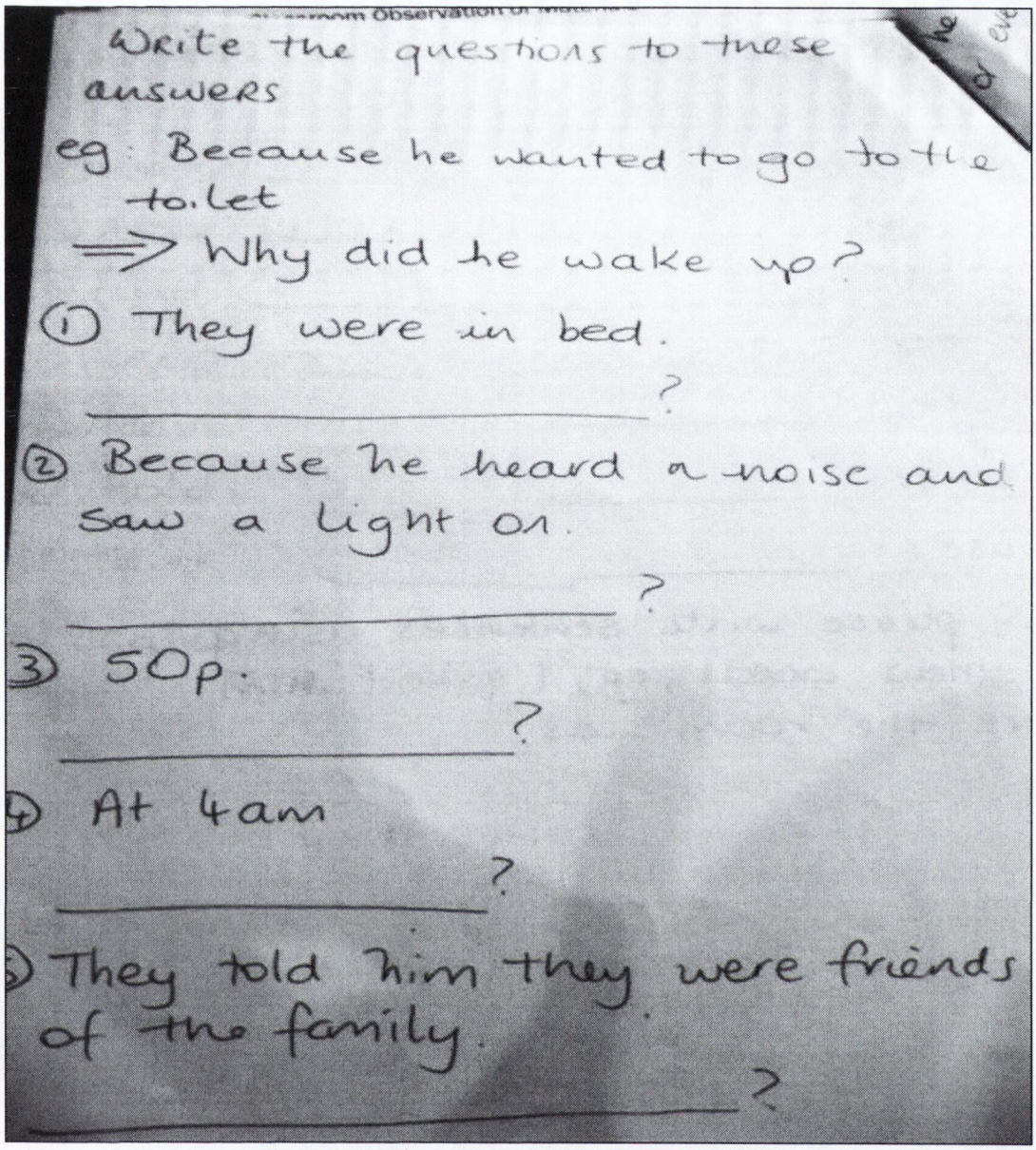


Figure 9-4 Linthorpe School ESL lesson 3 materials 1

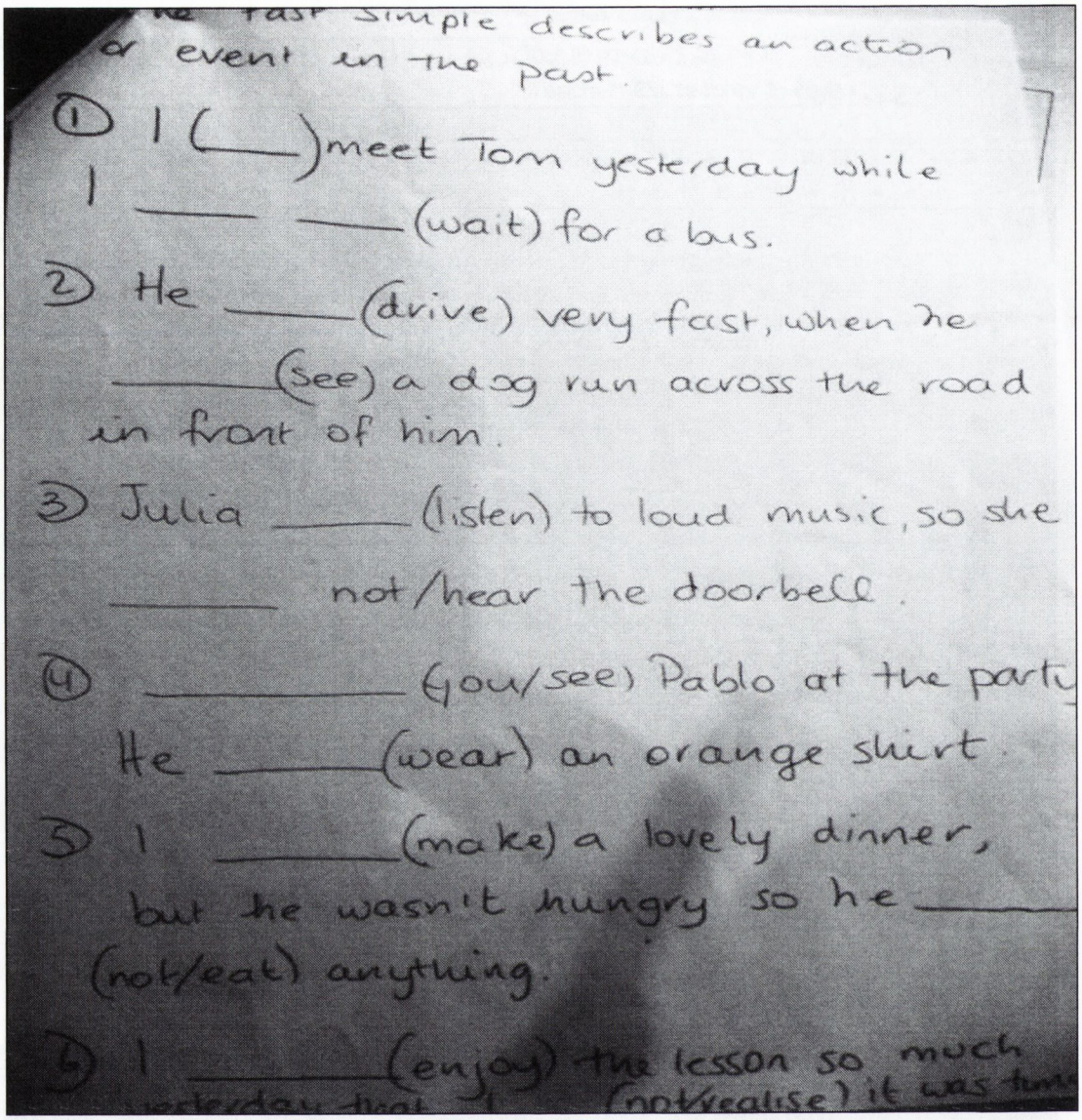


Figure 9-5 Linthorpe School ESL lesson 3 materials 2

ESL lesson 4

Class content	Date: WS 23.3.09 Teacher: ESL teacher 2
• **Role-play following instructions in a TEFL textbook** • **Students acted as shopkeeper and customer, for example** • **Teacher allowed students to interpret instructions and listened to the pairs** • **Teacher offered limited actual feedback, asked students to go on with another task if they encountered difficulties** • **Teacher talked about other issues (small-talk) during the task**	

Comments	• The teacher talked while the students completed the activity • The teacher interrupted students who appeared to encounter difficulties and completed the task for them
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• TEFL oriented/grammar teaching approach • Maximum exposure to English structures • Maximum time on task (L1 ignored) • Student collaboration discouraged

ESL lesson 5

Class content	Date: WS 23.3.09 Teacher: ESL teacher 2
• **Pre-taught the vocabulary from a given text (on a history subject from the mainstream)** • **Students take turns to read the history text aloud** • **Students answer the teacher's comprehension questions (written by the teacher)**	

Comments	• There is some attempt here to meet the cross-curricular needs of the students' mainstream education • The teacher interrupted students who appeared to encounter difficulties and completed the task for them • Materials were photocopied in a somewhat rushed manner and students collected the materials together in no given order in simple folders
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Teaching by testing • Banking education style

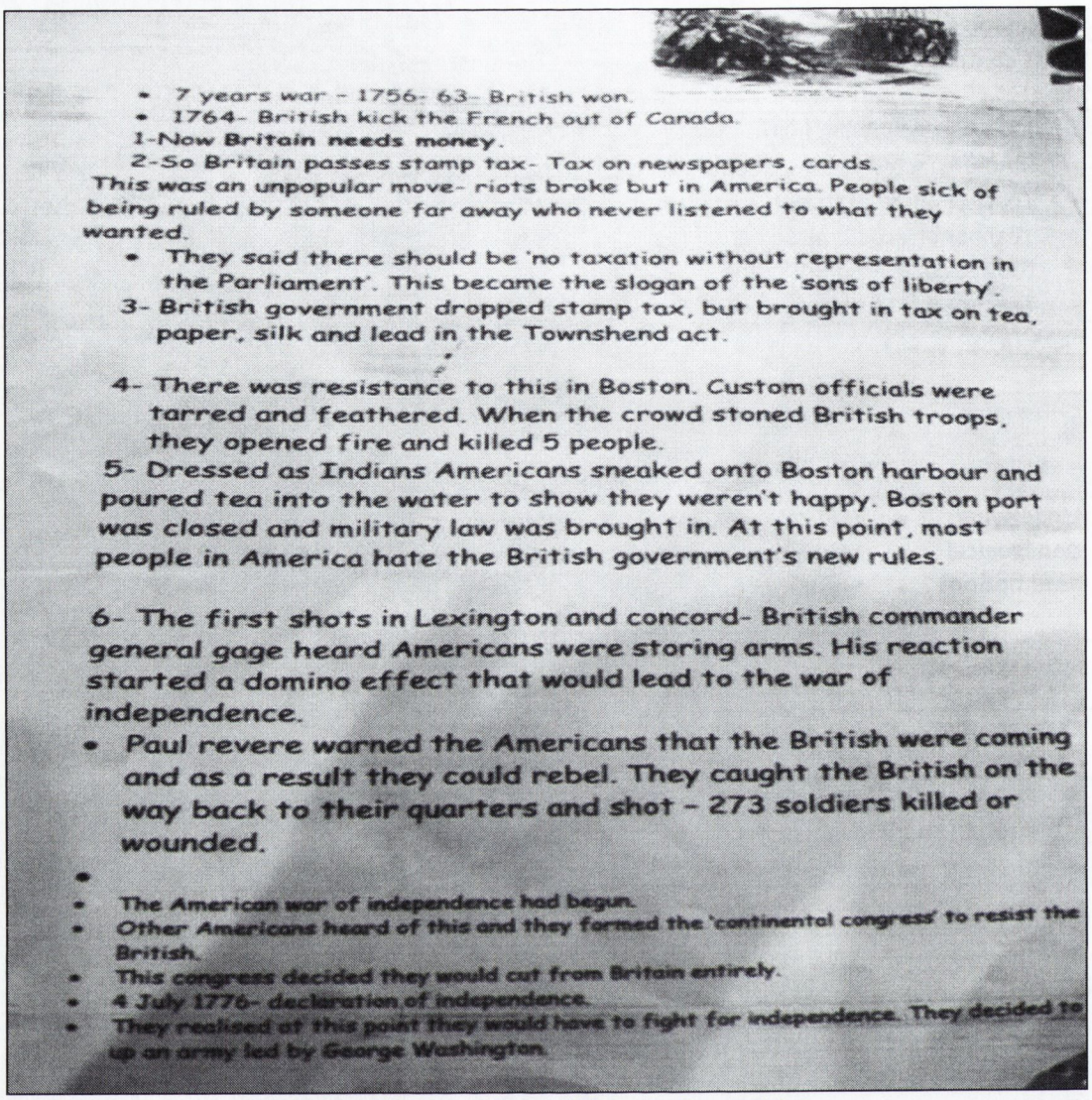


Figure 9-6 Linthorpe School ESL lesson 5 materials 1

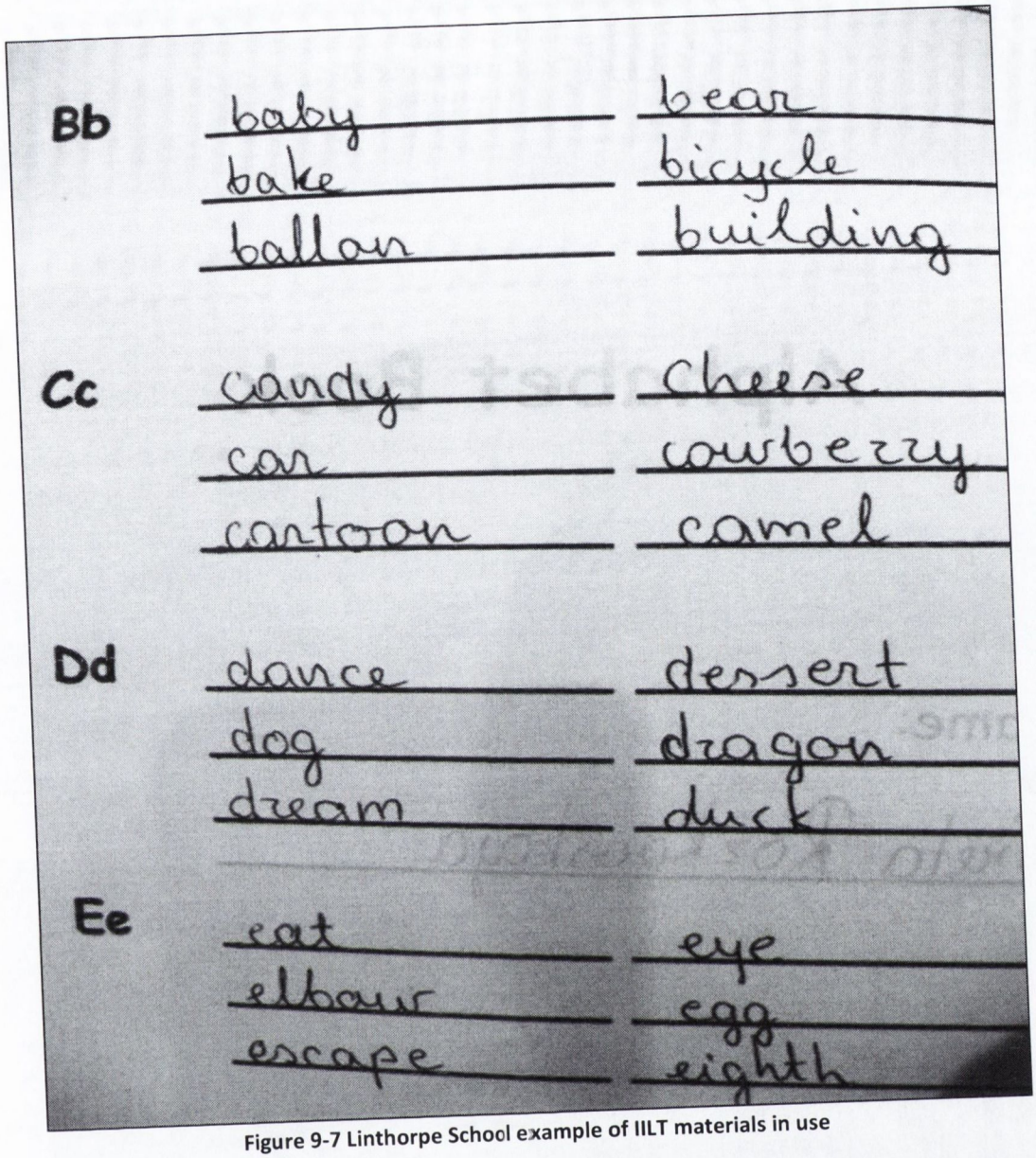
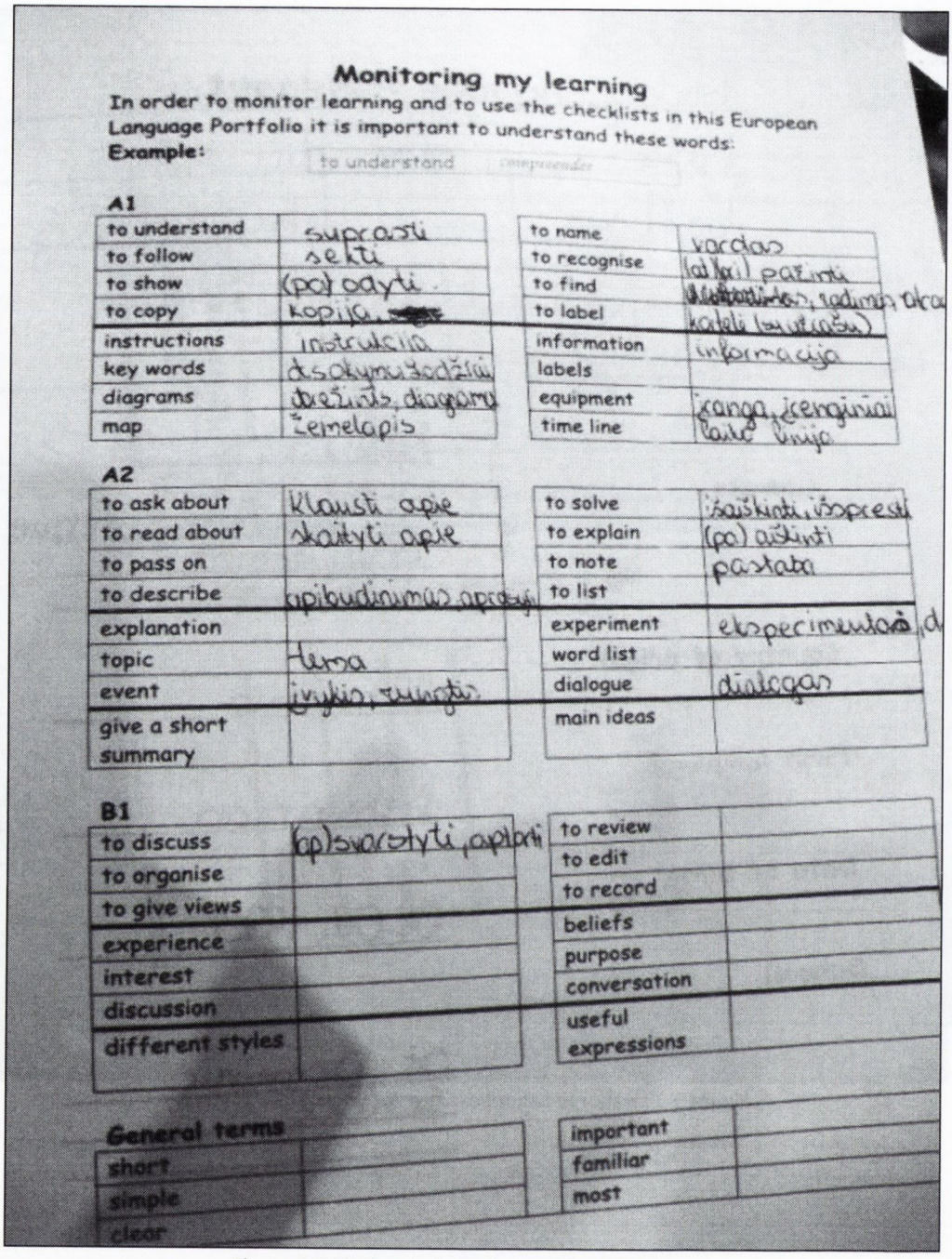


Figure 9-7 Linthorpe School example of IILT materials in use



Monitoring my learning

In order to monitor learning and to use the checklists in this European Language Portfolio it is important to understand these words:

Example: to understand

A1

to understand	suprasti	to name	vardas
to follow	sekti	to recognise	(at)pažinti
to show	(pa)rodyti	to find	[illegible], radimas, [illegible]
to copy	kopija	to label	[illegible]
instructions	instrukcija	information	informacija
key words	[illegible]	labels	
diagrams	[illegible], diagrama	equipment	įranga, įrenginiai
map	žemėlapis	time line	[illegible]

A2

to ask about	klausti apie	to solve	[illegible]
to read about	skaityti apie	to explain	(pa)aiškinti
to pass on		to note	pastaba
to describe	[illegible]	to list	
explanation		experiment	eksperimentas, [illegible]
topic	tema	word list	
event	įvykis, [illegible]	dialogue	dialogas
give a short summary		main ideas	

B1

to discuss	(ap)svarstyti, aptarti	to review	
to organise		to edit	
to give views		to record	
experience		beliefs	
interest		purpose	
discussion		conversation	
different styles		useful expressions	

General terms

short		important	
simple		familiar	
clear		most	

Figure 9-8 Linthorpe School example of ELP in use

Mainstream lessons

Lesson 1

Class content	**Date: WS 30.9.08** **Teacher: History mainstream** **Subject: History** **Details: 2nd Year, 19 students, mixed ability (1 ESL student)**

- **Teacher-talk, teacher set lesson goal, summarised in one sentence (causes of the American revolution)**
- **Teacher elicited previous learning by asking questions to the whole class**
- **Teacher described the historical situation in detail and asked what they would do in the same situation**
- **Teacher gave a handout to the students on events and causes which led to the American Revolution**
- **Teacher instructed students to work in 2 or 3s to pick the most important point on the handout**
- **Students discussed the points in groups as teacher invigilated while re-explaining the task/encouraging answers**
- **Teacher then gave feedback to the whole group**
- **Students spent last ten minutes finishing homework on the same subject but for another teacher**

Comments	• Students were disruptive, but teacher controlled them well • ESL student sat alone at first, then a late student took the seat next to her • Students were generally engaged but the ESL student was silent, seemed to be listening intently • Working with 'People of the Past 2'
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Inductive learning strategies • Lesson plan and task instructions scaffolded to students • Collaborative learning strategies

Lesson 2

Class content	**Date: WS 30.9.08** **Teacher: Learning Support** **Subject: Learning Support** **Details: 6th Year, 3 students, mixed ability (1 ESL student present and 1 ESL student absent)**
• **Teacher gave students opportunity to engage in peer support for up and coming oral examinations** • **Teacher reviewed mock exam English paper with one ESL student, asking her to re-write sections** • **Students worked independently on homework or exam preparation**	

Comments	• Teacher is concerned that while the language and content were acceptable, the student wouldn't do very well in this exam due to essay structure
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Collaborative learning strategies

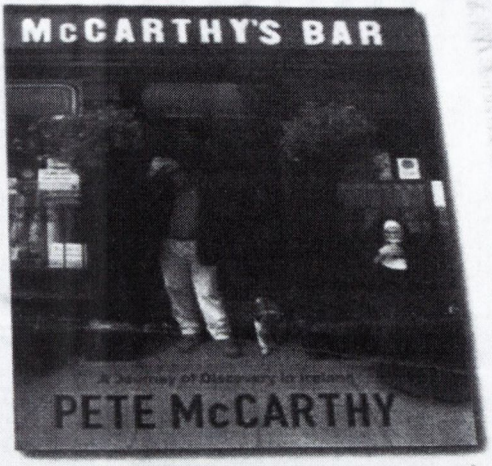
Lesson 3

Class content	**Date: WS 19.1.09** **Teacher: English /Learning Support** **Subject: English** **Details: 6th year (Ordinary), 4 students (2 ESL)**
• **Teacher instructed students to open their textbooks** • **Teacher read text and checked for understanding by asking comprehension questions** • **Students then told to read though the task questions on the photocopy of page 4 and to do them for homework** • **Students asked to read page 5 alone and to underline new vocabulary items**	

Comments	• *Language in Action*(Sheil, 2009) textbook, starting with page 4 • Students sat at desks arranged for pair work in this regular, mainstream classroom • Lesson time was mostly teacher talk
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Teaching by testing • Banking education style

TEXT 2

This extract is from Pete McCarthy's travel book McCarthy's Bar. *The book is an account of a journey he made around Ireland. In this extract, he visits Dingle, Co. Kerry.*



Some time in 1984, a young dolphin began to appear in Dingle Harbour. Unusually for such sociable mammals, he was always alone. He started visiting every day and was soon christened Fungi. Word was out among the New Age and hippy communities, who came down to bond with him. It wasn't long before he was marketed to the mainstream, and a raft of Fungie-related cottage industries grew up around him – boat trips and swimming sessions and wet-suit hire and books and photos and hostels. Suddenly Dingle was no longer remote. It had become a Destination, recommended by all the *Rough* and *Lonely Planet Guides*, with a marketing strategy, and an increasing sense of organised craic.

When you think about it, it's remarkable how reliable Fungie has been, turning up on cue every day for fifteen years for people to photograph and swim with him. For a wild dolphin, that is exceptional behaviour, and also very good for business. I can't quite banish the lingering suspicion that there's a guy who dresses up in the dolphin suit every day. The bottom will fall out of the tourist boom once he decides he's too knackered to do it any more. If they've any sense, they'll already be training up a replacement. There was a Dutch guy with very muscular arms in De Valera's Bar this morning, who wanted to know if he could have fish for breakfast. Maybe it's him.

Comprehending

1. According to the extract, what draws people to Dingle?
2. What is the purpose of this extract?
3. Did you find this a humorous piece of writing? Give reasons for your answer.
4. Who do you think might be the audience for this book?
5. How would you describe the author's tone (serious or humorous) in this extract? You must give reasons for your answer.

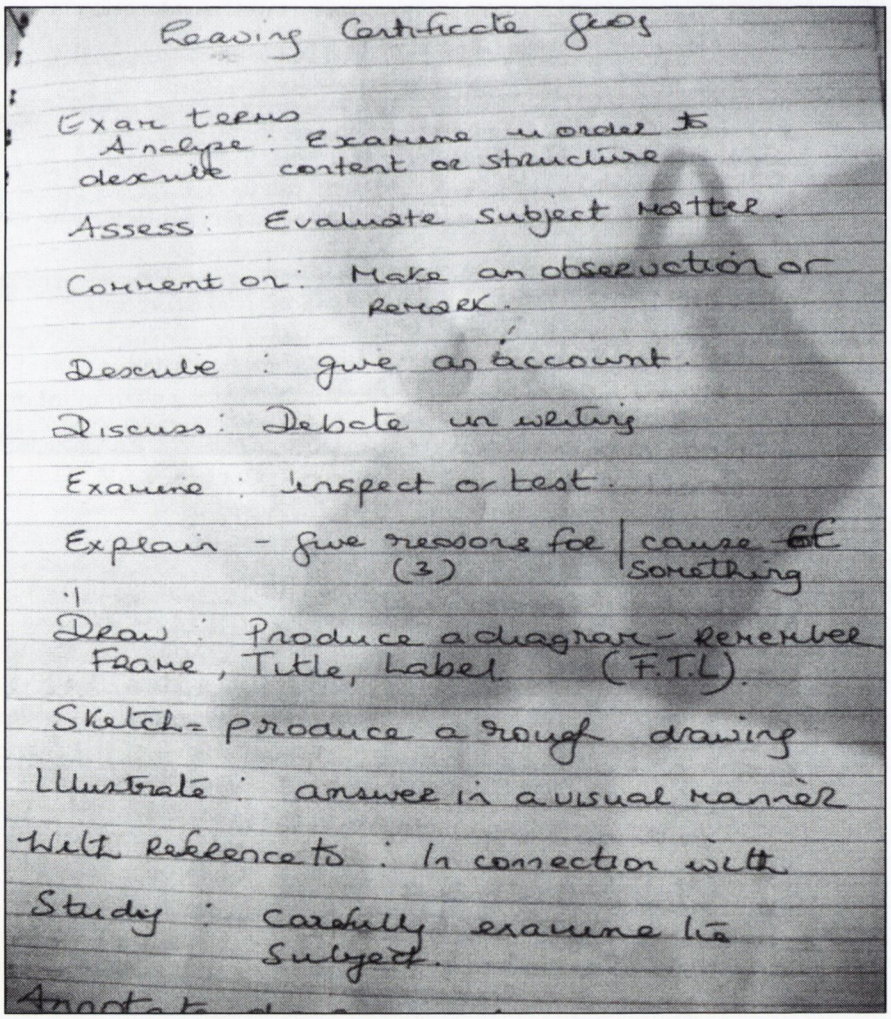
Figure 9-9 Linthorpe School mainstream lesson 3 materials

Lesson 4

Class content	Date: WS 19.1.09 Teacher: English /Learning Support Subject: Learning Support Details: 6th year , 4 students (2 ESL)

- **Teacher guided students through their mainstream homework and through English past papers**
- **Students studied the past papers and teacher gave individual advice about question types**
- **Students were provided with handwritten exam language tips**
- **2 students helped each other with geography coursework**

Comments	• Students sat around one small table (desk space for maximum 6 students) in this small, learning resource classroom
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Collaborative learning strategies



Leaving Certificate Geog

Exam terms

Analyse: Examine in order to describe content or structure

Assess: Evaluate subject matter.

Comment on: Make an observation or remark.

Describe: give an account.

Discuss: Debate in writing

Examine: Inspect or test.

Explain - give reasons for | cause of something (3)

Draw: Produce a diagram - Remember Frame, Title, Label (F.T.L).

Sketch = produce a rough drawing

Illustrate: answer in a visual manner

With Reference to: In connection with

Study: Carefully examine the subject.

Annotate

Figure 9-10 Linthorpe School mainstream lesson 4 materials

Lesson 5

Class content	**Date: WS 19.1.09** **Teacher: English /Learning Support** **Subject: English** **Details: 6th year, 7 students**
• **Teacher handed out past examination papers, and the students worked through producing sample answers** • **Teacher worked with individual students giving advice on interpreting the questions and forming an answer, and encouraging the students who were all reluctant to do any work**	

Comments	• The students in this classroom are identified as 'behaviour problem' students • Students sit at individual, examination style desks in this mainstream classroom
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Teaching by testing • Teaching to the test (in this case state examination)

Lesson 6

Class content	**Date: WS 23.3.09** **Teacher: Geography** **Subject: Geography** **Details: 2nd year, 23 students (1ESL)**
• **Teacher explained the lesson plan – to draw a map needed for the next school exam** • **Teacher demonstrated the steps for drawing the simple map diagram** • **Teacher wrote the key words from the diagram on the white board** • **Students copied the diagram and add the labels in the relevant places** • **Teacher invigilated the students while they worked** • **Many students did not complete the work because of the general disruptive nature of the group** • **Teacher gave students homework**	

Comments	• There were many disruptive students in this class, teacher controlled them well • The ESL student worked alone and sometimes took her work to the teacher to be checked. She didn't engage with any other students • Students sat in pairs facing the front of the classroom
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Inductive learning strategies • Lesson plan and task instructions scaffolded for the students

Lesson 7

Class content	Date: WS 23.3.09 Teacher: Maths Subject: Maths Details: 6th year, 7 students
• Teacher handed out handwritten worksheets and students worked at their own pace to answer their questions	

Comments	• The students in this classroom are identified as 'behaviour problem' students
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Banking education style (Freire, 1970)

(a) The temperature is measured @ noon each day for a week. The results are recorded as follows:

DAY	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
Temp (°C)	20	15	19	12	16	13	17

(i) Draw a bar chart to represent this data

(ii) What is the average temperature for the week

(iii) Draw a trend graph to represent the above chart.

(b) The temperatures for this week (above) and the next week are as follows:

20, 15, 19, 12, 16, 13, 17, 21, 18, 16, 13, 15, 14, 13.

(i) Complete the frequency table:

Temp	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
No. of Days										

(ii) Draw a trend graph to represent this new inform

Figure 9-11 Linthorpe School mainstream lesson 7 materials

9.3.3 Southbank School

ESL lessons

Lesson 1

Class content	Date: WS 1.9.08 Teacher: ESL teacher 1 Details: 6th year, 5 students
• Teacher introduced students and herself • Teacher introduced idea of language ability, using the introduction page of ELP • Teacher filled in ELP for herself (personal information, languages spoken) • Students filled in the ELP biography section, with help from teacher and other students • Students read an email from a student in a similar position to themselves • Teacher asked what the students would do if they were the author of the email • Students gave spoken advice and talked to each other while constructing their answer	

Comments	• Much opportunity for peer collaboration • Lesson content guided by teacher
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Focus on peer collaboration • Focus on dialogic teaching

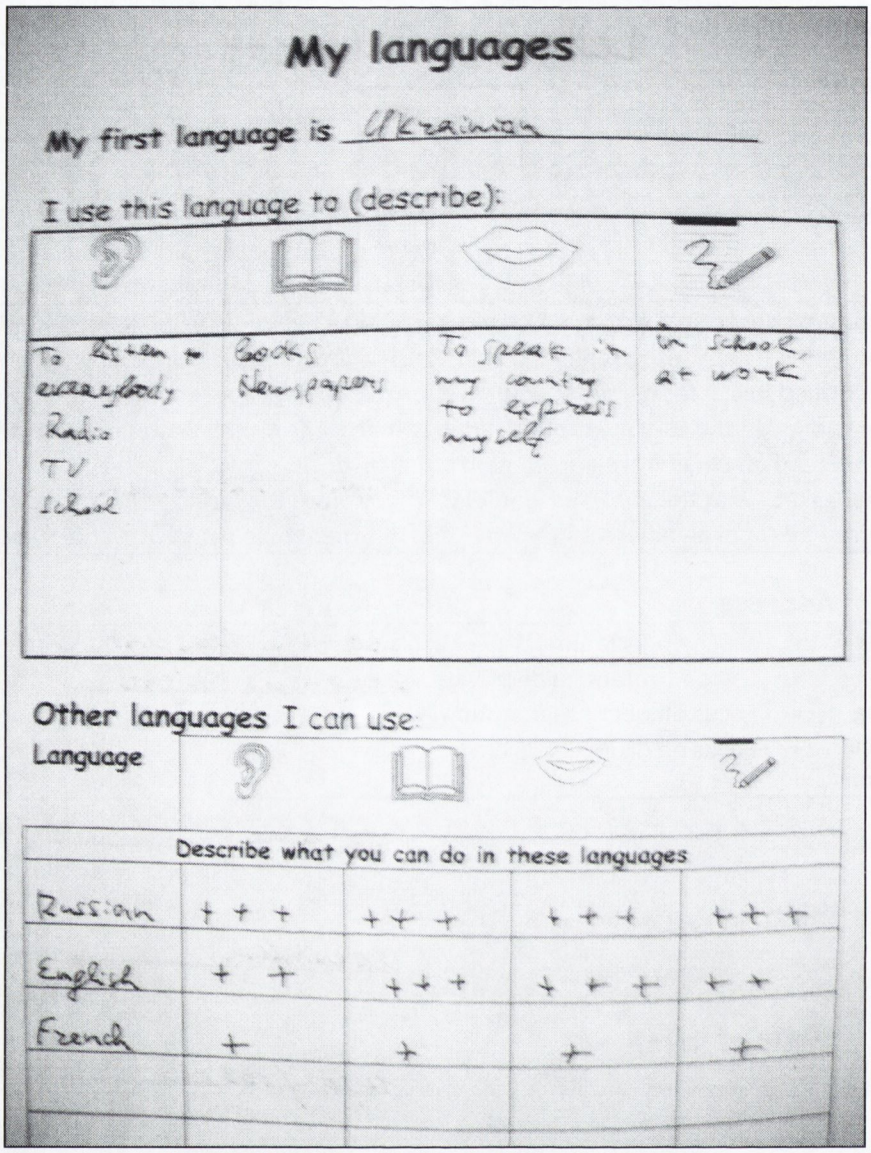


Figure 9-12 Southbank School ESL lesson 1 materials

Lesson 2

Class content	**Date: WS 15.9.08** **Teacher: ESL teacher 1** **Details: 5th year, 6 students**

- **Focus on Leaving Cert poetry – write a Bio-Poem**
- **Teacher asked students to pick their favourite poem from several source books**
- **Students engaged in dialogue with teacher about why they chose their poem**
- **Students asked questions about vocabulary and culturally specific references**
- **Students were asked to divide the poem into images evoked by the text**
- **Students designed a series of images for each section of the poem**

Comments	• Much opportunity for peer collaboration • Teacher gave lesson plan to whole class, then to students individually • Class took place in Irish classroom, arranged in three long rows of desks • Poems were later recorded and edited with movie-maker[46] software
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Dialogic teaching practice • Focus on learner autonomy • Content linked to students' own experiences • Wide range of cultural sources • Linked to mainstream curriculum subjects • Use of ICT

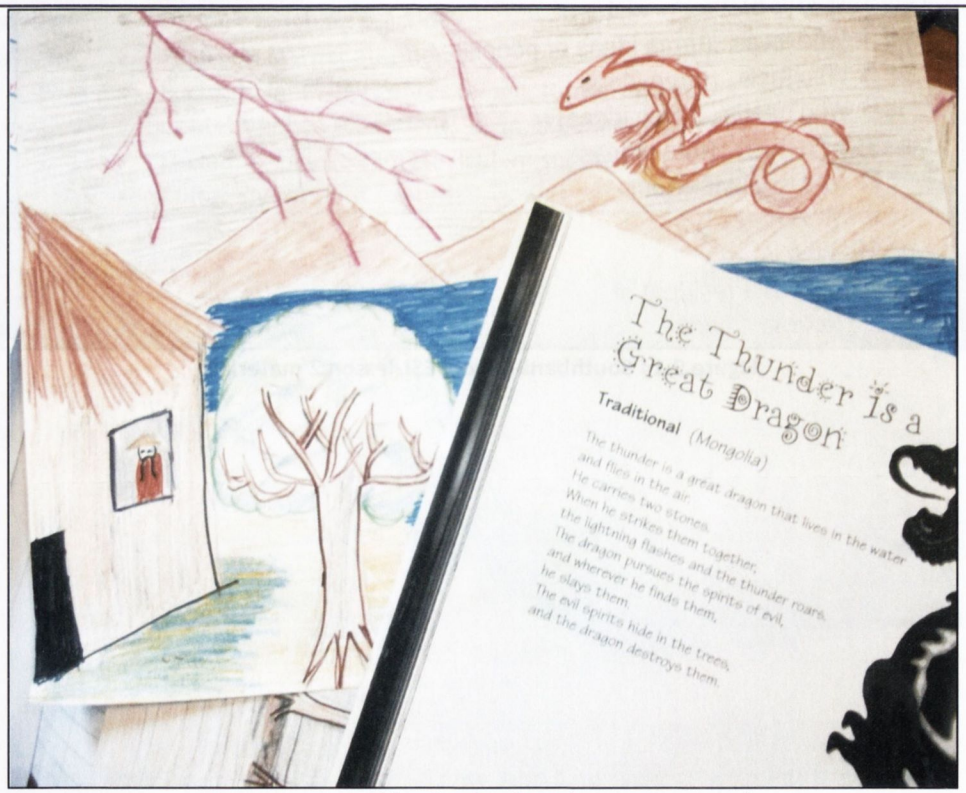


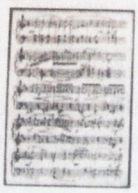
Figure 9-13 Southbank School ESL lesson 2 materials

[46] See: http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/updates/moviemaker2.mspx

Writing a Bio-Poem

(Adapted from : http://www.seedsofknowledge.com/biopoems.html by Tamera Bastiaans)

Introduce yourself through a Bio-poem. Follow the form of the sample Bio-poem below. Follow this simple guideline. Make sure that you do use words that are descriptive, colorful and lively. It should be YOUR creative expression about YOU.




Suggested Bio-Poem Form

Line 1: Your first name
Line 2: Who is...(descriptive words that describe you)
Line 3: Who is brother or sister of...
Line 4: Who loves...(three ideas or people)
Line 5: Who feels...(three ideas)
Line 6: Who needs...(three ideas)
Line 7: Who gives...(three ideas)
Line 8: Who would like to...
Line 9: Who shares...
Line 10: Who is...
Line 11: Who is a resident of...
Line 12: Your last name

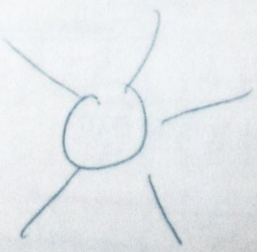


Figure 9-14 Southbank School ESL lesson 2 materials

Lesson 3

Class content	Date: WS 15.9.08 Teacher: ESL teacher 1 Details: 5th year, 5 students

- **Teacher asked students about their use of email**
- **Email chain – students individually invented a dialogue in informal, email style between themselves and a friend**
- **Students compared their email chains, making suggestions about 'email-ese'**
- **Teacher asked students to write a letter with the same content but in formal style**
- **Before writing task students and teacher talked about the differences between formal and informal language, giving examples**
- **Students and teacher talked about why the differences are significant in different contexts**
- **Students started to write their formal letter**
- **Feedback from teacher**

Comments	• Students were clearly engaged in the tasks • Students had much opportunity to give their opinion and chat to one another • Desks arranged in three long rows facing the front (mainstream Irish classroom)
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Dialogic teaching practice • Focus on learner autonomy • Focus on language genres (email, formal letters) • Content linked to students' own experiences • Linked to mainstream curriculum subjects • Culturally relevant content

Lesson 4

Class content	Date: 13.10.08 Teacher: ESL teacher 1 Details: 1st year, 2 students
• **General small-talk, teacher asked students about school** • **Teacher elicited vocabulary on school subjects** • **Teacher handed out a worksheet which present the constructions 'I like' and 'I don't like' regarding general objects and then school subjects** • **Students worked through worksheet while chatting to each other about likes/dislikes** • **Teacher reviewed answers with students, eliciting detailed responses about why they like/dislike subjects**	

Comments	• Desks arranged in rows facing the front/white board/teacher's desk • ESL teacher sat with students and students' answers lead the class discussion
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Focus on language forms • Linked to students' everyday lives and school subjects • Dialogic teaching practice

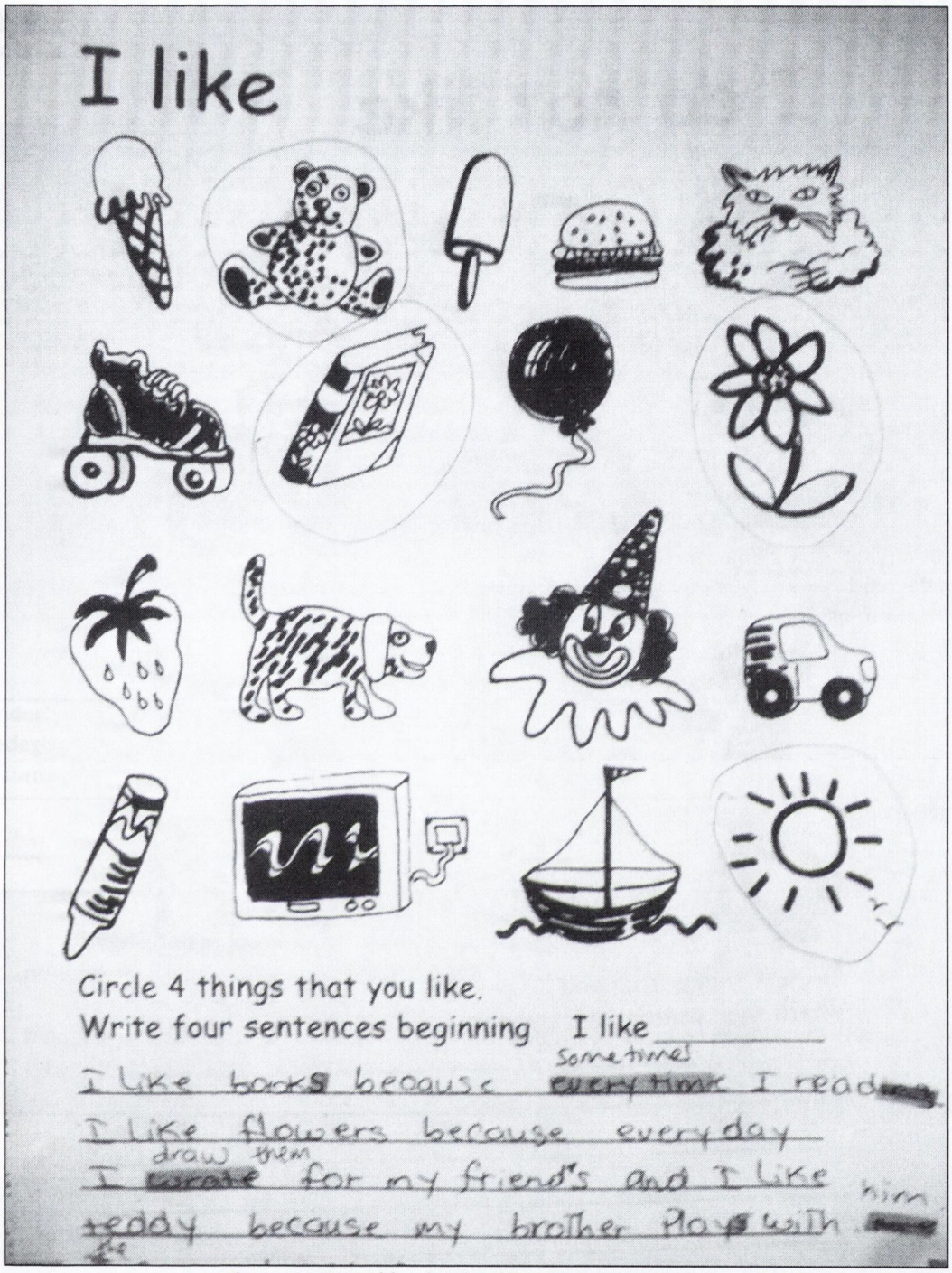


Figure 9-15 Southbank School ESL lesson 4 materials

Lesson 5

Class content	Date: 13.10.08 Teacher: ESL teacher 1 Details: 1st year, 4 students
• **Teacher presented examples of a broadsheet and tabloid newspaper** • **Students talked about the content, asked questions and teacher gave guidance about vocabulary** • **Students talked about the difference in reporting style** • **Teacher asked students to highlight language and style differences between the two articles** • **Students reread the articles and responded to comprehension questions from teacher**	

Comments	• Desks was arranged in rows facing the front/white board/teacher's desk • ESL teacher sat with students • Students were engaged in spoken production and reading, with the opportunity to relax and not concentrate on writing
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Dialogic teaching practice • Focus on learner autonomy • Focus on language genres • Content linked to students own experiences • Linked to mainstream curriculum subjects

Lesson 6

Class content	Date: 26.1.09 Teacher: ESL teacher 1 Details: 1st year, 3 students
• **Students were working on different subjects/tasks** • **Teacher liaised with each student in rotation, giving assistance where necessary** • **Student 1 required help with mainstream English homework, a reading comprehension task** • **Student 2 worked with his history textbook, highlighting keywords. Teacher facilitated an activity involving translating the keywords into L1 and re-writing the content in L1** • **Student 3 worked on a grammar worksheet, focussing on past tense**	

Comments	• Lesson took place after school hours, for a 'homework club' • Students were working at different levels of English language proficiency • Desks arranged in rows facing the front/white board/teacher's desk • ESL teacher sat with students
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Focus on L1 • Focus on language structure

Lesson 7

Class content	Date: 13.10.08 Teacher: ESL teacher 1 and 2 Details: 1st year, 4 students

- **Teachers presented short speeches about each of their towns**
- **Students asked guided questions about their home towns, using short closed answer questions ('where is your town?' 'is it big?' 'is it very green?)**
- **Teachers asked students questions to elicit longer answers ('what is it like?' 'what are the people like?')**
- **One teacher handed out a short text with an example of information about a town**
- **Teacher then handed out a writing frame with space for students to fill in information about their town**
- **Teachers helped the students fill in the writing frame**

Comments	• Desks arranged in rows facing the front/white board/teacher's desk • Two teachers worked together, as student 1 displays challenging behaviour • One teacher sat beside student 1 and encouraged her to contribute answers just to the teacher and not to the whole class if this was difficult • Students chatted and helped each other while filling in the gaps on the writing frame
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Dialogic teaching practice • Focus on learner autonomy • Content linked to students' own experiences • Wide range of cultural sources • Linked to mainstream curriculum subjects

Lesson 8

Class content	Date: 26.1.09 Teacher: ESL teacher 1 Details: TY,1 student
• **Teacher gave student (a Mandarin Chinese speaking student who has just arrived with no previous experience of English) a portfolio based on ELP with text translated into Chinese** • **Student read through Chinese texts** • **Student and teacher worked together to complete one of the tasks (translating key words related to school context)**	

Comments	• ESL teacher sat with student • ESL room was being used for other students too • ESL teacher had asked a Mandarin speaker to translate the portfolio • The portfolio had been prepared by the ESL teacher, who spent a lot of time developing it • To be used in the mainstream classroom (teachers were informed) and tasks repeated in ESL class
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Focus on learner autonomy • Focus on literacy • Focus on key words and key language • Linked to mainstream curriculum subjects

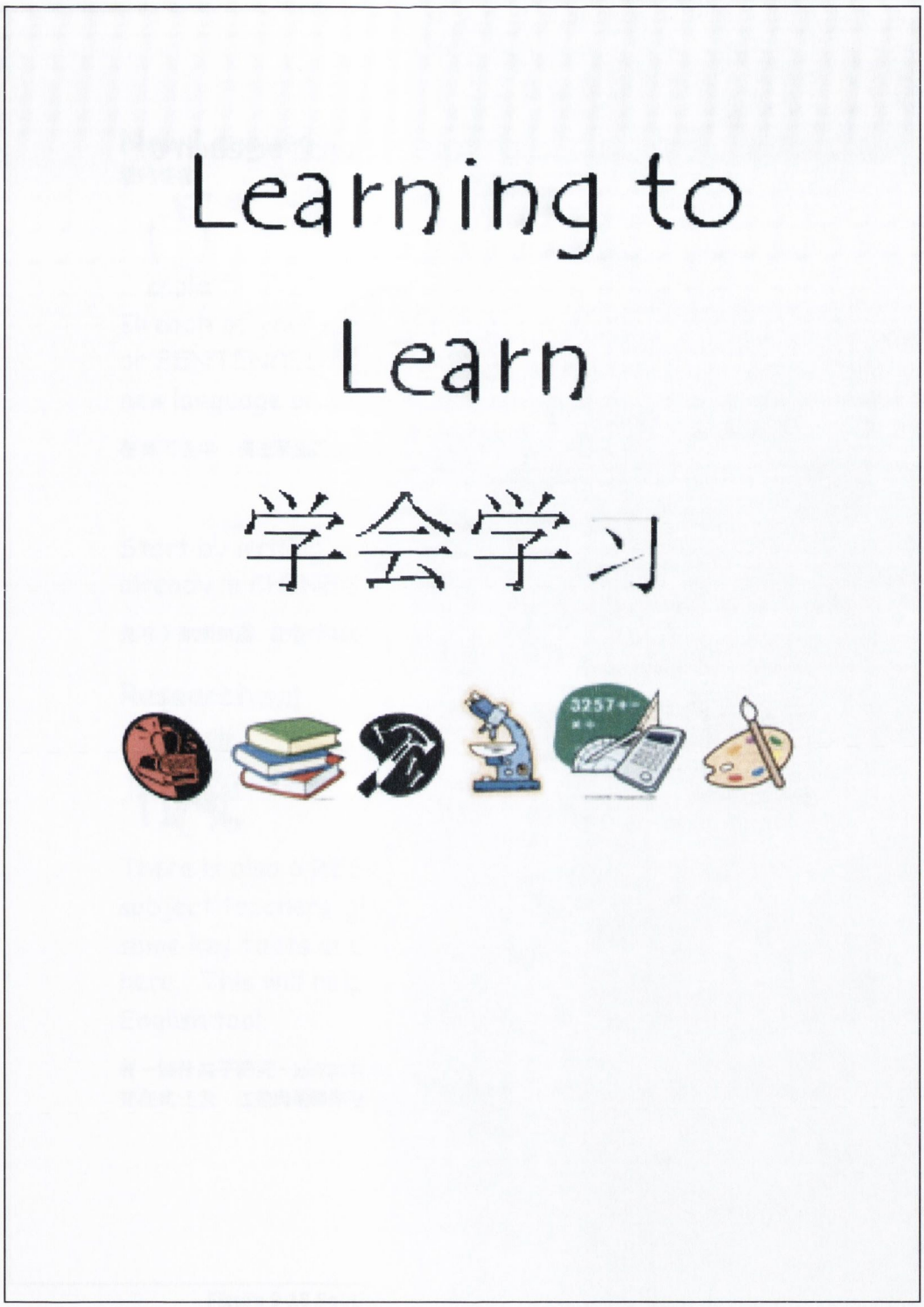


Figure 9-16 Southbank School ESL lesson 13 materials 1

This book is divided into sections for each of your school subjects:

本书根据你的学科被分成几部分



- Miscellaneous school language

不同的学校语言



- English



- Woodwork



- Biology



- Maths



- Art

Figure 9-17 Southbank School ESL lesson 13 materials 2

New Language

新的语言



apple

In each of your classes, please note any new WORDS or SENTENCES in this book and we will review the new language on Wednesdays.

在每节课中，请注意出现在本书中的新单词和新句子。在每周三，我们会温习新语言

Start by writing words you know about the subjects already in CHINESE.

先写下你所知道，在各学科中，中文意思的单词

Research研究



There is also a RESEARCH section. When your subject teachers give you a new TOPIC, research some key facts in Chinese and collect the information here. This will help you understand the concepts in English too!

有一部分关于研究，当你的学科老师布置一新课题，你从中文材料中寻求一些事实，并在此记录，这也同帮助你理解英语概念

Figure 9-18 Southbank School ESL lesson 13 materials 3

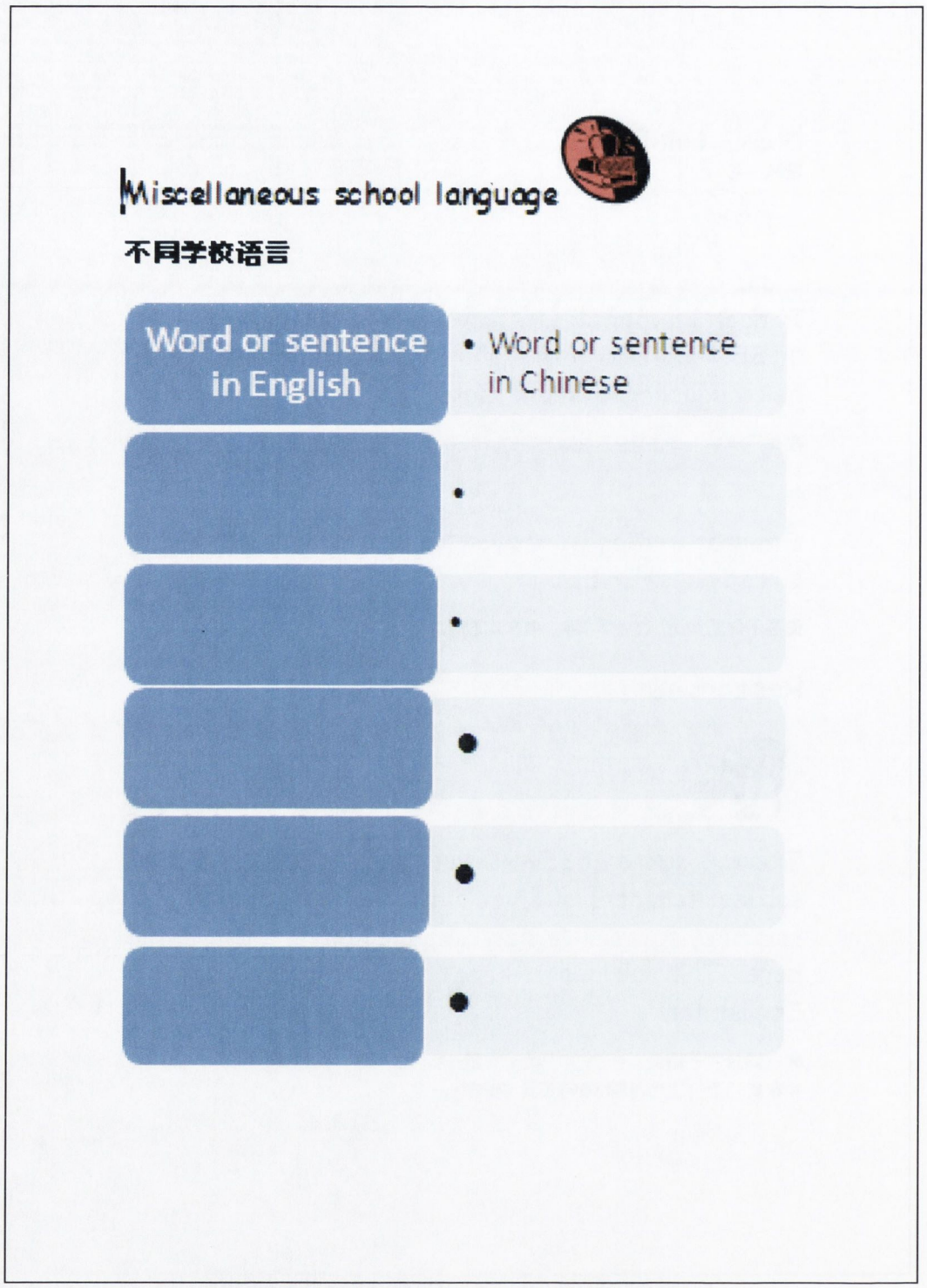


Figure 9-19 Southbank School ESL lesson 13 materials 4

ESL lesson 9

Class content	**Date: 27.4.09** **Teacher: ESL teacher 1 and 2** **Details: 1st year, 5 students**

- **Teachers pre-taught 5 vocabulary items**
- **Teachers asked students to read a short poem and highlight the vocabulary**
- **Teachers introduced concept of verb, first by asking what the words have in common**
- **Teachers explained in basic terms the concept of a verb, using actions**
- **Students reread the text with the teachers**
- **Students wrote the verbs on leaf-shaped pieces of green paper**
- **Teachers presented 'The Language Tree' to the students (a large poster with a tree shape on the middle)**
- **Students invited to make labels saying 'language tree', 'noun' and 'verb' in English and their L1s**
- **Students glued the labels to the relevant branches of the tree, leaving blank space for future lessons**

Comments	• Students created images of the poem in the following lesson – image provided below • Desks arranged in rows facing the front/white board/teacher's desk • Two teachers worked together, as student 1 displays challenging behaviour • One teacher sat beside student 1 and encouraged her to contribute answers just to the teacher and not to the whole class if this was difficult • Students added to the tree (growing other 'branches' such as 'adjective' and 'noun') in following lessons • Students put their names on the tree and hung the poster in the ESL classroom
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Dialogic teaching practice • Focus on learner autonomy • Focus on literacy • Focus on key words and key language • Linked to mainstream curriculum subjects

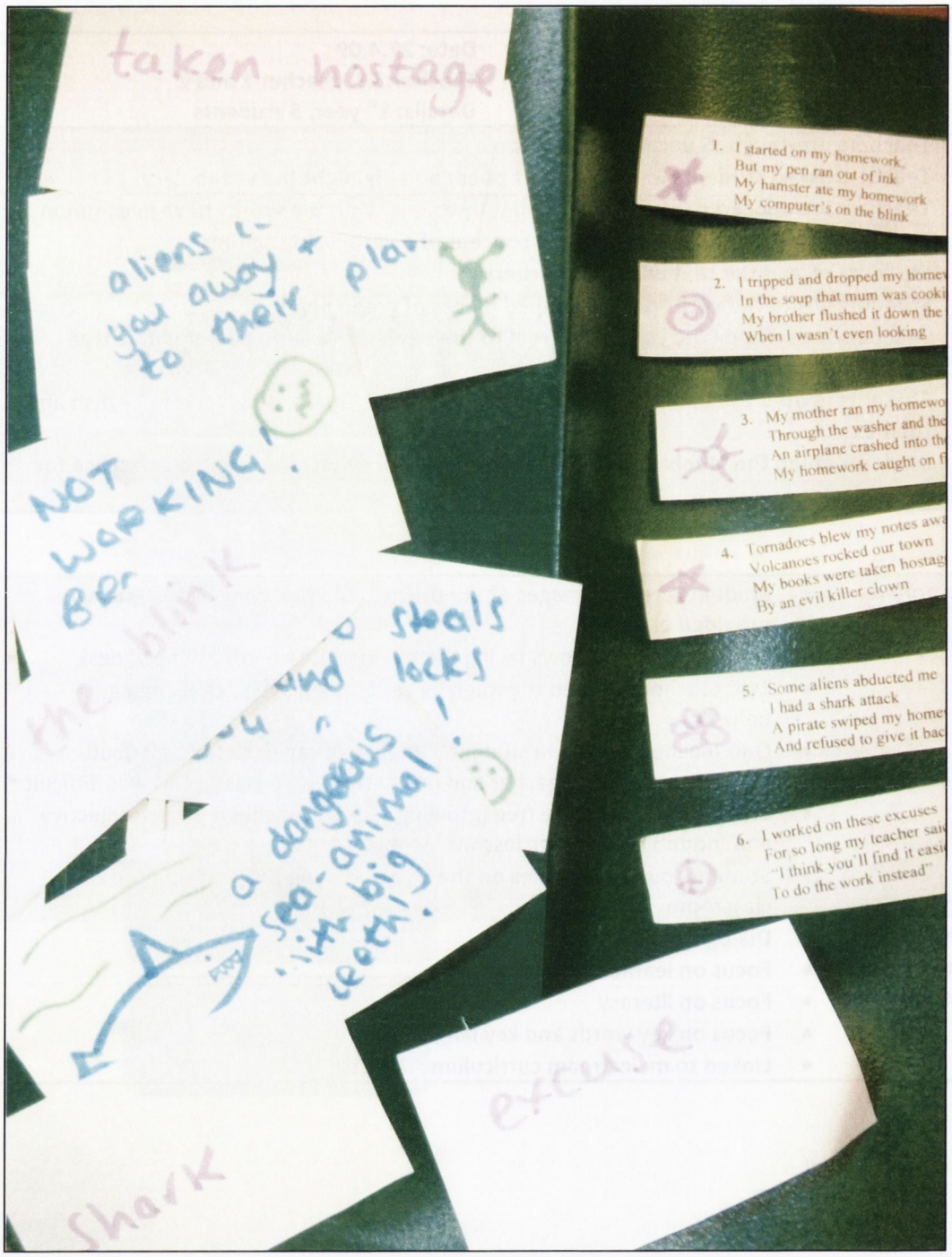


Figure 9-20 Southbank School ESL lesson 8 materials



Figure 9-21 Southbank School ESL lesson 8 follow-up materials 1

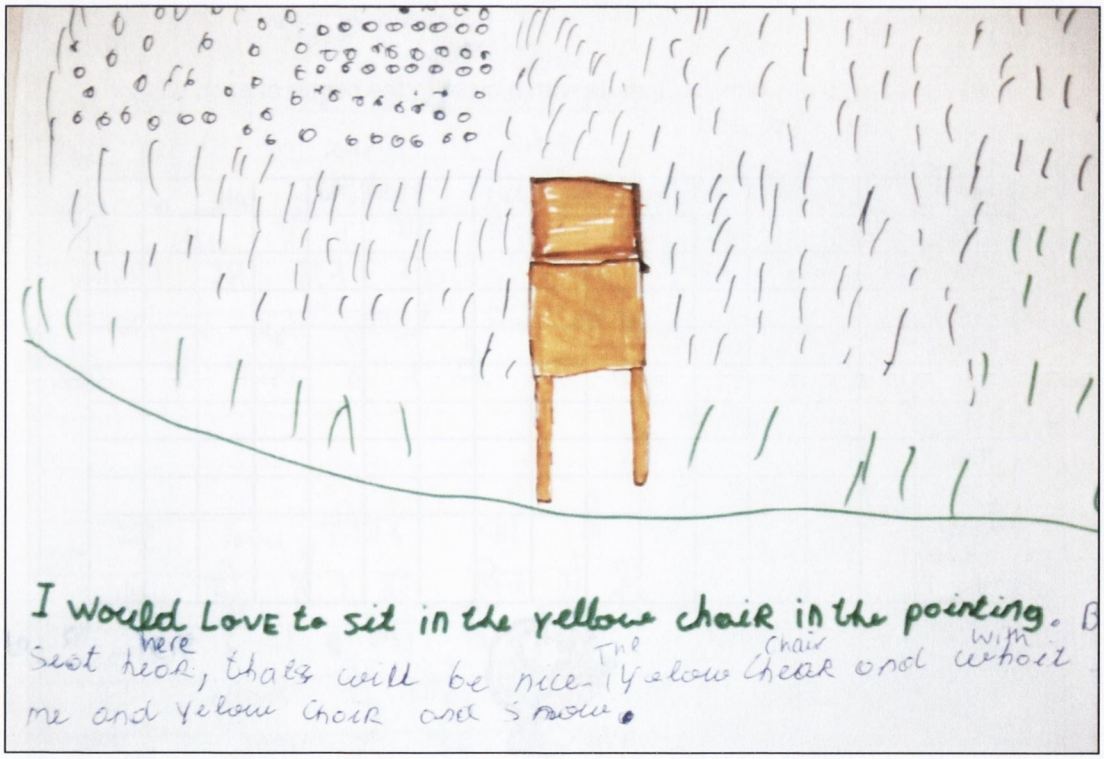


Figure 9-22 Southbank School ESL lesson 8 follow-up materials 2

Lesson 10

Class content	**Date: 27.4.09** **Teacher: ESL teacher 1** **Details: 6th year, 2 students**

- **Teacher reviewed reading texts from the Leaving Cert with students**
- **Students presented with a 'speed reading' grid**
- **Students asked to read a text as quickly as possible and then calculate the 'words per minute' score (instructions provided)**
- **Students marked their score on the grid and date the exercise, so they could track progress in future lessons**

Comments and observations	• Desks arranged in rows facing the front/white board/teacher's desk • ESL teacher sat with students • Students' answers lead the class discussion
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Focus on learner autonomy • Focus on literacy/reading skills • Linked to mainstream curriculum examination

Reading Faster Record Chart

1. Count the number of words in the text
2. Time yourself reading the text in seconds

$$\text{words per minute or speed} = \frac{\text{number of words x 60}}{\text{time in seconds}}$$

Mark your speed in words per minute with a cross in the centre of each column for every time that you read.

650														
600														
550														
500														
450														
400														
350														
300														
250														
WPM/ Times/ Title														



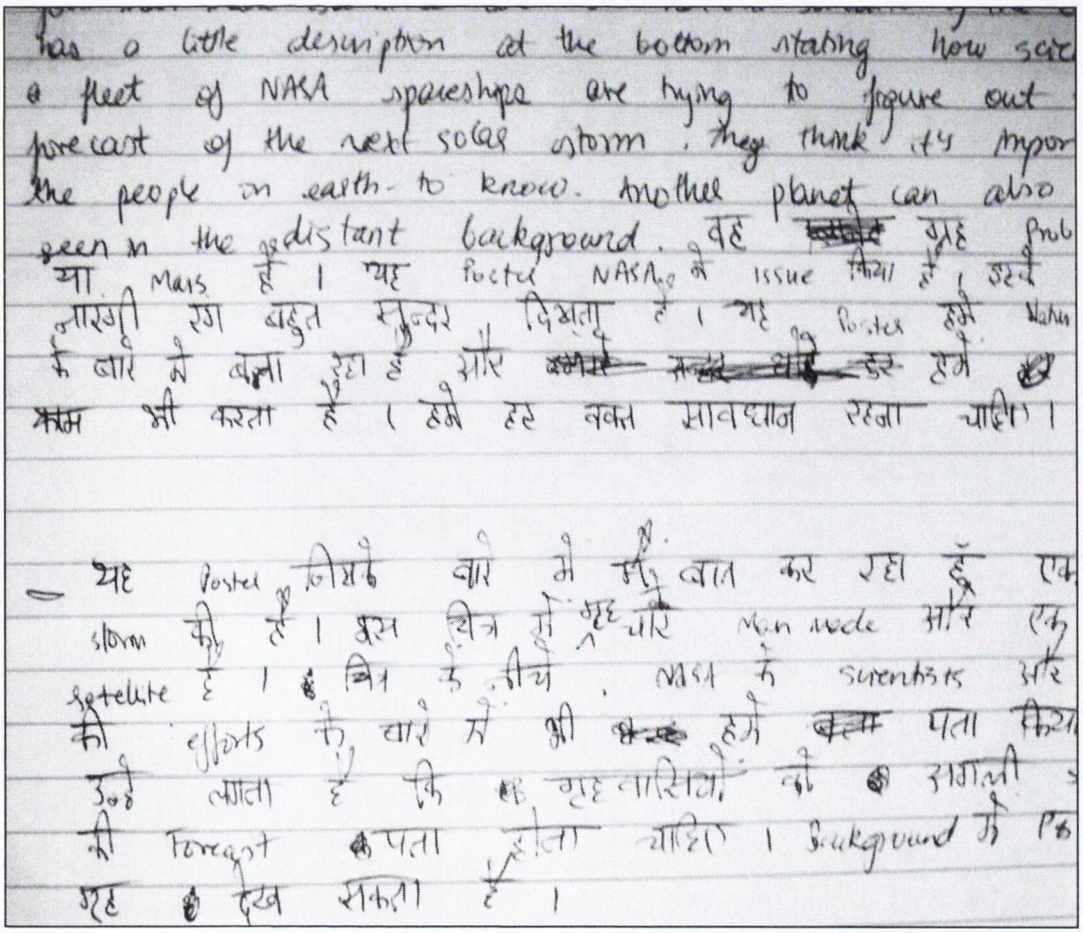
Figure 9-23 Southbank School ESL lesson 9 materials

Lesson 11

Class content	**Date: 27.4.09** **Teacher: ESL teacher 1**

	Details: 5th year, 6 students
	• **Students reread their favourite text from the speed reading activity (see above for instructions from same lesson with a 6th year class)** • **Teacher asked the group why they chose each particular text** • **After brief discussion, teacher presented a 'reading response' framework:** • **Four columns with space to write underneath and a tick box for each task** • **Four tasks were 'write a letter to author of your text', 'rewrite a paragraph of the text in a different style', 'write a dialogue with a friend about the text' and 'summarize the text'** • **Students read the task instructions and asked clarification questions** • **Teacher explained task and asked students to pick one individually to start with** • **Students began one task each**

Comments	• Desks arranged in rows facing the front/teacher's desk • ESL teacher sat with students • Students encouraged to write in L1 (see example materials below)
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Focus on learner autonomy • Focus on literacy • Focus on L1 • Linked to mainstream curriculum subjects


has a little description at the bottom stating how scie
a fleet of NASA spaceships are trying to figure out
forecast of the next solar storm. they think it's impor
the people on earth to know. another planet can also
seen in the distant background. वह ग्रह Pro
या Mars है। यह Poster NASA ने issue किया है। इसे
नारंगी रंग बहुत सुन्दर दिखाती है। यह Poster हमें Mars
के बारे में बता रहा है और हमें इस
भी करता है। हमें हर वक्त सावधान रहना चाहिए।

— यह Poster जिसके बारे में मैं बात कर रहा हूँ एक
storm की है। इस चित्र में ग्रह और Man made और एक
Satellite है। चित्र के नीचे, NASA के scientists और
की efforts के बारे में भी हमें पता किया
उन्हें लगता है कि ग्रह वासियों को सही
की Forecast पता होना चाहिए। Background में Pa
ग्रह देख सकते हैं।

Figure 9-24 Southbank School ESL lesson 10 materials

Lesson 12

Class content	Date: 27.4.09 Teacher: ESL teacher 3 Details: 3rd year, 7 students

- **Teacher had prepared students' copy books and folders of work, and had photocopied key pieces of written work for the students' reflection**
- **Students collected their work**
- **Students worked independently on tasks started in a previous lesson**
- **Teacher reminded the students of the steps for this task**
  - **Students do a piece of free-writing**
  - **Students the use a checklist of grammar points to proofread and correct their own work (based on morphology acquisition studies, see McGarry, forthcoming)**
  - **In previous lessons, the students' checklists have become personalised, so that students can easily identify their own needs and typical errors**
  - **Students then independently select language worksheets or exercises based on their own analysis of their written work**

Comments	• Desks arranged in rows facing the front/white board/teacher's desk • ESL teacher sat with students, moving rapidly between the students • Lesson was linked to the requirements of the Junior Cert English paper • There was evidence to suggest that the teacher had facilitated the concept in steps to the students in previous lessons
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Focus on learner autonomy • Focus on writing skills • Focus language structures • Linked to mainstream curriculum examination

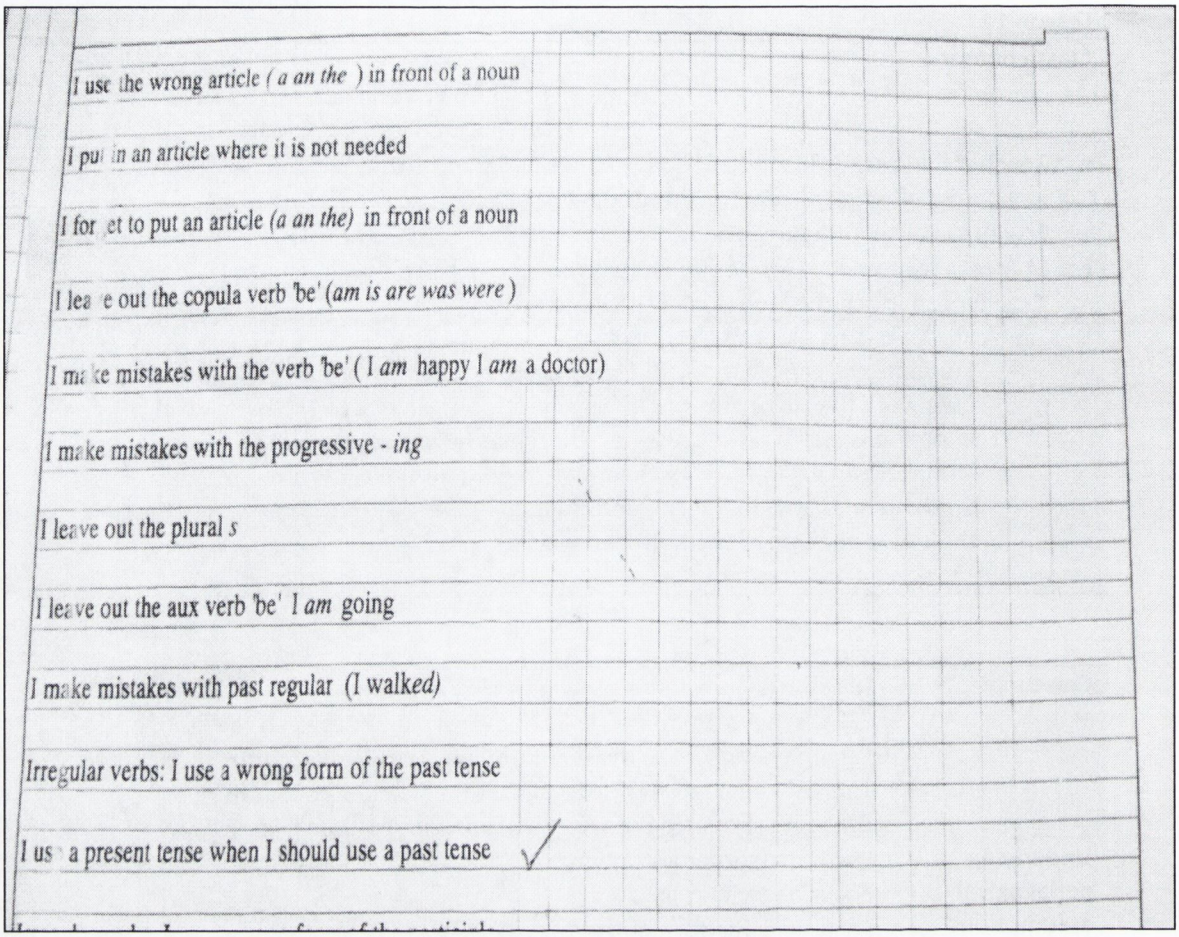
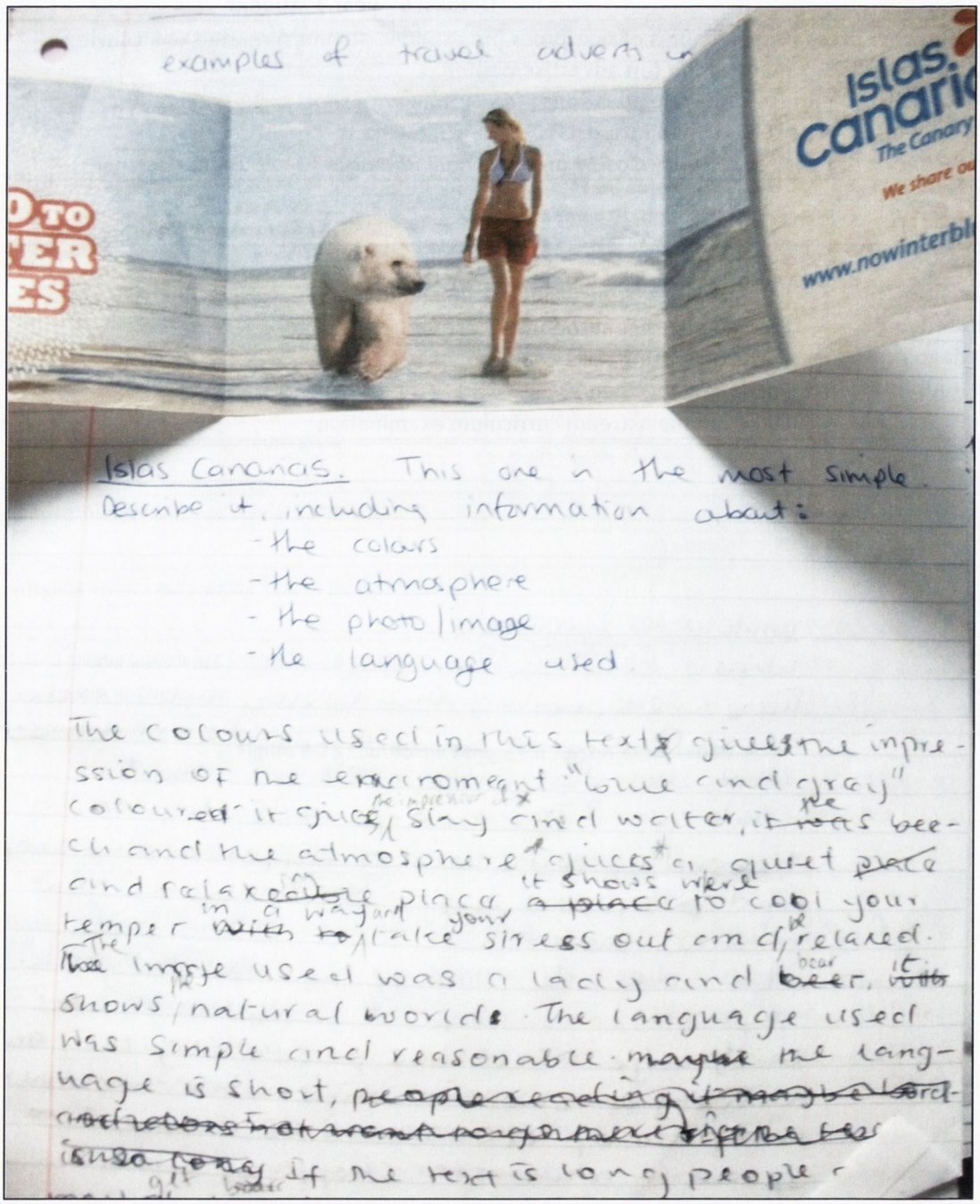


Figure 9-25 Southbank School ESL lesson 11 materials

Lesson 13

Class content	Date: 27.4.09 Teacher: ESL teacher 1 Details: 6th year,1 student
• Teacher presented examples of text types (newspaper clippings) related to a Leaving Cert English exam question (on advertisements) • Teacher scaffolds exam style questions step by step with short tasks, linking advertisements to student's interests • Final writing task based very closely on exam question from previous year's paper	

Comments	• ESL teacher sat with student • ESL room was being used for other students too
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Focus on learner autonomy • Focus on writing skills • Focus language genres • Linked to mainstream curriculum examination



Islas Canarias. This one is the most simple. Describe it, including information about:

- the colours
- the atmosphere
- the photo/image
- the language used.

The colours used in this text gives the impression of the environment "blue and grey" colours. It gives a very and water, it has beach and the atmosphere gives a quiet place and relaxing place, it shows where to cool your temper in a way and take your stress out and relaxed. The image used was a lady and beer, it shows natural world. The language used was simple and reasonable. maybe the language is short, ~~people reading it may be bored if the text is long~~ people

Figure 9-26 Southbank School ESL lesson 12 materials

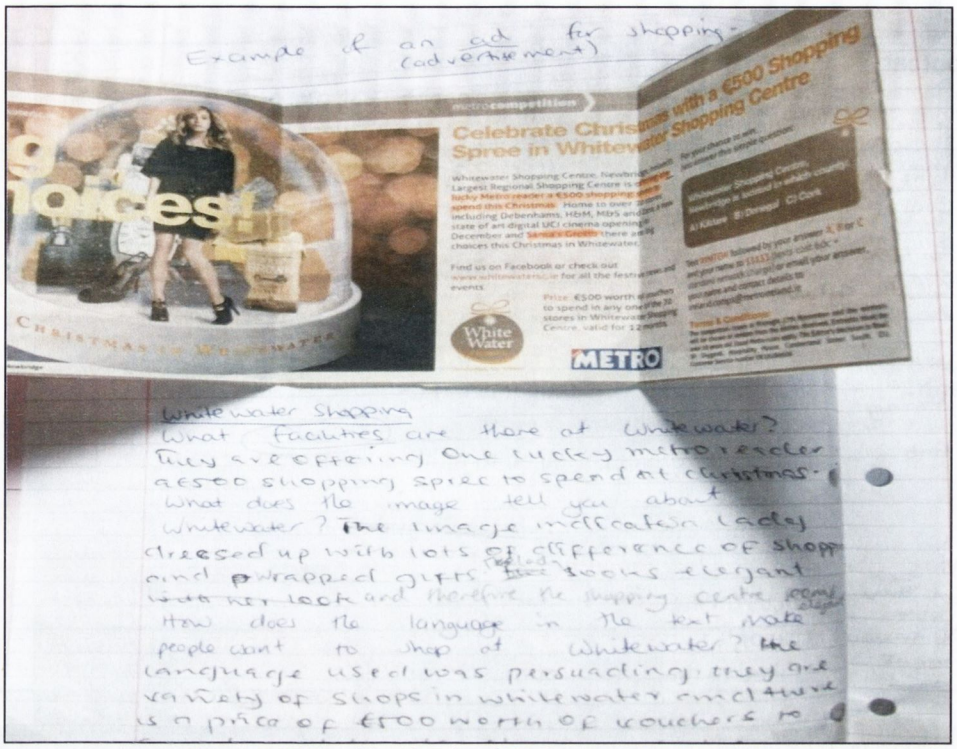


Figure 9-27 Southbank School ESL lesson 12 materials 2

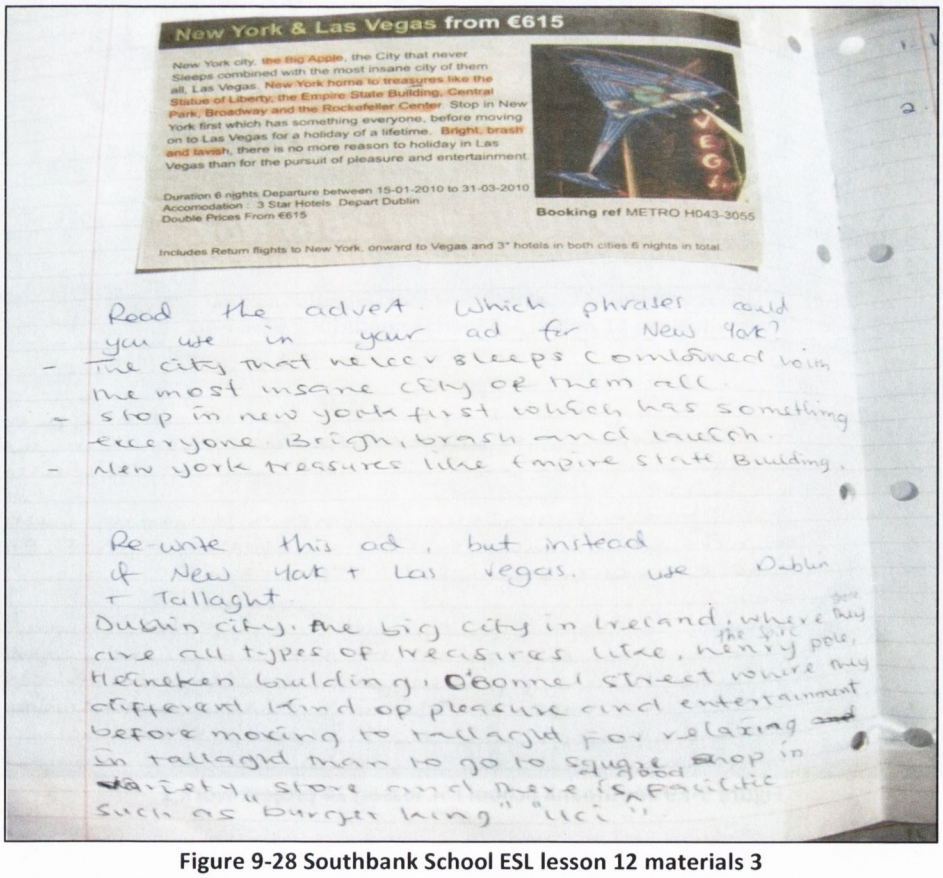


Figure 9-28 Southbank School ESL lesson 12 materials 3

Lesson 14

Class content	Date: 4.5.09 Teacher: ESL teacher 1 Details: 2nd year,6 students
• **Literacy development lesson – students pick a book (or bring one from home)** • **Students read their book (English or L1) and write a short summary (English or L1)** • **Students design an image to be displayed alongside their text** • **Students stick both onto a 'Book Project Poster'**	

Comments	• ESL teacher sat with students but let students relax/refrained from interfering too much • Students were encouraged to either ask each other help or to use a dictionary for help with vocabulary • Students later made a video diary of the project
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Focus on learner autonomy • Focus on literacy • Use of ICT • Linked to mainstream curriculum subjects

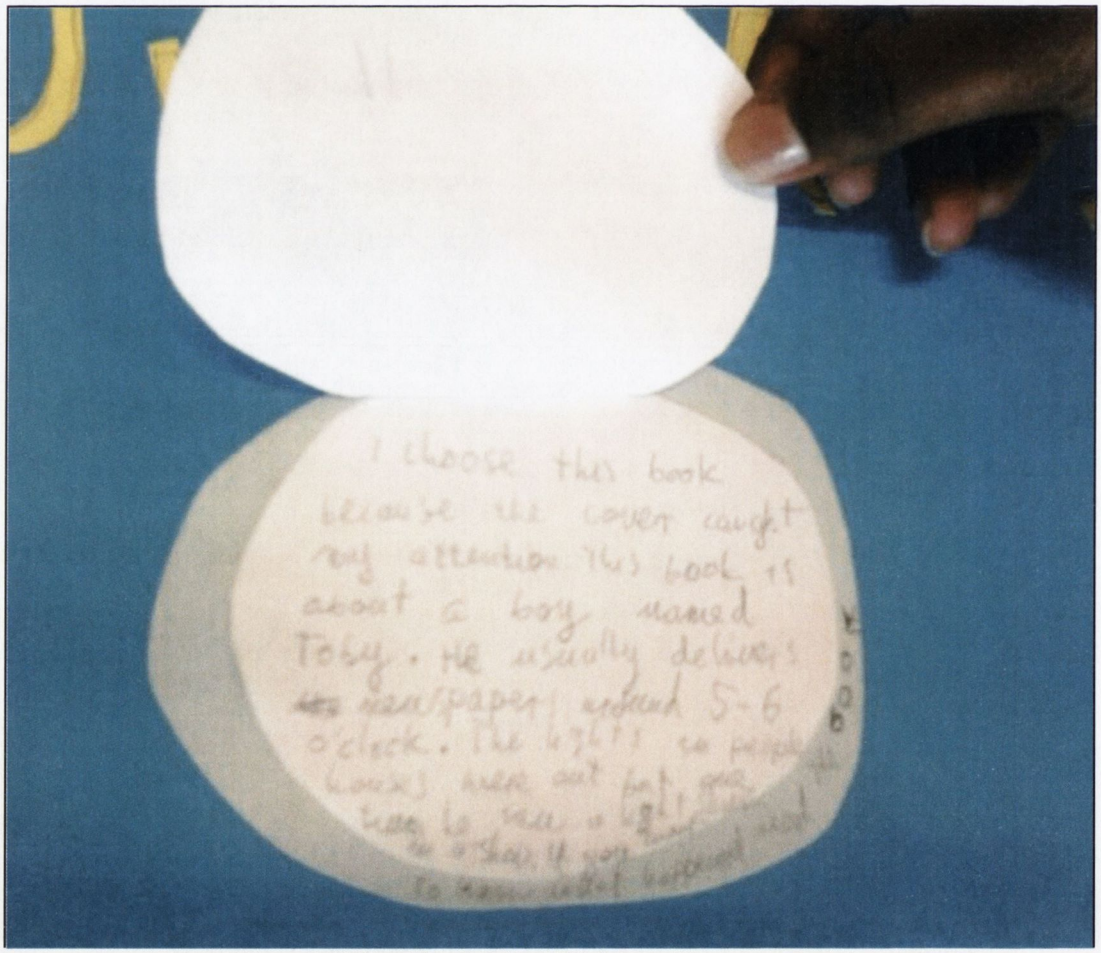


Figure 9-29 Southbank School ESL lesson 14 project work 1

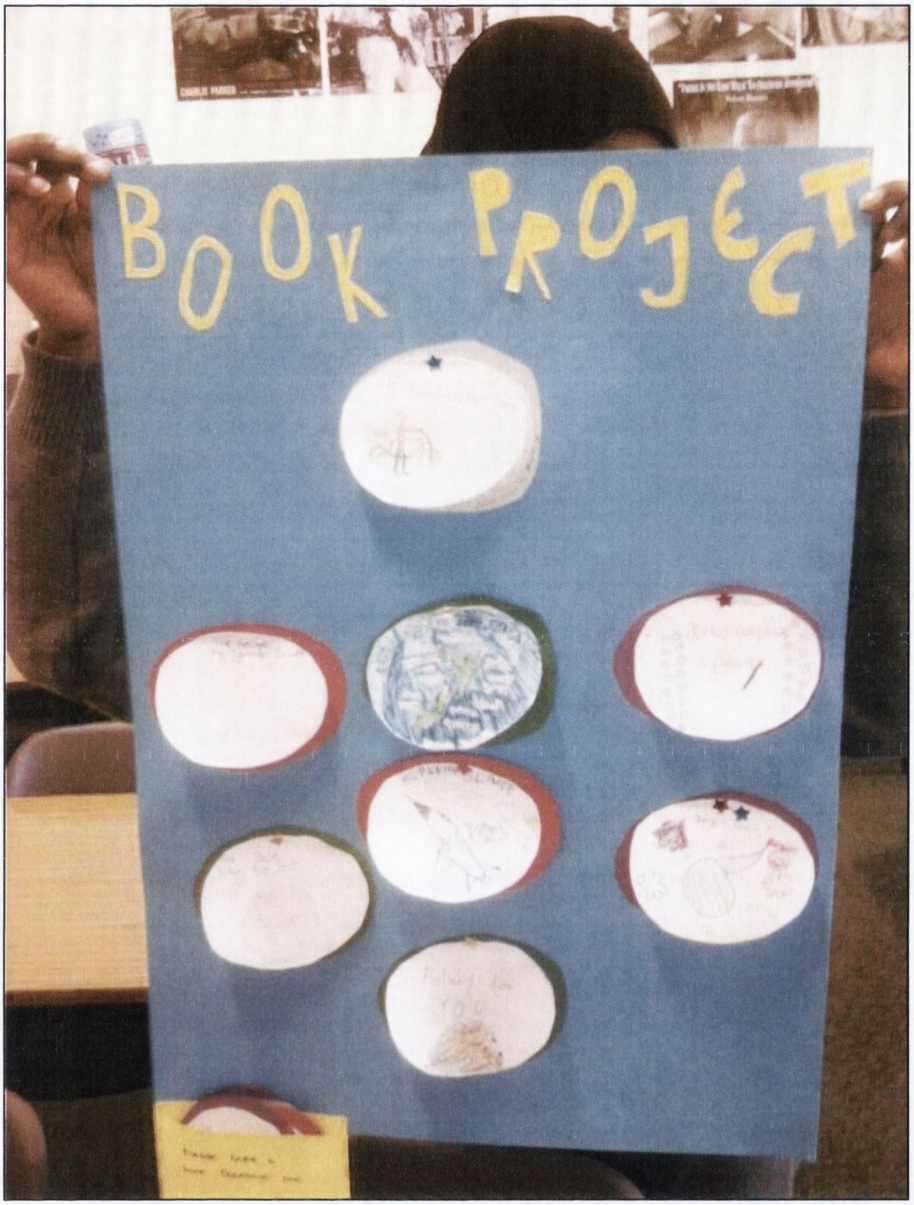


Figure 9-30 Southbank School ESL lesson 14 project work 2

Mainstream lessons

Lesson 1

Class content	Date: 15.9.08 Teacher: Maths teacher 1 Subject: Maths Details: 1st year, (H), 29 students

- **Teacher asked for homework and clarifies what the task was**
- **Teacher corrected homework with the group, naming specific students to answer questions**
- **Students asked to name answer and process used**
- **Board work: maths problem in real life context**

Starters	Main course	Dessert	
4	6	5	= 120

- **By multiplying the meal choices, students arrived at the number of possible combinations**
- **Teacher elicited responses about how many choices are available**
- **Teacher clarified the language used and checks for understanding**
- **Teacher checked individual students' answers**
- **Teacher referred to previous lessons, building on prior knowledge**
- **Students worked in groups/pairs in a dice, card and coin activity**
- **Teacher checked for understanding of new task**
- **Teachers wrote the names of each mathematical symbol on the board**
- **Teacher used white-board to give step-by-step instructions**

Comments	• Classroom set out for group work (5 islands) • Teachers gave explicit classroom instructions (open your copy, write the answer) • Teacher routinely repeated instructions, clarified simplified steps using the white-board and asked students for clarification
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Dialogic teaching practice • Inductive learning strategies • Experiential links to students' own lives • Teacher and students share equal status

Lesson 2

Class content	Date: 15.9.08 Teacher: Geography Subject: Geography Details: 2nd year,(H), 26 students (6 ESL)

- **Students took out work from previous lesson (notes from a video they watched) and read out points made**
- **Teacher supported students' points with a growing summary on the white-board**
- **Teacher repeated points for students who were absent in previous lesson while reiterating main content for all students**
- **Teacher linked key words with students' personal knowledge, for example by explaining the word 'congestion' with reference to when students have a cold**
- **Linked lesson content (City of Paris) to students' personal knowledge about Dublin, and to cross-curricular content (French class)**
- **Teacher elicited answers from students and reinforce them by using the board:**

Expand CBD to West	**c) develop 'green field' town**
Towns around Paris have developed	**Disadvantages jobs/employment in Paris**

- **Students copied work from the board**
- **Teacher recapped points on the board**

Comments	• Classroom arranged for group work in 5 islands • Much use of whiteboard to summarise key points, draw diagrams and display students' ideas/answers • Teacher led discussion (no interaction between peers in this lesson) • At one point the teacher used the phrase 'catch 22' and an English L1 student asked for clarification
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Dialogic teaching practice • Experiential links to students' own lives • Teacher and students share equal status

Lesson 3

Class content	Date: 13.1.08 Teacher: Maths teacher 1 Subject: Maths Details: 1st year,(F/SEN), 13 students (4 ESL)

- **Several minutes of administration/checking**
- **Board work:**

Take a card. List all the possible outcomes Club | Spade | Heart | Diamond

- **Students copied table from board**
- **Teacher handed out decks of cards with explicit verbal instructions**
- **Teacher gave step by step instructions throughout activity while checking on students' progress**
- **Students chatted and worked in pairs**
- **Teacher explained concepts using personal stories**
- **Board work:**

How many cards altogether? How many cards in each family? write down the value of each of these cards: King = Ace = Jack = Queen =

Comments	• Desks arranged in islands for group work • Teacher took time with each student to explain the task, paying particular attention to one ESL student who was struggling • Teacher constantly went around the groups to clarify understanding
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Dialogic teaching practice • Inductive learning strategies • Experiential links to students' own lives • Teacher and students share equal status

Lesson 4

Class content	Date: 13.10.08 Teacher: Maths teacher 3 Subject: Maths Details: 2nd year,(F/SEN), 16students (4 ESL)

- **Teacher wrote one page number and two questions on the board for students to be getting on with while she checked homework**
- **Theme: shapes. Teacher held up a cylindrical shaped pencil-case and checked for understanding**
- **Board work:**

Cylinder → Formula→ Volume→ πr 2h **h = 10 ○r = 6 (3.14) (6)2 (10) = 1130cm2** **π = 3.14 r = radius h = height (brackets mean x)**

- **Teacher used board to remind students of previous learning – other shapes (rectangle, triangle etc.) plus diagrams of the shapes**
- **Teacher gave several examples of calculating the volume of a cylinder and students were instructed to copy the examples**
- **Students performed the calculations using their textbooks**
- **Teacher checked understanding at the end of the instructions**

Comments	• Desks arranged in three long tables, facing the front, promoting individual work and teacher talk • Little time for student talk or student collaboration
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Experiential links to students' own lives • Teacher assumes higher status

Lesson 5

Class content	**Date: 26.1.09** **Teacher: English/History teacher 1** **Subject: History** **Details: 1st year,(O), 26 students (4 ESL)**

- **Teacher gave verbal lesson plan**
- **Teacher asked a question (about homework from previous lesson) and elicited answer from students**
- **Teacher linked concepts to students' lives (cf. 'homestead' to MTV's 'Cribs')**
- **Board work:**[47]

Clothes & Food	**3 Homesteads**
men – linen trousers	**1. A. Rothe**
women – ankle	**2. J. Smith**
length tunic	**3. K. Appian**
1. Milk 2. Beef	
3. Cheese	

- **After revision of homework, teacher asked for volunteers to read aloud from textbook**
- **Teacher linked concepts and keywords to students' lives (Celtic festivals → students' festivals)**
- **After each student had read a short paragraph aloud, teacher asked students to repeat the ideas in their own words**
- **If students' feedback was negative regarding clarification, teacher worked with other students to explain concept**

Comments	• All students were engaged • Much interaction between teacher and students • ESL and English L1 students were integrated (according to a seating plan) • Teacher attempted to make cross-curricular links (with Irish language) • Living History Education 1, p 59
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Dialogic teaching practice • Experiential links to students' own lives • Teacher and students share equal status

[47] The purpose of the board work appeared to make little sense. However, as an observed I could not ask the teacher for clarification.

Lesson 6

Class content	Date: 26.1.09 Teacher: Science Subject: Science Details: 1st year,(F/SEN), 6 students (2 ESL)

- **Teacher arranged students in groups (dividing student friendship links)**
- **Teacher explained today's global goal, linking it to previous lesson**
- **Teacher explained procedure, listing equipment needed and demonstrating safety procedures**
- **Teacher set up Bunsen Burners, safety goggles and tripod stands**
- **Teacher explained experiment using an evaporating dish and distributed sea water to the students**
- **As the experiment progressed, teacher distributed worksheet which highlights keywords and spelling, with diagrams**
- **Teacher explained key concepts, eliciting keywords and understanding**
- **Students worked at their own pace to finish worksheet then returned to watch experiment results**
- **Teacher linked experiment to students' lives (salt extracted from experiment is the same as salt students put on their chips)**
- **Teacher used actions and verbal response to explain evaporation in response to questions from students**
- **Students then taped the salt into their hardback books**

Comments	• Students constantly engaged with the experiment • One ESL student arrived late and teacher spent a few minutes with him explaining procedure of the experiment
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Dialogic teaching practice • Inductive learning strategies • Focus on language/key words • Teacher and students share equal status

Lesson 7

Class content	Date: 26.1.09 Teacher: English/history teacher 2 Subject: English Details: 1st year,(H), 26 students (2 ESL)

- **Teacher reviewed quiz from previous lesson**
- **Teacher elicited answers from the students**
- **Students expanded and commented on answers for clarification**
- **Teacher explained there would be a prize at the end of the lesson for the quiz winner**
- **Teachers instructed students that they would read the book from the point they had been requested to read up to for homework**
- **Teachers informed students that an important part of the book would be covered during this lesson**
- **Students took turns reading aloud and teacher explained points between students**
- **Teacher asked clarification questions**
- **Teacher gave explicit instruction to students to open their copy books. They had previously written a diary of the novel's main character and were asked to add the character's reaction to this part of the book**
- **Teacher supplemented his instructions with board work: 'Write a short note on how Rusty might feel about meeting her father for the first time'**
- **Teacher then reinforced the section of the book by rereading it**
- **Teacher instructed students that they had another 30 seconds to finish and that they would swap and read each other's work**
- **Teacher asked students to mark the current book section with a star, because it was a key part of the book**
- **Students then returned to reading aloud with teacher asking clarification questions**
- **Teacher linked the book section to previously read sections**
- **Teacher announced homework – revision for Christmas exams**

Comments	• Tables arranged into rows facing the front • All students were engaged • Much interaction between teacher and students • 'Back Home' novel by Michelle Magorian
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Dialogic teaching practice • Experiential links to students' own lives

Lesson 8

Class content	Date: 27.4.09 Teacher: History Subject: History Details: 3rd year,(O), 21 students (3 ESL)

- **Teacher summarised lesson plan, which was to revise sections of the book for the Christmas exams**
- **Teacher asked a series of questions to the students about the topic they had previously covered, to check understanding**
- **Teacher started many unfinished statements and students completed them**
- **When explaining keywords (such as 'nationalist') teacher explained them with reference to other, similar words ('nation')**
- **Teacher gave one significant question and students must locate the answer in the text**
- **Teacher then elicited the answer by prompting individual students**
- **Teacher explained keywords and acronyms from the text**

Comments	• Desks arranged in rows and divided again into pairs • Students were visibly engaged • Teacher led discussion, with students actively encouraged to participate • Teacher often made jokes and asked trick questions to check students were listening
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Dialogic teaching practice • Scaffolding techniques to relate task instructions • Focus on key words

Lesson 9

Class content	Date: 27.4.09 Teacher: Art Subject: Art Details: 2nd year,(F/SEN), 15 students (2 ESL)

- **Teacher gave feedback about previous lesson**
- **Teacher demonstrated the end product (a puppet skeleton) and gave students step-by-step instructions on how to start making the puppet**
- **Students worked at their own pace**
- **Teacher went around the desks and gave students individual feedback and assistance**

Comments	• Tables arranged facing the front, one student per table • Desks were separate so collaborative learning was not encouraged • 1 SNA is present in the classroom
Underlying pedagogical assumptions	• Teaching by demonstration

9.4 Whole school checklists

Parkend School

	Yes	No	Notes
New ESL students receive a 'starter kit'		✓	
Parents of ESL students receive a 'welcome' booklet		✓	
Lists of ESL groups displayed in staffroom		✓	
Space in staffroom for ESL notices		✓	
Notices, display material etc. acknowledge and provide positive images of different ethnic groups		✓	
The reception area has multilingual welcome notices		✓	
Funding is available to support ESL programme	✓		From general school funds, for set of books
Classroom and library material reflect positive images of ethnic and cultural diversity	✓		Some classrooms reflect diversity
Food served in the school cafeteria includes items that meet the cultural/dietary needs of the students			Not sure
Games and hobby activities in the school can adjust flexibly to support inclusion			Not sure
Special events are scheduled throughout the year to mark all cultures and heritages present in the school			Not sure
Anti-racism education is included as a natural part of the curriculum			Not sure
Maps or posters show diverse student population	✓		In some classrooms
National holidays and holy days of the student population are acknowledged			Not sure
Photographic displays represent the diverse student population	✓		In some cases
Intercultural days and events are organised		✓	
Library makes books available representing the different cultures at the school			Not sure
Buddy system operates in the school		✓	
Ecumenical prayer/spiritual support and opportunities available			Not sure
Parents offered English courses (free of charge)		✓	
Parents of ESL students invited to participate in the school			Not sure
Pictorial/translated documents available for ESL parents		✓	
Interpreters available for ESL parents		✓	
There is a planned assessment procedure for assessment of each new student		✓	
The student's English language proficiency is assessed in relation to the Language Proficiency Benchmarks		✓	
An assessment portfolio on each student deals with psychological issues, learning difficulties and academic support		✓	
Misc.	ESL hours are not clearly defined ESL and LS hours overlap ESL hours turn into general homework and supervised learning sessions		

Table 9-2 Whole school observation: Parkend School

Linthorpe School

	Yes	No	Notes
New ESL students receive a 'starter kit'		✓	
Parents of ESL students receive a 'welcome' booklet from the school		✓	
Lists of ESL groups displayed in staffroom		✓	
Space in staffroom for ESL notices in General		✓	
Notices, display material etc. acknowledge and provide positive images of different ethnic groups	✓		Multi-cultural club, with special "one-off" events. Artwork on walls of school corridors reflect diverse student population
The reception area has multilingual welcome notices		✓	
Funding is available to support ESL programme	✓		From general school funds
Classroom and library material reflect positive images of ethnic and cultural diversity		✓	
Food served I the school cafeteria includes items that meet the cultural/dietary needs of the students			n/a
Games and hobby activities in the school can adjust flexibly to support inclusion	✓		See multi-cultural club details above
Special events are scheduled throughout the year to mark all cultures and heritages present in the school			Some – need further details about this from Principal
Anti-racism education is included as a natural part of the curriculum			Not sure
Maps or posters show diverse student population			In some classrooms
National holidays and holy days of the student population are acknowledged			Not sure
Photographic displays represent the diverse student population	✓		In some cases
Intercultural days and events are organised	✓		See above
Library makes books available representing the different cultures at the school			Not sure
Buddy system operates in the school		✓	
Ecumenical prayer/spiritual support and opportunities available			Not sure
Parents offered English courses (free of charge)		✓	
Parents of ESL students invited to participate in the school	✓		ESL teacher had regular contact with the parents
Pictorial/translated documents available for ESL parents		✓	
Interpreters available for ESL parents		✓	
There is a planned assessment procedure for assessment of each new student		✓	
The student's English language proficiency is assessed in relation to the Language Proficiency Benchmarks		✓	
An assessment portfolio on each student deals with psychological issues, learning difficulties and academic support		✓	

Table 9-3 Whole school observation: Linthorpe School

Southbank School

	Yes	No	Notes
New ESL students receive a 'starter kit'	✓		Students get ESL copy books, information about the school journal (Polish students only) and versions of the ELP
Parents of ESL students receive a 'welcome' booklet from the school	✓		Polish speaking parents receive information (Polish speaking SEN employed by the school)
Lists of ESL groups displayed in staffroom	✓		Extensive ESL info displayed in the staffroom (policy, class lists, timetables, training information, updates)
Space in staffroom for ESL notices in General	✓		See above
Notices, display material etc. acknowledge and provide positive images of different ethnic groups	✓		ESL room displays much culturally diverse materials, and around the school there is evidence of some relevant display materials around the school and in other classrooms
The reception area has multilingual welcome notices		✓	
Funding is available to support ESL programme	✓		From general school funds
Classroom and library material reflect positive images of ethnic and cultural diversity	✓		ESL library has books representing many cultures
Food served I the school cafeteria includes items that meet the cultural and dietary needs of the students			No canteen at Southbank (students bring a packed lunch, or go home to eat)
Games and hobby activities in the school can adjust flexibly to support inclusion	✓		Recent film made during extracurricular activity centred on the theme of inclusion
Special events are scheduled throughout the year to mark all cultures and heritages present in the school	✓		Some
Anti-racism education is included as a natural part of the curriculum			Not sure
Maps or posters show diverse student population	✓		In some classrooms
National holidays and holy days of the student population are acknowledged	✓		
Photographic displays represent the diverse student population	✓		
Intercultural days and events are organised	✓		
Buddy system operates in the school	✓		To some extent, ESL coordinator tries to draw on students' L1s, and L1 groups to support each other, where appropriate for age
Ecumenical prayer/spiritual support and opportunities available			Not sure
Parents offered English courses (free of charge)		✓	
Parents of ESL students invited to participate in the school	✓		ESL teacher makes herself available to be contacted by parents
Pictorial/translated documents available for ESL parents	✓		Only in Polish

Interpreters available for ESL parents	✓	Only in Polish (and limited access to interpreters if older students are able and it is appropriate to withdraw them from class)
There is a planned assessment procedure for assessment of each new student	✓	Post-Primary Assessment Kit and free writing tasks
The student's English language proficiency is assessed in relation to the Language Proficiency Benchmarks	✓	
An assessment portfolio on each student deals with psychological issues, learning difficulties and academic support	✓	Stored in the ESL classroom and available to all teaching staff if relevant

Table 9-4 Whole school observation: Southbank School