Local Education Authorities' (LEAs) Responses to the Newly Arrived European Bilingual Population

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1. Introduction

This paper focuses on a specific group of European bilingual pupils; newly arrived Madeiran Portuguese in a town called Southview (a pseudonym) in the county of Highridge (again a pseudonym) on the south coast of England. By focusing in depth on the experience of one group in one Local Education Authority (LEA), it is hoped that the study can provide a starting point for recommendations and guidelines for more generalisable future policy and practice in the area of school support and provision for newly arrived bilingual pupils.

This study took place in an area where there is relatively little in the English as an additional Language (EAL) literature on the specific language education experiences of isolated bilingual learners, let alone a particular group on the south coast of England. The study on the newly arrived European bilingual population has led to interesting discoveries about this pupil population-a linguistic minority group whose lived experience of language and education in Britain has largely been overlooked, despite the fact that the seasonal migration of Madeirans to the south coast of the British Isles is a well-established pattern (Obare, 2002). As cited by Santarita & Martin-Jones in Alladina & Edwards (1991: 234), 'No research has yet been done among young people of Portuguese origin in Britain'.

As one head teacher commented to me during my study:

'People around this region has lived so much in isolation, Ruphine, and it is now that they are slowly accepting the minority groups living in their midst (AL 07/02).

The Madeiran Portuguese discussed in this study is a specific 'linguistic minority' who as noted, conceive of themselves as a group with definable characteristics, different even to the mainland Portuguese. No minority exists in isolation however. In order to understand their particular minority status, therefore, it is necessary to refer to the wider context which all minorities are part of. It is, therefore, necessary, also to examine practice, in this case school practices, towards linguistic minorities.

Human mobility internationally, as a result of internal conflicts, for economic gain and for many other reasons, has generated a considerable body of literature on ethnic minorities. Their heterogeneous nature has made it 'impossible (for some authors) to say even roughly how many people belong to linguistic and cultural minorities across the OECD countries or even for that matter, to provide a preliminary list of them' Churchill (1986: 5).

1.2 Linguistic minorities in Britain

Two features are generally accepted as describing linguistic minorities : the *linguistic* dimension and the *cultural* dimension (Verne, 1987: 27, in CERI 1987). The first does not apply to all minorities. Yet it is through language or culture, or both, that social groups are here identified as minorities. Verne 1987: cites a third dimension:

Language and/or culture are perceived only in relation to the culture and/ or language of majority social groups, so the concept of a minority is bound to be a relative one. By 'minorities' therefore we generally mean linguistic and cultural minorities. These, at any event, are the two aspects which the specific education programmes for minorities seem to have singled out (27).

In the UK, the Linguistic Minorities Project (1985: 30) focused on linguistic minorities with 'distinction of race and skin colour, which during the period in question have been the main categories implicitly used in the political debate about immigration policy'. In the same context, the Adult Language Use Survey (ALUS) grouped linguistic minorities into four categories: South Asian, East Asian, East European and South European (ibid: 34).

Historically, the main linguistic minorities were those who arrived in England between 1940 and 1975, namely the West Indians, the South Asian migrants from the Indian sub-continent; the political refugees from East Africa and the Vietnamese Chinese; the Greek and Turkish Cypriots, and the political refugees from Eastern Europe (ibid.: 31). These groups all spoke different languages, which was to 'later determine their exclusion or inclusion from economic activities, sometimes overtly on the basis of language skills' (ALUS, Chapter 4: 162, in ibid: 33).

Frank Angel (1975, in Spolsky, 1975: 35) points out that 'it would be a serious mistake not to realise that the language problem is part of a more complex set of non-linguistic ones'. He further poses the question: 'To what extent are minority students' difficulties a result of linguistic or cultural differences, and to what extent should they be attributed to social or economic factors? In any case, how is the fact of difference to be translated into classroom practice?' 'What it means to be Estonian, Basque, Quebecois or Catalan today is essentially captured by their construction of a 'political culture', for it is through struggle, readjustment and national assertion that such identities are being recast' (Williams, 1991: 19). This is not necessarily true for other minorities such as the Breton, Gaelic Scots, or Galician's, for much of their ethnicity, as John Edwards (1984b, in Williams, 1991: 19) has demonstrated, 'is symbolic and not essentially a platform for a wider political assertion of group rights in a plural society'.

As a result, policy planners may need to provide more than educational, psychological or linguistic rationales for their efforts. A conscious awareness of the complexity of such an effort from the societal perspective may also be necessary. Experience has suggested that, if policy planners are not aware of the specific nature of the language communities to which these policies are directed, the policies are bound to fail especially if the sociolinguistic dimension of the problem is ignored.

As Skuttnab-Kangas comments: 'Language is the main instrument for communication. If you live in a country with speakers of many different languages, you have to share at least one language with the others in order for a democratic process to be possible' (1988: 14).

1.3 Linguistic minorities in Highridge

A community Languages Survey undertaken in November 2001 across all Highridge schools recorded 60 languages spoken- (see tables below). The main language groups were those of the Indian sub-continent and the major languages spoken were Gujarati and Urdu (data published by the team responsible for the support of minority pupils in the county of Highridge, 2001).
The most common languages has over 350 speakers. Some languages have only one or two speakers.

1.3.1 Languages recorded in Highridge Schools as by November 2001

Gujarati	7. Portuguese	13. Tamil
Urdu	8. Italian	14. German
Panjabi	9. Cantonese	15. Spanish
Bangladeshi	10. French	16. Korean
Pashto	11. Turkish	17. Kaatchi
Arabic	12. Hindi	18. Shona

(Range –from 350 to 30+ speakers)

The other languages (in alphabetical order):

Afrikaans	Ibo	Norwegian
Albanian	Icelandic	Pehan
Armenian	Indonesian	Polish
Creoles	Japanese	Russian
Danish	Kashmiri	Serbo-Croat
Dutch	Kiswahili	Sindhi
Farsi	Kurdish	Sinhalese
Finnish	Lao	Swedish
Flemish	Lithuanian	Tagalog
Gha	Malay	Thai
Greek	Mandarin	Vietnamese
Hebrew	Mauritian	Visayan
Hungarian	Nepalese	Wolof

Yoruba

(Range from 30 to 1 or 2 speakers)

Source: Language Development in the Classroom Highridge Support Team for Ethnic Minority Pupils November, 2001- January 2002: 6)

All these linguistic groups form a very diverse and heterogeneous group; by their nationality of origin, their language, their culture and their socio-economic status. In many cases, the same nationality may mask different ethnic origins, e.g. the Madeiran Portuguese and the Portuguese from mainland Portugal, as, despite having the same nationality, they have different dialects, and accents and a different history. Their self-image is important, too, as they prefer to be referred to as Madeiran Portuguese rather than Portuguese. As one Madeiran Portuguese scholar pointed out to me:

'We have a slightly different dialect from those in the mainland but our accents are just Madeiran just like those from Lisbon have a Lisbon accent and so are those from the extreme north who speak a mixture of Spanish and Portuguese' (GA 11/01).

There are those minorities regarded as residents of long standing: in the case of Highridge those mainly from the Indian sub-continent and who are concentrated in the Parklands (pseudonym) area. The Madeiran Portuguese who are also identified as 'new arrivals' are scattered across the South coast with groups in the restaurant trade in Highridge in Parklands and in other counties towards the southwest in places like Bournemouth. As noted above, those in Seaview (again a pseudonym) mainly work in the vegetable nurseries.

According to Spolsky (1972: 3), when we refer to minority children, we are concerned with 'the problems of those whose variety of language is not the same as that chosen by the school as a medium of instruction'. 'It might be a different language, as when Spanish –speaking children are forced to study in English'. This draws attention to school policy on language and education. Skutnabb-Kangas argues that:

'In a democratic country, it should be the duty of the school system to give every child, regardless of linguistic background, the same chance to participate in the democratic process. If this requires that (at least) some children (i.e. the linguistic minority children) become bilingual or multilingual, then it should be the duty of the educational system to make them bilingual/multilingual, as individuals (as opposed to the *country* being multilingual)'. (1988: 15)

As Spolsky says:

Whatever language goals a society may set for its schools can be achieved only if they take into account the language competence that the pupils bring to school. There is no justification for the myth that children of lower socio-economic class speak no language, or an inferior one, or a debased and inaccurate form of standard language (1972: 4).

Williams (1970, in Spolsky op. cit.) further reiterates that linguistic minority children 'have learned the variety of language to which they have been exposed, a variety with as much semantic richness, structural complexity, and potential communication as any other'. If society believes they must also acquire some other language or variety, then the schools must develop sound and effective methods of language instruction. As argued above, this requires understanding of the minority in question, their needs and their status within the host society.

The challenge is, of course, a general one. Children in schools throughout the world fall into the category where their L1 is different from that of the majority? My focus group is no exception. Portuguese, though an official EU language, is a minority language in Britain. Their experience is common to the majority of pupils throughout the world, though not the majority of pupils in Britain. As Fishman (1970) points out:

> Given a moment's thought it is quite apparent that most of the world's schoolchildren…are not taught to read and write the same language or language variety that they bring with them to school from their homes and neighbourhoods'.

According to Cummins (2000: 17), the use of a pupil's first language enhances learning, including the acquisition of language and literacy skills. Pupils from different linguistic backgrounds have knowledge about language in use, about formal and informal uses of language, and the differences between speech and writing. The maintenance of the home language is of particular importance, therefore. This is obviously influenced by a number of factors, however. Among factors referred to by Baker (1989: 43-5) are the following:

- The status given to the home language;
- Access to mother tongue institutions (e.g. schooling in the minority language)
- Literacy in the home language;
- Maintenance of minority (ethnic) group identity.

Support for the home language has a number of significant educational 'pay-offs', too, as can be seen in the following summary of research findings, prepared by CUES (1983: 1):

- Supporting the development of the mother-tongue will enhance second language learning;
- Recognition of minority children's bilingualism by the school can be a positive force in their development;
- There is considerable evidence that bilingualism can benefit children's overall academic and intellectual progress;
- Concepts/skills developed in the mother tongue can easily be transferred to a second language. Schools and teachers can certainly influence these things. Minority languages can be given status; access to mother tongue institutions and literacy in the home language could be encouraged; there could be assistance in the maintenance of group identity. How these could be done is through possible responses ranging along a continuum from national policy at one end to the practice of individual schools and teachers at the other. My research experience in this field has led me to believe that I could influence policy through collaborative inquiry with teachers. However, not being the only stake holder, progress could be slow.

The next stage of my discussion, therefore, focuses on policy responses to the education of linguistic minorities in Britain and in Highridge.

2.0 Policy responses
2.1 Policy responses in Britain

From a historical perspective, the dominant political and economic group in Britain has shown a high degree of intolerance towards diversity through social and educational policy. This was best reaffirmed by the LMP (1985: 4), which states that many researchers have demonstrated how the structures of discrimination are reinforced by values and concepts that pervade economic and social processes. It is not difficult to see how social and political values influence the distribution of resources within the school in England'. The establishment of a significant ethnic minority population in Britain was neither planned nor anticipated by policy-makers (Layton-Henry, 1984). This was perhaps used as an excuse for Britain's slow response to the needs of pupils from linguistic minority backgrounds in the school population.

The emergence of many new minority language communities using a wide range of European and Asian languages has, broadly speaking, been met by an expectation of eventual linguistic assimilation. Initial responses to the educational needs of ethnic minority children were based on the more or less unchallenged conviction that the children should and would be integrated into British society fairly rapidly. Integration was understood in terms of assimilation. These early attitudes are documented in Fitzgerald (1978, in Ellis, 1985: 7). 'Both the Conservative and Labour Parties assumed that immigration would result in social and economic integration, and although by the end of the 1960s the reality of 'cultural diversity' was acknowledged, this did not become the official attitude of schools'. Fitzgerald suggests that this was because schools regarded themselves as 'the transmitting agent of social exchange' and so saw Townsend and Brittan's (1973) survey of the schools' own views on the important areas for curriculum development in multiracial classes stressed the high level of importance attached to the Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESL). 'The item that came first in the head teachers' assessment of importance both in primary and secondary schools was 'the linguistic difficulty of newly arrived non-English speaking pupils' (Townsend and Brittan, 1973:25). As they note:

'Primary school headmasters however, found the 'linguistic needs of deprived indigenous pupils' more important than the continued linguistic needs of immigrants after completion of special language-teaching arrangements' (ibid. 36).

This echoes the sentiments of indigenous pupils' parents in Highridge after the implementation of the Highridge Support Team for Ethnic Minorities (HSTEMP) in the 1980s:.

'Most parents questioned with hostility the criteria which the minority pupils were awarded the Section 11 funding and not their children' (HS 03/01).

As noted above, some parents of the monolingual English speaking children questioned the Section 11 funding-seeking to know why it was only benefiting children of minority ethnic communities and not their own children who also needed extra support. Townsend and Brittan (1973: 37) also report similar responses to special provision, represented in this comment from one headmaster:
Some allowance may be made for any immigrant pupil with a language difficulty, but the whole aim of the school is gradually to treat all pupils alike, be they immigrant or non-immigrant. This is a preparation for leaving school and entry into employment and the adult world.

As Ellis argues: 'It is perhaps because of conscious or subconscious resistance to special provision that schools have typically interpreted the immigrant pupil's needs as *linguistic* (rather than social and cultural) and as *initial* (rather than continuing)' (1985: 9).

The positive experience of those schools that took part in the Mother Tongue and English Teaching Project (MOTET, 1981) in Bradford lends general support to the carefully planned use of minority languages in school, at the reception stage, in appropriate areas. (This project involved teaching the

normal infant curriculum partly through English, partly through Punjabi). However, despite its success, it was not implemented as part of the curriculum.

The only significant language element in the curriculum apart from English is generally the study of 'one or two European languages chosen from a small range which reflects a rather limited view of Britain's present cultural and political needs, (Reid, 1984: 3). Britain has been slow to follow the example of other 'developed' countries like Sweden, Canada (see Cummins 1981) and Australia (Garner 1981) in making minority languages a normal element in mainstream schooling for those children for whom a minority language is a home language. 'The issue of minority languages in education remains marginal, even in the consciousness of professional educationists concerned with language' (Reid op.cit:).

Within the educational system, the linguistic adaptation that has been made to the sudden appearance of large numbers of children speaking languages other than English has been the provision of some teaching of English as an additional language though this is dependant on the availability of personnel and the general linguistic demography of the school.

There are some extant programmes involving language teaching for the indigenous linguistic minorities, however, for the 'new' minorities, the isolated cases are found in major cities most of which are organised by them for their own nationals in liaison with their countries' diplomatic missions. As my interviews with two Madeiran Portuguese restaurateurs and a Portuguese language instructor suggested:

> The schools our children attend do not provide Portuguese language support. All sessions are conducted in English. For Portuguese language sessions we have to send our children to Portuguese language schools run by the consulate across London. It always means travelling to the other end of the city-but we have no choice' (RS 02/01).

This is despite the fact that 'The Swann report recommended that LEAs should support linguistic minority communities in their efforts to maintain languages by encouraging them to use school premises, as this would encourage liaison with mainstream teachers' (Bourne 1989: 137).

The Madeiran Portuguese pupils in my study however, used the school premises for after school mother-tongue provision. Free accommodation was offered, but there was no contact between the mainstream teachers and the Portuguese language teacher. The language classes had no impact on the school staff, as my discussion with mainstream teachers revealed that most of them had not even met the language teacher and had no idea of the learning that took place.

> 'I guess they (the children) are taught the Portuguese alphabet and simple Portuguese words as most of them are not literate in their L1 either. I really don't know as I have never asked what they do in their sessions. Guida (not her real name)(the home-school liaison) could be the right person to ask' (KS 07/02).

The only link was through the home-school liaison co-ordinator from HSTEMP and the head teacher kept in touch over administrative and accommodation issues.

The general trend, therefore, is that pupils follow a school programme, which assumes native speaker competence in English and familiarity with English cultural norms. In most cases, the majority of the pupils in the classes are likely to be native English speakers and the teachers are monolingual and unfamiliar with the cultural background of the linguistic minority children in the class.

The Madeiran Portuguese speaking children who arrive in the South coast of England are generally regarded as coming from a peasant background. While conducting this study I noted that the teachers showed a tendency to have low expectations of their Madeiran pupils' progress. Comments like: 'The problem with Madeiran Portuguese families is that education is the least of their priorities' AB (12/01); 'Most of the Portuguese families around here are illiterate' AR (11/01) were not uncommon. These attitudes reflect an all too common national attitude noted in the Ofsted report *Access and Achievement*

in Urban Education that 'teachers tend to generalise the effects of poverty and social disadvantages and underestimate the potential ability of pupils' (Ofsted, 1993: 16).

Edwards and Redfern (1992: 2) suggest that:

> There have been very few attempts in the post-war period to document educational responses to diversity-at the level of central government, LEAs and schools. This state of affairs derives in part from the traditionally decentralised nature of British education where government attempts to influence practice through a system of financial inducements and general advice in pamphlets and directives rather than through the formulation of explicit policy on multicultural education. Given the lack of leadership from central government, it is not surprising that attempts to monitor and evaluate developments have been limited in number and in scope. And there has been relatively little attempt to document and explore the perceptions of classroom teachers.

Research has shown that teachers tend to have negative expectations of minority children. Romaine, for example, (1994: 194) cites a study where teachers were asked to evaluate some samples of school children's speech, writing, drawing and photographs and to say how successful they thought a child would be based on the evidence presented by these samples. Those whose speech samples were judged to be poor were stereotyped as underachievers, even though their written work and drawings might have been independently rated as good.

2.2 Policy responses in Highridge

Within this southern English county of Highridge, the town of Parklands has the highest concentration of linguistic minorities. According to the EMAG Action Plan of 2000-2001, 60% of pupils with EAL are based in 20 schools mainly in Parklands and of these 20 schools; only the first 4 or 5 have a minority ethnic population of above 40%. The majority of these pupils are British-born and of Asian origin. For a long time along the South Coast of Highridge County, there were no significant numbers of linguistic minorities. Those present were members of the invisible community mainly Italians, Greeks and French but had generally intermarried with the host community and thus had been assimilated in the society.

In March 1986, the first submission to the Home Office, under Section 11, was made by the Highridge Education Department for funding a team to work mainly in the north of Highridge. Section 11 of the 1966 Local Government Act empowered the Home Secretary to pay grants to local authorities and other institutions to support the cost of employing additional staff to help minority ethnic groups overcome barriers which inhibited them accessing and benefiting from mainstream services. Funds were bid for on a project basis and there was annual monitoring of results and assessment of need prior to the allocation of funds. 'At the very beginning, support mainly came from monolingual white teachers with Special Educational Needs (SEN) backgrounds:

> 'When HSTEMP began, the children from minority ethnic communities were supported by mainly white teachers with SEN background. For a long time there has been a misconception that EAL pupils have the same needs as SEN pupils' (HS 03/01).

The LEA could be seen as responding to what they saw as a problem in certain schools in Parklands. The increase in minority children in schools with EAL learning needs had prompted the authorities to begin to devise ways of dealing with this. There was no systematic allocation of support at the outset. The appointment of the first Team Leader in HSTEMP in 1985 saw guidelines being drawn up and systematic organisation based on the collection of data on available languages, and ensuring language provision in the mainstream rather than by withdrawal. This was in accordance with the recommendations of the Swann Report:

We are wholly in favour of a change from the provision of E2L by withdrawal, whether this has been to language centres or to separate units within schools. The needs of learners of English as a

second language should be met by provision within the mainstream as part of a comprehensive programme of language education for all children (1985 Paragraph 2.10).

Following the appointment of six EAL (then described as ESL) teachers and one Home School Liaison teacher, a small centre was established in Riverdale Middle School (as with other names, this is a fictional name) to be known as *Zentrum* (again, a fictional name, meaning 'centre' or 'meeting place'). This was the beginning of the present support team. Sufficient materials were begged, borrowed or made to establish the resource centre and Team members met regularly for in-service training, preparation of teaching materials and consultation between the EAL teachers and the Home School Liaison teacher. These seven teachers worked in close co-operation with the Area Primary Adviser and made contact with more experienced groups. With the Team's decision to extend the provision for linguistic minority children to all Highridge schools in the late 1980s and early1990s, they met with a lot of hostility in schools, which did not want change.

At the point at which the team widened its service it was necessary for the teachers to become a peripatetic team. Most of the teachers had overseas teaching or bilingual experience. There was an emphasis on giving pupils an opportunity to access the curriculum. New staff were recruited and trained in getting home the idea of anti-racist education and in-class support to the EAL pupils in schools. The team developed a draft policy borrowed from counties with a long history of linguistic minorities and ideas acquired from conferences and seminars which guided them on provision and funding in schools as there was no proper guideline from Central government. This highlights the complex nature of educational policy-making in Britain. Clearly the policies developed from counties where there was considerable ethnic and linguistic diversity would not be so easily applicable in an area like Southview, which was predominantly a rural town with a predominantly white population.

When the first Madeiran Portuguese children begun to arrive in Southview schools between the years 1997 to 1998, there was an urgency by the team to deploy extra specialist staff like bilingual assistants and home-school liaison co-ordinators with a preference on those who had a knowledge of Portuguese to support these pupils. These pupils had no English language proficiency and it was apparent that their first language (L1) was Portuguese. The schools were rather hesitant in admitting the pupils and Head teachers 'jammed' the Zentrum offices with phone calls asking the team leaders:

'What do we do with this lot? How do you expect us to teach children with no language?' (HS 03/01).

That the team met with a lot of resistance in the first year of the Portuguese pupils' influx is perhaps not surprising. The teachers were not ready to listen to the team. Responses like '*I don't know what this is all about*' or '*No we cannot do it this way, we can only do it this other way*' (HS 03/01) were not uncommon.

The Madeiran Portuguese presence in schools became noticeable in Southview in 1998. Before then there had been no significant presence of linguistic minority pupils in Southview schools who did not speak English and being from one particular community they were quite 'visible' despite being an 'invisible' minority. This group were different from the Parklands EAL pupils who were mainly British born and despite using a different language to English at home, had some background knowledge from their siblings and the wider community.

It should be noted that school population profiles are dynamic and each context has particular characteristics, reflecting the number or percentage of ethnic minority pupils, family background and circumstances, and both group and individual learner characteristics. The number or percentage of ethnic minority pupils is a continuum, with schools which have very small numbers of 'isolated' pupils at one extreme, and schools with more than 90 percent of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds at the other. Whatever the number of ethnic minority pupils in a school, those with language-learning needs are likely to fall into the broad categories suggested by Leung and Harris (1997:10):

a) New arrivals: pupils newly migrated to Britain with little or no English language proficiency or familiarity with contemporary British cultural and educational practices

b) Pupils born and brought up in Britain but entering early years schooling with overwhelming spoken use of community language but a low level of English language proficiency

c) Pupils born and brought up in Britain who are competent and confident users of local vernacular 'Englishes' and entirely familiar with contemporary British cultural and educational practices, but have difficulties in reproducing accurate and fluent written Standard English in the preferred written genres favoured in specific school disciplines.

d) Pupils arriving in Britain for the first time sometime between the ages of 5 and 16, and progressing over a period from a) to c)

e) Pupils of Caribbean descent who perhaps constitute a special case of c)

f) Pupils who represent an untapped potential for high bi/multilingual competence starting from a substantial family-and community-based confidence and proficiency in speaking a community language.

The Madeiran Portuguese fitted categories a) and d) of newly-arrived pupils with no background knowledge of English. Such factors as prior education and experience of literacy, age on entry, and linguistic, cultural, social and economic background, are important, as is the way these factors impact on learning. As a consequence, the combinations of variables, which make up the ethnic minority profiles of different schools, may call for quite different strategies in response to the particular make-up of the school population. Most of the teachers I interviewed in Southview schools had no prior experience with minority pupils with no English language proficiency or familiarity unlike their counterparts in Parklands schools who had taught minority pupils mainly from West Indian and Asian backgrounds with a long established tradition of living in England; `hence they had long developed their own teaching and learning methods of approach' One school in my case study had school policy guidelines pertaining to minority ethnic EAL provision:

> 'We developed our EAL policy guidelines a year ago partly because we knew that we were going to get an Ofsted inspection' (TJ 07/02)

The other two schools were yet to develop and implement a policy. Policy makers perhaps fail to realise that such differences lead to a situation where the diversity of ethnic minority pupils in the education system is arguably greater that the diversity within the majority group population.

3. School policy responses

In my observation of a year one class in an infant school, during teacher led sessions or circle time, the monolingual pupils dominated the discussion throughout the lesson. The class had two EAL learners-a Madeiran Portuguese pupil and a Bengali-British-born pupil. The teacher's attitude made it noticeably clear to the class that Carlos and Hassan (not their real names) spoke a different language. In a circle time session when pupils were describing their different feelings with objects, at Carlos' turn she commented to the class; *'Carlos may not understand'* (BW01/02). Yet Carlos confidently held the prickly object and described it as *'A cold and prickly feeling'* to the 'surprise' and 'delight' of the class. As Mitchell & Myles (1998:165) points out:

> 'the social position of the L2 learner may affect opportunities of learning due to mismatch of power relationships between the teacher and students, with teachers typically seen as dominant figures who control the detail of the L2 classroom discourse'.

Fishman and Lovas (1970: 215), for example, have emphasised that 'educational goals must be based on an understanding of the society of which they are developed'.

According to Churchill (1986: 5-8), 'linguistic and cultural minorities have recently emerged as a central concern for educational policy in almost all the OECD countries with the sole exception of Japan'. Past literature has revealed a radical shift towards the notion that minority groups should be

'deemed important for policy-making purposes in various countries, or provinces' (ibid 6). Bourne (1989: 4) points out that with reference to the specific linguistic needs of children of Eastern and Southern European (Polish, Ukrainian, French and Italians and many others) immigrants to Britain in the 1940s to 1960s, in the educational literature:

'There appears to be no discussion of the special linguistic needs of these children' (ibid: 4). The need for English language support was stressed for children of the visible minorities, most of who were West Indians, South and East Asian immigrants.

According to Waite (2002: 31), 'in our (sic) everyday experience, among white professionals many see the term 'ethnicity' as relating only to people of colour and therefore think that ethnic monitoring in schools means counting the number of white pupils'. This misconception was further highlighted by Maud Blair at a DfES annual conference for parent–governor representatives (see TES Feb 15, 2002), who finished the day with a presentation on ethnic-minority data collection, spelling out that 'ethnic data collection is not just data on ethnic-minority children'.

In this paper, I have used the term 'linguistic minorities' synonymously with 'immigrant minorities' to describe the EAL pupils. Although the link between linguistic minority children and educational underachievement is not a simple one, linguistic minorities, in general, have for a long time been associated with underachievement, often as a result of their English language needs. There has often been a focus on underachievement among the visible minorities, with the children of the host community and members of the invisible minority regarded as 'having no problem of English language acquisition and of underachievement.

When EAL provision was first introduced in 1985 in Highridge, the predominant group of linguistic minorities were of Asian origin. Portuguese migration into the UK started during the 1960s (LMP 1985: 59). 67% of the Portuguese speakers in England live in the greater London area (see1991 population census) with smaller numbers in towns to the west and north of London. The period between 1998 and 1999, however, saw an increase of Portuguese immigrants mainly from Madeira to the South coast of England. Most of these immigrants were peasant farmers from Camara de Lobos and Ribiera Brava: small fishing villages in the Madeiran archipelago. The companies running the vegetable nurseries found along the South Coast generally recruited them directly from Madeira.

'The Madeira Portuguese families in Seaview work in the mushroom and tomato green houses scattered along the coast. The families were recruited direct from Madeira as the company has a branch in mainland Portugal' (AB, TJ 01/02).

The better pay and attractive social amenities like child benefit, good housing and health care available to them in the UK as EU citizens, has encouraged this group of people to the area.

The majority of the Madeiran immigrants have had little education, as noted by Santarita and Martin-Jones (in Alladina & Edwards, 1991: 232) in their study of the Portuguese speech community: 'Few have had access to post-primary education in Portugal or Madeira before migrating to Britain'. Some have very limited literacy skills. Madeiran children enter Highridge primary schools at all ages and throughout the school year: from reception to almost the end of Key Stage 2, depending on how old the children are when they settle in the country. Those arriving from Jersey and the Channel islands usually have some knowledge of the language. Many, though, have never had any formal schooling at all because, although elementary education starts at seven years in Madeira, most of them have spent their early years migrating with their parents from the Channel Islands to Madeira back to the South coast and back to Madeira again. Hence the children were not able to attend school during this migration process. In one of my dialogues with the Madeiran Portuguese pupils, I unravelled the nature of this phenomenon:

P: 'I lived in Portugal came over here and lived in a caravan, went to Portugal again. We went to caravan there in Selsey. Then went to Portugal again and then I came over here and okay'

R: Were you going to school in Selsey?

P: No

R: Why?

P: Cos they haven't no school over there. Stayed in Selsey one year, went back to Madeira, came to Seaview. Went to Beachside Junior School first, then come to St Xavier's.

The above dialogue highlighted one of the negative effects of migration processes on these pupils. When these children arrived in Highridge schools, they required EAL provision just like other newly arrived children of minority ethnic groups who spoke languages other than English. Their educational background, however, posed a challenge to teachers in UK classrooms. They had a different cultural and linguistic background to those of the host community. Their integration into the system required an understanding of this specific type of linguistic minorities.

3.1 Policy and practice in Britain

For a long time, Britain has differed from many other countries in possessing a highly decentralised education system. Even though she is gradually moving away from this system of decentralisation it is still a factor though. The DfES seeks to draw the attention of LEAs to important educational issues by means of circulars and surveys and, where appropriate, to indicate possible courses of action. Its principal means of influencing policy at the local level, however, is through financial incentives. Such was the case in the 1970s, when Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) was funded by Section 11, as EAL is today funded through EMAG. This echoes Townsend's (1971, in Ellis, 1985: 7) observation that 'it has made it difficult for LEAs to share solutions to problems. All too often an LEA will be seen experimenting with a particular policy which another LEA has already found wanting and has abandoned'. Whether this is still true is yet to be established.

Policies for central funding were specifically rejected as they might 'reduce the scope of local responsibility' (Rampton Report 1974: 14). 'Section 11 grants and urban aid funding were considered to be sufficient' (Tomlinson, 1983: 22).

In terms of language provision for the linguistic minority children in schools, 'the majority of LEAs specifically reported the increased encouragement of mainstream in-class support over the past few years, rather than the withdrawal of bilingual pupils for English language classes' (Bourne, 1989: 78). However, there is a need to recognise that some policies are yet to be implemented. Even though in my case study school support is mainly in the mainstream, withdrawal still takes place in certain circumstances, though on a restricted basis for newly arrived and first stage pupils. This reaffirms Bourne's (1989) observation:

Thus while the picture is of a strong trend towards the implementation of a policy of mainstream classroom support, it is clear that the process of change is not yet complete nor secure, and that the realisation of policy is still being worked out in practice within schools. (80).

In practice, making arrangement for special provision for the needs of minority group pupils still means (as Townsend found 30 years ago) meeting the basic language requirements of English as an additional language. However, predominantly 'all-white' schools still believe that the wider multi-ethnic society has no relevance for them. My findings in two of my case study schools identified this belief in terms of provision for the white linguistic minorities.

'Even though we have a few isolated cases of EAL pupils, the government approach could not be applied in this small rural white majority primary school. We shall adopt any EAL policy that Zentrum comes up (JM 06/02).

In one of these schools, the claim was 'equality for all pupils in terms of provision irrespective of the level of L2 incompetence.'

Policies concerned with the education of minority children have, over the past fifty years, moved from assimilationist concerns with dispersal and teaching English, to recognition of the validity of cultural pluralism, but with little consensus on how an education system designed for the majority can accommodate minorities. We have seen many attempts by parliamentary committees, local governments and other bodies to push central government in the direction of the formulation of national policies for multi-ethnic education, as recommended in several reports from the Swann Report (1985) to the Harris Report (2000); the government's Section 11 funding to Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG); and the move from withdrawal to mainstream support. 'But no committee has had a national language policy as part of its terms of reference' (Stubbs, 1985). Most of these policies are just on paper and are yet to be implemented in areas which for a long time have been with a predominantly white-only school population with isolated cases of invisible or visible minorities. My study of policies and practice in 3 schools within one LEA involving a relatively small number of linguistic minority pupils echoes Young and Connelly's (1981: 132) observation made over 20 years ago that a national initiative to equalise or increase provision for ethnic minority education would have to take into account the complex nature of educational policy-making in Britain.

The change from Home Office funding under Section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966 to the DfES administered Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) seeks to show that the discourse about policy should reflect:

- the diversity of needs and provision
- A principled approach to the use of funding
- The involvement of communities and practitioners in policy-making
- The role of school action plans as a tool for managing provision (South in Jones and Wallace, 2001: 1).

Policies can be generated at various levels and take a variety of forms. The National Curriculum in particular has required schools to formulate policies on the distribution of resources for different areas of the curriculum. The Education Reform Acts of 1986 and 1988 gave new powers to governing bodies, which have major policy implications for those bodies themselves and for the schools for which they have responsibility. On the other hand, local management of schools (LMS) has greatly diminished LEA influence and control. In the past LEAs had school policies governing equality and school budgets, which the schools were required to implement, but today such policies are only advisory. Schools now have their own budgets formulated largely in relation to pupil numbers.

Hence this creates incentives for schools to adopt policies, which may only come in as part of equal opportunities, sometimes to the detriment of certain sections of the population such as ethnic minorities who the schools may consider to be a strain on the school resources or lower ability pupils who may not enhance the school's performance in the league tables. As one home-school liaison co-ordinator working in 48 schools in a London borough reaffirmed to me:

'Schools in this borough are not interested in adopting policies that they feel are 'not relevant' to the majority pupils in their schools. No they are only interested in things that would get them through their Ofsted. So they will do one on Equal Opportunities because they have to do an Equal Opportunities policy but for EAL pupils, they don't have to do any EAL policy' (MK 05/02).

3.2 Policy and practice in Highridge

Towards the end of 1987 confirmation was received that a second bid to the Home Office had been successful and new staff were appointed to strengthen the existing HSTEMP Team. At the time of this study, the new staff included a new Team Leader (the first had by this time retired), a Second Home School Liaison teacher, a Teacher with Responsibility for Early Years, three more EAL teachers and a team of Language Welfare Assistants (later to be upgraded to Multilingual Classroom Assistants). In 1988 a Deputy team Leader was appointed. The Team is now part of the Highridge Pupil Services

Division. The resources at Zentrum have been increased and there is now annual funding from the LEA for the purchase of materials for Team use to provide examples of classroom resources.

The current emphasis on provision is by providing training to interested mainstream teachers during school staff meetings after school or in less formal ways by working with mainstream teachers during school sessions on a weekly basis. The training guidelines are provided in the teams' action plan, which tends to change annually depending on the number of linguistic minority pupils requiring support in schools. The team responsible for the support of linguistic minority pupils tend to shift their level of support from pupils to the mainstream teacher due to lack of enough human and teaching resources.

The DfES is aiming for a system of collaborative teaching an planning between EAL specialist teachers and mainstream teachers. They recommend that most of the teaching should be alongside the classroom teacher with the EAL teacher leading some whole class sessions. This raises the profile of the EMAG post and gives the class teacher time to monitor and assess pupils' progress.

From my observation in schools, 'There is still a big challenge in schools to get teachers to realise that these pupils are part of the whole group and should be taught as part of the whole group rather than in extra different things. There is still a 'delicate' relationship between the EAL support teacher and the class teacher and there is always a need to respect each other's professional integrity. The general attitude of mainstream teachers that 'the EAL support teachers are responsible for the minority pupils in the class' is one that needs to be reversed.

The team tries to stress the importance of commitment from both the school administration, staff and support staff for any impact to be created. The EAL teacher could work successfully with one teacher and develop his/her attitude or strategy-but if the Head teacher of the school feels the system is invalid then it may not work as required. However, my interview with the team leader suggests that they still feel marginalized and despite the LEA showing signs of approval there is no support in terms of funding. Part of the complaint is that there is no advisor designated for the specific responsibility for EAL support. Within the Advisory Service there are Maths, Science, English etc advisors-all subject areas. But the EAL team feel they are not part of the advisory service yet the majority of the work done by specialist teachers of EAL is advisory. The team leader in the following statement further noted this:

'If there was an advisor with specific responsibility in this area of equal opportunities or something like that, I think that would help us' (MB 03/01).

Currently the DfES is not responsible for information on the levels of EMAG staffing in schools but the trend seems to be moving from the traditional EAL teacher, curriculum development teacher and home school liaison co-ordinator towards LSA and home/school link workers. This I confirmed in my 3 study schools. In one school the head teacher appointed a LSA to be in charge of the EAL pupils:

'We now have Sabrina (LSA in the school) to be in charge of our EAL pupils as she is a trained TESOL teacher and is multilingual' (AL 03/02). In a separate school: 'I understand the HSTEMP will not be providing us with EAL support next year. But we have Anita (LSA) who has a lot of experience with the Portuguese pupils' (JA 07/02).

The DfES plans to make use of the revised ethnic background coding collected by the Pupil Levels Annual Schools Census (PLASC) to provide statistical evidence of the educational experiences and attainment of pupils in different ethnic groups. It is believed that this data may help the government to identify future strategies to address under-achievement and set meaningful targets. There also plans to move towards a needs-based formula for funding.

There is concern among those in authorities like Highridge with a relatively small minority population that whereas the government strategy may successfully identify and target pockets of under-achievement, isolated pupils may be overlooked. It is still early days yet as the consultations on the strategies and funding are still on-going. It is my hope that the outcome will favour minorities within my focus pupils bracket as well.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, I have made attempts to review the policies governing the education of linguistic minorities with a specific reference to a group of newly-arrived European bilingual pupils (the Madeiran Portuguese pupils) from the macro to the micro perspective. These are, of course, related to different societal and educational settings, but some notable similarities have been highlighted especially in the OECD countries.

In the UK, central government has not taken a positive initiative in producing educational policies and directing resources at minority group children. The areas of education funded through EMAG are complex, and since they have been given little official recognition until recently, there is a need to increase understanding. According to Jones & Wallace (2001: 16), one way this can be achieved is through documented evaluations of EMAG practice from within schools, through the monitoring functions of LEAs and OFSTED inspection teams, and through independent studies commissioned by the DfEE'. An equally important way, which is already in practice in most Highridge schools, as noted above, is through an extensive programme of training, for both mainstream and specialist teachers. According to V.Hunt (TES January 2003) 'Many practitioners complain that the exchange of information and dissemination of good policy is patchy and relies largely on ad-hoc arrangements between individual schools and authorities. This leads to the marginalisation of the Ethnic Minority Achievement role'.

There is a need for schools and authorities to adapt strategies like those adapted by the HSTEMP Steering Committee which involve communities and practitioners in policy-making processes as both of these groups need to be involved in the discourse to make the policies workable.

A recent 'innovative pilot project' launched by the DfES as part of the government's commitment to raising attainment of ethnic minority pupils mainly targets ten LEAs with high concentrations of ethnic minority students. Most of these LEAs are in inner city areas in major cities. Even though the trend has been of large minority populations being in the major cities, most of the pupils are either in category c)-British born with English proficiency, e) –Caribbean and f) –exceptional bi/multilinguals. Those in category a) like the Madeiran Portuguese are still isolated in large cities and predominantly rural areas like Highridge. Unless there is a consistent system of allocation of funds and a method of prioritising English language provision for those who need it most, the system will continue to fail the newly –arrived pupils in rural areas.

It is my hope that all parties concerned with policy and practice would advocate the development of a nationally coherent strategy for pupils learning EAL.

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