Open Research Online

Linguistic capital of trainee teachers: knowledge worth having?

Abstract:	This research is an interpretive study of individual and institutional language practices based on an analysis of quantitative and qualitative data from a large higher education institute of teacher training in Britain. The study explores teacher professionalism in relation to language, examining the 'invisible' linguistic and cultural capital (cf Ellis 2004) of multilingual student teachers. This capital is a potentially powerful contribution to student teacher pedagogy and professionalism, but in the two key domains of teacher education (university and school) where practitioner 'funds of knowledge' are manifested in events and activities (Moll & Greenberg 1990) the study reveals how multilingual students struggle to create or access events and activities where they can demonstrate and develop their 'knowledge in action' (Schön 1987). The discussion frames multilingual student teachers and multilingual pupils as mirror participants in monolingual institutions and explores issues of subordination, investment and empowerment in relation to language use (Norton 1997; Lee and Norton, in press). The study presents multilingual student teachers as multi-competent language users (Pavlenko 2003) who could positively influence wider pedagogic knowledge and practices but who are prevented from activating their linguistic, cultural and community expertise through institutional and professional lack of recognition.

Linguistic capital of trainee teachers: knowledge worth having?

Abstract

This research is an interpretive study of individual and institutional language practices based on an analysis of quantitative and qualitative data from a large higher education institute of teacher training in Britain. The study explores dimensions of teacher professionalism in relation to language and examines the 'invisible' linguistic and cultural capital (cf Ellis 2004) of multilingual, minority ethnic student teachers. This capital is a potentially powerful contribution to student teacher pedagogy and professionalism, but in the two key domains of teacher education (university and school) where practitioner 'funds of knowledge' are manifested in events and activities (Moll & Greenberg 1990) the study reveals how multilingual student teachers struggle to create or access events and activities where they can demonstrate and develop their 'knowledge in action' (Schön 1987). The discussion frames multilingual student teachers and multilingual pupils as mirror participants in monolingual institutions and explores issues of subordination, investment and empowerment in relation to language use (Norton 1997; Lee and Norton, in press) as research participants describe their experiences of training to operate in a curriculum which offers little meaningful space for linguistic diversity (cf Heller 1995). The study presents multilingual student teachers as multi-competent language users (Pavlenko 2003) who could positively influence wider pedagogic knowledge and practices (and, potentially, the attitudes and achievement of pupils) but who are prevented from activating and enacting their linguistic, cultural and community expertise through institutional and professional lack of recognition.

Keywords

Research questions arising from institutional practices

Widening Participation programmes in post-compulsory education have greatly increased the numbers of minority ethnic student teachers, and our study arose from professional experience as university tutors in a large institute of higher education in England where we interviewed applicants to primary Initial Teacher Education (ITE) postgraduate and undergraduate programmes, lectured in English education and observed trainees on teaching practices in primary schools. At the ITE institution where this research took place, we observed over a period of time (2005-2008) increasing numbers of minority ethnic students particularly in the undergraduate teacher training programme. But recruitment, retention and achievement of such student teachers were all causes for concern; our institution reflected the ongoing national picture of lack of diversity in teacher education (Carrington et. al. 2001; Teeman et. al. 2005; Bielby et. al. 2007).

All professions have their 'norms' which apprentices and trainees must emulate in order to achieved qualified status and, as temporary guests in their practice classrooms, it is not unusual for student teachers to align themselves with the behaviour of their supervising teachers, the rules of the school and the expectations of the curriculum. Within this context, all student-trainees are subject to a great deal of scrutiny and critical feedback which can inhibit the expression of difference, resistance or change to established practices. But in light of the lack of diversity in the primary teacher population, our study will argue that institutional practices and the curriculum appear to position linguistic and minority ethnic student-trainees in ways which, present particular barriers to their professional development and limit their opportunities to call upon their 'funds of knowledge' (Moll *et. al.* 1992) in order to enhance their own and pupils' learning. Our research questions were:

- How do multilingual student teachers characterise their language knowledge?

- How do they use their language resources in monolingual institutions and in a monolingual curriculum?

- What are the implications for diversity in teacher education, training and practice when student teachers feel enabled or constrained in using their linguistic and

cultural funds of knowledge?

These are significant questions for teacher educators. It is puzzling that the ever-growing multilingual pupil population in British schools has not created a parallel institutional interest in multilingualism within teacher education and training. Apart from the distinctive situation in Wales, and recent policy promoting Modern Foreign Languages in primary schools (DfES 2004; DCFS 2005) being bilingual or multilingual is not viewed as a competency for mainstream primary school teachers and holds no special status[1]; to qualify as a graduate or postgraduate teacher in Britain students are not required to have studied a language in compulsory education.

This study grew from our experiences of interviewing prospective student teachers, and reading their personal statements on university applications forms. We began – initially out of personal interest - to ask whether they use any languages other than English, as there is no language question on undergraduate forms (although there is on the postgraduate form). There was a pattern in their replies: 'Yes, I speak Hindi (or Greek / Urdu / Portuguese / Arabic...) but I didn't think it was important to put in the application' and 'Should I have put that? Is it important?' and 'I suppose it could be useful sometimes talking to parents'. Applicants rarely mentioned their first (or home/community) languages unless prompted.

This pattern seemed to continue once students embarked on their training. Very early on they are required to complete a 'Starting Profile' which records existing skills and competences. One of the postgraduate trainees interviewed for this study reported that she did not think that it was 'relevant' to include the fact that she was a Welsh speaker. We continued to observe, informally, how multilingual student teachers often experienced difficulties in monitoring their own and pupils' English in order to meet the expectations of the school and national curriculum, and how this put them at

---

[1] In other English-speaking countries, community bilingualism is a highly-regarded teacher competency; for example in the United States bilingual Spanish-English teachers can attract higher rates of pay than monolingual teachers and are expected to apply their skills in the curriculum and across the school. In Britain, recent policy making MFL a statutory entitlement in primary schools has largely resulted in secondary school-trained specialist teachers leading discrete language (usually French or Spanish) sessions (DCSF 2010).

risk of not completing or failing the teacher training programme. We likewise observed confident multilingual student teachers who never used or referred to their other languages on teaching practices, even where they were teaching pupils who use these same languages (one postgraduate student, a Hindi speaker, reported that when she used this language with a child in her class who also used Hindi it was 'embarrassing' for both of them).

We developed this study in order to begin to find out about the nature and level of language expertise which linguistic and minority ethnic trainee teachers bring to Initial Teacher Education (ITE) institutions and to multilingual schools. Whilst recognising the processes of academic and professional acculturation which all apprentice teachers undergo, our study aims to begin to analyse the particular challenges of these processes for linguistic and minority ethnic trainee teachers both as learners in Higher Education institutions and as novice teachers in mainstream schools. In practice we aim to develop tools and strategies for utilising the linguistic and cultural capital of student teachers, which we believe would benefit monolingual and multilingual trainees alike.

Languages in primary school: children only?

Two areas of research touch on our questions: work carried out with respect to teachers of English as a foreign language (to which we will refer later) and work about children's multilingual competences. The latter has been the site of a great deal of research over the last thirty years in British schools. 1971 saw the publication of James Britton's seminal text, *Language and Learning,* a book that illuminated Vygotsky's insights into the relationship between thought and language. Two years later the Rosens' celebration of the linguistic diversity in London primary schools (*The Language of Primary School Children*) was published. At the same time Douglas Barnes' work in secondary schools was signalling the power of collaborative talk and learning. This was followed by the first significant government report with a sole focus on language: the *Bullock Report.* Subtitled *A Language for Life,* this included the much-quoted recognition that:

> No child can be expected to cast off the language and culture of
> the home as he [sic] crosses the school threshold.

Educators welcomed the *Bullock Report's* emphasis on the centrality of talk and children's first or home languages and dialects as a learning medium, but there was little in the report to support teachers in developing appropriate pedagogies for pupils for whom English was not a first language. The widespread premise at that time was that learning a second language was very different from learning a first one; indeed that the presence of the first would impede the learning of English. To this end, after a period of no provision at all, Language Centres were gradually developed and children were withdrawn from their classrooms to attend separate English language classes until they were thought to be ready to learn the mainstream curriculum.

The ensuing thirty years saw increased understandings about the relationship between first and second language learning, with findings about the similarities between the two processes and the clear advantages of bilingualism, for instance, in terms of metalinguistic awareness. (see, for example, Mayor 1988). Terminology and provision mirrored these research shifts: the 'immigrants' of the *Bullock Report* became 'bilingual / multilingual learners' and then users of 'English as an additional language'; teaching moved away from Language Centres (which a 1986 judicial ruling declared was separate and unequal provision) to mainstream classrooms with varying levels of language support. Current policy exhorts schools and teachers to value and celebrate the languages of pupils.

We provide this cursory overview of the history of the languages of children in primary schools in order to point out that the languages and language competences of children's teachers have never attracted the same attention. The significant developments in theoretical understanding of children's language learning, the resulting arguments over what constitutes best practice and provision, and policies which encourage appreciation of pupil diversity have had virtually no parallel impact on considerations of the language learning of mainstream (as opposed to language/ELT/EFL) teachers, how practitioner linguistic and cultural knowledge is applied in the mainstream classroom, and how teacher education programmes might enable student teachers to enact current theoretical understandings. The standards for *Qualifying to Teach* (TDA 2009) use 'diversity' as an umbrella under which a whole range of teacher knowledge in relation to children's languages, religions, cultures and

5

ethnicities is conflated; these standards do not mention, even in a tokenistic way, the languages and cultures of students in higher education who are training to become teachers.

The body of research examining the knowledge, skills and practices of 'Non-Native Speaking (NNS) language professionals' is also relevant to our study, although it focuses on teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL). The strengths and contributions which NNS of English bring to language teaching is well documented (Braine 1999; Ellis 2002, 2004); but studies exploring NNS student teacher needs have shown insecurity about English language proficiency, teaching expertise and professional confidence (Khami-Stein 2004; Garvey and Murray 2004; Llurda 2005; Brown and Miller 2006). The psychological construct of 'impostorhood' is a 'prevalent' feeling amongst NNS teachers of English (Yates and Chandler 1998), characterised by feelings of inadequacy, personal inauthenticity, anxiety and self-doubt. Research on NNS of English as mainstream school teachers is much less extensive. Vargese's ethnographic study (2006) discusses the ways in which local and national discourses and structural factors influence the actions of novice bilingual teachers, who develop a complex, sometimes conflicted, sense of their professionalism; a constellation of factors (their responses to marginalisation, their professional development, local settings, their personal histories) causes some to leave the profession and others to stay.

Data collection and methodologies

This study combines analysis of large-scale quantitative data and small-scale qualitative data, using the latter to illuminate the former. The study began with a questionnaire [2] of two cohorts of student teachers, one postgraduate and one second-year undergraduate. The two-page questionnaire was distributed to 400 students in their English tutor groups in the Autumn of 2007 following a taught session on children's language learning and development. Tutors explained that the anonymous questionnaire sought to find out about languages other than English which students use and that this information would help tutors to know the student cohort better.

---

[2] Adapted from the University of California *Language Survey of Incoming Students.*

6

Students were asked to list languages studied in compulsory and post-compulsory education as well as languages inherited through family or social networks; they were asked to rate themselves in relation to their expertise in these languages and whether they felt languages other than English were important to them. Students were given time to discuss the questions informally with each other and to complete the questionnaire in class sessions.

The questionnaire offered students the option of providing their name and contact details. 237 questionnaires were returned. Of the student teachers who agreed to be contacted, nine were selected to participate further in the study. The selection was predicated on obtaining a range of experience and languages within the interview cohort (and there were several students whom we invited to participate but declined).
.

The questionnaire data was exemplified by invitational semi-structured interviews, one in university and one in primary school work experience placements, of six undergraduate and three postgraduate student teachers (see Table 1). This qualitative data captured students' thinking in semi-structured oral interviews (eg Patton 1990, Kvale 1996, Spindler & Spindler 1993) where informants had scope to reflect on how and when they use languages other than English in their teacher training contexts. Further optional primary classroom observations of informants on teaching practices (eg Berger & Luckman 1966) also examined how student teachers operate within monolingual institutional habituses. [3]

---

[3] Classroom observations were optional as student teachers often felt pressured by scrutiny and assessment of their performance; six of the nine students agreed to be observed and participated in a second interview.

Student	Language background	Languages other than English used fluently (other languages used less fluently)
Pavitar	Born in England, studied Panjabi to GCSE and A-level, also confident in French and German	Panjabi, Hindi (Urdu, Arabic)
Bhadra	Born in England, learned English from older (by 7 years) sister and started school age 4 confidently bilingual	Gujerati (Panjabi, Hindi, Urdu)
Angela	Qualified teacher from Uganda, re-qualifying in UK, emigrated to the UK as an adult	Rwandan, Luganda, Acholi
Muskaan	Born in England, worked as a nursery nurse and later as a bilingual community worker for HIV awareness charity; started school age 4 with no English	Panjabi (Urdu)
Abidemi	Born in Nigeria, came to Britain age 4	Yoruba, 'back-slang' in Yoruba and English
Cherie	Born in England, attended Greek Saturday school from age 4, studied Greek to GCSE level	Greek, Greek-Cypriot
Meagan	Born in Wales, attended Welsh medium school from age 6	Welsh
Nona	Born in England, attended Gujerati Saturday school from age 8	Gujerati (Swahili, Igbo)
Bert	Born in England, studied MFL in compulsory education	(French)

Table 1

Our aim in the interviews was to illustrate the broad linguistic landscape of the questionnaire with detail and personal account. Students were familiar with the tutor-researchers from contact at the ITE institution, but none was supervised or assessed

8

by the tutor-researchers. We invited students, through talk, to reflect upon their developing professional selves in relation to their language and cultural backgrounds, how they were constructing themselves as teachers and what opportunities they had for co-constructing their professional selves (cf Cameron 2001) in dialogue with other more experienced practitioners (cf Vygotsky 1978).

Multilingual worlds, monolingual schools

The questionnaire revealed a depth and breadth of language knowledge amongst student teachers of which university tutors were largely unaware; just over half (122) of the respondents who returned the questionnaire reported using a language other than English, with some students reporting the use of two, three and four languages in addition to English (see Table 2). These included: Panjabi, Albanian, Flemish, Arabic, Greek, Portuguese, Gujerati, Tagalog, Urdu, Polish, Welsh and Hebrew. Students reported languages studied in compulsory education[4] as well as languages inherited and studied through family and community networks. Data from the questionnaire provided self-reported evidence of a wide range of language expertise, affiliation and inheritance[5] (Harris 1997; Rampton 1996), particularly in the written comments which students contributed to the questionnaire.

> I speak Gujerati with my family but I can't read or write it.

> I write letters to my family back home in Pakistan and I do Arabic calligraphy in my spare time. I also write in Arabic in reference to my religion.

> I write in Albanian when I teach in Albanian school on Saturdays.

---

[4] All but a few of the students who returned the questionnaire reported studying a language in their period of compulsory education. We would however expect this to change in surveys of future student cohorts, as the requirement to study a language in compulsory education was removed in 2003.

[5] 'Expertise' reflects language proficiency, 'affiliation' reflects languages adhered or aspired to for peer, academic, community, faith or family reasons, and 'inheritance' refers to languages attached to ethnicities; these often exist in combination, reflecting formal study and informal acquisition, and may be strong or weak. For example, a learner may have a language inheritance (Panjabi) but a weak affiliation to it whilst developing expertise in another language (French) and a strong affiliation for yet another (e.g.Arabic) through academic and peer networks.

20
18
16
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0

French German Panjabi Urdu Spanish Arabic Greek Hindi Italian Gujerati Welsh Danish Gaelic Japanese Patois Polish Swahili Tagalog Other (1)

Other: Afrikaans, Albanian, Bulgarian, Cantonese/Vietnamese/Mandarin, Dutch/Flemish, Finnish, French Creole, Hebrew, Igbo, Luganda/Rwandan/Acholi, Magyar, Malayalam, Ndebele, Portuguese, Serbian, Swahili, Swedish, Turkish, Yoruba
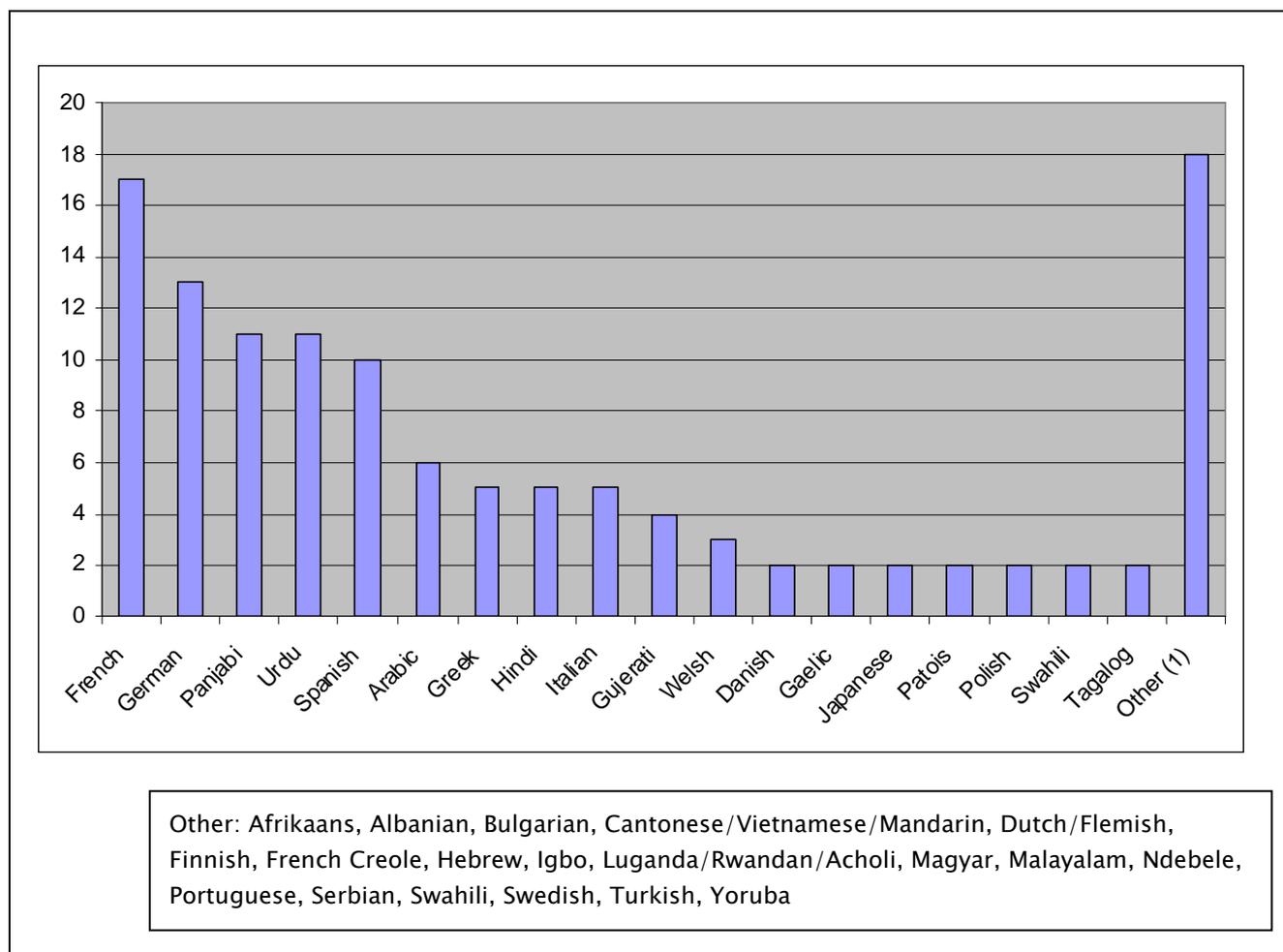
Table 2

This data raises questions about what university teacher-educators know about the language learning of student cohorts and the extent to which the Initial Teacher Education curriculum offers opportunities to identify and call upon their linguistic resources,[6] and it is worth considering how this relationship continues to be replicated between teachers and pupils in schools (Brumfit and Mitchell 1995; Gregory et. al. 1996; Gregory & Williams 2000; Cajker and Hall 2009). As Erstad *et al's* research into adult 'learning lives' reminds us, student teachers' learning trajectories are located in many different sites in which the self is positioned and repositioned: how far then does the training institution - a key learning site - offer the 'mobilisation of

---

[6] Typically, in the institution on which this research is based, a bilingual student might be asked (by a monolingual tutor) to address a lecture briefly in a language other than English in order to illustrate to monolingual trainees the difficulties pupils who are new to English may experience in the mainstream primary classroom.

resources and affordances' (2009: 100) that these adult learners bring? What became apparent in subsequent interviews with and observations of student teachers was their lack of opportunities for professional 'co-construction' where their experiences, languages and backgrounds might be recognised and promoted by others in an academic and/or professional context.

In interviews, students expressed their sense of alignment with the experiences of multilingual, multiethnic pupils. Angela, one of the informants born outside Britain, characterised a linguistic background and education which is considered unremarkable in many parts of the world:

> We've got 23 languages in Uganda. The village I was brought up was predominantly Rwandan … but the children speak together in Luganda. They will speak Rwandan or Acholi when they go back home… You have one language at home, another on the street, another one in school. I would recognise that in any classroom… it's just normal for people to have many languages.

Bhadra described a similar experience having been born in Britain and continues, as an adult, to use many languages:

> Well, mum and dad were Gujerati and I've been brought up speaking that as my first language. Obviously I went to school in this country and picked up English. Punjabi, because my sister got married and they all speak Punjabi so I managed to pick up that language as well. And my daughter's dad, he's also Punjabi, so she's picked up that language. And Hindi from the amount of Bollywood films we watch, and I use Urdu when I go to my best friend's house – only to her parents. ...with my daughter… I try to make as much effort as I can to speak to her in Punjabi because I want her to be proud of the language but whether she uses it or not, that's her choice.

The student teachers described their multilingual worlds as normal. In the context of the mainstream primary school however, they recast this 'normalcy' as difference, articulating a keen awareness of this difference for themselves and for pupils.

I'm more able to relate to them [bilingual children], know what it's like to be from a different culture. I understand they'll have their own music, they'll have their own way of speaking, they'll have their own way of thinking …the main thing is having a different culture, having a different language, you can understand where the child is coming from…it's just being able to put into words the fact that they have a life outside of school that's different to the norm and I have a life outside of school that's different to the mainstream.

Comments such as Pavitar's reflect the ways in which multilingual student teachers and pupils seem to have 'mirror' experiences of normalcy and difference as they travel between home, community and school. This was a theme which permeated the interview data and appeared to influence the student teacher's sense of professional self and her relationships with multilingual pupils in monolingual institutions:

I like being different…and I think language is a key part of that completely. (Pavitar)

It [being bilingual] just makes me so much more well-rounded and able to relate to the children, to relate to their home life. (Bhadra)

They feel comfortable, not silly. They know I speak Gujerati. In fact, whenever I go into a school, children always ask me three things: 'Do you speak any other languages?' I don't think they could ask a white teacher that. They ask, 'What religion are you?' and 'Where are you from?' (Nona)

These comments reflect distinctive, 'knowing' relationships with the whole child that orchestrate cultural, community and language knowledge. Although the student teachers in our study often felt constrained by professional practices and the nature of the curriculum in applying or sharing this knowledge, they were sometimes able to create small spaces in which to enact their expertise.

Metalinguistic awareness: knowledge worth having

12

Research evidence has pointed to the fact that bilingual pupils have heightened metalinguistic awareness in comparison with their monolingual peers (e.g. Cummins 1978; Ellis 2004) so it is unsurprising that a clear finding from this study suggests that multilingual student teachers posses metalinguistic awareness about their pupils' learning needs.

> I can see things from their points of view, what they might be thinking in their other languages. It's empathetic really. Sometimes when I'm reading their work I can tell how they're thinking, because I've made the same mistakes, making literal translations. My mum used to say to me 'Do your brush' instead of 'Brush your teeth', and 'Close the light'. So I used to say it like that…You can see it in their children's work, and in what they say. (Nona)

These student teachers bring with them a specific professional expertise. Here is Nona putting such invisible 'capital' into practice, as she modifies inappropriate resources for her pupils.

> I was teaching a lesson on the use of apostrophes. … There were phrases which you had to change into idioms. Children who may not have English as a first language – even though they were supposed to be focusing on apostrophes – they were going to have problems with the idioms…It looked like a fun thing to do – IF you knew those idioms…There was a clue, and a word, and you had to guess the word – like 'okra' and 'ladies' fingers'. Every idiom had an apostrophe. Publishers haven't thought about things like that. As soon as I saw it I knew it was going to cause problems. .. I didn't use it. I made my own sentences.

The student teachers also demonstrated an awareness of the level of language knowledge of monolingual class teachers, noticing their lack of understanding of bilingual pupils and as a result missing opportunities to promote learning.

> One of the boys here is Muslim and he's learning, because his parents told us, he goes to Arabic lessons for the Koran and when I was listening to him read one week, I noticed that he was reading right to left, and I said to him 'Oh

have you got confused because that's how you read the Koran, right to left'. So I knew that, and now the class teacher knows, and I'm not convinced somebody else who didn't have that knowledge would know. (Muskaan)

I was observing my teacher. She was asking the children what they did on the weekend. One girl said, 'We went to my mum's sister's house'. And the teacher said, 'What is the word for that?' But in other languages you have a word for 'mum's sister', not 'aunt', a specific word for your mother's sister, that specific aunt. And I know that, because I have it in Gujerati…There is no word in English for that – which is why the girl said it. She knew the word 'aunt' – she wanted to explain how they were related, and that is the only way she could do it in English… The teacher ignored it. Maybe she thought the girl didn't know the word for'aunt'. But I think this child wanted her to know it was her 'mother's sister' and not her father's sister… Like me, if I say the word 'aunt' to people, I don't feel that's enough information. It feels wrong. …I feel those words. I can see what that child meant – because I can feel it. I can translate it in my mind. That is quite a big thing. It's deep. (Nona)

This is powerful insider knowledge: it demonstrates a subtle understanding of what might be perceived as the child's misconception (or lack of vocabulary knowledge), when it actually reveals her precision and efforts to be accurate. Tellez and Waxman (2006) found that multilingual teachers are better able to understand such challenges and to distinguish language problems from more general learning difficulties, but the case for Muskaan and Nona, the student teachers above, is problematic because of the location of this particular 'inhospitable learning site' (Erstad *et al,* 2009) in their 'learning lives'. As student teachers working under the guidance of mentoring class teachers, how are they to operationalise their relevant understandings given the power relations that exist within such a context? The danger is that the constraints such a context could impose also become constraints on pupils' learning. It is worth remembering here the extent of some of these student teachers' language competence; Ellis (2004) cites several recent research studies which suggest that where children learn more than two languages, their metalinguistic competence is enhanced still further.

Multilingual teachers, monolingual mind-sets

Research carried out by Ellis (2004), although focused on ESL teachers in an Australian context, has particular significance for this study. She found that, whilst monolingual ESL teachers typically demonstrated some degree of metalinguistic awareness through a secure grasp of the syntax of English,

> … this knowledge can only be articulated or examined in relation to one language… A monolingual teacher may know what is English, but not what is not-English. Neither is it clear to what extent a monolingual teacher can know which are features of language as a human system, and which are features specific to English (2004: 102).

Ellis also found that monolingual ESL teachers perceived learning a new language as challenging and potentially distressing, and the resulting mind-sets for monolingual teachers over-privileged the difficulties of learning a new language and underplayed the potential. This attitude and the resulting possibility of a lowering of expectations appears to pertain to mainstream primary schools in this country: consider the earlier example where Nona's class teacher perhaps thought that the pupil did not have the vocabulary for 'aunt' and here, Pavitar's comment about her supervising class teacher in relation to a bilingual pupil which also suggests a similarly monolingual mind-set:

> The class teacher doesn't think she can do much but I found out that she is very good at maths.

The student teachers in our study experienced this lowering of expectations as a direct result of monolingual class teachers' lack of understanding about bilingual pupils' learning lives:

> There was a boy in my class who spoke Mandarin. I was at parents' evening in February with the class teacher E. She told his parents, 'I don't really understand him. The way he structures his sentences, it's confusing.' And his mum said, 'Well he goes to Saturday school to learn Mandarin and our grammar is structured in this way.'…and I thought, it's taken E., who is a very

experienced teacher, until now [February] to ask that question. Whereas I would have known to ask that question. (Muskaan)

The monolingual mind-set was illuminated for us in an interview with Bert. His perspective appeared to be that English language teaching was largely lost on bilingual children once they left the school building. Their linguistic prowess in other languages was seen as a disadvantage:

If they're only hearing English six hours a day and then they go home, and anything they pick up at school will be immediately wiped out at home where they don't hear any English or speak any English, don't watch English TV. A lot of them don't read in English, they read in Punjabi or Urdu… I don't think it's holding them back, but they may not be at the same level as everyone else.

Bert also told us in his interview that he 'hated' and 'was no good at' learning a language in school, reflecting Ellis's observation that monolingual teachers may perceive language learning as a difficult and unpleasant experience. Such perceptions may not be challenged in Initial Teacher Education, where the focus is on informing monolinguals of the difficulties of the multilingual experience (see the footnote on page 10).

A feature of the monolingual mind-set is that it relegates all matters of 'other' languages and cultures: it is up to the multilingual to negotiate any linguistic and cultural gaps. Non-native speakers therefore can have a powerful role as cultural mediators in the classroom, where they 'teach people from other cultures how to use somebody else's linguistic code in somebody else's cultural context' (Murti, 2002). Murti (discussing 'non-native' teachers in German classrooms) highlights what we would characterise as institutionalised stasis, where monolingual teachers see themselves as the unchanging norm and view multilingual peers as life-long learners trying to manage the roles of both learner and teacher. Her forceful assertion that this is a false dichotomy is resonant for our findings, as the notion of ongoing professional development for all student teachers (and teachers) is central to their training. In her words:

> To pretend that the native teacher is a finished product who has nothing
> more to learn is a comforting illusion, but one to which I am unwilling
> to subscribe. The knowledge that I bring to bear on the foreign language
> classroom is different from, but as valuable as, that of my native speaker
> colleague. (2002:29)

Student teachers in Britain are not trained as ESL teachers, yet the majority of them (like Bert) will be teaching pupils who are at varying stages of English language learning. They will be, in effect, teachers of the English language, and the understanding and confidence with which they approach this teaching task will come, in no small part, from their own experience of language learning. To cite Ellis again, multilingual trainee teachers hold this professional potential:

> For the multilinguals, language learning is possible. They know that what they
> have done successfully, their students can do, too… They can, and do, reflect
> on their own learning as a key source of knowledge and experience from
> which they construct their own practice. (Ellis 2004: 104)

The multilingual students in our study described vibrant and richly textured language histories that were effectively, to return to the words of Bullock, cast-off on the threshold of their key learning sites: the training institution itself and the schools in which they carried out their teaching practices. Such institutional repositioning of their considerable linguistic competences meant that they struggled to make explicit links between their language expertise and their developing competencies as teachers. Students required confidence to articulate and utilise their language knowledge in monolingual pedagogic contexts; in our group of student informants only Nona displayed this level of confidence, creating her own teaching resources based on her understanding of pupil need.

Students in our study found few spaces to reflect on their language knowledge and experience in order to construct their practice; their supervising class teachers lacked interest in their potential contributions to teaching and learning. The students did not have institutional opportunities to consider their language resources in terms of their

professional development and as a result tended to marginalise their expertise as limited playing a 'translator' role in home-school communication:

> It's bizarre, I haven't even thought about the children actually, when it comes to my language, it's more about being able to converse with the parents and for them to see that you are accessible. (Pavitar)

Indeed, some students marginalised their expertise still further, restricting its usefulness to potential communication only with children of the same language heritage:

> If their [children's] language is totally different to mine… if it's a different additional language, then I don't see how I can teach them any differently. (Bhadra).

In this process, as students strive to acquire and perform the norms of being a mainstream teacher, community multilingualism becomes pedagogically irrelevant; to be a knowledgeable cultural mediator in this context would appear to be incompatible with the professional model. Such institutional positioning, in the Foucauldian perspective, casts Initial Teacher Education as a 'disciplinary institution' which has the power to both define and constitute identities (cf Youdell 2006). Our study hypothesises that the outcomes of such 'casting off' of language and culture in professional training contexts may be reflected in the ongoing lack of diversity within ITE and the primary teacher population, in monolingual schools and in the low attainment of pupils who use English as an Additional Language (DfES 2006). At both ends of the educational spectrum – school and university – multilingual, minority ethnic learners continue to generate institutional concerns about attainment (e.g. DfES 2003) and structures designed to ensure they 'fit in' (TDA 2009). In the same way that bilingual children are often positioned as problematic learners (see, for example, Thompson, 1999), so too there is a real danger that the monolingual mind-set impacts on the professional development of multilingual training teachers. In interviews, student comments reflected their struggle to accommodate the status quo and sometimes being positioned in the role of support staff rather than teacher.

> I can't tame myself any more…my laugh is loud, my sneezes are loud. I'm trying to rein it in…Outside of school I can be as I want to be… I do have a laugh with one of the TAs [teaching assistants]. (Pavitar)

> I'm hoping to get to use more of my languages. As a Nursery Nurse I did. I spoke to the children and the parents in Panjabi. I felt it has been quite a shame that I haven't been able to use it. (Muskaan)

As Clark and Ivanic (1998) have discussed in relation to non-traditional students in higher education, learners such as our student teachers must choose the extent to which they accommodate the dominant practices (including the language conventions) which they encounter, or to challenge these by adopting alternative practices. Our student informants appeared to experience considerable constraints in formulating alternative practices which might turn their knowledge into pedagogic action; where institutional contexts predicate against students' ownership of their competences they are unlikely to act upon them (see, for example, Hughes & Greenhough, 2006). Students in interviews expressed a sense of resignation to the process of conforming to the norms of both school curriculum and training institution:

> There's almost no time for culture or using what you know. There's no time to get personal. It's not just the ethos of the university but it's just how it is, isn't it, that it doesn't matter… (Pavitar)

In this study, we have had glimpses of our students temporarily shifting the locus of power and control in classroom settings but these are few and far between and are specific to the initiative of individuals. We would therefore argue that teacher training institutions need to do more to prevent students' language knowledge lying dormant and to empower reflective pedagogic action in ways that genuinely permeate the higher education institution's culture, ethos and practices.

Clearly, much more than a tokenistic awareness of multilingual student teachers' competences is needed by an early recognition of their language skills; this could be achieved with a question about languages used in addition to English at interview and going on to record language expertise in students' ongoing profiles of professional

development. Completed with the guidance of university tutors, a student teacher's profile of professional development is the key vehicle which tracks knowledge, skills and understanding. It is a document which moves between school and university and, as such, offers a potentially important space for recording and acting upon linguistic competences in both of these learning/training sites.

What we take from our study as university tutors is a much greater understanding of how a higher education institution's practices may render it an inhospitable site for learning for some students, a site which limits their opportunities and is driven by what Brian Street (1997) would label as narrowly conceived 'autonomous' literacy practices that ignore multiple literacies and the social and ideological contexts that have shaped these. It is important to consider how such practices replicate the learning experiences of minority ethnic and bilingual pupils and the extent to which this replication discourages minority ethnic students from becoming primary school teachers. We also take from our study an awareness of the challenges of acknowledging and countering the monolingual mind-set which may be disadvantaging monolingual and multilingual teachers and pupils alike; this needs to be highlighted to all students as part of their teacher training on supporting pupils of diverse backgrounds. As part of higher education's brief to produce graduate teachers who can think critically and act reflectively, institutions should develop strategies which enable students to withstand pressures to conform to a curriculum and a model of teaching which exclude and disempower them professionally.

> By turning awareness into action – by choosing to adopt alternative practices
> in the face of pressure to conform to norms – people can contribute to their
> own emancipation and that of others by opening up new possibilities for
> linguistic behaviour. These new possibilities can contribute to change not only
> in the classroom but also in the wider institution of education.
> (Clark & Ivanic 1998: 217).

References

Barnes, D. (1976) *From Communication to Curriculum,* London: Penguin

Bielby, G. & C. Sharpe, M. Shuayb, D. Teeman, W. Keys and P. Benefield (2007)
Recruitment and retention on initial teacher training: a systematic review
Slough: NFER

Braine, G. (Ed.)(1999)*Non-native educators in English language teaching* Mahwah,
NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Britton, J. (197) *Language and Learning,* London: Penguin

Brown, J and Miller, J. (2006) 'Dilemmas of identity in teacher education; reflections
on one pre-service ESL teacher education cohort' in K. Cadman and K. Regan
(eds)*Tales out of school: identity and English language teaching* Adelaide:
TESOL in Context

Brumfit, C. & R. Mitchell (1995) *Trainee teachers' knowledge about
Language,* Occasional Paper 33 Southampton University

Burger, P. & T. Luckman, (1966) *The Social Construction of Reality: a Treatise in
the Sociology of Knowledge,* Garden City, NY: Doubleday

Cajker, W. & B. Hall (2009) '"When they first come in what do you do?*"* English as
an additional language and newly qualified teachers', *Language and Education*,
23 no. 2, 153-170

Cameron, D. (2001). *Working with spoken discourse*. London: Sage Publications.

Carrington, B & A. Bonnett, J. Demaine, I. Hall, A. Nayak, G. Short, C.Skelton, F.
Smith and R. Tomlin (2001) *Ethnicity and the professional socialization of teachers:
report to the Teacher Training Agency* London; TDA

CILT (2006) *Positively Plurilingual: The contribution of community languages to UK education and society,* London: National Centre for Languages

Clark R. & R. Ivanic (1998) 'Critical discourse analysis and educational change' in L. van Lier and D.Corson (eds) *Encyclopedia of language and education , vol 6: Knowledge about language,* Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers

Cummins, J. (1978) 'Bilingualism and metalinguistic awareness', *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology,* 9, no.2, 131-149

DCFS (2010) *Language learning at Key Stage 2: a longitudinal study*, London: DCSF

DCSF (2005) *Key Stage two Framework for Languages,* London: DCFS

DES (1975) *A Language for Life (The Bullock Report),* London: DES

DfES (2006) *Ethnicity and Education: the evidence on minority ethnic pupils aged 5 – 16,* London: DfES

DfES (2004) *Languages for all: from strategy to delivery* London: DfES

DfES (2003) *Aiming High: raising the achievement of minority ethnic pupils,* London DfES

Ellis, L. (2002) 'Teaching from experience: a new perspective on the non-native speaker in Adult ESL' *Australian review of applied linguistics* 25 (1) 71-107

Ellis, E. (2004) 'The Invisible Multilingual Teacher: the contribution of language background to Australian ESL teachers' professional knowledge and beliefs'*, The International Journal of Multilingualism,* 1, no 2, 90 - 108

Erstad, O., O. Gilje, J. Sefton-Green & K. Vasbo (2009) 'Exploring

'learning lives': community, identity, literacy and meaning' *Literacy,* 43, no.2, 100-106

Garvey E. and Murray D. (2004) 'The multilingual teacher: issues for teacher education' *Prospect* 19 (2) 3-24

Gregory, E., J. Mace, N. Rashid, & A. Williams (1996) *Family Literacy History and Children's Learning Strategies at School* End-of-award report ESRC Project R000-22-1186. London: Goldsmiths College

Gregory, E. & A. Williams (2000) *City Literacies: learning to read across generations and cultures,* London: Routledge

Harris, R. (1997) 'Romantic Bilingualism: time for a change?' in Leung, C. & C. Cable, eds. *English as an Additional Language: Changing Perspectives*, Watford: NALDIC

Heller (1995) 'Language Choice, Social Institutions and Symbolic Domination', *Language in Society,* 24 no. 3, 373-405

Hughes, M. & Greenhough, P. (2006) 'Boxes, bags and videotape: enhancing home-school communication through knowledge exchange activities', *Educational Review - Special Issue*, 58(4), 471-487

Kamhi-Stein, L. (Ed.). (2004) *Learning and teaching from experience: Perspectives on nonnative English-speaking professionals* Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Kvale, S. (1996) *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing,* London: Sage Publications

Lee, E., & B. Norton, B. (in press) 'The English language, multilingualism, and the politics of location' in S. K. Taylor & M. Sakamoto, eds. *Overcoming (macro/micro) constraints in the development of multilingualism,* [Special Issue] *The International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*

Llurda, E. (Ed.). (2005) *Non-native language teachers: Perceptions, challenges, and contributions to the profession* New York: Springer

Mayor, B. (1988) 'What does it mean to be bilingual?' in Mercer, N. ed *Language and Literacy from an educational perspective,* Milton Keynes: Open University Press

Moll, L.C. (1992) 'Bilingual classroom studies and community analysis', *Educational Researcher*, 21 no. 2, 20-24

Moll, L. & J. Greenberg (1990) 'Creating zones of possibilities: Combining social contexts for instruction' in Moll, L. ed. *Vygotsky and education* Cambridge: CUP

Moll, L. *et al*. (1992) 'Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms', *Theory into Practice,* 31, no. 21, 32-141

Murti, K. (2002) 'Whose Identity? The Non-Native Teacher as Classroom Mediator in the Language Classroom' *ADFL Bulletin,* 34, no.1, 26-9

Teeman, D. & K. Lewis, A. Woodthorpe, K. Ridley and B. Donahue (2005) *Characteristics of unsuccessful applicants to PGCE courses* Slough: NFER

Norton, B. (1997) 'Language, identity and the ownership of English', *TESOL Quarterly* 31, no.3, 409-429

Norton, B. (2008) 'Language and Identity' in N. Hornberger & S. McKay, eds. *Sociolinguistics and language education,* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Patton, M. Q. (1990) *Qualitative evaluation and research methods,* Newbury Park CA: Sage

Pavlenko, A. (2003) '"I Never Knew I Was a Bilingual": Reimagining Teacher Identities', *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 2 no. 4, 251-268

Rampton, B. (1996) 'Displacing the native speaker: expertise, inheritance and affiliation' in Hedge, T. & N. Whitney, eds. *Power, Pedagogy and Practice,* Oxford: OUP

Rosen. C. & H. Rosen (1973) *The Language of Primary School Children*, London: Penguin

Schön, D. (1987) *Educating the reflective practitioner,* San Francisco: Jossey Bass

Street, B. (1997) 'The Implications of the New Literacy Studies for Literacy Education', *English in Education,* 31, no.3, 45-59

Street, B. & C. Leung (in press) *Sociolinguistics, Language Teaching and New Literacy Studies,* London: King's College London

Spindler, G & L. Spindler (1993) 'Crosscultural, comparative, reflective

interviewing in Schönhausen and Roseville' in Schratz, M. ed.*Qualitative Voices in Educational Research*, London: Falmer

TDA (2009) *Guidance to accompany the Professional Standards for Qualified Teacher Status and Requirements for Initial Teacher Training and Professional Standards for Initial Teacher Training,* London: TDA

Tellez, K. & H. Waxman, eds (2006) *Preparing Quality Educators for English Language Learners,* London: Routledge

Thompson, L. (1999) *Young Bilingual Learners in Nursery School,* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters

University of California (2005) *Language Survey of Incoming Students*, Berkeley, CA: University of California

Varghese, M. (2006) 'Bilingual teachers-in-the-making in Urbantown' *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 27(3), 211-224

Vygotsky, L. (1978) *Mind in Society,* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press

Yates, G. C. R. & **Chandler**, M. (1998) *Impostor phenomenon in tertiary students*. Paper presented at the Australian Association for Educational Research Conference, Adelaide, Australia

Youdell, D. (2006) *Impossible Bodies, Impossible Selves: Exclusions and Student Subjectivities,* Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer