Pedagogy for reading for pleasure in low socio-economic primary schools: beyond 'pedagogy of poverty'?

Abstract

New research findings are presented in this paper, responding to a significant knowledge gap about the role of pedagogy in tackling persistent educational inequalities. The paper examines the potential of Reading for Pleasure (RfP) pedagogy to disrupt 'pedagogy of poverty' in low socio-economic (SES) schools and to enable children to reap the cognitive, wellbeing and social benefits of RfP. Children's volition and social interaction as readers are central to RfP and have been found to be particularly constrained by pedagogy common in low SES schools in the US, Australia and England. The research examined how pedagogy for RfP was instantiated in four low SES English primary schools to understand how this potential might be realised and its effects on children's engagement with RfP. The schools were selected because they had invested in RfP, yet the study found their RfP pedagogies did not in practice support children's volition and engagement because teachers' understandings of reading focussed upon proficiency. Such teachers need to reconceptualise reading as social and volitional to underpin RfP pedagogies. The paper provides new insight into the challenges of developing genuine RfP pedagogy and other pedagogies that profile volition and active engagement with learning in low SES schools.

Introduction/background

This paper presents new evidence to inform current debates about the role of pedagogy in tackling educational inequalities by examining the potential of reading for pleasure (RfP) pedagogies to disrupt 'pedagogy of poverty' (PoP) (Haberman, 1991; Haberman, 2010) in low socio-economic (SES) schools, thus enabling children to engage in and reap the benefits of such reading. These benefits include increased skill in reading (and other subject areas) and more sustained reader engagement which is particularly important for children in low SES areas whose educational outcomes tend to be significantly lower than their more advantaged peers. The paper is novel in examining RfP pedagogies specifically in the contexts of the unique circumstances of low SES schools. It examines the challenges posed by PoP in such contexts to developing children's volitional and sustained engagement with reading - their reading for pleasure.

The paper first introduces the research into PoP in the US and Australia and relates this to the English context using Bernstein's (2000) concept of performative pedagogy. It then presents research on RfP pedagogy using Bernstein's notion of competence pedagogy in order to contrast the possibilities for children to engage volitionally with learning – in this case reading - in each form of pedagogy. Following this, the methods for the empirical research reported in the paper are outlined. The findings from the research into how RfP pedagogy was instantiated in low SES schools are then presented followed by discussion, conclusion and recommendations for practitioners working in low SES contexts.

The concept of PoP, a term first coined by Haberman (1991), highlights the impoverished pedagogical offer commonly made to children living in low SES urban contexts in the US. Linked to Haberman's conceptualisation of PoP, research evidence from the US (Waxman, Padron & Lee, 2010; Thadani et al., 2010; Belfiore, Auld & Lee, 2005; Waxman, Huang & Padron 1995) and Australia (Smyth, McInerney & Fish, 2013; Mills & Gale, 2013; Hayes, Johnston & King, 2009; Lingard, 2007) suggests that pedagogy in low SES school contexts is likely to entail particularly strong teacher control where their role is to transmit knowledge to children who are positioned very passively. PoP requires student compliance in carrying out teacher-set tasks, rather than developing creativity, critical thinking or problem-solving, and focuses upon raising test scores in 'basic skills' in literacy and numeracy (Lingard, 2007). PoP

1

therefore places significant constraints on children's volition and thus their engagement with learning as they are more likely to be intellectually and affectively engaged when learning opportunities have relevance for them (van Lier, 2009). Volition is also central to children taking part in meaning-making through peer discussion (van Lier, 2009). This is constrained in PoP through teacher control of classroom talk and children's more passive positioning. Newer pedagogies, that enable young people to engage in learning volitionally have been developed to disrupt PoP and have led to better social and academic outcomes for low SES students in Australia (e.g. Munns, Sawyer & McCall, 2013; Lingard, 2007) and in the US (e.g. Thadani et al., 2010).

This pedagogy in the PoP research bears strong resemblance to Bernstein's (2000) conceptualisation of performative pedagogy, which was developed in relation to the English education system. Like the US, school intakes in England are also 'moderately' segregated by SES resulting in concentrations of children from low SES homes in particular schools (Jenkins, Micklewright & Sylke, 2008). Performative pedagogy is defined by a strong focus on what learners produce in pre-defined assessed work (e.g. in reading tests); children's behaviour and explicit rules of social conduct; and a transmission mode of teaching with teacher control over pedagogy and well-defined boundaries between subjects. Bernstein (2000) argued that performative pedagogy predominates (since the late 1980s) in English schools due to the emphasis on accountability and high-stakes assessment although as research in English low SES classrooms suggests, it may be particularly heightened in such contexts. However, in England there has been less research on the nature of pedagogy in low SES contexts compared with the US and Australia (the current focus tends to be on developing and evaluating targeted teaching 'interventions' through the Education Endowment Foundation).

Nevertheless, research in English low SES primary schools focussing on pedagogy has identified practices which conform to the characteristics of PoP and a heightened form of Bernstein's performative pedagogy (Hempel-Jorgensen, 2009; Lupton & Hempel-Jorgensen, 2012; Hempel-Jorgensen, 2015a). This is also evidenced in the schools in the present research into RfP pedagogy. Children's volitional engagement with learning was constrained in all these studies (situated in different parts of England) due to teachers retaining strong control over classroom talk and setting predominantly teacher-defined tasks requiring pre-defined 'correct' responses. While other research in low SES English schools has been undertaken it tends not to have focussed upon pedagogy and children's engagement with learning. Even so, it seems that PoP may be an issue in English low SES schools and if present there is a need to disrupt this pedagogy. In England, the stronger focus on basic skills in some low SES schools may be linked to a unique combination of children from low SES backgrounds having significantly lower cognitive skills upon starting school (Goodman & Gregg, 2010), and the pressure from the English school accountability system and school league-table positioning, to raise and maintain high attainment.

RfP pedagogy

Turning to RfP, this is a practice with volition and engagement at its core (Cremin et al., 2014) and one which has significant cognitive, emotional and social benefits (OECD, 2010). It has been shown to lead to improved general knowledge (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998), to raised attainment in literacy and numeracy (Sullivan & Brown, 2013), to facilitate identity exploration (especially for marginalised learners) (Rothbauer, 2004), and to increase empathy and mindfulness (Kidd & Castano, 2013). The positive effects on attainment apply *despite* parental education levels and SES (Kirsch et al., 2003). Research has also established a bidirectional relationship between the will to read and the skill, because children who enjoy reading and are intrinsically motivated to read, actually read more, increasing their proficiency and vice-versa (OECD, 2010; Morgan & Fuchs, 2007). Arguably therefore pedagogic practice needs to support a balance between RfP and reading for proficiency.

Few empirical studies have researched pedagogical approaches which aim to foster children's volitional reading. Practices such as reading aloud (e.g. Lockwood, 2008; Trelease, 2013) and free/independent reading (e.g. Miller, 2009) have been widely advocated as influential, but relatively rarely on empirical grounds. Research has shown however that given the time and space to make their own reading choices, and supported by their teacher's interest in them as readers, children develop reading networks (Moss & Macdonald, 2004). This ethnographic study highlighted the complexity of choice-led reading as social practice and the ongoing interactions between readers and texts, and how 'these elements interweave to steer the choices children make' (Moss, 2007: 129). More recently, the UK-based 'Teachers as Readers' (TaRs) project (Cremin et al., 2009; 2014) drawing on the work of 43 teachers from 27 schools, revealed four interrelated activities as salient within a coherent RfP pedagogy: social reading environments, reading aloud, informal booktalk, inside-text talk and recommendations, and the provision of time for volitional independent reading. The TaRs project established that these reciprocal and interactive practices, responsively shaped according to context, were highly dependent upon teachers' subject knowledge and their knowledge of their children as readers (Cremin et al., 2008, 2009). Based on these complementary knowledge sets, teachers were able to tailor text recommendations for individuals, whilst still affording choice. Working in complex combination and influenced by teachers' own identities and relational positioning as fellow readers, this RfP pedagogy impacted positively upon disengaged readers' attitudes, confidence and self-perception as readers (Cremin et al., 2014).

There are connections between such RfP pedagogy and Bernstein's (2000) conceptualisation of competence pedagogy, which first developed in the 1960/70s in order to empower children as learners. Performative and competence pedagogy can be understood as positioned at either end of a continuum; teachers' actual pedagogies can fall somewhere between the ideal types (Bernstein 2000). Competence pedagogy aims to enable children to develop what are seen to be their inherent interests and characteristics rather than imposing externally determined educational objectives (Bernstein 2000). There is therefore less focus on assessment and children typically experience more agency as learners, although this is not necessarily the case equally for all children, for example girls from working class backgrounds (e.g. Hempel-Jorgensen 2015b; Walkerdine 1990). This is because competence pedagogy carries within it historical conceptions (from the enlightenment) of the ideal learner as male (Bernstein, 2000). Competence pedagogy is therefore not *necessarily* disruptive of educational inequalities, but unlike performative pedagogy it does provide more potential for children's volition to be acted upon if teachers do not constrain certain children because of their social identities (similar to what Bernstein [2000] called radical child-centred pedagogy).

The English National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) strongly focuses on reading as technical proficiency, assessed through tests for accountability purposes, alongside espousing RfP. The balance arguably required between modes of pedagogy required to foster RfP alongside proficiency may be particularly challenging for low SES schools as these institutions are more likely to rely extensively on performative pedagogy/PoP as evidenced in existing research. Because RfP is enjoying increased attention in research and practice internationally and is emphasised in the current English NC (DfE, 2013), RfP pedagogy presents an opportunity to create pedagogical spaces that are disruptive of PoP in the school curriculum. In order to develop a better understanding of 'if and how' schools have managed to develop such practices, despite accountability constraints and poverty-related pressures, this paper examines two questions:

- How have RfP pedagogies been instantiated in practice in low SES primary schools in England?
- In what ways does this impact on children's volition and interaction as readers and their orientations to reading?

Research methods

A multiple case study design (Yin, 2014) and ethnographic methodology (Creswell 2007) were developed in order to compare and explore the nature of the RfP pedagogies in four schools and to understand its effects primarily on boys deemed to be 'struggling' readers, taking into account their experiences and orientations to RfP.

The study involved English urban primary schools in different parts of the country where RfP was reported as being high on the agenda by school leadership and external gatekeepers (including educational consultants and literacy charities). Criteria for inclusion encompassed reported attention to three of the four RfP strands of the RfP pedagogy identified by Cremin et al (2014), noted above. The selected schools all had high free school meal status (above 2014 national average of 17%, DfE 2014) and differing ethnic compositions. The schools were recruited using the different professional networks of the four researchers on the project.

In each school, two focus boys with different ethnicities and one focus girl were identified in the same class of 9-10 year olds (Year 5) with the help of the class teacher. These pupils were identified as 'struggling' readers though none had special educational needs. The girl was included in order to make it possible to compare male/female experiences (not explored in this paper). Seven of the 12 focus children had English as an additional language (EAL) and four were in receipt of FSM.

Table 1: Summary of demographic characteristics of case study schools and focus children (pseudonyms used)

	School A	School B	School C	School D
School FSM eligibility	31.5%	59.4%	41.3%	56%
Focus children	Kamal (FSM)	Malik (EAL)	Dominik (EAL)	Roman (EAL, FSM)
	Kayla (FSM)	Raqiah (EAL)	Jack	Akash (EAL)
	Oban (FSM)	Yasim (EAL)	Nadia (EAL)	Lily

The focus children in each school were interviewed twice as a group to understand the children's attitudes to reading and reading habits at school and home. The class teachers were also interviewed twice, firstly prior to the observation week so that the researchers had some knowledge of the class and focus children could be selected and discussed, secondly at the end of the week to discuss specific incidents in observations, the pedagogies, the focus children specifically and the class more generally. Semi-structured interviews were used to explore interviewees' responses in more depth (Creswell, 2007).

Researchers maintained field notes of literacy and RfP lesson observations to ensure data was as rich as possible (Denzin 2009). This concentrated on the focus children's and teachers' interactions and behaviours using a semi-structured observation schedule. Audio recordings of literacy and RfP lessons were also collected and independently transcribed. Only data relating to RfP activities feature in this paper.

All data were uploaded into NVivo software and inductive and deductive nodes were identified based on the emergent themes from the literature and by reading a sample of transcripts across all schools, covering each data type (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To ensure inter-coder reliability, each researcher

coded their own data which was then second coded by another team member. This process was repeated until there was agreement about the definitions and application of the nodes.

The data collection procedure followed British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2011) and The Open University ethical principles. Written consent forms were signed by head teachers, class teachers and focus children's parents who were each given comprehensive, tailored and written information.

The teachers' conceptualisation of reading

Although the case study schools were selected because they reported that RfP was a priority, the findings suggest that in three of the four schools (Schools A-C), the teachers' understandings of reading was predominantly related to reading as technical proficiency. Pleasure and volition were not seen as central to reading and it was mostly not recognised as a social practice.

Descriptions of a 'struggling reader' by teachers drew on an understanding of reading as a technically 'correct' performance. In particular they cited the importance of a lack of fluency when children read aloud, low phonics knowledge, decoding and comprehension difficulties, ignoring punctuation and reading slowly and falteringly. This was evidenced for example in School A teacher's judgements about two of the focus children as readers:

> *Kamal's not as fluent as Kayla at all, he will stutter a lot as he's reading. He's very segmented as he reads, there's no fluency at all. He completely bypasses punctuation again. But because I guess his sentences are so stuttery, you wouldn't tell if he's gone onto a new sentence or not. Whereas Kayla, she probably would change her tone, so you would know she's done that.*

Low attainment in reading assessment was also seen as a key indicator of whether a child was a 'good' or 'struggling' reader. For example in School C the teacher shared her planned identification of 'struggling' readers:

> *…what I'll need to do is find out what their attainment scores are and which ability they're in, so that we then look across with the other groups. So if I just make myself a quick grid as it were…*

This understanding of reading as proficiency was internalised by children. For example, during their group interview, the focus boys in School B described the 'good readers' in their class as being "…very clear, like they don't stammer or get nervous sometimes."

In marked contrast, the School D teacher, although acknowledging reading as related to proficiency, also saw it as related to understanding meaning, engaging with "the underlying messages of a text/story" and children creating their own interpretations of these. She stated the importance of children "finding something to read that [they] really like" to encourage RfP, "asking questions about [texts]" (not related to proficiency) and children "initiating" discussions and conversations about them. This teacher perceived 'struggling' readers not only in terms of reading proficiency, but also in relation to meaning-making. For example in describing one of the 'struggling' reader focus children she noted:

> *She's not very good at reading between the lines, she really finds that quite hard. Or to pick up on an underlying message or an aim in a book is quite challenging for her.*

Examining RfP pedagogy

This section, which reports on the analysis of the RfP practices in the schools, (structured around Cremin et al's [2014] RfP pedagogy) shows how the teachers' conceptualisations of reading influenced their instantiation of these practices.

The reading environment

Reading was profiled physically in all four classrooms; each had a reading area/corner in which a collection of texts was available. All areas had cushions and space for a small number of children to sit. In the observed class in School A, it was themed around superheroes with commercial wallpaper and hanging materials, and un-banded books were supplemented by comics about superheroes, football magazines and non-fiction. The teacher noted these aligned with his own interests: "I'm quite a big football fan. I'm quite a big super heroes fan so I've got lots of comics, I've got lots of football programmes", although none of the three focus children noted/voiced superheroes as a primary reading interest.

In School B's classroom, two large bookshelves created a carpeted corner with spine on books (grouped into shelves of poetry, fiction, dictionaries, 'First News' (a children's newspaper), atlases, and topic work books). The NC reading domains were displayed and on the end of one bookshelf with the title 'Reading Corner', definitions of key skills (e.g. clarifying, predicting and summarising) were presented. A display of alternatives to the word 'said' hung nearby.

A reading shed stood in the School C's classroom reading area, outside of which were baskets containing 'First News' and other books and a bookshelf with fiction, non-fiction and copies of 'Horrible Histories/Horrible Science'. A ladder of "reading ability" was pinned to the side of the shed, with children's names hierarchically listed alongside their level of reading competence. Child-made bunting adorned the shed on which children had noted for example their favourite animals or hobbies.

The large designated reading space in the School D classroom had a sofa, floor-cushions, bookcases and child-made notices (e.g. 'Which genre do you like best?'). Names of fictional genres (e.g. horror, romance) were dotted over the wall alongside a list of texts the class had enjoyed the previous term.

The teachers in Schools B, C and D all noted how they valued these spaces and in the latter two schools as relaxed spaces to be used for reading. However, the children's use of these spaces as reading areas was minimal beyond book borrowing, with the exception of the School D class. In A the area was deployed as a workspace and for time out for bad behaviour, in B no use was observed, and in C two children read in the shed as part of guided reading activities. In contrast in D, the area was used during independent reading time for reading, and before school and during lunchtimes for relaxation, conversation and reading. The nature of these areas at the four schools suggests notable tensions between cushioned comfort to engender relaxation and the profiling of reading as proficiency.

Independent reading time

In each classroom, time was set aside within the curriculum for children's 'own reading'. The amount of time differed markedly across the schools. This ranged from 45 minutes in School D (where it was a new practice) to 3 hours and 36 minutes in School B. All children sat in their assigned spaces (only by 'ability' in School C) during these sessions except those in the reading area in the School D class.

Given the majority of the children selected their reading material from the classroom collection for independent reading, the potential for choice varied very considerably: In the School A class 147 texts, School B class 473 texts, School C class 223 texts and School D class 802 texts. A few children brought in books from home, read texts from the school library (Schools A and D) or local library van.

The nature of interaction during this time differed. This regular practice was expected to be undertaken in silence in two classrooms, School B and C, and relatively quietly in D. In the School A class, interaction was allowed, although it was not explicitly encouraged or supported by the teacher. In schools A and D there was a more relaxed atmosphere than in B and C during this time.

The perceived value and purpose of the time varied in the views of the teachers as did their role during it. In School A the teacher commented that the time was useful as "they can finish a book …one of those 10 or 15 page books' and can 'feel an achievement that they've read it cover to cover". No specific mention was made of reading time as a pedagogic tool or its value by the teacher in School B, and the School C teacher observed "it's an opportunity for them to get themselves calmed down after lunchtime and get focused again", suggesting she viewed it primarily as a behaviour focusing activity. In School D where it was new, the newly qualified teacher was interested to "see if it works out"; she noted she had not experienced it before. During this time in the Schools B and C classes, regular interruptions were recorded. These took the form of phone calls from the office, children being taken out for activities, and teacher comments on children's behaviour or about other work. In between these interruptions and activities, and during the quiet hubbub of the sessions in Schools A and D, the teachers mostly prepared or marked work, although in School B, during the four after-lunch sessions, the teacher and Teaching Assistant read their own books, offering reading role models. In School D, the teacher, having taken receipt of 100 new books for the class, chose to introduce a few of these during own reading time, prompting conversation around them.

Many, though not all of the focus children were less than attentive or engaged during this time. Few of these children demonstrated sustained engagement with a text within sessions or across the week. There was very considerable book swapping; returning to the reading area to select another text which was often flicked through and then returned. Such behaviour was not encouraged, but was usually tolerated or remained unnoticed. There were covert conversations in Schools B and C, as well as allowed discussions in A and D. On one occasion in school D two boys (not the focus children) engaged in reading the same book together.

Reading aloud

Unlike independent reading time, reading aloud without interruption, for the purpose of pleasure, sharing literature and creating 'texts in common' (Cremin et al., 2014) was not listed as such in any of the teachers' timetables (no timetable was offered in School B), nor was it regular practice in any of the classes. However, when discussing their reading provision, all four teachers referred to reading aloud in some form. In School A, the teacher integrated this into independent reading time "perhaps once out of those opportunities, once or twice a week". Teacher B noted: "Most of the time at the end of the day I read them a story and we'll just clarify words that they didn't know and things like that". In School C, the teacher explained she believed in: "Modelling good reading. So how you look at a book - how you glean information from it before you even begin". In School D reading aloud had recently been prioritised, and was expressed as an intention by the teacher "I will do it more because we've got those 100 books, and we've got those lovely picture books which lend themselves to that".

There was however a gap between teachers' intentions and the reality; few opportunities were offered for children to hear texts read aloud. In the School A and D classes, 30 minute single sessions were offered, (in A this comprised 15 minutes reading aloud followed by 15 minutes questions and answers). In the School C class, two sessions occurred (10 and 6 minutes respectively), no time was allocated to this practice in the School B class. The teachers chose the texts read aloud (books in A and C and a graphic novel in D). In B according to the teacher children would normally be read aloud to from a novel.

The nature of the interactions during reading aloud varied, all teachers asked questions of the children before and during sessions. In Schools A and C these drew on the reading domains, were targeted at named individuals and focused predominantly on information retrieval, with some additional attention in the School A class to inference, deduction and making personal connections. In D, the teacher's questions were more open in nature for example: "What are you thinking about what we've read so far?" and brief pair talk was allowed prior to whole class discussion. The children in A and C were mainly positioned as listeners of the passage read and respondents to the questions asked, though some children in A made comments which were not responses to their teacher's questions, suggesting that they were seizing moments of connection and meaning-making.

Informal booktalk, inside text talk and recommendations

There was only one incidence observed or reported of informal talk around texts outside the remit of reading aloud, independent reading and literacy time, although in School D, conversations were observed during lunchtime in the reading area, it was not clear if these focused on texts. Teachers did refer to talking about texts in interview but the evidence suggests either there was a gap between their views and their practice, or that their conception of text talk is related to instructional whole class contexts, in contrast to the spontaneous informal booktalk, inside-text talk and book recommendations documented in Cremin et al. (2014).

Children's engagement with RfP

Having established the pedagogical context and RfP practices, the paper now turns to the impact of these on children's orientations to and engagement with RfP. This section draws upon interviews with children about their reading practices. In the absence of observation data beyond the classroom, it is only possible to make tentative observations about the children's reading practices outside school. The data indicates a distinction between the nature of children's orientation to and engagement with reading in Schools A, B and C on the one hand and School D on the other – much in line with the differences in RfP pedagogy in the schools.

Reading outside school

In Schools A and C, the focus children sought to give an impression during interview that they read extensively for pleasure outside of school. In School A they claimed to read continuously after arriving at home after school until late at night. They also expressed a high level of enjoyment of reading with one boy stating, "I feel excited, I feel like exploding when I see books, because I love them so much". However, the same boy, according to his home-school reading journal and an observed conversation with the teacher, had only read at home 1-2 times in the past half year (the same applied to the other focus children), yet the teacher perceived this boy was more motivated to read than the other young reader. In School C too the focus boys reported choosing to read books, comics and on-screen texts at home, but their home-school reading journals indicated a very marked lack of reading at home. Indeed, one of the focus boys was criticised by his teacher for 'letting the class down' as he had apparently not read his assigned school book nor had this signed for by his mother (entries in children's journals were counted daily as part of an inter-class weekly competition). Additionally, in School C one of the focus boys, in contrast to the others, talked about reading as being a turned-to activity when "bored", "It's not my really kind of thing to be doing, but when I'm bored I'll just do it, keep me amused", suggesting reading was not seen as a desirable activity.

Children from all four schools were able to name books they had read at home; they drew on a limited repertoire of classic authors, including Roald Dahl, Jacqueline Wilson and David Walliams, few of the

titles mentioned had been published in the last 15 years. These were often books that were available in the class collections or were books the teacher had read aloud. The focus children may not have been choosing from a wide range of literature which they could engage in sustained reading inside and/or outside school. Children also reported reading a wider range of less traditional texts such as computer games, comics, magazines and song lyrics at home, especially in School C, and slightly less so at other schools. Only one focus child (in School B) stated that he did not read at all outside of school.

Reading inside school
The overall level of engagement of focus children in the schools (with the exception of School D) was found to be low. The boys' were particularly disengaged as was illustrated by one of them who, during an independent reading session of 20 minutes, left his seat to change reading material five times, in addition to being very distracted and disengaged (e.g. stretching, yawning) in-between flicking through pages. This form of disengagement with reading was also reflected in School A and C where two of the focus boys frequently chose new non-fiction books/magazines and flicked through the pages during independent reading time, showing little evidence of sustained engagement.

In contrast, many of the focus children in all the schools made statements such as "I love reading" and "I love books". Children seemed to be aware that reading was valued by their teachers and therefore may have been attempting to position themselves as readers to the researchers. Yet when they talked about specific texts it became apparent that they only engaged with a narrow range of texts inside school (compared with outside school) and that their engagement was minimal. In School B, children felt that the books in class were mostly "boring" and preferred magazines, comics and newspapers. In School C, their capacity shown to discuss texts was meagre. Overall, the focus children's discussion reflected a much stronger pre-occupation with reading proficiency and they engaged in detailed discussion of how children in their class could be ranked in relation to one another.

There was some indication that children's engagement with RfP inside and outside of school in School D, contrasted with that at Schools A, B and C. In School D, more than in the other schools, children's conversations in interviews about reading often explored the narrative, plot or characters, their knowledge stretched beyond naming authors and/or titles. The two examples below illustrate how this was evident in children's accounts, the first featuring the focus girl on a book she had individually chosen to read and the second on 'texts in common' all three focus children had read.

> *Researcher: OK so did you have a number of books that you were interested in?*
> *Lily: Three.*
> *Researcher: OK did you know the other two; can you remember what they were?*
> *Lily: One of them was The Death of a Mouse and the other one was…it was this book where there was this little boy and he, mum and dad went missing that night and he had to go out like searching for them.*
> *Researcher: OK interesting. So what made you choose Flat Stanley?*
> *Lily: I read the [blurb] and it made me really interested.*

In a second example, whilst it wasn't clear whether the children had read a version of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl predominantly for pleasure, they were able to discuss both stories extensively and express their opinions of these. At least one child displayed excitement and interest in aspects of each story, including plot and characters. This kind of talk about texts was almost entirely absent in Schools A, B and C and indicates a different orientation to and engagement with RfP at School D, in line with the differences in RfP pedagogy at this school.

Discussion and conclusion

Through examining the RfP pedagogy offered in four low SES schools that had recently prioritised RfP, this study provides new and worrying evidence of how RfP pedagogy was instantiated in practice. It reveals the restrictive and restricting nature of pedagogy in relation to children's volition and social interaction as readers in the observed classrooms. This resonates strongly with the PoP identified in previous research and Bernstein's (2000) performative pedagogy, but significantly offers novel understandings of how this applies in the reading curriculum, specifically in relation to RfP pedagogy in which reader volition and interaction are key. The pedagogy intended to foster RfP was, in three of the schools, embedded in and strongly influenced by a highly performative pedagogy (Bernstein 2000). This pedagogy was underpinned by the teachers', and thereby the children's understanding of reading as primarily a matter of proficiency. This was despite the discourse of head teachers, reading co-ordinators and the teachers which indicated that they aimed to foster children's desire to read. The high profile proficiency agenda explains the presence of classroom displays and signs reflecting reading 'ability' hierarchies and a focus on technical aspects of reading. Teachers also used independent reading time to meet the school's assessment or accountability requirements by, for example, marking work, rather than acting as reading role models (with the exception of School B) or discussing texts with the young readers. Reading aloud was practiced in three of the schools, but again the focus in two of these was upon comprehension and vocabulary extension, in line with assessment expectations, not reading¸ and response.

The teachers', especially in Schools A to C, did not seem to recognise children's volition and social interaction as core elements of RfP which need to be supported. The infrequent use of reading areas designed to foster RfP significantly reduced children's volition as readers in these schools; children were unable to choose who to sit with and were not encouraged and/or supported to engage with peers informally around texts. Teachers' lack of support and encouragement for children's talk about texts also constrained the development of reading communities which are crucial for supporting children's engagement with RfP (Cremin et al., 2014). The lack of such collective ownership and engagement was also identified in the Australian PoP research and the development of inclusive learning communities were a core aspect of the more socially just pedagogies which were developed in response (Lingard, 2007; Munns et al., 2013).

Another key way in which the observed RfP pedagogies in Schools A-C reflected the PoP research was that the focus children's lack of engaged and sustained reading was not challenged by teachers. It is possible that that the teachers had low expectations of these children's engagement as readers and that they were satisfied with these children simply being compliant with the expectation of sitting at their desk with a text. This allowance of minimal engagement with RfP appeared to be at the expense of developing children's intrinsic desire to engage in reading in a more sustained manner. Similarly, in the PoP research in Australia and the US, teachers' pedagogy required learners' compliance rather than intellectual and affective engagement or higher-order thinking.

This paper therefore argues that the 'pedagogy of poverty', at least in relation to developing young readers in these contexts, was effectively not challenged, the constrained instantiation of pedagogies aimed at supporting RfP held the strugglers back. The opportunity presented by RfP being mandated in the English NC, to create pedagogical spaces where children could develop volition and skill as readers (and therefore as learners who actively engage in meaning-making through talk) remained unrealised in three of these four low SES schools. In contrast, the focus children's status as 'struggling' non-volitional readers was reinforced by the ways in which the teachers unconsciously framed and constrained RfP practices. This meant that the children's engagement with RfP was limited, with the potential exception of children in School D where a different conceptualisation of reading pertained, one also influenced by an orientation towards RfP.

In order to disrupt PoP and for children to reap the multiple benefits of reading for pleasure in low SES schools, the challenge of teaching in such contexts, particularly in a high accountability culture needs recognising and addressing. Furthermore teachers may need to be supported to reconsider the nature of reading in order to encompass children's volition and social interaction around texts in addition to proficiency. Teachers may need to be helped to re-orient their practice such that pedagogies intended to support RfP are able to achieve this goal. As previous research has shown, through widening their subject knowledge of children's literature and other texts and becoming more conscious of their own (and children's) everyday reading practices and identities, teachers can come to reconceptualise RfP from the inside out, recognising its essentially social and volitional nature and the significance of readers' rights (Cremin et al., 2014). With new knowledge and understanding derived from becoming reflective readers, teachers will be in a stronger position to more effectively build a nuanced and interactive RfP pedagogy. Such a relational pedagogy would be more in line with Bernstein's (2000) radical child-centred competence pedagogy, where all children have scope for volition and social interaction in comparison with the heightened performative pedagogy identified in the four schools and the wider PoP literature . The introduction of RfP into the English NC provides a significant opportunity to develop such a relational pedagogy and disrupt Pedagogy of Pedagogy.

The findings are also relevant to other attempts, in England and internationally, to develop pedagogies that foster young people's active engagement with learning, as the challenges in low SES contexts are likely to be similar where high-stakes assessment holds sway. The paper therefore makes a new contribution to the research literature about the nature of pedagogy in a more socially just education system. It also extends research on RfP pedagogy in widening understanding of the challenges, as well as the potential benefits, of its development in low SES schools.

References

BERA (2011) *Ethical guidelines for educational research*. London: BERA

Belfiore, P.J., Auld, R. and Lee, D.L., (2005) The Disconnect of Poor-Urban Education: Equal Access and a Pedagogy of Risk Taking. *Psychology in the Schools*, *42*.8. pp. 855-863.

Bernstein, B.B., (2000) *Pedagogy, symbolic control, and identity: Theory, research, critique*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Braun, V., and Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3.2, pp.77-101.

Cremin, T., Mottram, M. Bearne, E. and Goodwin, P. (2008) Exploring teachers' knowledge of children's literature *Cambridge Journal of Education* 38 (4): 449-464

Cremin, T., Mottram, M., Collins, F., Powell, S. and Safford, K. (2009) Teachers as readers: building communities of readers *Literacy* 43 (1):11-19.

Cremin, T. Mottram, M. Powell, S, Collins R and Safford K. (2014) *Building Communities of Engaged Readers*: *Reading for pleasure* London and NY: Routledge

Creswell, John W. (2007) *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Cunningham, A. and Stanovich, K. (1998) What reading does for the mind. *American Educator,* 22. 1 and 2, pp. 8-15.

Denzin, N. K. (2009) *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. New York: Aldine Transaction.

DfE (2013) *The National Curriculum. Key Stages 1 and 2 framework document*. London: DfE.

DfE (2014) *Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2014. Statistical first release*. London: DfE.

Mills, C. and Gale, T., (2009) *Schooling in disadvantaged communities: Playing the game from the back of the field*. Springer Science & Business Media.

Goodman, A., & Gregg, P. (Eds.) (2010) *Poorer children's educational attainment: How important are attitudes and behaviour?* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Haberman, M. (1991) Pedagogy of poverty versus good teaching. *Phi Delta Kappan*. 73. 4, pp. 290-294.

Haberman, M. (2010) The pedagogy of poverty versus good teaching. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 92. 2, pp. 81-87.

Hayes, D., Johnston, K. and King, A. (2009) Creating enabling classroom practices in high poverty contexts: The disruptive possibilities of looking in classrooms. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*. 17. 3, pp. 251-264.

Hempel-Jorgensen, A. (2015a) *Learner agency in urban primary schools*. London: Society for Educational Studies.

Hempel-Jorgensen, A. (2015b) Working-class girls and child-centred pedagogy: what are the implications for developing socially just pedagogy? *International Studies in Sociology of Education*. 25. 2, pp. 132-149.

Hempel-Jorgensen, A. (2009) The construction of the 'ideal pupil' and pupils' perceptions of 'misbehaviour' and discipline: contrasting experiences from a low-socio-economic and a high-socio-economic primary school. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 30.4., pp.435-448.

Jenkins, S.P., Micklewright, J. and Schnepf, S.V., (2008) Social segregation in secondary schools: how does England compare with other countries? *Oxford Review of Education*, 34.1. pp. 21-37.

Kidd, D. C., & Castano, E. (2013). Reading literary fiction improves theory of mind. *Science*, *342*. 6156, pp. 377-380.

Kirsch, I., De Jong, J., LaFontaine, D., McQueen, J., Mendelovitz, J., & Monseur, C. (2003) *Reading for change: Performance and engagement across countries: Results of PISA 2000*. Paris: OECD.

Van Lier, L., (2008) Agency in the classroom. *Sociocultural theory and the teaching of second languages*, 163, p.186.

Lingard, B., (2007) Pedagogies of indifference. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 11.3, pp.245-266.

Lockwood. M. (2008) *Promoting reading for pleasure in the primary school.* London: Sage.

Lupton, R. and Hempel-Jorgensen, A. (2012) The importance of teaching: Pedagogical constraints and possibilities in working-class schools. *Journal of education policy*. 27. 5, pp. 601-620.

Miller, D. (2009) *The Book Whisperer.* San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Mills, C. and Gale, T. (2009). Schooling in disadvantaged communities: Playing the game from the back of the field. New York, NY: Springer.

Morgan, P.L. and Fuchs, D., (2007) Is there a bidirectional relationship between children's reading skills and reading motivation? *Exceptional children*. 73. 2, pp.165-183.

Moss, G., and McDonald, J.W. (2004) The borrowers: library records as unobtrusive measures of children's reading preferences. *Journal of Research in Reading*. 27. 4, pp.401–412.

Moss, G. (2007) *Literacy and Gender.* London: Routledge

Munns, G., Sawyer, W. and Cole, B. eds., (2013) *Exemplary teachers of students in poverty*. Routledge.

OECD (2010) *PISA 2009 Results: Learning to Learn – Student Engagement, Strategies and Practices (Volume III)*. Paris: OECD.

Rothbauer, P.M. (2004) 'People aren't afraid any more but it's hard to find books': Reading practices that inform personal and social identities of self –identified lesbian and queer young women. *Canadian Journal of Information and Library science.* 28. 3, pp. 53-74.

Smyth, J., McInerney, P. and Fish, T., 2013. Blurring the boundaries: From relational learning towards a critical pedagogy of engagement for disengaged disadvantaged young people. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 21.2. pp. 299-320.

Sullivan, A. and Brown, M. (2013) *Social inequalities in cognitive scores at age 16: The role of reading*. CLS Working Paper 2013/10. London: Centre for Longitudinal Studies.

Thadani, V., Cook, M.S., Griffis, K., Wise, J.A. and Blakey, A., (2010) The possibilities and limitations of curriculum-based science inquiry interventions for challenging the "pedagogy of poverty". *Equity& Excellence in Education*, 43.1. pp. 21-37.

Trelease, J. (2013) *The Read Aloud Handbook*, (7th edition). New York: Penguin

van Lier, L. (2009) Learner agency in the classroom in Lantolf, J.P. & Poehner, M.E. (Eds.), *Sociocultural theory and the teaching of second languages*, London: Equinox.

Walkerdine, V. (1990). *Schoolgirl fictions*. Verso Books.

Waxman, H. C., Padron, Y. N., & Lee, Y. H. (2010). Accelerating the Pedagogy of Poverty in Urban Schools: Unanticipated Consequences of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. *ERS Spectrum*. 28. 2, 37-43.

Waxman, H.C., Huang, S.Y.L. and Padron, Y.N., (1995) Investigating the pedagogy of poverty in inner-city middle level schools. *Research in Middle Level Education*, 18.2. pp. 1-22.

Yin, R.K., (2009) *Case study research: Design and Methods*. Thousand oaks, California: Sage.