

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CURRICULUM

NALDIC

WORKING FOR PUPILS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

OCCASIONAL PAPER 7

Linguistic Diversity in the 1990s Some Language Education Issues For Minority Ethnic Pupils

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February 1996

This paper first appeared in *Managing Equality of Opportunity in Education into the 21st Century: papers presented for a conference organised by the Commission for Racial Equality, in partnership with The Institute of Education and the Times Educational Supplement in February 1995.* (Published by the Commission for Racial Equality and Thames Valley University, January 1996, reprinted here with permission.)

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Linguistic Diversity In The 1990s

Some Language Education Issues For Minority Ethnic Pupils

Abstract

Language education for minority ethnic pupils has been a focus of attention both within Europe and internationally. This paper attempts to examine the current situation in England with reference to the National Curriculum. The main focus of attention is on English as a second/additional language and mother tongue provision. While these two issues are related in terms of bilingual and cognitive development, they are treated in two distinct parts in this discussion. English as an additional language and mother tongue education issues, as practical policy matters, are at different stages of discussion and implementation. It is argued that there is a need for the National Curriculum to explicitly include a language developmental framework to recognise the needs of pupils who are learning to use English as an additional language. In the light of current research evidence it is also suggested that the present policy on mother tongue education should be reviewed.

Introduction

The recent school curriculum reforms have explicitly focused on many areas of the publicly funded system except one: language education for pupils who speak English as a second or additional language. Yet it remains a key concern for policy makers, administrators, teachers and members of the various minority ethnic communities alike. This is currently witnessed by the high level of professional and community interest in the possible impact of the Single Regeneration Budget on funding for language support and other related programmes. The continuing Home Office commitment to Section 11 funding also suggests the importance of this aspect of the educational provision.

This paper attempts to address some of the major long term issues concerning the teaching of English As A Second/Additional Language (TESL/TEAL)¹ and mother tongue² within the context of the National Curriculum. The main purpose is to explore

¹ For some pupils English is their third or fourth language. In the long run it would therefore be more accurate to adopt the term 'additional language' for all cases.

² This term is usually used to refer to the first language acquired by children. Therefore it may be used to refer to English. In the context of this discussion the term 'mother tongue' is used to refer to a first language other than English and the assumption is that this language is used in the home and the community. The term 'mother tongue' has been criticised because, as Pattanayak (1986:6) puts it, in an environment hostile to multilingualism 'a make-believe world has been created in which the majority has mother tongue; only the immigrants and the guest workers have mother tongues.' The term 'community language' is sometimes used; but it suffers from a similar problem in that it carries the

the key educational principles involved in meeting the educational and needs of pupils who use English as an additional language. This discussion will draw on the experiences and the research from Europe and other broadly similar English speaking societies. The domain assumption adopted in this paper is that languages, or varieties of a language, do not naturally attain the status of the chosen medium of instruction, a foreign modern curriculum language or an extra-curricular mother tongue. The status and the use of a language are often the subject of conscious decision and intervention on the societal level. (Lo Bianco, 1994)

Education For Minority Ethnic³ Pupils: Europe and beyond

Linguistic and cultural diversity is now a norm in most modern industrial, some would say post-industrial, societies. The impact of such diversity on educational provision has been recognised. The Commission Of The European Communities (1994:1) states that:

‘... as a consequence of growing cross-frontier mobility in the Union, and of the presence of steadily growing numbers of third country immigrants ... all Member States have now become immigration countries Beyond the total number of non-nationals in Member States’ schools (estimated at around 7-9%), the percentage of children whose everyday experience inside and outside schools is affected by contact with speakers of languages other than their own must now be estimated to represent around 50% of school children in Member States. All signs are that this trend will continue Indeed, cultural and linguistic diversity of the public schools is becoming the norm This confronts the education systems ... with ... new challenges, related both to the struggle against failure at school ... and the need to improve quality and diversity of their service As in the wake of increased intra-Community mobility, new linguistic and cultural communities emerge in the Member States, education systems and schools are confronted with the challenge of integrating all pupils into a unified educational framework able to ensure equality of opportunity and optimum success for all pupils while at the same time respecting their specific cultural identities.’⁴

This recognition of the changing reality and the need for fresh thinking and action has, *inter alia*, a powerful economic motivation. There is a growing recognition that the failure to provide an effective education creates a waste of human resources. It is

connotation of being a minority language of restricted social use, as opposed to English which is seen as the language for wider communication. In the professional literature some use the term ‘first language’ (L1). It is also potentially problematic because for some people their first language may not be their mother tongue. For instance, for some people their first language is English but their mother tongue is Welsh. ‘Mother tongue’ will be used here because it is still in wide currency and because the European Union institutions have adopted it. Furthermore it avoids the additional problem of having to distinguish between a community language (as meant here) and a Community language (an EU language). For a discussion see Skutnabb-Kangas and Cummins, 1988.

³ The concept of ethnic minorities is used in this discussion to refer to groups who consider themselves or who are considered by others as different from a majority group in terms of number, racial origin, language, religion and culture. In the British context many members of the minority ethnic groups have UK (and therefore EU) citizenship.

⁴ It is interesting to note that while the EU maintains a distinction between nationals of the Member States and nationals of third countries (non-EU) in terms of entitlement to some aspects of mother tongue teaching and freedom of movement, this policy does not apply to education in general. (Commission Of The European Communities, 1994:7)

reported that within the European Union as a whole the economic activity rate of the migrant populations (nationals of other Member States and nationals of third countries combined) is 'considerably higher (by 3.2%) than that of the nationals ...'. (Op.cit.:10) However, the activity rates of young people between 14 and 24 years of age in these population groups 'are lower than those of their national peers, due to lower levels of education and training qualifications and discrimination on the labour market.'⁵ (Loc.cit.) The implicit point here is that the low educational achievement and the waste of human resources need not happen.

The challenges experienced by the schools and the education systems are also recognised by another European initiative. The Eurocities DIECEC Project (1994:4) asserts that 'As traditional educational approaches are not always able to meet the challenges ... resulting from the demographic changes as well as the critical socio-economic situation, outcomes for minority ethnic pupils tend to lead to low levels of achievement and high levels of exclusion.'⁶

One of the key challenges facing the education systems in societies with linguistic and ethnic diversity is concerned with the related issues of second/additional language and mother tongue teaching provisions for minority ethnic pupils. Many countries around the world are actively addressing these matters. For instance, Australia, a country with a high level of linguistic and ethnic diversity, has devoted considerable time and resources to address these issues within a national framework. (Lo Bianco, 1987) The Australian National Policy On Languages deals with a whole range of language questions which include the teaching of English to minority ethnic pupils, the teaching of languages other than English (including the mother tongues of the ethnic minorities) to all pupils and issues concerning the Aboriginal languages. Canada, apart from the constitutional support for bilingualism (English and French), has seen a number of different initiatives on and approaches to second language education for different groups of pupils. (Cummins and Swain, 1986; Mohan, 1986, 1990 and Edwards and Redfern, 1992 and Meyers, 1993) These include the teaching of French through the immersion system to English speakers and the teaching of English as an additional language through an integrated language and content curriculum. The United States are currently putting in place a number of education reforms many of which have a regard to second/additional language issues. One of these reforms, Goals 2000, for instance, creates a National Institute On The Education Of At-Risk Students to research on and to provide leadership for the second/additional language needs of the US. (Edwards and McMillan, 1994/95)

Within Europe there have been a number of initiatives, some are realised on a national policy level and others on a more localised basis. For instance, Denmark seems to have a clearly defined policy which states that Danish is to be used as a medium of instruction for all minority ethnic pupils and that mother tongue teaching (except German in the border area between Denmark and Germany) is to take place outside mainstream school

⁵ This point does not refer to minority ethnic citizens of the Member States.

⁶ It is understood that the educational success or failure for all pupils, including minority ethnic pupils, is not determined by pedagogical action alone; social expectations and economic opportunities have a part to play.

hours. (Moldenhawer, 1994; Sondergaard, 1993; Byram, 1993) The Dutch government subsidises and organises 'Home Language Instruction' (up to five hours a week) in the official languages of the countries of family origins of the pupils. (This means, for instance, Turkish for ethnic Kurdish children from Turkey.) (Driessen and van der Grinten, 1994) In the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country Basque-medium schooling is now available for both Basque and Spanish speaking pupils. (Zalbide, 1994) Welsh-medium education is now part of the state provision within Wales. (Baker, 1993) In Slovenia both the mother tongue and the second/additional language (Slovene) are used in schooling for the Italian and Hungarian minorities. (Novak Lukanovic, 1994) There are many other examples of such conscious and deliberate attempts to address the language issues within the context of a specific linguistic and ethnic setting. It is not suggested here that in these communities and societies there are no further language issues. Indeed the experience of the industrial societies in the past fifty years or so would suggest the contrary. The point here is that these complex issues have to be considered and reconsidered in the light of changing circumstances and with reference to educational goals which are themselves subject to change.

English As A Second/Additional Language In The National Curriculum⁷

The focus of teaching of English as a second/additional language (TESL/TEAL) has been changing steadily over the past twenty years or so. There has been a move away from a major concern with teaching the structural parts of the English language, i.e. vocabulary and grammar. There is a much wider concern with providing language teaching in terms of curriculum access and curriculum support. Three significant events gave decisive support to the momentum of mainstreaming TEAL.

The Swann Committee of Enquiry, set up to investigate the low achievement of minority ethnic pupils, reported in 1985. The Committee (op.cit.:389) found that the provision of second/additional language teaching in separate language centres 'discriminatory in effect in that it denies an individual child access to the full range of educational opportunities available ...'⁸ The Committee recommended that the teaching of English to minority ethnic pupils should take place within mainstream classes as part of a

⁷ The focus of attention here is on the National Curriculum. Ipso facto many of the comments refer specifically to the English situation only since the National Curriculum does not apply to Scotland and Northern Ireland and while there is a similar National Curriculum in Wales it differs from the English one in that there is provision for Welsh-English bilingualism.

⁸ These were the arguments against separate provision:

- the limitations on the breadth of curriculum ... and the inherent injustice of denying any pupil access to other subjects until he or she has mastered English;
- the absence ... of direct links between the language centre or unit and the mainstream of school life which means that the work being done does not mirror that of the school and that the language needs perceived by class teachers are not necessarily met by the E2L specialists;
- the possibly negative effect on a pupils progress in learning English of mixing primarily or even solely with children for whom English is not a first language;
- the possible effects on a child's socialisation and developing maturity of being separated from his or her peers and away from the "social reality" of the school;
- the inevitable trauma for a child of entering the English-speaking environment of the mainstream school, is merely postponed and in no way avoided;
- mainstream school teachers are discouraged from regarding ethnic minority pupils' language needs as their concern and are indeed encouraged to regard E2L work as a whole as of low status.'

(Swann Report, 1985:391-392)

comprehensive response to the language learning needs of all pupils. '... we would ... hope to see ESL being viewed as an extension of the range of language needs for which *all* teachers in schools should, provided they are given adequate training and appropriate support, be able to cater.' (Op.cit.:392)

In 1986 the Commission For Racial Equality (CRE) carried out an investigation into the school admission procedure of the Calderdale Local Education Authority for children whose mother tongue is not English. It was found that the authority's requirement for children from a non-English mother tongue background to pass a language assessment before they were placed in a mainstream school to be an indirect discriminatory practice.⁹ It was also found that those children who did not pass the language screening procedure and who were sent to the English Language Teaching Service (ELTS) centres suffered a 'detriment in not having access to certain benefits, facilities or services available in mainstream schools and classes'. (CRE, 1986:6) The Commission made a number of recommendations which included:

'The test currently conducted to decide whether children are admitted to the ELTS or not is immediately terminated ...

A timetable for implementing integration of ESL teaching with mainstream schooling is drawn up ...

A programme of inservice training is implemented, both for mainstream teachers who will receive second language learners in their classrooms and for the ESL teachers who are going to become part of the mainstream themselves. All teachers will need to be aware of their different roles in the new system and a continuous rolling programme of inservice training will be needed.'

The introduction of the Education Reform Act (1988), and with it the National Curriculum, added a further dimension to TEAL. The National Curriculum is intended as an entitlement for all. Pupils who use English as an additional language are not exempted from this expectation.¹⁰ In other words, they are expected to participate in the learning of the content of the mainstream curriculum as fully as possible.

As it was stated earlier, TEAL has been moving towards the mainstream in recent years. The focus of attention has been enlarged from teaching the English language to a much broader concern with providing curriculum access and curriculum support. To provide curriculum access means to allow pupils who are learning to use English to study school subjects such as science and mathematics in the mainstream classes; to provide curriculum support means to offer these pupils help with studying these subjects, particularly with the English language. Despite this shift in focus it was still possible for teachers to prioritise and to maintain, up until the introduction of the National Curriculum, that the main aim of TEAL was to teach English. In a sense the relocation of the pupils in the mainstream classroom simply provided a more naturalistic language learning environment. It was generally held that the mainstream classroom where the English language was used purposefully to communicate meaning afforded the best

⁹ This statement was made with reference to the Race Relations Act 1976.

¹⁰ This view is demonstrated in the following quotation: 'In order to participate confidently in public, cultural and working life, pupils need to be able to speak and read standard English fluently and accurately. All pupils are therefore entitled to the full range of opportunities necessary to enable them to develop competence in standard English' (SCAA, National Curriculum Orders (English), 1994:2)

opportunity and the most conducive environment for learning to use language authentically. The content of the mainstream curriculum and activities, say geography, could be seen as providing the authentic context for language learning. Under the 1988 Act all pupils are expected to participate in the National Curriculum and teachers are obliged to provide as much TEAL support as possible so that **both the content of the curriculum and English language are learned at the same time.**

The current National Curriculum requirements are seen to provide equality of access to the mainstream curricular provision for second/additional language pupils. The experience of the last few years has shown that the equality of access has raised many pedagogical and structural issues.¹¹ For the purpose of this discussion the most urgent and fundamental one is concerned with the capacity of the National Curriculum to recognise and provide for the development of English as a second/additional language formally and structurally. The development of English as a mother tongue and English as second/additional language acquisition are not identical in terms of processes and contexts.¹²

At present the National Curriculum is primarily made up of a set of subject content specifications. These content specifications in effect constitute the bulk of what is to be learned and assessed. Since the medium of instruction is English, for the majority English speaking pupils the National Curriculum is often assumed to be 'language neutral' in the sense that all pupils would share more or less the same linguistic background knowledge or preparedness.¹³ But for the pupils who are learning to use English as a second/additional language, the National Curriculum is a de facto '**double curriculum**': a curriculum of school subjects and a curriculum of English language. This duality is often implicitly recognised by teachers in everyday classroom events when they sense that a particular pupil has the knowledge and the ability to tackle a certain task but they fail to do so because of their lack of English.¹⁴ It is important to recognise that in this double curriculum the subject content specifications, entirely encoded in English (except in the foreign modern languages), are serving as an all encompassing English language curriculum by default. In these circumstances second/additional language pupils are, therefore, having to work to English native-speaker norms which

¹¹ For a discussion on teaching issues see Leung, 1992.

¹² A clear recognition of this fact can be found in the (Western Australian) First Steps materials which were designed to promote language and literacy development in English as a mother tongue in the mainstream classroom. The authors were careful to point out that their materials should not be regarded as automatically suitable for pupils who were learning to use English as an additional language. For instance, on the assessment of oral language it is stated that 'It may never be appropriate to use Oral Language Developmental Continuum for second language learners, as development has already taken place in their first language.' (First Steps Oral Language Developmental Continuum, Education Dept, 1994:18)

¹³ It is recognised that all pupils have to learn the specialist vocabulary and genres and so on as part of learning a subject. It is also recognised that some would argue that the National Curriculum may not be seen as 'language neutral' from the point of view of social class and gender (and other considerations). The focus and scope of this paper preclude detailed discussion on these issues. The main argument here is that from the standpoint of the pupils who are learning English as a second/additional language the National Curriculum is encoded in the English language. The fact that English is a second/additional language for some pupils is recognised in some National Curriculum documents, particularly with reference to assessment. This recognition is, however, post hoc in nature.

¹⁴ This is a serious issue in terms of assessment: is one assessing content knowledge or English language knowledge?

may not be appropriate or realistic or helpful at any one particular point.¹⁵ One of the consequences that flows from the application of an inappropriate language model or norms is that teachers often find it difficult to evaluate achievement¹⁶ and to work out appropriate developmental targets for the pupils.

To be sure, individual TEAL and mainstream teachers, using their experience and training, have developed highly sensitive and effective ways of helping pupils develop their English in the mainstream context. But the question here is one of the structural capacity to provide for second/additional language development within the National Curriculum. After all one of the purposes of the National Curriculum is to set out subject content specifications with reference to progress; the level descriptors and the programmes of study of the various subjects are an attempt to do just this.

It may well be argued that English as a second/additional language is not a subject in its own right; there are no substantive constituents which may be regarded as the basis of a subject, e.g. the periodic table in science and the grammatical rule governing the tenses in English. English as a second/additional language, in this sense, is a phenomenon residing in the learners. Therefore this is primarily a teaching and learning issue which should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis by teachers.

It is perfectly true that English as a second/additional language does not have its own separate linguistic existence as a system. However, this in itself should not be regarded as the reason for exclusion from the National Curriculum because all pupils are in the same curriculum. The modern foreign languages, e.g. French and German, similarly do not have a distinct existence (separate from French and German as natural languages) and yet they have been given careful attention within the National Curriculum. The foreign modern languages and English as a second/additional language share an important constitutional characteristic: they are made up of language knowledge and skills selected by, in the case of schooling education, teachers, syllabus writers and curriculum designers. Seen in this light there is no principled reason why English as a second/additional language should be excluded from the proper concerns of the National Curriculum. Given that it is not a relevant consideration for the majority English speakers, a TEAL framework may be regarded as an obligatory adjunct to the mainstream provision because the pupils who have English as an additional language are already in the mainstream.

There are already in existence a plethora of more or less systematic definitions of English as a second/additional language. There is, however, no common agreement as to the definitions of the different stages or levels of learning or achievement across the country.¹⁷ Since teaching support is usually given with reference to the pupil's stage or level of learning, the different definitions in different parts of the country may lead to

¹⁵ The situation is made more complex by virtue of the fact that there are different types of pupils. Some may have had exposure to English in the play group or the nursery and through the mass media such as the television, before entering schools; others may be absolute beginner learners of English from a different social and cultural environment. Furthermore pupils arrive at school at different ages.

¹⁶ This is exemplified by common remarks such as 'I think I know what Y is trying to say, but the English doesn't say that. I gave him a D but ...'

¹⁷ For instance, virtually all Section 11 funded English language support projects have their own definitions of stages or levels of learning.

different treatments for pupils with similar needs. This situation makes it very difficult to identify common professional and pedagogical concerns and to evaluate pupil progress on a comparative basis regionally or nationally. From the point of view of the pupils it cannot be a satisfactory situation when learning needs and achievement are defined differently depending on where one happens to be. Furthermore, until there is common framework of practice it is virtually impossible to establish the true level of learning and teaching needs in the country. It is therefore imperative that a national framework and exemplification of practice should be developed to harmonise the various approaches.

The development of such a national second/additional language framework is necessarily a complex undertaking. It will have to be empirically grounded in the classroom reality of the National Curriculum. The language demands of the individual subjects, including the subject English, and classroom language use, by teachers and pupils, will need to be calibrated with reference to the pupils' developing competence in the four Key Stages of the National Curriculum. The place and significance of Standard English and dialects will need to be addressed within the context of developing linguistic competence and communicative purpose. Teachers' judgements of pupils' performance will need to be taken into account when deciding and forming attainment levels or level descriptors. These descriptors will need to be formed at a level of delicacy and detail which can be recognised by teachers in the classroom. Such a framework will also need to have a regard to research and theory already available. A great deal of work has been done in the notion of what constitutes communicative language competence and in the area of second/additional language acquisition. (Canale and Swain, 1980; Bachman, 1990, Adamson, 1993 and McLaughlin, 1987, among others) As the National Curriculum enters into a five-year period of stability this would be an opportune moment to begin to develop a second/additional language framework in conjunction with the consolidated mainstream curriculum.¹⁸

Mother Tongue¹⁹ Education Provision

The issue of mother tongue education has been the subject of much debate and government action in many of the societies with linguistic and ethnic diversity. For instance, as cited earlier, Australia and the Netherlands have made state-funded provision for mother tongue teaching available. Denmark, on the other hand, has excluded mother tongue teaching from the mainstream school curriculum. The different educational responses reflect the wide range of social and ideological opinions and historical contexts. Following Tollefson's (1991) discussion broadly it is possible to identify four socially oriented ideal-type positions:

1. Support for mother tongue education to maintain languages other than the majority/official language. The use of minority indigenous and non-indigenous languages is a right and bilingualism on the individual level is a societal resource.
2. Support for mother tongue education as a transitional measure leading to majority/official language-only education. The principle of equity requires mother

¹⁸ For an example of such a development in Australia see McKay, 1992 and Curriculum Corporation, 1994.

¹⁹ See note 2. The case of Welsh-medium education in Wales will be referred to where appropriate in this discussion. The main focus of attention is on the position in England.

tongue-medium classes to be provided until pupils are able to participate effectively in majority/official language-medium education.

3. Support for mother tongue capability as an asset for international business and commerce but no support for the use of mother tongue within society in general and in education in particular. The use of mother tongue within one's own society is seen as socially divisive.

4. No support for mother tongue education except as part of foreign/modern language learning. The use of mother tongue is seen as socially divisive.

It should be noted that these four are analytical positions. Social and educational policies may show various combinations.

The current position of mother tongue education in this country has been heavily influenced by the Swann Report (1985). The Report (op.cit.:406) declares itself 'for' mother tongue in the following way:

'We are "for" mother tongue in the sense that we regard the linguistic diversity of Britain today as a positive asset in just the same way as ... the many dialects and two indigenous languages (Welsh and Gaelic) We are also "for" mother tongue in that we see all schools having a role in imparting a broader understanding of our multilingual society to all pupils, and "for" mother tongue in the value which we attach to fostering the linguistic, religious and cultural identities of ethnic minority communities.'

On the question of bilingual education and mother tongue maintenance²⁰ the Report (op.cit.:406-407) takes the following position²¹:

'It is clear that both bilingual education and mother tongue maintenance can only be of relevance to mother tongue speakers of languages other than English, i.e. to pupils from certain ethnic minority groups. Where such provision has been made therefore it has inevitably meant that ethnic minority pupils have had to be separated from their peers for "special" teaching. ... we are opposed in principle to the withdrawal of ethnic minority pupils as an identifiable group and to the concept of "separate" provision. ... we believe that any form of separate provision catering exclusively for ethnic minority pupils, serves to establish and conform social divisions between groups of pupils. It also leaves the ethnic majority pupils' education impoverished and monolingual and the negative perceptions of the "strangeness" of ethnic minority groups, which lies at the

²⁰ These terms are defined by the Swann Report (op.cit.:399) as follows:

'-Bilingual Education: the structuring of a school's work to allow for the use of a pupil's mother tongue as a medium of instruction alongside English so that the child may be taught for a set part of the school day in for example Punjabi and for the rest of the time in English;

-Mother Tongue Maintenance: the development of a pupil's fluency in his or her mother tongue as an integral part of a primary school's curriculum in order to extend their existing language skills by time-tabling a set of hours each week for the teaching of for example Punjabi;

-Mother Tongue Teaching: the teaching of the languages of ethnic minority communities as part of the modern language curriculum of secondary schools alongside established languages such as French or German.'

²¹ The Swann Report (op.cit.:404) contains a review of research literature by the NFER which did not establish conclusive evidence of the value of bilingual education. Therefore it concludes that '... on the strength of the NFER review, it would not seem possible for the case for any form of mother tongue provision to rest on research evidence alone'.

roots of racism, unaffected. ... the key to equality of opportunity to academic success and, more broadly, to participation on equal terms as a full member of society, is good command of **English** and the emphasis must therefore be on the learning of English.'

The Report (op.cit.:407) goes on to assert:

'... we do not believe mainstream schools should seek to assume the role of the community providers for maintaining ethnic minority community languages. Languages are dynamic and are continually being modified and developed by the users according to context and environment. They thrive by being used, not merely taught. If a language is truly the mother tongue of a community and is the language needed for parent/child interaction and for discussions within the immediate and extended family, or for access to the religious and cultural heritage of the community, then we believe it will survive and flourish regardless of the provision made for its teaching and/or usage within mainstream schools.'

On the basis of this analysis the Swann Committee endorses three types of mother tongue provision. First, it is thought that there is a place for the use of mother tongue provision in primary schools, particularly in nursery classes. The use of mother tongue may be regarded as a "bilingual resource" to help with the transitional needs of a non-English speaking child starting school. We would see such a resource providing a degree of continuity between the home and school environment by offering psychological and social support for the child, as well as being able to explain simple educational concepts We would in no way however see such a situation as meaning that a child's mother tongue should be used as a general medium of instruction or should form a structured part of the curriculum' (Op.cit.:407-408) Second, it is felt that the local education authorities may play an enabling role. 'Since the education system does ... have a role to play in assisting communities to retain their linguistic heritages, we would see this broad aim best being achieved through the establishment of comprehensive programmes of support by LEAs for existing provision for language maintenance by the "language communities" concerned.' (Loc.cit.) The examples of such support are free classroom accommodation on school premises and advice from LEA professional. Third, it is argued that 'ethnic minority community languages' should be made available for all pupils as integral part of the curriculum in secondary schools.

The Swann position is comprised of a mixture of humane values and a commitment to social cohesion through English monolingualism. In the statement covering the recognition of the value of linguistic diversity and the value of mother tongue for linguistic, religious and cultural identities of the minority ethnic communities, it comes very close to ideal-type 1 mentioned earlier, which would argue for minority linguistic right. In its principled position on mother tongue education the Swann Report represents ideal-type 3, which sees the use of mother tongue as socially divisive and therefore it should not be supported. The suggestion that mother tongue may be used as a 'resource' in a primary school context may be seen as a vague kind of transitional bilingualism, which approximates to ideal-type 2. The idea that LEAs should be providing some material and professional support to the existing community provision is an indirect endorsement of ideal-type 1. The recommendation that 'ethnic minority community languages' should be taught as secondary school curriculum subjects, and nowhere else within the education system, echoes ideal-type 4.

The eclectic nature of the arguments and recommendations presented in the Swann Report is perhaps to be expected. Language policy issues, whether they are about varieties of English or minority languages, tend to generate responses which reflect complex social and ideological values which may not be, strictly speaking, related to education. (The debate on the role of Standard English within the National Curriculum in the last five years would bear witness to this point.) For instance, the point is made that languages are dynamic and that they thrive by being used and not taught. This view, however, does not always reflect reality. There is some recent experience in a number of different societies that language decline has been reversed by teaching.^{22 23}

From the point of view of this discussion it is important to note that the central tenets of the educational recommendations adopted by the Swann Report are explicitly concerned with social cohesion and equality of opportunity (of a particular interpretation). It would be beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the hugely complex issues concerning language education and its ability to deliver social goals.²⁴ In any case, over a decade has passed since the Swann Committee deliberated on these matters. There is now a need to look at some of the more recent work in the field of language education with reference to linguistic and cognitive development of the second/additional language pupils.

Up until the early-1980s the research in this field of bilingualism shows a range of contradictory findings. Some studies show that bilinguals perform at a lower level of verbal and academic skills; one study on Finnish children living in Sweden suggests bilinguals may develop 'semilingualism' or even 'double semilingualism'. (Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa, 1976; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981)²⁵ This is a condition characterised by the bilingual speaker achieving below native speaker norms in both Finnish and Swedish. Other studies suggest that bilingualism has positive associations with second/additional language development, metalinguistic awareness and cognitive development. In a review of these studies Cummins and Swain (1986:17) observe that 'positive findings are associated with children from majority language groups whereas negative findings are associated with minority language groups'.²⁶ There were exceptions to this general picture and it is suggested (*loc.cit.*) that '... the minority group

²² For instance, recent experience in Wales (Baker, 1993) and the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country (Zalbide, 1994) suggests that mother tongue medium education may have helped to reverse language decline. However, one needs to be cautious with this evidence because Welsh and Basque are indigenous languages of these countries.

²³ The Swann position is problematic in other ways. For instance, it argues that separate language provision for the minority ethnic pupils, apart from being socially divisive, 'leaves the ethnic majority pupils' education impoverished and monolingual ...'. The difficulty with this argument is that the English-only medium education is monolingual by definition. The presence of linguistically diverse pupils in schools does not make for a bilingual or multilingual education.

²⁴ For a discussion see Kalantzis et al, 1989.

²⁵ This phenomenon has since been explored carefully to specify the conditions under which low achievement may emerge. See Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981.

²⁶ This mirrors a common assumption: elite bilingualism (e.g. English/French) on the part of the majority English speakers is generally seen as a sign of high ability; folk or community-based bilingualism (e.g. Urdu/English) on the part of the minority Urdu speakers is often identified as obstacle to learning.

factor can be overcome through the reinforcement and development of high levels of L1 proficiency'.²⁷

Cummins and Swain (1986:18) put forward a threshold hypothesis to account for this apparent relationship between the two languages involved:

'... there may be threshold levels of linguistic competence which a bilingual child must attain both in order to avoid cognitive disadvantages and allow the potentially beneficial aspects of becoming bilingual to influence his cognitive functioning. In other words, the level of competence bilingual children achieve in their two languages may act as an intervening variable in mediating the effects of bilingual learning experiences on cognitive functioning.'

At the same time there is an interdependence between the two languages. It has been formally expressed as:

'To the extent that instruction in L_x is effective in promoting proficiency in L_x, transfer of this proficiency to L_y will occur provided there is adequate exposure to L_y (either in school or environment) and adequate motivation to learn L_y.'
(Cummins, 1981, cited in Cummins, 1992:22)

Since the evidence suggests that minority language pupils did not always benefit from education conducted in the majority language, it would make sense to provide mother tongue education until such a time when the pupils can benefit from a switch to the majority language. 'Specifically when the home language is different from the school language and the home language tends to be denigrated by others and selves, and where the children come from socio-economically deprived homes, it would appear appropriate to begin initial instruction in the child's first language, switching at a later stage to instruction in the school language.' (Swain and Cummins, 1979:14)²⁸

Tosi (1989), in a review of the developments within this field of research, points out that by the beginning of the 1980s there emerged a consensus on the positive value of mother tongue education for minority ethnic pupils. It was generally agreed that mother tongue instruction benefited second/additional language acquisition and academic learning.

In a study on the age and rate of acquiring English by newly arrived pupils in the United States Collier (1987) provides some evidence of the effect of the transfer from the knowledge and skills learned in the mother tongue to the second/additional language. In her cross-sectional study of 1528 pupils over a 10-year period, it was found that 12-year-old arrivals with a US residence of one to two years did significantly better on science, social studies and mathematics tests than 11-year-old arrivals with two or three years' residence. 'The loss of content-area instruction while 11-year-old arrivals were acquiring English appeared to lower their scores, whereas the 12-year-old arrivals had the advantage of an additional year of L1 content instruction to apply to their L2 content knowledge.' (Op.cit.:634)

²⁷ Cummins and Swain (1986) cite a project involving minority Franco-phone children in a French-English bilingual programme in the US as an example.

²⁸ Legarreta-Marcaida (1989) suggests that mother tongue education is more likely to suit the minority language children's cognitive style. She also cites research evidence to show that mother tongue education provides the minority language pupils a higher self-esteem.

In a longitudinal study Ramirez (1992) looks at the effect of three types of education programmes on the acquisition of English and mathematics by primary school minority language (Spanish speaking) pupils in the US. The three programmes involved are: English immersion, early-exit and late-exit. In the English immersion programme all teaching is carried out in English. In the early-exit programme there is some teaching using mother tongue for thirty to sixty minutes a day and it is usually used to teach initial reading skills; the use of mother tongue lasts only a short period and by grade (year) 2 all teaching is in English. In the late-exit programme a minimum of 40% of the teaching time is in Spanish; this arrangement continues up to grade 6. At the end of the third year there was no difference in the English and mathematics test results between the immersion and early-exit pupils. The late-exit pupils showed faster growth at the end of the sixth year than the general pupil population. Cazden (1992) observes that 'The most obvious implication is that the amount of time spent using a second language in school can no longer be considered the most important influence on learning it.'

In a study of the academic achievement of the minority language students in four states in the US Collier and Thomas (1994) analyse the long term effect of different types of educational programmes. The programmes involved are: 'ESL-only, early-exit bilingual with ESL taught through content (students receive some L1 instruction and support for up to 2 years, after which they receive English-only instruction); early-exit bilingual with traditional ESL; late-exit bilingual (students receive academic subject matter instruction in L1 for 5 to 6 years) and two-way bilingual, with English speakers and language minority students receiving academic subject matter through two languages'. They find that it takes on average 5 to 7 years for the students 'in the most effective types of programs to compete on an equal footing with native-English-speaking students in English-only classrooms.' The students who reach this level of achievement have at least 2 to 3 years of L1 schooling. Those students without this background on average take 7 to 10 years to arrive at the same level. It is also found that the late-exit and two-way bilingual students perform significantly above the national average after the sixth year and, on average, the ESL-only and early-exit students do not reach the national average.

On the basis of these recent findings it would be reasonable to suggest that there is, at least, a *prima facie* case for bilingual education involving the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction. The use of mother tongue does not seem to have a detrimental effect on second/additional language acquisition; the evidence seems to show that it has a long term beneficial effect on academic achievement in the second/additional language, English.

Discussion

This discussion has attempted to highlight some of the key language education issues for minority ethnic pupils who are learning to use English. It is clearly understood that questions concerning language and languages in education are inescapably a part of the wider policy of social, economic and cultural development. Given that there is a high level of agreement in this country, and within the European Union, on the need to raise the quality of education and the level of academic achievement of minority ethnic pupils, it is important to ensure that the educational provision is well-equipped to realise policy goals.

The educational reforms of the past few years have introduced equality of access to the mainstream provision for minority ethnic pupils. The task now is to develop and extend the National Curriculum, as a system, to provide for the learning needs of the pupils who are learning to use English in an explicit way. At present the system depends on, to a great extent, the additional provision through the Section 11 grant-aided projects to help make the everyday learning and teaching in the mainstream productive. There is no doubt that these projects have made a great difference. (OFSTED, 1994) However, the effectiveness of the Section 11 and other related LEA projects will be enhanced if there is an explicit concern for second/additional language development within the National Curriculum. An explicit specification for curriculum-related second/additional language development which is an adjunct to the National Curriculum will be seen as an inclusive measure in an otherwise predominantly monolingual English curriculum. Apart from the obvious benefits for teaching and assessment, it will also have a facilitating effect on teacher training. TEAL may then be seen as a clearly identified area as a main subject for specialisation for pre-service training; and as a component for pre- and in-service training for all teachers. The monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of in-service provision such as GEST 16 would be more easily established and standardised. In short, most of the positive arguments for the introduction of a national curriculum may be applied here.

The issues concerning mother tongue provision within the mainstream are, in a sense, fundamentally more complex because, first, there is very little, if any, existing provision²⁹ to build on and, second, the medium of instruction within the National Curriculum is stated to be English. So there are structural and legislative issues involved from the very start. Even if the principle of mother tongue medium education is accepted, its implementation will have to address a large number of immediate policy questions. For instance, which language/s should be included and on what basis? How would one respond to the requirement or entitlement of those isolated pupils in predominantly English as a mother tongue schools? Which mother tongue norm/s should be adopted? For instance, should it be national standard Italian or Urdu as opposed to the varieties spoken in the local communities in England? What sort of community/parent consultation is needed to establish support for such provision? Should such provision be made available to non-mother tongue pupils? If so, the types of programme and pedagogical approach would have to be different than those run for homogenous mother tongue groups. The question of whether such language provision should be transitional (eventual societal monolingualism in English) or permanent (long term maintenance of societal linguistic diversity) would inevitably arise. None of these are insuperable issues. There is a good deal of experience and knowledge from Europe and other English speaking countries which is relevant here. But it is important to recognise the potential task.

Having said that, it is quite clear from the earlier discussion that second/additional language and mother tongue have an interdependent relationship from the point of view

²⁹ The work of bilingual teachers and classroom assistants who use their mother tongue to help pupils with their study is recognised but it should not be confused with the mother tongue medium/bilingual education under discussion here. By and large the current practice conforms to the 'enabling' mode suggested in the Swann Report.

of academic achievement. It has been shown that mother tongue medium education contributes positively to long term academic achievement in English. On educational grounds alone there seems to be a sound reason for the relevant authorities to consider this possibility further. Given that the relevance of research from other educational settings is contingent on contextual factors, it would be a good idea to initiate feasibility studies and pilot projects to tease out some of the immediate policy questions posed above. Since there is no large scale mainstream provision of this kind in this country, one will need to continue to study new research evidence from other education systems and extrapolate the new information to the English context appropriately. As Tosi (forthcoming, 1995) observes, in a study on language education and ethnic relations, that 'It is ... important to make explicit the assumptions and expectations of people and agencies promoting - or discouraging changes - because these can be in harmony or disharmony with the mainstream practices at regional and national level'. At the same time there has to be a careful deliberation on and an informed debate about the relationship between language education and social goals. There is some evidence to show that unless the two are properly articulated it is unlikely that any attempt to introduce innovative educational ideas involving the mother tongues of the minority ethnic communities will be successful. (Sondergaard, 1993; Kalantzis et al, 1989)

Conclusion

This discussion has attempted to address the two key educational concerns for minority ethnic pupils in mainstream schools: English as an additional language and mother tongue education provision. The National Curriculum has provided the minority ethnic pupils who are learning to use English access to the mainstream educational provision. It is argued that the benefits of being in the mainstream will be enhanced by an explicit framework of language development for these pupils. Such a framework may be regarded as an obligatory adjunct to the National Curriculum.

The recent research evidence indicates that there is an interdependence between mother tongue development and academic achievement, including achievement in learning a second or additional language. Mother tongue education has been shown to have a positive effect on the academic achievement of minority ethnic pupils. It is suggested here that the current policy of mother tongue education within the mainstream should be re-examined in the light of the recent research findings. It is understood that mother tongue education issues are highly complex and context-dependent. Therefore it is argued that at this time there should be an informed debate and that pilot studies should be initiated to inform policy discussion.

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