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Buttar, Harshindar Kaur

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HARSHINDAR KAUR BUTTAR

MASTER OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

November 1997

HARSHINDAR KAUR BUTTAR

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I confirm that the thesis conforms with the prescribed word length for the degree for which I am submitting it for examination.

I declare that no part of the material offered has previously been submitted by me for a degree in this or in any other University. Material from the work of others has been acknowledged and quotations and paraphrases have been suitably indicated.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my husband, Satvinderpal Singh Buttar for his enormous support, endurance, patience and encouragement that he has shown me during these demanding times. My success in furthering my education is all due to the love and respect he has showered upon me.

I dedicate this thesis to my dad, Geja Singh Sidhu Brar and mum, Kirpal Kaur for their long-distance interest in my studies. They have always taught me the importance of hard work and believing in myself.

I would also like to thank my supervisor, Linda Thompson for her invaluable advice and guidance.

The Assessment of Bilingual Children's Reading Comprehension

The study aims to show that bilingual children's performance in a linguistic comprehension test may be affected by the language of assessment English, their second language. 36 bilingual, primary school children aged between 7 and 9 years were assessed in the reading comprehension component of the SATs in their first language, Punjabi. Their performance on this assessment was compared with :

(i) their comprehension of the same passage in English, and
(ii) monolingual children's comprehension of the passage in English.

Analysis of the findings suggest that bilingual children have a broader range of language skills and a more fully developed comprehension repertoire, which includes listening skills, than their monolingual peers.

The study discusses the various definitions and theories of bilingualism and second language acquisition. It also looks at how the current assessment procedures affect the performance of bilingual learners in UK's primary schools. The rationale of this research is supported by other studies of the similarities between reading and listening comprehension and how the read aloud approach was used to overcome any differences between the two. A macro and micro view of the linguistic backgrounds of the sample of children is discussed. The Preferred Language Questionnaire's methodology, collation of data and interpretation of the children's responses is presented. This is followed by the two reading comprehension tests and the results of the assessments are followed by a detailed discussion on the relationship between bilingual children's linguistic usage and linguistic comprehension skills. The study ends with recommendations for future testing of bilingual learners.

The findings suggest that bilingual children have a very wide and sophisticated linguistic repertoire, including comprehension and listening skills, that is being ignored or overlooked in the current modes of official school assessments.

The results of the reading comprehension tests have implications for bilingual and monolingual teachers, parents and children in primary schools. The study will outline alternate classroom methods and assessments appropriate for testing bilingual children's linguistic competence. Finally, the study concludes that the current assessment procedures (SATs) are not only inappropriate for bilingual children but they may impact on their broader educational outcomes.

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INTRODUCTION

> ***'Children in British schools speak more than 200 languages. As many as 500 000 children learn to speak a language other than English at home before they encounter English at school'.***
> (Blackledge, 1994 : 43)

Two surveys carried out in the 1980s confirmed Britain as a multilingual society. The Linguistic Minorities Project (LMP, 1985) reported 154 languages spoken in London primary schools. Two years later in 1987, the Language Consensus found no fewer than 172 languages spoken in inner London primary schools. There is therefore strong evidence to suggest that there are significant numbers of pupils in mainstream primary schools who speak a range of languages as well as English as part of their everyday lives; in their schools, homes and local communities. It has long been recognised that children's primary learning medium is their first language. Yet at policy-making level, there is little recognition of these other languages of Britain and the central value they play in the education of bilingual children.

Since the introduction of the Education Reform Act in 1988, English has been the official language of the primary school curriculum.

Children are assessed in English using Standard Assessment Tests at the ages of 7, 11, 14 and 16 years. These standard assessments use only English and thus fail to recognise the repertoire of linguistic skills which a bilingual child may have acquired in the home language. This study aims to show that the current practice of assessing bilingual children's linguistic comprehension skills in English, their medium of instruction in mainstream education in England, and their second language, can influence the assessment of bilingual children. Language is central to all learning, particularly in school. This study aims to demonstrate the ways in which bilingual children are being denied their full entitlement to the curriculum because they are assessed only in the English language. Churchill (1986 : 41) supported this view when he wrote :

> ***The assumption that there is a 'right' way to speak or write is so deeply ingrained in teaching practice (not to mention testing procedures) for majority group pupils, that it long went unrecognised as a factor in dealing with minority groups.***

Similarly, Edwards (1983) suggested that mainstream education has been slow to respond to the needs of bilingual pupils. This is particularly the case with the assessment of bilingual pupils in English,

a core subject of the National Curriculum. Cummins (1984a : 93) acknowledged that :

> ***The failure by educators and academics to critically examine the implicit acceptance of middle-class dominant-group values in the assessment and pedagogical process has served to perpetuate the educational (and societal) status quo in which cultural and socio-economic differences are frequently transformed into academic deficits.***

This statement by a leading educationalist was one of the factors that lay behind the motivation to undertake this study and address this aspect of current educational concern.

The primary objective of the study is to show that a bilingual child's performance in a reading comprehension test may suffer due to the language of assessment that is, English, their second language rather than the child's first language. There are two strands to this research; the first is the Preferred Language Questionnaire, which establishes the repertoire of linguistic skills that a group of bilingual children possess, and second is the Reading Comprehension Test, which assesses bilingual children's linguistic comprehension competence in both their first and second languages. These two strands of the study complement

each other as the formulation of an overall assessment of a bilingual child's linguistic competence necessitates establishing a profile of his or her linguistic usage. Generalisations can be made from the two researches and these are detailed towards the end of this study. The study will begin by identifying current issues in the education of bilingual children.

Chapter 1 will review the current theories of bilingualism and how they try to explain the cognitive functioning of bilingual children. The most popular theories of bilingualism will be critically reviewed. In addition, the major second language acquisition theories which are concerned with attitude, motivation and social factors that form features central to language learning will also be described. This will be followed by an overview of the purposes and different forms of assessment in Chapter 2. These common and statutory assessment procedures will be reviewed with respect to implications for the bilingual learner.

In Chapter 3 there will be a brief discussion on the linguistic composition of Britain and with greater emphasis, the linguistic

minority composition of Middlesbrough. This is important as the targeted children of this study originate from this region of Britain. The sample of children is also a representative group of Britain's linguistic minority population as well. There will also be a short discussion on the sociolinguistic history of the Punjabi language.

Part of the assessment of the bilingual child necessitates establishing a profile of his or her linguistic usage. This information is significant in formulating an overall assessment of a child's communicative competence. Bilingual children can display their linguistic comprehension skills more competently if tested in their first language. It is essential to establish a profile of the bilingual children's linguistic usage in order to facilitate and make relations to the findings of the reading comprehension test. It is suggested that this can be done using a Preferred Language Questionnaire (PLQ). The questionnaire was administered to the bilingual children to gauge their linguistic preference in social, personal and learning environments.

The Preferred Language Questionnaire in Chapter 4 acknowledges the range of linguistic skills that bilingual children have acquired through

both their first and second languages. This chapter will outline the stages in the formulation of the Preferred Language Questionnaire, how it was carried out and the results will be analysed in great detail.

Chapter 5 will try to show that linguistic skills acquired in the first language of the home transfer relatively easily to the second language of the classroom and that this is the case in linguistic comprehension skills. Alternative ways of assessing the linguistic comprehension skills of bilingual children using a reading comprehension and a listening comprehension test will be discussed. It will also explain as to why the reading aloud method was adopted for this form of assessment in the study. The results of the school's NFER Reading Test was the determinant in the reading aloud approach for the reading comprehension test.

The reading comprehension test was a two-fold assessment for the bilingual children who were assessed in both their first and second languages. The results of the bilingual children's reading comprehension test (Schools' Curriculum and Assessment Authority's Key Stage One 1995 reading comprehension test) will be compared

with the results achieved by a sample of monolingual children of the same age and from the same school. The results of the bilingual children's performance on the reading comprehension test is analysed with detailed reference to their replies to the Preferred Language Questionnaire. Significant generalisations will be made between the pattern of bilingual children's language usage and their achievements in the reading comprehension test.

The ideas extrapolated from the theories of bilingualism and second language acquisition theories will be discussed with close reference to the findings of the reading comprehension test in Chapter 6. The study concludes with recommendations for future testing of bilingual children's linguistic comprehension and the related assessment of English language skills; a requirement since the 1988 Education Reform Act. There will also be some suggestions as to how aspects of this research could be developed further.

As mentioned earlier, there are two strands to this study, the Preferred Language Questionnaire and the Reading Comprehension Test. These two strands needed to be time-tabled so as to make sure that the

analysis of one set of data would inform the next stage of the study. The time scale for the two strands of investigations in this study is as follows in Table 1 below :

Table 1 : Time-Table of the Investigations

November 1995	Pilot of the Preferred Language Questionnaire
May 1996	NFER Reading Test
June 1996	Reading Comprehension Test in English
July 1996	Reading Comprehension Test in Punjabi

This study will help to explain some of the general confusion which many teachers feel when trying to distinguish between bilingual children's cognitive abilities in curriculum areas and their linguistic skills. Besides, it is not easy to say if children have learning difficulties or are unable to demonstrate attainment because they have to use English, their second language which they are still in the process of learning. The study begins with an introduction to the various definitions of bilingualism.

CHAPTER 1

BILINGUAL CHILDREN AS LEARNERS

1.0 Introduction

This chapter will present a critical review of existing definitions and descriptions of bilingualism. It will be suggested that the topics of bilingualism and second language acquisition are closely related and that research into bilingualism also feeds into the wider topic of second language acquisition (see for example, The Development of Bilingual Proficiency Project, Harley et al., 1987 and 1990). The chapter will also discuss the socially orientated theories of second language acquisition and describe code-switching as a particular feature of bilinguals' repertoire and its effects on second language acquisition.

1.1 Definitions of bilingualism

The term 'bilingualism' has not been used in a consistent way among researchers and theoreticians. The proffered definitions vary considerably. Macnamara (1967) defined bilinguals as those who

possess at least one of the language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in their second language. Similarly, Diebold (1961) gave a minimal definition of bilingualism when he used the term 'incipient bilingualism' to characterise the initial stages of contact between two languages. Neither of these definitions address the absolute minimal proficiency required in order to be considered bilingual. At the other end of the scale, bilinguals have been defined as those who demonstrate complete mastery of two different languages without interference between the two linguistic processes (Oeistreicher, 1974) or those who have 'native-like control of two languages' (Bloomfield, 1933). However, these two definitions both impose stringent criteria on bilinguals and have sometimes been associated with bilingualism as stigmatization, and the speakers regarded as being somehow deficient in their language capacities.

Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the sociological definition by Weinreich (1953 : 5) is the preferred one. He said that :

> ***the practice of altenatively using two languages will be called here bilingualism and the persons involved bilinguals.***

Therefore, a person who regularly uses two or more languages in alternation is a bilingual. However even within the definition, speakers may still differ widely in their actual linguistic skills. It is these degrees of language ability that gave rise to various other definitions of different types of bilingualism. There are numerous distinctions of bilingualism in the field of linguistic studies but only the relevant ones will be explained as they occur. As Appel and Muysken (1987 : 3) cautioned not to :

> ***impose standards for bilinguals that go much beyond those for monolinguals.***

Before commenting on the positive and negative effects of bilingualism on bilingual learners, the next section will identify theories of bilingualism that aim to explain the cognitive functioning of bilingual learners.

1.2 Cognitive theories of bilingualism

Research is directed by theoretical questions or it is even said to originate from a theory. A theory is an :

> ***intuitive guess at the mechanisms operating inside an individual or classroom or education system*** (Baker, 1988 : 169).

Each teacher for example, has a 'theory of practice' that guides their classroom behaviour. The teacher's 'theory of practice' which may be embedded in innermost thoughts and is the personal reference map that guides their practice. A teacher working with for example bilingual learners, will have his/her own theory of practice which influences the teaching input and the subsequent assessments. It is these theories of practice that a teacher upholds with regard to bilingualism, bilingual education and cognitive functioning of bilingual learners, that we will look at in greater detail.

1.2.1 The Balance Theory of Bilingualism

The balance theory of bilingualism purports that early research on IQ and literary attainment supports the view of bilinguals as inferior to monolinguals. It was founded on the false assumption that the effect of increasing the additional language causes a decrease in the first language. In this theory, bilingualism is viewed as weighing scales; the arrival of a second language tips the balance and negatively effects the development of the first language. There is inherent in this assumption the notion that the brain has a limited space and capacity

for the acquisition and storage of language skills. Cummins (1980a, 1981a), expanded on the balance theory by drawing an analogy with balloons. He suggested that a monolingual learner would have one better filled balloon in his brain than a bilingual learner having two half-filled balloons. He further developed this analogy into the (SPU) Separate Underlying Proficiency Model of Bilingualism (Cummins, 1980a, 1981a). However, the balance theory is now generally considered flawed for assuming that the acquisition of two languages are kept separate in the brain, and that the two balloons of language are quite independent of each other. The balance theory is unsubstantiated and recent studies (Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa, 1976) have shown that the acquisition of skills in one language can affect the learning of subsequent languages. Cummins (1980a, 1981a), further developed his ideas of SPU to form the Common Underlying Proficiency Model of Bilingualism. This theory is also known as the Iceberg Analogy or the Think Tank Model.

1.2.2 The Think Tank Model of Bilingualism

The Think Tank model of bilingualism is of particular interest to this study because it provides a better explanation of the relationship between cognitive functioning, bilingual education and bilingualism. This model illustrates the ways in which bilingualism is viable and that people have the capacity to store adequately two or more languages. It is founded on the belief that a second language does not hamper the learner's conceptual and academic skills' development. The Think Tank model is summarised by Cummins (1981a : 30) as follows :

> ***although the linguistic contents of the Think Tank often retain specific L1 or L2 characteristics (that is, they do not become linguistically homegenised), the same mental expertise underlies performance (namely, processing of input and output) in both languages. The quantity and quality of the linguistic input and of the feedback received from linguistic output in both languages is an important stimulus for the growth of the total Think Tank.***

In other words, the Think Tank works in a unitary way of thinking even if the two languages do not merge and remain separate. Feeding the language tank richly results in a well developed engine. For a

bilingual learner, cognitive functioning and educational attainment are fed equally successfully via two language channels. Therefore, the Think Tank Model is capable of accommodating two languages and consists of the bilingual capability to foster conceptual and academic development.

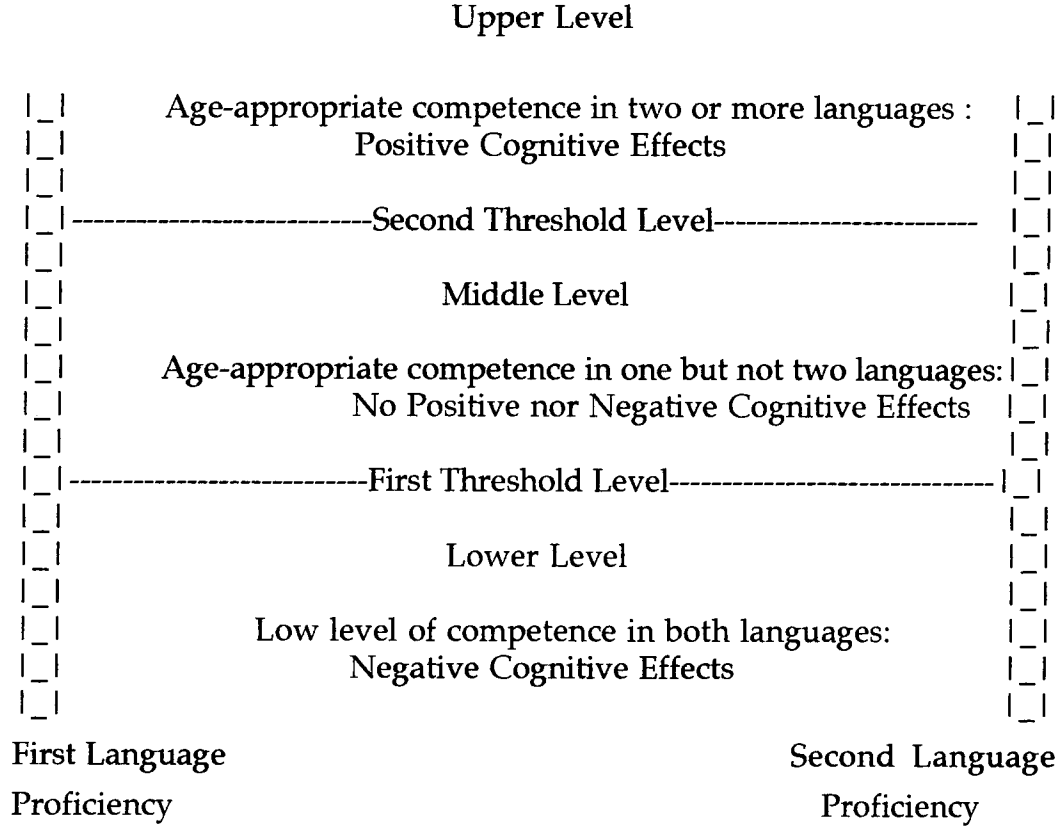
Baker (1993a) explained that the child's language needs to be sufficiently well developed in order to process the cognitive challenges of the classroom. For example, this has been the experience of some Finns who attend Swedish schools and who were forced to operate in Swedish (Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa, 1976). In the experiment, some Finns in Swedish schools were made to operate in a submersion (where children are forbidden to use their first language, with all the curriculum being experienced in a second language) classroom with poorly developed second language materials. It was found that the Finnish children tended to perform poorly in the curriculum in both Finnish and Swedish because both languages were insufficiently devloped to cope with given curriculum material.

Although both the Think Tank Model of Bilingualism and Balance Theory of Bilingualism are preferable to the earliest definitions and descriptions of bilingualism offered by Lambert (1955), MacNamara (1967) and Diebold (1961), neither of the theories have provided an effective link between cognition and degrees of bilingualism; which is why the Threshold Theory surfaced to explain this point.

1.2.3 The Threshold Theory of Bilingualism

One theoretical proposition to explain the negative or positive effects of bilingualism on the learner's cognitive functioning is the Threshold Theory (Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa, 1977; Cummins, 1976). Figure 1 outlines the Bilingualism, Cognitive Functioning and the Threshold Theory as presented by Baker (1988 : 176). From Figure 1 we can see that two thresholds (a low and a high level of linguistic competence in two languages) are posited :

Figure 1: Bilingualism, Cognitive Functioning and the Threshold Theory (Baker, 1988 : 176).



The first threshold is a level of linguistic competence that children must reach to avoid the negative consequences of bilingualism. If a child has a low threshold of competence in the first language, it is highly likely that there will be a similar low level of linguistic proficiency in the second language. Such a child will find it difficult to assimilate the academic aspects of the curriculum which are highly dependent on literacy skills. When a child can function effectively in

one language, there is less likelihood of negative or positive effects. The child is then somewhere in the middle level. The second threshold is reached when a child becomes a relatively balanced bilingual (where a learner is proficient in both languages). Children with a high level of linguistic competence in the first language are assumed to be in a position to be able to attain a sufficiently high threshold level in the second language; and it is hence assumed can therefore cope well with the more academic aspects of the curriculum. It is therefore important to ensure that the first language of linguistic minority children is maintained and supported sufficiently in order for them to be able to reach the requisite level of bilingual competence which will enable them to make sufficient progress in academic tasks.

Since this hypothesis was originally formulated by Cummins (1976) several studies have reported findings consistent with its general tenets (Bialystok, 1988; Clarkson and Galbraith, 1992; Cummins and Mulcahy, 1978; Dawe, 1983; Duncan and DeAvila, 1979; Hakuta and Diaz, 1983; Kessler and Quinn, 1980). Duncan and DeAvila (1979), for example, found that linguistic minority children who had developed high levels of proficiency in both languages performed significantly better than

monolinguals and other sub-groups of bilinguals such as those termed as partial bilinguals (i.e., better in one language than the other) and limited bilinguals (i.e., not very proficient in both languages); in a range of cognitive tasks. Dawe's (1983) study examined bilingual Punjabi, Mirpuri and Jamaican, Creole speaking children aged 11 to 13 years. On tests of deductive mathematical reasoning, Dawe found evidence for both the lower and higher threholds. As competency in two languages increased, so did deductive reasoning skills.

The Threshold Theory of Bilingualism fails to take into consideration the usual practice that linguistic minority children are taught subject content through their second language and they do not benefit from second language instruction unless they have developed sufficient competency in their second language (Cummins, 1984b). Cummins (1984b : 60) emphasised that :

> ***This condition is cumulative and the children fall progressively further behind in academic and cognitive skills because their low level of L2 proficiency limits the scope of their interaction with the conceptual environment of the school.***

Furthermore, the theory does not specify precisely the nature and level of proficiency required in order to reach a certain threshold level. It has not been made clear as to the level of language proficiency a child has to acquire in order to avoid the negative effects of bilingualism and to obtain the positive advantages of bilingualism.

Cummins (1978b), proposed the Threshold Level Hypothesis as accountable for the difference in attainment between pupils in two different sets of circumstances. If a child has a low threshold competence in the first language, then this is synonymous with second language proficiency; thus he suggests, the positive effects of bilingualism will not develop. Therefore, the child with such a handicap of literacy skills will be unlikely to assimilate the academic aspects of the curriculum. Thus, in fostering the first language development of linguistic minority children, most attention should be paid to academically related aspects of language proficiency such as speaking, listening, reading and writing. Here again, Cummins (1978a) followed the views of Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa (1976) who introduced the notion of surface fluency defined as the ability to communicate effectively in everyday situations and conceptual-

linguistic knowledge (this is necessary for the development of academic language skills related to literacy). Cummins (1978b) expanded upon these two categories and outlined the Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis. This theory will be explained in the next section.

1.2.4 The Developmental Interdependence Theory of Bilingualism

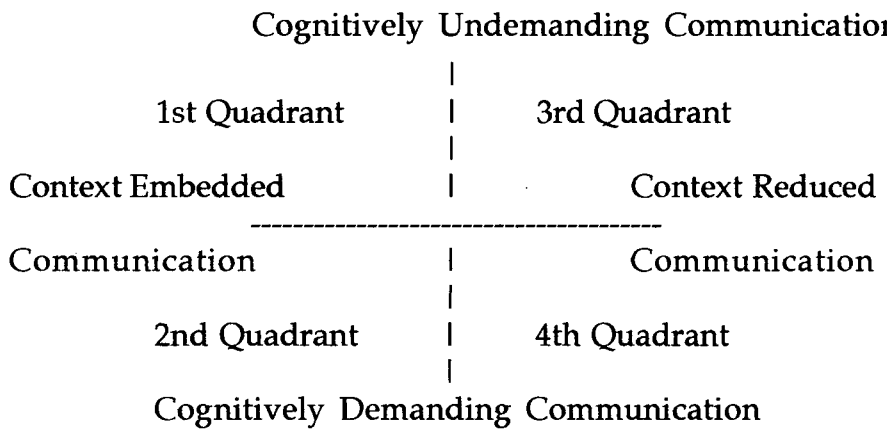
This hypothesis suggested that a child's second language competence is partly dependent on the level of competence already achieved in the first language. Cummins (1984a) revamped Skutnabb-Kangas' and Toukomaa's (1976) notion of surface fluency and conceptual-linguistic knowledge into what he terms as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Appel and Muysken (1987 : 105) defined the terms as :

> ***BICS are the phonological, syntactic and lexical skills necessary to function in everyday interpersonal contexts, while CALP is required in tasks where students have to manipulate or reflect upon surface features of language outside immediate interpersonal contexts, as in school tasks or in language tests.***

Baker (1993a) uses the distinction to explain the situation of children

in the United States' transitional bilingual education programmes (language minority children are taught through their first language temporarily until they are thought to be proficient enough in their second language to cope in mainstream education), who after achieving surface fluency are then transferred to mainstream education. However, their achievement of BICS is presumed to be insufficient and not developed enough to cope with the demands of the curriculum. Therefore, Cummins (1981b, 1983 and 1984a) proposed two dimensions for the further development of this theory (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2 : Range of Contextual Support and Degree of Cognitive Involvement in Communicative Activities (Cummins, 1984a : 139).



The first dimension refers to the amount of contextual support available to a pupil. In context-embedded communication, children

can infer meaning by relying on situational cues for example, bodily movements, facial expressions and the intonation of utterances. However, in context-reduced communication, the support for understanding tends to be primarily linguistic in nature, from the text itself, with little or no non-linguistic help. The second dimension is the level of cognitive demands required in communication. Cognitively demanding communication is where a person has the mastery of language skills sufficient to enable easy communication. Therefore, BICS is context embedded and cognitively undemanding use of language and will fit into the first quadrant; while CALP which is cognitively and academically more advanced fits into the fourth quadrant. So, Cummins' (1981b) theory suggested that second language competency in the first quadrant develops relatively independently of first language surface fluency. Thus, the Developmental Interdependence Theory suggests that bilingual education will only be successful when children have enough first or second language proficiency to work in the context reduced, cognitively demanding situation of the classroom (Baker, 1993 : 140).

Cummins (1979 : 236) states the use of his hypothesis in favour of employing different strategies in educating majority and minority children :

> ***In immersion programmes for majority language children the children's L1 is developed in such a way that it is unaffected by intensive exposure to L2. Consequently, as children develop high levels of L2 skills, their fluent access to two languages can give rise to enhancement of both L2 skills and other aspects of cognitive functioning.***

However, Cummins' (1981b) theory of the relationship between language and cognition is not without its shortcomings. The main criticisms by Edelsky et al. (1983); Frederickson and Cline (1990); Martin-Jones and Romaine (1986) and Rivera (1984)) are summarised by Baker (1993a : 144), who said that Cummins' theory fails to consider other variables like cultural, social, political, community, teacher expectations and home factors, which invariably do explain bilingualism as an individual and societal phenomenon. Other social and psychological factors that influence second language development are not dealt with either by Cummins' theory. Furthermore, Frederickson and Cline (1990 : 26) found it ***"difficult to disentangle the cognitive from the contextual"*** when applying Cummins' two

dimensions to curriculum tasks. For example, a teacher may try to simplify tasks to aid bilingual children who appear to have learning difficulties. This strategy is part of the task analysis approach to the curriculum. It may sometimes result in an unmeaningful context to a curriculum task. Definitions of bilingualism vary but some studies suggest a positive link between bilingualism and cognitive function. These will be explained in the next section.

1.3 Studies reporting positive association between bilingualism and cognitive functioning.

In most IQ tests, children have to indicate one correct answer to each question. An alternative style of response is the result of divergent thinking, where a child can provide a variety of valid answers which is the result of the child being more creative, imaginative, open-minded and free in thinking. Traditional research trends comparing monolingual and bilingual groups have focused on IQ tests but the recent trend is to gauge scores on divergent thinking. Baker (1993a : 119) believed that :

> ***The underlying hypothesis concerning creative thinking and bilingualism is that the ownership of two or more languages may***

increase fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration in thinking.
Therefore, bilinguals tend to have two or more words for a single object or idea. In their analysis of neuropsychological research on 'The Bilingual Brain', Albert and Obler (1978 : 248) concluded that :

> ***Bilinguals mature earlier than monolinguals both in terms of cerebral lateralisation for language and in acquiring skills for linguistic abstraction. Bilinguals have better developed auditory language skills than monolinguals, but there is no clear evidence that they differ from monolinguals in written skills.***

Cummins (1975 and1977b) found that balanced bilinguals were better than non-balanced bilinguals on fluency and flexibility scales. The monolingual group who obtained similar scores as the balanced bilingual group but scored less on originality. Cummins (1977b : 10) further explained that :

> ***there may be a threshold level of linguistic competence which a bilingual child must attain both in order to avoid cognitive deficits and allow the potentially beneficial aspects of becoming bilingual to influence his cognitive growth.***

The difference between balanced and non-balanced bilinguals has already been explained before in the Threshold Theory of Bilinguslism that is, once a child has obtained a certain level of competence in his second language, positive cognitive consequences can result that go

beyond competency in one or both languages. Several studies reported a positive association between bilingualism and both general intellectual skills and divergent thinking. Most of these studies were conducted in primary school immersion programmes (where bilingual learners' first language is not developed but replaced consequently by the second language) with young learners of school age. Barik and Swain (1978) discovered that by Grade 5 (10 - 11 years old) children for whom English is their first language, in the Ottawa early total French immersion programme were performing better than control pupils on some aspects of English skills. Ekstrand (1979) also reported preliminary results of an experiment in Sweden where elementary school children with an early start in learning English (L2) did significantly better in Swedish (L1) than the children in the control group.

More positive studies have reported evidence that bilingualism can promote an

> ***analytic orientation to language and increase aspects of metalinguistic awareness*** (Cummins and Swain, 1989 : 11).

Ianco-Worrall (1972) conducted a study in South Africa and reported

that bilingual children, brought up in a one-person, one-language home environment, were more aware of the arbitrary assignment of names to referents that is, that the words 'cap' and 'hat' refer to objects in the same semantic field. He also found that while the bilinguals' answers were governed by meaning of the word, monolinguals responded more to the sound of the word. In two different studies involving middle-class Hebrew-English bilinguals and lower-class Spanish-English bilinguals, Ben-Zeev (1977a,b) reported that bilingual children performed better on sentence structure analysis and several non-verbal tasks which required perceptual analysis. Therefore from these studies bilinguals appear to be more flexible and analytical in language skills.

Several studies provide evidence of both greater social sensitivity and greater ability to react more flexibly to cognitive feedback among bilinguals. In addition to these studies that suggest that bilingual pupils have an enhanced awareness of languages and language forms, there are also other studies that stress the social advantages to bilinguals. Bilinguals were found to pick up clues quicker and once given feedback, corrected their mistakes faster than monolinguals. In

other words, bilinguals were depicted in these various studies to have more communicative sensitivity than their monolingual peers.

Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) and Ben-Zeev (1977a,b) have further speculated on the sensitivity hypothesis. Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) argues that sensitivity to non-verbal communication (e.g. the ability to interpret facial expressions, gestures, intonation, varying situations) is related to overall social sensitivity, and explained by it. In order to know when to switch languages, a bilingual needs to pick up cues and vary behaviour accordingly. Ben-Zeev (1977a,b) suggests that such sensitivity stems from constant scanning to see if the language is correct or incorrect. Children who experience some minor interference between languages may be more sensitive to feedback cues, verbal and non-verbal. Such cues may indicate when, for example, a Punjabi word has crept into a sentence in English. Besides, the positive effects of bilingualism on cognitive functioning, there are also other studies that report negative associations with bilingualism.

1.4 Studies reporting negative association between bilingualism and cognitive functioning

Little emphasis has been given to the effects on the first language after the acquisition of a second language; and the importance of first and second language interaction in the ongoing development of both the languages. In certain circumstances, there is some disruption to first language learning after second language acquisition has begun and these disruptions range from a delaying of development, through interrupted development and to sometimes complete dissolution of the first language. Miller (1984 : 94) believed that if first language development is slow, due to the added cognitive load imposed by second language onset, then the functional importance of first language is diminished and its continuing acquisition is at a lesser rate. Furthermore, if first language is lost at a period when second language has only been generally acquired, this would cause the child to be at a severe disadvantage in comparison with their monolingual peers who have had several years' experience in one language. This loss is more evident in situations where there is no provision for first language support in the schools and community. This situation is

typical of the current education system in England where bilingual children are expected to cross the threshold of learning a second language by discarding their first language skills and then to be assessed in their cognitive development via the second language that is still very new to them.

Further studies by Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa (1976) suggest that proficiency in first language declines more rapidly while second language proficiency is developed. They report that children of Finnish migrant workers in Sweden tended to be 'semilingual' as their skills in both languages as measured by standardised tests, were considerably below Finnish and Swedish norms. MacNamara (1966) reported that Irish primary school children, whose home language was English, but were taught through the medium of Irish were eleven months behind in their problem arithmetic relative to other Irish children taught through the medium of English. However, Cummins (1977a and 1977b) believed that Macnamara's (1966) study for testing immersion children's competence in problem arithmetic through their weaker language was not a fair study.

Lambert (1974) contrasted the subtractive bilingualism of many minority children with the additive bilingualism generally achieved by children whose first language was dominant and highly regarded and hence in no danger of being replaced by the additional language. The bilingualism of these children (for example, Anglophone children in French immersion programmes), is called 'additive' since another language is being added to the bilingual's repertoire of skills at no apparent cost to proficiency in first language. Furthermore, children from subordinate language backgrounds can also acquire additive bilingualism if their first language is being strongly encouraged in the school.

The studies discussed in this chapter fall into two categories, they either suggest a strong link between bilingualism and cognitive functioning or argue a negative effect on cognition as a result of bilingualism. It is difficult to reconcile these positions. Baker (1993a) suggested that research in the area of billingualism and cognitive functioning are often flawed by their methodology and this may in part account for these differing results and perceptions. The next section will outline the problems of carrying out studies which investigate links between

bilingualism and cognitive thinking.

1.5 Limitations of Studies Associating Bilingualism and Cognitive Functioning

Baker (1993a) highlighted the fact that the studies carried out to establish an association between bilingualism and divergent thinking fail to match monolingual and bilingual groups on variables other than language. This is not the case with MacNamara's (1966) study which tested the children's competence on arithmetic. One shortcoming of these studies is the fact that researchers who find cognitive advantages focus mostly on balanced bilinguals. MacNab (1979) argued that bilinguals are a special and distinct group in society (being bilingual and bicultural); and are therefore different in major ways from monolinguals. For example, bilinguals' parents encourage creative and divergent thinking to foster biculturalism and bilingualism. Such parents may give high priority to the development of languages by comparison with monolingual parents who may not.

The cause and effect relationship is also questioned by Baker (1993a)

when discussing bilingualism and cognitive functioning. A common assumption made by most researchers is that bilingualism comes first and causes cognitive advantages. 'What if things were the reverse?' he asks. This was investigated by Diaz (1985) using sophisticated statistical techniques (structural equation modelling). He found that bilingualism is more the cause of better cognitive functioning than the consequence, and suggests that language learning and cognitive ability may develop together rather than one affecting the other. Finally, Baker (1993a) asks if the outcomes of such 'positive' studies on bilingualism and cognitive development is attributable to the experimenters' expectations. As Hakuta (1986 : 43) suggested

> ***a full account of the relationship between bilingualism and intelligence, of why negative effects suddenly turn in to positive effects, will have to examine the motivations of the researcher as well as more traditional considerations at the level of methodology.***

Hence it can be seen that the literature on the cognitive advantages and disadvantages of bilingualism is almost equally divided with no concensus seen to emerge. The effects of bilingualism can only be studied fruitfully and be understood properly if social factors are taken into account. Since motivation plays a dominant factor in determining

how well learners acquire a second language, this psychological dimension was frequently used to explain subsequent theories of second language acquisition.

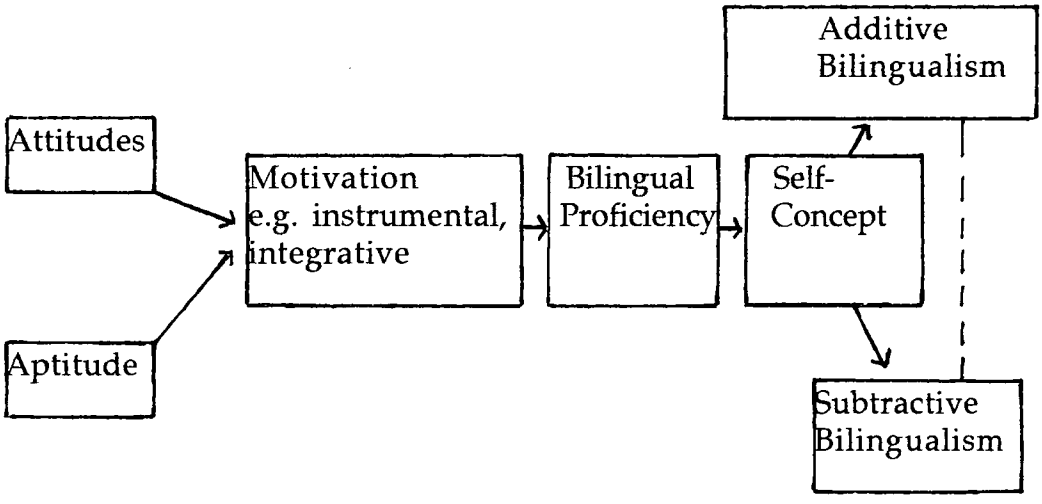
1.6 Theories of Second Language Acquisition

By contrast to the cognitive theories of bilingualism which tend to focus on individual psychological explanations, the following theories of second language acquisition include features of language learning such as attitude, motivation and social factors which are important in interactive and inter-connected social psychological models.

1.6.1 Lambert's Model of Second Language Learning

Lambert's (1974) model of individual and societal elements of second language learning as presented by Baker (1988 : 183) begins with the individual's attitudes and aptitude. Figure 3 shows aptitude and attitude as two major, distinct influences on learning a second language.

Figure 3 : Lambert's Model of Individual and Societal Elements of Second Language Learning (Baker, 1988 : 183).



Aptitude in learning a second language may be an important factor in second language learning (Skehan, 1986). Similarly, the attitudes of a learner towards a language is not only important in learning but also in maintaining or restoring that language. In addition, some cognitive ability is also required as a positive attitude. Lambert (1974) explained that the attitude relates to motivation. This could be instrumental or integrative in the learner's readiness to engage in language learning or language activity. Moving on, bilingual proficiency is therefore, based on the extent of aptitude or cognitive ability and the relationship between positive attitude and motivation. For Lambert (1974) becoming bilingual has effects both on the self-concept and on the

learner's perception of bilingualism. Positive self-concept will enhance additive bilingualism especially when the second language is acquired with genuine interest and this acquisition may not have a negative effect on the learner's first language. The converse is true of subtractive bilingualism when the second language is being learnt from a need to conform or a compulsion (for example, immigrants learning a second language in order to get a job). In these instances the first language suffers. Its importance is replaced or demoted. This may lead to a less positive self-concept, loss of cultural identity, with possible alienation. These are usually factors associated with total integration or assimilation into a new speech community or society. Additive and subtractive bilingualism which refer to positive or negative cognitive outcomes from being bilingual was discussed earlier.

Lambert's model (Baker, 1988 : 183) is simple and indicates that

> ***subtractive and additive bilingualism are social effects or outputs concerning the status of languages in society and the educational system***

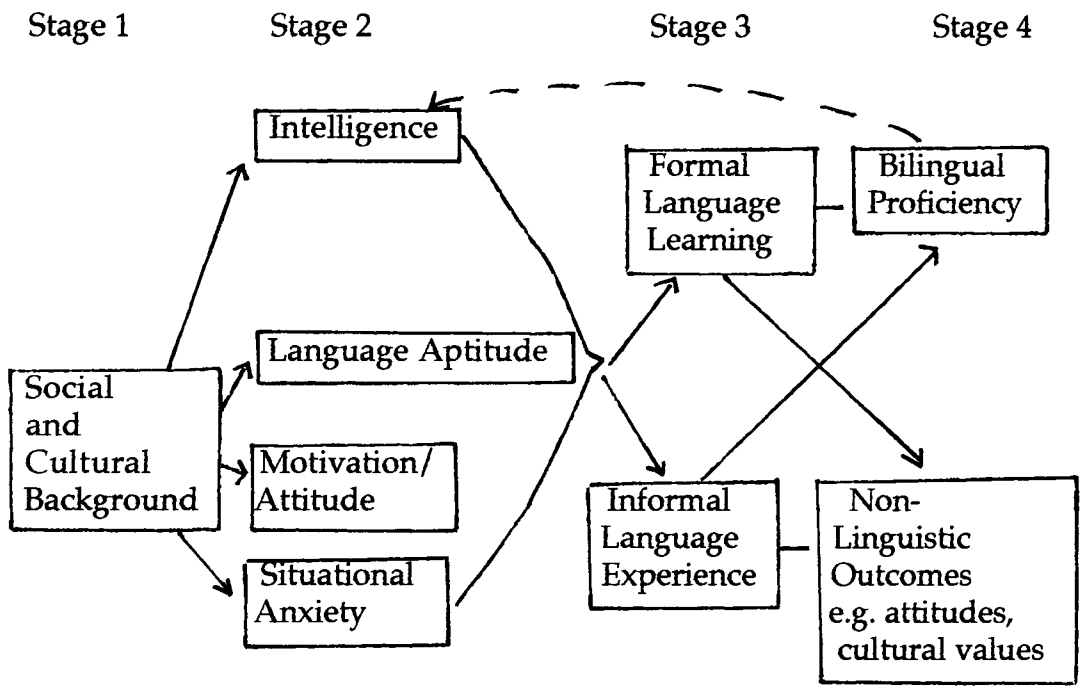
However, like most theories, it is static rather than dynamic and does not adequately describe actual groups in real life situations. It suggests

an easy, functional flow in relationships between the factors rather than the dynamic ever changing and conflicting paths that the process of bilingualism may take at a personal or societal level. The research of Gardner and colleagues since the early 1970s suggests that attitudes to second language and motivation towards learning a second language are crucial additional factors in the language learning process. Having the ability and aptitude without the motivation and positive attitude would tend to result in lower achievement than having both aptitude and motivation. Besides, there is a distinction made between instrumental and integrative attitudes. Instrumental or extrinsic motivation signifies learning a second language positively helps to find employment, obtain promotion or gain social and economic recognition and status. On the other hand, integrative motivation would be a desire to identify or belong to a second language group. An integrative motivation therefore refers to wanting to be liked and accepted by a particular language group (Gardner and Lambert, 1972) and perhaps to be assimilated into that group as a member of the group.

1.6.2 Gardner's Socio-Educational Model of Second Language Learning

There are four stages to Gardner's (1979, 1983, 1985) model of second language learning as indicated in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4 : Gardner's Socio-Educational Model of Second Language Learning (Baker, 1993a : 97)



The first stage starts where Lambert (1974) ends his model that is, the social and cultural context, is where Gardner's model begins his. The child grows up in a community that transmits beliefs about language and culture. In many white communities in Britain, bilingualism is

deemed unnecessary. Such communities also tend to share the traditional United States philosophy of assimilation of minority cultures and languages. On the other hand, bilingual schooling in countries like Canada and Singapore reflect the values of those communities. In Gardner's model social and cultural background refer not only to the wider community but also to the influence of the home, neighbours and friends. Therefore, the child's social and cultural milieu affects individual differences of intelligence, aptitude and motivation towards second language learning.

The second stage of Gardner's model is termed as individual differences. This comprises four major variables : intelligence, language aptitude, motivation and situational anxiety (attitudes and personality are taken to be subsumed within this section). Gardner suggests that these four variables will all affect the outcomes of language learning. *'Intelligence is assumed to play a role because it determines how well or how quickly individuals understand the nature of any learning task or any explanations provided'* (Gardner, 1985 : 147); language aptitude concerns the degree of talent specific to learning any language; motivation concerns effort, desire and affect;

and situational anxiety is viewed as important *'because it would have an inhibiting effect on the individual's performance, thus interfering with acquisition'* (p. 148).

The third stage of Gardner's (1979, 1983, 1985) model concerns the context or environment in which language is acquired. Gardner makes a distinction between formal and informal contexts of language acquisition. The formal context he defines as the typical example of a classroom where pupils are taught to be linguistically competent and functionally bilingual. Language learning in this formal second language learning takes the form of drill, practice and immersion classes; audio-visual methods, translations and grammar exercises. Informal contexts are where language learning is not the primary aim. For example, watching a German language film may be principally motivated by entertainment needs, and hence extending skills in German may be an unintended outcome. Bilingualism is often achieved through the informal acquisition processes of the street and media, neighbourhood and newspaper. However, there are times when formal and informal contexts may on occasions overlap. For example, talking to the teacher in the classroom at the end of a lesson,

or listening to a radio programme for both acquiring a language for learning and pleasure, are examples of where the formal merges with the informal. Gardner (1985) suggested that all four individual difference variables influence the formal learning context. In informal contexts, motivation and situational anxiety are the principal determinants of entry into that context. Intelligence and language aptitude play a secondary role as Gardner (1985 : 148) explained :

> ***Once students enter into an informal context, their level of intelligence and aptitude will influence how much language material is learned.***

The fourth and final stage of Gardner's (1979, 1983, 1985) model has two outcomes. One outcome is bilingual proficiency for e.g. fluency, vocabulary and pronounciation. The second outcome refers to non-linguistic outcomes such as the change in learner's attitudes, self-concept, cultural values and beliefs. The inclusion of attitudes in the third and fourth stage within the model suggests that it is not static, but dynamic and cyclical. Attitudes are not only the ingredients but also the products or outcomes of language learning. Hence, the learning of a second language and the act of becoming bilingual, may change attitudes. Gardner's model has been directly and formally

tested as a complete model (Gardner, 1983; Gardner, Lalonde and Pierson, 1983; Lalonde, 1982) and found to fit collected data.

The Bradford mother tongue and English teaching (MOTET) project (Reid, 1984) was one example of a practical project that reflects the dynamic aspect of Gardner's model. The project consisted of a one-year bilingual education programme for 5 year old native speakers of Punjabi, who at the start had little or no knowledge of English. There were two groups of approximately 70 children : an experimental bilingual group and a monolingual, English control group. The two groups were assessed at the end of the year on non-verbal tasks and verbal tasks in English and Punjabi. The non-verbal tasks results showed no difference but the verbal tasks results indicated that the bilingual group performed better in Punjabi than the control group. The performance in English was equivalent for both groups. Hence the practice of assessing bilingual children in both their first and second language deems it a fair assessment procedure.

The role of positive parental attitudes towards bilingualism cannot be sufficiently stressed if bilinguals are to overcome subtractive

bilingualism and develop into balanced bilinguals. On the other hand, negative parental attitudes towards bilingualism may place conflicting demands upon the bilingual learner which in turn lead to decreasing proficiency in the acquisition of the second language.

1.7 Linguistic Minorities' Views of English

Societal and community views on bilingualism are sometimes affected by findings of researchers and vice versa. Appel and Muysken (1987) quoted instances where learners feel that when they are in contact with two languages, they cannot speak either of them correctly. Vildomec (1963) carried out a questionnaire study on bilingual Europeans, speaking a variety of languages and from different groups and nationalities. One subject reported that *'there is interference with concentrated and able use of one language'*, and she is *'always hindered by the vividness of a particular word in another tongue'* (p. 213). The opinions of such subjects reflect a widespread attitude towards bilingualism in Europe. Many European countries view themselves as essentially monolingual even though speakers of other languages live

within their boundaries. For example, English is not the only language spoken in Britain. There are also speakers of Welsh, Arabic, Creole, Punjabi, Hindi and many other languages. Yet, Britain is still widely regarded from both inside and outside as an English-speaking nation. In Britain bilingualism is seen as a result of immigration and this may in part account for its negative connotation. Appel and Muysken's (1987 : 101) view sums up the Britain's situation :

> ***if there is bilingualism, it is expected to fade away and develop into monolingualism.***

By contrast outside of Europe in Africa and Asia, bilingualism is considered to be the norm. People from these areas may be surprised at the negative effects of bilingualism that some researchers report. They see it as an expression of Western ethnocentrism. It is no surprise that much of the research carried out in pro-bilingualism countries report positive effects. As mentioned earlier, the results of studies carried out on bilingualism is aligned to the researchers' expectations. Maybe, the studies carried out on negative effects of bilingualism were mainly conducted in monolingual European countries; thus reflecting the communal views. The danger of publicising such findings is the

detrimental effects it would have on bilinguals' parents' attitudes towards bilingualism. Bilinguals' parents may become apprehensive and choose not to encourage their children to be bilingual and bicultural. Parental attitudes play an important role in the bilingual children's acquisition of second language.

Romaine (1989 : 250) quoted studies that :

> ***looked at differences in interactional styles between groups in an effort to identify mismatches in the kinds of participation structures and other routines which children are exposed to in school and at home.***

Wong Fillmore (1983) in a study carried out on Mexican-American and Chinese-American children, found that attitudes of parents towards life, education and so on affected the social skills of their children. The Chinese children were intent on pleasing adults (in this case, the teacher), and so pursued whatever tasks that were assigned to them to perfection, no matter how boring. This display of working attitude was conditioned by their parents who placed a great deal of emphasis on educational success. The Mexican parents wanted first and foremost for their children to be happy. So, the Mexican children tended to work

together better in small, mixed ethnic groups than in activities which the teacher structured for the class as a whole.

There is also a cross-cultural dimension to interactions between teachers and children. Philips (1972) discovered that notions of when to speak, turn-taking, etc., differed in one study of American-Indian children. The Indian children are taught by their parents to be silent and polite in front of elders. The teachers, however, mistook this behaviour as a sign of unco-operativeness and ignorance. Therefore, the misinformed teachers' expectations had an inappropriate effect on the results of the study.

Focusing on the settled migrants from the Indian subcontinent, it will be seen that it is clearly not a homogeneous group. By far the largest language communities are Gujarati and Punjabi speakers, but Urdu, Hindi and other languages are also spoken. The language divisions also largely coincide with religious differences for example, Punjabi-speakers being mainly Sikhs, Gujarati-speakers who are mostly Hindus and Urdu-speakers are mainly Muslims. With the onset of mass immigration in the 1950s and 1960s the style of settlement affected the

rapidity with which the second language, that is, English was acquired. Where the bilinguals were an isolated family or a small and loosely-knit community of relatively recent arrival in a monolingual community, there was a home/non-home split in language usage. Minority language was used in the home and English for all out-of-home purposes like in job situations. In time bilinguals in England may become passive bilinguals, able to use their original language if needs be, but disinclined to do so.

This definition is reflective of a personal experience I had of a 6 year old Punjabi-speaking boy. One afternoon a week, I would work with a group of eight Punjabi-speaking children, speaking and teaching the national curriculum only in Punjabi during the duration of the lesson. Everytime I spoke to him in Punjabi, he would answer in English showing his understanding of what he had heard in Punjabi. Towards the end of the year on speaking to his mother about his absolute refusal to speak in his home language, I discovered that he spoke Punjabi all the time at home contrary to my belief that he may have been exposed to and made to speak in English at home. Therefore, his disinclination to use his first language in an English-speaking school environment

makes him a passive bilingual.

On the other hand, some members of the settled linguistic minority communites who have the least motivation to learn the new language that is, English, usually stayed at home (especially elderly men and women) and mothers who did not go out to work. They therefore, may preserve their own language and were not keen to acquire a second language, as they probably did not need English for their everyday purposes and interactions. Miller (1984 : 6) summarised the difference between styles of second language acquisition by first and second generation bilinguals as :

> ***Thus it is not uncommon to find the first-generation immigrant family most fluent in the minority language, with majority-language knowledge restricted to comprehension and expression necessary for day-to-day survival in the community, typically amounting to a comprehension better than expression; their second-generation children move towards the opposite of this, with minority-language skills restricted to home matters and interpreting for their parents, while they in turn may be reluctant to encourage, or even actively discourage, their own children from using the minority language.***

Therefore, the changing linguistic repertoire of settled linguistic minority groups affects the bilingual children's preference for a certain

language. This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4. Current assessment practices in Britain fail to recognise the fact that judging the language proficiency of bilingual children is flawed in itself as standardised language tests are those instruments used for assessing language which permit the comparison of individual test results against the standard language behaviour of a 'representative sample group' or the 'standard group'. The flaws and bias of testing bilingual children is discussed in greater depth in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

THE ASSESSMENT OF BILINGUAL CHILDREN

2.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the major purposes of assessments in the educational context and the different types of assessments that are currently common practice in Britain's primary schools. The National Curriculum Assessment which involves a combination of continuous teacher assessment and external tests (known as Standard Assessment Tests) to be given to all 7, 11, 14 and 16 year old children in Britain is outlined and the purposes and types of these assessments are discussed in relation to the testing of bilingual children's reading comprehension skills.

2.1 Purposes of Assessment

The organisation of education in Britain has changed very sharply since 1988, when the Education Reform Act (ERA) came into force. Amongst the very many other provisions, the ERA established a National Curriculum comprising English, mathematics, science,

technology, history, geography, one modern foreign language, music, art and physical education; and in Wales, Welsh. It is within the National Curriculum :

> ***that a great deal of language planning is taking place, not explicitly and overtly, but in a fragmented and uncoordinated way, so that its effects are more difficult to monitor and predict, more so in the case of bilingual learners.*** (Stubbs, 1995 : 26)

There are a number of purposes for testing children. The quotation below describes the purposes of official assessment in primary schools since 1988.

> ***Promoting children's learning is a principal aim of schools. Assessment lies at the heart of this process. It can provide a framework in which educational objectives may be set, and pupils' progress charted and expressed. It can yield a basis for planning the next educational steps in response to children's needs. By facilitating dialogue between teachers, it can enhance professional skills and help the school as a whole to strengthen learning across the curriculum and throughout its age range.***
> (Report of the Task Group on Assessment and Testing, DES, 1988. Cited in Sutton, 1992 : 2)

Screening is the process of testing groups of children to identify those individuals who are in need of special help or remediation. The aim of screening is to gather information to be used for identifying future teaching needs. Diagnosis is the stage that comes after screening and

involves using tests to identify individual children's strengths and more usually, weaknesses. Hence, diagnostic assessments are used to substantiate evidence regarding a child's limited progress in a particular area of learning for example, reading, spelling, etc. Becher et al. (1980) found that, though many tests were introduced for diagnostic purposes, their results were rarely used in this way. Assessment is largely used by teachers as a means of record-keeping which is the most passive use of test results. Work in the USA (e.g. Salmon-Cox, 1981; Yeh, 1978) and Ireland (Kellaghan et al., 1982) found that teachers rely primarily on their own judgement and observations rather than test scores to make assessments about children and for diagnosing their needs. Furthermore, these assessments provide a means of feedback to the teacher both about the child's progress and the teacher's success. However, such a purpose can be misconstrued and be used instead to monitor the success or failure of teachers and the school as a whole. Initially, the Department for Education and Science (DES) did not intend to enforce publication of the Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs) as stated in its Circular 15/1989. However, the position had changed and the revised Department for Education and Employment (DFEE) started publishing national league tables consisting of the individual

schools' performance in the national tests as reported by the Local Education Authorities (LEAs). The introduction of the league tables where schools in England today are publicly listed according to the results of the national assessments, has brought about much discontent and controversy. Hence, the dual purpose of the Standard Assessment Tests or SATs assessments which is for diagnosing the children's learning achievements and for making up a national league table. Such standardised assessments also function as a monitoring tool for the government to regulate and make sure that teachers teach the national curriculum and also monitor national standards for comparative purposes. These school level results are not to be adjusted for socio-economic background of the intake. It is important here to make reference to the main report entitled 'National Curriculum : Task Group on Assessment and Testing : A Report' (DES, 1988b); which argued that using statistically adjusted results to compare schools' performance

> ***would be liable to lead to complacency if results were adjusted and to misinterpretation if they were not.*** (cited in Gipps et al., 1993 : 48)

Instead for each school, TGAT recommended that the results be set in the context of a written account of the work of the school as a whole,

and socio-economic and other influences that are known to affect attainment. Adjusted and unadjusted scores would seem to be part of the solution.

2.2 Types of Assessments

It can be said that the functions of assessment influences the types of assessments carried out. Formative assessment is an ongoing process, conducted both formally and informally, where information and evidence about a child's learning (more specific elements of an area of knowledge or skill) is gathered and recorded; and further used to plan the next course of action. This approach is appropriate for the diagnostic assessment as it provides feedback to the teacher, learner, parents, the institutional policy-makers and others who are responsible for planning and structuring education. Summative assessment, on the other hand, fulfills a summarising and reporting function. It is a wholesale judgement formulated by judging overall mastery or competence and assigning grades or levels; and addressing all this within a stated time-scale of for example a term, a year or specific duration of a project. The summative assessment is the main type of

assessment within the national curriculum but schools do other types of assessments as well (Shorrocks et al., 1993 : 41). For example, continuous assessment through coursework is carried out in secondary schools in order to motivate students to complete the GCSE course. Teachers have to make a holistic judgement of the skills and area of knowledge that children have acquired and write a report (as required by law) to parents at the end of each academic year. On the other hand, formative asessment is currently being used since the introduction of the SEN (Special Educational Needs) Code of Practice in 1994. This requires that if any child is registered on the Code of Practice, it is the teacher's responsibility to draw up and monitor an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) for that targeted child. Regular feedback on the progress of the targeted child is conveyed to parents and this information is used to plan the next course of diagnostic action. Whatever the type of assessment used by classroom teachers in British schools, the bilingual children are most affected by it. In formative or summative assessments, bilingual children's progress and learning outcomes are measured only in their second language English, and hence the true extent of their cognitive functioning may be ignored or not accounted for because of the modes of assessment currently in

place.

The current practice is that after the formative or summative assessment has been carried out, scores or levels are calculated. These scores or levels have to be measured against natural trends. If the score is measured against other children or a supposed 'average child', then this is considered a 'norm'. This practice is known as norm-referencing. As soon as norms have been established, they are classified as 'pass' or 'fail'. Thus a child's performance lies above or below the norm. ***'This has been the traditional form or assessment for decades, in the British culture at least'*** (Sutton, 1992 : 4). Ability tests are norm-referenced, since they invariably require population comparisons. This form of assessment is not designed to generate more specific information about an individual child. Such assessments may however, be useful to educational planners and policy-makers who devise the curriculum. There are however particular disadvantages to norm-referencing for bilingual pupils. For example, a bilingual child who is being assessed on the basic sight vocabulary of the 50 most commonly used words in English. If the child is able to read 20 of the 50 words, the norm-referenced interpretation would be

that this score of 40% meant that the child achieved less than most children of that age in the wider population and in fact could be located in the bottom 25% of the national range. The bilingual child is being compared to the wider population of monolingual children and is hence being described as a failure. No consideration is given to the reality that the child's basic sight vocabulary is the fifty most commonly used English words which are in his second language domain.

In order to generate more specific information about learning strengths and weaknesses, another form of assessment is used, this is known as criterion-referenced assessment. The reference is to a particular area of knowledge or skill. The child's performance is judged by the extent of the knowledge or skills mastered. Criterion-referenced assessment measures the child's performance against predetermined expectations. These are usually written down and built into the assessment process. Using the National Curriculum and its related teacher and standard assessments, children's attainments are assessed in terms of national curriculum levels. The main problem here is whether these standard statements of attainment are sufficiently precise to allow unambiguous interpretation. In fact, Gipps (1992) suggested that since these standard

attainments are not effective assessment criteria themselves that they have to be mediated by means of exemplar material and further interpretation (see Gipps, 1992).

Therefore, the general concensus is that criterion-referenced assessment is much more purposeful and meaningful than norm-referenced assessment and this has been reflected in many educational works. In the 1950s, the work of Bloom et al. (1956) specified the different kinds of knowledge, skills and facets of human thinking and behaviour. He provided a foundation for this much more specific kind of approach to assessment. Criterion-referencing emphasises differences within an individual's performance rather than differences between individuals. According to Wood (1986) it is a form of assessment that strives to tackle the problem not ignore it.

> ***'In an ideal form, it embodies a constructive outlook, looks for competence and for best performance from the child '***
> (Shorrocks et al., 1993 : 28).

There are valid arguments for criterion-referenced assessment. The real concern here is the DFEE mandated the creation of the National Curriculum in Britain and an associated norm-referenced system. The

national criteria for assessment, as enshrined in the attainment targets of the National Curriculum framework, are all norm-based. Attainment targets, which are descriptions of knowledge and activities to be learned (that is, what children should know, understand and be able to do) are divided up into ten levels of performance covering the age range of 7 to 16, and these are described by statements of attainment. They are derived from the expectations of the people who wrote them. These standardised statements of attainment or level descriptors as they are now refered to in the Revised National Curriculum (1995), are pertaining to the norms or skills inherent or displayed by a child from a particular age group and that tends to be the mainly monolingual children of that particular category. These statements of attainment have not considered the language skills that bilingual children possess. All children will then be assessed on these statements of attainment by a mixture of teacher assessment and statutory testing, Standard Assessment Tests (SATs). Hence they are being assessed in those language skills pertinent to monolingual children only; who make up the norm that the statements of attainment are based upon.

2.3 Educational Reports Concerning Bilingual Children

Britain is generally described as a monolingual nation with English as its main language. English is reputed to be the *lingua franca* of the world, as a common language of communication and trade. However, the arrival and settlement of other languages into Britain has not done much to broaden the narrow views that English is the only language by which education or cognitive functioning can occur. Bhatt and Martin-Jones (1989), summarise the changing policies concerning minority languages in Britain. The major waves of immigration into Britain in the 1960s were accompanied by firmly assimilationist assumptions that Britain should respect but not perpetuate different cultural values. Groups were seen as a problem needing compensatory English teaching (cited in Stubbs, 1995 : 32) : ***'Bilingualism was seen as bewildering for the individuals involved'*** (DES. 1971 : 9). While some of these official policies acknowledged the right of place of other languages in English Britain, the impact of such official reports have yet to be seen in the educational field in the present day. There have been a number of educational reports, including Bullock (1975), Swann (1985), Kingman

(1988a) and Cox (1989a) that have influenced the thinking and planning of education for bilingual pupils. This section will review their main findings.

2.3.1 The Bullock Report

The Bullock Report (DES, 1975) took a liberal pluralist view that *'minority languages are a resource and a right'* (Cox, DES, 1989a : 2.7). Bullock (DES, 1975) had a special chapter on the needs of 'Children from Families of Overseas Origin', which included the now much quoted assertion that :

> ***No child should be expected to cast off the language and culture of the home as he crosses the school threshold, nor to live and act as though school and home represent two totally separate and different cultures which have to be kept firmly apart .***
> (DES, 1975 : 286)

This statement reflects the evolving attitudes to 'multicultural education' and asserted that children's home language and culture is just as important and significant in the school as is the major English language and culture. The Bullock Report's (DES, 1975) recommendations, along with the EC (European Community) 'Mother

Tongue' Directive of 1977 (EC, 1977 : 77/486) provided the 'official' recognition that in the education of the children of migrant workers, mother tongue teaching should be provided. When the British Government relayed the EC Directive (EC, 1977) to local education authorities in July 1981, it became translated into exploring ways in which mother tongue teaching might be provided. Such provision could be during or outside school hours, but tuition was not to be considered as a legal right of an individual. The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) saw LEA's (Local Education Authority) educational support for mother tongue teaching as a necessary part of the full recognition for the rights of minorities. They, therefore, supported the adoption of the EC Directive (EC, 1977) Article 3 which required member states to ***'promote the teaching of the mother tongue and culture of the children of migrant workers'.*** It was only at a later stage that the DES and the National Union of Teachers (NUT) gave public recognition to the importance of the mother tongue in the educational process (DES, 1981; NUT, 1982).

2.3.2 The Swann Report

The Swann Committee was set up to advise not on language planning, but on the role of education in race relations and equal opportunities. The Report entitled 'Education for All' (DES, 1985), decided in favour of the aim of a pluralist , multiracial society as the basis for valuing and creating a multilingual society in the education system and stated :

> ***We recommend that a syllabus recognising the multiethnic character of Britain be used in ALL schools, not just those with a multi-ethnic population. Ignorance breeds prejudice, especially where there is no opportunity for recognising shared interests .***
> (DES, 1985 : 321)

Therefore, the Report calls for the equal acceptance of all minority languages. Thus, the provision of mother tongue teaching to bilingual children outside school hours which came as a result of the EC Directive (EC, 1977); was seen to be a separatist measure to assimilate bilingual children into learning English in order to take their place in an unchanged mainstream school. Learning English as a second, but not foreign language, is seen as a necessary and integrated provision within the mainstream school.

Baker (1988 : 63), distinguished the three different possible aims with regard to minority languages that arose out of the Swann Report (DES, 1985). Bilingual education where the mother tongue is used as a medium of instruction is rejected as there were more arguments against its introduction in mainstream schools including the large variety of languages spoken in Britain today and the implications on the resources and administration. Baker (1988) regards home language maintenance as developing children's fluency in their own language and mainstream schools do not see this as a school aim but as the role of the communities themselves in continuing their ethnic languages. Baker (1988) finally suggests that home language teaching should be seen as the teaching of community languages similar to the teaching of modern language curriculum for example, in the same way that French and German are taught in secondary schools. This aim was seen to be worth developing as minority languages became a small part of the broader curriculum and so such languages may become a subject within the curriculum but not a medium in teaching the curriculum.

As a result of the report a debate galvanised. It was a general feeling that the report was limited to schools with multilingual populations.

Verma (1989), felt that the general recommendations about the need for all children of whatever language background are to learn about the multilingual nature of Britain, have little effect on the dominant culture. In a paper discussing the impact of the National Curriculum on Asian pupils, Verma (1989) argued that the Swann Report's (1985) radical analysis of the nature and role of the school cannot be dismissed if British society is sincere about its commitment to maintain its multilingual environment. He reiterated that likewise the National Curriculum fails to account for the needs of all children. The National Council for Mother Tongue Teaching (1985), criticised the Swann Report (1985) for a number of reasons such as its over-emphasis on the English language and British identity, its dismissal of bilingual education and the implication that ethnic minority languages and cultures are divisive. Such a negative view of bilingual education was further reflected in the next significant educational report.

2.3.3 The Kingman Report

The Kingman Report (DES, 1988a : 33) avoids bilingual children in a single paragraph, saying simply that the Report is concerned with

English as a first language, and that English as a second language is outside their terms of reference. This has been criticised for not considering the education of all children especially bilingual children. The Committee's terms of reference asked them to advise on a model of the English language which could inform all aspects of English teaching (DES, 1988a : 58), but the Committee narrowed its own terms of reference quite sharply to the teaching of the English language in general. Stubbs (1995 : 28) pointed out that the Kingman Report's superficially liberal pluralist tone is briefly evident when it recommends ***'social cohesion around one variety of English'*** **and it** ***'uses a rhetoric of language entitlement and language rights, and of freedom and democracy'*** (DES, 1988a : 2-11). Stubbs (1995 : 28) believed that the brief reference made to entitlement and equality of opportunity in the Kingman Report (DES, 1988a) does not directly deal with the ***'discrimination which many children face and equality of outcome'.***

It is contradictory that professional working parties which are formed to investigate issues in education failed to recognise the pluralistic and multilingual nature of Britain today, and the importance that education plays in nurturing this cultural variety. This brings into

question their authority to investigate and recommend appropriate educational practice for bilingual pupils.

2.3.4 The Cox Report

The Cox Committee (1989a) was given a more sharply defined guidance by the Secretary of State under the paragraph 'Equal Opportunities'. The Committee was instructed to consider that English should be the first language and medium of instruction for all pupils in Britain and that bilingual education should be ruled out (except in Wales). The Welsh Act of 1967 asserted the equal validity of English and Welsh and therefore the legal situation of Welsh in Wales is very different from the situation of other languages in England and Wales. The Welsh Act is considered to be the only

> ***'explicit legislation in the UK concerning language rights, and is therefore significant for its covert implications for other langauges '.***
> (Stubbs, 1995 : 32)

If Welsh is important enough to be considered as a language of instruction in Britain's education system, then it seems logical that the other indigenous languages of Britain (for example, Asian languages, Chinese, etc.) should also be given equal status as languages of

instruction in the education system. Stubbs (1995 : 33) highlighted the assumptions that English should become the 'first language' of all children and language loss seemed to be recommended. The instructions were contested in the Cox Report (1989a : 10.3). The Report pointed out that English is not the first language of all children but it is recognised as the first language of the education system. Stubbs (1995 : 33) summarised the recommendations of the Cox Report (1989a) as tolerant and promotion-oriented (and some minority languages were even listed in the schedules) but without positive promotion or financial support. Therefore, such languages may be a subject on the curriculum, but not a language of instruction. This leaves young bilingual pupils at a disadvantage.

All of the educational reports discussed so far have either directly or indirectly made references to the existence of minority languages in the education system in Britain today. However, none have made strong arguments for the integration of these languages into the mainstream curriculum of primary schools.

2.4 The National Curriculum and Bilingual Learners

The DES (Department for Education and Science) Circular 15/89 hailed Britain's National Curriculum as an 'entitlement curriculum'. The circular elaborates that *'It is intended that the curriculum should reflect the culturally diverse society to which pupils belong and that of which they will become adult members'* (DES, 1989b : para. 17). The programme of national, statutory assessments, the Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) is to monitor the national curriculum. All children of 7, 11, 14 and 16 (via GCSE) will be assessed using tests and activities directly related to the national curriculum. The extent to which bilingual children have grasped the national curriculum is measured by the scores achieved in the statutory assessments, SATs. Shorrocks, et al., (1993 : 172), highlighted this dilemma in their quotation of the raw results of National Curriculum Assessment being published in national newspapers like 'The Guardian', 20th of December 1991; showing certain Local Education Authorities (LEAs) as top of the assessment league tables. Those LEAs identified as being at 'the bottom of the league' had a high proportion of bilingual children

in their schools. In addition, an article reaffirming the results was published as such :

> *'Ministers immediately seized on the proportion of pupils at level one as an indicator of a local authority's efficiency in delivering education standards, and discounted other factors which might have a bearing on results such as levels of social deprivation or the proportion of children from homes where English is not the first language'.* (The Guardian, 20.12.91).

The implications of these results are that some bilingual children attain at lower levels in the national assessment system. This could be that this group of children are being denied their full entitlement to the curriculum, with the assessment outcomes reflecting this underachievement. Alternatively, the bilingual child's language proficiency in his/her home language is not assessed or recorded, but that as second language learner he/she is being compared in English with children who have English as their native language, and most of the time, one and only language. Finally, the assessment process itself could be putting these children at a disadvantage for a number of reasons.

The assessment atmosphere and unfamiliarity with being tested, particularly by a monolingual adult, can be daunting for a bilingual child. When questions or tasks are presented to a child and little or no response obtained, it simply cannot be possible to determine what the child does or does not know. This kind of flawed interpretation of test outcomes can be misleading in any measure of 'standards'. The test may also cause difficulties for these children. Test items, where possible, should be culture fair, for example, not using pictures of white children only. In addition, test items can be prone to gender bias as well as racial stereotypes and therefore, potentially disadvantage several groups of children. The SATs which are norm-referenced tests compare a child's achievements with a 'representative', wider sample of children of the same age. As later in chapter 4, given the unique and diverse language backgrounds of bilingual children, it is difficult to see how a truly representative sample could be obtained. Finally, the whole issue of the language of assessment cannot be separated from the much broader issue of the language of instruction. In certain situations there is acknowledgement and use of first language in the classroom for example, use of bilingual classroom assistants in the everyday classroom to facilitate teaching input via the child's first language.

However, this educational practice is not acknowledged as vehicles of learning to be developed in their own right, but it is assumed to be aids to the acquisition of English.

A child's language proficiency is often not taken into account when administering an assessment of any kind. Cummins (1980a) distinguished between fluency at the level of 'basic interpersonal communicative skills' and full 'cognitive/academic language proficiency' has direct relevance to testing. A more elaborate explanation of Cummins' (1984a) Developmental Interdependence Theory was discussed earlier in Chapter 1. Cummins (1980a : 103), claimed that for children who arrive in a new linguistic environment after the age of 6, the acquisition of age-appropriate second language cognitive/academic language proficiency, the type of proficiency required in most tests, can take up to 7 years. Therefore, examiners presume that because a bilingual child can converse about everyday matters in their first or second language, that they can be tested on a par with native speakers of the same language. The application of this theory has implications for bilingual children being assessed solely in English for the Key Stage 1 English SATs, as they have just come into

school at the age of 5 with little or no English and are then being assessed two years later in this new language.

Thus arises the conflict between testing bilingual learners primarily in English (for example, the English SATs), to measure the linguistic skills that a child may possess but not allowed to display by means of bias in the test and testing procedures. This essential element of testing bilingual children fairly is still not given due consideration in the new English National Curriculum Orders which came into force on the 1st of August, 1995.

2.5 The New Orders

The new English National Curriculum Orders present a clearer and more logical format than the former National Curriculum document for English. The three skills -- speaking and listening, reading and writing become parameters for the programmes of study. Each programme of study is sub-divided into range, key skills and standard English and language study. The ten statements of attainment levels have been made more concise and are now called Level Descriptors.

One of the key issues raised during consultations on the revised curriculum concerned the experience of pupils learning English as an additional language. I remember being involved in one such consultation where the issues of bilingual learners not being accounted for in the norm-referenced level descriptors, were raised and the responses were sent back to the Dearing Review Committee in early 1995. Unfortunately, the absence of considering the specific needs of bilingual learners with regard to assessment has been reinforced in the new revised document 'English in the National Curriculum' (August, 1995). Whilst the new English Orders recommend that appropriate provision should be made for pupils with a range of special educational needs, it does not acknowledge the specific needs of second language learners, either in terms of curriculum access, or assessment. Consequently, second language learners will continue to be assessed by the same criteria as monolingual learners, potentially, ***'creating a cycle of underachievement amongst those who are inadequately supported in gaining access to the full range of National Curriculum subjects'*** (Rassool, 1995 : 298). It also implies that pupils' home languages need not be valued and fails to recognise how these contribute to the development of oracy and literacy in another language that is, English.

Leung (1995) highlighted in the paper, The Assessment of EAL pupils, some of the difficulties and problems of using the new English National Curriculum level descriptors to assess English as an Additional Language (EAL) progression. The levels of description for English do not reflect the progression for a bilingual learner. For bilingual children entering the school system at Key Stage 1 have to acquire conceptual understanding which is the premise for their entire future learning and in addition learning a second language. The additional or second language (rather than the home language) is the medium through which both language learning and cognitive development takes place. In the meantime, the EAL learners have to move on as the cognitive demands of the curriculum are not static and the targets are constantly 'moving away' from them. Therefore, a bilingual learner being on the same level description as the native language learner is some kind of 'extraordinary' achievement. Besides, the level descriptors like developing 'confidence', 'exploring and developing ideas' and 'the progressive use of standard English', which are central to the way progression in assessment of English language is conceived; all assume the native speaker's knowledge and experience. Furthermore, a bilingual child, new to English, and who is learning to

apply 'Standard English' (as the language learned in school) in a range of contexts, is not credited for this and is still considered as 'working towards level 1' because this component in speaking and listening is only increasingly appropriate to assess from level 3 (because the native speaker is not expected to have the appropriate level of socialisation and maturation before level 3). With the exception of the new English orders being more general in nature, there is no other difference between the old and the current English National Curriculum documents and its implications for bilingual learners. We will now look at how unfair assessment procedures clash with the purposes of assessment and how this can lead to a misrepresentation of bilingual children's linguistic competency.

2.6 Policy Problems in Assessing Bilingual Children

In the context of the situation in England, if a child is not a 'balanced bilingual', then he or she will clearly be disadvantaged when being assessed against English Attainment Targets. Unlike in science and mathematics, the use of the child's preferred or most proficient

language is not allowed. Assessment purely in English also fails to recognise the degree of linguistic achievement which a child may have acquired in the home language. Language is central to learning in school and therefore bilingual children, as well as being denied their full entitlement to the curriculum, may also be exposed to bias in assessment. The clear message to these children and their families is that their languages are not valued, either in our schools or in our society.

Many cases have been reported as failing to do so especially in Cummins' (1984a) book, Bilingualism and Special Education : Issues in Assessment and Pedagogy. In 1970, a law suit (Diana v. State Board of Education) was filed in California, USA, alleging that nine Mexican-American children had been placed in classes for the mentally retarded on the basis of the results of IQ tests that had been administered in English (cited in Cummins, 1984a : 11). An out-of-court settlement was reached in which the following provision was made (Oakland and Laosa, 1977 : 42-43) :

> ***'All children whose home language is other than English must be tested in both their primary language and English'.***

Although this case is unique there is the general situation in educational assessment where sometimes the misinterpretation of the assessment procedure clash with the purpose of the assessment. Cazden (1988) reported a study of Spanish-American children receiving bilingual education in California where the researchers concluded that the English reading teacher wrongly assessed the children's non-native pronunciation of the English in their reading texts, by assessing their accent as incorrect decoding of the text. Cazden believed that the children's progress in English reading comprehension was undermined merely for want of lessons in the pronunciation of English, their second language. This variation in pronunciation can disguise genuine fluency. Although this example is drawn from the USA it is possible to speculate that similar inaccurate assessments may be a common feature when 7, 11, 14 and 16 years old bilingual children are tested in the reading and comprehension component of the Standard Assessment Tests in Britain.

To overcome the conflict between the purpose and actual procedure of assessing bilingual children's second language development, Fried (1985 : 355) suggested using standardised language tests with a *'mother*

tongue orientation for L2 language level measurement'. Standardised language tests compare individual test results against the standard language behaviour of a representative sample group or their standard group. However, sufficiently tested native language instruments should be adapted for the purpose. Cummins (1984a) warned against testing children in the minority (first) language if it is likely to have been affected by too little use and by recent and mass exposure to the dominant language.

Moffatt (1991), studied the code choice of young Punjabi pupils in British schools and she found that the overall language skills of the children in her study comprise mother tongue, second language English, their use of language mixing and pragmatic skills. She concluded that in order to assess all these skills and to make a sound judgment about each child's linguistic competence requires a naturalistic non-test situation. The least subjective form of assessment involves a difficult balancing act of formal test and informal observation-based realistic situations. Another less biased form of assessing bilingual children's language competence can be achieved by assessments in both languages. Romaine (1989) warned against an

uncritical use of tests translated from the majority into the minority language, with little regard paid to differences in usage norms between the two languages experienced by the children's social contexts.

Significant changes in the assessment of bilingual children's language proficiency in Britain especially, can only be facilitated by educational policies that recognise the importance of conducting statutory assessments in the bilingual children's first language. Cummins (1984a) describes some of the education initiatives employed in Canada, such as the memorandum by the York Board of Education (1977, Policy/Program Memorandum No. 59 : 2) to school boards :

'The administration and interpretation of the (psychological) assessment must be made carefully, recognizing the impact of the pupil's culture and language facility on the results of the assessment ..... If the pupil's first language is other than English or French and/or the pupil lacks facility in either of these languages, consideration should be given to postponing the assessment or, where possible, conducting the assessment in the child's first language'.

Therefore the current policy of testing bilingual children's comprehension in the SATs carried out here in England fails to define precisely the purpose of the assessments. Do the assessments measure bilingual children's linguistic comprehension or their linguistic

comprehension of the second language, English? Do bilingual children possess linguistic comprehension skills only in English and none whatsoever in their first language? Is linguistic comprehension only measurable in reading but not in listening comprehension? These questions will be explained in the research outlined in Chapter 4.

Before carrying out the Preferred Language Questionnaire and the reading test with the targeted bilingual children, it is also important to identify their social background in the wider context of the country (UK) and the region (Middlesbrough). The next chapter will outline the composition of the ethnic minority population in Middlesbrough, the location of this study and the bilingual children who form the target group. We will also study the linguistic make-up of this sample of children.

CHAPTER 3

THE STATISTICAL DATA OF THE CHILDREN

3.0 Introduction

The assessment of a bilingual child necessitates establishing a profile of his/her ethnic background compared to the whole population and the immediate ethnic population of the region in which the child lives. Travis (1996 : 6) writes in The Guardian newspaper that the black population is now mostly British-born. A profile of the whole of UK's linguistic minority population will be established first before specifically discussing the linguistic minority population of Middlesbrough where the bilingual children involved in this research live and go to school.

3.1 The Composition of Britain's Ethnic Minority School Population

The most recent statistics on the composition of the linguistic minority population in Britain is available in Social Trends (1996). The data reveal that Britain's ethnic minority population comprise mostly of post-war immigrants, their children and grandchildren. Their numbers are small, around 3.5 million or 5.5 per cent of the whole population, but the population is growing rapidly. In some cases, a majority of children born in Britain tend to be from the ethnic minority population. The Spring 1994 Labour Force Survey found that almost 8 in 10 members of the ethnic minority population aged under 25 years were born in Britain. Table 2 on shows that the ethnic minority population is younger by comparison to the majority (white) population.

Table 2 : The Age Structure of the Different Ethnic Groups in Britain (Social Trends, 1996 :40).

Ethnic groups	Percentage of Population				
	Under 16	16-29	30-44	45-59	Over 60
Black(1)	29.0	25.5	27.0	11.3	7.2
Indian	25.3	26.0	25.5	16.0	7.2
Pakistani/ Bangladeshi	40.6	26.4	19.4	9.3	4.3
Other (2)	37.2	23.3	26.0	9.6	3.9
White	20.1	19.0	21.6	18.3	20

(1) Includes Caribbean, African and other Black people of non-mixed origin.

(2) Includes Chinese and other ethnic minority groups of non-mixed origin.

It is clear from Table 2 that the Pakistani/Bangladeshi ethnic groups have been presented together. This may be due to the fact that both these two groups' countries of origin, Pakistan and Bangladesh were one whole country pre-1947 partition of India and they were known as East and West Pakistan until 1971. It is difficult to extrapolate these groups from existing records because of the newly formed nation states

of Pakistan and Bangladesh. Travis (The Guardian, 1996 : 6) notes that : ***'The Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities do, however, live in high concentration 'ethnic villages', particularly in West Yorkshire, the West Midlands, and east London'.*** Therefore, the Central Statistical Office (1996) may have used the same reasons outlined above when deciding to present the figures of the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities as one. It is important to identify that the bilingual children involved in the study are all Pakistanis by ethnicity and Muslim Pakistanis by faith.

All the ethnic minority groups have a higher proportion of people under the age of 16 and most of these would be children who are still in mainstream schools. Table 2 shows that the ethnic minority population in Britain has a younger age structure than the white population. For example, the under 30s represented nearly 7 in 10 of the Pakistani/Bangladeshi group compared with just under 4 in 10 of those in the White group or the indigenous population. 40.6% of the Pakistani/Bangladeshi population are under the age of 16. Hence, this figure represents a significant number of young children who may still be studying in mainstream schools. Although these statistics are of

national trends they are also reflected in the composition of Cleveland's ethnic minority population.

3.2 Predominant Features of Cleveland's Ethnic Minority Population

The latest statistical data available on Cleveland's ethnic minority population was collated by the Cleveland County Research and Intelligence Unit in August 1992 entitled Asian Community Survey. This remains the most recent information. Cleveland County no longer exists and became four unitary councils in April 1996. The statistics for the Asian Community Survey (August, 1992) were gathered from the electoral registers of the four boroughs in the county. The Research and Intelligence Unit of Cleveland County (1991)was requested by a number of departments and agencies for information on the ethnic minority population in Cleveland. Due to the amount of interest in this population group, it was decided by the Unit to undertake a survey of the Asian community in the county. They defined the Asian community as those people whose ethnic origin lies in Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Indian sub-continent or Sri

Lanka.

3.3 The Cleveland Asian Community Survey (1992)

The method used to locate the sample for the Asian Community Survey was through a search of the electoral registers of the four boroughs in the county. In Hartlepool, Langbaurgh and Stockton an interview was sought at every address located from the electoral roll and in Middlesbrough, because of the larger Asian population, an interview was sought at every second address located. 791 interviews were conducted for the Asian Community Survey Report 5 (1992 : CR803) on education, training and leisure. In advance of the interviews, letters in four languages (Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali and English) were sent out to the selected respondents explaining the purpose of the survey and how they had been selected. Table 3 presents the demographic structure of the Asian community in Cleveland. It shows that the largest concentration of ethnic minority groups is in Middlesbrough with 345 households representing 44% of households. It is significant to highlight this as all of the children in this study

originate from the Middlesbrough area, the area of highest concentration of ethnic minority families and young children.

Table 3 : Composition of the Ethnic Minority Population in Cleveland.

Boroughs	Number	Percentage
Middlesbrough	345	44
Hartlepool	62	8
Langbaurgh	98	12
Stockton	286	36
Totals	791	100

The Asian Community Survey (1992) discovered that approximately 4 out of 10 Asian households (44%) have children of primary school age. Those families who have 5-11 year olds of their own were asked a number of question about their child's primary school education. The children discussed were aged between 4 years and 11 years and consisted

of both boys and girls. In all four Cleveland boroughs, the primary schools used by Asian households tended to be concentrated in particular parts of the borough. In Middlesbrough, with its larger Asian population (44% or 345 households) 21 different schools were mentioned in the interviews. In Hartlepool, 7 different schools were mentioned; in Langbaurgh 8 primary schools were mentioned and finally in Stockton, 15 different primary schools were mentioned. The most frequently named schools in Middlesbrough are in order of importance :

Abingdon Infants/Juniors

Breckon Hill School

Ayresome Infants/Juniors

Linthorpe School

These schools together are used by 66% of Middlesbrough respondents who have children of primary school age (5 to 11 years old). The children in this study were from one of these most frequently used schools by the Asian community in the Middlesbrough area. Therefore, the children in the sample are from a multi-ethnic primary school.

Since the last Asian Community Survey by the Cleveland County Research and Intelligence Unit in August 1992, there is clear evidence that the number of children from Asian origin attending primary schools in Middlesbrough has increased and may have even doubled in number, as suggested by The Spring 1994 Labour Force Survey that the ethnic minority population aged under 25 years is growing rapidly. According to the Statistics of Education (Schools in England 1995), carried out by the Department for Education and Employment, the number of children on roll in Cleveland's primary schools was 65,323 in 1995. A significant proportion of these would be children from settled Asian families like Pakistanis. It was deemed necessary to carry out a Preferred Language Questionnaire with the targeted children involved in this research. The linguistic make-up of the monolingual and bilingual children who make up the sample in this study will be outlined next.

3.4 The Linguistic Composition of the Sample

36, 7 to 9 year old, Punjabi-speaking children were interviewed for the Preferred Language Questionnaire. The children were in three, vertically grouped Year 3/4 classes in a multi-ethnic school in Middlesbrough. Of the 36, 18 were Year 3 (7-8 years old) and 18 were Year 4 (8-9 years old) children. The study also considered the gender issue in selecting the bilingual children for the target sample. Of the 18 Year 3 children, 9 were girls and 9 were boys and the same selection criteria applied to the 18 Year 4 bilingual children.

There were 72, 7 to 9 year old monolingual and bilingual children included in the reading comprehension test read aloud in English. These 72 children were chosen from the three, Year3/4 vertically grouped classes in the same school. There were 100 pupils on the roll in these three classes but only 72 were chosen in order to have a balance of boys and girls, Year 3s and Year 4s, bilingual and monolingual children; and matching learning ability. To make sure that the two groups of monolingual and bilingual children were chosen randomly

and as far as possible had similar language skills, the children's NFER reading ages (refer to table 4) were analysed with respect to choosing compatible bilingual and monolingual children. The results of the reading test show that there was insignificant difference in the average reading ages of a 7, 8 and 9 year old monolingual and bilingual child (these average reading ages were derived from the reading test papers of only the 72 children in the sample).

All the 72 children in the sample live in school's catchment area i.e., within three mile radius of the school. The 36 monolingual children's mother tongue is English and they speak in English at home. All the 36 monolingual children are British-born and except for two new arrivals from other counties, the rest of them have lived in Middlesbrough (Cleveland County) ever since they started school.

The sample of bilingual children used in the questionnaire and later in the reading comprehension test are from Pakistani families and they all speak Punjabi, their first language. The problem of language naming is of particular interest with reference to speakers of Punjabi from

Pakistan. The Linguistic Minorities Project of 1985 faced a similar problem when interpreting data relating to bilingual families who have their origins in the Punjab. This is explained more clearly in the next section.

3.5 The Sociolinguistic History

Prior to the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, the whole of Punjab was part of a single state and most of the people spoke one of the local dialects or vernaculars of Punjabi as a first language. Hawkins (1987 : 175) defines a dialect as *'a variety of speech used in a particular geographical area and or by a particular social group'*. He goes on to elaborate that whereas different languages are mutually unintelligible; different dialects of one language are mutually intelligible, to a large degree, across the dialect boundaries. Therefore, there is a high degree of mutual intelligibility between the spoken forms of Punjabi used on either side of the Indo-Pakistan border (LMP, 1985 : 45). To some extent, many linguists refer to a large part of the north of the subcontinent as the 'Hindi-Urdu-Punjabi' area or dialect continuum (Khubchandani, 1979).

With the creation of the new nations of India and Pakistan, language became closely associated with national and religious identity. Urdu (the national and official language of Pakistan) is a language based on the speech of educated Muslims of Northern India and written in the Perso-Arabic script. The medium of Urdu is used in almost all education, for official business communication and for literacy in Pakistan. Most Pakistani migrants to England come from the Punjab or adjoining districts of Kashmir (LMP, 1985 : 45). They speak local dialects of Punjabi as their home language, but may regard Urdu as their 'mother tongue' and use it as their language of literacy. They may learn Urdu for the specific purpose of writing letters to relatives in Pakistan. The bilingual children in the study are aware of Urdu as most of them go to language learning classes at the mosque or tutors' homes to learn to read and write in Urdu.

There are some basic differences between Urdu and Arabic and this warrants a very brief discussion. The bilingual children receive tuition in learning the Arabic alphabet, called the Koranic Qaida, so that they can learn to read the Koran which is in Arabic. In addition, some of the bilingual children receive further tuition in learning Urdu so that they

can be literate in their national language. Therefore, they are taught how to read and write using the Urdu alphabet, also known as the Qaida. The main difference between the Urdu and Arabic alphabet system is the sounds of different letters. In Urdu there are 36 distinct alphabetical sounds while Arabic has 28 letter sounds only. This is due to the fact that in Arabic one letter can be used at least three times and still be counted as one letter sound for e.g., 'l (ah), ! (eh) and l (ooh). There are more syntactic features of the Urdu and Arabic scripts which can be compared but this is not an important element in this study.

As a result of the sociolinguistic history of this area of South Asia, most families in England with origins in the Punjab, whether in India or Pakistan, and whether they are Muslims, Sikhs or Hindus by religion, will use spoken varieties of Punjabi which are likely to be mutually intelligible (LMP, 1985 : 47). The reading comprehension test was carried out in Punjabi, the bilingual children's first language. However, Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus normally receive tuition in their distinct languages of literacy, e.g., Punjabi in the Gurmukhi script for Sikhs, Punjabi in the Gurmukhi or Hindi script for Hindus (originating from the present Indian state of Punjab) and Urdu for

Muslims from the Pakistani part of Punjab.

The discussion on the sociolinguistic milieu of the bilingual children involved in this study adds another dimension to the Preferred Language Questionnaire that the Punjabi-speaking bilingual children are also exposed to another language, Urdu. Indeed, they may display a repertoire of linguistic skills in this additional language as well. Therefore, this point was taken into consideration when the questionnaire's design was being formulated in the next chapter. As a result, the bilingual children were asked in the questionnaire to gauge their competence in all the four languages that they are exposed to; English, Punjabi, Urdu and Koranic Arabic. Furthermore, the difference between minority languages and English has gone through rapid change brought on by the changing features of social structures. The Linguistic Minorities Project (1985 : 123), reiterates this point as a situation where the new generations of British-born bilinguals have acquired a wider linguistic repertoire than their migrant parents. It is this wider linguistic repertoire that is being investigated next.

CHAPTER 4

BILINGUAL CHILDREN'S LINGUISTIC REPERTOIRES

4.0 Introduction

This chapter begins with a critical overview of previous studies of language competency tests. The rationale for carrying out the Preferred Language Questionnaire is discussed and the pilot questionnaire is then presented. The process of conducting the Preferred Language Questionnaire through the mode of direct interviews is described. The findings of the questionnaire are presented under specific headings which relate to languge use in different contexts. These responses will later be integrated into the results of the reading comprehension test in Chapter 5. The findings are summarised and their significance in the performance of the targeted children in the reading comprehension test is highlighted. There are various studies reporting the principles guiding the formulation of language competency tests and these studies will be discussed next.

4.1 Studies on Language Competency Tests

A bilingual's skill may not be the same for both languages at any linguistic level, so linguistic proficiency needs to be assessed in a variety of areas. This will be discussed with reference to the target group of bilingual pupils central to this study who are Punjabi-speaking children. It is important to understand the linguistic repertoire of a Punjabi speaker as one who understands spoken Punjabi, but who is unable to read the Gurmukhi/Urdu script in which it is written because the alphabetical system used in the written form varies from the phonological form. On the Mackey's (1968 : 557) table of 'Measuring degree of bilingualism', the Punjabi speaker would rate high for listening and speaking skills in Punjabi but not for reading and writing. The bilingual's level of phonological ability might differ in the two languages, that is Gurmukhi and Urdu . It might also be that when an additional language has been learned only for a very specific purpose e.g., reading (for example, the Muslim children read the Koran in Arabic script and the Sikh children read the Granth Sahib in Gurmukhi); in which case speaking and listening skills for that

language would be poor.

At the grammatical level, different degrees of ability are evident in reading and writing by comparison with speaking and listening. As for the semantic level, a bilingual may be able to express meaning better in one language than another. For example, a Punjabi speaking child might find it difficult to talk about a particular topic in the curriculum as learning has taken place in another language and so the child finds it difficult to explain about the Vikings as he or she cannot think of the appropriate vocabulary in Punjabi. Hence, as Romaine (1989 : 13) said :

> ***'In principle, there is no necessary connection between ability in one level and another'.***

Therefore, a bilingual might have good pronunciation in one language but weak grammatical knowledge in another language.

There are various tests used to measure bilingual ability and Macnamara (1967, 1969) grouped these tests into four categories : rating scales, fluency tests, flexibility tests and dominance tests. The rating scales tests comprise of interviews, language usage scales and self-rating scales. In self-rating, individuals assess their ability in a language with

reference to various skills. For example, a Punjabi/English bilingual is asked to rate his ability in both languages using Mackey's matrix (Romaine, 1989 : 14). He rated his Punjabi skills higher than English, except for reading and writing. His personal scores are 4 on speaking and listening for all levels of Punjabi but 0 for reading and writing. On the other hand, his English scores range from 2-4 across the skills and levels, averaging out at 3. If his self-ratings in Punjabi are averaged, we will get a 2 even with his total lack of reading and writing ability. If we then subtract this from the English score of 3, the result is 1. We, therefore, have a degree of imbalance which does not tell us anything about the nature of the imbalance, and that much of it may result from illiteracy in Punjabi. So, an extreme imbalance of skills within one of the languages may affect the balance of scores across two languages.

Romaine (1989) commented that such self-assessment is not reliable as it is affected by many variables, like the atttitudes the person has towards a particular language and the relative status of the languages in a certain situation. The attitude a child has towards a language may afffect the performance of the child in an assessment of the language skills. For example, if one of the languages has higher prestige, then

the subject may claim greater knowledge of it (and conversely, lesser knowledge of the non-prestige language) than they actually have. Besides, fluency carries a lot more weight in terms of measurements of proficiency. Various fluency tests have been used to assess proficiency for e.g., picture naming, word completion, oral reading and following instructions. Lambert (1955) developed a task where subjects had to respond to instructions in two languages. Their response time was taken as the indication of being balanced or more dominant in one language. It was assumed that a balanced bilingual should take more or less the same time to respond to instructions in both languages. The principles for carrying out the Preferred Language Questionnaire are described next.

4.2 Rationale of the PLQ

Bilingual children acquire a second language both inside and outside school, and formally and informally. In assessing bilingual children's acquisition of a second language, it is important to consider the repertoire of linguistic skills they possess and how this affects their performance in a 'limited' testing environment such as standardised

tests or tests carried out only in the second language. An alternative would be a 'wholesome' testing environment which takes into consideration the cognitive abilities of the bilingual children rather than only their second language competency. To achieve this ideal testing situation whose results would take into consideration the repertoire of linguistic skills that bilingual children in this study display, it was decided that a Preferred Language Questionnaire (refer to Appendix I) would provide information about the children's broader linguistic competence in languages other than English. Hence, a Preferred Language Questionnaire preceded the reading comprehension test which was carried out with the children in the sample. We will now identify the aims and scope of the Preferred Language Questionnaire.

The major objective of the Preferred Language Questionnaire was to elicit the children's own perceptions of their linguistic repertoires and to establish a co-relation between this and the reading comprehension test to be carried out later. The idea for carrying out the Preferred Language Questionnaire was derived upon after reading the Schools Language Survey that was carried out by the Linguistic Minorities

Project in 1985. The Preferred Language Questionnaire was designed to identify the bilingual child's linguistic and sociolinguistic milieu. Language use in bilinguals has been characterised as varying according to who speaks what language to whom, when, where, how and why. Taking a single school setting or a home-based sample will not suffice to capture the full variety of bilingual children's language interaction. That is why the Preferred Language Questionnaire was used in this study. It tries to address language interaction among bilingual children in a number of different ways : -- (i) formal and informal settings in the school; (ii) formal and informal settings in the home; (iii) the frequency of use of their two languages with close and distant relations and friends; (iv) the bilingual child's self-perception of his or her linguistic repertoire in reading, writing, speaking and understanding.

The Preferred Language Questionnaire was designed to look in detail at the bilingual children's use of language and their experience of language learning both inside and outside school. The Preferred Language Questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part tries to establish a pattern of language use experienced by the children when communicating with different people. The second part details the

bilingual children's self-perception of their competence in various aspects of a language that they speak and understand. The Preferred Language Questionnaire was derived after a long process of drafting and changing of the questions. This process is described briefly in the next section.

4.3 Piloting and Redrafting the PLQ

The Preferred Language Questionnaire went through a number of drafts, with the aim of producing a questionnaire that would provide a straightforward yet detailed insight into the languages that bilingual children actually use in the course of their everyday interactions and their self-perceived ability in the different components of each particular language. The first pilot for the Preferred Language Questionnaire (refer to Appendix III) was carried out in November 1995 with 20, 7 to 9 year old bilingual children.

The first pilot of the Preferred Language Questionnaire had limitations. It was found to be too general and lacking in detail. For example, item 1(**Name**), item 2 (**Age**), item 3 (**Number of family members**) and item 4

(**Position in family**) were to help collate demographic figures for the calculation of the number, age, size of family and position of the children in the family structures. These were considered adequate. Question 5 (**Languages spoken at home**), question 6 (**Which language do you speak most at home?**) and question 7 (**Which language do you speak most at school?**) were not detailed enough to find out the variety of languages the children use with their different interlocutors, such as the parents, siblings, cousins, etc. In addition the questions were limiting the children's languages to only one language as indicated by the question and therefore not recognising the number of languages that bilingual children may know.

Question 8 (**Which language can you read and write?**) was not valuing the inherent variety of linguistic repertoires that children possess by combining two distinct language acquisition processes into one question. Finally, question 9 (**Do you enjoy learning in English?**) was the only reliable question that was repeated in the final draft of the Preferred Language Questionnaire. This question tries to elicit the response from bilingual children about their views towards the second language, English, that they have to learn and perform in the school

curriculum. The experience of the pilot survey led to improvements being made in both the wording and layout of the questionnaire. Once the questionnaire had been redrafted several times until it was in satisfactory condition, then the interviews were carried out. The final and most suitable draft of the Preferred Language Questionnaire is featured in Appendix I.

4.4 The Preferred Language Questionnaire (PLQ)

The first part of the survey explored bilingual children's patterns of language use with different interlocutors : what language or language variety they choose when speaking with different members of their family or with friends. The questions were therefore designed to assess the extent to which bilingual children drew on their bilingual repertoire in daily interactions with their interlocutors in and out of school. The age, the year group and the gender of the children were identified (refer to Appendix I). This was to make sure that there was a balance in the number of children of different ages, from different year groups and between boys and girls. It was necessary to find out the

number of family members the child has as this helped to establish the size of the child's family. Asking the question on the position of the child in the family, was to determine if being a younger or older positioned child reflected the child's perception of the status of the first language and English and this was evidenced in the frequency of the use of that particular language by the child.

The first question (**Do you like school?**) was designed to ease the child's mind that the interview was not a serious test but more to elicit the child's personal responses to the questions that would follow. Question 2 (**Who do you play with in school?**) and question 3 (**What language/s do you speak to your friend when playing?**) were to identify what languages the child used when playing especially at playtimes with a friend from school and how the choice of using a particular language was indicative of the ethnic identity of the friend. Question 4 (**Who do you play with after school?**) and question 5 (**What language/s do you speak to your friend?**) have the same purpose as questions 2 and 3 but this time it refers to playing with a friend after school. The children's response to Questions 2 and 4 were indicated by the researcher as playing with a black boy/girl or a white boy/girl. The

gender distinction was to find out if there was any difference in the choice made to play with a child of the same or different gender. The race distinction was to find out if the children chose to play with other children of the same or different ethnic background. Hence, when the children indicated their friends' names, the researcher wrote down if the friend is a white child (referring to the majority, monolingual population) or a black child (referring to the ethnic minority population). Any uncertainty in names was clarified to be able to categorise the response correctly.

Question 6 (**What language/s do you speak to your parents?**), question 7 (**What language/s do you speak to your brothers and sisters?**), question 8 (**What language/s do you speak to your grandparents?**), question 9 (**What language/s do you speak to your cousins?**) and question 10 (**What language/s do you speak to your uncles and aunts?**) were designed to find out the languages the child uses with close relatives (for e.g., parents, siblings or grandparents if they live in the same household) in their daily interactions and with distant relatives (like cousins, uncles, aunts or grandparents). These questions are also indicative of the languages bilingual children choose to use in formal

interactions like with older relations like parents, grandparents and uncles or aunts; and in informal interactions like with younger relations like siblings and cousins. Finally, question 11 (**What language/s do you speak to your friends in the classroom?**) was to identify what languages the children spoke to their friends in the formal environment of the classroom.

The second part of the survey aims to elicit the children's own perception of parts of their linguistic repertoire. This is an indication of the children's self-perceived language competence. It is an attempt to establish the degree of skill the bilingual child has, by asking him/her to assess his/her own current language skills. This includes a range of skills including receptive and productive skills in both aural and written modes. The study is aware of the discrepancies that exist between linguists' models of language use generally and children's own accounts of their language behaviour. Those discrepancies may be illuminated by considering Chomsky's (1968) and Hymes' (1971) explanation of 'competence' in language. 'Competence' is an abstraction, drawn from the notion of an 'ideal' speaker of a particular language as the repository of data about that language.

'Against that is put a "competence" which includes language "performances", which are infinitely complex, variable and therefore beyond satisfactory definition' (Miller, 1984 : 127).

However, for the purpose of this study, the former model of competence is taken into consideration as the survey tries to elicit the children's responses of their self-perceived ability in the different components of a particular language. It is assumed that the children might be considering their 'intelligent' friend or classmate as an 'ideal' speaker of that language and be evaluating their own ability in that respect.

The purpose of question 12 (**Which language/s can you understand?**) was to find out how many languages the children feel they know. After identification, then the languages could be listed separately for the phrasing of question 13 (**How well can you understand Punjabi, English or any other language?**). Question 14 (**How well can you speak Punjabi, English or any other language?**), question 15 (**How well can you read Punjabi, English or any other language?**) and question 16 (**How well can you write Punjabi, English or any other language?**). If

the children appeared not to comprehend the question, they were given an analogy to rate their ability on a scale of 1 to 5, 1and 2 being poor, 3 being average and 4 and 5 being good indicators of their ability in that aspect of language. When given a scale to measure their linguistic repertoires, bilingual children could visualise an otherwise difficult and abstract element.

Question 17 (**Where do you go to learn this language?**), question 18 (**When do you go to learn this language?**) and question 19 (**About how many hours do you spend learning this language?**) investigated children's present involvement in language classes (languages other than English). Question 20 (**Do you enjoy learning this language?**) and question 21 (**Why?**) was to find out if children knew why they were going for these language classes and whether they enjoyed those experiences. Question 22 (**Do you enjoy learning in English?**) and question 23 (**Why?**) was to establish children's views towards English, the second language that they are required to learn and perform in school. Finally, question 24 (**Would you understand and learn better if things are explained to you in Punjabi?**) and question 25 (**Why?**) were asking children to hypothesise a situation where they had a choice to

make between being taught the school curriculum through their first language or through their second language, English and to explain reasons for their choice.

There are various methods of collecting information on linguistic usage and the repertoire of linguistic skills in bilingual children. This could be done either on the basis of observation or interviews or a mixture of both. After reading numerous literature reviews on these various methods such as Fishman, Cooper and Ma's (1971) research in the Puerto Rican community in New York City and Ervin-Tripp's (1964) study on the behaviour of Japanese-English bilinguals in the United States; the questionnaire was conducted in a direct interview with the bilingual children. This literature review follows in the next section.

4.5 Using Questionnaires

One approach that has been used to achieve a balanced overview of linguistic usage is the questionnaire and diary technique. These methods of data collation try to define the interpersonal input to the

bilingual child, i.e., who speaks what language/s to the child and what language/s the child hears in the environment (directly or indirectly addressed to him or her); what is the percentage input of the first language relative to the second language, what is the co-relation between the language input and the indentifiable persons in the child's life (parents, playmates, etc), and does variation correspond to different social domains for e.g., home, school, neighbourhood?

Questionnaire and self-report procedures have been criticised as unreliable. Teitelbaum (1979) reported the difficulty of young children in accurately reporting on language usage but this inaccuracy was not reflective of older children. However, older subjects were not able to identify between actual and perceived usage. Therefore, answers to questionnaires or diaries are more likely to be statements of what people think they are or should be talking about on any particular occasion. Match-guise techniques also suggest that bilinguals' use of one or both languages is so intuitive that they themselves are not aware of the switches from one to another. Furthermore, these procedures of identifying linguistic usage sometimes fail to account for the symbolic importance of a particular language as perceived by the

community, family or individual; and the pressures exerted by the dominant and minority cultures to use certain languages. Later, when interpreting the data of the Preferred Language Questionnaire, the study will be addressing all these issues that most other studies may fail to do so.

Questionnaires and diaries would be more relevant if there is the involvement of an outside observer or analysis of tape-recorded material is made. This is not to say that the subject's own ideas on what they might be speaking are not relevant. In the case of this study, the outside observer (i.e., the support teacher) was able to para-phrase the question in the child's first language to ensure that the child understood precisely what was being asked of him or her. While questionnaires and diaries cannot replace standardised tests and analyses in bilingual settings, they can however :

> ***'provide a method of evaluating an individual's attitudes to language use as well as defining those settings to be assessed in gaining a reliable profile of a child's language competence'.***
> (Miller, 1984 : 24).

When the method of collecting data on bilingual children's repertoire of linguistic skills was decided in the form of a questionnaire, it was then essential to consider the way in which this questionnaire would be carried out.

4.6 The Interview

The Preferred Language Questionnaire was conducted by the researcher in a direct interview with each child. The reason for conducting the questionnaire in a direct interview was because of the many disadvantages inherent in a questionnaire mode of data collation. Questionnaires tend to have a low percentage of returns, misunderstanding of questions as it sometimes happen that the same questions have different meanings for different people and respondents may be unable to write their answers for one reason or another. Questionnaires present problems to people of limited literacy (in this case young 7 to 9 year old children and many of who have low reading ages); and an interview can be conducted at an appropriate speed whereas questionnaires are often filled in hurriedly. In addition, the Preferred Language Questionnaire has 6 open-ended questions that

would require developing a satisfactory method of recording individual responses if it was carried out as a survey. In order to overcome this problem, the researcher is able to summarise the main idea of the children's responses in the course of an interview. Therefore, it was essential to carry out the Preferred Language Questionnaire in a researcher-directed interview.

Before conducting the interview, the researcher was aware of the qualities that an interviewer is deemed essentially to possess (Rogers, 1942). This includes the view that the interviewer should base the work on attitudes of acceptance and permissiveness; that the child's answers are respected as being responsible; that the child is permitted to explain his or her response in his or her own way; and that the interviewer does not 'forcibly' try to evoke 'satisfactory' reponses which would arouse the child's defences.

In the case of this study, the interviewer (i.e. the researcher), was a support teacher, who works closely with most of the children being interviewed and hence was known to all of the children who have come into direct contact with the interviewer in their daily classroom

interactions. The interviewer is a fluent speaker of English and Punjabi. This was an important quality for the interviewer to have as the interviewer could translate some of the questions whenever the children did not understand them in English. In addition, they were more willing to use their full repertoire of English and Punjabi, and a mixture of both if they thought the interviewer could understand them. After all the interviews had been conducted, the children's responses to the questions were gathered and analysed. This completed the first stage in the project. The next section will present the children's responses to the Preferred Language Questionnaire.

4.7 Children's Responses to the PLQ

When the interviews had been completed, the children's responses to the questions were collated. Upon collation, it was discovered that the girls in the sample showed no statistically significant differences in terms of language use from the boys. Besides, there were no distinct differences in the responses of the 7, 8 and 9 year old children. Hence, it was not necessary to distinguish between the Year 3 and Year 4 children's responses. In addition, four of the children have started to

learn Koranic Arabic so they could learn to read the Koran. Therefore, it was decided to include Koranic Arabic as a language category in the second part of the data collation. Since the sample of 36 children was such a small number, it is not essential to present the data in percentage form.

4.7.1 Collation of Children's Responses

Part A is a collation of the children's responses to the questions asked in the Preferred Language Survey which explored the children's patterns of language use with different interlocutors.

Part A : Language Use with Family and Friends

Total Number of Responses : 36

Age Range : 7 to 9 years old

Year 3 : 18 children **Year 4** : 18 children

Boys : 18 **Girls** : 18

Average Family Size : 7 people per household

Position in Family :	Older/Oldest	Middle	Younger/Youngest
Responses	10	10	16

Question 1. What do you think of school?

	Responses
I like school	34
I do not like school	2

Question 2. Who do you play with at playtimes in school?

	Responses
Black boy	17
Black girl	17
White boy	1
White girl	1

Question 3. What language/s do you speak to your friend when playing at playtimes in school?

	Responses
Punjabi only	3
English only	17
Punjabi and English	16

Question 4. Who do you play with after school?

	Responses
black boy	17
black girl	17
white boy	1
white girl	1

Question 5. What language/s do you speak to your friend when playing after school?

	Responses
Punjabi only	14
English only	12
Punjabi and English	10

Question 6. What language/s do you speak to your parents?

	Responses
Punjabi only	32
English only	2
Punjabi and English	2

Question 7. **What language/s do you speak to your brothers and sisters?**

	Responses
Punjabi only	7
English only	14
Punjabi and English	15

Question 8. **What language/s do you speak to your grandparents?**

	Responses
Punjabi only	36
English only	--
Punjabi and English	--

Question 9. **What language/s do you speak to your cousins?**

	Responses
Punjabi only	10
English only	16
Punjabi and English	10

Question 10. What language/s do you speak to your uncles and aunts?

	Responses
Punjabi only	24
English only	5
Punjabi and English	7

Question 11. What language/s do you speak to your friends in the classroom?

	Responses
Punjabi only	--
English only	31
Punjabi and English	5

Part B is a collation of the children's responses to the questions asked in the survey which reflected the children's self-perceived ability in the different components of a particular language; details of when, where and how they acquire their distinct language of literacy, i.e., Urdu; and finally which languages they enjoy learning and why. The totals for the Urdu and Koranic Arabic categories in Questions 13 to 16 are directly influenced by the children's response in Question 12.

Part B : Self-Perception of Language Competence

Question 12. Which language/s can you understand?

	Responses
Punjabi, Urdu and English	32
Punjabi, Urdu, English and Koranic Arabic	4

Question 13. How well can you understand this language?

	English	Punjabi	Urdu	Koranic Arabic
Yes,quite well	30	34	2	--
Only a little	6	2	8	1
Not at all	--	--	26	3

Question 14. How well can you speak this language?

	English	Punjabi	Urdu	Koranic Arabic
Yes, quite well	33	34	2	--
Only a little	3	2	--	--
Not at all	--	--	34	4

Question 15. How well can you read this language?

	English	Punjabi	Urdu	Koranic Arabic
Yes, quite well	25	--	2	1
Only a little	11	--	--	3
Not at all	--	--	34	--

Question 16. How well can you write this language?

	English	Punjabi	Urdu	Koranic Arabic
Yes, quite well	25	--	1	--
Only a little	11	--	1	--
Not at all	--	--	34	4

Question 17. Where do you go to learn this language?

	Responses
In another school	--
In a mosque	19
At somebody's house	12
At home	5

Question 18. When do you go to learn this language?

	Responses
After school/weekdays	35
At weekends	1

Question 19. About how many hours a week do you spend learning this language?

	Responses
1-5 hours	5
6-10 hours	17
11-15 hours	14

Question 20. Do you enjoy learning this language?

	Responses
Yes	36
No	--

Question 21. Why?

	Yes	No
I will know more about Islam	12	–
I can learn to read and write in my first language	10	–
So I can learn to read the Koran	12	–
So I can learn more languages	2	–

Question 22. Do you enjoy learning in English?

	Responses
Yes	35
No	1

Question 23. Why?

	Yes	No
I want to learn English	7	–
So I can do better in English	15	–
I like to learn in English	8	–
I can understand when people speak to me in English	5	–
I find English difficult to understand	–	1

Question 24. Would you understand and learn better if things are explained to you in Punjabi?

	Responses
Yes	34
No	2

Question 25. Why?

	Yes	No
I can tell my mum/family about what I had learnt in school	5	--
My Punjabi is better than my English	24	--
I can understand the lessons	5	--
My English is better than my Punjabi	--	1
In school I have to learn in English (I use Punjabi at home)	--	1

4.8 Interpretation of the Data

In this section, the bilingual children's responses will be discussed within the following categories : language use with family and friends, self-perception of competence in language skills, language learning; and choosing between English and the first language.

4.8.1 Language Use with Family and Friends

There is a clear pattern which suggested that English was used most of the time with the younger generation (such as the siblings, cousins and friends), while the first language was used more often with parents, grandparents and older relations. In Question 3, 17 of the children tended to use English when speaking to their friends at playtime in school and 16 children tended to combine English and their first language in a similar situation. There is only a slight difference in Question 5 where 12 children used English and 10 children used Punjabi and English when speaking to their friends when playing outside of the school environment. The decision to use English on its

own or in combination with the first language, when playing with friends is enormously influenced by the ethnic origin of their friends. As Question 2 and Question 4 indicates that only 2 children play with white children in and outside of school. These 2 children would therefore use only English with this set of friends.

There is a strong correlation between bilingual children's language choice and the nature of the 'play' environment. Even though 34 children (Question 2) play with their friends of their own ethnic origin, however only 3 children (Question 3) would use just their first language to communicate with their friends. This could be due to the school environment within which the playing takes place as children may perceive that the first language is 'forbidden' in such a situation. On the other hand, 34 children in response to Question 4 play with friends of their own ethnic origin and 14 children in response to Question 5 choose to use their first language only to speak to their friends when playing outside school. The rise in the number of children, from 3 to 14 is assumed to be a result of the non-restricted playing environment, i.e., outside of the school. Therefore, the reasoning that bilingual children are pressured from the

predominantly monolingual, monocultural majority, in terms of language use especially within the school is also reflected in the data for question 11; where 31 children use English only and 5 children attempt to combine English with their first language when speaking to their friends in the classroom.

The apparent tendency among younger bilingual children to use more English, or both their languages with the younger generation, for e.g. with their friends in school and outside of school, is also reflected in the pattern of language use they choose when communicating with their siblings or cousins. In Question 7, 14 children use English only to speak to their brothers and sisters and 15 choose English and the home language to do the same. And when these figures were compared to the children's position in the family, 14 of the 16 younger/youngest children in their respective families who responded, are the very same children who tend to use English more often than the other children. The 10 older/oldest children in the families, tend to use more of the first language or to combine it with English when speaking to their younger siblings. The 7 children in Question 7, who use only the first language with their younger siblings also felt that it was their duty to

set 'good examples' to their younger brothers and sisters by using the first language more frequently. Similarly, 10 of the children in Question 9 tended to use both their languages when speaking to their cousins. These 10 children are the same 10 older/oldest positioned children who would use their first language only with their cousins who they said are younger than them.

English was found to be used less frequently with the older generation in households where the home language is to be maintained and cultivated to ensure that there is no language loss. 32 of the children in Question 6 speak in their first language to their parents. The 2 children who said that they are encouraged to speak in English only to their parents and the two children who use both languages in the same instance are exceptional but realistic cases. The parents of these 4 children in the sample, encourage their children to speak in English in the belief that this would help them to be competent English speakers and do well in their school studies. This response was elicited from the children. On the other hand, most of the children who are expected to use home language only at home whether with their parents or siblings, also tended to speak more in English in the school or outside

the home. In Question 8 all of the children in the sample used only their first language with their grandparents. As for older relations like uncles and aunts, 5 children (in Question 10) use English only and 7 children use both languages. When asked to elaborate, some of these children said that they tended to use English on its own or in combination with their first language when they are speaking to their 'younger' uncles and aunts who are not too strict or formal with them. Therefore, the findings from this Preferred Language Questionnaire parallel to those found in the Schools Language Survey by the Linguistic Minorities Project in 1985 with older bilingual children aged 11 to 16. There seems to be a general pattern of language shift among British-born children of the linguistic minorities. As children from linguistic minorities grow up (particularly during their school years), the pressures from the predominantly monolingual, monocultural English society, in terms of both language use and general patterns of behaviour, are very difficult to resist. These pressures can lead to absence of reference to their home language and culture in and around the school; and the penetrating and compelling influence of the English-medium media within as well as outside their homes and among their peer group. To overcome this deterioration, the relevant

home languages should be cultivated and nurtured widely outside as well as inside the home and these languages should also be given status in the school reflected clearly in schools' multicultural education policies and strategic teaching input.

4.8.2 Self-Perception of Competence in Language Skills

Question 12 sets the precedent for the responses to Questions 13, 14, 15 and 16. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 3, as all the Punjabi-speaking children in the sample are expected to learn to read and write in Urdu, the national and official written script for Pakistan; therefore all the 36 children were asked to rate their skills in Urdu as well. However, 4 of these children indicated that they have acquired another language as well i.e., Koranic Arabic. Hence, another category indicating the responses of these 4 children has been included. In Question 13, 2 of the children feel that they understand Urdu quite well. These two children said that they lived close to some Urdu-speaking Pakistani families and hence have picked up the language quite well. Consequently, these 2 children who can speak Urdu quite well

responded similarly to Question 14. 34 of the total number of children who can understand Urdu a little or not at all may be due to the fact that these young children have only started to go for language classes in the past year or two years. The 4 children who have progressed on to reading the Koran but are still reading with limited or no understanding. They have to be taught what the words in the Koran mean before they can gain better understanding of the language. Only one of the four children said he could understand Koranic Arabic only a little. None of the four children could speak Koranic Arabic at all as they tend to learn this language more for a religious basis of being able to read the Koran rather than communicating by speaking or writing.

Urdu is a language of literacy that the bilingual children have only recently started learning in the past two years or so. This beginning stage of learning a new language is quite evident in the children's responses. Only 2 (Question 15) of the children say they can read the language quite well and only 1 (Question 16) child can write it quite well. One of the 2 children who can read Urdu quite well, has also learnt how to read the Koran quite well and has started to read Urdu stories as well. The 34 children in Questions 14, 15 and 16 who cannot

speak, read and write Urdu at all are still in the infancy stage of learning Urdu and its alphabetical system.

It is not surprising that none of the children said they could not understand, speak, read and write in English at all because they have been learning English ever since they started school in nursery. The bilingual children's responses to Questions 13 and 14 shows that their understanding and speaking aspects of their first and second languages bears little difference. 34 children said in Question 13 that they understand Punjabi quite well compared to 30 in the English category and the same number could speak Punjabi quite well in Question 14, just one more than those who could speak English quite well. Therefore, their perception of their understanding and speaking of their first and second languages is almost identical.

In a typical school day, all the bilingual children spend approximately 5 hours learning in English and they have only started to learn to read and write in Urdu; and spend approximately 1 1/2 to 2 hours doing so after school after a long school day. Some of the children confided that learning to read and write in Urdu can be quite boring as they do not

learn it in a fun way like doing art, topic work or design and technology like they do in English. Therefore the appealing conditions and circumstances are not available when the bilingual children are learning to read and write in Urdu. This is reflected in the figure where more children can understand, speak, read and write quite well in English. Therefore, styles of learning influence the bilingual children's perceptions of the language.

The 2 children in Question 14 who can speak only a little Punjabi are the same children who use English only with their parents, siblings, friends and relations. Most of the Punjabi-speaking children knew that the spoken language does not have its own unique written script. That is why when they were asked how well they could read and write in Punjabi, they said not at all with no hesitation. Some of the children when asked elaborated that they would use the Urdu alphabets to scribe spoken Punjabi. As for the few children who were not aware, the interviewer was able to clarify the question for them. The interviewer said a sentence in Punjabi and she wrote it in Gurmukhi script and showed the children how she would write Punjabi. The children were asked to do the same even with having to say and try to write just one

word. When they could not write the word, a knowledgeable child was recruited to do this part of the task and the child being interviewed smiled in recognition of the writing and this made the child realise that Punjabi can be written in more than one way. Hence, all the children said they could not read or write in Punjabi at all.

4.8.3 Language Learning

Most of the children go for language learning classes in order to be literate in Urdu and learn to read the Koran. Question 17 indicates that 19 children go to the mosque and 12 children go to somebody's house, i.e., a tutor, to learn the language. Some 5 children are fortunate enough to have parents who are literate themselves and who have the time to teach the reading and writing skills at home. These language learning classes take place mostly after school and usually everyday from Mondays to Fridays (in Question 18). Only 1 of the 5 children who is taught at home is only taught at the weekends by the parent. The 5 children who are taught at home are still at the very early stage of learning the Urdu alphabet and so some parents think they can manage to teach them on their own. However, when these 5 children become

better, some of the parents might consider sending them to the mosque or for private tuition. Similarly, 5 of the children who are taught at home spend less time on these language learning classes. They spend an average of only 5 hours per week (in Question 19). This may be due to the fact that parents can only afford to teach them for one hour a day. Of the 5 children taught at home only 1 child receives tuition from his father while the other 4 children are taught by their mothers.

The majority of the children (35) learn Urdu on weekdays (Question 18) and half of the sample (17) spend an average of 6 to 10 hours a week (in Question 19) learning the language. 14 children spend an average of 11 to 15 hours on these language learning classes. There was no correlation found between the amount of time spent on these classes and how far advanced the children were in their learning, i.e., whether they had just started learning the Urdu alphabet or they were competent speakers, readers and writers of Urdu. However, the competent Urdu and Koran readers explained in Question 21 their main reason for learning the language. All of the 36 children in the sample indicated in Question 20 that they enjoyed learning the language and were asked to elaborate their answers in Question 21.

The 12 children in Question 21 who said that they go for these language learning classes so they could learn to read the Koran comprised of the 2 Urdu and 4 Koranic Arabic children who had earlier indicated in Question 15 that they could read Urdu and Koranic Arabic quite well or a little. The 2 children (Question 21) who said that they can learn more languages are the same language conscious children who tended to use more English with their siblings and friends. The response from these 2 children show that they are very aware of the benefits of being fluent in as many languages as one could. 12 of the children who said that they will know more about their religion, Islam, know that the primary purpose of going for language learning classes is so that they could foremost read the Koran. Furthermore, the 10 children in Question 21 who said that they could learn to read and write in their home language show an inherent knowledge that while they could speak Punjabi, they needed to learn how to write it in the Urdu script.

4.8.4 Choosing Between English and First Language

All the children (35) in the sample except one said they enjoyed

learning in English (Question 22). One child explained in Question 23 that he finds English difficult to understand and by this it is presumed he was referring to studying and performing tasks in school which are usually done in English. 15 of the children have also identified learning in English with education (Question 23). They said they enjoyed learning in English so they could do better in English, i.e., they could perform better in their studies in school. 7 of the children have identified their pleasure in learning in English as a feeling of needing or longing to learn the language and 8 of the children have identified it as a form of pleasure in learning English. 5 of the children (Question 23) have related the question more to the social function of English as a means of communication. They have said that they enjoyed learning in English so they could understand when people spoke to them in English. Therefore, the 23 responses in the following categories : **'I want to learn English, I can do better in English** and **I find English difficult to understand'**; have based their answers on the basis of the use of English as a medium of learning and doing well in school. On the other hand, the 13 responses in the categories of **'I like to learn in English'** and **'I can understand when people speak to me in English'** may have the social function of English in mind when answering the

question. They may see English as a major language of communication in the school, community, region and or country.

A few of the children found Question 24 difficult to visualise. In order to overcome this confusion, they were given an analogy by the interviewer. They were told to recall the work they had done the day before for example, the Victorian Wash-day. They were then asked if they thought they could have understood and learnt better if that lesson was explained to them in their first language rather than the original way it was done, i.e., in English. This little example helped to clarify the question for the few children who were then able to respond. 34 of the children in the sample responded that they would understand and learn better if things are explained to them in Punjabi (Question 24). 2 of the children said no they would not. The 2 children who said 'no' comprised of the same 2 children who spoke in English only to their parents and 3 children who used English only when playing with friends, speaking to their siblings, cousins, uncles and aunts (refer to Questions 3,5,7,9 and 10). One of the 2 children who said 'no' explained that since their English is generally better than their home language (according to their self-perception), they would then not benefit from

being taught the school curriculum in their first language (Question 25). The other one child felt that it was her duty to learn in English in school as she already used her first language at home. Here again these responses are closely associated to the educational purpose of English as an important medium of learning in school.

5 of the children who said they would benefit from being taught the school curriculum in their first language have explained that it would be easier for them to tell their mums especially or family about what they had learnt in school (Question 25). When asked to elaborate, these children said that they tend to share what they had done in school with their family and sometimes they find it extremely difficult to translate an English word or concept into their first language. The majority of the children (24) in the sample said that since their first language is better than their second language, i.e., English, they would certainly benefit from being taught in their first language (Question 25). 5 of the children have admitted that their cognitive functioning is affected by the language of instruction, i.e., English. They said that they would certainly understand lessons better if they were taught in their first language. Their responses therefore, echo the objective of the research

that bilingual children have innate cognitive abilities but these are being overlooked as they are expected to learn and perform in tests only in their second language.

The results of the questionnaire were discussed in the relevant different categories. Some findings were similar and they appeared continuously in the different headings. The main points will now be summarised in the next section.

4.9 Summary of Findings

The most immediate and striking aspect of the interviews carried out with the bilingual children is their positive attitude to the languages in their repertoire. Most of the children feel that their languages should be retained, that they do have value and are a valid medium of learning. At the same time, however, they feel that English is, or is becoming one of their stronger language by their response to Question 22, 35 children said that they enjoy learning in English. The results of the data collated from the Preferred Language Questionnaire shows an increasing use of English on its own or in combination with the first

language when bilingual children are involved in a 'play' environment. The non-restrictive environment coupled with the fact that bilingual children are communicating with other children of the same generation makes the use of English natural and therefore perhaps more favourable. It is true that English is used more with the younger generation and the first language with the older generation. More bilingual children tend to use English on its own or in combination with the first language when speaking to their friends both inside and outside of school, with siblings and cousins. The first language was used more frequently than English when talking to members of the older generation like parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts. A small but significant number of parents are encouraging their children to use more English at home with hopes that this might benefit the children's acquisition of the majority language and eventually lead to better achievement in their studies. The increasing use of English is also dependent upon the position of the speakers in the family. It was discovered that the bilingual children who hold the younger/youngest position in the family tend to speak in English more frequently. Comparatively, the older/oldest children in the family realise that it is their duty to set 'good examples' to their younger

siblings by using the first language more frequently. However, this does not seem to be the case for the younger siblings who still tend to use English more than they would use their home language.

During the interviews, it was interesting to discover that the bilingual children are aware of their ability to speak more than one language and could self-perceive how able they are in the understanding, speaking, reading and writing aspects of a particular language. As explained earlier, since these bilingual children are very young and are at the early stage of learning Urdu, they were still able to perceive their competence in the Urdu linguistic skills. Therefore, many bilingual children acknowledged that they cannot understand, speak, read and write Urdu quite well or even a little bit at all. The children were aware that the language is mutually intelligible regardless of religion and that Punjabi can be written in more than one way. The trend for bilingual children to learn two languages just as intensively but having to learn the literal form of the first language (Urdu) outside of school hours accounts for the difference in competence of both the languages.

Most of the children (ranging from 33 children in Question 14 to 25

children in Question 15) said they could understand, speak, read and write quite well in English, the language medium that they engage in learning for most part of the day. The first language that they engage in formal learning for a small part of the day (for e.g. 1 to 2 hours) takes place in unsuitable conditions like after a long school day and the lessons tend to be dull and rigid in structure. Therefore, most of these children who had just started learning Urdu in the past year or so felt that they could not understand, speak, read and write it well at all. Finally, many bilingual children preferred to learn and be taught in their first language rather than English claiming better understanding would take place in their first language. Such a strong desire calls for an investigation into the possibility of having bilingual education programmes for young children in British schools.

Cummins and Swain (1989) provide evidence from a range of bilingual education programmes to show that experience with either first or second language can promote development of the linguistic proficiency underlying both languages. Skills learned in one language will transfer readily to another. Therefore, if children speak in their first language for part of the curriculum they are not wasting time that could be spent

learning English. In fact their development of skills in the first language enables them to learn English more proficiently and with greater sophistication. Lanauze and Snow (1989 : 337) confirm this viewpoint with **'language skills acquired in a first language can, at least if developed beyond a certain point in L1, be recruited at relatively early stages of L2 acquisition for relatively skilled performance in L2, thus shortcutting the normal developmental progress in L2'.** This was the idea found in the Common Underlying Proficiency or the Think Tank model of Cummins discussed earlier in Chapter 1. The general idea drawn from the Preferred Language Questionnaire is that children are able to add a new language to their existing skills when their first language is strongly reinforced by a committed bilingual education programme in school.

The next chapter will identify how the bilingual children's linguistic repertoires described in this chapter may affect their performance in a reading comprehension assessment carried out in both settings, the first and the second language context.

CHAPTER 5

BILINGUAL CHILDREN'S READING COMPREHENSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter forms the main part of the research as it details the administration of the reading comprehension test and the results.The rationale for conducting a reading comprehension test in bilingual children's first and second language is clearly explained with support from the findings of relevant studies described in the categories of 'linguistic comprehension', 'similarities and differences between listening and reading comprehension' and 'reading aloud for comprehension'. The read-aloud method was adopted for assessing the bilingual children's linguistic comprehension skills.

Some isssues regarding the translation of the text and the principles guiding the translation of a text from English to Punjabi are also described in the relevant context. Since the purpose of the reading

comprehension test was to establish that bilingual children have a repertoire of linguistic skills such as linguistic comprehension; then it was justified to translate the text into the bilingual children's first language as well. The results of the reading comprehension test will be presented and the data will be interpreted with relevance to the Preferred Language Questionnaire.

5.1 Linguistic Comprehension

Linguistic comprehension is the *'ability to take lexical information (i.e. semantic information at the word level) and derive sentence and discourse interpretations'* (Hoover and Tunmer, 1993 : 8). Linguistic comprehension can be assessed in two ways : through reading or through listening. Reading and listening comprehension involves the same abilities but while the former relies on printed information decoded through visual clues via the eye, the latter is decoded through spoken language obtained by hearing. While Hoover and Tunmer (1993) discussed the views on linguistic comprehension with regard only to reading, here it will also be demonstrated that it is also possible to assess comprehension to the same extent as listening. Calfee (1975 :

58) offered the following definition of reading comprehension :

> ***'I can imagine a situation in which a few words are mixed with pictorial and diagrammatic information, so that a person with a minimal reading vocabulary is able to understand the gist of what is being communicated..... If he can show evidence of such understanding, then he can read in the sense of comprehending'.***

Pictorial and diagrammatic information may indeed support linguistic comprehension, but such information is extra-linguistic in that its understanding does not depend on linguistic knowledge. Similarly, listening comprehension is made easier by the gestures and facial expressions, paralinguistic features of the speaker. However such information is also extra-linguistic and linguistic understanding of the text is not dependent on it .

Linguistic comprehension must assess the ability to understand language and this can be done either by listening or reading. Listening comprehension, assesses the ability to answer questions about the contents of a narrative passage presented orally. Similarly, a measure of reading comprehension must assess the same ability, but one where the comprehension process begins with print that is, by assessing the ability to answer questions about the contents of a read passage. Both

are concerned with the content of the message and hence both are suitable means of assessments.

The notion of literacy can therefore be supported by measures of performance in linguistic comprehension of a spoken or read text. Fries (1963) maintained that the skills of thinking, evaluating, judging, imagining, reasoning and problem-solving can be found in both readers and non-readers, literates and illiterates. In short, conceptual understanding is (logically) independent of reading ability.

Hoover and Tunmer (1993 : 17) contend that while reading can undoubtedly further conceptual understanding, *'the overall education of individuals must be considered not just their ability to understand through reading what can be understood through listening'.* This quote succintly supports the study's view that bilingual children are not being allowed to display their conceptual understanding of language through their performance in reading comprehension texts in their second language, English, because this approach denies the conceptual understanding of language that takes place in bilingual children's first language. This study aims to demonstrate that when bilingual children

are permitted to display their repertoire of linguistic skills by showing their conceptual understanding of a passage both in their first and second languages, this tends to a more fair form of assessment than the current procedures. Before outlining the investigation it is important to establish that an alternative method of assessing bilingual pupils' reading comprehension and conceptual understanding can be measured either through listening to the passage as it is read aloud or by reading the passage silently alone as an individual activity.

5.2 Similarities and differences between listening and reading comprehension

The definition of comprehension applies to both modes of input whether it is spoken or written modes of language. Comprehension means to decode or extract meanings from language in a number of ways : (1) by extracting main ideas, (2) skimming or searching for particular details in order to find answers to specific questions. These can be achieved in aural or written modes. Much of the research in reading and listening comprehension makes the assumption that after word identification, the cognitive processes and the mental

representations elicited by the two modes of input are the same. This view is supported by Fries (1963), Goodman (1970), Kavanagh and Mattingly (1972), Perfetti (1985) and Sticht et al. (1974) . Danks (1980) suggested that a unitary or single comprehension process is activated regardless of the mode of input. According to this unitary process view, reading consists of listening comprehension plus decoding. Sticht et al. (1974) have claimed that reading uses the same language ability and cognitive resources as listening, plus one extra dimension, the ability to decode the print.

The comprehension of spoken and written language have the same general features. Harris and Sipay (1979 : 321) define similarities of these features as sufficient mastery of the language in which the message is framed, possessing an adequate level of mental ability that enables the listener or reader to follow the reasoning presented, and active attention accorded by the listener or reader. While these similarities in the processes of decoding listening and reading are acknowledged, there are also differences between listening and reading comprehension.

The most obvious distinction is that reading requires the decoding of printed symbols to recognise words and acquire meaning, whereas listening does not (Townsend, Carrithers and Bever, 1987). This distinction suggests that the two tasks are intrinsically different and therefore require independent sets of processes. Rubin (1980) noted that the listener can take advantage of non-linguistic cues such as gestures and facial expressions which also contribute towards communication. The reader, on the other hand, has to organise the printed words into meaningful units.

Besides, there are other stimuli that create the difference between listening and reading comprehension. Carroll and Slowiaczek (1985) suggested that in spoken language, the stimuli decays rapidly while in written language, the information is relatively permanent. In listening, the rate of information is controlled by the speaker but in reading, the reader has control of it. Listening happens in real time and needs rapid processing of a text. In reading, a text can be returned to many times and thus a time factor is involved in the issue of control. In spoken language, sentences are often fragmented but they are grammatically complete in written language.

There is a great deal of prosodic information (rhythm, intonation, phrasing) in listening comprehension and in reading comprehension it is only available in the form of punctuation. The reader offers an understanding of the text in their reading of it and this is actualised by intonation, rhythm, etc. Finally, while the reader has time to pause, reflect or review a certain point, the listener has to be more constantly attentive than the reader.

Linguists including Hodges (1972), assume that reading comprehension is heavily dependent on the comprehension of spoken language. Thus they recommend that reading comprehension can be improved by increasing the ability to understand spoken language and that children should apply the processes they use for understanding spoken language to their understanding of written texts. Kennedy and Weener (1973) found that the time used to develop listening comprehension was not rewarding as a similar amount of time was spent to improve reading comprehension but there was some carry-over from listening to reading.

There are a number of hypotheses that suggest the processes of comprehending speech and print are similar. This unitary view is discussed by Sinatra (1990 : 117-129) in his paper, Listening and Reading Processing. The most prominent hypotheses was put forward by Sticht et al. in 1974, who suggested that performance in listening will exceed performance in reading until the reading skill is mastered. However, once the decoding skills for reading have been mastered, the performance in listening comprehension should be predictive of performance on measures of reading comprehension, and gains made in the listening skill (for example, listening for the main idea) should transfer to the reading skills. Sticht et al. (1974) presented a large review of studies that provide evidence to support this hypotheses in their book, Auding and Reading : A Developmental Model. However, these studies are based largely on correlational research and may not be indicative of the relation between cognitive processes of listening and reading.

While most researchers seem to have adopted the unitary process view, others have postulated separate processes for listening and reading (Danks, 1980; Mattingly, 1972; Miller, 1972; Perfetti, 1987). The

dual process theory maintains that although reading and listening comprehension share some common elements, there are developmental differences that distinguish the two modes of input. Mattingly (1972 : 133-148) has noted that while children develop the ability to understand their native spoken language, they need to learn to read it inspite of having sufficient listening skills. Miller (1972 : 373-381) and Danks (1980 : 1-39) pointed out that writing did not originate from speech but rather from pictures as an alternate form of communication.

However, Perfetti (1987 : 355-369) explained that both the unitary and dual process theories have significant implications for reading instruction. The unitary process view suggests that reading should be taught only until the process of decoding is mastered while the dual process view suggests that besides this decoding skill, the skills necessary for the specific task demands of reading comprehension should also be taught. These skills are the decoding of words in context and using syntactic clues. Hence it can be seen that many unitary and dual process theorists agree that listening and reading share common processing at some point. Thus it was decided that

assessing the children's comprehension in the listening mode of input would be appropriate for this study. The researcher had to consider some of the factors that influence the listening comprehension of second language learners.

5.3 Factors Influencing Second Language Learners' Listening Comprehension

Before carrying out the comprehension test, it is necessary to highlight some of the major factors that affect the listening comprehension of second language learners. Most of these major factors are discussed by Rubin (1994 : 199-221) in her paper entitled A Review of Second Language Listening Comprehension Research. She identifies five major influential factors : text, interlocutor, task, listener and process characteristics. The relevant characteristics of the text used for the listening comprehension assessment will be discussed briefly. There is conflicting evidence that speech rate affects comprehension. Griffiths (1992 : 385-391), found that if the speech is faster than 200 words per minute (w.p.m.) then it is harder for lower ability learners to

understand. This hypothesis has been supported by similar works of Kelch (1985 : 81-89) and Blau (1990 : 746-753). Therefore, it was decided to use less than 200 w.p.m. when reading the text in this particular study.

Several researchers (Blau, 1990; Dunkel, 1991; Jacobs et al., 1988; Voss, 1979) have examined hesitation or pause phenomena for second language learners . Voss (1979), is the only researcher who regards the hesitation phenomena as detracting from comprehension but he used real and spontaneous speech. All the other researchers find that pausing is beneficial to understanding when the passage is read aloud. Hence, as the text chosen for the assessment in this study is a written text, it was therefore deemed essential to use relevant and consistent pauses when reading aloud. Finally, another text characteristic that affects listening comprehension is visual support. Studies (Herron et al., 1995; Rubin, 1990; Secules et al., 1992) have suggested that visual support, like videos and illustrations, can enhance listening comprehension. Illustration as a visual support is of relevance here. Wolff's (1987 : 307-326) study of German English as second language learners between ages twelve and eighteen, found that the more

difficult the text, the more the subjects used the illustration. With an easy text, the subjects ignored the illustration altogether. Since the text chosen for the reading comprehension test in this research was a published test material by SCAA, it was decided to use the original test material in its entirety and to keep the original illustrations. It should be stated that some of the illustrations provide direct clues to support the comprehension of the text. However during the duration of the test, very few children focused on the illustrations, as all of the children were intently focused on listening to the teacher read aloud the text.

There is little research comparing task types for second language learners. Shohamy and Inbar (1991 : 23-40) considered how type of question influenced better performance in second language listening tasks. They found that subjects performed much better on questions referring to local cues in the text than on those referring to global cues for example, local cues which are self-evident in the passage being narrated than global cues which the listener has to infer and use previous knowledge to deduce the meaning. They concluded that it is more difficult to generalise, infer and synthesize information than to look for data-specific information. As a result of this valuable

hypothesis, it was decided that the questions used in the listening comprehension task of this research would be those requiring local cues in the text.

The most relevant listener characteristic is the language proficiency level. However, most of the researches carried out in this area do not have standardised tests to determine proficiency level. Most studies use either teacher judgement, course level or performance on a non-standard test. Still, most researchers suggest that cognitive processing will vary depending on learners' knowledge of the language.

> ***'It is not clear what role grammar, vocabulary, background knowledge of the culture, and knowledge of discourse processes play at different proficiency levels. In addition, all tests are dependent on task, context, and lesson purpose as well as on learner purpose, interest and motivation'*** (Rubin, 1994 : 206).

It was therefore deemed unnecessary, in the context of this study; to carry out a language proficiency test (which are not standardised) prior to the reading comprehension test. The only relevant language proficiency test carried out prior to the reading comprehension test was the reading test which was conducted more to determine if the test was to be administered using the read aloud technique. The results of the

reading test will be discussed in the rationale.

Another listener characteristic is gender. A few studies have considered how gender may relate to differences in second language listening comprehension. Feyten (1991 : 174-180), looked at university students of French and Spanish and failed to find a significant relationship between gender and any foreign language proficiency measure. Similarly, Bacon (1992 : 160-177) looked at university students of Spanish and also failed to find a significant relationship between gender and listening comprehension. Inspite of such inconclusive, small amount of research on gender and listening comprehension, the results of the read-aloud comprehension test in this research were attempted to be analysed (to be discussed later) in terms of gender; but again there was no relationship between gender and measures of English as second language listening comprehension.

The last major factor that affects the listening comprehension of second language learners is process characteristics. Process refers to how listeners interpret the reading aloud input in terms of what they know or identify what they do not know. Many studies (Lund, 1991; O'Malley et al., 1989; Van Patten, 1989) have looked at the way in which listeners

use different kinds of signals to interpret what is said. Murphy (1985) worked with university English as second language students and found that more proficient listeners placed greater emphasis on 'personalising' (on elaborating from their own knowledge) and also inferred, drew conclusions, self-described and anticipated more often than less proficient listeners. An investigation like this is more difficult and not feasible to carry out with young 7 to 9 year old children (as the sample used in this study) than with university students (as the sample used in most of the studies discussed above). DeFillipis (1980), worked with elementary French students and concluded that the listening strategies of both skillful and unskillful listeners were more similar than dissimilar. Both groups reported using the same list of strategies. Such convincing studies carried out with mostly university English as second language students, therefore, reaffirmed this study's view that it is not necessary to do a thorough analysis of how the text, interlocutor, task, listener and process characteristics affect the listening comprehension of young 7 to 9 year old second language learners.

Finally, in the course of this literature review it was found that many studies that investigated the positive effect of listening to a text spoken

in English on the comprehension ability of non-native English speakers, but almost all of these studies had been carried out with teenage or young adult learners of English as a second language. The fact that there have been few investigative studies of a similar nature carried out with young children in Britain motivated this approach to the research design. We will now look at how studies have used the read aloud approach to reconcile the differences between reading and listening comprehension.

5.4 The Read Aloud Approach

An alternative way of assessing bilingual children's linguistic comprehension skills is via the reading or listening mode. This display of cognitive ability in comprehending a story can be apparent in either the bilingual child's first or second language. The various studies described earlier help to form the rationale for assessing bilingual children's reading comprehension in both the bilingual child's two languages. Finally I decided to use the read-aloud as a method for assessing the bilingual children's comprehension skills as there is ample research evidence that supports this technique.

5.4.1 Studies Using the Read Aloud Approach

As teachers and theorists grow to understand the unique characteristics of the listening skill and the significant role it plays in language learning, they recognise more and more the crucial importance of teaching listening comprehension in the second language classroom. Basabas-Ikeguchi (1988) explores this point in her paper, Analysis of Reading and Listening Comprehension Skills in Different Language Environments. In her study, she found that the comparatively high correlation between the cloze reading test and listening comprehension test results of the Japanese students in higher learning institution like the university, indicates that *'exposure to English as a foreign language has made possible the fact that the language skills have been tapped'.* (1988 : 21). For those Japanese students for whom English is the major language at home and in the environment and who are taught in the English medium, *'the low correlational test results indicate that the skills in listening comprehension have advanced to a certain degree while the other skills of reading comprehension have not'* (1988 : 21). The results of the study support Carroll's (1983) view that the cognitive

skills learned in decoding the messages either in audio or written tests have progressed to a certain extent that such advancement in the listening skills is accompanied by advancement in the other skill, and vice-versa. Basabas-Ikeguchi (1988) also explained that the Japanese students for whom English is a second language, are exposed more to aural English, the language mode they most frequently come in contact with through mass media and as a medium of instruction; had performed better in the listening comprehension test than the cloze reading test. Therefore, as more of the 7 to 9 year old bilingual children involved in this study, speak in English frequently (as discovered in Chapter 4); it was deemed appropriate because of the research evidence presented in this section, to adopt a different approach to the assessment of reading comprehension. Hence, the text was read aloud to the targeted children in both their first and second language.

To reconcile opposing views that conceptual understanding and linguistic comprehension is better assessed either in the reading or listening comprehension test, it was decided that reading aloud to the children would be the preferred approach. Traditionally, teachers have assumed that the best way to teaching reading for comprehension is

through engaging the learner in silent reading. Reading aloud by either the fellow learner or teacher was rarely encouraged and thought to be intrusive (Dhaif, 1990). However by contrast many studies (Elley, 1989; Hillman, 1975; McCormick, 1981) have emphasised the importance of reading aloud to children in first language teaching environment as a measure of improving their comprehension and as a means of encouraging them to read. However, this technique has been somewhat neglected in second language learning situations. As May (1986 : 10) pointed out :

> ***'Current research in the area of reading methods and techniques has rendered substantive empirical data indicating the value of reading aloud to native English-speaking children. Unfortunately, similar evidence is not available to support the use of this teaching technique with non-native speakers'.***

Non-native readers adopt a bit-by-bit reading technique due to their limited linguistic ability. As they try to understand each word, they break the sentences into small parts when trying to read. The sentences therefore become meaningless. Reading aloud to learners reinforces the meaning and presents pupils with larger semantic units that lead to better comprehension. Consequently, the learner realises that :

> ***'a higher level of comprehension can only be achieved by reading larger chunks of texts and not by attempting to understand***

individual words or bits of sentences' **(Dhaif, 1990 : 458).**

As mentioned earlier, there are very few studies that have investigated the use of the reading aloud technique in second language learning situations. May (1986) investigated the effect of the teacher's reading aloud in English on the reading comprehension of Spanish-speaking children (cited in Dhaif, 1990 : 458). The study concluded that ***'the results undoubtedly favour the use of reading aloud with the non-English speaking learners, regardless of linguistic level'*** (May, 1986 : 74). In a similar study, Santos (1987 : 68-69) found that reading aloud had a significantly positive effect on Spanish-speaking learners' reading comprehension skill as they could inter-relate, interpret and draw conclusions from the content. Finally, a study by Husain Dhaif (1990) entitled, Reading Aloud for Comprehension : A Neglected Teaching Aid helped to influence this study's decision to adopt the read aloud approach to testing the reading comprehension of the children involved in the research. The paper discusses the findings of a research project at the University of Bahrain to determine if the teacher's reading aloud to learners of English as a foreign language would lead to a higher level of comprehension than when students read silently on

their own. In the first session the students were given three passages to read silently and to answer five multiple-choice comprehension questions on each passage. In the next session, the researcher read aloud three other passages of a similar level of reading difficulty and asked them to answer the comprehension questions. The results showed that the students' scores were significantly higher in the second testing session. This indicates that the reading aloud technique had a positive effect on the learners' reading comprehension.

5.4.2 Rationale for Using the Read Aloud Approach in the Reading Comprehension Test

Earlier in this study, it was established that bilingual children are being penalised in reading comprehension tests more because of the language of testing rather than their not having the cognitive skills. A published reading test employing the read aloud technique was used to test the children's listening comprehension.

Whether one comprehends better when reading or listening seems to be related to the learner's level of reading ability. Tinker and McCullough (1975) conclude that at the lower grade levels and for below-average readers, listening comprehension tends to be equal to or better than reading comprehension while skilled readers' reading comprehension tends to be equal to or better than their listening comprehension. Therefore, children who are just learning to read, and poor reading comprehenders whose reading problems seems related to an inability to understand spoken language will benefit from practice in auding (listening with understanding). According to teacher assessment and personal experience of working with the 36 monolingual (control group) and 36 bilingual (target group) 7 to 9 year old children, there was a lot of evidence showing that these children had low reading ability. 50 of the 72 children require support in reading from the school's auxillary teacher who instructs and hears them read regularly during the week. 22 of the remaining 72 children are monitored regularly in their reading by the class teachers, the language support teacher and learning support teacher.

To support the evidence derived from teacher assessment and personal experience about the low reading ability of the children in the sample, the NFER Reading Test (refer to Appendix IV) was conducted in the first week of May 1996, one month prior to the reading comprehension test. There were 8 children who were 7 years old, 32 8 year olds and 32 9 year olds. The Reading Test was administered to all junior children (i.e., 7 to 11 year olds) in the school as part of the school's annual routine of gathering data regarding the children's reading ages. The reading test was conducted in accordance with the accompanying guidelines, i.e., in silent and isolated conditions; and children could take as much time as they would possibly want to complete the whole paper. The average time taken by the children was about 30 to 40 minutes. The test papers were then collected in by the class teachers, marked and the reading ages of each child was then calculated. For the purpose of this study, the reading ages of only the 72 children (i.e., 18, Year 3 and 18, Year 4 bilingual children; and 18, Year 3 and 18, Year 4 monolingual children) in the sample were used to represent the average reading age of a 7 year old bilingual and monolingual child, the average reading age of an 8 year old bilingual and monolingual child and the average reading age of a 9 year old bilingual and monolingual

child. The table below represents the data :

Table 4 : Average Reading Age of a Year 3/4 child (NFER Reading Test)

	Average Bilingual Reading Age	Average Monolingual Reading Age
7 year old	7.1	7.2
8 year old	7.3	7.5
9 year old	8.2	8.1

The table above shows that there is no stark contrast in the average reading age of a bilingual and monolingual child between the ages of 7 to 9 years. One must remember that the 8, 7 year olds are Year 3 or first year junior children and therefore their reading ages which may appear to be in line with their chronological age does not truly reflect the reading age that they should be at as first year juniors, that is, a reading age of 8 and above . Furthermore, 4 of the Year 4 or second year junior children are still 8 year olds and that is why they do not figure in the average reading age of the 9 year olds. The results show that the spread

of the reading ability in the two groups of (monolingual and bilingual) children fall within a similar range and are hence comparable.

The reading ages of the target group, i.e., the bilingual children were analysed in greater detail. It was found that the average reading age of the 36, 7 to 9 year old bilingual children was 7.6 years. Of the 36 bilingual children, only one child had a reading age above his chronological age and two children had the same reading age as their chronological ages. 33 of the 36 bilingual children had reading ages well below their chronological ages. Consequently, the NFER Reading Test's results gives support for the methodology of this research, i.e., the read aloud approach is an equivalent measure of the reading comprehension skills of a second language learner.

The read aloud approach was used for both the English and Punjabi reading comprehension tests. The next course of action was to translate the English text into Punjabi and hence it is essential to identify the principles guiding the translation of an English text to Punjabi. It is useful to outline the terms of reference under which translation of a text from one language to another takes place.

5.5 Domains, Diglossia and Code-Switching

The complexity of the changing repertoire of settled linguistic minority groups can be explained in a number of ways. Fishman (1972b) coined the term 'domain' to link patterns of language use in different social situations like the home, neighbourhood, school, workplace, etc. as differentiated into specific sets of distinct role relations. The assumption underlying this classification is that language use in a bilingual population will vary from domain to domain, each reflecting its particular type of locality, interaction and topic. Some prefer to use 'setting' instead of domain. While the concept of domain tries to form a link between language choice and the wider social constraints on language uses it fails to take into account the essentially differential nature of the relationship between a minority language and the language of a dominant society.

Fishman (1972a) also developed Ferguson's original 1959 definition of diglossia :

> *'a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language ... there is a very divergent, highly*

> ***codified, superimposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature either of an earlier period or in another speech community'.***
> (Ferguson, in Dil (ed.), 1971 : 16)

While Ferguson argued that this superimposed variety of language was not actually used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversatio, Fishman (1972b) used the term 'diglossia' more generally, so that diglossia came to mean basically the functional distribution of two or more language varieties within a speech community. Therefore a Punjabi-speaking child may have greater choice of which language to use in spoken or written form.

However Fishman's (1972b) societal diglossia is not necessarily reflected in some kind of individual diglossia where an individual restricts the use of his or her languages to specific spheres of activity. The Linguistic Minorities Project ((1985) reiterates that most members of linguistic minorities in England are bilingual, and while one language or variety may be used more often in some places or with some people, no generalisation can be made for all sections of the population. When creating the Preferred Language Questionnaire, questions were chosen relating to particular spheres of social activity like Questions 3, 5, 11, 17,

18,19, 20 and 21 (refer to Appendix I), and those specific relationships like Questions 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

In addition, language switching and borrowing are typical features of many bilingual settings, especially in minority language situations where inter-group barriers are breaking down. Code-switching from one language to another is a means of communication which cannot be accounted for under static, structural and functional view of language use as the domain-diglossia concept suggested. Poplack (1984) argued that code-switching does not necessarily result in language disintegration or loss but it may even sustain bilingual skills. Stubbs (1985 : 127), summarised the arguments for and against code-switching:

> ***'The phenomenon of code-switching reminds us that a minority language may come to have less communicative and more symbolic value over time. This is particularly evident in the case of adolescents who have almost lost their verbal skills in their first language, but who come to reassert their ethnic identity through distinctive patterns of language use or discourse strategies'.***

So, we shall now try to identify if English and Punjabi differ and how code-switching in Punjabi would affect the second language comprehension that was carried out in the reading comprehension test.

However, the analysis of code-switching in Punjabi would be brief as a more technical aspect of the analysis (which is possible) would tend to disarray the focus of the study. In addition, there will be a detailed discussion as to how the English text in the reading comprehension test (Appendix II) was translated into Punjabi.

5.5.1 Linguistic Structures in English and Punjabi

As far as Punjabi is concerned (and for that matter, most of the languages of the Indian subcontinent), there is a long history of contact with English as well as much other languages. As a result of *'genetic inheritance and diffusion, the South Asian languages share such a large number of syntactic, grammatical and phonological features'* (Romaine, 1989 : 131). One example of this is that in Punjabi, there are items in the lexicon which have been created through English borrowing for example, *pass kerna,* in the sense of *exam pass kerna,* has no equivalent in Punjabi. This group of so-called compound or conjunct verbs consist of a major category (such as verb, noun or adjective) plus operator. The operators are a small class of simplex

verbs with lexical meaning in their own right. The main ones are *kerna* which means to do and *hona* which means to be/become. The basic meaning of the compound is determined by the first element and modified by the verbal operator. The operator *kerna* is now being used with English verbs, not only in cases where the equivalent Punjabi meaning would be expressed with a compound verb, but also in cases where the Punjabi equivalent would be a simplex verb. So, while the Punjabi word for to play is *khelna* , when this is mixed with English, the new compound verb will be *ple kerna*. There are of course cases where English words are used in compound verb constructions because no Punjabi equivalent exists for example, *lobbying kerna*. Therefore, later in the reading comprehension test, where there is no Punjabi equivalent word, a compound verb will be constructed by borrowing the English word.

To some extent the infiltration of English words into the compound verb system is a reflection of the fact that Punjabi lacks productive word formation rules for creating new verbs. There are other cases where Punjabi equivalent exist with a slightly different meaning. For example, the Punjabi compound verb *mould kerna* appears to be that

there is no general term for moulding something. Instead, separate words for moulding clay, shaping wood and metal exists in Punjabi and they are *sachena* and *khedai.* One could probably only use *benana* which means 'to make' in a general sense. A further example, is the English/Punjabi mixed compound verb *pick up kerna* in the sense of 'pick up a language'. The Punjabi version of pick up is *chukhna* which literally means 'to pick up a language'. So, the Punjabi compound verb has no equivalent semantic extension to that of English and is therefore not available for lexical mapping for example, *boli* (language) *chukhna.* A better Punjabi compound verb would be *boli sikhna* which means to 'learn a language' but the meaning of the original phrase has been distorted from 'to pick up a language' to learning a language.

Romaine (1989) suggested that to overcome the difficulties posed by the compound verbs in Punjabi/English bilingual discourse is to regard them as cases of borrowing. This simple idea of borrowing English words is not as straightforward as it seems because as with French, Punjabi has masculine and feminine verb and noun markers. An example of this is the following sentence in Punjabi followed by

English :

Meh apni language learn kerni
I want to learn my language

The reflexive *apni* is a feminine form (masculine form is *apne*) and this is used in conjunction with the English noun 'language'. 'Language' takes on a feminine gender classification because the Punjabi equivalent of language is *boli* which only exists in the feminine form. So even if some English words are used in code-switching in Punjabi, then these English nouns bear grammatical relations with other sentence constituents and trigger gender agreement just as Punjabi words would in an otherwise monolingual discourse.

Zentella (1981) believed that bilingual speakers who code-switch because they do not know the term in one language or another, do in fact switch often for items they know and use in both languages. In my personal experience, when I do use the Punjabi equivalent of a word, some bilingual children say that they have not heard of that word before or never use or even do not know it. This may be due to the type of life style that they experience here in England and they do not

genuinely use that word at home. For example, some Punjabi-speaking children did not know the Punjabi equivalent for spring is *basant*. If they lived in the Indian subcontinent, they would hear of *basant* being used to describe the season, which is celebrated as a festival of colours. However, living here in Britain, Punjabi-speaking children would rarely hear their parents use the word 'basant' to talk about the still much cold English weather or even to talk about the season in general. Therefore, this limits the bilingual children's vocabulary of Punjabi words. So, it would be much more purposeful in some cases (in the reading comprehension test) to use the English word rather than the Punjabi equivalent that the children genuinely do not know about.

Furthermore, British-born bilingual children are increasingly using English in communication as discovered in the Preferred Language Questionnaire in the chapter before. English is becoming a rather common language in this world and here in Britain, it is the majority language. In their conscious attempt to learn the majority language and to make sure that their children would become well-versed in the language of instruction in schools here, many parents of bilingual children tend to include English words when speaking in Punjabi to

them. As a result, the bilingual children who regularly hear some words especially nouns in English frequently and never hear them being uttered in Punjabi, do not genuinely know the Punjabi equivalent of the word.

5.5.2 Translation of the Read Aloud Text

The process of translating the text from English into Punjabi was an arduous task because when a sentence could not be translated as accurately as possible, a more precise translation had to be sought. Hence, in the interests of maintaining a consistently accurate translation, it is difficult to know when to deviate from the exact English form without changing meanings. The researcher was very aware that in any translation, the alteration of merely a few words, or the word order, the inclusion or exclusion of a single word, can totally change the emphasis of a phrase or sentence. Consequently, in the process of translation, clues can either be added or omitted and such crucial information would affect the child's retention of it in his or her understanding and memory.

The first major aspect of the translation process was to determine which English words when translated into Punjabi would only cause confusion instead of benefit the children's comprehension. Hence, some of the words in the text were picked out as not being worthwhile to be translated into Punjabi. After picking out these words, the researcher held an informal discussion with 10 Punjabi-speaking children in Year 5 and Year 6 (i.e. third and fourth year juniors respectively). These 10 and 11 year old children were asked to give the Punjabi equivalents of the English words in the list. Only 2 to 3 children could give the Punjabi equivalents of two words only. It was therefore, decided that if the majority of the older bilingual children did not know the Punjabi equivalents of all the words in the list, it was quite possible that the younger bilingual children (7 to 9 year olds in the sample) would also not know it too.

Thus, the following words (together with the pages on which they appear in Appendix II) were not translated into Punjabi and but were used in their original English form during the translation of the sentences in which they appear :

English word	Punjabi equivalent
spring (page 236)	*basant*
boat (page 236)	*kishtee*
nest (page 236, 241)	*alena*
mole (page 236, 237, 239)	*kaato*
drainpipe (page 238)	*pernala*
barn (page 238)	*haveli*
flowerpot (page 238)	*ghemla*
busy (page 238)	*rujia*
lazy (page 238)	*alsi*
tunnels (page 239)	*surang*
safe (page 241)	*surakshat*
shell (page 241)	*khokri*
wood (page 239)	*jengle*

It is very clear from the list before that there is no distinct Punjabi equivalent of the word wood. All forms of wood or forest is called *jengle* in Punjabi, which bears striking resemblance to the English word that it is derived from.

Another aspect of the translation process is that where the bilingual children do not know the Punjabi equivalent of a word, a compound verb could be constructed by borrowing the English word. This

grammatical feature was especially used in the translation on page 238. On page 238 when the objective items for question 5 were translated into Punjabi or Urdu, the compound verbs were formed as follows :

In a flowerpot	---	English
Ek flowerpot wech	---	Punjabi
In a drainpipe	---	English
Ek drainpipe wech	---	Punjabi
In a barn	---	English
Ek barn wech	---	Punjabi

Finally, when a Punjabi compound verb has no equivalent semantic extension to that of English, it can therefore not be used for lexical mapping . If the Punjabi compound verb is used for lexical mapping, there will be a change in the meaning of the original phrase. There are a few instances where this occurs in the translation of the text into Punjabi . To illustrate this point, there is a very good example on page 237 of the text. The first sentence on the page is 'Toad walked on until he met Owl'. This sentence translated into Punjabi becomes *Dedu turdha gia te ulu nu milia* . However when the Punjabi sentence is translated back into English, it becomes 'Toad walked on and he met

Owl'. The semantic meaning of the original English sentence has changed somewhat but this is a better translation of it than if one was to strictly translate the English word 'until' into Punjabi. Then it will become *Dedu turdha gia jedho tak ulu nu milia.* It is clear from the two Punjabi translations of the sentence that *jedho tak* refers to until. However, the second translation of the sentence is grammatically unacceptable in Punjabi because the word *jedho tak* or 'until' in English cannot be used in the middle of a Punjabi sentence as it seems grammatically inaccurate. It can however, be used at the beginning of a Punjabi sentence like *Jedho tak meh kehena nehi, tusi jana nehi;* which translated into English means 'Till I do not say so, you do not go'. Hence, when the Punjabi compound verb is used for lexical mapping, it is acknowledged that there is a variation in meaning of the original English sentence; however, it must be stressed that the change in meaning is so slightly varied that it does not affect the bilingual children's understanding of the text.

5.5.3 Using a Published Text

The published text chosen for the reading comprehension test is called 'A New Home For Toad' (see Appendix II). This text was produced by the Schools' Curriculum Assessment Authority (SCAA) in 1995 for the Key Stage One Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs). This text was to be used to test the reading comprehension of good Level 2 achievers (third year infants, 6 to 7 year olds) in Attainment Target 2 (Reading) of the National Curriculum. Upon checking with the Infant teachers, it was established that none of the 7 to 8 year old children in the sample were tested using the text. The text was chosen as a suitable reading comprehension text for several reasons. The text had no culture bias. It is the story of a toad looking for a change in his environment and he meets up with other animals who invite him to live with them. Incidentally, the science topic for the summer term in which the comprehension test was conducted, was 'Living Things' and quite a lot of teaching input had been on animals and their homes. The story is an average length narrative with questions posed at appropriate intervals. This is an important feature of the text as young children (i.e., 7 to 9 year olds) have low retention rate and a very long narrative

with questions posed at the end of the whole story would have bored the children and made it difficult for them to recall the facts in the story in order to answer the questions corrrectly. The questions in the text are objective items where only one predetermined correct answer is available. This type of question is better than a question where a written answer is required of the individual, however short, since judgement is needed in the marking of such answers, even if only to determine acceptable degrees of incorrect spelling. The questions are designed to test the young children's range of linguistic comprehension i.e., from literal comprehension (getting the primary stated meaning to interpretation (probing for greater depth of meaning) of the text.

There are several benefits to using published tests. Published tests are straightforward, easy and quick to administer (as they come with guidelines); and to mark. They are standardised on monolingual populations and it is easier to compare national trends. Published tests are considered to have been standardised across a named population (e.g. a particular age group) so that they represent a wide population. However, not all standardised tests are appropriate as this form of assessment is norm-referenced, measuring a bilingual child's

performance on a monolingual sample. We will now look at how the reading comprehension test was administered.

5.6 The Reading Comprehension Test

The reading comprehension test was carried out in two major segments. The first major segment was carried out in the first week of June 1996 where the test was carried out in English only. The second major segment was carried out one month later and this time it involved just the bilingual children. When the reading comprehension test was in English, extra copies of the test were produced and distributed to all the children in that particular class (on an average 33 children), so as to appear to be discreet. The text was read aloud to all the children (100) in the three, Year 3/4 classes in the school. Each child had a copy of the text and the test was carried out under examination conditions with the children seated separately so as to ensure that no copying of answers took place.

The children were informed of the purpose of the test, i.e., to test how well they comprehended a text read aloud to them; and were instructed

to either tick the correct objective item or draw a circle around it. The text was read aloud by a fluent English-speaking teacher who was known to the children. The reading pace was kept constant. The title, the text, the questions and the multiple-choice items were all read aloud. An extra sentence was inserted in the text as it formed a necessary instruction -- "Can you please tick the correct answer" after each question and corresponding objective items had been read aloud.

The text, questions and multiple-choice items were read aloud only once. Time (approximately 30 seconds) was allowed for the children to choose the correct answer to each question and to indicate so in their papers. In total, the listening comprehension test lasted 20 to 30 minutes. This first major segment of the first part of the study was repeated 3 times with the 3 classes on the same day. Only 72 of the 100 scripts belonging to the identified 36 monolingual and 36 bilingual children were marked and collated for data analysis.

The second major segment of the reading comprehension test was carried out one month later. The time lapse was necessary so as to ensure that the bilingual children would treat the second test as a fresh

start. Each child had a copy of the text and the test was conducted under similar examination conditions. As explained earlier, the children were informed of the purpose of the test and how to indicate their chosen answers. The text, questions and objective items were read aloud by a fluent Punjabi-speaking teacher, known to the children.

The bilingual children are still not able to fluently read a text written in Urdu as the Preferred Language Questionnaire's results show that they are still at the early stages of learning the Urdu alphabet system. Furthermore, bilingual children can display linguistic comprehension by listening to a text read aloud to them in their first language rather than having to read it on their own. The points raised in Chapter 4 indicate that it would not have been worthwhile to give the bilingual children the written Urdu translations of the text to test their linguistic comprehension skills. It was felt that the bilingual children would have been distracted from the purpose of the test if they were given a copy of the Urdu text as they would have been more interested in trying to decipher the words rather than listening intently to the reading aloud. As the bilingual children were given a copy of the text in English, they showed much more interest in listening attentively to

the reading aloud in Punjabi. The bilingual children were given the same amount of time as in the English test, to choose their answers and the Punjabi test lasted as long as the English test, i.e., 20 to 30 minutes. The 36 scripts of the Punjabi test were then gathered, marked and the bilingual children's performance was analysed further for interpretation of data.

5.7 Results of the Test

When both the English reading comprehension test papers and the first language, Punjabi reading comprehension test papers were analysed, there were no statistically significant differences in the performance of the girls and boys in the sample. Furthermore, there was no distinct difference in the performance of the Year 3 (7-8 years old) and Year 4 (8-9 years old) children. Hence, it was not necessary to distinguish between the Year 3 and the Year 4 children's performance in the two tests. In addition, since the sample of children is so small, it was not feasible to present the data in percentage form. Table 5 is a collation of the 72 monolingual and bilingual children's performance in the English listening comprehension test.

Table 5 : Results of the Reading Comprehension Test in English.

Total score	Monolingual children	Bilingual children
12/12	26	17
11/12	8	8
10/12	1	3
9/12	1	3
8/12	--	2
7/12	--	2
6/12	--	1

The results above show that the monolingual children have performed better in the reading comprehension test read aloud to them in their first language, English with 28 of the 36 children answering all the questions correctly. Comparatively, almost half of the 36 bilingual children (17) managed the score 12/12 in the test. 8 of the monolingual children made just one mistake, 1 child made two mistakes and another 1 child made three mistakes. No monolingual child made more than three mistakes. On the other hand, 5 bilingual children

made more than three mistakes in their test. Of the 5 bilingual children, 2 children made four mistakes, 2 children made five mistakes and 1 child made six mistakes. The bilingual children did not achieve as good scores as their monolingual friends with 17 bilingual children compared to 26 monolingual children getting all their questions correct, the same number of bilingual children as the monolingual children (8) getting 11 out of 12 questions correct, 3 bilingual children compared to 1 monolingual child getting 10 out of 12 questions correct and this same figure applies to scoring 9 out of 12.

Table 6 is a collation of the 36 bilingual children's performance in the reading comprehension test carried out in both their first and second language, i.e., Punjabi and English. Since, there was no significant difference in the performance of the 7 to 8 year old and the 8 to 9 year old bilingual children and between the boys and girls, hence the data did not need to be presented as such.

Table 6: Results of the Bilingual Children's Reading Comprehension Test in Both English and Punjabi.

Total Score	English	Punjabi
12/12	17	27
11/12	8	6
10/12	3	2
9/12	3	1
8/12	2	--
7/12	2	--
6/12	1	--

The results in Table 6 above show that given the chance to listen to a text being read aloud to them in their first language, Punjabi, bilingual children would do better than when listening to a text read aloud in their second language, English. 27 of the bilingual children had perfect scores of 12/12 and had fully understood the text in their first language. This figure is an increase of 10 children when compared with the bilingual children's test results in English. 6 of the 36 bilingual children scored 11/12; 2 children scored 10/12; and 1 child scored 9/12. Compared to the first test conducted only in English, no bilingual child

achieved any score less than 9/12. Tables 5 and 6 provide an insight into how young 7 to 9 year old children perform in a reading comprehension test carried out in their first language whether it is English or Punjabi, and in their second language, in this instance English. These results require further discussion in the next section.

5.8 Interpretation of Data

Table 7 shows the number of mistakes made by both the bilingual and monolingual children. It is not necessary to find out the difficulty index of each of the twelve questions to find out which questions were considered relatively easy or difficult based on the children's responses as this is not part of the study. However, comparing the number of mistakes made by both the bilingual and monolingual children will help us to understand if the children found difficulty in comprehending the text read aloud to them in their first or second language.

Table 7: A Comparative Analysis of Bilingual and Monolingual Children's Mistakes in the Test.

	Monolingual Children	Bilingual Children	
No. of mistakes	English	English	Punjabi
0	26	17	27
1	8	8	6
2	1	3	2
3	1	3	1
4	--	2	--
5	--	2	--
6	--	1	--

In the first test, the 72 monolingual and bilingual children had to listen to the text read aloud in English and to answer the corresponding 12 questions. The monolingual English-speaking children, had obviously a clear advantage in having to decode the information provided in their first language and to display their conceptual understanding by answering the questions. 26 of the 36 monolingual children were able to do this accurately and without making a single mistake. By comparison, the 36 bilingual children had to overcome two distinct

cognitive processes, understanding the language of instruction and then understanding the text. This clearly makes this standard form of assessment more difficult and hence unfair to the bilingual children. Therefore, only 17 of the 36 bilingual children were able to get all the questions correct in English. This number is almost half of the total number of children in this cohort and it is 9 children less than the monolingual children.

However, when the test conditions were changed to allow the 36 bilingual children the opportunity to decode the information in their first language, Punjabi, just like the monolingual children, their results improved dramatically. 27 of the 36 bilingual children scored 12/12 and did not make a single mistake compared to 26 monolingual children achieving the same results. It is obvious that one more bilingual child has answered all the questions in the test correctly compared to the monolingual children. This is significant as this cohort of young learners show a repertoire of linguistic skills but do not have the opportunity to show this repertoire due to the language of assessment. Hence, this shows that bilingual children have a broad range of developed language skills such as comprehension and listening skills

and when tested on par with the monolingual children i.e., listening to a text read aloud in their first language; bilingual children can perform slightly better than monolingual children.

There are more monolingual children (10 children) scoring 11/12 than the bilingual children (7 children); and while there are 3 bilingual children scoring 10/12, there is only 1 monolingual child with the same score. These two figures show that the monolingual children perform better in their first language than the bilingual children did in their home language, Punjabi. However, the number of mistakes made by monolingual children in their first language shows 10 children scoring from between 11/12 to 9/12. This figure is higher than the number of bilingual children making mistakes in their first language test, 9 children scored between 11/12 to 9/12. There are therefore, more monolingual children than bilingual children who were not able to answer all their 12 answers correctly.

In conclusion, it can be seen that the bilingual children given the opportunity to take the test in their first language, would be able to do just as well as their monolingual peers in the reading comprehension

test. The findings of the reading comprehension test will be summarised in view of the children's responses to the Preferred Language Questionnaire and the shift in language from the minority to the majority language.

5.9 Summary of the Findings

The bilingual children's linguistic comprehension may to some extent have been influenced by the pattern of linguistic usage that was discovered in the Preferred Language Questionnaire (refer to page 118 : 'Children's Responses to the PLQ' for relevant figures). Furthermore, the Preferred Language Questionnaire found out that there was a significant change in the use of English among the bilingual children in their homes.

5.9.1 Summary of the Findings and the PLQ

The survey showed that most bilingual children used English (17 children in Question 3) or in combination with the home language (16 children in Question 3) when speaking to their friends in the classroom

or at the playground. It could be said that perhaps these children had the impression that the first language did not have a place in school. Therefore, their cognitive functioning regularly takes place in English when in school and some of the bilingual children may not have used their diverse range of language skills when doing the test in Punjabi.

While the monolingual children in the sample made a maximum of three mistakes in the English test (i.e., scoring 9/12), the bilingual children made up to six mistakes (i.e., scoring 6/12 in Table 7). To understand this more clearly, the 5 bilingual children's (in this group who made more than 3 mistakes compared to the monolingual children) responses to the Preferred Language Questionnaire was studied more carefully. The 5 bilingual children comprised of the 3 bilingual children (in Question 3) who tended to use the first language only when communicating with their friends in the school playground; 1 bilingual child (in Question 6) of the 7 bilingual children who used the Punjabi only with his siblings; and 1 bilingual child (in Question 22) who did not enjoy learning in English. As a result, the 5 bilingual children who spoke frequently in their first language did not perform as well in the reading comprehension test carried out in

English, their second language. Hence, it can be seen that there is a relationship between frequent use of the second language, English and performance in the reading comprehension test in English. On the other hand, the 2 bilingual children (in Question 6) who spoke English at home, even to their parents, performed better in the English test than they did in the Punjabi test. It could be argued that this is a result of the 2 bilingual children not using their first language frequently.

In the Preferred Language Questionnaire, the bilingual children were asked about their self-perceived language competence in the different areas of a language. The most relevant linguistic area was 'the understanding of a spoken language'. 34 bilingual children said in Question 13 that they can understand spoken Punjabi very well, and these children's test scores showed that they had achieved better scores in the first language reading comprehension test as well.

All of the 36 bilingual children indicated in Question 20 that they enjoyed going to language learning classes. If the interest of these children is sustained and developed further, they could in future be tested for their linguistic comprehension in a reading test conducted in

a similar manner; i.e., their understanding when reading a text in English and the same text in the Urdu script. This could be achieved by a longitudinal study of these 36 bilingual children . 35 of the bilingual children said in Question 22 that they enjoyed learning in English but their enjoyment could be shortlived if the education system in Britain becomes increasingly assessment-based in a way whereby the expense of continuing failure demoralises bilingual learners. The current educational policies (as discussed in Chapter 2) tend to assess bilingual children in their second language and consequently underestimate these children's cognitive processing. These unfair outcomes are then formulated to produce league tables for the general public. Such unfair educational practices in assessing bilingual children could impact on their overall enjoyment of learning in English.

Finally, 34 of the bilingual children said in Question 24 that they would understand and learn better if they were taught in their first language. This preference is very strongly supported by the good achievement of the bilingual children in the first language test in Table 6. The main reason given in Question 25 by 24 children regarding their preference to being taught in the first language is 'My home language is better than

my English'. This reason further supports the results in Table 6; that the bilingual children can indeed comprehend better in a first language reading comprehension test than in the second language.

The findings of the reading comprehension test can also be summarised in the view that there is a shift in language taking place in bilingual children's homes.

5.9.2 Summary of the Findings and Language Shift

The findings in Chapter 4 conclude that there was a general pattern of language shift among British-born children of linguistic minorities in England. This pattern refers to the increasing use of English with the younger generation and more use of the first language with the older generation. The first language is maintained at home and this may have contributed to the bilingual children doing better in the reading comprehension test in their first language than the English test. Hence, the results in Table 7 show that the language shift towards English does not adversely affect the understanding of a text that is heard in

the first language because the bilingual children did better in the home language test than the English test. This language shift towards English could still be in its 'infant' stage, i.e., the bilingual children who are using more English in communication with friends, family and relatives, are still just acquiring the basic conventions of the spoken English language. The responses to Question 7 of the survey showed that 15 bilingual children used Punjabi in combination with English, and a further 7 of them used Punjabi only with their younger siblings. It was noted that the older/oldest bilingual children tended to use more of their first language when speaking to their younger siblings. These children's test papers were analysed and it was discovered that they had done better in the Punjabi reading comprehension test. So, these children had maintained their first language well enough to achieve better scores in the first language comprehension test.

The results of the English and the first language reading comprehension tests can be further discussed in view of the theories purporting how bilingual children's cognitive functioning is affected by the addition of languages. This study started by looking at the various theories of bilingualism and second language learning and went on to

test its hypothesis that bilingual children possess a repertoire of language skills, which are not taken into consideration during the assessment of their reading comprehension. Chapter 6 will outline suggestions and recommendations regarding the assessment of bilingual pupils based on the combined findings of the reading comprehension test and the responses to the PLQ.

CHAPTER 6

RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter will summarise the results of the two reading comprehension tests, and discuss the validity of teacher assessments and standardised National Curriculum assessments, in relation to the assessment of bilingual children. The study will end with recommendations for future testing of bilingual children's linguistic comprehension and the related assessment of language skills.

6.1 Reassessing Models of Bilingualism in the Light of Results of the Test

The early theories of bilingualism (refer to Chapter 1 for detailed analysis of these theories) likened the bilingual brain to weighing scales which are tipped when a second language arrives and thus the first language cannot be developed much. Cummins (1981a) expanded on the balance theory and said the bilingual learner's language

development capacity will be like two half-filled balloons compared to a monolingual learner with one spaciously-filled balloon. The balance theory and Cummins (1981a) Separate Underlying Proficiency Model of Bilingualism are further unsubstantiated by the results of the listening comprehension test. If these hypotheses were true then the bilingual children would have performed very badly in the English test as with the arrival of the second language, i.e., English, the bilingual children would not have enough mental capacity to do the test in English at all and so performed very poorly. However, the results in Table 7 show there is not a vast gap between the achievement of the bilingual children and the monolingual children, only 5 of 36 bilingual children had made more than three mistakes. Furthermore, bilingual children are considered not to be able to transfer comprehension skills from the first language to the second language and vice versa; and it is therefore not possible that the two languages are kept separate in the bilingual brain as the balance theories suggest. In fact, the reading of the text in the first language used the mixing of languages technique, i.e., where the bilingual children did not know the Punjabi equivalents of an English word, the original English word was used in the translated sentences. Hence, the two languages were drawn upon each other

where necessary.

The Think Tank model of bilingualism (Cummins, 1981a), does not keep the two languages separate in the bilingual brain but believes that bilingual children can function cognitively just as well if both the languages are fostered and developed together. This theory can be commented upon further if the bilingual children in the sample had been exposed to a well established bilingual education programme. Since the young bilingual children in the sample have not been taught in this way, it is not possible to analyse the results within this theory. According to the Preferred Language Questionnaire, it was discovered that bilingual children's first language is being fostered and developed to some extent by their attending language learning classes but this language is not being developed in accordance with the English or second language curriculum in mainstream education.

The Threshold theory (Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa, 1977; Cummins, 1976) explains that there are negative or positive effects of bilingualism on the learner's cognitive functioning. The level of competence in the two languages characterises the cognitive effects and

which threshold the bilingual learner has reached. As explained earlier in Chapter 1, the Threshold theory does not consider that bilingual children are normally taught through their second language inspite of not having developed sufficient competency in the second language. This is an echo of what the study has been saying from the beginning, that bilingual children cannot be assessed in language skills in their second language only and therefore denying that they do possess language skills in their first language. The results of the reading comprehension test done in the first language (Table 6) shows that the bilingual children in the sample display positive cognitive effects in their first language. However, Table 7 shows that the bilingual children have not performed too poorly when compared with the monolingual children's performance, i.e., only 5 out of 36 bilingual children having made more than three mistakes. These results can place the bilingual children in the upper threshold as they had done quite satisfactorily in the two language tests.

Finally, the Developmental Interdependence theory (Cummins, 1984a) suggests that a child's second language competence is partly dependent on the level of competence already achieved in the first language.

Cummins makes a distinction between fluency at the level of 'basic interpersonal communicative skills' and full 'cognitive/academic language proficiency' and this has direct relevance to testing. Cummins (1980a : 103), claimed that for children who arrive in a new linguistic environment after the age of 6, the type of age-appropriate second language cognitive/academic language proficiency required in most tests, can take up to 7 years. Therefore, just because bilingual children can communicate coherently about everyday matters in their first or second language, this does not mean that they can be tested on a par with the monolingual children. Hence, the results in Table 7 show that bilingual children can be tested on a par with monolingual children but they should be given the opportunity to be tested in both their languages.

The second language acquisition theories considered attitude, motivation and social factors as having a direct impact on learning a second language. Lambert's (1974) model explains that attitude and aptitude relates to motivation which further affects the bilingual proficiency of a learner. The relationship moves on to show that a

positive self-concept will enhance additive bilingualism and the converse is true that a negative self-concept will promote subtractive bilingualism. With reference to the Preferred Language Questionnaire's responses and the results of the reading comprehension test of the 2 bilingual children who spoke in English regularly at home to their parents, 1 child obtained 10/12 in the Punjabi test and 11/12 for the English test; and the other child got a better score in the English test than the Punjabi test. For these children the attitudes and motivation towards the second language (being encouraged to speak in the second language at home) enhanced the second language proficiency and further results in additive bilingualism.

The results of the English reading comprehension test reveal that 5 bilingual children made 4 mistakes and more compared to the monolingual children. In the interpretation earlier it was discovered that these 5 children were the same children who tended to speak more in their first language than in English. For these 5 bilingual children their poor attitudes and motivation towards learning a second language has affected their second language proficiency and hence their

achieving poor results in the English test. Frustration at not being proficient in their second language might cultivate a negative self-concept which further enhances subtractive bilingualism. Therefore the Preferred Language Questionnaire and the second language reading comprehension test supports this theory of second language acquisition.

The next theory of second language acquisition is Gardner's (1985) Socio-Educational Model. This theory considers the social and cultural background as being the basis of second language acquisition. The four individual variables intelligence, language aptitude, motivation and situational anxiety make up the next stage. The third stage concerns the context where the second language is acquired i.e., via the formal/classroom environments or the informal/media channels. The final stage has two outcomes which is bilingual proficiency and non-linguistic outcomes like attitudes and self-concept. Here again, the positive social and cultural backgrounds which promote the acquisition of a second language for the 2 bilingual children in the Preferred Language Questionnaire who spoke regularly in English at home would have motivated the children to be more conscientious when

acquiring English formally in school or even informally (though this cannot be measured in this instance). The positive experience of acquiring a second language has resulted in these 2 children being proficient in their second language and doing well in the English reading comprehension test.

The task of analysing the results of the two reading comprehension tests with regard to the theories of bilingualism and second language acquisition can only be carried out as a general discussion because measuring a quantifiable output like marks achieved in a test against a non-quantifiable yardstick like motivation and attitudes towards a language is a mismatched exercise. Furthermore, it is not the particular objective of this study to explain achievements in an assessment done in the first or second language with direct relevance to the subjective elements of feelings towards language acquisition. The next section provides recommendations to educationists on assessing the language competence of bilingual children.

6.2 Recommendations for Teacher Assessment of Bilingual Children

A criterion-referenced system is simply defined as a comparison between a child and the subject matter of the curriculum (Rowntree, 1987; Shepard, 1991). What curriculum objectives has the child met and where is remedial action necessary? The National Curriculum reflects such a criterion-referenced system that classroom teachers use in their daily observations of children's learning achievements. In this context it is important to recognise that bilingual learners have knowledge which they cannot articulate well in English, their foreign or second language. An essential initial strategy is for teachers to tap into the bilingual learner's existing knowledge and to accomodate the bilingual learner's home language and culture in the teaching/learning environment. The National Curriculum is not specific regarding bilingual children's attainment of a skill and this suggests that many bilingual children may be left out of the the National Curriculum SATs because of 'inadequate' English. However, Nyakatawa and Siraj-Blatchford (1994 : 114) suggested emerging evidence that this exclusion of bilingual children from the SATs is rarely applied at Key Stage One.

The National Curriculum does not provide classroom teachers accurate guidance in how to account for bilingual learners' linguistic and cultural differences when carrying out teacher assessments. Prior to teacher assessment, monolingual classroom teachers do not receive adequate guidance and training in developing teaching strategies that encourage, value and support the use of bilingual children's home language. Bilingual children can be generally perceived as having learning problems emanating from language difficulties. Teachers tend to disapprove the use of the home language by bilingual children in their classrooms. As Dodson (1985 : 16) argued against this teaching practice :

> ***'If the child's preferred language is kept out of the classroom, the child will resort to private bilingual inner speech, because he must , but he will do so guiltily and consequently insufficiently and imperfectly. This will affect the pupil's ability to engage in profitable teacher-pupil, pupil-pupil interactions so crucial for his proper concept development.'***

Many teachers feel confused when trying to distinguish between bilingual children's abilities across curriculum areas and their ability in English language. In some circumstances, it is difficult to identify if bilingual children have genuine learning difficulties or are unable to

show attainment because they have to use English, a language they are still grappling with. To overcome this difficulty, Mills and Mills (1993) carried out a study with a small group of reception children aged four. The children were given ample opportunity to respond to English, Maths and Science activities in both their home language (Punjabi) and second language (English). Their achievement in English and Punjabi was analysed (similarly as done so in this study) against information derived about their family life and attitudes. The evidence of the study suggested that :

> ***'the children's abilities were more advanced than an assessment in English would have shown'*** (Mills and Mills, 1993 : 103).

Classroom teachers should therefore attempt to use a variety of assessment techniques when assessing bilingual children's attainment of skills in a particular area.

This research has emphasised from the beginning that bilingual children do possess a repertoire of linguistic skills that classroom teachers should consider when assessing their learning abilities. It is essential to find out if a recently-arrived bilingual child is literate in

his/her home language rather than just recording a failure for a particular skill, especially in literacy skills. Many languages rely on the child acquiring a common core of skills when decoding text (for example, left-to-right orientation and phonic analysis), and these skills do not need to be re-learned in the second language but may be simply transferred. This skill does not relate to a Chinese, Japanese or Arabic bilingual learner where the writing styles differ from the left-to-right orientation. A simple record of 'failure' in a box tells the teacher nothing of the child's previous experiences and the teacher needs to know of these acquired knowledge and skills before making decisions about the individual child, curriculum delivery and the effective use of curriculum resources (Brown, 1981; Blenkin and Kelly, 1992). Older bilingual children achieving higher levels of attainment which are similar to their monolingual peers; may still need support with the nuances of the English language. Grimble and Filer (1996 : 51) suggested :

> ***'As with speaking and listening, a fair assessment of a bilingual learner's capabilities in reading is not possible unless a wide variety of reading material is available, with suitable subject matter to interest all children irrespective of their culture and age'.***

6.3 Recommendations for Standard Assessments of Bilingual Children

Validity in N C assessment centres on how exactly pupil attainment on the level decriptions and the Attainment Targets is measured. There is difficulty in defining precisely and measuring exactly the Language Attainment Targets (Listening and Speaking, Reading and Writing). This study has shown that the Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority, SCAA should have recommended that the text 'A New Home For Toad' of the Key Stage 1's Reading Comprehension test could also be administered in the bilingual child's home language as it is basically a test of a child's linguistic comprehension and conceptual understanding of the text regardless of the medium it is presented in. The targets do not precisely indicate the competences, differences of definition and classification that occur (Baker, 1993a). Baker (1995 : 136) asked :

> *'Does pronunciation and dialect matter in oracy? How should context play a part in measuring reading and listening? How important is spelling in writing?'*

Answers to such questions vary among teachers and policy-makers.

Therefore measurement of attainment cannot be as precise and correct for all children, that is, monolingual and bilingual children. The ambiguity of level descriptions means that assessment will require value judgement and common understanding among teachers. Hence, standardised interpretations of attainment levels cannot be imposed upon all teachers as human judgement is required. All of the above reasons citing the invalidity of the statements of attainment has a further impact on bilingual children. Bilingual children's achievements are further left to the classroom teacher's judgement or interpretation of the standard attainment levels. As noted earlier in this chapter classroom teacher's lack of knowledge regarding second language acquisition and language skills of bilingual children, will foster unfair educational outcomes for bilingual children.

Baker (1995) made a few suggestions as to how validity of the N C assessment tests can be encountered to measure the relevant statements of attainment. He suggested that language experts, expert teachers and assessment experts can assess content validity of the SATs tests through an initial and thorough examination for content relevance. After the tests, pupils' answers can be examined to find out

as to what extent has the test 'worked' effectively and fairly with all pupils. The extent to which a test is valid depends partly on what it is expected to be valid for. There is a need to specifically define the purpose of the SATs test and subsequently for the test constructor to build a test that is valid for that purpose only. It then becomes important to gather evidence to show that decisions can be properly made on the basis of test results.

It is further hoped that bilingual children's needs are being considered when examining the validity of the SATs tests. If the reading comprehension component of the SATs is designed to measure the linguistic comprehension skills of the children being tested, then the test will 'work' effectively and fairly with bilingual children if they were tested in their first language as well. The bilingual children's responses for the reading comprehension test in both their first language and second language (English) can be collated and their achievement can be measured more fairly. Only then will the particular test be valid for measuring relevant statements of attainment.

While this study has shown that the achievements made by bilingual children in the reading comprehension tests conducted in their first and second languages highlighted the repertoire of linguistic skills they posess; however, the cognitive processing of information and knowledge that took place during the tasks is left to be desired. This is another separate form of research that one could investigate to try to explain if the storage of information is different for bilinguals' and monolinguals' brains. The issue that language or information is differently organised and processed in a bilingual brain compared to a monolingual brain will be discussed next. This area of study is the next step available to support this research's philosophy that bilingual children's repertoire of language skills are not being fairly accounted for in the assessment of language skills, like linguistic comprehension.

6.4 Extension to the Study

There are various researches (Obler, 1983; Fromm, 1970; Vaid and Hall, 1991) on neurolinguistics and bilingualism. Obler (1983) finds it difficult to make clear cut conclusions that bilingual learners language processing differs considerably to that of monolingual learners. A

dominant topic in the study of bilingualism and the brain is lateralisation. Vaid and Hall (1991) reviewed the five main points from existing research on which part of the bilingual brain is dominantly used for language processing. They said that balanced bilinguals use the right hemisphere of the brain more than monolinguals for first and second language processing; and second language acquisition occurs more actively in the right hemisphere than first language acquisition. It was also observed that as proficiency in a second language progresses, the left hemisphere of the bilingual brain gets more active. Another point reviewed by Vaid and Hall (1991) is that those bilinguals who acquire a second language naturally or informally tend to use their right hemisphere more for processing than those who learn a second language formally. Finally, late bilinguals were more likely to use the right hemisphere than early bilinguals.

Contrary to much of the earlier conclusions, Vaid and Hall (1991) used a quantitative procedure called meta-analysis and found out that the left hemisphere strongly dominated language processing for both monolinguals and bilinguals.

'The largely negative findings from the meta-analysis must be taken seriously as reflecting a general lack of support for the five hypotheses as they have been addressed in the literature to date.' (Vaid and Hall, 1991 : 104).

They discovered that bilinguals did not seem to vary from monolinguals in neuropsychological processes and that the lateralisation of language of the two groups were relatively similar.

Baker (1993 : 127-129) emphasises that there are limitations to the findings of research conducted in the area of bilingualism and neurolinguistics. Firstly, research tends to match monolingual and bilingual groups on all variables other than language. There may be other social factors like motivation of the children, parental attitude and school experience that may provide alternative explanations which are usually overlooked in such research. Secondly, researchers often focus on balanced bilinguals to explain cognitive advantages. MacNab (1979) argues that bilinguals are different in major ways from monolinguals. For example, some bilingual parents give high priority to the development of their children's language skills compared with monolingual parents. Such bilingual parents want their children to be bicultural and bilingual; and encourage creative thinking in their

children to foster metalinguistic skills. Therefore other non-language factors which are influential should be taken into consideration when explaining how the bilingual brain functions in cognitive processing.

Most research in this area assumes that bilingualism come first and causes cognitive benefits. However Diaz (1985) using sophisticated statistical techniques suggests that bilingualism is more likely to be the cause of increased cognitive abilities than the reverse. Finally, Baker (1993) points out that experimenters' expectations can affect the outcomes and results of human studies. Hakuta (1986 : 43) suggested that :

> *'a full account of the relationship between bilingualism and intelligence, of why negative effects suddenly turn into positive effects, will have to examine the motivations of the researcher as well as more traditional considerations at the level of methodology.'*

Hence, anyone wishing to undertake such research should not allow personal preferences to creep unintentionally into their research and affecting both the results and interpretations of the results.

To conclude that all the research is invalid fails to acknowledge that the

majority of researches establish positive links between bilingualism and cognitive functioning. While the relationship between the brain and bilingualism is an important area, the present state of knowledge makes generalisation unsafe but an area where future research holds some promise. This should provide a strong basis for anyone to extend this study further to explain if the bilingual children were cognitively functioning in their first language when doing the comprehension test in their second language and vice versa. This could be done by the researcher interviewing the children directly after the test and asking specific questions to determine if the bilingual children was internally processing the second language into his/her first language so he/she could understand the question before providing an answer. This extension study will be more easily carried out with older bilingual children (for example 11 years old and beyond) who might be able to recall if they were processing the information in their first or second language. Prior to the test, the children could be forewarned to be very aware of how they process the second language cognitively in their brains; and so they would be able to inform the researcher afterwards. These are just very brief guidelines and suggestions for further development of this field research.

CONCLUSION

This whole study has been concerned with making assessments fair for all children especially bilingual children who are presently being denied their full entitlement to the curriculum and its related assessment procedures. MacNab (1979) describes bilinguals as being a 'special, idiosyncratic' group in society. This 'special' group of learners should be treated fairly in all aspects of the education system. They should be taught parts of the curriculum in their first language just like the monolingual group are learning through their first language all the time. Hence, the importance of a bilingual education system needs to be recognised by policymakers and huge efforts need to be made almost immediately as numbers of school-going bilingual children are increasing rapidly.

In the meantime, efforts should be made to review the national assessment structure like the Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) in Key Stage 1 to 3 in view of implications for bilingual learners. The creation of a league table heavily undermines the bilingual children's linguistic skills and unfairly distinguishes this special group of learners as being

under-achievers or cause of poor results for individual schools' academic performance.

The assessment carried out in this research was conducted fairly with all the children whether they were monolinguals or bilinguals. The monolinguals and bilinguals were assessed their linguistic comprehension skills in their first language. The results showed that both these two groups of children were high achievers. In line with the standard assessment procedures, the bilingual group of children were further tested in their second language as well. The results of this test showed the bilingual group to be low achievers than their monolingual counterparts. Such a standard means of assessment denies the bilingual learners their full right to the curriculum and these children may later be streamed into lower ability classes.

The reality is that bilingual children do possess a repertoire of linguistic skills as various studies and theories of bilingualism and second language acquisition theories continually support. However, policymakers and educationists fail to consider the cognitive abilities of bilingual children when hurriedly distinguishing them as being low

achievers. It is hoped that this study has shed some light on how bilingual children's repertoire of linguistic skills can be assessed fairly.

APPENDIX I

The Preferred Language Questionnaire

Name : **Year :**

Age : **Boy/Girl :**

No. of family members : **Position in family :**

Part A : Child's use of language

1. What do you think of school?

2. Who do you play with in school? [ ] black [ ] white
[ ] boy [ ] girl

3. What language/s do you speak to your friend when playing?
[ ] Punjabi
[ ] English

4. Who do you play with after school? [ ] black [ ] white
[ ] boy [ ] girl

5. What language/s do you speak to your friend when playing after school?
[ ] Punjabi
[ ] English

6. What language/s do you speak to your parents?
[ ] Punjabi
[ ] English

7. What language/s do you speak to your brothers and sisters?
[ ] Punjabi
[ ] English

8. What language/s do you speak to your grandparents?
[ ] Punjabi
[ ] English

9. What language/s do you speak to your cousins?
[ ] Punjabi
[ ] English

10. What language/s do you speak to your uncles and aunts?
[ ] Punjabi
[ ] English

11. What language/s do you speak to your friends in school?
[ ] Punjabi
[ ] English

Part B : Child's language competence (self perception)

12. Which language/s can you understand?

[ ] Punjabi [ ] Urdu
[ ] English [ ] Koranic Arabic

13. How well can you understand this language?

[ ] yes, quite well	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[ ] only a little	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[ ] not at all	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

14. How well can you speak this language?

[ ] yes, quite well	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[ ] only a little	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[ ] not at all	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

15. How well can you read this language?

[ ] yes, quite well	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[ ] only a little	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[ ] not at all	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

16. How well can you write this language?

[ ] yes, quite well	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[ ] only a little	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[ ] not at all	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

17. Where do you go to learn this language?

[ ] in another schoo
[ ] in a mosque
[ ] somebody's house

18. When do you go to learn this language?

[ ] after school/weekdays
[ ] at weekends

19. About how many hours a week do you spend learning this language?

[ ] hours

20. Do you enjoy learning this language?

[ ] yes [ ] no

21. Why?

22. Do you enjoy learning in English?

[ ] yes [ ] no

23. Why?

24. Would you understand and learn better if things are explained to you in Punjabi?

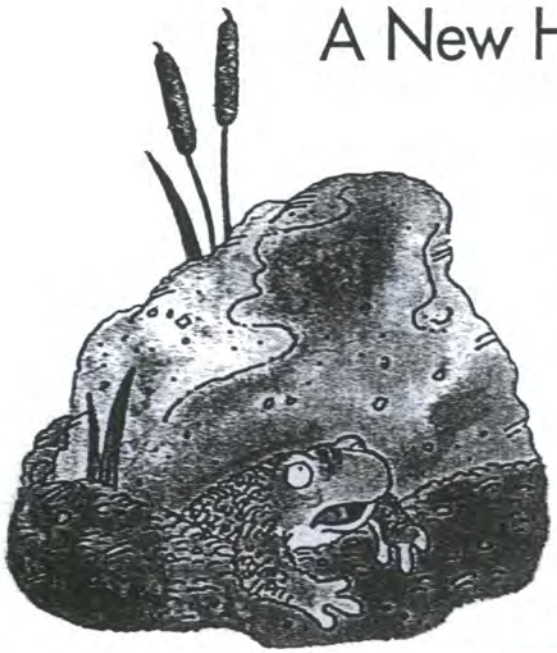
[ ] yes [ ] no

25. Why?

APPENDIX II

The Reading Comprehension Test (A New Home for Toad)

A New Home for Toad



Spring was on its way.

Toad looked from under his stone.
Everywhere was new and bright.

Toad wanted his home to be new and bright as well. He was fed up with living under the same old stone by the same old pond.

It was time he moved. But where would he go?
Toad went for a walk to think about it.

---

1. Which animal wanted a new home?

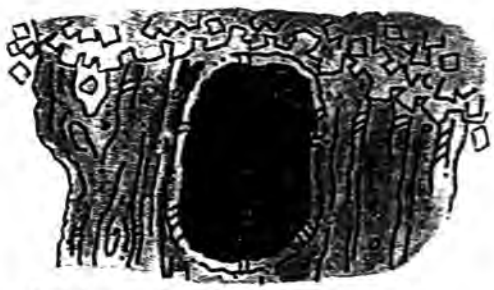
   ☐ Owl. ☐ Rat. ☐ Mole. ☐ Toad.

2. Toad lived

   ☐ on a boat. ☐ under a stone.

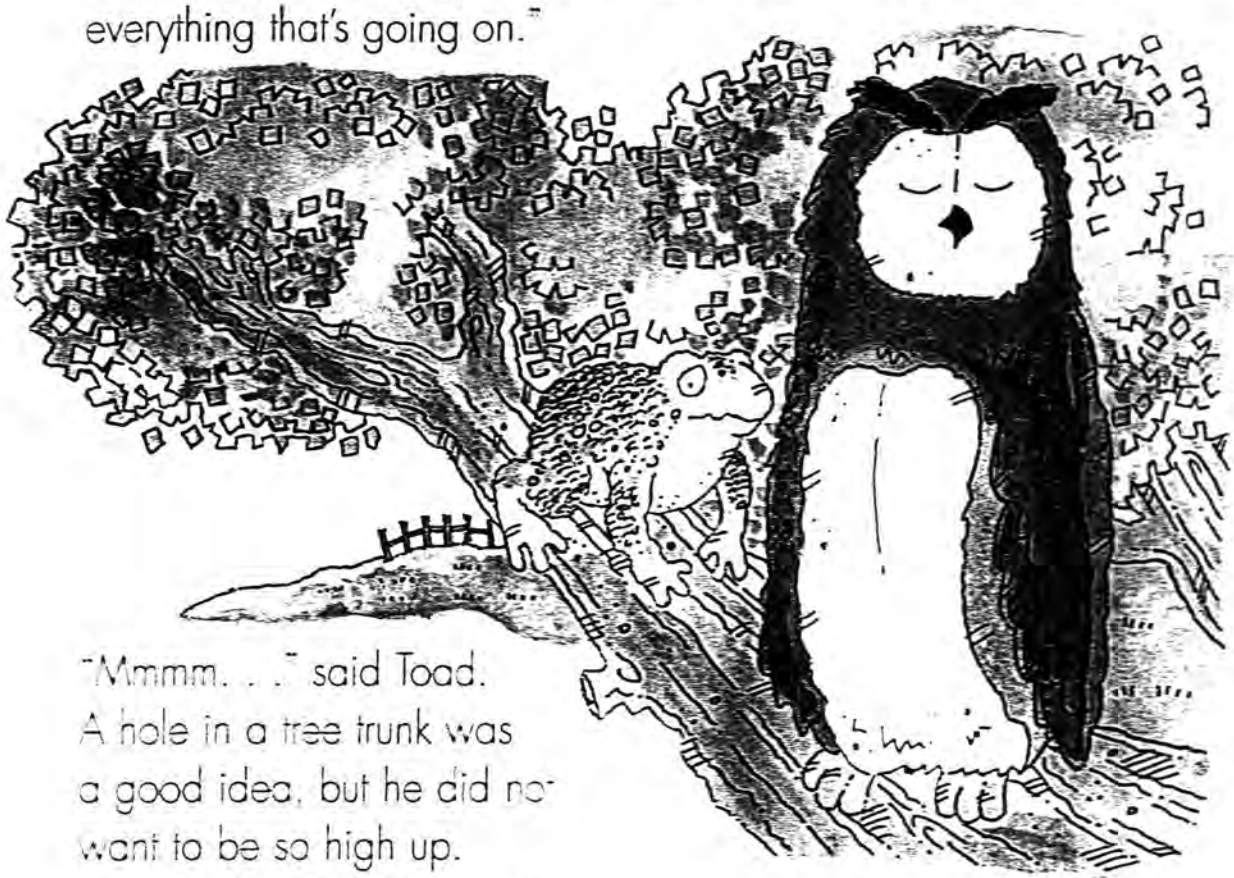
   ☐ up a tree. ☐ in a nest.

Toad walked on until he met Owl.



"I want a new home," said Toad.

"What about a nice hole in a tree trunk like mine?" said Owl. "There is plenty of space. You could sit on a branch and watch everything that's going on."



"Mmmm. . ." said Toad. A hole in a tree trunk was a good idea, but he did not want to be so high up. "No thanks, Owl," he said.

---

3. Who lived in a tree trunk?

   ___ Owl. ___ Rat. ___ Mole. ___ Toad.

4. Toad did not want to live in a tree trunk because he thought it was

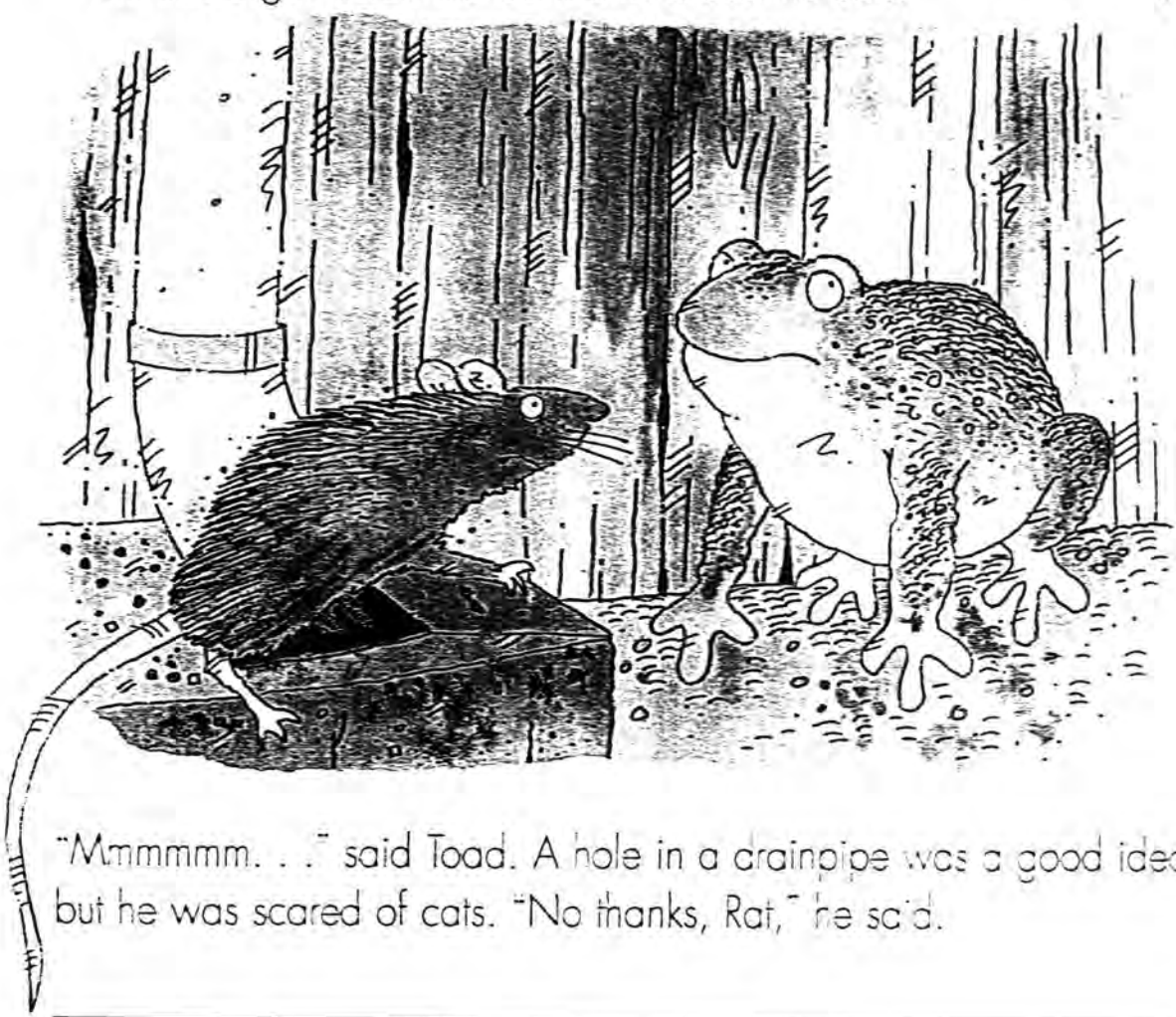
   ☐ too big for him. ☐ too cold.

   ☐ too high up. ☐ too windy.

Toad walked on a bit more until he met Rat.

"I want a new home," said Toad.

"What about a nice hole in a drainpipe like mine?" said Rat. "You could get inside the barn and chase the cats."



"Mmmmmm. . ." said Toad. A hole in a drainpipe was a good idea but he was scared of cats. "No thanks, Rat," he said.

5. Where does Rat live?

- ☐ In a flowerpot.
- ☐ In a box.
- ☐ In a drainpipe.
- ☐ In a barn.

6. Why did Toad not want to chase cats?

- ☐ He was too busy.
- ☐ He was lazy.
- ☐ They ran too fast.
- ☐ He was afraid of them.

Toad walked on some more until he met Mole.

"I want a new home," said Toad.

"What about a nice hole in the ground like mine?" said Mole.
"You could dig lots of tunnels under the wood."

"Mmmmmmmmm. . . ," said Toad.
A hole in the ground was a good idea,
but he might get lost in the tunnels.
"No thanks, Mole," he said.

---

7. Where does Mole live?

   ___ In a hole in the ground.
   ___ Under a stone.
   ___ Beside the river.
   ___ In a hole in a tree.

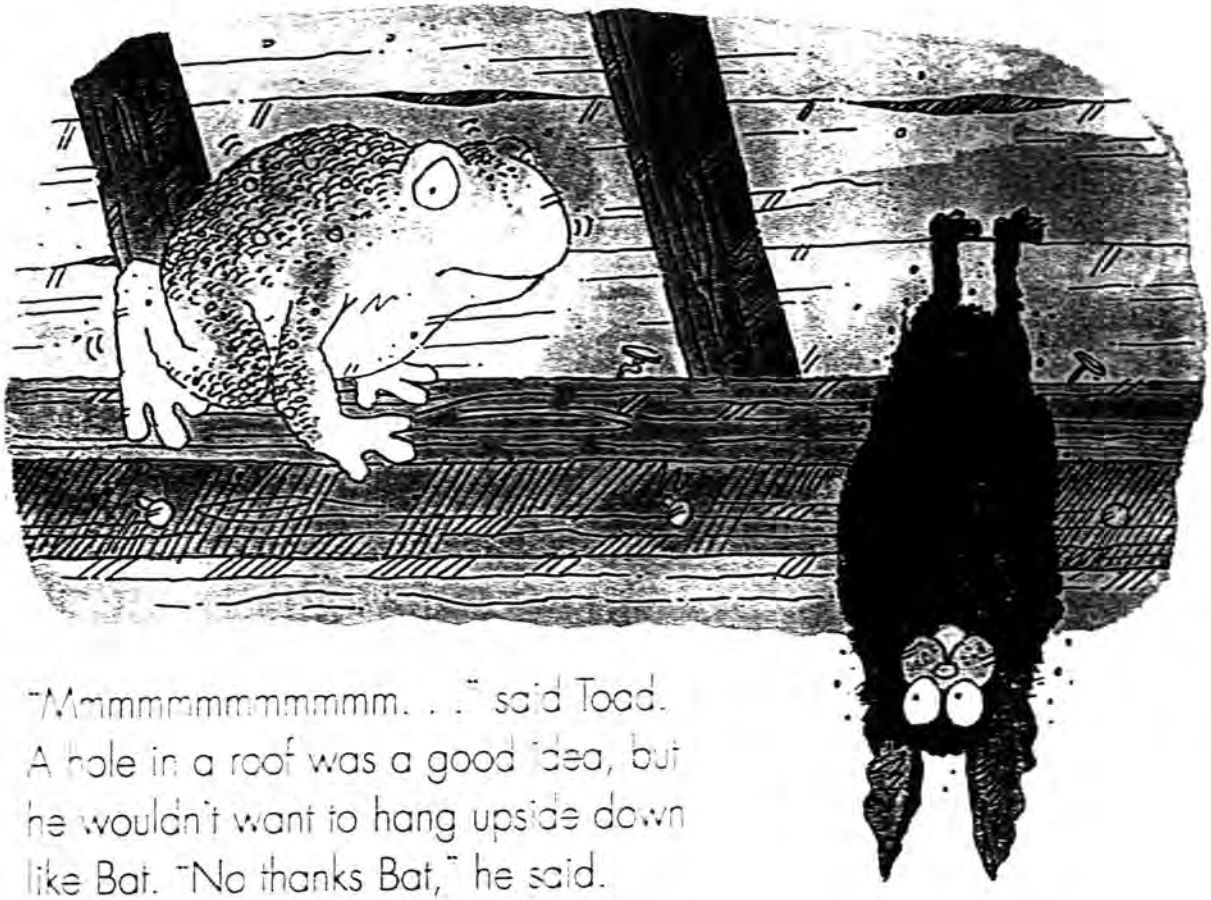
8. Toad didn't want to live in a tunnel because he thought

   ___ it was too deep.
   ___ he wouldn't like digging.
   ___ he might lose his way.
   ___ it was too near the wood.

Toad walked on lots more until he met Bat.

"I want a new home," said Toad.

"What about a nice hole in a roof like mine?" said Bat.
"There are plenty of places to hang."



"Mmmmmmmmmmm. . ." said Toad.
A hole in a roof was a good idea, but he wouldn't want to hang upside down like Bat. "No thanks Bat," he said.

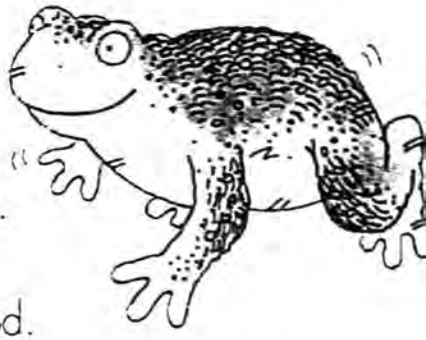
9. What does Bat say is good about living in a roof?

__ There are lots of places to hang.
__ There are lots of places to hide.
__ It is warm and dry.
__ It is high up.

10. Toad thought he didn't want to

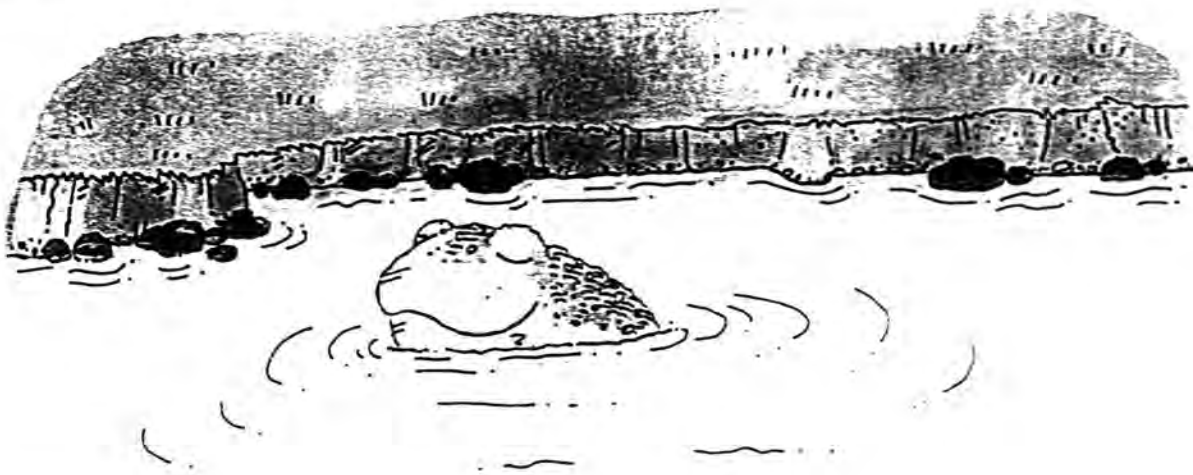
__ climb up to the roof.
__ hang from the roof.
__ fall from the roof.
__ live with Bat.

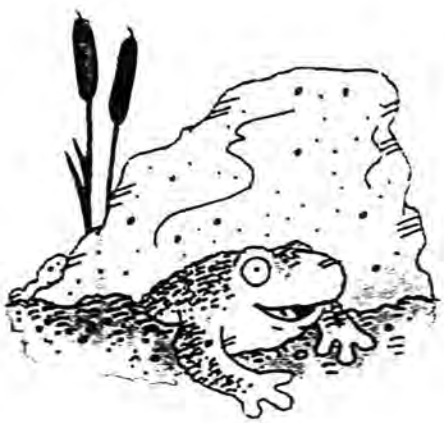
Toad walked all the way back to the pond.



"Do I really want a new home?" he asked.
Toad decided to go for a swim to think about it.

He swam across his same old pond. It felt good.





He climbed out of the pond and crawled under his same old stone. It was cool and dark and safe.

"Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmm. . . ." said Toad. "I think I'll stay here after all."

11. When Toad got back to the pond he
- ☐ ate some food.
- ☐ built a nest.
- ☐ went to sleep.
- ☐ went swimming.

12. In the end Toad decided to live
- ☐ in a shell.
- ☐ under the ground.
- ☐ under a stone.
- ☐ up in a roof.

APPENDIX III

Pilot of the Preferred Language Questionnaire

1. Name

2. Age

3. Number of family members

4. Position in family

5. Languages spoken at home	Punjabi	English
6. Which language do you speak most at home?	Punjabi	English
7. Which language do you speak most at school?	Punjabi	English
8. Which language can you read and write?	Punjabi English	Urdu Others
9. Do you enjoy learning in English?	Yes	No

Why?

APPENDIX IV

The NFER Reading Test

PUPIL

Pupil's Name _____

Class _____ School _____

Today's Date _____

Date of Birth _____

Age _____ Years _____ Months

TEST RESULTS

Raw Score _____

Standardised Score _____

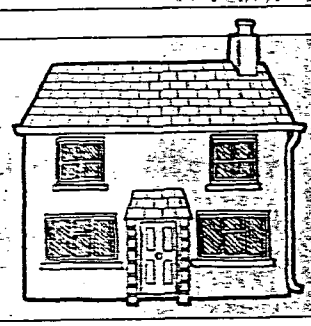
Other Test Score _____

Attitude A – B – C – D – E

Comment _____

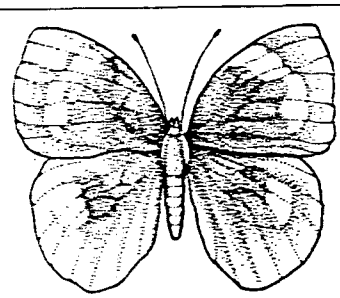
Look at each list of 5 words.
Find the word that fits the picture.
Draw a ring round this word.
Look at the example below to see how you do it. If you make a mistake, put a line through the word you have ringed like this, (cat).

hall
horse
(house)
show
mouse



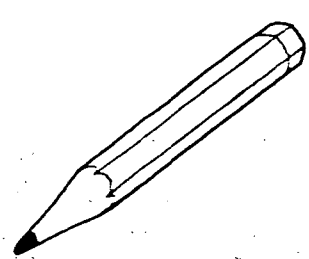
1

monkey
butterfly
chimney
paper
apple



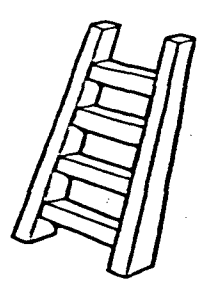
2

nail
pencil
ship
pin
hand



3

cat
taper
ladder
pram
garden

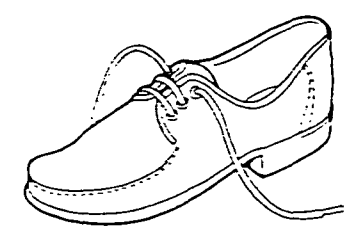


4

nose
ear
mouth
dish
cart

5

slip
shoe
walk
game
toe



Look at the sentence in question 6.
Find the word that best fits in the gap.
Draw a ring round this word.
Look at the example below to see how you do it.
Do not write the word in the gap.

The _____ bit the man.

log
(dog)
car
pen
bog

6 Her mother _____ she had to stay in.

said
rode
worked
sad
cannot

Turn over and answer all the other sentences in the same way.

7 I looked at myself in the ———.

mirror
bat
mirage
roof
face

8 She may ——— her book first.

finish
stand
spell
sit
catch

9 He turned the ——— in the lock.

screw
pencil
key
bolt
latch

10 Tom's baby sister is a ———.

boy
brother
son
girl
grill

11 Mary picked a ——— off the tree.

net
set
tom
nut
ten

12 They played ——— when it rained.

done
high
under
down
inside

13 She picked a ——— of flowers.

lunch
bunch
branch
launch
bustle

14 "——— kind of a dog is that?" she asked.

What
When
That
Hate
Bark

15 Bob ——— the string with a knife.

tied
cut
chewed
fetched
bent

16 My brother is three years ——— than I am.

young
taller
wider
older
sister

17 ——— the gate as you go out.

Bolt
Garden
Fence
Please
Stand

18 When the lights failed we lit the ———.

candles
camels
handles
bundles
cradles

19 Do not ——— where you put the key.

pick
forget
expect
climb
slip

20 After the storm we saw a ——— in the sky.

reindeer
thunder
railing
rainbow
rally

21 To ——— means to rub hard.

brittle
quiver
sprinkle
scrub
folder

22 The fire did a great deal of ———.

bargain
damson
wastage
heat
damage

23 We saw a play at a London ———.

heater
theatre
treaty
threat
theme

24 The ——— were nesting near the house.

willows
smalls
swallows
swills
windows

25 A black cloud is a ——— of rain.

sign
season
hail
circle
moisten

26 "——— am I?" he asked when he woke up.

Here
When
Will
Where
There

27 There was a ——— at each end of the rope.

now
nought
knot
not
note

28 The two boys ——— for the bus.

began
ranged
raced
want
sent

29 A ——— is a leather seat.

sadden
harden
slattern
lantern
saddle

30 He was ——— a bicycle for his birthday.

atomised
proved
promised
ridden
advertised

31 Her ——— was tucked inside her skirt.

bloom
blouse
collar
house
cuff

32 When her mother felt ill, Joan ——— to prepare a meal.

ate
finished
started
failing
served

33 We bought soap and a toothbrush at the ———.

chemistry
chemical
church
chemist
clinic

34 From the bulb she grew a pink———.

pupil
tongue
tipple
tulip
flute

Now turn over and do as many questions as you can.

35 The ——— was frozen so we could not play.

bicycle
rook
ice
cart
ground

36 He had a ——— cold and stayed indoors.

sight
sling
night
slight
stream

37 She was selling fruit from a ———.

barrow
burrow
barman
brow
bangle

38 She was told to stay ——— she was.

when
whence
which
were
where

39 We watched the fish swimming in the ———.

museum
equation
circus
aquarium
aquatic

40 ——— is a light metal often used for making saucepans.

Mercury
Illumination
Aluminium
Alluvium
Albumen

41 Jim jumped over the stream in one ———.

pound
bond
broad
board
bound

42 At the foot of the ——— was a number.

sock
leg
page
stool
piano

43 The rabbit was trapped in the ———.

share
snare
shave
nape
sneeze

44 At the Town Hall they were sent to the right ———.

important
department
apartment
docket
deportment

45 He had no ——— of a family called Fiske.

knowledge
insight
existence
relatives
whereabouts

46 He deserves ——— for winning the race.

price
raise
prize
raisin
praise

47 There was a ——— shutting off the new rooms.

petition
position
nutrition
partition
particle

48 He suffered from an ——— of the skin.

affection
indication
aspersion
affliction
aptitude

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