Multilingual learners in London mainstream schools: Policy, pratice and professional development

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Abstract

Key words:
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This paper is a summary of a report section produced for LUCIDE (Languages in Urban Contexts: Integration and Diversity in Europe) project and network, funded by the EU Commission Lifelong learning programme 2011–2014, based on the collected primary and secondary data. This summary focuses on multilingualism in mainstream education. The full report addresses multilingualism in several other areas: public, economic, private sphere and urban spaces. It is available on: www.urbanlanguages.eu.

Considering the size, population and complexity of London, our specific focus is on one local authority (out of an existing 33): the City of Westminster, geographically the heart of this metropolis. Westminster is in many ways representative of London language trends. It shows some of the most prominent features of multilingualism in London: an extraordinary linguistic variety with a wide distribution of languages, where no one language is dominant.

The aim of this research is to gain insights into experiences of multilingual learners in London in regards to: education practice and relevant policies. Primary data was collected by a team of four researchers who consulted 82 professionals relevant to the identified spheres of practice. The methods used were interviews and questionnaires. The sampling was purposive in terms of relevant professions: education, social work, public services, police and finance and business sector professionals. The theoretical framework used to develop our approach is the typology of language use, which distinguishes: symbolic, pragmatic and authoritative language use.

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1. KEY CONCEPTS: MULTILINGUALISM VERSUS PLURILINGUALISM

We would like to begin this paper by acknowledging the types of discourse we have encountered in the field and the current debates relevant to the two key concepts used throughout this report: multilingualism and plurilingualism.

In the contexts which we have explored only the concept of multilingualism is used. Practitioners and policy makers in the UK education system refer to 'multilingual schools', 'multilingual classrooms' and 'multilingual communities of learners'. In reality, this is in recognition of the fact that some or many students in these schools, especially London schools, have a language other than English as a part of their lives, often outside the mainstream school. However, it does not mean that any of their learning happens in another language.

Throughout our field work, we have not identified any agencies or spaces where the concept of plurilingualism is used as such. Participants in this study also did not refer to this concept. As the authors of this report we have made a point of using the concept of plurilingualism alongside multilingualism with the aim of promoting plurilingualism and plurilingual competencies as conceptualised by the Council of Europe (2001).

Plurilingualism recognises an all-encompassing communication competence that is made up of different languages that one person has been exposed to and acknowledges the partial nature of the knowledge anyone can have of one language, be it their mother tongue or not.

Therefore plurilingualism removes the ideal of the native speaker as the ultimate achievement and replaces it with the aim of an effective pluralistic communicator who draws on his/her varied repertoire of linguistic and cultural knowledge in a flexible, creative and individual way (ibid.: 4-5, 169). The emphasis in this process is on attitude formation and language and cultural awareness as essential to one's understanding of social and physical environment and ability to function effectively in the local, national and international environment (Tosi and Leung, 1999: 3).

The main distinction between a multilingual and a plurilingual approach in education is that a multilingual approach focuses on the coexistence of different languages within individuals or a society with the ultimate aim of achieving the idealised competency of the native speaker (Council of Europe, 2001:

4). A plurilingual approach, on the other hand, places the emphasis on the process of learning the language of home, society, other peoples; developing communicative competencies as a life-long activity; and in different situations flexibly calling upon different parts of this competence in order to achieve effective communication.

A plurilingual orientation outlined in the above referenced European policy documents provides a good starting point for rethinking communicative skills in education, public services, industry, business. Plurilingualism recognises the reality of children and adults acquiring only partial knowledge of relevant languages. This reality need not be dismissed as a shortfall, but acknowledged as an important contributor to the enrichment of an 'all- encompassing communicative competence'. This type of approach encourages language and cultural learning, appreciation and awareness in formal and informal settings for bilinguals and monolinguals alike. It places value on all of our linguistic experiences and provides a formal framework for their recognition – a Language Portfolio, as proposed by the Council of Europe. According to this proposition, every child in Europe is entitled to a Language Portfolio in which can be entered anything significant referring to their engagement with other languages and cultures.

The aim of this report is to contribute to the process of making this qualitative shift in thinking about engagement with existing linguistic diversity at the individual and societal level underpinned by the principles of a plurilingual orientation.

2. CONTEXT: LONDON AS A MULTILINGUAL CITY

Any attempt to produce a report on London needs to consider finding a focus that is realistic for the given time and resources. Having engaged with the largest city in Europe with a population of over 8 million according to the latest official figures, 233 languages recorded as spoken by school children and 33 local authorities (Eversley et al, 2010), our research team can only make a claim to providing insights and vignettes of particular practices and contexts based on the collected data and available literature.

We have used facts and figures from multiple sources to present a complex picture of a hyperdiverse metropolis and a site of massive global migrations.

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Some of these figures, although very recent, are probably out of date already considering the high level of fluidity in London. Every day there are 'new arrivals' in London schools, children arriving from different countries; its workforce is changing rapidly, shaped by the volatile state of the job market and economy; and high profile events, such as the recent Olympic Games, leave their own footprint on everyday life in a variety of ways. In addition, there is the perpetual change imposed by politicians and policymakers on the education system and other public services.

3. ETHNOLINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN LONDON

This section is a digest of the available statistics on ethnic and linguistic diversity most relevant to the focus of this paper: for additional figures please refer to our full report at www.urbanlanguages.eu.

The 2011 census asked London residents to describe their ethnic origin or identity in terms of five main ethnic-geographical categories, which subsume a number of sub-categories:

- White (including English, Scottish, Welsh, Northern Irish, British, Irish as well as other white);
- Mixed/multiple ethnic group;
- Asian/Asian British (including the categories Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Chinese);
- Black / African / Caribbean / Black British;
- Other ethnic group (including Arab).

Ignoring the numerous methodological and other problems related to this rather crude attempt of measuring ethnic affiliations (Aspinall, 2012), the results confirm London as a city characterised by extraordinary ethnic diversity, as shown in Figure 1, which divides the category of white into British white and non-British white.
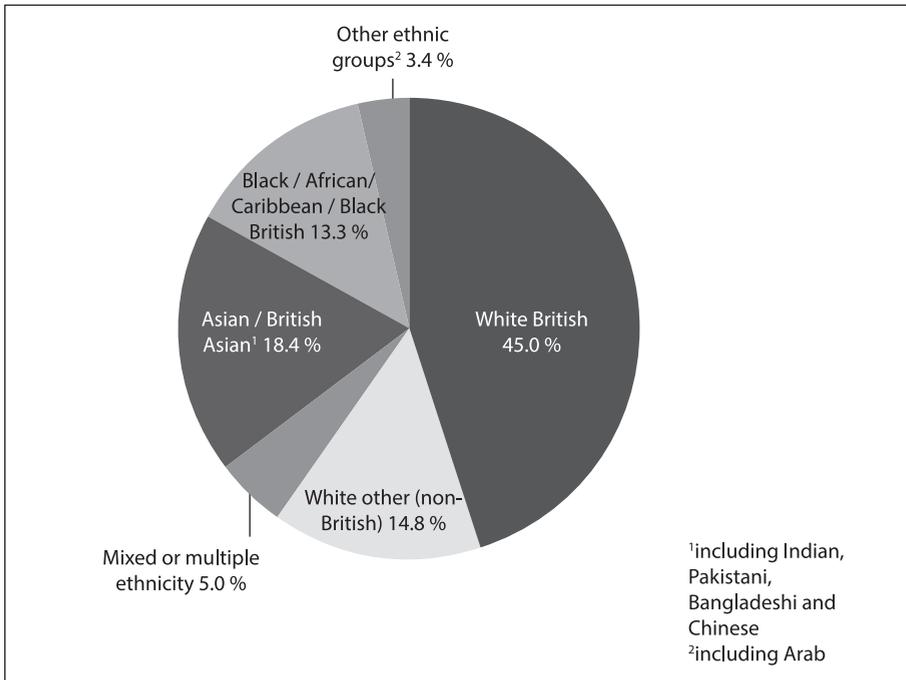
Other ethnic groups[2] 3.4 %

Black / African/ Caribbean / Black British 13.3 %

Asian / British Asian[1] 18.4 %

White British 45.0 %

White other (non-British) 14.8 %

Mixed or multiple ethnicity 5.0 %

[1]including Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese
[2]including Arab

Figure 1: Relative frequencies of ethnic categories chosen by Londoners

For the first time the census also contained a question on languages spoken in households ("What is your main language?") and a question on English language proficiency ("How well can you speak English?") (UK Office for National Statistics 2011).

According to the published planning documentation, the questions were included to ascertain "the need for translation and interpretation services […] and for providing English language lessons […], to gain a better understanding of the ethno-religious diversity of the UK population, […] to understand the impact of English language ability on employment and other social inclusion indicators [and] to identify linguistic resources in the UK for business reasons" (UK Office for National Statistics 2009: 4). The data gained from the census confirms the degree of linguistic diversity in London (UK Office for National Statistics 2013). Figure 2 shows that 26% of households in London have members whose main language is not English, and that in nearly 13% of all households no person has English as their main language.

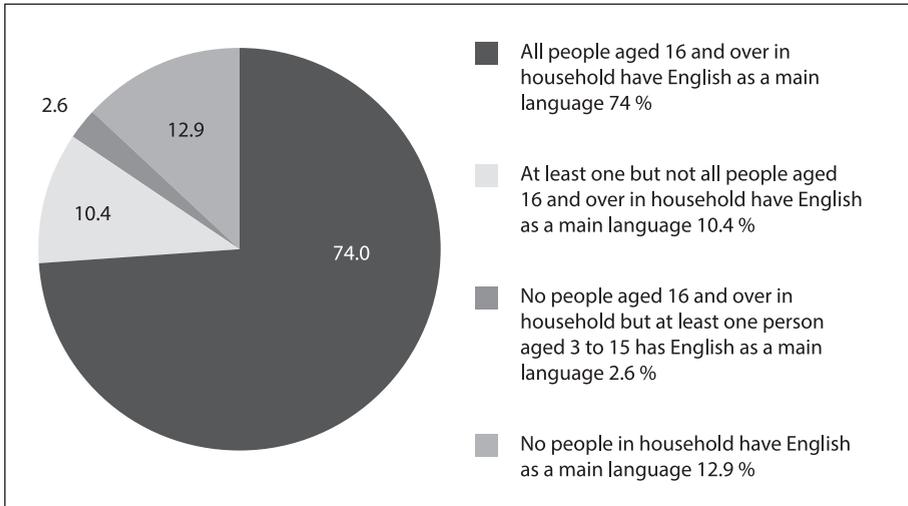A closer look at the quarter of households in London where English is not

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Figure 2: English as a main language in London households *(percentages of London households; census 2011)*

the main language reveals the current degree of linguistic diversity in the capital. More than 1.7 million Londoners over the age of three speak a language other than English as their main language.

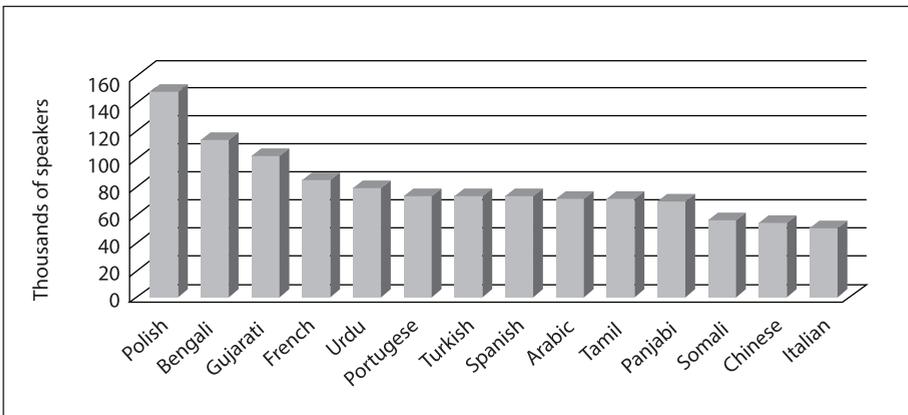Figure 3 shows the 15 largest community languages/language groups[1] in London.

Figure 3: The 15 largest community languages/language groups in London

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[1]   Bengali includes Sylheti and Chatgaya; Chinese includes Mandarin, Cantonese and other varieties. We are using the term 'community language' to refer to any language other than English which is spoken in London.

This set of 15 languages can be divided into groups of:

- very large community languages (more than 100,000 speakers): Polish, Bengali (with Sylheti and Chatgaya) and Gujarati;
- large community languages with 68,000 to 84,000 speakers: French, Urdu, Portuguese, Turkish, Spanish, Arabic, Tamil, Panjabi and;
- sizeable community languages with around 50,000 resident speakers: Somali, Chinese languages (including Mandarin, Cantonese & others) and Italian.

Together these 15 languages account for 64% of residents who do not have English as their main language. The remaining 58 languages named in the data account for 33% of community language speakers, while the last 3% of numerically very small languages spoken by London are not named in the published census data.

If we compare these figures with the data on school population (Eversley et al., 2010) there are interesting differences to be observed:

- The top 3 languages in schools are: Bengali (46 681 speakers), Urdu (29,354) and Somali (27,126);
- Followed by Panjabi, Gujarati, Arabic, Turkish, Tamil, Yoruba and French (between 21,000 and 13,000 speakers);
- Other sizeable groups are: Portuguese, Polish, Spanish, Albanian, Akan, Persian and Chinese languages (between 12,000 and 6,000).

One of the possible explanations for the differences between adult and school populations can be that the new waves of immigrants from countries, such as Poland, are naturally predominantly adults looking for work, often arriving as single men or women. On the other hand Bengali is very high up in both sets of data, reflecting a settled community with a consistent presence in both the adult and school populations.

One group that goes against these trends are Somali speakers. Although they are a recent and growing immigrant group, there is a higher ratio of children in comparison to adults. This can be explained by the fact that Somali women typically have children earlier in life and very often more than two children. Also, because of the conflict in Somalia a significant number of Somali school-age children arrive in the UK as unaccompanied minors, having lost their par-

ents in the war. This shows that having insights into the background of each individual community is essential in order to understand current trends and differences in data sets.

Looking outside the group of 15 large or very large languages, the next 20 languages listed in Figure 4 below have between 10,000 and 40,000 speakers and account for a quarter of all residents reporting that English is not their main language.
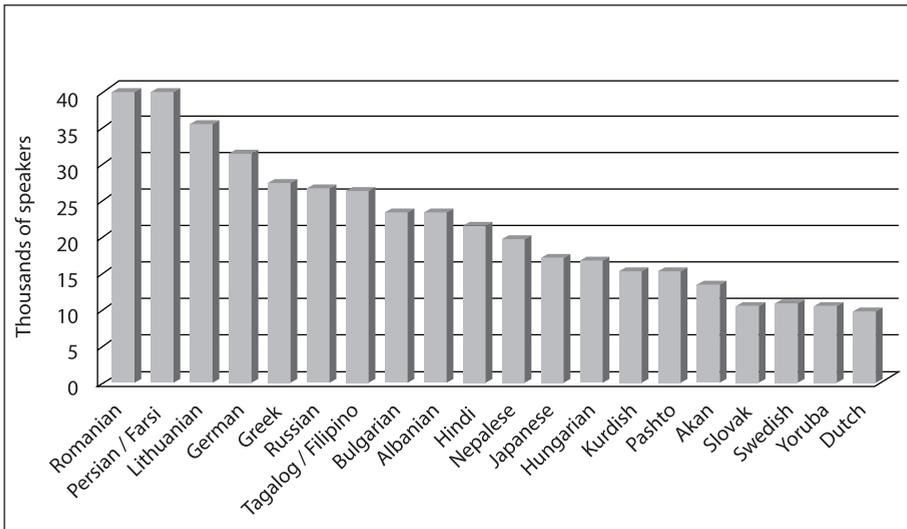

Figure 4: London languages with 10 000 – 40 000 speakers

In the City of Westminster, which is the main focus of our City Report, the 15 largest community languages account for 77% of all speakers of community languages. Figure 5 shows the absolute number of speakers for each language, as well as the percentage each language has of the total of residents who do not have English as their main language.

In Westminster, as in the rest of London, the overall picture is one of extraordinary linguistic diversity, where amongst the different community languages of a local government area no single linguistic community is particularly dominant. The one exception to this is the London borough of Tower Hamlets, where more than 18% of inhabitants (i.e. more than 50% of the total of speakers of community languages) have Bengali as their main language. Figure 5 shows notable linguistic communities across London. The percentages relate to the total number of residents in each local government area. Figure 6 is a
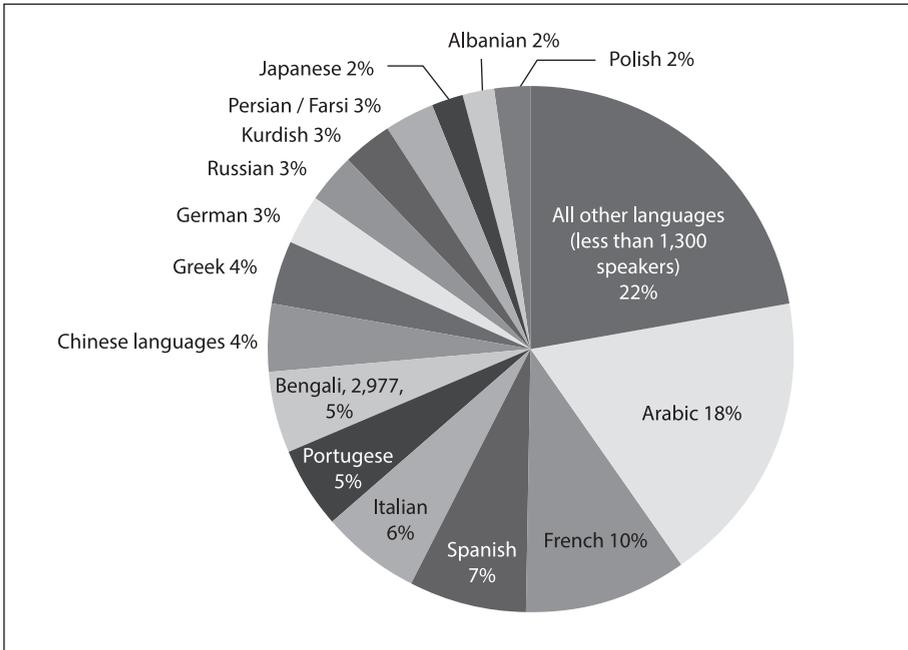
Figure 5: Communities languages in Westminster, Central London[2]

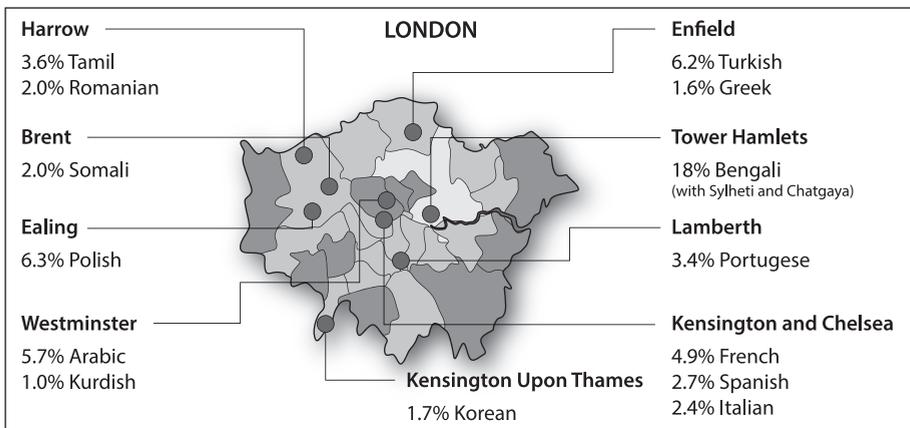map of second languages spoken in inner and outer London (UK Office for National Statistics, 2013).

Figure 6: Notable linguistic communities (% of total population in each borough) © Crown copyright 2014

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2   Bengali includes Sylheti & Chatgaya; Chinese = Cantonese, Mandarin & other Chinese languages

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4. RESEARCH APPROACH

Our approach considers language in its communicative processes and practice rather than from a more static perspective (e.g. counting people/languages). These communicative processes and practices may be understood within a typology of language use:

1. Symbolic/representational use of language;
2. Transactional/communicative/pragmatic use of languages other than the national language by authorities on the ground, for communicative efficiency;
3. Authoritative/directive.

Therefore our research questions were:
1. What evidence can be identified in terms of symbolic use of languages other than English?
2. What evidence can be identified in terms of pragmatic use of languages other than English?
3. What evidence can be identified in terms of authoritative use of languages other than English?

During 2012 the research was organised in two phases: secondary data collection, followed by primary data collection.

4.1. Secondary Data Collection

LUCIDE partners based in 13 European cities: Athens, Dublin, Hamburg, Limassol, London, Madrid, Osijek, Oslo, Rome, Sofia, Strasbourg, Utrecht and Varna jointly agreed the research methodology, aimed at generating new knowledge about improved use of diversity as an economic and social cohesion resource. As the first step fifteen meta-surveys of recent secondary data on multilingualism and plurilingualism in the network's cities were conducted. As well as the more traditional academic or policy documents on multilingualism, we were also interested in a variety of examples of multilingualism. These varied in each sphere, but included artefacts (printed/ visual/digital) which illustrated the multilingual reality of the city, like websites, advertising campaigns, public or private documents (biographies, diaries, official correspondence).

Five key spheres were delineated in order to provide for comprehensive and systematic exploration of how languages are encountered, used and learned in city life. These spheres included the public sphere, education, economic life, the private lives of citizens, and urban spaces or the 'cityscape'. It was decided to examine education as an individual sphere, given the focus of our network on language learning, although often it falls within the public remit. This paper will only present findings for this sphere. This phase of secondary research yielded a considerable quantity of data which allowed us to generate a relevant set of research questions.

4.2 Primary Data Collection

In the second phase of our research, we sought to gain insights from city respondents about the reality of multi/plurilingualism in their city, about language policy/practice, visibility, affordances and challenges. These interviews were adapted according to local circumstances, but included questions on the visibility of different languages, on the challenges involved in creating and managing multilingualism in an urban context and on some of the difficulties posed for individuals.

In London a team of four researchers consulted 82 professionals, relevant to the identified spheres, 42 of those in education. The methods used were either interviews or questionnaires. Our sampling was purposive in terms of relevant professions: education, social work, public services, police and finance and business sector professionals. In terms of linguistic and ethnic background our participants reflected a wide range of diverse profiles present in London, the breakdown of those relevant to mainstream education will be provided in the continuation of this paper. The collected data was analysed within the typology of language use framework outlined above.

5. MULTILINGUALISM AND PLURILINGUALISM IN THE EDUCATION SPHERE

5.1. Policy Context: English as an Additional Language (EAL)

England as a country with high rates of immigration has been addressing the issue of English as an Additional Language (EAL) since 1966 (Education Act, 1966). While in the 1960s the waves of immigration were linked to the

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Commonwealth ties and history, more recently the main influx of immigrants has been from the countries of the European Union. Amongst these, Polish people are the most represented group. In urban areas there is a higher concentration of EAL or bilingual pupils, defined as 'children exposed to another language (other than English) in their homes or communities' (Hall, 2001). It is estimated that over 50% of the school children in inner London classify as bilingual and in individual schools it can be as high as 70 to over 90%. It needs to be emphasised that the broad and inclusive definition of exposure to more than one language is necessary and suitable to the context where there are many different types of bilingualism with various degrees of competencies in languages used. In London alone there are around 233 languages recorded as used by school children (Eversley et al., 2010).

The patterns of immigration have also changed and although London remains the main site of mass and multiple immigrations, other urban and even rural areas and schools are now also receiving new arrivals.

The urgency to equip all the layers of the national school workforce for working effectively with children who are new to English and still developing age appropriate competencies in English has been apparent for some time. The Institute of Education (2008a) research identified the lack of recruitment of specialist teachers who are increasingly being replaced by teaching assistants. According to the experts, who participated in that study, a lack of understanding of EAL specialism among school leaders and increasing financial pressures result in such practices.

Although bilingual pupils are becoming a norm in many urban mainstream settings too, most of all in London, the mainstream sector in England still largely suffers from the deficit model of bilingual pupils.

5.2. Mainstream Practice

Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) in England mostly arrive in schools having had very little input, often one lecture, on working with EAL learners (NUT/NALDIC, 2011). In inner London schools, all NQTs are likely to have the majority of their lessons in highly multilingual classes. In such contexts their ITT (Initial Teacher Training) is a seriously insufficient preparation for the reality of London schools. This has been an issue for the last ten years. The NQTs themselves have raised it with the then Teaching Training Agency.

(Department of Education, 2012). The Teaching Development Agency (TDA), the successor to the TTA, responded to these concerns by supporting the development of the Multiverse Website for NQTs which for many years provided examples of good practice and relevant research findings. However, this resource is no longer available, due to recent cuts. Individual PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate in Education) providers in London, such as the Institute of Education (IOE) have been providing two whole days of EAL training, which has recently become the EAL pathway with more added time, for PGCE students in Languages. This way teachers of foreign languages are also prepared to work in EAL departments, which is especially useful if they only offer one foreign language they can teach.

In the last decade there has been an increased recognition that teachers in the capital need a distinct set of skills and professional knowledge in order to engage with "complex issues of diversity and pupil learning found in London schools " (Department of Education, 2004: 23) As a part of the London Challenge, the Charted London Teacher Status (CLT) initiative, launched by the DfES in September 2004, put a significant emphasis on the knowledge of the range of communities, cultures and subcultures in London and developing inclusive practices (ibid). However, having a strong focus on culture in CLT has the potential of creating a culture-language dichotomy. Many London practitioners are already advanced in terms of accommodating multiculturalism as one of the defining elements of citizenship, education and everyday life, whilst multi- and plurilingualism mainly manifests itself as part of a school's data. Often the fact that a school lists 40 languages spoken by 30 per cent of its pupils will not be visible in the classrooms, notebooks or schemes of work. It is a missed opportunity therefore that the Chartered London Teacher Status scheme does not specifically mention linguistic diversity. The importance of multiculturalism to excellent teacher practice in London is recognised, but the recognition of excellent teacher practice in relation to multilingualism is left more open. Also, it is not ideal that EAL learners are mentioned under the point referring to 'reducing individual barriers to learning' and in the same sentence as SEN pupils (ibid). Referring to bilingualism as 'a barrier to learning' undermines a natural process of new language acquisition and can perpetuate the attitude that bilingualism is a problem rather than a resource. The CLT Scheme is still available to teachers, although it does not have the presence or popularity that it did during the London Challenge period.

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For practitioners at senior level and head teachers, the situation is somewhat similar. There is no compulsory EAL module in the NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headship) training. Even though there is a compulsory module on racial and cultural diversity, again it cannot be taken for granted that multilingualism will be sufficiently covered under these two headings. The data and evidence collected in a study of four London head teachers provides an insight into the absence of professional development specifically addressing multilingualism (Mehmedbegovic, 2008). Securing sufficient input on multilingualism for future head teachers currently going through training and for existing heads through professional development is of vital importance in a system where head teachers have almost unlimited autonomy to decide how to utilise funds allocated to schools for bilingual children. London schools cannot afford a leadership vacuum in this area as without good leadership existing pockets of good practice in using first languages in the curriculum and supporting children to develop bilingually can easily be lost. This is a serious issue for the leadership of schools in London which needs head teachers who will champion good practice that enhances the acquisition of English and plurilingualism (Mehmedbegovic, 2009).

5.3. Recent Developments: National School Workforce Strategy for EAL

In 2007 The Training and Development Agency (TDA) commissioned the Institute of Education, in the consortium with the Learning and Skills Network, to advise them on the development of a national school workforce strategy for EAL. This project was charged to outline a strategy in which every EAL learner in mainstream schools in England would be supported better in achieving their full potential, and every member of the teaching workforce would be more appropriately equipped to address the needs and talents of EAL learners.

One of the key distinctions of this strategy in comparison to previous policy responses was its intent to challenge deficit models of bilingual learners, made very prominent in its publicity and consultation documents: "This should not be a strategy being put in place to address a "problem". It has ambitious goals; to support the language and curriculum learning of EAL learners at every level, including the most gifted and talented, across the breadth of the curriculum and throughout their school lives" (IOE, 2008b: 1). The evidence for the development of this strategy was collected in a research exercise carried out by the project team from November 2007 to April 2008.

After five years of investments and efforts into developing a National EAL Workforce Strategy this job remains unfinished. The legacy of what has been developed and achieved so far is uncertain. The strategy was envisaged as enhancing initial teacher training and all stages of professional development, encompassing all members of the teaching workforce across all key stages; those who have a classroom role (teaching and supporting learning), including EAL specialists and mainstream staff, as well as school leaders. In 2010, with the change of government and cuts in the budget for education, the work on the strategy was put on hold. In the following academic year (2010/2011), only one aspect of developmental ITT work was funded. Two pilots titled: *Additional Experience in EAL*, one for primary PGCE students and one for secondary PGCE students, were developed in consultation with an advisory board. These pilots were offered to two small cohorts of 15 students (30 in total), one at University of Leeds and one at the Institute of Education, University of London. The purpose of these pilots was to widen the current ITT provision addressing EAL learners and offer an optional additional training to teacher trainees across primary and secondary stages and subject specialisms. These pilots received a lot of interest from students and staff and their evaluation emphasised that this small group of students is evidently better equipped than their peers for the school population with which they will be engaging.

5.4. Current Situation

Under the current political leadership EAL remains a priority on the official agenda for education. However, in the climate of severe cuts the process of a loss of relevant specialist expertise continues, at this stage especially at the Local Authority level. This is highly concerning considering that the conducted research (ibid) identified the Local Authority level as the hub of expertise, good practice and the driver of professional development and good practice dissemination.

A recent NUT and NALDIC survey (2011 a, b) revealed that 80% of respondents had experienced the reduction of EAL support posts through forced or voluntary redundancies. Common negative impacts identified by respondents included: a reduction in pupil support; a reduction in the availability of knowledgeable specialists; and fragility of the current arrangements. The biggest deterioration was in the quality or availability of support for EAL and bilingual

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pupils and students; over 60% of respondents reported that support for EAL and bilingual pupils had deteriorated over the previous 6 months.

The most pressing concern remains for bilingual learners. The latest evidence provided by the secondary PGCE students who participated in the above outlined pilot 2010/2011 confirms that concerns raised by experts a few years ago still remain. The students on the pilot were charged with a task of shadowing a bilingual learner in order to understand experiences of bilingual children. All of them, without exception, reported that in their placement secondary schools bilingual children were placed in low ability sets even when they outperformed students in one or even two sets up. They also reported in most cases lack of recognition of skills and knowledge that bilingual children had in their first languages. In some cases schools had stated: 'we do not have EAL issues', whereas Ofsted reports were describing learners of these schools as plurilingual children who spoke up to 50 different languages. Academies styled as focusing on languages were not interested in linguistic competencies of their students beyond French and Spanish. This evidence is clearly communicating that the good practice that exists in isolated pockets is not being disseminated.

Development and dissemination of good practice increasingly depends on individual practitioners, institutions and professional associations. Current national politics and policies are proving to be facilitating deterioration rather than progress in this field. The only stepping stone that remains is EAL in the Teachers' Standards (Department for Education, 2013). Organisations such as NALDIC are doing excellent work in filling in gaps in the system in terms of guidance, dissemination of relevant research and supporting practitioners to enhance and enlarge their 'pockets of good practice'. A positive impact that an individual practitioner can make is evident even with teacher trainees, who report increased engagement of all learners when developing approaches based on principles of good EAL practice (IOE Evaluation of the Pilot 2010/11, IOE internal documents). Developing excellence at the individual level has probably never been more important for this field and learner experience.

5.5. *Pockets of Good Practice*

The vacuum, which has been created by the lack of ring fenced funding and appropriate policies, is being filled by external agencies: charities, specialist external agencies and professional associations.

Below are some examples of excellent practice:

Translation Nation

Outline: The Translation Nation (http://translation-nation.heroku.com/) project introduces children at primary school to translation. It promotes inclusivity of all languages and uniquely links community languages with a curriculum focus on literacy including listening skills and the use of phonics. Translation Nation aims to inspire children at primary school to begin a lifelong exploration of literature from around the world, an enjoyment and appreciation of literary English as well as taking pride in the many languages that have become part of the community.

Outcome: Translation Nation is a celebration of the languages spoken in Primary schools in England. By sharing their languages with their peers, students become fascinated by the different worlds that language can create and develop a respect for those with linguistic ability. Parents are able to find new ground on which to communicate with their children and build a bridge between their childhood and their child's. Schools are able to offer parents different ways of becoming involved within the school community and teachers become inspired to adopt more creative ways to engage with their students.

The project is a partnership between Eastside Educational Trust and the Stephen Spender Trust. Translation Nation brings together the expertise of Eastside's work in educational settings and Stephen Spender Trust's commitment to literature in translation.

Feltham Community College, London

The school (http://www.feltham.hounslow.sch.uk/) has invested in staff from its own budget rather than rely on the uncertainties surrounding external funding such as the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant. To build capacity and to ensure a legacy for the future, the school has organised a 'literacy dream team' to ensure a spread of literacy and EAL skills across all departments. Leaders are ensuring that every department sees literacy and EAL as their responsibility. Last year, twelve teachers across a range of subjects completed an intensive local authority course on supporting bilingual learners in mainstream lessons.

A comprehensive training programme uses the expertise in the department

and the local authority specialist language service. As well as whole school training about how bilingual learners achieve and learn, the school tailors training to particular departments, for example, in science, where under-performance of learners had been identified. Key to the internal training are the two specialists, well qualified teachers who work with staff to share their knowledge and expertise.

5.6. Primary data: Stakeholder Interviews

5.6.1. Participants

A purposive sample of 42 participants consisted of: school leaders (head teachers, deputy head teachers), middle leaders: head of departments in secondary schools, teachers, school inspectors (OfSTED inspectors) and students studying for teaching qualifications (PGCE) or doing masters in school leadership (MAL).

According to participants' self-identification their ethnic backgrounds were representative of London's hyperdiversity and they included: White British, White Anglo-Saxon, Londoner, British-Asian, White European, Chinese, French, Italian, Greek, German, Indian, Bangladeshi/White British, White British/German, White European, White Other, Other, USA, Australian, New Zealand, Korean.

For the data collection we used a questionnaire which was administered as a hard copy or via email.

5.6.2. Major Themes Emerging
Pragmatic Use

Themes which qualify as pragmatic use were the most commented on and illustrated with examples. In this category the participants reflected on the use of interpreters, visibility of languages in schools, reasons to study other languages and maintain existing home languages and practices relevant to learning other languages.

The participants praised schools where multilingual teachers and community workers used their skills to help translate for pupils, especially since many participants acknowledged being aware of EAL children 'struggling to participate on daily basis'. Many teachers who participated raised concerns that 'EAL

children are put in bottom sets only because of the language barrier'. This is one of the high priority issues which also impacts on equality of opportunity – as previously discussed in this paper.

It was also seen as more helpful to bring interpreters into schools rather than sending translated letters home. The reason that was given was that schools should try and reach out to parents, who are not English speakers, and make them feel welcome in the school community.

Some participants reported that visibility of a language in a school depended on the number of speakers and this influenced support provided to children and parents:

- 'Different attitudes in schools: Turkish and Mandarin are supported and recognised, Cantonese and African languages are not.'
- 'As a worker for the refugee council I notice that Kurdish is not available.'
- 'In a placement school, big majority of Bengali speakers, therefore Bengali more visible.'
- 'Those not spoken by many pupils are not visible.'

Some participants felt that focus on economic reasons to study languages was disadvantaging many languages which were not seen as adding to one's employability, for example Bengali versus Mandarin. It was identified by one of the participants that these messages were coming from the Government:

- 'Government is only interested in promoting languages for economic purposes.'
- Therefore, the suggestions made were along the lines of focusing on academic and cultural values of languages, in order to promote languages as equally beneficial. One participant reported being:
- 'ridiculed for learning Swahili - now it is needed by the government'.
- 'You never know which language is going to be 'cool' next.'

This perception of 'cool' or desirable languages was raised by other participants too in different ways:

- 'More schools need to offer Mandarin.'
- 'I need to spend more time in China (Chinese origin student, speaker of

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Cantonese) and learn Mandarin.'

Raising awareness on key issues to do with multilingualism was also highlighted as essential in education: 'Children should be made aware that being monolingual is the exception rather than the norm.'

Many teacher participants felt that EAL students should be actively encouraged to use home languages in their own learning. One way of communicating that encouragement was a suggestion that schools should provide bilingual dictionaries in languages used by their students. The practice of students interpreting for each other in classrooms in order to support new arrivals was also seen as beneficial and something that should be encouraged.

On the other hand participants also raised issues of learning other languages as something that needs to improve in mainstream education. Suggestions made were about introducing foreign languages from an early age and making languages provision 'stronger'. This would be achieved by: 'More interaction with native speakers of taught languages.'

Immersion and school exchange schemes were highlighted by many participants as the most significant and most useful language learning experience:

- 'Immersion in a different country, being taken out of your comfort zone, being constantly surrounded by words/ people you don't understand, getting tired and reflective.'
- 'Year 8 exchange (12 year old) – really motivated me to learn languages at school.'
- 'Learning Russian by immersion in Siberia – now I know how it feels to go through a cultural shock and not understand a word, the situation many children experience in our schools.'
- 'Going to study at a Spanish university.'

Some participants also reported how learning languages made an impact on their worldview and personal experiences:

- 'Learning Spanish in school opened up opportunities of travelling to South America and making friends there.'
- 'Seeing the world in another way.'
- 'I made efforts to use languages with our international staff members and I received appreciation for attempts to speak in their language.'

One participant reported learning a language in school as an extremely negative experience: 'learning French in school and being left with a profound feeling of failure.'

Symbolic Use:

Seven participants reported being involved in initiatives in schools which are not fully integrated into teaching and learning, but consist in an add-on element that is done in one day and shelved until next year, such as: 'We have a World Languages Day once a year: we talk about languages without any follow up'. These types of initiatives were identified as purely symbolic use.

Equally, collecting data on languages used by school children, sharing it with staff and then not using these languages in teaching and learning is critiqued as symbolic:

'Yes, in my school there are 66 languages identified, but where are they?'

Authoritative Use:

In terms of authoritative use we came across one example of a school which operates English only policy. From our knowledge of the context the experience of this participant is common in London schools: 'There are 76 languages spoken by children in my school and we operate English only rule on site. All these languages are invisible apart from Spanish and German as MFL.' Common practice is that languages spoken by children can be heard in playgrounds, corridors and sometimes in classrooms, as a quick exchange between students who share the same language. Having a school policy which effectively bans children from using their home languages as their language of choice during their time on school site but outside of structured teaching and learning is highly unusual. The norm is that there is no English only policy either for classroom use or outside classroom use.

However, all the teaching will happen in English, apart from teaching MFL.

English only policy might also be linked with the following views identified by some participants:

• 'High percentage of EAL children is seen as detrimental to British children in schools'

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- 'Multilingualism is often perceived with suspicion by English only speaking public.'

One participant suggested that all new arrivals should be 'put in one class, to learn English, then transfer them mainstream schools.'

These strategies were used in the 70-ies and they were abandoned for two reasons: separate language centres or classes were seen as ghettoising immigrants and children did not have access to the full curriculum which is one of the key principles of current good practice and equality of opportunity.

6. CONCLUSIONS

In our exploration of different spheres, presented in our full report, we have shown that practices are very devolved, resulting in "standard practice" being very different from area to area (local authority to local authority, school to school, hospital to hospital, etc.). The advantage can be that best practice can develop quickly on a small scale and be very responsive to local needs and local resources. The disadvantage is that there is great variation and a risk of 'postcode lottery'. If you are a Somali in one part of London, you may get much better level of support than if you lived in a different part of London only a few hundred metres away. This characteristic also encourages immigrant communities to settle in particular areas.

In education the vulnerability of certain groups translates into issues of equality of opportunity voiced by our participants concerned about EAL children being placed in low ability sets in particular. The approach, focussing on the lack of skills in English as a type of special need or cognitive deficiency in children new to English, has been an ongoing issue in the mainstream education system for many decades, as previously explored. Parallel to this, there is a flourishing sector of independent, bilingual and international schools in London where children from affluent socio-economic backgrounds are given opportunities and encouraged to develop their plurilingual potential.

In its history there have been two distinct attempts to provide a more strategic approach in London's education sphere: the ILEA (Inner London Education Authority) in the 1970s and a more recent regional strategy: the London Challenge, in 2000. Both of these structures have left legacies and achieved results which

clearly demonstrate the advantage of a strategic approach across London.

Currently London has a Mayor and a London Assembly, established with the purpose of championing London and improving the city for all its residents. These institutions have already shown some regard to issues of multilingualism in London. This research has shown that further efforts are needed to put the challenges – and advantages – of multilingualism and plurilingualism at the core of London's efforts to establish itself as the foremost global city.

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Višejezični učenici u londonskim osnovnim školama: politika, praksa i profesionalni razvoj

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Sažetak

Ključne riječi:
*višejezičnost, osnovna
škola, London*

Ovaj je članak sažetak izvješća koje je napravljeno za LUCIDE (Languages in Urban Contexts: Integration and Diversity in Europe; Jezici u urbanim kontekstima: integracija i raznolikost u Europi) projekt i mrežu. Projekt je financiran iz Programa Europske unije za cjeloživotno učenje 2011.-2014., temeljem prikupljenih primarnih i sekundarnih podataka. Ovaj se sažetak fokusira na višejezičnost u osnovnoškolskom obrazovanju. Cjelovito izvješće govori o višejezičnosti u nekoliko ostalih područja: javnoj, gospodarskoj, privatnoj sferi te urbanim prostorima (dostupno na: www.urbanlanguages.eu)
S obzirom na veličinu, stanovništvo i složenost Londona u radu je posebna pažnja usmjerena na lokalnu jedinicu (od postojeće 33): grad Westminster koji je zemljopisno srce ove metropole. Westminster je na mnogo načina predstavnik jezičnih trendova u Londonu. To pokazuje neke od najistaknutijih obilježja višejezičnosti Londona, kao što je izvanredna lingvistička raznolikost sa širokom rasprostranjenošću jezika, pri čemu niti jedan jezik nije dominantan. Cilj ovog istraživanja je stjecanje uvida u iskustva višejezičnih učenika u Londonu s obzirom na obrazovnu praksu i relevantne politike. Primarne podatke prikupio je tim od četiri istraživača koji su konzultirali

*82 stručnjaka relevantna za identificirana područja prakse. Korište-
ne su metode intervjuiranja i anketiranja. Uzorkovanje je svrhovito
obuhvaćalo relevantne struke: obrazovanje, socijalni rad, javne službe,
policiju i financije te stručnjake iz poslovnog sektora. Teorijski okvir za
razvoj ovog pristupa je tipologija uporabe jezika koja razlikuje: simbo-
ličku, pragmatičnu i autoritativnu primjenu jezika.*

ACITA Iadertina