Thesis title: How successful is the 'immersion' of children whose
'mother tongue' is not English into the English language section of
one European School?

Thesis presented for the Doctor of Education degree at the University of Leicester

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Abstract

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The European School system, which is funded by the European Union and its member states, has one of the most comprehensive multi-lingual educational programmes in existence: all students learn not only their own language but also a first and second 'foreign' language. Its organisation into different language 'sections' is problematic as these do not always correspond with the students in the schools, many of whom speak a different first language from that of the section to which they belong. This study examined the experience of a small group of these students. Adopting a qualitative approach, and using a case study approach, it focuses on issues to do with language and 'culture'. The methodology involved both interviews and observation. These included both individual interviews with students and parents, as well as one group interview. The students were also observed in lessons and about the school. Although factors affecting individual students were found to be important, the study strongly suggests that the status of the languages concerned within the school and local society, as well the nature of the educational systems from which the students, or their parents, came, had a considerable effect on how well the students were able to make a successful adjustment to the multi-lingual environment of a European School. The study concludes that the diversity present in the language section of the European School studied necessitates a re-evaluation of the effectiveness of the European School system for it would seem that the presence of many 'native' speakers in 'foreign languages' courses means that the level of the class is often too challenging for the other students. Additionally, while some students are having their languages supported, others find themselves being 'immersed' into language sections and experiencing loss of competence in their own language.
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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis is, essentially, about the experiences of a group of students who belong to a multilingual school but do not fit easily into the programme because they speak a 'mother tongue' which is not included as one of the major sections of the school. To varying degrees, therefore, they attend classes almost exclusively in a second (L2) or third (L3) foreign language.

This thesis arose, in great part, from my increased awareness of the areas of 'culture', bilingual education programmes and ethics which had been gained from previous study with the University of Leicester. In particular, these courses developed an awareness of the very problematic concept of 'culture'. It became increasingly clear that the relationships between individuals and the societies in which they live is one that is highly complex. Of particular importance seemed to be the awareness that any particular human grouping could exhibit both homogeneity and heterogeneity. Thus, any cultural grouping might well have much in common with each other - varying degrees of a sense of having a common language or history, to take a very obvious example. On the other hand, any such grouping will also contain much diversity, often as a result of other variations caused by factors such as gender, age, and personal history. Consequently, although someone is an individual in the sense of being different from others in the same group, these individual features are themselves affected by 'cultural' factors.

An awareness of such factors is certainly very helpful in any analysis of education in a bilingual educational programme, for one of the problems with categorising such systems is that there is a tendency for the overall description to background the diversity
that may exist within such programmes. In particular, as mentioned in Chapter 2, the
genral benefits of the language educational programmes may be more accessible to
some parts of the society than others (see section 2.4.3.). Such a perspective represents
a view that, while recognizing the importance of 'micro' pedagogical concerns such as
teaching techniques, aims to explore the more 'macro' 'contextual' factors that surround
education.

It became clear that an examination of any international programme needed to make
some assessment of these factors if it was to comment effectively on the programme in
question. Just how this might be done was itself in turn affected by factors which were
partly to do with validity but also to do with ethical considerations. In particular, it was
felt that it was important to consider the views of those most intimately affected by such
programmes, i.e. the students themselves, something not always the case with earlier
studies. Indeed, even more recent research on bilingual programmes, although making
some reference to the views of the students themselves, have often put greater emphasis
on a system's official documentation or the views of parents and teachers. This is not,
of course, to argue that these approaches are not of great value but to suggest that such
research could well be augmented by data obtained from those most affected by the
programme in question.

The European School system, where I have been a teacher since 1996, seemed a good
choice for investigation for it is part of a very unusual group of schools that offers a
very comprehensive bi and tri-lingual education programme (see Chapter 3).
Furthermore, although there had been considerable research on the system, much of this
had taken place in the 1980s.
Initially, the study described in this thesis had intended to concentrate on the students’ experience of the bilingual programme, perhaps looking at how this varied in accordance with other factors in the population. As indicated in Chapter Four, however, initial investigation of the languages programme seemed to indicate that what was happening in the school was not always in full accordance with the official description of the system. In particular, it became clear that the system’s intention of supporting the ‘mother tongue’ (hereafter ‘L1’) of the student was sometimes failing to do this because of the heterogeneity of the classes. Initial investigation, indeed, suggested that, often within the same class, there were some students whose language was being maintained, working alongside others who were, in effect, being ‘immersed’ into a language which was not their own.

In many ways it was this insight which was the genesis of the present study. Immediately the focus shifted to examine how students within such a programme were affected by this experience, to establish to what extent the students were able to resist the sorts of pressures put on minority groups in what have been called ‘submersion’ programmes, i.e. ones that involve language loss and poor self-esteem.

This led to the production of a number of research questions, which focused on a group of students who do not have their own language section but follow most of their lessons in a language which is not their own L1 (‘mother tongue’). The European School system calls this group SWALS (Students without a Language Section). Following some pilot interviews these were expanded into two main groups, questions to do with ‘culture’, and questions concerning languages:
Language

1. How important is the status of the SWALS students’ first language (‘mother tongue’) within the school and local community?

2. How important is the provision of lessons in the SWALS students’ own first language (‘mother tongue’)?

3. How important is it for pupils to have contact with others who speak their first language within the group?

Culture

4. How important is the educational culture which the SWALS students bring with them to a European School?

5. How important is the educational ‘culture’ of the group or teachers encountered by SWALS students in European School?

6. To what extent are ‘individual factors important in explaining SWALS students’ abilities to cope with the European School system?

Having established the beginning point of the study, it seemed that there were two distinct, albeit closely related areas under consideration. These were, firstly, bilingual education and, secondly, The European School System. The existence of these two
different areas made it necessary to have two corresponding literature review chapters, i.e. the ones presented in Chapter 2 and 3 below.

As the above questions suggest, the investigation was intended to be a critical study of the European School system, using one school as the subject of a case study. For this reason the literature review begins by considering the whole system but then focuses increasingly on The European School of Karlsruhe, the site of the study. This had important ethical considerations, particularly those concerning issues surrounding anonymity (see section 4.7).

Following on from the literature reviews, Chapter 4 looks at the issues surrounding the design of the study. The first part of the chapter looks at the theoretical considerations involved in such a study, while the second part describes the research design and methodology adopted during the present study. The methodology adopted to investigate these areas would be firmly placed within the 'qualitative' tradition by most researchers since as explained in Chapter 4, it consisted of a case study which used both relatively unstructured interviews, alongside participative and non-participative classroom observation. However, as argued later, a simple distinction between 'qualitative' and quantitative methodologies is over-simplistic. Having said this, the idea that case study research should be regarded as a paradigm is rejected, the argument in the present study being, rather, that the approach adopted is the best way of obtaining the required data: it is certainly asserted that a more formal form of interviewing would simply have failed to capture the complexity of people's attitudes to their educational experience in an international setting.
Following on from the discussion about methodology in Chapter 4, Chapters 5 and 6 look at what the data collected suggests about the experience of SWALS students in the European School. In line with the two main areas considered by the research questions, Chapter 5 considers what the data has to say about the use of L1 ('mother tongue') in the European School of Karlsruhe while Chapter 6 looks at what the data indicates about 'cultural' factors at work in this system.

Following on from this Chapter 7 relates this data to the research questions before considering whether it is possible, or desirable, to generalize the findings to other European Schools. The final section of the chapter then makes a series of professional recommendations which, it is hoped, could improve the experience of SWALS students in the European Schools.
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW OF BILINGUAL PROGRAMMES

2.1. Introduction.

This chapter is the first part of the literature review for the present study. As indicated in Chapter 1 the research questions were designed to examine two major areas concerning bilingual education. The first of these, the importance of students’ first language (‘mother tongue’) and ‘Culture’ is dealt with in this chapter. This is then followed by Chapter 3 which considers how these factors affect education in the context of the European Schools.

As indicated in Chapter 1, the focus of the present study is more on the ‘macro’ ‘contextual’ factors which surround bilingual education than on more ‘micro’ pedagogical concerns such as teaching techniques in individual classrooms. The chapter begins by exploring some of the key terms used in the thesis. The chapter continues by looking at the different outcomes which are frequently expected from bilingual education. The later sections then look in more detail at the many problematic areas that need to be examined when considering bilingual programmes. This begins by looking at how the relationship between nationhood and particular languages has sometimes led to the discouragement of bilingualism. The next section, similarly, looks at how the status of those involved in bilingual programmes sometimes affects the value attributed to such programmes by powerful groups in society. In the latter parts of the chapter, various theories are examined which challenge commonly held perceptions of the area and a number of factors are identified which seem to be associated with successful bilingual education.
2.2 Key Terms

2.2.1 Culture

As indicated below (see section 2.7.1), the word ‘culture’ is particularly problematic, being used in a wide variety of ways. It is difficult to avoid the term, however, as people’s sense of their own identity often seems to be tied up with some notion of belonging to what they see as their ‘culture’. And while all ‘cultures’ contain a great deal of heterogeneity (Griffiths, 1998), such groupings often do make some sense as a classification system. Because of this it is necessary to use the word ‘culture’ in a way which embraces elements of heterogeneity and homogeneity. The approach to this which is used in the present study relies heavily on Bordieu’s (1990) notion of ‘Habitus’ which, as mentioned below (see section 2.7.1) he uses to refer to the way people are conditioned to accept as normal the things they experience in their particular environment. The present study takes the view that it is these sets of ‘scripts’ which, collectively, can be seen as constituting people’s sense of the ‘culture’ to which they belong. Because of the heterogeneity that affects all social life, the group of ‘scripts’ important to any individual may of course vary markedly from those of other group members. Consequently, this study takes the view that individuals’ relationships to the scripts and ‘culture’ is rather like a complicated Venn diagram with all participants being part of the diagram but not necessarily having scripts in common with all other members of the ‘diagram’ or ‘culture’. It is for this reason that it is argued later (see Chapter 6) that some educational systems have enough in common to allow them to be grouped together, while acknowledging that there are other ways in which they differ.
2.2.2 Mother Tongue

'Mother tongue' is another problematic term. While the use of the term possibly derives from the use of the word 'mother' to mean source or origin, rather than in the biological sense, the use of such engendered terms has been avoided where possible in the present study. While 'mother tongue' was formerly used by the European School system, it has now been replaced by the term 'L1'. Although this avoids the gender associations of the previous term, it is still problematic in that like 'mother tongue' it supports the notion that people have one main language which may then be supplemented at a later date by others, a point challenged by much of the research literature on bilingualism (Cummins, 2000). As argued later (see Chapter 3) it is precisely this use of 'L1' as an organising principle within the European Schools which masks the linguistic diversity of its classes. Despite these problems the present study uses the term 'L1' in preference to 'mother tongue' but as the latter term is far more common in the research literature than the former, 'mother tongue' is often added in parenthesis.

2.2.3 Students Without A Language Student (SWALS)

As explored later (see section 3.4.1) the European Schools are each divided into a series of language sections. Because of the diversity of the schools (see section 3.4.2.) many students do not fit into this linguistic division. The English Language Section, for example, contains many students who do not speak English as an L1. The European School System refers to these students as SWALS (Students without a Language Section). Some of these will receive L1 instruction in their own language, but otherwise follow the normal educational programme of the section.
2.2.4 Immersion education programs

The term 'immersion' is widely used in the present study (see Chapter 2) In general terms educational programmes which use immersion involves learning an L2 through participating in lessons where the language of instruction is the target language,(Lyster, 1998). There is a great deal of variation in immersion programmes particulary to do with which subject are involved, as well as the age at which the process begins and ends. The immersion program used by the European Schools has often been praised by commentators, especially Baetens Beardsmore (1993)

2.2.5 Submersion education programs

The term ‘submersion’ is used (Cohen and Swain 1976) to describe educational programmes where students are ‘immersed’ in a target language. Unlike other immersion programmes, however, students are given little, if any, support in their own language. Such programmes, rather than to supporting the L1 ('mother tongue’), aim to replace it with the target language (see section 2.2). The present study argues that many of the SWALS students in the European School of Karlsure are, in effect, experiencing such a programme( See Section.7.4.1.)

Typically these consist of programmes where minority students are ‘immersed’ in English, sometimes with ESL support to help them acquire the language: often this consists of placing immigrant children who know little of the target language in standard monolingual schools. Because such policies are not concerned with preserving the child's own language but, rather, replacing it with another, such schemes have been called 'submersion' programmes by writers such as) and Skutnabb-Kangas (1984). As
the term implies, the learner concerned is dropped into, usually, an English medium school and sinks or swims. Hernández-Chávez (1984) argues that such policies are a mistake, with children typically failing to acquire the language of the school and, consequently making poor academic progress. As will be discussed later (see section 2.4) the close relationship between L1 and identity suggests that such policies are unlikely to succeed. Indeed Cummins (2000) suggests that immigrant populations acquire proficiency in the target language far better if their first language is developed, rather than being ignored, by the system concerned.

2.3. Types of Bilingual Programme

Although, when used in an educational context, the term 'bilingual' seems at first sight simply to suggest the use of two languages in a programme, this is a misleading simplification for, rooted as they are in complex cultural situations, bilingual programmes vary enormously (Bentahila, 1983), and involve both individual and societal variables (Landry and Allard, 1991). However, although any definition of bilingualism is problematic, Fishman (1976) provides a useful starting framework by identifying three bilingual outcomes: 'maintenance', 'enrichment', and 'transitional'.

The purpose of 'maintenance' programmes is to use education to assist with keeping alive a particular language, and such programmes are often associated with threatened minority languages. Some bilingual schools in Wales, for instance, could be seen in this way. 'Enrichment' programmes are rather different in that the second language does not replace the first but is added, aiming to enable users to function adequately in the second without adversely affecting the first. Perhaps the best known of such programmes are those which exist in Canada to help English speakers to learn French
(Swain and Lapkin, 1982). An example of a programme which operates with more than two languages is that in Luxemburg (Hoffmann, 1998). Although a thorough treatment is not possible, both of these examples, because of their relevance to European Schools, will be considered below (see section 2.7.).

Fishman’s (1976) third category, ‘transitional’, describes those situations where a bilingual programme is used to assist learners to acquire a L2 which, it is often hoped, will eventually become the L1. As Baetens Beardsmore (1993) points out, the bilingual programmes designed for immigrants would often fit into this category. However, as Baker and de Kante (1981) point out, what has been called ‘immersion’ has been urged by some of those in charge of policy as an alternative to bilingual education for language minority students. Typically these consist of programmes where minority students are ‘immersed’ in English, sometimes with ESL support to help them acquire the language: often this consists of placing immigrant children who know little of the target language in standard monolingual schools. Because such policies are not concerned with preserving the child's own language but rather replacing it with another, such schemes have been called 'submersion' programmes by writers such as Cohen and Swain (1976) and Skutnabb-Kangas (1984). As the term implies, the learner concerned is dropped into, usually, an English medium school and sinks or swims. Hernandez-Chavez (1984) argues that such policies are a mistake, with children typically failing to acquire the language of the school and consequently making poor academic progress. As will be discussed later (see section 2.4.) the close relationship between L1 and identity suggests that such policies are unlikely to succeed. Indeed Cummins (2000) suggests that immigrant populations acquire proficiency in the target language far better if their first language is developed rather than being ignored by the system concerned.
2.4. The Influence of the Nation State on Bilingualism

Because it is important to all bilingual programmes, including the European Schools, this sub-section looks a little at the influence of the nation state. Many writers such as Fairclough (1989) and Cummins (2000) have claimed that the nation state tends to serve the interests of its most powerful sections of society, something which is seen as being reflected in attitudes to bilingual programmes, as indicated below. This is particularly the case when a language, or occasionally a small group of languages, is associated with a sense of national identity. In such circumstances, there may be strong pressure on other groups to learn the dominant language at the expense of their own first language (L1). Indeed, for Foucault (1982, p.212), the modern nation state only succeeds because it has developed strategies of ‘normalising’ individuals through discipline structures such as legal systems, prisons, and particularly important for any consideration of bilingual programmes, schools.

The role of education is particularly important in those parts of the world where the association between language and nationality is particularly strong, as is the case in many states in western and northern Europe, many of which have a historical tradition of monolingualism (Hoffmann, 1998). The United States in particular is an example of a country where the promotion of a common language has been seen as a unifying feature. This was very much the context of Ronald Reagan’s view that it was wrong to have a programme dedicated to preserving the languages of America’s indigenous populations (Crawford, 1989). Such views are even to be found in famous authors such as the Pulwitzer prize winning writer, Schlesinger, who commented that bilingualism
'promotes segregation more than it does integration. Bilingualism shuts doors. It nourishes racial self-ghettoization, and ghettoization nourishes racial antagonism ...a common language is a necessary bond of national cohesion in so heterogeneous a nation as America.' (Schlesinger, 1991, p.108-109).

Awareness of the connection that exists for such writers between a nation and one particular language highlights the need to examine carefully criticisms of bilingual programmes. This is particularly the case when criticisms are made which, as indicated later, are unsupported by available research. Some writers in America for example have suggested that children who have a different home language from the official language used in schools suffer: 'If he can read and write his own mother tongue this might not always be very useful, and his eye and hand movements may need to be completely retrained.' (Derrick, 1966, quoted in Tosi, 1991, p.2)

The alternative to bilingualism offered by those such as Derrick (ibid), is a policy of 'immersion' in the dominant language and the abandonment of teaching the child's first language. In agreement with this view, Porter(1990, cited in Cummins, 2000) suggests that, for immigrants, bilingual programmes simply take time away from teaching of the dominant second language: 'The evidence of direct correlation between early, intensive second-language learning and high level of competence in the second language is inescapable, as is the on-task principle – that is, the more time spent learning a language, the better you do in it, all other factors being equal' (Ibid, p.119).

Views such as those presented above are not, however, supported by the available evidence. Cummins (1991) for example points out that studies in Canada and elsewhere
show that 'under certain conditions, children exposed to a home-school language switch
experience no academic retardation' (ibid, p.162). Indeed, he goes on to suggest that:

'veirtually every bilingual programme that has ever been evaluated (including
French immersion programmes) shows that students instructed through a
minority language for all or part of the school day perform, over time, at least as
well in the majority language (e.g. English in North America) as students
instructed exclusively through the majority language.' (Cummins, 1991, p.163)

Similarly, while it is clear that children from minority language backgrounds often do
experience difficulties in school, performing worse than monolingual children on verbal
IQ tests, 'this...was not because of bilingualism but rather because of the treatment they
received in schools which essentially amounted to an assault on their personal
identities.' (Cummins, 1991, p.164)

2.5 Bilingualism and Social Status

While nationalism may sometimes be an important influence on bilingualism in itself it
is far more often intertwined with questions of social status. It has been observed, for
example by Cummins (2000), that bilingual programmes involving high status groups
are viewed far more positively in the USA than those that involve low status
immigrants: 'The clear message being broadcast by the media in the United States is
that bilingual education is a cause of further impoverishment for the poor but a potential
source of further enrichment for the rich.' (Cummins, 2000, p.18). The following two
sections of this chapter will examine how researchers have reacted to such distinctions
by categorising bilingualism as either voluntary and involuntary, which itself is
sometimes presented as a distinction between 'elite' and 'folk' bilingualism.

2.5.1. Voluntary and Involuntary Bilingualism.

As a way of explaining the different attitudes to bilingual programmes, some writers like Ogbu (1992) distinguish between 'voluntary' minorities who often succeed academically and 'involuntary' minorities, who have difficulties. Thus the participants in Canadian immersion programmes would be seen as 'voluntary' participants in bilingual programmes, unlike those who have no choice, a situation that frequently occurs with groups such as immigrants.

'Voluntary' bilinguals in contrast with 'involuntary' ones would normally belong to groups which possess extensive economic resources, in demographic, economic, political and cultural terms. Tosi (1991), for example, sees the controversy of high-status versus low status 'reappearing in terms of bilingualism rather than monolingualism' (p.21). For high status groups, language can function, argues Bourdieu (1990), as a form of 'symbolic' or 'cultural capital' which they can exchange in the 'marketplace' of social interaction. The possession of such 'capital' in turn gives access to privileged jobs. Thus Finaldi-Baratieri (2000) argues that the European Schools provide the skills necessary for students to gain access to high paying careers in the European Union.

As already mentioned the 'voluntary' / 'involuntary' distinction has often been seen as one between 'Elite' and 'Folk' bilingualism. This latter term emphasises that groups who have a language imposed on them, by slavery for example, have a very different relationship with it when compared with groups who actively wish to acquire another
language. The term ‘elite’ is itself, however, very problematic. Apart from problems of definition the use of the term may even have dissuaded researchers from investigating cases which might be seen as ‘wasting (their) time on the imaginary troubles of a pampered minority’ (Harding and Riley, 1986, p.23, cited in de Mejia, 2002, p.42)

It is also important to realise that the development of the world economy is leading to wider groups of people seeking to work in other countries and that groups such as teachers, soldiers and translators, who although relatively properous, are not rich (Majia, 2002). When referring to such groups, therefore, it is necessary, as Gibson (1997) indicates, to focus on the importance of in-group variance, particularly as it affects variables such as socioeconomic status. As will be suggested later, this is highly relevant to a discussion of European Schools. Similarly, when talking of voluntariness, it is important to realise that while parents may have made a voluntary choice, this is not always the case with their children.

It is because of the problematic nature of the word ‘elite’ that some writers, such as Baker and Prys Jones (1998) use the term ‘Prestigious bilingualism’ by which they describe bilinguals who can use two high status languages. It is of course hardly surprising that such ‘prestige’ bilinguals should value, above others, languages which enjoy status world wide. Thus, although it cannot be fully considered here, it has been asserted that bilingualism has further strengthened the role and influence of English in the world (Tosi, 1991). The status of any particular language is however, dependent on context: the reaction of a person to a Spanish speaker may be more positive in Europe than it might be in parts of the USA where it may be associated with gang-related crime. As this example shows, there is no automatic reason why a minority language has to be seen as low status (Lebrun and Beardsmore, 1991). Thus, as Lebrun and Beardsmore
suggest (ibid), Luxembourger is a popular medium of communication in the Grand Duchy. However, in this case, the language’s status is increased by its role as a unifying factor in a small state which has often felt itself to be under threat from its neighbours. It would be unlikely to be popular with aspirant prestige bilinguals. In some, rather limited circumstances however a low status language may be attractive even to such groups. English middle class migrants to Wales, for example, may well be attracted to education in Welsh because, in this particular context, it provides their children with cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1990). The development of language programmes, whether as ‘maintainence’ or ‘enrichment’ for languages such as Welsh in Britain, English in parts of Canada, or French, German and Luxembougish does, however, tend to confirm Hoffmann’s (1998) view that ‘provision for indigenous linguistic minorities has tended to be more succesful than for non-indigenous’ (p.144). As will be seen later (see Chapter 3), this is particularly relevant to European Schools.

2.5.2. Additive and Subtractive Bilingualism

Asymetry of status between languages is also likely to have an effect within bilingual programmes. In particular, the different resources available to majority and minority communities means that majority group children may be schooled exclusively in a L2 with few adverse effects because of the extensive support for the language in the family and society. Such programmes have often been refered to as ‘additive’ (Baker 1996) because the learners’ existing language resources are enriched, or added to.

By contrast, minority children do not have this support which, it is often claimed, leads to them loosing their L1; for them ‘schooling via L2 is a subtractive process since the remaining networks are not strong enough to ensure the maintenance of L1’ (Landry and
Because differences in status are always present in some form, Landry and Allard (1991) conclude that, while balanced bilingualism may be possible, it is rare in reality. Similarly, Bibeau (1982) concluded that most forms of bilingual education lead insiduously to the assimilation of these groups. Valdes (1997), in much the same vein, warns that even dual language immersion schemes may benefit dominant groups more than subordinated groups and may also fail to properly consider the relationships between language and power in both school and society. It is factors like these which caused Mougeon et al (1986) to argue that assimilation may occur even when minority education programmes are implemented.

2.5.3. The Importance of Dealing with Inequality.

Because of the large influence of the factors indicated above, Cummins (2000) argues that 'what distinguishes effective from ineffective programs is the extent to which the program challenges the historical pattern of coercive relations of power.' (Cummins, 2000, p.192). He argues (ibid, 2000) that it is particularly important to detect the ways in which any particular curriculum conceals unequal treatment: 'By sanitizing the curriculum, traditional pedagogy attempts to make coercive power structures invisible, thereby reinforcing their discriminatory effect' (Cummins, 2000, p.256). Such a view is very close to that put forward by Fairclough (1989) who argues that the modern state increasingly uses 'ideology' to control its population and that this is most effective when it is unperceived in social practices such as education.

Certainly, as Cummins suggests (2000), the multi-faceted nature of power relationships
makes analysis difficult. Thus, the attitude of Canada to bilingualism is often contrasted positively with the USA by Genesee (1987) for example, because it gives official recognition to minority languages. It has also been pointed out, however, that most of those who benefit from the bilingual programme in Canada come from the dominant group in Canada, the middle class English speakers who would be seen as voluntary bilinguals in terms of Ogbu's (1992) classification.

The Canadian example also makes it clear that societal support for bilingual programmes is crucial. As Edwards (1988) points out there is often too much emphasis on what schools do even though their efforts may well be less influential than the social pressures outside their gates. Having said this, a critical view of culture is useful in pointing out that cultures and powerful groups are not homogenous and that attitudes may evolve. Corson (1990), for example, claims that in Australia today it is the monocultural and monolingual people who are now seen as deprived. It may, therefore, be possible that bilingual programmes can, in favourable circumstances, themselves play a role in changing societal attitudes. It is with this view in mind that Cummins (2000) describes programs such as those that exist in Canada as functioning as the 'Achilles heel' (Cummins, 200, p.242) of bilingual education because they show how effective a bilingual policy can be if the necessary conditions are established.

The influence of factors such as those mentioned above also has important implications for staffing. Thus it would seem necessary for an effective bilingual programme to employ teachers who were at least aware of the complicated factors involved. This is difficult for, as Baetens Beardsmore (1993) points out, national educational systems do not normally train teachers for working in bilingual systems.
Baetens Beardsmore (1993) goes on to suggest that the employment of teachers who are to some extent bilingual, as is the case with The European Schools, at least means that they will have some understanding of what it is like to have to live with two languages. Byram (1998) further suggests that 'teachers also need a professional understanding of the cultural values implicit in the curriculum and of the ways in which the explicit introduction of other cultures into the curriculum relativises and challenges the taken-for-granted, natural status of the national or state curriculum' (p.113). This would certainly seem preferable to the situation in many ESL programmes where native speaker teachers often do not learn either the student's language, or much about their cultural practices (Pennycook, 1994).

The lack of such teacher competence is particularly acute in many 'submersion' programmes for immigrants where, as Cummins (2000) points out, the group teachers are typically prepared to teach is 'white, middle-class, monolingual and monocultural.' (p.6).

Similarly, the involvement of the interrelated factors of power, identity and culture have led many writers to stress the active involvement of parents in bilingual programmes. Thus Leman (1993) identifies the involvement of parents as one of the key factors in the trilingual Foyer Project which was set up for immigrants in Brussels. Likewise, Baetens Beardsmore (1993) recommends the use of liaison officers drawn from members of immigrant communities to act as explainers. He also suggests that the involvement and briefing of parents partly explains the success of the Canadian immersion programme (ibid, 1993).
While there has been much attention, as indicated above, given to teachers and parents, there has been little focus on the voices of those most centrally involved in the process themselves, i.e. the students themselves. Giving a voice to some of these participants is one of the principle aims of this study.

2.6. Challenging Perceptions about Bilingual Language Provision.
As has been seen in the above section, powerful groups have sometimes questioned the value of bilingual programmes. Although a full treatment is not possible, this section looks at views which challenge this perception. Beginning by looking at the importance of a student's own language (hereafter L1), it proceeds to examine various concepts which seek to explore the relationship between instruction in the L1 and L2.

2.6.1. The Importance of a Learner's L1
The role of the learner's L1 in bilingual programmes has received considerable attention. That the denial of the value of someone's own language could have a detrimental effect on their education should be no surprise: the importance of language to a sense of identity is itself implicit in the argument of the integrationists above. Because the consequences of undervaluing a language can be so great, the opportunity to use a person's L1 has often been seen as a human rights issue: Hernandez-Chavez (1988), for example, sees the restriction of use of a people's L1 as a denial of their right to participate in society. For this reason it is probably no coincidence that many of the bilingual programmes considered later were set up during the 60s and 70s, when human rights issues were increasingly prominent. Equally, recent attacks on such programmes are often seen as an attack on the perceived liberalism of more recent times (Cummins, 2000).
This importance of the L1 also helps to explain why students whose language is undervalued to the extent of not being included in their own education may react negatively to this since, as Cummins (2000) points out, belittling a language may be seen as belittling the person themself. It is this, rather than any problem with coping with two languages which causes such children to underperform in schools: 'resistance takes the form of mentally withdrawing from a coercive educational relationship' (Cummins, 2000, p.48). Similarly Allard and Landry (1991) claim that students simply will not want to learn a language which they have come to associate with oppression.

Just as not valuing a L1 can harm the individual's chances of performing well in school, it is, conversely, argued that bilingual education can have beneficical benefits. Wong et al (1986) have argued that, in general, instruction in their own language helps children to cope with instruction given in the target language, that knowledge and skills are more easily learnt in their own language, and that many computational and literary skills acquired in the L1 can be transferred to the new language once it is mastered. The next section describes several theories which seek to elaborate on this relationship between education in the first and second language.

### 2.6.2. The Thresholds Theory

Although it does not specify particular levels, the Thresholds Theory, developed by Cummins (1976) and Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa (1976) helps to explain the often poor performance of minority language children in 'submersion' programmes. Essentially, the theory argues that bilingual children need to reach a certain level of achievement in both their languages before they can approach the level of monolingual
speakers in either. Children in ‘submersion’ programmes fail to make progress in their second language because they are not given the opportunity to develop their first language to a sufficient level. The Thresholds Theory describes two thresholds, each of which indicates a level of linguistic competence that must be reached to experience the advantages of bilingualism. The first threshold is reached when a learner has age-appropriate proficiency in one language. At this level there are likely to be no negative or positive cognitive consequences of bilingualism. The second threshold is reached when a child is relatively balanced and proficient in both languages, with children in this situation exhibiting age-appropriate ability in both languages.

The Thresholds theory is borne out in Canada by the experience of English speakers being taught in French (see section 2.8.3) where children often show a lag in achievement when measured against monolinguals. Later, though, and following instruction in English language skills, they catch up (Swain and Lapkin, 1982; Genesee, 1987). Such findings directly counter earlier theories that claimed that bilingual children developed their languages separately, with long term negative consequences: thus Laurie (1890, quoted in Baker 1993), suggested that dividing their efforts between languages would have unfortunate effects on a learner: 'His intellectual and spiritual growth would not thereby be doubled but halved' (p.107).

2.6.3. The ‘Interdependence Hypothesis’

The 'Interdependence Hypothesis' (Cummins, 1981) further elaborates on the Thresholds Theory, emphasising, as the name indicates, that language competencies can be transferred between languages. The term Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) has also been used to describe the cognitive and academic proficiency that supports
academic performance in two languages (Cummins 2000). Most importantly, the hypothesis speculates that continuing the development of two languages can produce positive educational and linguistic consequences. Cummins (1981) sums up the 'interdependence hypothesis' as follows: 'To the extent that instruction in Lx is effective in promoting proficiency in Lx, transfer of this proficiency to Ly will occur provided there is adequate exposure to Ly (either in school or environment) and adequate motivation to learn Ly' (p.28).

Cummins and Swain (1986) illustrate the underlying proficiency with the example of reading: 'One does not relearn to read every time a new language is learned. One makes use of already learned skills and knowledge in learning to read the second time around' (p.103). Similarly, Dulay et al (1982) claim that students' use of language skills such as conceptualising, or expressing complex relationships, operate independently of the language system the individual is working in.

Cummins (1991) cites extensive empirical evidence to support the 'interdependence hypothesis'. Thus, to take but one of many examples, Tregor and Wong (cited in Cummins, 1991) reported a significant positive relationship between the L1 and English reading ability, as measured by cloze testing, among Chinese-background and Hispanic elementary school students in Boston: students who were performing well in their L1 reading also tended to be doing well in their L2, which was, in this case, English.

2.6.4. Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)
Valuable though the above theories are, perhaps the most important pair of concepts in explaining the performance of students in bilingual programmes is that between what Cummins (1979) calls BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communications Skills) and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency). Essentially this is a distinction between conversational and academic aspects of language proficiency. BICS refers, in essence, to the type of language proficiency necessary for performing context-embedded and cognitively-undemanding language activities such as taking part in a social conversation. BICS can develop quickly. Thus, within a couple of years in an immersion programme a child can display sophisticated BICS, particularly phonetically. Cummins (1979) believes that this explains the failure of many language minority students in transitional bilingual programmes who, although they are competent communicators, do not have sufficient skills to cope in higher order cognitive situations. A good example of this is given by Vincent (1996) who, writing about a group of second generation students whose parents came from San Salvador, commented: 'The children seem to have much greater English proficiency than they actually do because their spoken English has no accent and they are able to converse on a few everyday discussed subjects' (p.195).

By contrast, CALP (cognitive-academic language proficiency) refers to the ability to process academic content. These skills are essentially linguistic and permit a learner to process content sufficiently to succeed in academic work. As the child moves through the school the cognitive demands become orientated towards CALP, i.e. tasks which are cognitively demanding with few contextual clues to aid with the completion of the task. This has been conceptualised as a 'context-embedded/context-reduced continuum' (Cummins, 2000, p.67). Cummins goes on to point out that much academic work,
including writing an essay, is cognitively demanding but supported by few contextual clues, unlike much early work in schools. Although CALP is not necessarily a distinction between written and oral work, it can be defined as 'expertise in understanding and using literacy-related aspects of language.' (Cummins, 2000, p.70). Very importantly, Cummins (2000) estimates that, even under optimal circumstances, it may take five or six years for an L2 learner to reach the same level as a monolingual.

The BICS /CALP distinction is compatible with a number of other theories. These include Vygotsky's (1962) distinction between spontaneous and scientific concepts, Bruner's (1975) distinction between communicative and analytic competence and Snow et al's (1991) distinction between contextualised and decontextualised language.

Unless educators are aware of the above theories they may well assume that students who possess BICS competence no longer need support. A consequence of this might be that poor results would more likely to be seen as to do with intelligence than language level: 'Because students often appeared to be fluent in English, psychologists tended to assume that they had overcome all problems in learning English and consequently that IQ tests administered in English were valid' (Cummins, 1991, p.169).

By contrast, understanding of the distinction between BICS and CALP would indicate that, in fact, learners will need continuing support for several years if they are to obtain the CALP skills which are necessary for academic success. As Cummins (1991) argues that the development of CALP is interdependent, this would suggest that programmes that support CALP in the L1 would have a corresponding benefit in the development of the L2.
Cummins’ theories have not been without their critics. Edelsky (1990), argues that CALP is really little more than test-taking skills and that, as such approaches inevitably support skills-orientated teaching, CALP is really a learning deficit argument. Cummins (2000), however, has vigourously defended his position and makes it clear that the development of CALP requires instruction which is cognitively challenging, encouraging students to use higher-order thinking abilities rather than the low-level memorization and application skills that are tapped by typical worksheets or drill-and-practice computer programs. He further argues that academic content in science, maths, art, etc should be integrated with language instruction so that students acquire the specific language or registers of these academic subjects.

2.7. Factors Involved in Successful Bilingual Education Programmes.

As indicated above, an effective education programme should if possible make use of the learners’ LI. Additionally it should support the development of CALP skills. The next section examines how this might be done. It starts by considering the importance of ‘cultural’ considerations in education. The following section then considers the importance of ‘input’ in bilingual programmes before considering the importance of providing students with opportunities to produce ‘output’. The section finishes by considering the role of rule isolation and grammatical instruction.

2.7.1 The Importance of ‘Cultural’ Considerations

As has already been discussed, failure to support a learner’s LI has been seen as harmful to learners in bilingual programmes. Part of the reason for this is the relationship between language and ‘culture’ in its widest sense. While this issue cannot
be examined in detail here some treatment of the complexities involved is necessary as a background to the present study, particularly in Chapter 7 where 'individual' factors are considered.

Although it is often not treated as such, it is important to realise that the word 'culture' is used in such a wide variety of ways that one definition is unlikely to prove useful: it has been considered one of the two or three most problematic words in English (Williams, 1976). Perhaps the most important distinction as far as bilingual programmes are concerned is that between what Atkinson (1999) calls the 'received view of culture' (p.626) and those which have arisen out of criticisms of such a view. In the 'received' view, culture(s) are seen as largely fixed, homogenous systems of rules and or norms with a strong geographical dimension that have a strong influence on people's behaviour. Gupta and Ferguson (1997) view perspectives which incorporate some of these elements as 'people-and-cultures' approaches, 'the ideas that a world of human differences is to be conceptualized as diversity of separate societies, each with its own culture' (ibid, p.1). As Atkinson (1999) points out, the uncritical use of terms such as 'Japanese culture' tends to reflect a 'received' view.

Criticisms of 'received' views of culture, however, have increasingly undermined the old, universal, humanist, liberal certainties, and led to analyses which are grounded in the plurality and fragmentation which characterise social groups (Griffiths, 1998). As Ingold puts it 'what we do not find are neatly bound and mutually exclusive bodies of thought and custom, perfectly shared by all who subscribe to them' (Ingold, 1994, p.330). Clifford (1986), furthermore, makes the point that cultures are shot through with
inside/outside knowledge and experience and he sees cultures as essentially places of displacement and interaction.

These insights are crucial to understanding bilingual education programmes. Thus, Atkinson (1999) argues that a critical understanding of culture is central to an awareness that, although humans are individuals and should not therefore be reduced to cultural types, this individuality is itself deeply affected by culture. Bourdieu (1990) refers to the way in which people are conditioned by their environment as ‘Habitus’. By this he means that, in social life, people rely upon a large store of ‘scripts’ which they have learned and which, effectively, constrain their free will. Bourdieu (ibid) does not regard people as automata, because some flexibility exists in a habitus but neither is there free will. Habitus is seen as largely existing in the unconscious and, consequently, cannot be fully known to the agent himself or herself.

In any particular education setting, therefore, it is important to realise that ‘cultural’ considerations are unlikely to be straightforward, being an important source of the ‘scripts’ which make up the ‘habitus’. One area that is always important, however, is the match between the cultural expectations of learners and teachers in the delivery of a programme. Thus Cortazzi and Jin (1996) showed the importance to teaching of a knowledge of the dominant models of learning within a society, in their case China. However ‘natural’ these may appear within that culture they may cause problems from learners or teachers who do not share such a background. Failure to appreciate this factor can lead to the choice of teaching methods which are not acceptable in that context.
In many bilingual programmes such clashes between educational ‘cultures’ may contribute to what some writers such as de Mejía (2002) have called culture shock. As this writer indicates, in extreme cases this may even result in physical illness. The reaction of many other writers to such difficulties has been to suggest some form of critical language study: ‘The issue in teaching critically, then, is one of working with students to come to terms with the continuing struggles over language, knowledge and culture, over what is constituted as knowledge, and how one is represented and can come to represent oneself in the world.’ (Pennycook, 1994, p.313)

2.7.2 The Importance of ‘Input’ in Bilingual Programmes

Many bilingual programmes make some use of ‘immersion’, which generally implies that the L2 is at least partly taught not just as a subject but also through attending classes in lessons in subjects such as science and geography through the medium of the L2 (Lyster, 1998). The advocates of such programmes have often stressed the importance of ‘input’ to language acquisition. Thus both Krashen (1981) and Schachter (1983) have suggested an input hypothesis which proposes that acquisition of a second language depends on access to second language input which had been modified to make it comprehensible. Krashen (1981) goes as far as to assert that input is the primary causative variable in second language acquisition. Krashen (ibid) is particularly keen to stress that if second language learners are to catch up academically to native-speakers they must engage in extensive reading of written text because academic language is reliably only to be found in written text. Agreeing with this viewpoint, Fredrickson and Cline (1990) argue for the importance of giving L2 learners increased contextual support in order to lessen the cognitive demands made by such work.
Another way in which L2 learners can be supported, argues Krashen (1993), is by sheltered teaching, i.e. the exclusion of all but second language learners from a class. This is an important way of establishing a level which is appropriate for L2 learners. In particular, such a policy reduces the likelihood that the students will be made to feel inadequate by the presence of L1 speakers, something which has certainly happened to students in 'submersion' programmes. As will be seen later, the adoption of a system which keeps L1 and L2 learners apart for languages courses, is often seen as one of the strengths of the European Schools (see section 3.3.2.).

Although comprehensible and comprehensive input are clearly important, some writers have argued that on their own they are insufficient. Hammerly (1991), for example, points out that Canadian students in immersion programmes have good levels of oral fluency but these are insufficient to allow them to function in both languages in employment or academic institutions. Similarly, Swain (1985) found that even after seven years in a French immersion programme English children have near native competence in spoken French and auditory comprehension but have striking shortcomings in writing and speaking French accurately. Additionally, Harley and Swain (1977) had earlier found immersion students using avoidance procedures to reduce the need for complex verb forms. They claim that once the learners have reached a point where they can make themselves understood, there is no longer a strong social incentive to develop further.
2.7.3 The Importance of Generating Language Output

Swain's (1985) explanation for these deficiencies is that there is often insufficient focus on comprehensive output in such programmes. In order to provide this, a programme should provide opportunities for the manufacture of meaningful, coherent, and precise discourse 'helping the learner to move on from a purely semi-pragmatic analysis of the L2 to a structural analysis' (Swain, 1985, p.25).

Some writers such as Long (1991) argue that even a focus on both comprehensible input and output is not in itself sufficient for the attainment of high levels of linguistic accuracy and precision. Similarly, agreeing that both receptive and expressive aspects are important, Swain and Wong Fillmore (1984) have suggested an 'interactionist' theory on the basis that 'interaction between learner and target language users is the major causal variable in second language acquisition' (p.18) They also include meaningful interactions with text in the target language and the production of texts for real audiences. Swain has also argued that this process of negotiating meaning pushes the learner toward producing communication 'that is conveyed precisely, coherently, and appropriately' (1985, p.249).

2.7.4 The Role of Rule Isolation and Grammatical Instruction

Other writers such as McLauglin (1986) have argued that an important part of achieving such high levels of competence would be to focus on instruction which involves rule-isolation and attention to grammatical instruction. Because he, too, regards it as vital to the development of academic usage, Housen (1997), argues for focusing the learner's attention on factors of the L2 which might go unnoticed without explicit attention. He gives as examples explicit metalinguistic explanation, grammar rule presentation, or
more implicit techniques of drawing learners' attention to aspects of form and usage.

One possible way to meet this requirement would be through a system which combined 'immersion' with teaching the L2 as a discrete subject. By this means it would be possible for the students to see the pertinence of the explicit language study in the subjects through their experience in the lessons in which they were learning through 'immersion'. This is often seen to be the approach used by the European School Model which, it is claimed (Baetens Beardsmore, 1993) begins the instruction in the L2 by a context rich/cognitively undemanding environment and only later, partly through teaching the L2 as a separate subject, supports the development of the students so that they can manage a context reduced / cognitively demanding system (see section 3.3.2.).

2.8. Examples of Educational Systems which Make Use of Two Languages.

Having looked at some of the factors which are necessary for a successful bilingual programme, the following section looks at schools in Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg and Canada which make substantial use of instruction in a language which is not the majority L1 in the country concerned.

2.7.1. Denmark and Germany

For various historical reasons, the area surrounding the Danish-German border has a mixture of L1 speakers with considerable numbers of L1 German speakers in Denmark and vice-versa. In 1991 there were 42 schools (24 kindergartens, 16 secondary schools, 1 Gymnasium and one 'Nachschule') serving approx 1800 German speaking pupils in Nordschleswig (source: Byram, 1993). On the other side of the border is a Danish minority with 53 Danish language minority schools catering for 5246 pupils (Source:
The schools are examples of voluntary bilingualism and could be seen as 'language maintenance' programmes by Fishman's (1976) classification. The German schools do a good job in developing the student's L1 with standards in the target language being high (Byram, 1993). Unfortunately, although the students certainly possess BICS competence (see section 2.6.4.) they do not possess sufficient CALP skills to function in either academic or business life in the L2 (Byram, 1993). One reason for this is that the L2 is taught only as a subject within the school, the rest of the curriculum being delivered through the medium of the L1. Byram (1993) argues that it is the influence of the nation state which is the essential stumbling block to bilingualism, with the schools seeing themselves as the guardians of the minority culture - both governments help to finance schools for their L1 speakers on the other side of the border. Byram (1993), writing about the German schools in Denmark, argues that this places 'the interests of the group above those of its members, especially those of school age' (p.63). A similar situation exists on the other side of the border: 'The schools in Sydslesvig were to be, according to their own view of themselves, as Danish as possible, i.e. as little German as possible. The attitude to the German language was an instrumental one and German culture was to play a secondary role' (Sondergaard, 1993, p. 69). In conclusion, both systems show how the influence of powerful groups, in this case nation states, can restrict the possibilities for the development of bilingualism.

2.8.2. Luxembourg

Unlike the above examples, the unique system in Luxembourg concerns a languages programme within a state which has more than one official language. This aims to
ensure that its students leave school with competence in three languages i.e. French, German and Luxembourgish. Each of these languages is seen as performing different roles within the society. Thus, according to Hoffman (1998) Luxembourgish is spoken by all native inhabitants, being seen as the language of national solidarity. French, by contrast, is seen as the language of power and prestige, with German being seen as a convenient, additional language (Hoffmann, 1998). The problem of categorisation is revealed by this system which has elements of both 'maintainence and enrichment' programmes as identified by Fishman (1976).

The system is a complex one where the different languages are used at different stages in the programme first as a subject and then later as a medium for instruction. At the age of four all students must attend a kindergarten where the language is Luxembourgish. At the age of six they go to primary school where although Luxembourgish remains the main language of instruction German is taught intensively as a subject with 8-9 periods a week for the first two years, 5 per week from year 3 onwards. German increasingly becomes the medium of instruction taking over that role by the time the students are twelve. French is introduced as a subject in the second grade (at age 7) for three periods a week, and seven periods in the third grade.

Lebrun and Baetens Beardsmore (1991) argue that the Luxembourg model confirms Cummins' Interdependence hypothesis (Cummins, 1986), which explains the successful transfer of literary skills from one language to another (Cummins, 1986). Unlike the examples in Denmark and Germany which are voluntary this programme involves the whole country. It also, according to Kraemer (1993), enjoys wide support in the country. Its use of both 'immersion' and teaching languages as subjects may also
support the development of CALP skills, as indicated above. However, as Kraemer (1993) also points out, it is not so beneficial to weaker or even average students many of whom find the programme too taxing. Additionally, in 1985-6, 53% of those who left school after only completing compulsory education were foreigners (Lebrun and Baetens Beardsmore, 1993). At least part of the difficulty is that many students, particularly immigrants, do not have Luxembourgish as an L1. Extra support for these children is clearly necessary, particularly as they account for 59% of the population in the canton of Luxembourg City (Lebrun and Baetens Beardsmore, 1993). As this would seem to suggest that the trilingual programme benefits some groups rather than others, the Luxembourg system would seem to confirm the need for a society to consider power relationships in the design of such programmes (Hoffman, 1998).

2.8.3. Canada

The Canadian bilingual programmes are often praised for, arising from a desire to tackle the sorts of power relationships indicated above. In Canada, French speakers had for many years suffered discrimination but after years of protest, the Official Languages Act (1969) declared that the two languages French and English 'possess and enjoy equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all the institutions of the Parliament and Government of Canada' (Section 2 of the Official Languages Act, quoted in Genesee, 1987). The bilingual programme is, therefore, another confirmation of the intimate link between a society's education system and wider political concerns for as Genesee (1987) points out, the programmes were seen by their founders as 'an intermediate goal leading to improved relationships between English and French Quebecers and thus ultimately to a breaking down of the two solitudes' (p.11).
Although English is the bigger language in Canada, some English L1 speakers found themselves in a situation where their children because they lacked the ability to speak French fluently, suffered various forms of discrimination. In Quebec there was particular dissatisfaction with a foreign language teaching programme which even after twelve years of instruction in French produced a level of competence which was described by one parent as 'not sufficient to enable the students to communicate with their French-Canadian neighbours' (Quoted in Genesee, 1987, p.10). Largely as a result of parental pressure a bilingual programme was established which by 1993 was educating about a quarter of a million pupils, approximately 6% of the total school population (Genesee, 1987).

Rather than being one system, there are several variations, with immersion being started at different ages. All the programmes, however, involve students being taught for some, typically half of their curriculum, through the medium of French (Swain and Johnson, 1988).

These programmes are voluntary and would be seen as a form of 'enrichment' in Fishman's (1976) categorisation, since an L2 (French) is added to the L1 but without harming the potential to develop in the L1. Part of the reason why they have succeeded is, as Baetens Beardsmore (1993) points out, both inside and outside the school the students feel secure in the worth of their language which is neither denigrated nor threatened thus further highlighting the importance of power relationships. Additionally, because there is always an alternative viable education the stress placed on parents and children is greatly reduced in comparison with many immigrant groups. Furthermore, one of the factors identified above, the desire to learn the language is encouraged by the
high status of both languages. There are also clear economic benefits to English speaking students in the French speaking areas of Canada: the programme clearly offers its participants 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1990). For most of the students concerned the programme seems to be highly successful although, as already noted, some commentators have suggested that there is insufficient attention paid to the development of CALP (Cummins, 2000).

More serious criticisms suggest that the benefits of bilingualism are largely restricted to the middle class, from which as Baetens Beardsmore (1993) points out, most of the children come. The way in which benefits are unevenly distributed is also suggested by Braithwaite and James (1996) who claimed that although Black Canadians saw education as very important, their ambitions were often frustrated by what they saw as institutional racism lurking beneath the public face of multi-culturalism in Canadian schools.

2.9. Concluding Remarks
This chapter has considered the many factors which have to be considered when judging a bilingual system. The most important of these relate to the interrelated questions of status and power. In the latter part of the chapter these two issues were seen as affecting the programmes operating in Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg, and Canada. The next section will consider the extent to which the issues raised in this chapter are important to the main focus of this study, the European Schools.
CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW: THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS CONTEXT

3.1 General Introduction

The function of this chapter is to explain the European School system. The considerable length of this chapter is necessary because, although the European School system is one of the most comprehensive multilingual educational programmes in existence, it is not widely known outside its own schools. This introduction to the system is also a necessary background to understanding the data produced by the present study itself.

The chapter begins (Section 3.2) by giving a necessarily short introduction to this system, its history and its organisation. Following on from this various elements of the system are examined in more detail. This is begun in Section 3.3. which looks at the educational programme and because of its importance to the present study particular emphasis is given to its policy on languages, as well as the extent to which it is similar to other programmes already considered. Section 3.4 then examines in more detail the main organisational device of the schools, language sections, looking critically at their composition and diversity. Following on from this, section 3.5 looks at the extent to which the European Schools system should be regarded as elitist. This, it is argued is an important consideration in judging the value of the system as a model for other bilingual contexts, as well as a way of considering whether these schools deal with power relationships in the way that Cummins (2000) suggests is necessary for effective bilingual education.

Following on from this, section 3.6 then considers whether factors such as the nature of the academic programme and the teaching force encourage an elitist environment. Finally, section 3.7 examines to what extent the system has dealt with possible tension between language groups by promoting a European and international climate within the schools.
The chapter gradually centres on the European School of Karlsruhe, the main focus of the present study. Although the site was not anonymised, great care was taken in protecting the identities of those involved in the study (see section 4.3.6). In essence it is suggested that, at every level, although the system aims to ensure equal treatment for what it sees as different cultural groups, this is frustrated because the existence of parallel language sections acts as an organisational framework whose very existence detracts attention from the way in which some groups are privileged over others. Furthermore, it will be suggested that the failure to examine the complexities of these grouping has sometimes led to misunderstandings about what happens in the European School system.

3.1 Historical Background to the European School System

Following the Treaty of Paris in 1951, the headquarters of the European Coal and Steel Community was established in Luxembourg. This organisation, which was eventually to develop into the EU led to many employees being sent to Luxembourg. Many of these were on short contracts and had children of school age. To cope with this situation a system was established which would allow these children both to operate in the host country, while developing the level of their L1 needed to allow them to return to their own national educational system. With the Treaty of Rome in 1957, which brought the European Community into being, many more families found themselves in foreign lands. In 1957, following ratification by the parliaments of the six member states, the European School became an official intergovernmental institution. The first school opened in Luxembourg in 1953, reaching its full age range of classes by 1958. The perceived success of the Luxembourg school, along with the growth of the European Union and consequently its institutions has lead to the development of others. There are currently 12
European Schools with a population that is now approaching 20000 (Ryan, 2003). This represents an increase of 16% over the previous three years, largely because of the opening of two new schools. The enlargement of the EU, which took place from May 2004, will inevitably lead to further growth, particularly in Belgium and Luxembourg where the administration of the EU is concentrated and where, as shown in the table below, the schools are much bigger.

Table 1: The Size of the European Schools (2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ES Alicante</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES Bergen</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES Brussels I</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>2312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES Brussels II</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>2820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES Brussels III</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>2662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES Culham</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES Frankfurt</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES Karlsruhe (ESK)</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES Luxembourg</td>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>3803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES Mol</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES Munich</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES Varies</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1325</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Report of the Secretary-General of the European Schools (Ryan, 2004)
3.3. The Educational Programme of the European Schools

3.3.1. Introduction

In this section the curriculum of the European School is described. Like other studies of bilingual programmes this will focus on the languages programme, although later it will be suggested that other areas of the curriculum also impinge on the teaching of languages. This initial description will focus on the way in which the European Schools have often been praised, i.e. for providing an effective languages learning environment. This will involve looking at the system’s attempt to carefully preserve and develop the mother tongue (L1) while at the same time fostering L2 development both through what has been called ‘comprehensible input’ (Krashen, 1981) as well as by providing an environment which fosters the students’ own L2 output. Later sections will then consider to what extent this system description is really observable in the practice of the schools.

3.3.2. Description of the Language Programme

The most prolific commentator on European Schools has been Baetens Beardsmore. He points out (Baetens Beardsmore 1993) that the system does not easily fit into the categories identified by Fishman (1976) (see Chapter 2.1). Rather, he suggests that it is best seen as a combination of these categories, i.e. ‘maintenance’, ‘transition’ and ‘enrichment’. Thus, while laying stress on maintaining L1 it is in some ways a transition programme in that it enables students to achieve high academic levels in their L2. However, in contrast to immersion programmes, it could also be seen as an ‘enrichment’ programme in the sense used by Fishman (1976) i.e. that the students’ use of language is enriched in that ‘the second language does not take over to the detriment of the first.’ (Baetens Beardsmore, 1993, p.122). Furthermore, he claims that this system manages to avoid the oppressive
power relationships, which mar other systems. This, it is suggested below (see section 3.5), is an over-simplification and that commentators like Baetens Beardsmore (1993) have not fully appreciated the complex cultural factors at work in the school.

This emphasis on 'maintenance' and 'enrichment' is certainly explicitly stated in the 'Aims, Objectives and Principles' section of 'European Schools', the system's own introduction (The European Schools, 1996, p. 7). According to this document the aims of the European Schools embody a clear, political objective:

' Educated side by side, untroubled from infancy by divisive prejudices, acquainted with all that is great and good in the different cultures, it will be borne in upon them as they mature that they belong together. Without ceasing to look to their own lands with love and pride, they will become in mind Europeans, schooled and ready to complete and consolidate the work of their fathers before them, to bring into being a united and thriving Europe.'

(Source: European Schools, 1996, p.7)

The status of what the system sees as its 'aim' is underlined by the fact that the above statement is sealed into the foundation stones of all the schools. These make a clear link between the education system and the political ambitions of the EU.

Such a view is itself reflected in the 'Objectives' (The European Schools, 1996, p.8), which include:
• To give pupils confidence in their own cultural identity – the bedrock for their
development as European citizens;
• To develop high standards in the mother tongue and in foreign languages.
• To encourage a European and global perspective overall and particularly in the
study of the human sciences.

(Source: European Schools, 1996, p.8)

Furthermore, the importance that the European schools attach to language acquisition as a
tool of cross-cultural communication is reflected in the system’s ‘Principles’ which include
the following: ‘To foster the unity of the school and encourage genuine multi-cultural
education, there is a strong emphasis on the learning, understanding and use of foreign
language’ (The European Schools, 1996, p.10).

The combined emphasis in these documents is certainly very evident in the organisation of
the school where the approach that has been taken to preserving the L1 of the students is to
divide the schools into a number of linguistic sections, a structure which aims to both
protect the students' own culture and give them the opportunity to develop as Europeans.

The number of these ‘Language Sections’, as they are normally called, which any
particular school has is determined by the number of EU staff who are within reach of the
school. Thus E.S. Brussels 1 in Belgium has Danish, Dutch, English, French, German,
Greek, Italian, and Spanish sections. E.S. Karlsruhe (ESK), Germany, on the other hand,
has, at present, five (English, Dutch, French, German, and Italian). The only language
sections possible are the official languages of the European Schools which at the time of
the study were Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, and Swedish.

By adopting such a policy each European School could be seen in some ways as being made up of a series of little schools since the parallel sections, although they teach the same range of subject, are affected by the cultures of the various groups that they contain, including the nation states that they might be seen to represent. One reason for this is that each section is under the supervision of a national inspector (see section 3.4), and the teachers of each section are appointed by their education ministry, not by the school. This inevitably has an affect on the character of each section. The full extent of this is, however, beyond the scope of the present study.

All students in the school, however, experience teachers not just from different sections but also from nations that may not have their own section within their school. In the European School of Karlsruhe, for example, students who study Spanish for their L3 will be taught by a Spanish L1 speaker sent by the national system to Germany for this specific purpose. The effect of such considerable cultural factors is considered later (see section 3.4).

On entry to the school each child is allocated to a language section which should correspond with their L1. From the first year of primary school one of the ‘working languages’ (French, German, or English) must be studied as Language two (L2). From the second year, secondary, all children must also study a second foreign language (L3). From the fourth class they may also study a third foreign language (L4). In the last two years it is also possible to study a fourth foreign language (L5), although this is not compulsory and indeed students can choose to drop L3 and L4 from their programme at this point if they so
wish. Until the very end of the programme, however, they will always receive L2 teaching, as well as history and geography taught through the medium of the L2. Thus, although as indicated above all students study three languages, and can learn up to five, much of the programme is aimed at producing high levels of competence in both L1 and L2.

Such an approach can be seen in the organisation of the programme. Thus, in the primary school, the L2 is taught at first as a subject, with one 45-minute lesson a day. As the child moves through the school, more subjects are added in the L2 but only in a form which is cognitively undemanding, and highly contextualised. Thus in the secondary school, subjects such as art, music and sport are taught in the L2. The most significant change, however, occurs in the third year of the secondary school when human sciences begin to be taught to mixed language groups through the medium of the L2. So a humanities group taught in English at ESK will usually contain children from the French, German and Italian sections. Now it becomes, claims Beatens Beardsmore (1993), more cognitively demanding and context reduced and therefore more linguistically demanding.

By the semi-specialisation cycle (4th and 5th year secondary) the process of moving away from the L1 will be well advanced, with typically 75% of the students' time being spent in lessons where the language is not their L1. It is difficult to make generalisations about the specialisation cycle (6th and 7th year secondary) because the students' options can vary considerably. Typically, though, only about a third of a student's time will be spent in lessons where the lesson is in their L1. The secondary programme ends with the European Baccalaureate examination. As part of this all students must take an academic written and oral examination in both their L1 and L2. As Housen (1997) points out, the L2 may even
be used for 'highly decontextualised, abstract and intellectually demanding subject matter like sociology, mathematics, chemistry and physics, which are offered as elective specialisation courses.' (p.49)

According to Baetens Beardmore (1993) one of the reasons that the system is effective is as indicated above the way in which the L2 is gradually increased in the system, being introduced first as a subject and then only later as a medium for instruction. He therefore claims that it supports the development of more sophisticated language use or Cognitive Academic Linguistic Proficiency (CALP) skills (Cummins 1979a) (see section 2.6.4) because it provides what has been seen as ‘comprehensible input’ (Krashen, 1981), moving gradually and supportively from a context embedded and cognitively undemanding programme to one which is certainly de-contextualised and cognitively very demanding (Baetens Beardsmore, 1993).

The structure of this programme has been praised for supporting language acquisition in a number of ways. Earlier it was asserted that pupils needed to see the importance of learning a particular target language to their own needs and goals (see section 2.7.4.). As in most cases any L2 being taught in a European School is also being taught elsewhere as an L1, it has been claimed that this makes it clear to students that the languages are useful because they will encounter them around the school and in extra-curricular activities. For these reasons Baetens Beardsmore and Kohls (1988) claim that conversations in the European Schools have 'immediate pertinence' i.e. by providing a genuine need for the pupil to communicate. They also claimed that there is what they call a 'perceived pertinence' whenever the working language is used in class (ibid).
This ‘pertinence’ it is claimed helps to explain why this system is successful in encouraging students to generate language output, another factor which has been identified as characteristic of successful language policies (see section 2.7.3) It is also claimed that EU students in comparison with some immersion programmes in the US do not feel intimidated in practising their L2: ‘no one mocks at linguistic inadequacies since everyone in the school has to use a weaker language at some time’ (Baetens Beardsmore, 1995, p.60).

It was also argued earlier (see section 2.7.4) that the development of CALP skills was aided by the teaching of explicit language features. The fact that in the European Schools L2 continues to be taught as a subject has been seen as helping to explain the relatively accurate production of written language shown by European School students compared with children in Canadian immersion programmes (Baetens Beardsmore and Kohls, 1984).

Such a view, though, is problematic for as Housen (1997) points out there has been little empirical research on the second language education programme in the European Schools. However, some information is provided by two cross-sectional studies (Baetens Beardsmore and Swain, 1985; Lebrun and Baetens Beardsmore, 1991) which suggested that the level of French L2 achievement of 13 year old pupils in European Schools in Brussels are comparable to those of Canadian French-immersion pupils, despite markedly less classroom contact time with the L2.

Housen’s own research (Housen, 1997) used a longitudinal case study approach to examine English L2 students who had various first language backgrounds in the European Schools at Brussels. He claimed that, although there was much individual variation in L2 ability in
the primary cycle, this is to a large extent levelled out by the end of the secondary programme. A further cross-sectional study (Devolder 1989, quoted in Housen, 1997, pp.40-53) claimed that in general terms English L2 achievement in the European Schools in Brussels and Mol was comparable with the high levels in French L2 in the same school. This evidence would seem to suggest that the languages programme in these schools is capable of producing high levels of competence in a language even where there was little out of school support for the L2 in question, English in the case of Brussels (Housen, 1997).

Housen also scrutinized results from the European Baccalaureate, which he felt suggested that the content courses (history, geography, etc) taught in the L2 revealed near monolingual levels of scholastic attainment. He concludes that, 'The exam results further bear out what is considered one of the greatest achievements of the L2 programme, namely European School pupils' ability to produce their own independent grammatically accurate and lexically precise sustained discourse in the L2' (Housen, 1997, p.45). Housen (ibid) contrasts this directly with Canadian immersion pupils, whose work often contains very noticeable grammatical inaccuracies (Swain 1985; Hammerly 1991).

3.4 The European Schools, Language Sections and Diversity.

This section begins by looking at the influence of the nation states on the system and considers how well the European Schools manage to fulfil their stated goals of linguistic equality. This leads to a more critical consideration of the main tool by which the L1 is maintained, the language sections. The following sub-section then argues that the very existence of these language sections masks the diversity present at every level of the school, a factor which makes all of the comments made above about the language
programme (see section 3.3) very problematic. It will also be argued that while the European School system confers many benefits, these are unequally distributed amongst those who make up its community.

Not surprisingly, the competition between the various nation states that make up the EU has a profound effect on the schools. As Swan (1996), who was described by a former Secretary-General of The Board of Governors of the European Schools as ‘the official chronicler of the European Schools’ (Olson, 1993, p. 134) points out: 'The European Schools must pursue their curricular aims on the basis of equality of esteem among the Member States,' (Swan, 1996, p.10). This is certainly one reason why the schools are organised into ‘equal’ linguistic units, a division which reflects wider sensitivities about language usage in general within the European Union where the dominance of any one language would be as unacceptable. In this way the schools are a microcosm of the tensions about language within the EU.

The need for equality of esteem between the languages is certainly clearly seen in the complex system for managing the schools. Legally the European Schools are the joint responsibility of the education ministeries of the member states of the European Community. These are represented on the most important administrative structure, the Board of Governors (BOG). Strictly speaking the organisation is a council of ministers but in practice the responsibility is given to delegations from each of the member states. As Swan (1996) points out, the BOG has considerable autonomy over educational, administrative and financial matters but many of its functions are carried out through a series of committees such as the Administrative and Finance Committee (CAF) which supervises the financial running of the schools. There is also a Board of Inspectors
(BOI) to which every member state provides one inspector for primary and another for secondary education. In the case of the UK, each of these inspectors is drawn from HMI (Her Majesty's Inspectorate), the senior group of inspectors in the British education system. Additionally, each school has its own Administrative Board which is made up of the BOG's representative, the director, as well as pupils, parents and teachers. The day to day running of the system is under the control of a Secretary-General and Deputy-General, both full time officials who are based in Brussels.

The BOG is often criticised, by Swan (1996) for example, for being rather bureaucratic. However, bearing in mind that it has to find compromises between so many different systems, it is perhaps rather more surprising that it is able to function at all. In particular, the fact that it can only make decisions based on a two-thirds majority for most issues and must have unanimity for any decision which might lead to the opening or closure of a school means that it can only act slowly. The need for agreement which this voting system implies is also a reason why despite the geographical spread of the system, this system is highly centralised (Swan, 1996).

The advantages of a system which attempts to guarantee the L1 of its students are easy enough to see. Without such schools it would be difficult for the EU to convince its employees to go to a different country if this involved their children having to face the sort of 'immersion' or 'submersion' programmes described earlier (section 2.5). And even if as is sometimes suggested by those within the EU who criticise the system on the grounds of cost suggest it would be cheaper to send children to international schools this would not preserve their L1. Indeed, as Swan (1996) suggests, in most such schools one or, at the most, two languages will dominate and there is often an emphasis on
assimilation. This view is supported by Tosi (1991) who points out that the IB programme run by many international schools tends to centre around English: 'The international baccalaureate attaches a privileged role to English as a medium of instruction and supranational acculturation which diminishes the cognitive and academic role of the national languages' (p.36).
3.4.1. Language Sections and the Maintenance of the L1.

As indicated above, the aims of the European schools provide a clear statement about the importance of maintaining the student's own L1 as part of preserving what is seen as their 'culture'. To achieve this students are placed into language sections. The existence of such groupings is very problematic (see section 3.4.2) but comment on the system rarely looks critically at terms such as 'national identity'. Thus Hoffman (1998) comments favourably, stating that 'one of the fundamental principles of the European Schools is that children should be able to receive an education in their native language and culture while being away from their country of origin, thus helping them to develop their own national identity' (p.161).

Such a view which seems to equate languages and culture is, as already mentioned, implicit in the aims of the European Schools. The immediate problem with dividing such a system into language sections, however, is that such a division represents a very selective choice of the languages spoken in Europe: in this case the high status official languages of the EU. These are certainly not the largest language groups for Catalan has 6m speakers, more than either Danish or Finnish (Phillipson et al, 1996). The choice of the official languages as the organisational principle of the European School system would seem to underline the point made earlier (see section 2.5) that bilingual programmes often favour high status languages at the expense of others.

Even without this rather selective view of European languages the system's concept of equality of esteem would only be satisfied if these language sections really did in large part correspond with the population in the schools. If this was not the case it would have as suggested below a number of very important consequences.
Perhaps the first point to acknowledge when talking about the language sections as guardians of the students' cultures is that the fifteen nation states of the EU that existed in 2003 had only eleven language sections. For nationals such as the Belgians, the Luxembourgers, the Austrians, this may be problematic, as these groups may, historically, have experienced assimilationist policies from the same neighbours with whom they now share a language section.

3.4.2. Diversity within the Language Sections.

Apart from this difficulty there is also the question of to what extent the students within any particular section do have the language in question as an L1. The true scale of the phenomena is very difficult to assess. The evidence that is available comes from two sources: the findings of research carried out on the schools, and data produced within the system.

While it has sometimes been acknowledged that there is some diversity within the language sections, this has not usually been seen by commentators as a common phenomenon. Thus Tosi (1991) who is, on other aspects of the system, often critical of the European Schools comments that 'within each school students from the same state are taught together in their national section in the official language of their country of origin, which in most cases is their mother tongue.' (p.30).

While also suggesting that the phenomenon is not a major consideration, Hoffman (1998) identifies one of the main reasons why there must be at least some diversity within the schools: 'For most children, their first learning experience will be through the language
spoken at home, but there are also bilingual speakers, as well as those from different linguistic backgrounds whose languages are not represented in the schools' (p.164).

Indeed, as no European School contains a language section for each of the official languages, it is likely that some children in a section must come from a different L1 background.

There are also two major sources of information, both of which are produced on an annual basis, within the system. The first of these, produced for the Board of Governors, is the Annual Report of the Secretary-General of the European Schools. The second is the 'Rapport de rentree’ (Starting School Report), a document that European Schools are required to compile shortly after the beginning of each school year. This document is a presentation of statistics and commentary on a wide range of issues.

Judging by the Annual Report of the Secretary-General of the European Schools (2003) there is no unexpected diversity at all. The only comment on this area refers to the preparations for students from the member states due to join the union in May 2004 and the decision already made to create language sections for the Polish, Hungarian and Czech languages in Brussels and Luxembourg. There is no explicit mention that any of the other students in the system are from countries other than the member states of the EU. That this does not give a full account is clear from the ‘Rapport de rentree’ documents produced by each school. The 2003 report for the European School of Luxembourg, for example reveals that there were students with 56 nationalities. Similarly, in ESK, the report records the presence of 55 nationalities in the school
Further evidence of diversity comes from Section K of the 'Rapport de rentée'. This section deals with the problems of integrating children into existing language sections. Because it is up to each school to report what they consider relevant, this does not produce a full or consistent picture, although how they use the space may reveal something about priorities. Thus the 2003 entry for ESK deals only with the relatively small number of children, 26 in all, from other EU member states who do not have a language section in the school. This is also the pattern in ES Culham. ES Frankfurt, Germany, on the other hand, which only opened in September, 2003, is far more revealing. The section for the primary section of this school reports, 'A large number of pupils who joined the English section in September 2003 have little or no previous knowledge of English' (Rapport de rentée, Frankfurt, 2003, p.71).

Several of the schools, including all the four largest (Brussels I, Brussels II, Brussels III, Luxembourg) report the arrival of large numbers of pupils from the new member states. Thus Luxembourg's 'Rapport de rentée' estimates that about 200 such children would join the school in the year 2004/5. As indicated below, some of these students will eventually have their own language section, or at least L1 lessons in their own language. For the time being most of them the report indicates will join the English section.

As the above would also seem to confirm, it is normally perceived that diversity is greatest in the English section. However, while the Varese 'Rapport' points out that 'soit plus de moitié' - more than the majority (Rapport de rentée, European School of Varese, p.106) of the children in the English section have an L1 other than English, it also points out that there are significant numbers of students in the Italian, German and French sections.
The ‘Rapport de rentree’ do seem to reflect a growing awareness among some staff that the English section, in particular, is very diverse. What seems to have happened in the last few years is that the increasing numbers of pupils arriving from the member states who were preparing for accession in May 2004 have made staff more aware of the diversity of the system in general. Thus in recent years, this has several times been raised at the L1 Committee, a group made up of representatives of the L1 English teachers and chaired by a member of HMI (Her Majesties Inspectorate – the most senior inspectors in the British education systems). While the experience of diversity seems to be greater in the smaller schools, the discussion at the meetings indicates that the language sections in the bigger schools are also affected, albeit probably to a lesser extent, having more Category 1 students (see section 3.6.3).

Even the awareness revealed in the ‘Rapport de rentree’, while suggesting considerable diversity, probably considerably understates the situation. An important point is that some children, for family reasons, have more than one nationality and that the one that is used on their registration documents may have been selected to support their application. Again the extent of such factors is difficult to assess, although sometimes evidence of it arises even when it was not the subject of the research. Thus, writing about the benefits of history lessons delivered through the medium of an L2, one of Bulwer's (1992) interviewees, writing about her history class writes: 'I don't know – most of them aren't even German anyway – they're half Dutch' (p.181).

In Karlsruhe some of the children certainly have English/German or English/American nationality, often simply because of where they were born. Some of these will effectively be L1 speakers in both languages but more often, living in Germany, often with German
parents, this will not be the case. Another reason why the picture is complex is that some of the families have often moved frequently from country to country, stopping nowhere for more than a couple of years. The result of this is that the various children in a family may have very differing levels of competence in a series of languages. One family in ESK, for example, has one child who can speak Portuguese, Polish, and English, while a sibling can speak English and German. This would be an extreme case but the European School of Karlsruhe has families where, although the children and one parent are German, none of the children could speak the language at all when they joined the school. Likewise, the school contains children who, despite having two English parents, have very low level of competence when they join the school simply because they have lived all their lives in Germany and belong to families who are well integrated in the local community.

Another factor is that for various historic reasons there are communities in many countries who speak a different L1 from that of the majority in their country. In Karlsruhe, for example, there have been several German L1 speakers with passports from countries in South America where there are a number of German speaking communities. Such students would be classified as Argentineans, Bolivians, etc, despite having German as an L1.

Because of such factors it is necessary to look very carefully at individual cases, rather than relying on the official statistics. As an example, on March 22nd, 2004, a list of students in the English section of ESK was extracted from the school’s computer system. With the help of the L1 teachers each individual case was examined. The criterion was how many students could be considered to have in general terms age equivalent L1 competence in English at the time when they joined the English section. It was also
considered whether they had this level in other languages. In some cases it was necessary to talk to individual students about the history of their languages usage. Perhaps unsurprisingly the results did not fit very well into the official categorisation:

Table 2: The L1 of Students in the English Section of the European School of Karlsruhe.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Number in Class</th>
<th>L1 English</th>
<th>L1 German</th>
<th>Other L1s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1E</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2E</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3E</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4E</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5E</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6E</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7E</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>94 (54%)</td>
<td>121(70%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures are, of course, problematic in that the judgements made about the level of fluency necessary to put someone in any of these categories could be disputed. Similarly, it could well be argued that many of the students could be regarded as having more than one L1. However, the above table certainly indicates that large numbers of students in the English section have an L1 that is not English. Another important finding was that there
were substantial numbers of L1 German students present in all of the classes. The implications of such diversity are explored below (see section 3.4.3).

In conclusion to this section it should perhaps be observed that it is hardly surprising that the schools do contain diversity, for its setting is very different from that which exists in some other programmes. Thus, while in the Canadian programmes described above (see section 2.8.3) it may be reasonable to expect that the English children living in English speaking areas have consistently low levels of competence in the target language when they go to school, this is far less likely to be the case with a European School, many of whose pupils will have lived in the host country for several years. What is certain is that the diversity that exists in this system is very likely to vary greatly from school to school, section to section, class to class. The main consequence of this is to stress the importance of looking critically at the composition of groups before accepting generalisations about the system.

3.4.3. The Consequences of Diversity within the Language Sections.

The realisation that the language sections are at least sometimes very diverse has a number of very important consequences for the bilingual programme run both in E S Karlsruhe as well as in any of the other schools with a similar language distribution. Firstly, the school's aim to maintain the L1 and culture of the children by the establishment of language sections becomes far more problematic when one realises that some of the classes contain a majority of students who are not from the 'culture' which it was designed to preserve. The factors which affect the English section of ESK are considered below. In essence it is suggested that the presence of large numbers of L1 speakers in L2 classes, and vice versa, has a number of effects which, because of the limited range of support which is
provided for these students means that some groups are benefited more than others. This, it is argued, should be borne in mind when assessing the operation of the programme as a whole.

In the case of ESK, as mentioned above, an important factor in the diversity of the section has been the presence of large numbers of L1 German speakers in the L1 English lessons. The reasons for this are quite involved. Sometimes there has been no room in the German section and so children have been placed in the English section, space being available because of the relatively few L1 English speakers present in the area. Another possibility is that the choice of the English section reflects a wish on the part of parents to obtain what Bourdieu (1990) sees as ‘Cultural Capital’ (see section 2.5.1). What Bourdieu (ibid) means by this is that children can be given other forms of ‘capital’ besides direct economic resources. He therefore sees such things as high status education as a form of ‘capital’ which can later be ‘exchanged’ for more traditional forms of wealth via the better access to highly rewarded jobs that such education may provide. The education provided by the European Schools is very much viewed in this way by Finaldi-Baratieri (2000, p. 45) who asserts ‘The language education given to the pupils is extremely expensive and successful and it is surely a calling-card for top-jobs in Europe’. The particular role of English in this process was indicated, albeit on a limited scale, by several of the parents spoken to as part of the present study. They were very aware of the potential benefits of their German children joining the English Language Section. One parent had previously requested a transfer to the USA from their employer with the specific intention of giving his children the basic English language skills necessary to join the section. Some indication that this also happens at other schools is suggested by a comment from a European School teacher.
at E.S. Varese reported by Finaldi-Baratieri (2000, p.26): ‘The English section is multinational; everybody smuggles their children in’.

Such children will also have a marked advantage in the L2 courses, as well as the other courses which are run in L2 such as music and most importantly, from the third year secondary, the compulsory humanities courses which must be studied through the medium of the L2. Not only do such children have initial competence in the L2 concerned, but they also typically have high levels of out of school support.

The presence of such students for whom English is really an L2 also means necessarily that the range of language competence within the L1 groups is likely to be very considerable, making extensive demands on the teachers and students.

It is not possible in this study to explore the full extent of this phenomenon in other sections or schools. Having said this, the topic has several times been discussed by English L1 committee mentioned already (see section 3.4.2.). Much of this discussion reflected concerns arising from the teachers concerning the arrival of students from the new member states in the larger schools. Information about other sections is more difficult to obtain although Swan (1989) writing about a Dutch class wrote:

'Even within the same class three or four distinct levels of fluency in the common language can be found; in one extreme case, 14 year old native speakers of Dutch were sitting side by side with total beginners in the same language' (p.168).

The decision of the European Schools to raise the number of L1 lessons from five to six per week in 1990 also suggests some awareness of the consequences of such diversity
within the system. Swan (1996), for example, points out that the reason that the extra hour was necessary was that: '(i) pupils living abroad can sometimes have a rather tenuous hold on their mother tongue, especially if their parents speak different languages, and (ii) the L1 groups in the schools may include a variety of national and linguistic groups whose grasp of this language itself varies widely' (Swan, 1996, p.51).

Although detailed statistics are not available, some of these children clearly experience difficulties, as Swan (1996) states 'children who were placed in a language section other than that of their mother tongue contributed substantially to the occurrence of learning difficulties' (p.48). In Chapters 5 and 6 the results of interviews with such children are recorded.

The diversity within L1 groupings means, necessarily, that there must be a corresponding diversity within the L2 groups. The reason why awareness of diversity is so important is that the L2 lessons are not the sheltered environments recommended by Krashen (1981), with the consequence that L2 learners find themselves in classes where the level of the group will already be so high that they cannot effectively participate. It also means that such students are unlikely to receive encouraging grades for, as Tosi (1991, p.33) points out: 'In a system operating with norm-referenced language tests, the top marks are awarded to native competence.'

As with the L1 lessons, many of those who have commented on the language programme have failed to apply this criticism to the European Schools because they assume that the groupings were largely homogenous. For example, Baetens Beardsmore (1995) writes:
'In the L2 language lessons there are no native-speaker peers present (unless children come from mixed marriage bilingual backgrounds, as is sometimes the case) since all sub-sections are being taught different L2s' (p.47).

Similarly, Tosi (1991), accepts the system’s description of itself: 'on no account are genuine foreign language learners allowed to sit the same examination with students who speak the same language as a mother tongue, or those who have learned it as a second academic or vehicular language.' (p.32)

3.4.4. The Influence of the Host Nation

The presence of large numbers of students in the English section of ESK from the host country (Germany) emphasises the point made by Baetens Beardsmore (1993) that the language of the host nation has a big influence on each of the European Schools. He tended to see this as explaining the high performance of students in their L2 lessons when the L2 in question was the language of the host nation. In view of the previous section it seems possible that this the high performance may be because many of them are, in reality, L1 speakers.

The choice of L2 made across the European Schools system (See appendix B) certainly suggests that there is the potential for the phenomenon identified above in the two other schools in Germany where German is also the most popular L2 choice. It is also true that although the most popular L2 in the other schools is, as the above table shows, English, it is interesting that in the very large schools in Luxembourg and Brussels a very large number of children choose French. This is, of course, hardly surprising and may well reflect the influence of the dominant language of the area where the school is situated. It
would be interesting to know whether some of these ‘L2’ speakers already have the language as an L1. This is, however, outside the scope of this study.

3.4.5. The Choice of the First Foreign Language (L2)

The fact that the L2 must, as already mentioned, be selected from English, French or Germany is also significant. The choice of these three languages makes considerable sense in that they have the highest numbers of L1 speakers in the European Community. However, the usefulness of the language is clearly not the only consideration since Spanish, although being, from a world wide perspective anyway, at least as useful as two of the working languages, has never been proposed for this role. In reality, the choice of working languages reflects, as with much else to do with the educational system, the power structures of its parent bodies for the simple fact is that English, French and German are the official languages of the nation states which dominate Europe.

In view of the above it is perhaps hardly surprising that the students who most benefit from such a system are those who have early access to two of these languages. English students, for example, who have lived in Brussels from an early age are likely to have attended French speaking kindergartens there. Similarly, German students who have lived outside their own country for any length of time are highly likely to have acquired some competence in English.

Conversely, children who join the school with competence in another language will not benefit from this as much, if at all: a German child who speaks some Italian will not be able to use this until they reach the third year of the secondary where it will sometimes be offered as an L3. Even then there will be no benefit to be had in the humanities courses.
which, as mentioned above, must be studied through the L2 language. Interestingly, Baetens Beardsmore (1995) commented that the fact that the L2 language must be chosen from English, French or German makes 'these languages more equal than the others' (p.33). Although it is not clear from the context whether this author realises the Orwellian associations of such a comment, the advantages it gives to some groups might be thought to justify such a reference.

The group who are most disadvantaged by this system are those who join the European School not speaking any of the official languages of the European School. Thus a Russian who joins the system not only receives no support for their own language, but must learn two of the official languages immediately, and a third EU language later. If they join the school from the second year secondary, they must learn all three immediately. It will be argued later (see Chapter 7) that, in effect, within the Bilingual Programme of additive bilingualism in the European Schools, there is a further programme which amounts to an 'immersion' programme and, in some cases, a 'submersion' programme.

3.5. Elitism and the European Schools

The previous section began to consider how some groups are more privileged by the European Schools than others. This will be further developed in the following section which considers the question of elitism in relation to these schools. This is important for two reasons. The first of these is that the extent to which this system might be considered elitist would affect the possible application of this model to a wider population, something which has been proposed by the European Parliament (see below). Equally importantly, if some sections of the school population are indeed treated more favourably than others, this too would be significant since one of the factors which has been identified
in successful bilingual programmes is the extent to which a system challenges such
inequalities (see section 2.5.3).

A full discussion of the problematic word ‘elite’ cannot be conducted here, where it will
be assumed to refer, essentially, to a relatively small and wealthy group. The section
begins by considering whether the very existence of the system contradicts the EU’s own
general policy on education. Following from this it considers other possible areas of
elitism such as the make up of the student body as well as fees and selection procedures.

A number of writers have considered that the very existence of the European School is
elitist, re-enforcing the dominance of national languages. Hoffmann (1989), for example,
points out that most bilingual programmes in Europe involve either the prestigious
‘national’ languages or, more recently, their own indigenous languages. In stark contrast
to this is the way in which these same states usually ignore the languages spoken by large
migrant or immigrant communities such as Turks in Germany, Moroccans in Spain,
Algerians in France, and Asians in Britain. Similarly, Neave (1984) saw the schools as
being contradictory as far as community education is concerned because their excellence
favours one set of migrants, those who have wealth. Such a viewpoint was later put
forward by Oostlander (1993) in his report to the European Parliament when he claimed
that, by educating only one group of workers, the schools did not live up to the European
Union principle of justice for all.

The existence of language sections which support only the official languages of the EU
does make such a claim difficult to entirely discount. However, it must be remembered that
the school system was set up to serve the needs of a very specific group, the children of the
EU's own employees, without which the functioning of the EU would be very difficult. While the very existence of such a system must be seen as elitist in that similar programmes to protect other languages are not given the same sort of support, it is difficult to see how such a small system could deal with a wider range of languages than it does, bearing in mind that as argued above, it already copes with more languages than is normal in bilingual programmes. To some extent though the European Parliament has itself encouraged such criticisms. Thus, apart from the Oostlander report (1993) mentioned above, it again commissioned a report from the EU Committee on Budgets which, called the Bosch Report after its author, was presented to the European Parliament in 2002. This stated: 'At present European Schools are primarily there for the correct functioning of European institutions and other Community bodies. This implies an elitist character' (Bösch, 2002, p.12).

Such comments, however, must be seen in the context of the constant struggle between the EU and member states over finance. It soon becomes clear from the above report that the term 'elitist' is being used as part of an argument for having the European Schools funded by other groups rather than by the European Commission: 'The question which then arises is whether these schools would have to be financed from the Union's budget or rather that subsidiarity would apply and the local, regional or national authorities, the regional international enterprises and the parents should pay for the schools' (Bösch, 2002, p.12).

The Board Of Governors of The European Schools (BOG) has reacted to such criticisms by encouraging the schools to seek co-financing agreements with national or local bodies. This has led the schools to adopt a higher profile and to lay increasing stress on their uniqueness, a phenomenon which has itself been seen as evidence of the school's view of
themselves as elitist (Finaldi-Baratieri, 2000).

The student body has also been seen as reflecting an elitist system. Thus Baker (1993) refers to those who attend the schools as the 'privileged European School Children' (p.166-7). Finaldi-Baratieri (2000) goes further, seeing the European Schools as one of the ways by which the elite which runs the European Union reproduces itself: 'What these schools are is an expression of an elite in the making. The Schools play a vitally important part in giving this elite the self-confidence to carry out its objective of accruing to itself more and more extensive powers' (p.46). To examine this aspect it is important to look at the makeup of the school population, how it is selected, as well as the level of fees. The following section looks at the division of the schools into separate categories of students. This is followed by a section which looks at the economic background of those who attend the schools.

3.5.1. The Different Categories of European School Students

The schools have three categories of students. Those in Category 1 are the dependents of European Union officials, or teachers in the schools. These do not pay fees. They are also a privileged group in that the schools must offer a place to someone in this category, although not necessarily in the appropriate year group if that is already full. Similarly, this group is highly advantaged in that the schools must offer L1 provision to any child in this category; even if there is only one child in a year group with Portuguese or Swedish as an L1, to take ESK as an instance, the schools must provide L1 lessons in these languages, subject only to the restriction that there must be such a teacher available – which is nearly always the case. This, as indicated in Chapter 7, has important and largely unacknowledged, consequences for the whole language programme.
While Category 1 students make up just under 60% of the system’s population, this varies greatly from school to school (See appendix C). Across the system as a whole, however, the schools fail to attract even 50% of the possible Category 1 population (Swan, 1996). This alone would seem to suggest that, if the schools really are part of an elite’s attempt to reproduce itself, as Finaldi-Baratieri (2000) suggests, their value would not always appear to be apparent to the functionaries themselves.

Category 2 students are those who are sponsored by an organisation which is not an official instution of the EU. Thus some big national and multinational companies have contracts with individual European School which guarantee their expatriate students access to the schools. The pressure from the BOG to attract finance is clearly seen in the increasing size of the category 2 group (see appendix D).

Category 3 students are all those who do not fall into the above categories. Unlike the other two sections they have no entitlement to L1 provision which is not already available in the school. Some category 3 students have been able to have L1 Danish lessons, however, because they were lucky enough to have joined classes where there were already students entitled to the course. The only concession made is the important one that the L1 course will continue even if the ‘entitled’ student leaves the school.

There are several reasons why the schools admit such students, not least because, as Baetens Beardsmore (1993) points out, of the need to balance language sections. In some ways, this group of students could be considered as being exploited by the other parts of the system, as one reason they are admitted is to provide a less elitist environment (Bösch
2002). What in effect this means is that these students seem to be acceptable mainly because the system realises that the category I and 2 students need a broader social and linguistic environment than would exist without the presence of category 3 students: in some sections or courses the idea of an L1 environment would be very difficult without these students. Yet despite this value category 3 students have, as already mentioned, few rights. As a category 3 place costs significantly less than a Category 2 place, there have been pressures on the schools to reduce, despite their usefulness, the numbers of such students.

Baetens Beardsmore (1995) pointed out that the fees are relatively modest, and thus would not deter parents of more modest means. This may previously have been the case but since that time they have been steadily increasing, due largely to increasing pressure from the European Commision to reduce costs. This was reflected in a decision of 1994 to raise the fees for this group by 10% a year for ten years (Swan, 1996).

3.5.2. The Economic Background of the Students

The division into three categories only gives an imperfect view of the diversity of the school's population. As Baetens Beardsmore (1995) points out, even though the schools were set up to educate the children of the expatriate EU employees, this does not mean that all children come from middle class backgrounds, as the schools have a population 'ranging from the offspring of cabinet ministers to those of porters and cleaning staff' (p.28).

Similarly Swan (1996) claims that 'despite assumptions often made by observers about the homogeneity of their families' social status, the pupils in the various schools actually
represent a very wide range of intellectual, cultural and educational backgrounds.' (p.104) He also points out that 67% the European School of Mol's population was made up of the children of miners at the time of his research.

Because of the wide variation in the number of pupils in the various categories, it is difficult to judge how economically elitist the backgrounds of the children are, even if 'elitist' had a clear meaning. While it is true that not all the Category 1 students would be middle class, various factors ensure that this is often the case. Firstly, it is not always the case that EU jobs give automatic entitlement to education in the schools. Also, lower grade workers are more likely to come from the country where the school is situated and thus have the alternative of sending their children to the local schools.

Category 2 students are also very likely to have middle class parents, if only because these parents would normally have the sorts of jobs which are valuable enough to their employers to justify such a considerable extra expense, often on top of other expatriate employment conditions.

Category 3 students, by contrast, are a very variable group. They range from students whose parents are very solidly middle class professionals to the children of migrant and immigrant workers. Thus Hoffmann (1989) found that the European School in Britain (ES Culham) near Oxford 'attracts children from parents with professional and international backgrounds, often with mixed marriages'(p.163). There is, however, also considerable variation, year on year, class on class. It may, additionally, be the case that the balance is different between sections. Thus at Karlsruhe, while the students in the English section come largely from the middle class, this is not the case across the school.
In particular, the Italian section is rather different from the other four because Karlsruhe has a large population of Italians, most of whom work in the city's service industries. This group as a whole does not enjoy high status, either in the school or the city. This was summed up by one of the teachers at ESK who described them as ‘the blacks of Karlsruhe’. While such a remark is unacceptable even when, as was the case here, made by a black teacher it does reflect the difficulty of regarding this part of the school’s population as elite in any sense of the word.

In conclusion to this section it would be difficult to describe the whole population of the school as completely elitist in composition but recent changes to restrict the numbers in category 3 are likely to make it more so in the future. Most importantly, though, there is considerable diversity between the schools with some groups being relatively disadvantaged.

3.6. The Academic Level of the European Schools

The academic level of the schools is a further important consideration, which might support claims that this is an elitist system. This section begins by examining the nature of the programme, arguing that although there is little in the system which formally encourages a highly academic environment, a whole range of factors virtually ensure that this is the case, although this varies from section to section. It is then argued that the system may be too academically demanding for those who are already having problems with the languages programme. Following on from this the section ends by looking at the various procedures in place for helping students who have difficulties but argues that an appreciation of the factors necessary for successful bilingual education (see section 2.7) would suggest that such policies are likely to prove inadequate.
The European School's have certainly often been criticised by writers for having too academic a curriculum. Brendan O'Brien (1988 in Swan, 1996), the Chair of the Parents Association of ES Brussels II in 1988, for example, while praising the excellent achievements of the the European Schools claimed that they had a less than satisfactory record with less academically gifted children. It is difficult to know whether such views are widespread although, when Swan researched the subject in 1984 and 1991 (Swan, 1991) the charge of 'exclusively academic' was frequently made.

Acknowledgement of the such difficulties, at least from some within the system can be found in at least one official document prepared for the BOG:

'Apart from this academic pathway, involving highly cognitive and abstract learning, the European Schools do not offer any other training pathway through across-the-board differentiation geared to more concrete (technical/vocational) training.'

Source: Integration of SEN Pupils into the European Schools (2003)

3.6.1. How the European School Grades its Students

The extent to which students will find the European Schools' programme challenging depends, to some extent, on the language section they attend. To understand why this is the case it is necessary to consider the system's marking scheme.
Table 3: The Grading System of the European Schools (Secondary)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mark Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>The performance meets the requirements of the subject and the question particularly adequately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-8.9</td>
<td>The performance fully meets the requirements of the subject and the question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-7.9</td>
<td>The performance generally meets the requirements of the subject and the question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-6.9</td>
<td>The performance does show weaknesses but still meets the requirements of the subject and the question on the whole.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5.9</td>
<td>The performance does not meet the requirements of the subject and the question but shows that the necessary basic knowledge exists and that the weaknesses can be remedied in the foreseeable future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3.9</td>
<td>The performance does not meet the requirements of the subject and the question, the basic knowledge being so sketchy that the weaknesses cannot be remedied in the comparatively distant future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.1-1.9</td>
<td>The performance does not meet the requirements of the subject and the question, the basic knowledge being so sketchy that the weaknesses cannot be remedied in the foreseeable future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>This assessment will be given in the event of a blank or unacceptable script, of the absence of an answer or of a particular project or of cheating.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The vagueness of this set of descriptors means that it is almost inevitable that the marks
obtained will be heavily influenced by the national norms of the teachers (see section 3.6.4) concerned. In contrast to the set of descriptors, the system by which students are promoted to the next class is minutely described in the European School regulations. It is not possible to give a full description of these here. However, in general terms, in the secondary section, each teacher gives every student a mark out of ten for their subject. With the exception of the religion or ethics grade, these are then averaged. To pass the year a student must have an average of six in all subjects. There are, however, other conditions which have to be met, with strict limits on how many subjects may be ‘failed’.

One important reason why the language sections have differing failure rates as the is that, although students will have marks from teachers in several sections, many of their marks will be awarded by teachers from their own section who may have different norms from their colleagues in other sections. The following table shows the differing rates for each school and language section.
### Table 4: Statistics on Pupil's Repeating a Year in The European Schools (2003-4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total by school/language section</th>
<th>Alicante</th>
<th>Bergen</th>
<th>Brussels I</th>
<th>Brussels II</th>
<th>Brussels III</th>
<th>Culham</th>
<th>Frankfurt</th>
<th>Karlsruhe</th>
<th>Lux</th>
<th>Mol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
<td>147</td>
<td></td>
<td>176</td>
<td></td>
<td>151</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>87</td>
<td></td>
<td>113</td>
<td></td>
<td>223</td>
<td></td>
<td>252</td>
<td></td>
<td>322</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danish</td>
<td>131</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>119</td>
<td></td>
<td>161</td>
<td></td>
<td>192</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>111</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
<td>64</td>
<td></td>
<td>437</td>
<td></td>
<td>397</td>
<td></td>
<td>380</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>234</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
<td>170</td>
<td></td>
<td>163</td>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
<td>106</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>118</td>
<td></td>
<td>161</td>
<td></td>
<td>162</td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>175</td>
<td></td>
<td>137</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>93</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>319</td>
<td></td>
<td>377</td>
<td></td>
<td>1269</td>
<td></td>
<td>1528</td>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
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The attitude to the failure rates itself reflects national expectations. Thus, although O'Brien (quoted in Swan, 1996) claims that such 'failure and attrition rates would lead to a public outcry were they to occur in the national systems at home' (Swan, 1996, p.16), this is by no means certain. While it would certainly be shocking in the UK or Ireland where repeating a year is very uncommon, some countries have even higher rates of class repetition: 'Comment tends therefore to be coloured by cultural or national perspectives, and these vary widely on every major aspect of schooling' (Swan, 1996, p.17).

3.6.2. European School Examinations: the European Baccalaureate.

Having considered the marking system, the following section looks at the only examination available to European School students at the end of the educational programme, The European Baccalaureate. This it will be argued further increases the academic nature of the system.

The European Baccalaureate is unique in that all European Union member states agree, at least in theory, to accept it as a qualification for study at university. As can be imagined this was only achieved after a great deal of negotiation. The result is that 'the syllabus for these two years comes even more to resemble the continental European model, both in its exclusively academic bias and its very broad range of subjects' (Swan, 1996, p.56). All students must study compulsory courses in LI, L2, Maths, history, geography, as well as at least one science. Students must, additionally, choose from a range of optional subjects. The difficulties of producing such a system are illustrated by the inclusion of the compulsory philosophy course which must be studied as part of the European Baccalaureate in the sixth and seventh year: the only choice given to the students is whether they study the normal course (2 hours per week) or the advanced course (4 hours
per week). Even though this is not an obligatory course in most countries within the EU, this is required in upper tier schools in Italy and France and, consequently, it had to be included in the programme in order to persuade those states to authenticate the programme.

The existence of such a programme has a considerable influence on the rest of the programme. Indeed, as Swan (1996) points out, some critics claim that its shadow falls all the way to the primary school since: 'pupils who are considered unlikely to pass it are said to be refused promotion from class or are 'counselling out' before they reach it' (Swan, 1996, p.58).

3.6.3. Selection of students

Having looked at the academic nature of the schools, the following section considers how vacant places are allocated to students and how this, too, tends to increase the academic nature of the system.

None of the schools is 100% Category 1 and 2 and so there is inevitably some element of selection involved for the remaining places. There is often very strong competition for available places in some sections. Hoffmann (1989), for example, writes that the European School of Culham is always oversubscribed. Similarly, in the last four years, more than 400 applications for ESK have been rejected. Even in the larger schools, as mentioned above, there are substantial numbers of category 3 children and it is necessary to ask how they are selected.

Bulwer (1995), a serving teacher in one of the larger schools, has gone to some lengths to challenge the view of the European Schools as a form of elite bilingualism. As part of this
he points out that 'there are no entrance tests and pupils once admitted to the nursery section of the school are automatically entitled, if they so wish, to continue their education to the European Baccalaureate' (p.464). This is, however a little misleading as, while there are certainly no standardised admission tests, it does not follow that there is are no selection procedures. Indeed as Bulwer (1995) himself acknowledged: ‘For pupils entering the system at a later stage some screening for ability and proficiency in L2 and L3 is necessary to ascertain whether the pupils could benefit from the languages-based curriculum of the secondary school’ (p.464).

That there is no standard test means that, although the process is flexible, it is likely that in the absence of an alternative the school and its teachers are judging people by norm-referencing – picking those who should be able to manage with the system. The practical end result of this is that two types of students are more likely to be admitted. The first group are those who have already shown some academic promise. The second group is likely to be made up of those who have at least some competence in two languages. Although it is not possible here to examine this phenomenon it would seem likely that, at least in some cases, the success of European Schools students may be as much to do with the selection procedures as with the quality of the schooling itself.

3.6.4. The European School Teachers

The way in which teacher selection may increase the academic nature of the schools has already been mentioned briefly above (see section 3.6.1). In the following section this idea is developed by looking at the ways in which the diversity of the teaching staff plus a lack of training and regulation means that teachers often rely on national norms in their grading and teaching.
Certainly, as Swan (1996) points out, the teachers are a very diverse group: ‘Nearly a thousand teachers seconded from at least twelve cultural traditions, educated in and trained for as many national school systems, and speaking nine or more native languages amongst them’ (p.88).

The ‘deployed’ teachers are directly selected by their educational ministries, again reinforcing the link between language and state. Furthermore, although schools sometimes are involved in the process it is the Ministries of Education of each nation state who shortlist and appoint staff. Similarly, although the directors are involved when staff need to have new contracts, it is the inspectors of the national system who have most influence. It is difficult for people without knowledge of the diversity of educational practice in Europe to appreciate just how great this may be.

Development towards any sort of consensus is also harmed by the lack of training, for contrary to what might be expected, teachers in a European School receive no special training before taking up their posts. As Swan (1996) remarks they generally learn on the job. Furthermore, as Housen (1997) points out, there is no worked out standard European School method for second language teaching.

While these factors give the teachers much flexibility this is not without its disadvantages. For one thing, it would be hardly surprising if in such circumstances teachers relied largely on norms from their own national system, which in itself probably explains the difference in marking identified above. An understanding of the problematic nature of ‘culture’ (see section 2.7.1) is also helpful in understanding why, although the teachers in a particular
section may themselves be a very diverse group, they do often have a recognisable cultural 'footprint' each being a deviation from a dominant cultural model.

Evidence for the effect of this diversity in the teaching force was found by Baetens Beardmore (1995) who discovered that primary English L2 teachers tended to use a predominantly oral-aural, functional-notional approach in comparison to their French counterparts who tended to follow a more formal approach and use written materials more and sooner than their English or German colleagues. It should be pointed out, however, that not everyone sees this as a disadvantage. Hart (1992), a former head teacher claims that 'pupils have the benefit of experiencing different teaching styles' (p.40). To some extent this is true: some students certainly do find it exciting to effectively move from one national system to another as they pass from, say, an L1 lesson in English, with an Irish teacher, to an L3 French lesson delivered by a Belgian, before proceeding to an L2 History lesson conducted by an Austrian.

The diversity of teachers may, however, cause problems in a number of ways. Swan (1996) gives a good indication of the sort of consequence of such diversity:

'A class may be taught the first lesson of the day by a teacher who introduces himself by his first name, addresses the pupils by theirs and maintains an informal rapport throughout. In the next lesson the same pupils may be taught by another teacher who is to be addressed as Mr X or Doctor Y, and whose manner, deriving from a different national tradition, is entirely formal and impersonal' (Swan, 1996, p.94).
Similarly, as might be expected, pastoral care, which in some circumstances might be considered of vital importance in such a system is very controversial in these schools: 'The concept of the teacher as having a pastoral role in loco parentis, vis-a-vis the pupil, may be a time honoured one, but it is not one that is shared equally widely among the school systems of the EU Member States' (Swan, 1996, p. 98). The school systems do have some staff, the Educational Advisors (Counseillers d'éducation) who might take on such a role. Unfortunately, with very little clerical support, their time is fully taken up with administrative matters such as checking attendance and organising the examinations. Some of them, depending on their personal inclinations and of course the educational 'culture' from which they come, do perform some of the roles which might be expected of year heads in the UK. There has, in recent years, been a move to make this work part of their job description but this is deeply contested within the system.

To some extent the absence of more formal pastoral care is met by the counselling services which exist in all the established schools. However, although each of the schools has one of these, they are staffed by volunteers and regarded with suspicion by at least part of the staff of each institution.

3.6.6. The European School Parents

As with the teachers the parents are a heterogeneous group. However, as most of them are middle class it would not be surprising if a portion of the parents were also supportive of high academic standards. In the case of ESK some evidence of this comes from a letter written by the Parents' Association to the 'Gaignate Group' which met to consider the future of the school in December, 2003. In this they argued that many students 'are not prepared enough to successfully take courses in their second language' (ESK 2003-2008
They suggested that their preferred answer to this would be to intensify still further the L2 teaching programme:

'Primary year 1 and 2 will concentrate on the section language of the child, mother tongue (if it exists) and a basic introduction into language 2 (L2)

By third year primary, more intensive L2 training should begin and other subjects should be taught in L2. By fifth year primary, a more substantial base of courses should be taught in Language 2'

Such a proposal would put considerable extra stress on those children who already have difficulty with the L2. Furthermore it could only be achieved at the expense of instruction in the L1, something which, considering the diversity of the sections, might well have serious effects on the teaching of the subject. The reason for such proposals probably reflects, to some extent anyway, the frustrations of parents whose children already have high levels of competence in the L2 when joining the school and are impatient that the L2 is taught in the primary section as a foreign language.

3.6.7. European School Support Systems

The European Schools have a variety of programmes for dealing with students who have difficulties. This section begins by looking at the support for the languages programme before considering the other forms of learning support which are available.
One of the ways in which the European Schools deal with students who have difficulty applies only to a small group, those who are in Category 1 or 2 and have a L1 which is not available in the particular school. The consequence of this, as already mentioned, is that Category 1 Portuguese students at ESK will be given L1 lessons in Portuguese. Category 3 students may only join a group which has been created for a Category 1 or 2 student. Such provision does help to support some students although it clearly only benefits some groups within the population. It is also not, however, ideal in that the student by definition is effectively withdrawn from the section for these lessons and this may further increase the sense of isolation sometimes felt by such students. This group is also in a strange situation in that although they will then study the language of the section as an L2, they still have to follow a series of courses the content of which requires high levels of L1 competence. This will include maths, science and, from the sixth year secondary, philosophy.
3.6.9 Supporting Students who Join the Programme at a Late Stage.

As already indicated, some students, particularly those who join the programme late, experience difficulties with the language requirements of the school. Baetens Beardsmore (1995), writing about one of the Brussels schools gives a positive description of the system’s response to this: ‘In the primary and secondary school there are teams of remedial teachers whose mother tongues are those of the 8 language sub-sections. The functions of these remedial teachers are to provide extra instruction to new arrivals who may join the school at any time of the year’ (p.55). While it is possible that such teams may sometimes exist it is very unlikely in view of what has already been said of the level of training that teachers typically have in teaching their subject as a foreign language. It is true that special courses ‘cours de rattrapage’- catching-up classes are organised to help children to improve their L2. Unfortunately, at least in the secondary section, this will often involve at least some withdrawal from the normal curriculum a practice which may, as often with withdrawal, cause other problems which cannot, however, be explored here.

The system also recognises that children will take some time to achieve the necessary level of competence in their L2. It is for this reason that grades for any subject taken in the L2 do not count towards promotion during the student’s first year in the school. However, research about how long it takes students to acquire written competence in another language (see section 2.6.4) suggests that this is far too short a period of time.

As far as more general educational support is concerned, although education ministeries do sometimes try to recruit staff for the primary section with experience of teaching children with learning difficulties, this is very difficult to achieve, given the other selection criteria, particularly the need to have some competence in a EU working language. The most
common form of support within the system is the ‘Cours de rattrapage’- catching up classes. Effectively this means that students who are having difficulties in L1, L2 or mathematics are given an extra lesson a week, often on a Wednesday afternoon which most younger classes have free.

The conclusion of the Learning Support in Secondary: General Policy (2004) report also paints a rather negative picture of such provision:

‘Learning support is an integral part of all national systems but so far the European Schools have provided support to a very limited extent. A number of European School pupils have therefore been handicapped in their efforts to integrate fully into the schools. This number has grown and will continue to grow with the increasing number of pupils in the schools.’

(Learning Support in the Secondary: General Policy, section 11, 2004, )

Stark though this comment is the very existence of such a report, which makes a number of proposals for reform does suggest a willingness to reform the system, at least from its authors. One area where there has, however, been some progress is that of learning disability. Remedial teaching, as it was then called was introduced into the primary schools in 1981. Since 1995 it has been possible for students with special educational needs (SEN) to be admitted on the basis of an individual contract between the school and the parents of the student. Having looked at much of the documentation surrounding SEN in three of the European Schools it is clear that the system now possesses a group of teachers with considerable enthusiasm and competence in the area. A new document produced for the BOG in 2004 sets out a plan for far more comprehensive programme.
As always, however, there remain considerable problems to be overcome, not least of which is the very differing attitudes which exist amongst the various stakeholders in the system. In particular, the development of SEN provision must be limited while the existing promotion system, as described above, is in place. Thus although students in the SEN programme can move through the school without failing a year, this is only allowed at present until the end of the third year secondary. After that the former SEN students must either meet the normal standards of the system or leave the school.

3.7. Social Engineering – Promoting a European and International Dimension.

The two previous sections have looked at elements which have often been seen as essential to successful bilingual programmes, i.e. the extent to which a system manages to deal with asymmetrical power relationships. In those sections it was argued that some elements of elitism, as well as the academic nature of the programme limits the effectiveness of European Schools in these areas, at least for some groups. The following section looks at one of the ways European Schools attempt to deal with another very important aspect, i.e. the relationships between different language groups. It starts by considering how this system attempts to equalise these relationships through promoting a European and international dimension in their schools. This involves looking at the main tools of this policy i.e., the European Hours programme and the decision to teach History and Geography through the medium of the L2 in the secondary school. The section finishes by looking at evidence for the success of such policies, as well as the charge that it is promoting a eurocentric identity in place of a nationalist one.

As already mentioned (see section 3.3), the system's own official objectives contain a
number of statements which make it clear that an important aim of the schools is ‘to foster a European and global perspective’ (The European Schools, 1996, p.9). The general policy of trying to promote a common identity which does not detract from the national identity of the student is supported by writers such as Hayden and Wong (1997) who argue that there is no contradiction between promoting one's own language and cultural heritage and the development of an international outlook and set of values.

An important part of this strategy is the European Hours programme which operates in all the primary sections. For three 45 minute lessons each week children from the different sections are mixed together into groups according to their L2. Although the allocation of time is reduced for the secondary section, a range of 'complementary subjects' is offered, again with mixed classes. These vary from year to year, school to school but typically included ICT, as well as a range of art courses.

Another attempt to develop a European perspective involves the human sciences in the secondary section. As one of the official descriptions puts it, these aim to: 'encourage a European and global perspective in the study of history and geography, rather than a narrower, nationalistic one.' (The European Schools, 1996, p.9) Consequently, in the third year secondary all students study a course on human science taught through the L2. In the next year this splits into history and geography, subjects which remain compulsory up to the Baccalaureate, where, depending on other options, they can study these two subjects as either 2 hour or 4 hour courses.

The practical upshot of this is that a French student may learn about the history of the French Revolution through being taught by a German in German.
One criticism of the programme is that it would seem that, rather than looking critically at different perspectives, it merely substitutes one interpretation with another. German students, for example, may be taught German history by a British teacher but are hardly in a position to make much of a judgement between different perspectives because, by definition, they have not experienced what a German teacher would have to say on the same topic. So although to use an example given by Swan (1996) a British teacher might find their view of the Battle of Waterloo challenged by a class of French pupils, it is difficult to see from where the pupils would get a contrary view. Against this it has to be said that many modern history textbooks do include original sources which might lead to a wider discussion than in a national school.

A further danger of the European School's L2 Humanities programme is represented in the claim that this itself reveals a desire on the part of the European Community to replace national perspectives with a eurocentric view. Finaldi-Baratieri (2000), for example, claims that:

'What is happening is then that the teachers are endowing 'Europe' with an existence through time and space by emphasising the cultural output and 'achievements' recorded by text-books not from a single nation-state, but from a panoply of EU states. By portraying these states as peers and equal contributors to something greater, not just to 'European Culture but 'European civilisation', their historical inequality not only in waging war, but more specifically in determining what is culturally important is downplayed' (p.20).
Against such views it must be pointed out that although the 'European dimension' originated with the Council of Europe in 1949, that body has itself been very concerned about the very dangers of producing a new kind of pan-europeanism every bit as dangerous as those based on nation states. In the schools themselves, it has been claimed that the very division into partly national, linguistic sections will help to ensure that the schools remain multilingual rather than 'Euronational' (Halls, 1974).

Apart from such formal procedures as those mentioned above, part of the European dimension is on the more informal level of 'the daily fact of working, playing and living together, as much as in a deliberately European curriculum' (Hart, 1992, quoted in Swan, 1996, p.65). Agreeing with this perspective, Housen (1997) concludes that both the formal and informal elements of the curriculum are important:

'Through social engineering, the European Schools actively promote cross-linguistic peer interaction through a common L2 by creating opportunities for pupils from different language sections to mix, both inside the classroom (during communal L2-subject and L2-medium lessons) and outside the classroom and school (e.g. in the playground, during extra-curricular and extra-mural activities.). (Housen, 1997, p.43)

It is for these reasons argues Housen (ibid) that 'ethnolinguistic and nationalistic tensions are rare and pupils' attitudes towards the other nationalities, their cultures and languages range from neutral to extremely favourable' (p.48).

Other writers have largely accepted this positive view. Thus Tosi (1991), although critical
of some aspects of the programme comments that the 'reward is a population of educated bilinguals, equally at ease with two languages, with their own national culture and the supranational European identity' (p. 33).

There have been various other attempts to measure the European dimension in the school's population. Housen and Beatens Beardsmore (1987) for example looked at friendship groups in one of the larger schools. They saw evidence of an increasing 'Europeanism' in their findings that although in the primary section most friendships were among children from the same language section in the high grades of the school friendships were frequently formed outside their own sections. Awareness of the diversity of the language sections however means that such findings would have to be carefully examined. It would not be surprising for instance if German children in an English section at ESK eventually formed friendships with the Germans in the German section. As already mentioned it is quite likely that the same factors are at play in other schools. This does not mean that the findings were inaccurate but does, once again, underline the need for a critical perspective.

By contrast with the above approach, Hayden and Thompson (1997) conducted a questionnaire in six of the schools. Of the 16 year olds in these schools, 226 (we are not told what percentage responded) filled in a questionnaire about their attitudes to the European Schools. In each case participants were required to tick boxes choosing from a five point scale ranging from 'slightly important' to 'extremely important'. The research by Hayden and Thompson (ibid) would support the social engineering thesis since they reported that European School students attached more importance to speaking a number of languages than students from other international schools. Furthermore the speaking of
English was not seen as being as important as it is for other international schools:

'It was not perceived by the European School Students, however, to be as important as the general language proficiency and multi-lingual environment which is a feature of the European School's philosophy,... Having teachers from a number of different cultures was also particularly valued by European School students.'

(Hayden and Thompson, 1997, p.471)

In contrast to these studies a discordant note is added by Finaldi-Baratieri(2000). Although the details are not fully presented in her article she conducted 105 questionnaires which dealt with a number of areas of school life. She pointed out that only three respondents explicitly mentioned the Europeaness of the schools. However, although she acknowledges that the evidence from ex-students is very limited she concludes that what there is suggested that 'ex-pupils seem to realise and value their distinctive 'European' education once they are confronted with the 'outside world' of university' (Finaldi-Baratieri-Baratieri, 2000, p. 41).

In conclusion to this introduction to the European Schools it must be said that, while its general policy is to support the development of the L1 and gradually developed students' competence with other languages, this is to some extent frustrated by the diversity that exists within the sections which ensures that many L1 speakers are present in what should be L2 classes. Effectively this means that some students are put under far more stress by this system than others, particularly those who join the system at a late stage. Similarly the highly academic nature of the European Schools systems may prove very stressful, particularly to the SWALS student who have to follow much of the programme in a
language which is not their L1. This academic background is further re-enforced by the recruitment of staff from the upper tiers of selective education systems as well as by the socio-economic backgrounds of many of the students. The existence of different categories of students also disadvantages some students since some of the support for those who struggle in the system is not available to all categories, particularly category 3. It has been argued that the consequences of these factors must be fully appreciated before coming to any judgements about its operation.
Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Having considered the literature relevant to the project in question the next chapter considers the methodological considerations of the study. The chapter is divided into two parts: the first of these is a theoretical examination of the methodological issues surrounding the project undertaken; the second section then describes the research design and procedure followed in the project.

4.2 Theoretical Issues Surrounding the Research Design

4.2.1 Introduction

This section begins with some discussion of the view of truth and validity which determined the research design of the project. Following on from this case study research, the approach used in the project is considered, as is the importance of the need to critically examine data obtained through the use of triangulation. This in turn leads to an examination of the main methods used i.e. interviewing and observation. Finally, the ethical dimension of the research is reviewed.

4.2.2 Truth and Validity

Although it cannot be treated fully some consideration must be given to the concept of truth for the stance adopted to this area largely determines the selection of a methodology considered to provide knowledge which is true, or valid. The antipathy that often exists between the holders of different epistemological positions has led to
the claim that such belief systems constitute paradigms, a view largely deriving from Kuhn (1962) who, stressing the interrelationships between knowledge systems and society, believed that communities develop a set of beliefs, a paradigm, which are true for them. His view was that rather than knowledge 'progressing', what was apparently change was in fact the breakdown of one set of beliefs and its replacement by another consistent set of views which was not however necessarily superior. Furthermore Kuhn's (1962) view is that paradigms are incommensurable, that is people in one paradigm cannot understand what happens in another. The question of paradigms is vital because if they exist in the way that Kuhn suggests all knowledge would be relative with no way of judging between competing views of issues such as truth and validity. Writers such as Carloye (1985) however point out that paradigm shift normally reveals an incremental and evolutionary process, with much internal criticism of the 'paradigm'. Thus although the concept of paradigms is certainly useful in explaining people's attachment to different methodologies these are perhaps best viewed as strong tendencies based on different perspectives and traditions rather than completely self-sealed world views.

Such different views about what constitutes a valid path to truth are often very deeply held. This is relevant to any discussion of educational research and in particular to the distinction often made between 'positivist' and 'interpretivist' methodology.

As Cohen and Manion (1994) point out, the 'positivist', or as it is sometimes called, 'normative paradigm', is usually seen as containing two major assumptions: the first of these is the notion that human behaviour is essentially governed by rules; the second assumption is that only the methods of natural science will lead to the truth.
By contrast the 'interpretivist' approach is seen as mainly concerned with examining the multilayered complexities of human life (Blumer, 1976). There is frequently disagreement about what exactly constitutes an 'interpretivist' stance, with much difference of opinion about 'grey areas' such as the extent to which interviews have to be structured to be seen as qualitative (Bryman, 1988). Acknowledging that there are some disagreements, a number of common features of such 'qualitative' research are identified by Merriam (1988):

1. Qualitative researchers are concerned with process, rather than products or outcomes.
2. Qualitative researchers aim to find meaning; that is, how people see their lives, experiences and their perceptions of the world around them.
3. Qualitative researchers are themselves the instrument of data collection and analysis. They do not depend on questionnaires or machines as measurement of reality.
4. Qualitative researchers prefer to conduct their research in a naturalistic setting, instead of in a tightly manipulated and controlled environment.
5. Qualitative research is descriptive in essence because researchers attempt to make sense of reality through words of interpretation.
6. Qualitative research is inductive. Instead of basing their research on existing theories, researchers aim to build concepts, hypotheses, and theories from details.

(Merriam, 1988, pp. 19-20)
To some extent, as acknowledged above, the choice between ‘positivist’ and ‘interpretivist’ approaches is one reflecting different views of truth and validity. The above discussion of paradigms however suggests that it is possible to do more than simply regard these as self-sealed views of the world and to defend a choice of methodology as one most effective in a particular situation. Such a viewpoint has very important implications for the present study which (see section 4.3) adopts an interpretivist approach because this seemed most appropriate for an investigation of complex issues such as people’s attitudes and reflections on their experience in European Schools. It seemed very unlikely that this sort of data could be recovered from a ‘positivist’ approach.

4.2.3 The Case Study Approach.

Having looked at more general matters concerning truth and validity, the next section considers the case study approach which, as explained later (see section 4.3.1), was used in the present study. The section begins by looking at the problematic status of case study research before moving on to consider its advantages and disadvantages as part of the research process.

The first difficulty with the concept of case studies is finding commonalities with a term that has been so widely used. Indeed as Simons (1980) points out the term is not a recent development and ‘has antecedents in the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, history and psychology and the professions of law and medicine’ (Simons, 1980, p.i). Despite this, the term ‘case study’ is very problematic, partly because, as Gomm et al (2000) point out, it has been used in so many different contexts. Indeed, as they claim, ‘in one sense all research is case study: there is
always some unit, or set of units, in relationship to which data are collected and/or analysed' (Gomm, et al, 2000, p.2).

Looking at this diversity of usage there are three main ways in which case studies have been seen: as a paradigm, as a method, as one case selection approach among many (Gomm, et al, 2000). As indicated above the whole concept of 'paradigms' is problematic, while the term ‘method’ seems too narrow a description of something whose very strength is that it allows the use of more than one method. For these reasons case study is perhaps best seen, as Hammersley (1992) suggests, as 'one case study strategy among others, the others being experiment and survey' (p.184). It differs from the experiment because although it also normally involves small numbers, the researcher typically creates the cases studied whereas the case study researcher normally uses naturally occurring situations. Case study research however differs from surveys. Although it too is mainly concerned with naturally occurring phenomena, it has an important difference. As Denscombe (1998, p.39-41) notes, 'whereas the survey approach tends to go for large numbers, the case study approach tends to prefer small numbers, which are investigated in depth’ (Denscombe (1998, p.32). As Denscombe further points out (ibid.), the advantage of such an approach is that it allows for the focus on the subtleties of what are often complex situations. This makes it very suitable for probing areas about personal responses to situations - 'how' and 'why' questions. This is, indeed, one of the reasons why it was selected for the present study (see section 4.3.2).

Perhaps unsurprisingly the case study approach has also been criticized, particularly when it involves ‘insider’ research i.e. investigators operating in areas in which they
themselves are closely involved. One issue for such researchers is that although they have enormous background information they are often so familiar with the context that what might be seen as problematic to others may not seem so to them. Thus Moore (1992) claimed that one teacher who claimed to be following an anti-racist policy was unconsciously operating within an ethnocentric framework. Although only a partial solution the best reaction to this is self-awareness and a constant attention to the influence of such factors. An important part of developing such self-awareness is what Woods (1986) calls ‘washing your mind clean’ (Woods, 1986, p.34), a process that involves ‘opening up the mind, inducing a mood of reflection, identifying prejudices’ (Woods, 1986, p. 19). Whether 'insiders' or not it is also of particular importance for qualitative researchers to take into account the likely perceptions of those they interview: ‘The failure to appreciate how you are perceived and identified may inhibit, distort, or channel your perception of events. The researcher can never be the invisible fly on the wall, as is sometimes claimed' (Ball, 1990, p.159). The way in which these concerns were dealt with in the present study is described in section 4.3.2.

A further criticism of case study research is the claim that case studies are not suitable for generalisation. This issue can only be briefly discussed here but essentially there have been three reactions to the difficulty: the first reaction, one often taken by those who claim that case study research is a paradigm, is to seek to avoid the ‘problem’ of generalization, stressing like Stake (1978) the intrinsic value of the case under study, and arguing that generalization is not a necessary part of case study research. A second reaction which is also critical of categorization is to look at ways of using information from case studies without such formal categorization. Thus Stake (1978)
argues that case studies can aid ‘naturalistic generalization’ so long as research is presented in the same terms at the target audience’s everyday language. Lincoln and Guba (1985), although broadly in sympathy with Stake, developed a concept of ‘fittingness’ where case studies are seen as having relevance to other similar situations. Still other writers, such as MacDonald and Walker (1975) claim that case studies can provide inspiration in the same way that art is often claimed to do. All these reactions are however problematic as none of them satisfactorily explains how we can be sure that what is studied is typical, or ‘fits’ other cases. It is partly these problems which have led to a third reaction which argues that generalization does not imply the use of statistical methods and that, while accepting the problems associated with categorization, this represents the only satisfactory way of using material generated by case studies outside the case. Gomm et al (2000), for example, argue that researchers can systematically investigate the extent to which the population in the case study matches other cases, and select cases which do have these factors rather than, as is often done, using the sample which is most readily available. Even with an 'opportunity' sample however it should be possible to establish for the reader, the extent to which the case study in question might differ from any defined wider population.

4.2.4 Data Collection

Having considered the case study approach the following section considers the selection of appropriate methods that might be used within such an approach. One of the ways in which any study can try to improve its validity is by attempting to corroborate data through the use of different methods of research, a process that is often called triangulation. A frequent choice for qualitative researchers seeking such
triangulation is to combine interviews with observation. This would seem to be particularly appropriate to the present study whose design is considered later (see section 4.3.2) as this looked at students' perceptions of their education in a particular school system. The use of interviews and observation allowed each method to ‘triangulate’ the data produced by the other (see section 4.3.2). In the following section these methods will be considered in turn.

4.2.4.1 Interviews

Interviewing, as Drever (1995) points out, is frequently used in small-scale research, having the advantage that it can be used to collect a wide range of data including statements of opinions, narration of experience, as well as factual information. It also allows the researchers to gain insight into things that for a variety of reasons cannot be observed directly (Patton, 1980). By gathering data in the subjects’ own words, interviews can help to probe people’s intentions and emotional reactions ‘so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world’ (Bogdan and Biklen 1992, p.96).

The essence of the research interview, according to Lofland and Lofland (1971) is a ‘guided conversation’, the objective, being ‘to elicit rich, detailed materials that can be used in qualitative analysis’ (p.76). According to Cohen and Manion (1994) and Nunan (1992) the semi-structured interview is frequently chosen by researchers who wish to interpret responses. It is particularly suited to subject areas which are sensitive or complicated (Gilbert, 1993). It is also useful when topics have differing salience to members of the sample population but it is difficult to ascertain which will register with particular respondents using only broad indicators such as age, etc. A particular
advantage of the semi-structured interview is that, while still fairly formal in that the interviewer sets the agenda before the meeting, it is possible to change the sequence of questions and make other changes, for example through the use of prompts and probes, depending on the levels of understanding or motivation in the respondents.

The above descriptions largely assume that the interview is a relatively private experience, with individual interviews being seen as the best way to guarantee involvement (Lewis, 1992). This is reflected in Cannel and Kahn's (1968) view that an interview is: ‘a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation’ (Cannel and Kahn, 1968, cited in Cohen and Manion, 1994, p. 271).

In contrast to such views there has been, as Lewis (1992) points out, much recent emphasis on seeing the research participant as a social being (Harre, 1986; Bruner and Haste, 1987). Such work supports the use of group interviews to assess how people work out a common view or a range of views, as well as allowing us to see how people interact in considering a topic (Gilbert, 1993). This would seem to be a particularly important dimension when, as in the present study, dealing with school students. Group interviews might, for example, help to reveal dominant attitudes in groups or allow students to voice opinions that they would not reveal in individual interview. Thus Lewis and Lewis (1987) used group interviews to obtain insight into student’s group norms about fears and acceptable behaviour towards others with specific learning disabilities. Lewis (1992) argues that 10 year olds’ understanding of
severe learning difficulties was enhanced in group interview situations, the children both challenging and extending each other’s ideas.

While interviews clearly have many advantages, the method is not without its critics. Thus Cicourel (1964) identifies the following features of interviews, which are normally seen as problems:

1. There are many factors, which inevitably differ from one interview to another, such as mutual trust, social distance and the interviewer’s control.

2. The respondent may feel uneasy and adopt avoidance tactics if the questioning is too deep.

3. Both interviewer and respondent are bound to hold back part of what it is in their power to state.

4. Many of the meanings which are clear to one will be relatively opaque to the others, even when the intention is genuine communication.

(Cicourel, cited in Cohen and Manion, 1994, p.275)

Bearing such factors in mind, Kitwood (1977, cited in Cohen and Manion, 1994) suggests that rather than techniques for dealing with bias what is needed in such circumstances is a theory of everyday life which takes into account factors such as stereotyping and role playing. In developing theories that explain people’s behaviour in such circumstances a particularly influential writer has been Bakhtin (1981) whose concept of ‘voice’ suggests that what people say is both constituted by and
constitutive of the words of those with whom they share membership in a particular
discourse community. As Block (2000) puts it:

‘When researchers analyse interview data, they are not only studying
representational accounts of events and the views of individuals; they are also
confronting what is intelligible and plausible to say in a given discourse
community and how members of the community use shared resources to construct
a position in an interview.’ (p.762)

This diversity should also be seen as existing within people’s own personality,
challenging liberal views of agency: Holstein and Gubrium (1995) suggest that
during the course of an interview interviewees may adopt different roles in response
to their perception of being positioned in different way by different questions.

Rather than seeing these areas as problems they could be viewed as helpful guidelines
in identifying the different and extensive challenges which may affect any particular
present study. Thus rather than looking for ‘correct’ method, we might follow the
spirit of Popper’s (1963) falsification principle in seeking to constantly challenge
methodologies and the results which they produce. This would seem to be particularly
appropriate in view of Block’s (2000) comment that what most readers encounter ‘is
presentation of data plus content analysis, but no problematization of the data
themselves or the respective roles of interviewers and interviewees’ (Block, 2000,
p.756).
4.2.4.2 Observation

Having considered interviewing, one of the methods used by the present study, the next section moves on to discuss the other main tool used in the particular present study, observation. The way in which observation was used as part of the research design is discussed in section 4.3.4. This section however considers the advantages of using observation alongside interviewing as a form of triangulation (see section 4.3.3.2.). The final part of the section then looks at the advantages and challenges of participant and non-participant forms of observation.

Observation is certainly a common choice to use alongside interviewing. Not only can it act as a form of triangulation but it may access data difficult to obtain otherwise: "Being there' in the schools provided data of a type and insights that would not be available in a set of serial, one-to-one interviews' (Ball, 1990).

Although a clear distinction is not always possible there are essentially two forms of observation, participant and non-participant. Participant observation, the form taken in the current study, requires researchers to have or take on a role in the research environment to explain their presence. This has the advantage that it may provide more validity than non-participant observation because there is less disturbance of the naturally occurring situation, although researchers must be aware that there is always likely to be some effect (Hargreaves, 1967). According to Adler and Adler (1994, p.338) participant observation ‘enjoys the advantage of drawing the observer into the phenomenological complexity of the world, where connections, correlations, and causes can be witnessed as and how they unfold’.
Against these positive points participant observation carries the risk of researchers identifying too strongly with the researched and thus affecting the research, something that is less of a danger with non-participant observation. Non-participation may also make it easier to create a written account, a factor especially important if audio or visual recording is not possible.

The form of recording can also vary greatly. Structured observation involves the coding of behaviour in terms of a fairly limited set of categories, something which may not be appropriate where it is not clear what is not relevant early in the research process; there is also the danger that interpretation of the schedule will itself affect what is recorded.

4.2.4.3 Data Analysis

This section considers some of the issues involving date analysis. The way in which this informed the design of the present study is discussed in section 4.3.5.

A good general point about analysis is made by Richards (2003, p.268) who points out that ‘Analysis is neither a distinct stage nor a discrete process; it is something that is happening, in one form or other, throughout the whole research process.’

An important approach in the qualitative tradition involves analysing data for themes, as Woods (1979) advocates. This leads to the development of categories which emerge from examination of the data. After this initial set of categories is devised, later data is coded and allocated to the categories. Theories developed in this way are sometimes said to be 'grounded' in the activity which they claim to explain (Glaser
and Strauss, 1967). This was the main approach adopted in the present study (see section 4.3.5). As Richards (2003) points out the alternative approach i.e. working with pre-determined categories may seem attractive but may result in important areas being overlooked because they did not fit into the categories selected.

Researchers like Stubbs (1986) criticise such theme analysis for its tendency to play down the ways in which discourse works, claiming that data items are stripped from their original contexts to place them in general categories. Discourse analysis is, however, in turn, often criticised for focussing too closely on texts rather than wider contexts.

Whatever attitude is adopted to such issues, one valuable approach is to use, as far as possible, 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973), i.e. a detailed portrayal of events and people which may be used to portray the complexity of a situation. Such a strategy should at least allow the reader of research findings to make some judgement about the results presented.

4.2.4.4 Ethics

The next section considers the ethical dimension which needs to be considered in educational research in general. This then informs the ethical consideration of the research design of the present study (see section 4.3.6).

A fundamental point about ethics was made by Hume ([1748] 1979) who pointed out that there are no facts about ethics only interpretations. This however should lead to greater not lesser attention to this area if researchers are to deal with the many
different perspectives concerning the field. The areas that will be considered below concern trust, informed consent, deception, and privacy. Only if these areas are given due attention can the widespread wish not to harm research participants be adequately addressed.

**Trust**

Weis (1992) points out that exhibiting integrity is both methodologically and ethically valuable since people are more likely to cooperate if they trust the researcher. However, as Fairclough (1989) points out, the spread of what he calls ‘the discourse of counselling’ may lead to people being manipulated by apparent sincerity.

**Informed Consent**

Like trust, consent also has both ethical and validity implications, since people may not cooperate fully if they feel that they are being treated as objects. Cohen and Manion (1994) suggest a number of categories to guide researchers: ‘competence’, ‘voluntarism’, ‘full information’, and ‘comprehension’ (ibid, p.350). While these are certainly good, general guidelines, each of the terms is itself problematic. Thus the idea that mature individuals will make correct decisions if they are given full information (Cohen and Manion, 1994) reflects a liberal framework which may not be appropriate in all circumstances.

The use of children is particularly problematic. Cohen and Manion (1980) stress the importance of parental/guardians' consent but children may themselves see this as treating them as objects. Because of this, Fine and Sandstrom (1988) recommend that
wherever possible children should themselves be given a meaningful explanation of the purpose of the research.

**Deception: Covert Research**

Perhaps the most extreme examples where consent is not obtained are those employing covert methods. Even techniques for putting interviewees at ease might be considered in this way because they could also make people less conscious of revealing sensitive information. With small scale studies in the qualitative tradition this is a particularly difficult area because the research focus may evolve during the investigation and, consequently, new covert situations may arise. Bhatti (1999) for example conducted long term ethnographic research. Although initially teachers had known that she was a researcher this was forgotten and she became seen as an Asian helper: ‘She could have reminded them that she was an experienced teacher and that she was studying for a doctorate’ (Griffiths, 1998, p.135). Although some researchers may oppose such covert methods- there can be little doubt that such an approach has often provided useful knowledge (Bulmer 1982). In these circumstances, it is important to consider whether the deception is justified by the value of the study and the lack of alternative routes of access to the information (Cohen and Manion, 1994).

**Privacy**

The effect of covert action may be reduced by confidentiality, with the more sensitive the information, the greater the need to ensure anonymity (Cameron et al, 1992). As Raffe et al (1989) point out categorisation of data may uniquely identify someone and this is particularly problematic for ‘qualitative’ approaches where the number of cases
is small. It may simply not be adequate to give a school a fictional name to preserve its anonymity. Cohen and Manion (1994) consider that a possible solution is to seek the consent of those involved: 'As in the case with most rights, privacy can be voluntarily relinquished.' (p.366) This is however deeply problematic, as many participants, particularly children, may feel pressured to give ‘consent’. An awareness of the limitation of liberal views of agency might lead a researcher to protect a participant even if they had given their consent freely.

There are further difficulties with anonymity. Firstly, as Mill observed ([1859] 1992) it may have the undesirable effect that the respondents are not accountable for their opinions, with consequent implications on validity. The question of validity is also raised by the fact that participants cannot be re-interviewed if they are not identified. The publication of transcripts and other data does however go someway to alleviate this problem. Finally, anonymity may deprive participants of control over information, and how the information is subsequently used.

In all the areas discussed above there is a possible cost to validity if people are going to be treated as subjects in their own right. Clearly, at the design stage of any study some decision has to be made which weighs the benefits of the research against the foreseeable cost to the participants. Cohen and Manion call this a ‘cost-benefits analysis’ (Cohen and Manion, 1994). It must be remembered however that such terms, which tend to reflect a liberal-capitalist ideology can be problematic and that it is important to develop a critical approach which recognises that the people who
benefit may not be the same as those who suffer any cost. Nonetheless, some such
calculation is inevitable (see section 4.3.6).

4.3 Research Design and Methodology

4.3.1 Introduction

The previous section outlined the theoretical considerations which underpinned the
methodology of the present study. This section begins by outlining the basis on
which design of the study was devised including some discussion of triangulation and
the problems involved with ‘insider’ research. Following on from this the main
methods used in the project are described. This begins by looking at the process by
which the interviews were organised and conducted. The section then moves on to
look at the way in which observation played a part in the research. This is followed
by a section on the approach to data analysis used by the project. The section ends by
describing the ethical dimension of the present project.

4.3.2 Research Design

As the main aim in this project was to examine the attitudes and experiences of school
students in an international school it was decided, on the basis of the arguments
presented above (see section 4.2) that an ‘interpretivist’ approach would be most
suitable to teasing out the complexity of the area. Similarly, a case study approach
was chosen as the most appropriate strategy for looking at a group of students within
the boundary of one school. Although such an approach could be defended simply on
the grounds of its intrinsic value, it will be argued that the results may be applicable to
other schools within the system if the various factors identified are similar (see
section 4.2.). Establishing this would, however, involve a more extensive study than is possible here.

As indicated above (2.5.3), one of the major aims of this research project was to give a voice to those who are most affected by the education offered by the European Schools i.e. the students themselves. This was reflected in the research design where the main focus is on the data which is produced by the interviews with the students. The study was, however, also designed to provide some limited triangulation of data (see section 4.5). Thus although the main method used in the research was interviews, observation was also used, and fieldnotes were kept. Additionally, as the researcher was also an ‘insider’ it was possible to have access to a range of sources, which included attendance at class conferences, as well as official documentation, such as school reports.

4.3.3 Insider Research
The challenges of this form of research led to much scrutiny of the research situation, particularly the role of researcher as insider (see section 4.2.3). Indeed one way in which the project was clearly in the qualitative tradition was that the research problem emerged and changed during the project, reflecting a desire to challenge perceptions of the situation. The way in which the researcher was defined by the respondents was the subject of much thought, a key factor being that the researcher was also one of the school counsellors. In comparison with other systems the European Schools do not have well developed pastoral systems but all the schools have developed a counselling service staffed by teachers on a voluntary basis. Importantly these teachers are not part of the school’s disciplinary system. As a member of this group the researcher
frequently talks to students about any area of their lives that concerns them. It is likely that this experience and the knowledge that the researcher was part of this service were helpful in facilitating what seemed to be relaxed interviews. It was always borne in mind however that in such situations students might feel the need to change their views, if only because, apparently comfortable in the interview, they might feel the need to please the interviewer by giving answers which they felt would be acceptable. Because of this a critical view was adopted to any particular occurrence and, wherever possible, the views were compared with others or corroborated through observation. In the event there seemed to be no conflict of interest between the different roles I play in the institution i.e. counsellor, teacher and interviewer. Although the interviews took place in the counselling rooms, it was made clear to the students that these were not counselling sessions and the interviewees all seemed aware that the purpose of the interviews was to obtain their insights into the European Schools. This point was re-enforced when the second meeting took place with interviewees to check the transcript of the interviews.

4.3.3 The Interviews

In this section the evolution of the interviewing schedule is discussed. The selection of interviewees is then considered.

The evolution of the interviewing schedule was influenced by the view of interviews described earlier (section 4.2.4.1), and particularly by the need to suit the methodology to the particular line of enquiry. As the study centred on examining students’ view of their education and their own sense of identity it was clear that such complex matters were going to need the sort of extensive in-depth investigation
difficult to achieve with a tightly structured interview. This was confirmed by the pilot interviews (see section 4.3.3.1). Thus when one child talked, clearly still deeply upset several months later, of her class' very negative reaction to her talk about Russian folk dancing, it was clear how difficult it would be to frame a structured question and answer format that would have adequately recorded this experience. This awareness itself led to the creation of a schedule making use of open questioning which it was hoped would lead to the airing of such personal experiences and impressions.

Initially, largely because of a wish to achieve some level of standardisation between interviews, the approach was mainly of a semi-structured type in that the schedule consisted of a fairly formal list of questions, which was filled up with a series of possible prompts and probes. The questions themselves, as Cohen and Manion (1994) recommend, grew from the research topic. In fact this process, along with a group interview, changed the whole course of the project. Initially it had been intended to look at the school’s bilingual programme. However, following initial investigation it became clear that the group of people who were placed in a language section which was not their first language were experiencing a form of ‘immersion’ which is largely unacknowledged by the system itself.

It was this insight that could be said to be the genesis of the project in question, for it lead to a decision to focus on investigating how successful such an ‘immersion’ was likely to be. A starting point for the project was two areas suggested by Artigal’s (1993) work on Catalan and Basque. This was chosen because Artigal’s research had itself focused on the importance of ‘cultural’ considerations in assessing language programmes. The two areas which seemed most relevant to the experience of
children being ‘immersed’ into a language section of a European school were as follows:

1. The status of the home language in the school environment

2. The students’ attitude to their learning of the official L1, in this case English

These areas themselves contributed to the emergence of the research questions which are provided in Chapter 1, and are restated here:

1. How important is the status of the SWALS (Students Without a Language Section) students’ first language (‘mother tongue’) within the school and local community?

2. How important is the provision of lessons in the SWALS students’ own first language (‘mother tongue’)?

3. How important is it for pupils to have contact with others who speak their first language within the group?

4. How important is the educational culture which the SWALS students bring with them to a European School?

5. How important is the educational ‘culture’ of the group or teachers encountered by SWALS students in European School?
6. To what extent are 'individual factors important in explaining SWALS students' abilities to cope with the European School system?

The change in the course, as well as leading to the production of these questions also resulted in changes to the interviewing schedule. This was redesigned with the new intention of examining students' own perceptions of their education in the European School system. It commenced by seeking information about the languages they could speak and when they speak them. It next investigated their experience of the European School, whether they had found it hard to join the English section, what difficulties they had encountered, and the attitude of the rest of the group to them. The schedule also investigated the extent to which the interviewees had been able to maintain their first language.

4.3.3.1 The Pilot Interviews

As a way of testing the new schedule six pilot interviews were conducted. The data obtained from these suggested that the use of a series of questions was affecting the school students, leading to short answers. In response to this the schedule was modified so that it was just a series of headings which indicated the general areas to be covered. Each of these contained sub-questions or probes, as a reminder of particular areas of interest. In this way the schedule had moved more in the direction of Lofland and Lofland's (1971) notion of the 'guided conversation' (see section
4.2.4.1). The results with the modified schedule (appendix F) were far more positive, at least in the sense that it seemed to encourage the pupils to talk at greater length.

4.3.3.2 Selection of Interviewees.

As a form of triangulation it was important to cover as wide a range of opinions about the research questions as possible. Because of this a set of categories was devised but the possibility that these could themselves affect the research was never forgotten. There were five categories of interviewees, all with strong connections with the site of the project, i.e. the European School of Karlsruhe:

1. Twenty two students who were interviewed individually.
2. Five Parents of the students from (1) above
3. One group interview of students (eight participants).
4. A teacher who provides language support to the SWALS students.
5. 'Key informants' who were used to provide background information about classes.

Individual Interviews

Because of the need to gain access to a full range of students, the interviewees were drawn from all seven year groups in the secondary school, as well as the last year of primary school. Similarly, as it was important to see whether there were differences between the perceptions of different language groups, an effort was made to interview at least one individual from every language group within the section. However because of the relatively small numbers of such children in the section this inevitably led to imbalance on a range of criteria such as age or gender: every class has at least one Russian, but not all have Indians, or Czechs.
Table 5: The Backgrounds of the Individual Students who were Interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of SWALS Students</th>
<th>M/F</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>L1/L2</th>
<th>Language Section</th>
<th>L2 in School</th>
<th>Cat.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Akako F</td>
<td></td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>5th Sec.</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alojzy M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>6th Sec.</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Danish</td>
<td>1st Sec.</td>
<td>Danish</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Slovakian</td>
<td>4th Sec.</td>
<td>Slovakian</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annatoli M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Georgian</td>
<td>3rd Sec.</td>
<td>Georgian/Russian</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arnfinnur M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Icelandic</td>
<td>2nd Sec.</td>
<td>Spanish, English, Icelandic</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arundhati M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>2nd Sec.</td>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bazyl M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>1st Sec.</td>
<td>English, German, Polish</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borje M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>2nd Sec.</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edvard M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Norwegian</td>
<td>2nd Sec.</td>
<td>Norwegian</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fernanda F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Brazilian</td>
<td>3rd Sec.</td>
<td>Portuguese, English, Italian, German</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galilea F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Norwegian</td>
<td>5th Sec.</td>
<td>Norwegian</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haira F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>5th Prim.</td>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hege F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Danish</td>
<td>7th Sec.</td>
<td>Danish</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Danish</td>
<td>5th Sec.</td>
<td>Danish</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingsley M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Nigerian</td>
<td>1st Sec.</td>
<td>Beni</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lidya F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>6th Sec.</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhoda F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>6th Sec.</td>
<td>German/Turkish</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some of the above students have been identified as having more than one 'L1'. Those with more than two L1s are later described as ‘The International School Students’ (see section 6.5.1.)

Table 6: The Nationalities of the Individual Students who were Interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Number Interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brazilian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danish</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icelandic</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigerian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwegian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukranian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Gender of the Individual Students who were Interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender of Participants</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Choice of Parents.
The table below indicates the children whose parents were interviewed, although in all but one case, only one parent came to the interview.

Table 8: The Parents who were Interviewed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of student</th>
<th>Parent interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hege</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arnfinnur</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bazyl</td>
<td>Mother and Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhoda</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galilea</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: The Backgrounds of the Students who were Interviewed as a Group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>M/F</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>First language</th>
<th>Language Section</th>
<th>L2 in School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Abelone</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Danish</td>
<td>5th primary</td>
<td>Danish</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Abhay</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>5th primary</td>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Aboeho</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>5th primary</td>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Beldev</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>5th primary</td>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Haira</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>5th Primary</td>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Hakan</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>5th primary</td>
<td>Turkish, English, Japanese</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mika</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>5th primary</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Thorano</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>5th primary</td>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As will be seen from the above tables, one students, Haira, was interviewed both as a member of the group as well as individually. This was done because her contributions to the group interview seemed to indicate that the student had much more to say about her experiences in the school.
The Learning Support Teacher

This was a teacher who provides language support to the SWALS students in the primary school. Mrs Jones (name changed) has many years experience of working in the school.

Choice of 'Key informants'

This group were used to give background information about some of the incidents and situations described by the interviewees. As such they were a useful if limited form of triangulation of the interviewees. The five students came from the following years: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7. Considerable thought was given to their selection: they had all been in the system for at least three years, and although not SWALS students were all bilingual. It was felt that these factors were necessary to ensure that the informants had sufficient experience of the European School system. More importantly, the individuals chosen were considered to be both perceptive and discrete. Each of the students was given an initial interview where their intended role was discussed, and the importance of confidentiality underlined. Many informal discussions took place with the key informants about issues that were raised in the group or individual interviews. It was always important to make a critical appraisal of the extent to which informants provide only partial guidance to the institutions in which they are located (Burgess, 1989).

Location of the Interviews

The individual interviews mostly took place in the ‘blue rooms’ which are small comfortably furnished rooms reserved by the school for individual counselling
interviews between staff and students or parents. Most of the students had been in these rooms before and none seemed to regard a visit there as problematic.

Negotiating interview times was sometimes difficult. Where it was possible meetings took place when neither interviewer nor interviewee was timetabled. This was not always possible and as a result students were sometimes withdrawn from the curriculum for this purpose. Such a course of action was only possible because of the support of the school management and some of my L1 English colleagues who saw that it had the potential to benefit both individual students and the system. The support of these teachers was vital: not only were they prepared to release students for this purpose but most importantly they were also prepared to amend their teaching programme to make sure that the students would not be harmed by missing a class. On several occasions my lessons were covered by other colleagues to allow the interviews to take place. Unfortunately however not all colleagues were so accommodating - requests for the release of student several times met with the claim that the loss of even a single lesson would have a disastrous effect on the student's future.

One group interview was also conducted. The purpose of this was partly to corroborate the data produced by the individual interviews. The students for this interview were drawn from the last year of the primary cycle and it certainly seemed that interaction of the children would support the claims made for this technique (see section 4.2.4.1) with students apparently benefiting from the support of others who had shared a common experience.
4.3.3.3 Participant Validation

All but one of the participants gave permission for the interview to be recorded. Even in that case however when the interviewee was shown the notes of the interview, she then changed her mind and at her suggestion a further interview was recorded where she reflected on the notes about her first interview. All the interviews were transcribed although the transcription of the group interviews was rather problematic in that identification of individual speakers was not always possible.

All participants in the individual interviews were given a second appointment where they had the opportunity to read the transcript and make any comments or objections that they wished. This led to small changes and was very helpful for clarifying some issues. Thus, one student had described the Germans as ‘rash’. This had gone undetected in the original interview but was noticed during transcription. When it was discussed, it transpired that the student had meant ‘racist’ but was concerned about saying this openly. In this way the respondent validation had helped both to clarify the interview but also provided some insights into the respondent’s view of politeness conventions. Apart from such minor clarifications, none of the participants wished to make any correction, or retract anything that they had said. In this sense giving the research participants the opportunity to examine the record helped to establish the authenticity of the record as an accurate reflection of the interview. One of the transcriptions is included in the appendices (appendix E).

4.3.4 Observation.

The theoretical issues surrounding observation were considered earlier (see section 4.2.4.2). As pointed out earlier, the major research tool used in the present study was
interviewing. The main purpose of the observation undertaken was to provide some triangulating the data from the interviews is considered. In one sense this was less satisfactory than the interviews in that the selection was more confined to an ‘opportunity’ sample, because of the difficulty of arranging observation sessions. To some extent this is to do with the European Schools, where teachers have a high level of autonomy. This was probably one reason why some teachers found it difficult to understand the purpose or value of the project. Initially eight lessons containing SWALS students were visited, the researcher being a non-participant observer. This was however unsatisfactory, as the unusual presence of a third party was clearly affecting the lesson. As a result of these experiences it was decided to adopt a participant stance. In the last two years, although by no means always welcomed, changes in the European School system have led to limited in-class learning support. This development provided the opportunity for a ‘role’ which justified the presence of a second teacher. This of course raised ethical issues (see section 4.7) but allowed, over two academic years, all seven of the L1 English classes to be visited. Visiting the last year of the primary school was less problematic because a primary-secondary liaison project had been run for the previous six years so that students were used to the idea that they would be visited by a secondary school teacher. In all 43 lessons were observed.

In addition to the above observation, one class was routinely observed over a period of half a school year (18 weeks) for four hours a week. In this case the observer was also the teacher. This group, twelve in number, was studying philosophy and contained several SWALS students. It was particularly interesting because it was
made up from members of a class which had been mentioned in a number of informal conversations as being unwelcoming to SWALS students.

All the observations were unstructured as the 'role' made note taking difficult. Notes, however, were written as soon as possible after the lesson. The focus was very clearly on the same issues used in the interview schedule, although a critical stance was adopted in case any of the data suggested new areas of investigation. In the event, however, this did not prove to be the case. The schedule used for recording the observation data is included in appendix F. A sample of a completed observation schedule is included in Appendix G. Additionally, notes were kept of other data that was observed during the research. This was very useful in recording other incidents involving SWALS students that were observed around the school during the research period.

4.3.5 Data Analysis

As described above (see section 4.2.4.3), there are various way in which qualitative data can be analysed. In this case the data was analysed thematically because of the problems inherent in starting with a set of categories (see section 4.2.4.3). This involved going through all the data manually to see which themes could be identified. Once initial categories had been established the data was checked again allocating data to the categories where appropriate. At all times a critical attitude was maintained to the categorisation system. This involved revisiting the material many times. It was considered particularly important to constantly consider whether there were not some other, more plausible explanations for any particular assessment of the data. On a number of occasions this resulted in a change to the categories which
were the final result of this process. These categories became, in turn, the major headings of Chapters 5 and 6.

Although care was taken to collect the data described above it is important to acknowledge that various factors may limit its validity. The most important of these relates to the relatively small size of the population. Although as far as possible a sample was used that covered the full age range and the various language groups within the European School of Karlsruhe it is possible that a larger sample would have produced different insights into the experience. Secondly, as indicated in Chapter 3, European Schools are very heterogeneous institutions where there is considerable year on year, class on class variability. Again, the nature of the research which was necessarily a ‘snapshot’ covering only a small period of time, and a limited number of respondents, may have failed to fully describe the experience of SWALS students in the European School of Karlsruhe. Similarly, although as indicated above (see section 4.3.3), much attention was given to my role as an insider research and its possible effect on the data collected, it is possible that the various roles which I played for some of the students (teacher, observer, interviewer, counsellor) it is possible that this had some effect on the information given.

4.3.6 Ethical Considerations

The following section describes how the present study was informed by the discussion about ethics considered earlier (see section 4.2.4.5). Ethical considerations had a big impact on the project because it seemed particularly important to develop a climate of trust if the interviewees were going to give frank and honest responses in their interviewees. In particular, considerable effort was put
into obtaining full consent. Thus a short preliminary meeting was held with each potential interviewee where it was explained that the purpose of the research was to explore the experience of people like them and what this would involve. It was also made clear that it was perfectly acceptable for them not to take part. After this a letter was written to the parents or guardian of each student to ask for their consent. Where possible the parents were consulted personally.

As already mentioned above the purpose of the visit to lessons was not made explicit (see section 4.3.4). The effect of this was tackled by a strong emphasis on confidentiality. It was made very clear that all the names would be anonymised in any report written. As a consequence of this decision each participant was given a pseudonym which was also a common first name in their country of origin. Additionally, every student was given the option of not having their interview recorded and it was also made clear that where consent was granted the resulting tapes would not be played to anyone else able to identify them. It was clear however that simply changing names would not be sufficient to preserve the identity of, for example, the only Hindi speaking female student in a particular class. Fortunately, as the research covered more than one school year this problem did not arise. The need to preserve anonymity remained however a foreground issue throughout the study.

Similarly, the decision not to anonymise the name of the particular school itself raises ethical issues. The use of the name seemed necessary however so that readers would be able to make some comparisons between this data and that obtained from previous studies, all of which have identified the schools concerned. Again, however, the
nature of the research, spread over several years and many classes, along with the changing of all individual names would prevent any individual from being identified.

4.4. Conclusion

This chapter began by exploring the theoretical issues which informed the research design and methodology of the present study. The second part of the chapter built on this by going into detail about the design and the methods deployed to meet the challenges outlined by the previous section. This involved looking at the approach adopted, the ways in which interviewing and observation were used, and the results examined. Although ethical considerations were left to the end of the chapter this was purely for organisational reasons. Ethical considerations were, indeed, fundamental to all parts of the research process from the choice of a qualitative methodology to the method adopted to guard the anonymity of the participants.
CHAPTER 5: ISSUES SURROUNDING THE USE OF THE L1 ('MOTHER TONGUE') IN THE EUROPEAN SCHOOL OF KARLSRUHE

5.1 Introduction to the Data

It has already been pointed out (see section 3.4) that European Schools contain many students who although they are members of the English Language Section have a first language (L1) which is not English. If these students speak one of the official European languages they are known as SWALS (Students Without A Language Section). This chapter looks at what the data collected during the present study indicated about the first set of research questions, those concerned largely with the SWALS students' relationship with their own Language 1 ('Mother Tongue') i.e.:

- How important is the status of the SWALS students’ first language ('mother tongue') within the school and local community?

- How important is the provision of lessons in the SWALS students’ own first language ('mother tongue')?

- How important is it for pupils to have contact with others who speak their first language within the group?

The chapter begins by looking at what the data collected reveals about the diversity of language use in one of the European Schools. The next section then looks at the importance of how any particular language is viewed within the school and local community. Following on from this the extent to which it is helpful for SWALS students to have lessons in their own L1 ('mother tongue') is considered. The final section then focuses on how advantageous it is for SWALS students to have other students in their group with the same, or closely related, L1. In all sections of the chapter the data is presented first and this is then followed by a section of commentary.
5.2 The Diversity of the English Section.

As has already been indicated in Chapter 3 the European School population is far more diverse than is suggested by the number of language sections. This was very clear in the present study where many of those interviewed or observed were found to have complex linguistic backgrounds. Thus Lisa for example talked about her background during a class discussion. She was born in Brazil where she lived until she was six. Her mother was born in Brazil but is an Italian by descent and speaks fluent Italian. Her mother later re-married and had another child with Lisa’s stepfather. It was because the stepfather is German that the family moved to Germany. Lisa speaks Portuguese to her mother. Her sister on the other hand speaks German and only a little English. Despite this the siblings only speak together in English which is the strongest language that they have in common. It also became clear that although some of those interviewed had only moved country once during their lives, others had had a much wider experience:

'Well, I was born in Poland and all my parents are from Poland. Poland, then Brazil and then Uruguay and that’s all. From Uruguay I came back to Poland. Um.. um.. I don’t know really why but.. I forgot. And I lived there for one year. Well, when I came to Portugal. Well, when I lived in the other countries I always had another language. And in Poland... I started speaking Polish but then when I came to Portugal my mum said that we will keep English as your first language so she put me in the English, well, the British school actually...in Portugal’

Source: Bazyl (turn 8)

Born in Denmark.. I think, when I was..one and a half I moved to Germany. When I was three back to Denmark. And seven, to England. Twelve back to Denmark. Sixteen to Germany.’

Source: Hege (turn 3)

Although not all the students had such involved backgrounds the study found many cases of students whose backgrounds were also complex, albeit to a lesser extent. Together these examples help to illustrate one of the central conclusions of this study, that the diversity of
the European School system makes generalisations about its language learning programme very problematic

5.3. First Languages in a European School

As already mentioned in Chapter 3 a system which organises itself into language sections is likely to be marking those languages as more important than others. This was confirmed by the data that suggested that there are clear differences in the status of languages. The most important of these is the difference between those who speak an official EU language as a ‘mother tongue’ and those who do not.

The most interesting finding here was that those who spoke an official EU language made no comment about the area: none of them could recall having experienced any particular comments, negative or positive about their L1. Although some of them had difficulties with other parts of the programme none of them had been made to feel uncomfortable about their language. This was remarkably consistent across those spoken to. Some speakers of other languages have lessons in their own L1 while others, for a various reasons (see Chapter 3) attend English L1. Both groups felt equally comfortable about their L1. The positive view accorded to such languages seemed to be helped by the management structure of European Schools which in principle seeks to avoid having heads or deputies from the host country. Thus the director during the period of study was Danish and the head of the secondary section was Finnish. This seemed to give the students, and their parents, the sense that their languages were valued in the school community.

Those who do not have a EU language as an L1, in stark contrast to the above group, often felt that their language was not valued. As reported below many had received negative
comments about their languages. Others simply felt that their language needs were ignored: many students felt that they were simply expected to work at the same level as L1 English students. As with the group above the attitudes towards languages were also affected by other local factors. In Germany for example there are often negative attitudes to people from the east, particularly Poles and Russians, groups associated with crime in the minds of many people. The Turkish community in Germany, which numbers some five million, is also often seen as being of low status. Evidence that these views were common in the European school was very easy to find; jokes about Polish people and derogatory comments about Turks occurred frequently during observations of class lessons. It was hardly surprising therefore to discover that one of the very few female Turkish students had dyed her naturally dark hair blonde and bleached her skin. She told one of the key informants that she had done this because she did not wish to be seen as Turkish.

Similarly, in an informal conversation, a Russian student, Valentina told of a music lesson that was conducted through the medium of L2, German in this case, where the teacher had asked for people to bring in music from their own lands. While contributions from Italy and Britain were listened to patiently, her tape of Russian folk songs was frequently disrupted by the class. It was clear to the student that her language had very little status for the class. Even several months after the incident re-telling the story reduced her to tears.

Evidence concerning the status of languages did not often occur directly in the individual interviews, although one Nigerian boy, Kingsley, seemed ashamed of his first language, Beni:
Kingsley was not the only student who played down an ability to speak a language that is not valued in the school or local context. Rhoda, similarly, although she had spoken Turkish from an early age, was very reluctant to use it:

Interviewer: ‘Do you get much chance to talk Turkish around here?’
Rhoda : ‘Not any more because I just don’t get along with the Turks who are here.’
Interviewer: ‘There are certainly quite a few Turkish people.’
Rhoda: ‘Well, I have met some and, and sometimes, sometimes, I speak Turkish with them. I’ve just lost all, most, of my Turkish.
Source: Rhoda (turns 11-14)

In other discussions it became clear that this student’s unwillingness to use the language was to do with its associations with a group that has low status in the school and local community.

Although direct awareness of the inequality between languages did not occur in the individual interviews, in the group interview one of the Indian boys present initiated a series of ‘turns’ which revealed a belief that European union languages were privileged within this system:

Abhay: ‘This school was specially made for the Forschungzentrum [An EU institution]. For children who come from Forschungzentrum er and it’s especially for the people who come from Europe. And, er...’
Interviewer: ‘Was that a problem?’
Abhay: 'Maybe. And especially for people from outside the European Union.'

Interviewer: 'Why was that interesting for you?'

Abhay: 'Because I knew that. Because it is quite unfair for the people who otherwise other places from Germany.'

Interviewer: 'Can you say a bit more about that?'

Abhay: 'And it's even like er, for example, someone from er like, for example, like someone is from Greenland and it's not in Europe and they don't er like, they are, they don't know any other language. Sometimes it becomes a problem. They are accused, er the people here, sometimes because they have, er, they don't know any other language from Europe. It is held against, seen as a crime, that people do not speak European Languages.'

Source: Group interview: Abhay: (turns 139-145)

Interestingly, several members of the group, although they had not mentioned this themselves, nodded enthusiastically during this conversation, making it clear that they, too, agreed with the sentiment. Having said this it was often clear that the European schools, whatever their limitations, were seen as preferable to local schools. As another one of the Indian boys remarked:

'I was first of all in the German school. And that was far too uncomfortable because they were too, oh, rash [later confirmed with the student as 'racist']. And then, so I changed myself to here.'

Source: Group interview, Baldev (turn 12)

By contrast, those students who had a European official language as an L1, perhaps unsurprisingly, tended to see the stress placed on European identity as a positive feature:

Hege: 'But, I think the things is, like, when I think, I don’t consider myself Danish really, or British or German, or anything really. That could also be something to do with because I also, like, don’t have this nationalistic feeling, or anything, you know. And then, I think, in my class nobody really had that either. Except maybe [lowers voice to a whisper] a few Germans.'

Interviewer: 'Do you think that people need a sense of identity?'

Hege: 'I'm doing ok up until now. I mean, I can just say that I am a European.'

Source: Hege (turns84-86)

The way in which the promotion of a 'European' rather than a national identity may exclude others is seldom seen, even by otherwise sensitive observers such as the language
support teacher who recalled an activity where children read versions of 'The Hungry Caterpillar' in their own L1:

'It did so much for those children's sense of who they were. We had Danish, Swedish, Spanish. And they each read half of 'The Hungry Caterpillar'. When the other children were listening and guessing, it did so much for them.'

'The other children being aware that these children don't go home and speak English and yet they're in the English section.'

Source: Jones (turns 35-6)

While such an activity may well promote the status of those involved, it is also important to realise that this activity may itself cause problems for those who find themselves, amongst so many languages celebrated, the ones left out.

Interestingly, the question of status also seemed to affect not just different languages but even non-standard varieties of English. Thus one of the L1 teachers told of a parent who was dissatisfied with the grades that her daughter was receiving. In discussion with the parent it became clear that the disquiet stemmed from the fact that a new arrival, 'the brown one' as the parent described her, was being awarded higher marks. It seemed that the parent could not accept that someone from a country not seen by them as having English as a L1 could possible have a high level of competence in the language. This was not the first time that the teacher had heard such remarks. In a separate case, several parents complained to another L1 teacher because they claimed that an Indian child had been admitted to the English section who spoke, as one of them put it 'hardly a word of English'. In fact, although the accent may have been unfamiliar to many Europeans, the student had an exceptional command of the language.

The evidence above gives some limited evidence for the importance of the status of the pupils' own language, with the EU official languages being seen as carrying the highest
status. This was evident in the Hege’s interview. One other speaker (group interview: Abhay: turns 139-145 see page 136 above) felt that his language was not as valued in the school as EU languages. As mentioned above, some students had even experienced negative treatment, some of which might be considered abusive. The evidence collected however would not suggest that is a particular feature of this European School. Indeed, many of the students felt that it was less prevalent than in their previous schools. This was particularly the case if they had attended German state schools. Having said this the central organisational principle of the European schools i.e. language sections, distracts attention from the heterogeneity which is so common in some of the classes.

5.4 The Value of Lessons in The Students’ First Language
As already mentioned (see Chapter 3) students who have an L1 that is an EU official language may in some circumstances be offered L1 instruction even when they are attached to other sections. Thus even though there is no Danish section as ESK, Danish students often have Danish L1 lessons while the rest of the class have L1 English. They will then follow the language of the section as an L2. This means in practice that they study L2 English while other members of the group have L2 French or German. From the 2nd year of the secondary section they will also have humanities courses in English, while the rest of the group follow the lesson through the medium of French or German. Apart from this, they follow the same programme as others in the section.

Those who were in the fortunate position of having L1 support in their own language felt that the experience was a good one: the students seemed to be more relaxed and happy about their life in the school than those who did not have L1 support. This was clear both from the informal interviews as well as the classroom observations. This is not surprising
as the SWALS programme can go to considerable lengths to help its students: one student who came from the minority Swedish speaking population in Finland was provided with a programme of study involving close cooperation with the Finnish education ministry, as well as a university in Sweden. The result of this was that the student was able to take his European Baccalaureate in his L1 (Swedish) which made it far easier for him to contemplate returning to his own country for higher education.

The provision of such lessons was often mentioned during interviews. Hege was in the English section before this programme was available but her younger brother follows L1 Danish. She could see both advantages and disadvantages:

'I think it's been helpful because it made it a lot easier, you know. I think if I'd had it too it would have been easier for me as well. But now, looking back, it's not always best to take the easiest way out, you know. It's also difficult to manage with so many languages you know. But he's made a lot more friends'

Source: Hege (turn 90)

Despite their generally positive view of L1 support, two of the 1st year secondary Danes showed awareness that it had its limitations, particularly as there was only one Danish teacher:

'Maybe in the higher grades, the third and fourth year Oberschule [secondary school], maybe we need a teacher which knows the subject better.'

Source: Andrea (Turn 35)

'My parents they think that later on I'll probably gonna have to, to get taught some higher level Danish. Maybe we go to Denmark a few years. Then learn some Danish there and then come back to Germany or somewhere I'm going to study.'

Source: Axel (turn 39)

As the above comments reveal those who participate in the SWALS programmes are aware that it has its disadvantages something that helps to explain why not all the students entitled to this provision take up the offer. Thus, as indicated above, one disadvantage from some students' and parents' views was that because of staffing needs, it is almost
inevitable that students in this position will always have the same teacher for L1, no matter how long they remain in the school. Another point is that the groups are usually very small, typically one or two students. A few of the parents spoken to felt that this offset the advantage of having lessons in a different L1 from most of the students in the language section.

Another factor is that by definition the students with L1 support will be away from any other members of their class for both L1 and L2 lessons. They will also be away from their class for the compulsory history and geography lessons that are taught through the medium of the L2 from the third year of the secondary cycle. There is a fear among some parents that this could cause social problems for their children in the group. Thus, in one case the parents did not take up the offer because there were two students in the L1 class and their child had been bullied by the other student in previous years. As this last point indicates, the issues surrounding language teaching are seldom limited to language alone.

However, even with some disadvantages, this programme did give one group of students a form of support that was not available to other language groups. Without such support many students felt anxious about their futures. Thus two of the Danish students who were not entitled to L1 support reported being very nervous about returning to their country because they felt that their L1 had suffered, even though their parents had long anticipated this possibility and had taken sensible steps to deal with it. Both students had, for example, been sent to summer schools in Denmark for several years. To some extent such fears were unjustified. Both students on returning to Denmark reported that their higher levels of English more than compensated, in their school’s view for slight problems with the L1. Others were not, however, so fortunate. In one case provided by the Finnish
Deputy of the secondary section, one student, as a result of a divorce, had had to return to Finland at short notice. The student had not had L1 Finnish and was very upset to find herself regarded as a foreigner who could, however, speak a little Finnish. This account was confirmed by one of the key informants who had maintained e-mail contact with the student.

The learning support teacher interviewed also felt that, although joining ESK could be stressful for all children, those without L1 support were more harmed than others:

'I put 'damaged' in inverted commas. I do think it is upsetting for a lot of children and the children who are most upset by it are the children who do not have a mother tongue in the school. So, for example, we've had Koreans in the past and there hasn't been someone coming in so they've at no point been taken out for a bit of respite, for want of a better word, and to feel that there is someone there who understands them and can say yes you're achieving very well in your own language. Those children I feel desperately sorry for. One little girl was desperately damaged by it.'

Source: Jones (turn 1)

The same teacher also pointed out that where the child had no, or very minimal contact with the language of the section, this made it very difficult for students and teachers alike:

'It's virtually impossible to assess these children when they first arrive unless you happen to have a Japanese [teacher]. When a child is found to have learning difficulties and is having, is not really in the English section, he or she is going out for mother tongue theoretically the learning support should be in the mother tongue but it is not. Obviously if you have learning difficulties in your mother tongue, you're going to have them in your second language. It's double learning for a disability you can't help.

Source: Jones (turn 42)

As described above the provision of L1 support lessons seems to further increase the prestige of the languages concerned. For those who had access to it the provision of such L1 lessons was very positive, even though there were some disadvantages: for one thing all the students felt less anxious about their future as, should their parents have to return to the home country, they could at least be certain that the L1 skills would have received some
attention. As the comment from the group interview showed however this provision may make other groups feel disadvantaged.

5.5. Maintaining Contact with Other Speakers of the L1

Those SWALS students who have L1 lessons in their own language clearly do have some contact with other speakers of their language, if only the teacher. All the students who were interviewed however were consulted about whether they would find such contact helpful. Additionally, the level of contact between students who shared a L1 was particularly noted during classroom observation sessions. As indicated below, although all students expressed hesitation about speaking their own L1 in class, the level of use of the L1 varied depending on the status of the language concerned.

The classroom observation suggested that Speakers of European Union official languages were quite likely to speak their language together. Danish speakers for example often made brief comments to each other, particularly if they had not been together in the previous lesson. In another class, speakers of L1s that are similar in structure often spoke a few sentences together. This was frequently the case between Norwegian, Swedish and Danish students, whose languages are similar enough for quite high levels of communication. Even these students however seldom used their own language for more than a couple of sentences. The interviews made it clear that this was done because these speakers were sensitive to the perceptions of other group members who they did not wish to exclude or antagonise:

'I had a classmate who spoke Danish and yeah, we would speak Danish to each other but then usually you don't just, like, socialise the two of you, so there's other people around you and it's rude to speak a foreign language – not polite at least.'

Source: Hege (turn 13)
Later Hege developed this theme further:

‘Cos, if you just like step back in yourself, calling your friends back in Denmark, then you’re gonna not integrate. You really have to try hard to integrate. That’s the most important thing. And then, whether it be taking lots of extra German lessons or sitting up until God knows when learning chemistry or physics and that’s really what you have to learn to do. You have to want to do it. Otherwise it’s not gonna happen. It really won’t.’

Source: Hege (turn 93)

Unlike students who speak an EU official language, the speakers of other L1s were never seen talking with each other in class. The only exception to this was with one Russian girl who had not managed to establish friendships within her group. When another Russian arrived, the newcomer found herself being frequently addressed in her L1. Although this was helpful in some ways, the new student reported that associating with the other Russian made her stand out in her group. In contrast to the speakers of high status European languages, Russian speakers sometimes claimed to not even know that there were others who could speak their language in the school. Thus Yuliya said that she had heard there were other Russian speakers but had never spoken to them in the language.

As with the EU speakers, the main reason given for not speaking an L1 in class was the reaction of the others. Thus, Anna, a Slovakian, commented:

‘Don’t think it would be helpful [to have another Slovakian speaker in the class] because you [Herself] think so, but I don’t think so [Now] because if you would have a friend who can speak your language it wouldn’t be so good because you wouldn’t speak English. Just that. And also the other kids they would be like, yah, you’re always just with blah-blah [another speaker of the L1 in question].’

Source: Anna (turn 65)

The reason for such reticence also appeared with one of the younger girls, Haira, from Pakistan, when she was asked whether anyone else in her class spoke her L1, Urdu:

Haira: ‘No, but Hindi is a bit kinda, you can er, like Arundhati [an Indian student in the same class], she can understand Urdu. Hindi is a bit like Urdu. We have borrowed some words from Hindi.’
Interviewer: ‘Do you talk together?’

Haira: ‘No, no, I always want to but I just leave it.’

Source: Haira (turns13-15)

Later discussions with the student revealed that she was scared that others would respond negatively to hearing an Indian language.

As indicated above, whatever their L1, students were reluctant to communicate with others of a similar linguistic background, even if they had the chance and even though, as was generally agreed, their level in their own L1 was of some concern to them. Yuliya for example, although she speaks Russian at home, reported that she sometimes finds it difficult to follow all the nuances of her parents’ conversation. She did start a language maintenance Russian course outside school but it was too difficult to fit this with the rest of her schedule.

Even those who had come directly to the school from a national school reported difficulties. Thus Haira, from Pakistan, said, rather plaintively:

‘I have forgot how to write words. Only one year I forgot some words’

Source: Haira (turn 17)

Similarly, Anna, from Slovakia, had noticed a decline in her ability to write her L1:

‘Special letter. You don’t use it in German and not in English. I forget to write them now. When I write something in my language I’m like - ahhh [an expression of humorous disgust]’

Source: Anna (turn 26)

Neither of the two students, however, was very distressed about this loss. Haira, for example, thought that her new skills in English would be well received back at home:

‘I think they will give me chance because I know, know, better English.’

Source: Haira (turn 19)
Even Hege, who had not lived in her home country for several years, and only then briefly, was not worried about her lack of written competence:

Hege: 'I mean, the problem is now that I can't really write Danish any more because I haven't done that in so many years.'

Interviewer: 'Do you have any other contact with people who speak Danish?'

Hege: 'Actually no. I really don't. Family and... that's it.'

Interviewer: 'You think it's a problem that you can't write Danish as well as you might like?'

Hege: 'There's five million people who speak the language - it doesn't make that much of a difference'

Source: Hege (turns 7-11)

The way in which the status seemed to effect preparedness to speak a language was shown by the Polish speakers. Thus one Polish parent told me that there were in fact far more Polish speakers in the school than were officially recognised by the system. However, when she was in the process of organising a project with a Polish school very few of these wanted to take part, and some were unwilling to use Polish even though other evidence suggested that they were very fluent in the language. However, during the course of the research some limited evidence emerged that this was changing. Although no Polish students were observed talking together during the main stage of the research period, this changed almost immediately after Poland entered the EU in May 2004. On a number of occasion since that time the author of this text has observed Polish speakers exchanging short greetings, or comments, in Polish. The most prominent of these took place at the end of the fifth year examinations in December 2004 when three Polish students were seen to take up a prominent position outside the hall and sit there for some time conversing, rather loudly, in Polish. Similarly, the one Polish speaking teacher in the school reported
his astonishment at discovering, since the accession of Poland, just how many of the students could speak the language. The evidence obtained for the changing position of Polish though interesting was insubstantial and requires further investigation. It would be very interesting to know if the language grows in importance in the future, something which is however outside the scope of the present study.

As reported above the students did not seem to attach much importance towards having others who could speak their L1 in the class. In some cases they claimed not to be aware that some class members shared an L1 with them. Yet given this it was surprising that many of them were also clearly worried about what they saw as a deterioration of their L1. What perhaps makes this even more surprising is that no evidence emerged from the students that teachers were likely to object to occasional use of the L1: this had certainly not been the case when Danes and Swedes were seen to exchange brief comments in lessons. Furthermore it is quite common in the school for speakers to use their L1 in classes conducted in L2. German speakers for instance will often help each other, using their L1 during L2 French lessons. The answer to this seems to lie in the reasons given for not speaking to others in an L1. As both the interviews and observation revealed, the students mostly felt constrained from using the L1 by a concern about the reaction of the other students. Hege, one of the L1 Danish students even said that using the L1 would stop someone from being integrated into the group (Hege, Turn 93). This seems very important, emphasising that even when considering a system which claims, and often does support the L1, it is necessary to look carefully at what is, in practice, happening. In this case the existence of language sections, while supporting the genuine L1 speakers, is effectively acting as an ‘immersion’ programme for those for whom the language is an L2 or L3. When seen like this it is hardly surprising that the only groups seen communicating
in their L1 were those using the high status, EU official languages such as those used by
the Swedes, Danes, Finns and Norwegians [Northern European Group]. This would also
explain why, as soon as their country joined the EU, the Polish speakers began to use the
language around the school. The question of a language’s status would appear to be, as in
the previous section, very important.

5.6 Conclusion

In conclusion it is clear that the issues surrounding the use of the L1 (‘Mother Tongue’) in
this school are very involved. It was found that by focusing on the maintenance of official
EU languages, the school raised the status of these languages. Even those speakers of EU
languages who did not have L1 lessons in their own language were in no doubt that these
languages were considered to be valuable. By contrast speakers of other languages tended
to feel that their L1’s were seen as less important. The relative status of the languages was
also found to affect students’ willingness to use their language with others in the school.
For those speakers of non-EU languages this led to much unhappiness, as well as concern
about the loss of ability in their own L1. In effect this means that while the speakers of EU
languages were having their L1s maintained, speakers of other languages were in a
‘subtractive’ bilingual system.
CHAPTER 6: CULTURE AND THE EUROPEAN SCHOOL

6.1. The Importance of the ‘Cultural’ Background of the SWALS Students

In the previous chapter it was observed that students did not always see contact with other speakers of their L1 as being beneficial. To understand this a number of other factors need to be considered such as the status of the ‘mother tongue’ [L1] within the local community. This chapter looks at some of these other factors, the ‘cultural’ issues raised by the second set of research questions:

4. How important is the educational culture which the SWALS students bring with them to a European School?

5. How important is the educational ‘culture’ of the group or teachers encountered by SWALS students in European School?

6. To what extent are ‘individual factors important in explaining SWALS students’ abilities to cope with the European School system?

These encompass the effect of the ‘culture’ of the education system from which the students come, as well as the ‘culture’ of the class or group that they join in the European School.

One of the things to emerge very strongly from the data was that the experience of the SWALS students seemed to vary depending on how much the educational systems from which they had come differed from that in the European schools. The responses also indicated that some neighbouring states had enough similarities to allow the students’ experiences to be grouped together. This is perhaps hardly surprising since countries near to each other may have much in common and be influenced by the ‘culture’ of their immediate neighbours. It is important to note however that geographical proximity is in
itself not sufficient, as evidenced by the case of England and France. Two major criteria were used to group the students: similarity of language, and similarity of educational system. Information about similarity between languages came mostly from the students. Several times during interviews students mentioned that their language was similar enough to another one to allow easy social communication. This was further explored with informal interviews with other SWALS students, as well as with parents. The various L1 teachers were also useful sources of information as was the Russian teacher who teaches her language in the school as an L5. Similarly, information about national educational systems came mostly from students and their families. It was clear, for example, that students in Denmark often have an educational experience which shares important similarities with Norwegian students.

It is of course problematic to undertake any classification in an educational context since there is so much variation within countries, as well as between individual schools. Nonetheless, the data did seem to suggest the following groupings:

- The Northern European Group [Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway];
- The Eastern European group [Russia, Georgia, Ukraine].
- The International School Students.

The last group it should be noted is different from the others in that, usually as a consequence of complicated family backgrounds, often combined with frequent movement from country to country, the students concerned did not seem to have an L1 but, rather, varying levels of competence in a range of languages.
In the following sub-sections each of these groups will be considered in turn. As with the previous material, an initial section presenting the data from the present study is followed by a section of commentary.

6.1.2. The Northern European Group

It was quite clear from the interviews that the systems this group were familiar with were markedly different from what they encountered at ESK. Hege had returned briefly to Denmark following periods of time in both England and Germany. Later she joined ESK. She had found the atmosphere in Denmark far more informal:

'And then you get back to Denmark and you're sitting there in this class. There is no uniform and everybody, like, swears at the teacher, calls the teacher by the first name. Teacher doesn't mind swearing either. [Laughs]. I don't know, it was such a shock it really was.'

Source: Hege (turn 33)

Similarly, Karen, also Danish, also found the atmosphere at ESK more formal, and the work more difficult:

'It's a lot harder. It's a lot more strict. In Denmark we didn't really get any homeworks and we didn't get graded: I have never been graded before I came here. So, it was hard.'

Source: Karen (turn 16)

Karen was also used to a more supportive environment:

'In the class if you weren't good at something, they would put an extra teacher in and help them so they could get through the year. And if not, if you really had big problems they would have a talk with your parents.'

Source: Karen (turn 20)

Hege also found the level of work expected at ESK more demanding than she was used to. The teaching style was also different:

'Well, I mean, it's really easy compared to here. Like, I think that the level which you achieve [in Denmark] is nothing. But here [ESK] I didn't know anything, I'd never,
like, had any of the subjects that you have here. And, I mean, you come home [in Denmark], at one thirty or something, and, I mean there's never really any homework, nothing special and there's... The only thing which I missed was there was always a lot of group work which you don't have here.'

Source: Hege (turn 37)

The point about group work was echoed by most of the students in this group. Thus a Swedish speaking Finn, commented:

'Had a lot of work in small group work nearly for everything.'

Source: Börje (turn 18)

This was clearly an aspect of their own education systems which was much missed in the European Schools. Even younger students who only knew of the educational systems of their home country through their parents sometimes expressed such views. This was the background to the following comment by a Finnish student:

'In Finland they do the maths better'

Source: group interview 1, Mika: (turn 130)

The difference in content between the European school curriculum and their own systems also caused this group some problems:

'And, yeah, like I said, the education system is really different. All of these subjects which I'd never had before. And, in the beginning it was really, really hard, you know. I mean, you'd come home and you'd just, your head would be just exploding with everything that you'd heard and you'd want to do your best and pass, you know. So...it was, it took a while to get used to that.'

Source: Hege (turn 57)

In comparison to ESK there were very few tests:

Hege: 'You hardly, you have a couple of diktats [dictations] at the beginning when you are younger, when you learn to write Danish But you don't... you really hardly ever had tests. Had a few tests where, like, erm, arithmetic training, you know, not allowed to use any calculator. But other than that, really, you usually get, like, this take home exam, kind o'thing, where you would have to do these exercises and you'd have like...Maybe that's just like homework. You'd have maybe like five exercises. Have a month to do them. And then you'd have to hand them in written in your fanciest writing and stuff.'

Interviewer: 'It was really an assessment, rather than a formal test?'

Hege: 'Yeah, I mean you could go home, do it with a calculator and so on.'
Other conversations, with both students and teachers from this group, confirmed that Danes and Norwegians can reach 15 before they are expected to complete any sort of formal testing.

One benefit this group did have, however, was in coming from a system which puts great emphasis on learning foreign languages, particularly English:

'Because Danish is not that big a language you are just used to learning other languages.'

Source: Karen (turn 6)

Even those who like Grethe, a Norwegian, had never left her country before coming to the ESK had a level of English which meant that she had some time to deal with a very different system. However, used to what she saw as a ‘friendly’ system at home she struggled with a curriculum that uses so many tests and was greatly upset by having to repeat a year because she did not meet the promotion criteria.

The provision of L1 support lessons seemed to help students to cope with a new system. Those members of the group who had L1 lessons in their ‘mother tongue’ did not report that joining the school was a stressful experience. The situation for those without their own L1 in the school was very different. Hege’s comment was typical of many heard during the research period:

Interviewer: ‘When you arrived, what was your first impression during the first few days?’

Hege: ‘Errm.. A lot of crying I think. A lot of crying.’

Source: Hege (turns 58-59)
In summary to this section, the Northern European Group were used to schools with developed pastoral care systems and where, in their experience anyway, the power differences between student and teacher were far less pronounced. Because of this they often found the European school system to be a hostile environment. They were also unused to formal testing and found adjusting to this difficult. On the other hand the students had the benefit of coming from systems that encouraged the learning of foreign languages. Despite these problems most of the northern European group experienced relatively few long term problem in the sense that only one of those interviewed had had to repeat a year.

6.1.3 The Eastern European Group

In contrast to the Northern European group those from the former Soviet Union found the ESK to be for the most part less pressurized than their previous schools. Most of these students had experienced fairly traditional teaching strategies, involving frequent testing and a typical lesson would involve the teacher leading from the front of the class. As a consequence of this they were unused to other strategies:

'We don't do any projects in the Ukraine, we just study. We just have to study.'
Source: Valeri 20 (turn 10).

In most subjects the normal pattern was for the teacher to set a task in class that was then tested orally at the front of the class. The marks awarded were seen as very important:

'Like Geography. We had to study. And we had to study, for example, life in Alaska, or something like that. And then the teacher is going to ask us questions. And we had to answer them. If you didn't answer the questions, you would get like two [a very low mark] or something. A grade every lesson in some subjects.'
Source: Valeri (turn 16).
Unlike the students from the Northern European Group most of these students felt that there was less homework in a European School:

'You don’t have that much homework here than in the Ukraine.’

Source: Valeri (turn 3).

There was also general agreement that the level in maths and the sciences in their own systems was higher:

‘The mathematics in Ukraine is way stronger than here. Physics and all these start way earlier. Age 11.’

Source: Valeri (turn 9).

In one or two instances however this caused different problems. One case was recounted by one of the key informants, as well as being confirmed through conversations with several teachers. Leonid joined the European School in the third year of the secondary section. He was very advanced at maths and science but this seemed to cause him to form a very negative view of the school because of what he saw as its low level in these subjects. This view seemed to be shared by his parents who, in meetings with at least one teacher, made the same criticisms of the school. Unfortunately this generally negative view seemed to become a barrier to progress in those areas where his skill level was undeveloped, particularly in languages and, after two years, he left the school.

As will be explored later such cases are perhaps best seen as a result of a mixture of cultural and individual factors. Thus, in stark contrast to Leonid, Yuliya, also a Russian, joined ESK at approximately the same age and coming from a very similar background. She, however, made rapid progress in all her classes. The difference in her case seemed to be the reassuring attitude of her parents who, she reported, constantly told her that they
were happy because, although her maths in the short term might suffer, her new competence in languages would be highly appreciated if they returned to Russia.

When talking about this group it is important to realise that, although their previous experience of schools were remarkably similar, this may have been due, at least in part to other factors they had in common. Thus they may have had an unusual education since most of their parents are scientists and they had previously attended schools where most of the parents had similar jobs. Perhaps not surprisingly the parents of this group often knew each other quite well, as they were mostly employed in the atomic research institute that is the main reason why there is a European school in Karlsruhe:

'"My father is a physicist. He is doing quantum physics. In the institute there are a few. Their families are our family's friends.'

Source: Anatoli (turn 8).

Those few eastern European students in ESK with a different occupational background had sometimes had different experiences with schools. Anna, for example, a Slovakian, observed:

'"It was not exactly the same sort of work. It was the same. Here it is better because we don't get so much homework. As in my country. It's up to the subjects. It depends also on the subject. Some teachers are just at the front [mime of lesson- negative portrayal] But some of them they were like walking in the class and making fun, you know. It depends also on the age of the teacher.'

Source Anna (turn 36).

In part this experience of different teaching strategies was due to the school Anna had attended, which had been partially privatised.

In conclusion to this sub-section, The Eastern European group, by contrast with The Northern European Group, as described above, were often able to cope with the assessment in the European schools because they tended to come from schools which made even
greater use of testing. They also had a background where parents and the education system tended to regard pressure as a desirable feature of learning. On a practical level, although these students did not usually have very high levels in the required foreign languages when they joined the class, their typically high level of competence in science and maths often helped by allowing them sufficient success in the system to give them the time necessary to develop the necessary languages skills. Although present in far smaller numbers this also tended to be the case with students who came from Japan or Korea.

6.1.4. The India and Pakistan Group

There was considerable variation in this group, largely determined by whether the students had attended private or state schools. Arundhati for example had attended an Indian state school:

'One class there were about fifty children. In sixth grade there were about six classes with sixty children.'

Source: Arundhati (turn: 9).

All of these students however had experienced a system that put considerable pressure on the students to perform well. The sanctions and rewards however, varied. In some cases this involved physical punishment.

'Like, every day you would have to do, like, two periods of science. And two periods of maths. And it's so that you, if you don't do your homework you get yourself beaten up.'

Source: Group interview, Baldev, (turn 63).

'Some teachers are so.. they are really strict. If you don't do even.. if you miss one word you are hit once. And some teachers are like.. My school there's something called the warning slips. The warning slips is for, like, the homework.. Like if you don't do your homework, they give you a slip and if you have three of them you are kicked out of the school.'

Source: Indian boy 3 (group turn 64).
Other students were used to a system that rewarded success with positions of responsibility:

'You are there in Pakistan. There are not grades, there are positions, like first position, second position, and third position. And, then, if you get the first position, you get a prize, if you get a second position you also get a prize, if you get a third you also get a prize.'

Source: Kousar (Group Interview, turn: 91).

Some of these students found subjects difficult because they had been taught them differently in previous schools. Thus discussion with Haira revealed that she found maths in the European Schools challenging because the maths problems involved real life situations:

'I didn't know how to do these maths questions because here they are a bit tricky. In Pakistan they are simple, just straight. Just straight to it. Just do it.'

Source: Haira (turn 55).

Several students in the group had been initially shocked by the attitude of others at the European School to education:

'In Pakistan the big thing it was, like, the difference was we have manners over there. If the teacher is teaching we need to be really quiet. And when the teacher is, like, like, if we behave really badly in the class, she will punish us. And we need to stand out there in the class and we say we are really sorry, we won't do it again. So, the big thing was manners. And bad words which they say here, it wasn't over there.'

Source: Haira (turn 47)

The enormous level of respect for education in some societies, implicit in Haira's remarks was confirmed by classroom observations, as well as through informal discussions with parents, although this did often seem to depend on how long the students had been away from India. Thus those who had spent several years in the school had sometimes adjusted
their attitudes, something that, as informal discussions with parents revealed, often caused conflict within families.

In summary to this section the students from India and Pakistan had also come from an educational culture that seemed to place great stress on those who attend its schools. Thus most of the children were used to what would be seen in England as a very traditional environment: many of these children were used to the teacher being at the front conducting the lesson and asking questions to check the student’s comprehension. This seemed to help them to cope with the educational system at ESK. This process was also helped by the fact that this group typically possessed relatively high levels of English. This meant that, unlike some of the other groups, the language of the section was not such a challenge to them. Effectively this and their sense of the importance of education allowed these students to ‘buy’ sufficient time to allow them to develop the level of their L2 and L3.

6.1.5 The International School Group

This group was a little different from the others in that, rather than coming from a system with a distinctive cultural ‘footprint’, what seemed to unite them was, rather, that it was often difficult to associate them strongly with any particular group. Most of the students in this category had usually been to several international schools, often changing every year or two. They had minimal if any contact with their national systems, and it was frequently difficult to establish which language should be considered their L1. Hakan, a Turkish student, was typical of the group:

'I born in Cologne. After that, well, I've been to Turkey two years but my father had a move to go to Japan. We went to Japan, then Denmark and then, again, back to Turkey and here. But sometimes when I forget the words. Well, my English is more better than my Turkish. And I speak a little Japanese'

Source: Group interview 1: Turkish boy (turn 26).
Bazyl, similarly, had had a wide experience for a twelve year old.

Interviewer: 'Do you speak English at home?'

Bazyl: 'Yep, with my stepfather [A German]. Me and my mum speak Portuguese on Fridays.'

Interviewer: 'Is Polish your first language?'

Bazyl: Well, I speak Polish pretty well and I can read Polish alright, not so well.

Source: Bazyl (turns 16-21).

The international school students tended to find the European school system academically challenging. They were also used to schools with more fully developed pastoral systems:

'Well, first of all, it wasn’t as hard as here. And the teachers. It was like friends. You could just tell them everything.'

Source: Rhoda (turn, 36).

The international school students were also used to systems where, at least within any one school, there was greater homogeneity between teaching methods than in a European school:

'I’ve never done as much work as here. Erm...and... it’s different. Like, some courses, it’s like learning off by heart. Some, it’s only understanding. It’s really...odd, because it’s different for every course. So you have to get used to each teacher and that’s the most important thing. If you get used to the teacher...and you know what to say to please the teacher then you’re fine. But if you are not a person to do that, then you’re not.'

Source: Rhoda (turn 104).

Some of these students also found ESK difficult because they had followed a rather narrow curriculum in their international schools:

'It was a class that was called ESL. Everyday we had double English. We had Maths English and sport and that’s, yeah, all we had there.

Source: Bazyl (turn 34)
Despite difficulties with the European Schools curriculum members of this group usually did not experience long term difficulties. A possible reason for this was that those observed or interviewed seemed to find it relatively easy to establish social relationships within classes: they said that they made friends easily and did not seem to have difficulty with finding someone to sit and work with in class. This was clear from the classroom observations and was confirmed through informal discussions with the students and some of their parents.

The ability of this group to ‘fit in’ with their class was in turn helpful because it allowed the students to rapidly find others to help them with areas where they had deficiencies. Thus their new friends were able to give them vital in-class support in L2 German lessons, for instance. Also members of this group did not have the well established ideas of what education should be like that was reported by other groups, and had sometimes made it difficult for those students to work effectively in a different environment. By contrast the international school SWALS students seemed to put far more emphasis on coping with their present situation.

This rosy picture does however need some qualification. Firstly this was a very small group and may be untypical. Their experience was certainly different from that of the Americans and British students in the school who had attended several international schools. Those students had typically been used to following an international curriculum closely related to the British and American high school models and tended to react negatively to the European School System’s emphasis on foreign language acquisition. This itself illustrates the importance of ‘cultural’ backgrounds in influencing students’ perceptions even when they are placed in a very different context.
Perhaps the important difference between the British and American students and the SWALS international students was that the latter group was used to being ‘outsiders’ wherever they were educated. This may also explain why these students sometimes expressed concerns about not feeling a sense of belonging.

In summary, as described above, the international school students typically found the European School systems very different from their previous experience. As, unlike the Northern European Group, these students typically did not have higher levels of competence in any EU official language when they joined the school, they frequently found the European School languages programme very challenging. Additionally, unlike the East European Group, they did not have the high level of competence in maths or science which would raise their average marks to a level that would, effectively, buy them time to develop the languages skills necessary in the European School system. On the other hand, what was very clear in both the interviews and observation was that the international group, with no observed exceptions, had high levels of what might be called ‘coping skills’.

6.1.6. Individual Cases

Apart from the above groups, there were many children whose language group was very uncommon in the school. Although there are very few students from Japan, China, or Korea in the school, five of these (one Japanese, one Chinese, three Koreans) were observed in lessons. They were attentive in lessons, always completed the assignments as well as they could and although they clearly often found the work difficult were typically seen by their teachers as maintaining a positive attitude and doing the best they could. In
fact as the learning support teacher reported (see Chapter 5) they were often very miserable but did not feel that it would be appropriate to reveal this to their subject teachers. However there seemed little doubt from the observation that the ‘positive stereotyping’ by their teachers led to much positive support for the students.

One Nigerian student was influenced by his previous educational ‘culture’ in a quite different way. Emmanuel was mentioned to me by his L1 teacher because he was having difficulty with some parts of the course, particularly the writing of stories. This was confirmed by observation of the class. As a result of this the difficulty was discussed with the student who revealed that he had attended a fundamentalist Christian church where it had been strongly impressed on him that all forms of fiction were lies, with the consequence that he experienced strong feelings of guilt in a whole range of activities in the European school.

In conclusion, the individual students were interesting in that they underlined the importance of the background of the students. Some benefited because, like the Koreans and Japanese, the educational ‘culture’ of the systems they had left helped them to make progress in the European Schools. Where this was not the case however as with Emmanuel, it led to much frustration for the students concerned. All such cases confirm the importance of a person’s ‘habitus’ (see section 7.2: Research Question 4 and 5).

6.1.7. The ‘Cultural’ background of the SWALS students: Concluding Remarks

This section looked at some of the different cultural factors that affect SWALS students in the European Schools. In general terms the educational background of the students did seem to make a great deal of difference. Perhaps unsurprisingly those who came from a
system that was closer to the European Schools seemed to find it easier to adjust to the system: this was clear from both the interviews and the classroom observation. This was particularly true of students who were used to a system that places considerable stress on the student. In this sense students from the Eastern European Group and the India and Pakistan Group seemed more at ease in the European School system than those from the Northern European Group and the International Students group. The 'cultural' backgrounds of the students were not the only factors at work however for, as pointed out in the following sections, individual factors were also important. This and other 'cultural' dimensions are addressed in the following sections.

6.2. The 'Culture' of the Receiving Class

One of the most interesting findings of the present study was that the experience of the students seemed to vary not just according to their own background but also according to the class they joined, and the teachers they encountered. Thus some students found themselves very welcome. Fernanda, for example, a Brazilian student observed:

'They treat me with respect like they do to every other person. Like, they don't care that I'm Brazilian.'

Source: Fernanda (turn 43).

At least one of the students however had experienced very negative reactions from the rest of the class. Haira, from Pakistan, had not felt very welcome in her own class:

Interviewer: 'Did you feel welcome when you first arrived?'
Haira: 'A bit. I felt like a terrible plague is welcoming me.'
Source: Haira (turns 79-80).

One important point is that new students join a number of different groups. Haira found her L2 German class to be particularly unfriendly:
'Everyone said, you’re weird, you’re weird. In my second language class which was in German and they always teased me like, you’re weird, you’re strange. And then, I don’t even say a thing. I was like, like sitting like that and I don’t know German.’

Source: Haira (turn 69).

Similarly, Haira’s sister had also had a difficult time:

Haira: ‘Well, she thinks that these people in her class, they tease her a lot. They chant Hajra from Pakistan, Hajra from Pakistan.’

Interviewer: ‘Really?’

Haira: ‘Just because, they say that, ..terrorist, is hiding in Pakistan. Just because of that. They just tease her like that. Every teachers says that they are a really different class, Harem’s class. Like naughty and a bit, and behaviour, not that much good.’

Source: Haira (turns 108-110).

On the other hand Haira’s brother had found it very easy to join his class:

‘He’s got, like, lots of friends.’

Source: Haira (turn 113).

The view that a child’s welcome will depend very much on the class they join was also put forward by one of the learning support teachers:

‘Annelies and Erika are in one of the most horrible classes I have ever known.’

Source: Jones (turn 37).

Some classes certainly seemed to present challenges for new students. The teacher quoted above for example was subsequently asked what she meant by ‘horrible’. She said that the class in question was very unpleasant to newcomers, especially to those who did not speak either German or English as a first language. Such children were often ignored by the rest of the class or had to endure unpleasant teasing about their cultural background. Another class was often mentioned during the interviews as being particularly unwelcoming to outsiders. On investigation it seemed that this group had developed what
might be seen as a strong class ‘culture’ which involved much emphasis on personal appearance and being ‘cool’. While such tendencies are likely to be present to a lesser or greater extent in all secondary school classes in a western school, this became very pronounced in this case: both staff and key informants mentioned that these tendencies had, at one time, led to the group being widely known as ‘The gangstas and the Miss Americas’ group. Perhaps unsurprisingly, some of the female students developed eating problems, while at least two of the males became users of soft drugs. It seemed that this was at least partly the result of the stress caused by the European School system to a number of group members. In any case, partly as a result of their self-image, the group was very unwelcoming to those incoming students who did not easily fit into their view of being ‘cool’.

The complexity of generalisation, however, is also shown by this group for, by the end of the research period, there had been considerable change. Some of this was caused by normal turnover, with students leaving and new ones joining. A very important point, however, seemed to be that the students were more certain about their futures. With the European Baccalaureate only two years away, none of the students was scared that their parents’ work would take them back to a national school system. The whole atmosphere in the class was noticeably friendlier.

Although observing the group as a whole was not possible half of the class were observed during their philosophy lessons for forty lessons during a period of half a year. On this occasion the observer was also the teacher. What seemed particularly important was that the class had been joined by a group of three very outgoing SWALS students. The positive nature of these students seemed to encourage the rest of the group to be more
welcoming to newcomers, and to be part of a process that had beneficial effects in other areas, too.

Thus the group that had earlier been characterised by aggressive competition between its members now began to adopt more cooperative approaches to work. On several occasions, for example, I recorded seeing members of the group sitting and working collaboratively around the school during their free study periods. The development that was seen to take place in this group illustrates how important the background of any particular group is within this system.

One of the key informants gave an account of another class that she felt had changed its attitude to new students, albeit for different reasons. In her opinion the nature of the class had been deeply affected by a key episode in the primary school when many of the students felt that a new, academically weak, student was being victimised by the teacher. Although the student left the school, the key informant felt that this episode had made a significant number of the students aware of the problems faced by newcomers and made them friendlier as a result. It was not possible, however, to corroborate this claim because the incident related to had taken place four years before the research period started.

One of the most interesting factors to emerge from the interviews and observations was that some classes seemed to be far more welcoming for SWALS students than others. This certainly seemed to be an important factor in whether such students felt welcome in the school. This is in hindsight hardly surprising since as already pointed out [see section 3.4.2.) the English section's composition is very variable year on year, something which in itself makes generalisations problematic. What seemed particularly important was the
history of the class and their relationships with each other. Thus, a class where many of the children were experiencing academic, personal or social problems tended to present difficulties for all newcomers. The nature of these difficulties varied considerably. Thus, for example, many of the children travel considerable distances to the school with a typical class being spread over a large geographical area. This may mean that there is considerable competition for friendships. The result of this in one class was that newcomers who did not have well developed language skills in English or German found it difficult to make friends, something which caused a great deal of distress, particularly for many younger students. This further emphasises the point that the issues affecting language acquisition are not restricted purely to matters directly concerning language.

Some groups, similarly, were found to be very hostile to particular groups of newcomers. While most of the interviewees reported no difficulties there was some evidence, as reported in the previous sections, that it was acceptable in some groups to make racist remarks to other members of the class.

By contrast some classes were very welcoming to outsiders. These tended to be classes where there were either few students with personal, social or academic problems or where there were few tensions between the members of the group. In one case, as detailed in the previous sections, a small group of influential students made a conscious decision to be supportive of each other, with the result that the class became more open and positive. As this case showed the situation was never static: in at least one class, a group underwent a change from being unwelcoming to being very receptive to new arrivals.
6.3 The ‘Culture’ of the Teacher

The ‘cultural’ background of the teachers was often mentioned by the students their views largely depending on their previous experiences. Anna, for example, was very impressed with the director’s practice of standing at the school entrance to greet people each morning:

‘I like the director because every morning he stands in front of the school, doesn’t he. First, when I came here, I thought it’s a school man, works in the school. You know, like, digging the garden or something. But I think he is really nice, if he does what he does, like standing in front of the school and says hi to everybody.’

Source: Anna (turn 45).

The same student contrasted the relatively informal nature of lessons in the English section with those in Slovakia:

‘Here you have teachers like, not a friend but, it’s better here you know. It’s also better because you can say ‘you’ not like ‘Sie’ in German. You understand what I mean. The teachers there [in Slovakia] are like, I’m the best, I’m the biggest one and you have to be, like small one.’

Source: Anna (turn 32).

Many of the students felt that some of the teachers did not take into account the learning challenges facing students who joined the programme late. This was a criticism frequently made of teachers in both the English and German sections:

‘I don’t know, you never spoken German before really or slightly and then you get handed this, like, textbook which you’re meant to read in a month or, you know. And it was really overwhelming in the beginning. And my English wasn’t that good either because I hadn’t spoken it really the whole time while I was [in Denmark]. so I had to get that back up to scratch.’

Source: Hege (turn 59).

As far as the English section was concerned, many of the students felt that no allowance was made for the fact that English was not their L1 and that they were expected to keep up with a level that was really only appropriate to English L1 speakers. Anna’s experience
was typical. She was asked whether her teachers gave her different work from the rest of the class.

'No, it's the same I think. They try to get me to do normal work'  
Source: Anna (turn 59).

This was also the view of the learning support teacher interviewed:

'The Pakistan children, they were expected to go in and participate instantly in these tremendously complicated lessons. They didn't know the meanings of, I don't know, five sixths of the words.'  
Source: Jones (turn 16).

The same source also indicated that the teachers do not always react well to the diversity in their classes:

'Some teachers in our primary school they cannot accept that these children, their mother tongue is not English. And it really is. I've seen children become quite anxious about the fact they've perhaps wanted to go our five minutes early because their Swedish or Finnish teacher is doing something early with them and the teacher has said to them 'Oh, not again!' This worries the children, I mean to the point of crying. It's something they really do need to consider that these children's mother tongue is not English.'  
Source: Jones (turn 10)

As with other parts of this study the existence of language sections, helpful though it may be, seemed to encourage teachers to 'background' the diversity that exists in a typical European School classroom. A relevant factor here is probably that, as previously remarked (see Chapter 3), very few European School teachers have any training for teaching in such an environment. The evidence above would seem to indicate that this is an area in need of development.
6.4 The Importance of Factors Other than Culture

Having discussed the importance of the ‘cultural’ background of the students themselves but also of the classes SWALS students join, the next section considers the importance of individual factors. As discussed earlier, talking about individual factors from a cultural perspective is problematic as all individual decisions are deeply affected by ‘cultural’ factors in the widest sense of the word. Thus, as will be described below, many parents helped their children to deal with difficulties through various forms of support. In some senses this may be seen as cultural in that some groups, such as the Danish students in this sample, benefited from coming from a society that seems to try to avoid putting children under pressure. Nonetheless, as already described, cultural groups are far from being homogenous and in-group variance was also found to be important. In the following sub-sections this variance will be considered in terms of the following areas: parental support; family plans for the future; students’ fears of academic decline.

The Amount of Support Given by Parents

The amount of parental support seemed to have a big effect on the students. Firstly, as detailed in the previous sections, those students who had been prepared for the changes they were likely to meet seemed to experience fewer problems and stress: some parents had discussed the situation with their children, whereas others had not.

'My father first said that we are going to be here just another year but he said, we can stay here a long time but he said to me that I need not to stay here if I don't want to.'

Source: Anna (turn 22).

To some extent the reaction of such parents is certainly a cultural matter since, in some communities, children are not routinely consulted by their parents about such matters. However, as was revealed from the interviews, although there was a tendency for the
Eastern European Group parents to consult less than the North European group, there was considerable in-group variation, with some members of the former group being amongst the most active in consultation and re-assurance.

Some parents had certainly given their children considerable support in helping them to adjust to the European school. Thus Benni, a Swedish speaking Finn, revealed that his parents had discussed the move with their two children well in advance of the event with an in-depth consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of the change. This supportive approach continued at the school. When Benni joined the school he felt under considerable pressure and was particularly worried about his L1. His parents however reassured him that the problems with his L1 would be short lived and that he should focus on the many positive experiences that the whole family was enjoying. Furthermore, they arranged for him to have private lessons in meditation to help him relax. Similarly, Yuliya, a Russian, reported that her parents had helped her by constantly assuring her that her results in the short term were not a big cause for distress and that the new languages skills she was acquiring would mean that they would be able to find a school that would appreciate her if they had to return to Russia.

Other parents, for a variety of reasons, were not so supportive. In one very unfortunate case a student had not known that she was leaving her own country (Russia) until a week before the family departed. She had had no chance to say goodbye to her friends and felt that her parents were not interested in discussing her problems. Furthermore, largely because of language problems, her maths work declined. Her parents however regarded this as a sign of laziness. In another case a teacher mentioned a family which had arrived from an African state. Because their previous education had been very different, the
children found it difficult to cope and, not surprisingly, received poor grades. The family reacted to this by blaming the children, punishing them very severely.
Parental Expectations

Another related factor that seemed important was, as already mentioned in the previous two sections, the unrealistic expectations of some parents concerning the level that their children could attain. Such parents often showed little sympathy for their children’s difficulties, putting even greater pressure on them to do well. Thus Anike initially found the European School difficult because, used to being educated in Africaans, she found an English medium programme challenging. She told one of the key informants that her parents simply could not understand why her grades were declining and constantly told her that she was not working hard enough. Other parents however were able to take a longer view and stressed the positive achievements of their children, showing understanding of the problems faced. Again, the educational culture from which the parents came was not a perfect indicator of the parent’s reaction, although parents of the Northern European and the India and Pakistan groups tended to show more positive re-enforcement than the Eastern European Group.

Students’ Reaction to Difficulties

Many students themselves expressed their own concerns about the grades they were able to attain in the European School.

‘Actually, I am very good at English, and especially I am very good at grammar. In grammar tests in India, I got 25 out of 25. Sometimes I get 24. In here [at ESK], I tried to manage a little of it [a worksheet]. I didn’t manage two lines. It was very hard.’

Source: group interview, Abhay (turn 112).

‘I always had like the top mark in my country. Here, not so good.’

Source: Anna (turn 43).
The learning support teacher mentioned several similar students, one of whom was from Denmark:

'I'm sure that back in Denmark she was probably a fairly good student - I'd put her in the upper not in the lower - certainly not. Very motivated and hard working. She was beside herself because she could not achieve in that fifth year.'

Source: Jones (turn 32).

The fall in self-esteem is perhaps greatest when admission into the school means that a student joins a group different from the one they would normally expect to join. Thus, when students are admitted to the school it may be decided that their lack of competence in a L2 means that they should join a younger class. While it is true that many educational systems have classes containing a wider range of ages than would be normal in the UK, this is normally associated in the students' mind with low academic ability. For this reason, however benevolent the intention, students in this position frequently feel humiliated by being in such a situation. The extent to which this caused problems for the students was, again, affected by many factors, most notably whether their parents were sympathetic to the situation. In some cases the sense of present failure was offset by the development of new skills that would be valued when they returned home:

'I'll be like a more advanced person because I can speak English, German, and a bit French.'

Source: Yuliya (turn 41).

'When I go back to Finland I feel very good because it's Wow, you can speak English.'

Source: Börje (turn 38).

The receiving class can also have an effect. Anna, although initially worried about joining a younger group was much happier when she discovered that there were several others in the same situation.
**Student's Worries About the Future**

One factor that emerged very strongly from the data was the importance of the future plans of the student and parents, and how much tension this was causing within the family. In particular, many students were uncertain how long they would stay in the school. Even for those whose parents had been told that they were in Germany for a fixed period, often two years, there was always the possibility that there would be an extension or indeed that they would be transferred before the end of the parents' current work contract. For these students there was usually more anxiety about the loss of the L1 and other elements which might be an important feature of education in their home country. A typical example of this would be a Russian teenager who might worry that their level in Russian, maths or science would not allow them to join the type of school which they, or their parents, desired. One of the SWALS students, Lidiya, was deeply affected by this uncertainty. For years she had been under enormous pressure from her parents to ensure that her maths and Russian were at a level to allow her to attend a 'good' Russian school; she became increasingly anxious about the possibility of returning to what to her had become a very foreign country, especially as she had, in the meantime acquired very high levels in both German and English. A big change occurred shortly after the beginning of the sixth year, however, when her family was granted German citizenship. Within a very short time she became far more relaxed and clearly happier in herself. The view of education held by her family, however, continued to influence her. Thus, while her parents now allowed her to drop the more advanced maths course, they insisted that she carried on with advanced German, very much against her wishes. The parents made this decision because they argued that, as she was now a German, she needed to be very proficient in the language. They were not prepared however to allow their daughter any say in the matter, and told her
that the pressure this put her under was not at all a bad thing. This example, one of several reported by students, illustrates the problematic nature of the role of those parents whose own educational culture may lead them to believe that putting pressure on children is a productive policy. While such a policy may work in its home environment this study would seem to suggest that it is not helpful for those students who spend several years in a European school.

While fear of returning to a national system was usually a more important consideration for the Eastern European students the subject was often raised by the Danish students, too. One of the Danes, Asta, was particularly worried on this account. In the event she settled very well on her return to Denmark. What this last example shows however is the importance of a student’s perception about what the future might hold, something that is often affected by their parents. Thus some of the children in this group had been put under additional pressure by their parents to perform well in science and maths. By contrast those students who felt themselves likely to complete their schooling at the European School seemed to feel under less stress, even if they wished to go to their country of origin for university. These students seemed not to have the anxiety of adjusting, or re-adjusting, to a system which may seem very alien to them. This was the case for one of the Norwegians, Edvard, who was thirteen at the time of the interview. He had been in the school from the first year, primary, as had one of the Swedish speaking Finns in the class.

One group of students with a particular worry about the future seemed to be those families who came to the area either with the intention of becoming German or who had developed that aspiration during their time in the area. In ESK many of the families who come from the former Soviet Union fall into this category. This causes difficulties because obtaining
German citizenship is a long and complicated business. One of the parents from Georgia told me that their initial visa had been for two years. When this was renewed the following visas were for one year, nine months and then six months. This process of shortening the visa length had a very unsettling effect on the whole family as it meant that there was always the possibility that they would be forced to return home.

The Importance of Friendship

Virtually all the students mentioned the importance of acquiring friends. What the students meant by this term was somewhat varied:

‘But I think it is important for, because I could do my work very easily with him, like a partner. And like that I could be happier. No troubles. No fighting, all those things. It’s ok.’

Source: group interview Finn (turn 126).

‘Feel way better when, like, had friends like in school like lonely when someone is making fun of you. If you have friends usually they don’t do it.’

Source: Valeri (turn 5).

What seemed to unite the various comments about friendships however was a desire to avoid loneliness and isolation in a strange environment.

Some had found the other students very willing to be friendly:

‘Well, when I first came to the school, I didn’t speak like any word of English. And then I tried to speak, like, with one of my friends, I spoke to him Finnish [laughs]. And when I could speak better English he told me that he didn’t understand any word I told him.’

Source: Group interview, Thorano (turn 109)

‘Because in this class many good, friendly children. Really! I got friends, like, I dunno three or four days, like, when I started school.’

Source: group interview, Hakan (turn 49)

A minority of the students had not found it easy to make friends. One Indian when asked what advice she would give to a friend who was going to join the school said:
'I would say to him that, first of all, you are going to do a really big mistake cos you’re are not going to get any friends and you are going to be really alone.'

Source: group interview, Abeeha (turn 129).

While students like the one above were made very miserable by the difficulty of establishing friendships, others were better able to cope with the situation:

'I would like to say that you’d have to be quite ready to, er, keep yourself, er, happy even though when you don’t have any friends.'

Source: group interview, Kapila (turn 132).

Again, as with previous sections, the ‘cultural’ background of the students in question was hardly a precise indicator in predicting how easily they were able to make social relationships with others. Observation in the classrooms and corridors of the school made it clear, rather, that social groupings were not usually based on shared cultural backgrounds, although as already mentioned, at least one student was clearly excluded from friendships on racist grounds. What did seem to matter however was the level of stress that the individual students were under due to some of the factors identified above: students who felt pressurised did seem to find it hard to find friends, at least initially, and this factor tended to increase these students feelings of unhappiness.

6.5. Conclusion

In conclusion it seems clear that cultural issues had a big effect on the SWALS students studied during the present background. Their own ‘cultural’ background had a very important effect on the way in which they viewed the experiences they encountered at the European School of Karlsruhe.
CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters looked at the data obtained during the study. The first section of this chapter relates this directly to the research questions, the evolution of which discussed in Chapter 4 (Methodology). As indicated in Chapter 1, the research questions were divided into two main groups, those dealing with language and those more concerned with ‘culture’. This was, however, merely an organizational device since, as indicated below, there is considerable overlap between all the areas concerned.

7.2. Conclusions

In the following section each research question is considered in turn.

Research Question 1: How Important is the Status of the Pupils’ First Language (‘mother tongue’) Within the School and Local Community?

The study produced much evidence that the status of the student’s first language in both the school and the local community was very important. By far the most important distinction found was that between languages which are and those which are not official languages of the European Union. As indicated in Chapter 3 this is hardly surprising since the European Schools were established to maintain the former in children educated outside their home country.

With very few exceptions those students who spoke an EU language were noticeably happier and less stressed than those who did not. This was very clear from both the interviews, as well as the classroom observation. This was particularly shown in the interviews in the way that, supported in their use of the L1 as they were, the question of
language use hardly seemed an issue. Indeed, secure in themselves, they often felt free to consider themselves just as much Europeans, as members of their national states. This is hardly surprising and has been noted by several researchers who have examined this system (see Chapter 3). This confidence also seemed, judging by the interviews, to help the students with an L1 that is an EU language to cope with any real or perceived lack of progress in their L1.

Unfortunately, as the data frequently indicated, this privilege does not seem to extend to those who have a non-EU language as an L1. As reported in Chapter 5, speakers of other languages often felt under pressure not to use them in the school. Although this was not often vocalized in individual interviews, the group interview did reveal some resentment about the way that some languages were valued above others. This difference in status was reflected in the way that speakers of non-EU official languages were, unlike the speakers of EU official languages, very rarely observed to speak their language together. In extreme cases some students of languages regarded as low status such as Turkish, Russian and Hindi even played down their connection with the languages. As reported in Chapter 5 the most dramatic example of the way that status is important to language use in a European School took place following May, 2004, when Poland joined the European Union and, almost immediately, Polish began to be heard in the school.

In this way, much of the data suggested that what was an ‘additive bilingualism’ programme for some groups was acting as a ‘subtractive’ programme (see Chapter 2) for others in the same group. Part of the reason for this is that, as was argued in Chapter 2, majority group children can be successfully educated in a bilingual programme because of the superior levels of resources open to them. In the European School system the speakers of the official European languages could be seen as being in the same position as majority
groups in other schools, whose languages are supported by the system. In this case, the speakers of other languages would be equivalent to the minority groups identified by Landry and Allard (1991). Just as in bilingual programmes in national systems, these students are disadvantaged because they don't have sufficient resources open to them to maintain their L1.

The effect of the support or lack of support for a language is so important because as indicated earlier (see section 2.4) it is often an important part of people's sense of identity, particularly when a language is associated with someone's sense of national identity (see section 2.6.1). Indeed, the European Schools were expressly set up with the intention of defending students' 'own cultural identity' (The European Schools, 1996, p.8) (see section 3.3.2.). For those students in the present study who spoke an EU official language that was supported in the school this seemed to work precisely because this was helping them to maintain their sense of identity (see section 5.3). By contrast those who did not have this support often felt undervalued and as some of the comments in interviews made clear this was, at least partly, to do with a sense of losing their cultural identity (see section 5.3). Even the promotion of a European cultural identity, one of the system's strategies to reduce tension between national groups (see section 3.7) only served to make at least some non-Europeans feel that their cultural identity was not valued.

For those students who do not have their language supported by the European School system the situation may be very similar to the programmes written about by Valdes (1997) who concluded that dual language programmes may benefit dominant groups at the expense of lower status groups. This in turn would tend to confirm Cummins' (2000) point that educational programmes need to address inequalities of power relationships if they are to benefit all their students.
This awareness that the European School programme operates as both an ‘additive’ and ‘subtractive’ bilingual programme, simultaneously, is one of the major findings of this project. The reason why previous commentators have failed to appreciate this is probably because they have either failed to notice or played down the level of language diversity within the language sections of European Schools (see Chapter 3). Once this has been acknowledged however it throws into considerable doubt much of the previous, largely positive findings about the European School system. In particular, as the findings about the high levels of performance in L2 classes referred to in Chapter 3 become problematic when it is realised that this may, at least sometimes, have been the result of the presence of large numbers of students for whom the language was, in reality, a L1. In turn the presence of such students, as was clear from the interviews, has often made the level of the L2 classes unreasonably difficult for SWALS students and others, for whom the language was really an L2. It does not necessarily follow, of course, that previous findings were wrong but does suggest that any analysis of a bilingual system should look very closely at the language backgrounds of the students present.
Research Question 2: How Important is the Provision of Lessons in the First Language (L1) for Students Without a Language Section Within a European School?

As reported in Chapter 5, not all SWALS students were able to have lessons in their L1. To some extent this is closely tied to the previous research question since the availability of the L1 lessons was itself affected by the status of the language in question, the European Schools being only able to provide L1 instruction in official EU languages. Those SWALS students who did have this support were agreed that this was a positive experience that allowed them to develop their second language while maintaining and moving forward with their L1. This is not to say that the students had an uncritical view of the programme: they were well aware, for example, that the practical necessity of having the same teacher for L1 during their whole time in the school was sometimes a far from ideal situation. The disadvantages of the programme, indeed, were partly responsible for the less than 100% take-up of the programme by those entitled to it. As reported earlier (see Chapter 5), some of this group had not taken up the offer because they feared that the time spent away from the class, and the often tiny size of the L1 groups, offset the advantage of language maintenance. Those students who did participate did nonetheless have fewer fears about returning to their home states. They were furthermore a much happier and relaxed group than the rest of the SWALS students.

Such advantages were thrown into high relief by comparison with those SWALS students who, not speaking a community language, were unable to have L1 support. As was clear from the interviews, as well as the classroom observation, this group were noticeably unhappier and more anxious than the others. There was however much in-group variation. Much of this worry was traceable to concerns about the decline in the standard of their L1. As a consequence, the students were often worried about the future, particularly if they
felt that they might have to return to their home country and re-enter their national system where many of them felt that they would have deficiencies in their L1.

As with the first research question, the data tended to support much of the research concerning bilingual education. That those students with language support found the programme easier lends at least some support to the Thresholds Theory (Cummins, 1976) in that, with the support of the programme, students were able by the end of the programme to have reached age appropriate levels in their L1 along with high levels in their L2. Similarly the students with language support were able to achieve high levels of both BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills) and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) (Cummins 1979). The development of CALP in particular was well demonstrated by these students’ ability to follow the European School programme both in their L1 and their L2. Not only did such students almost invariably do well in their own L1 course but were able to successfully follow the normal L1 courses in their host sections. Thus the Danish students with SWALS language support did well not just in the L1 Swedish course but in most case the compulsory courses in the language of the section to which they were attached. This included cognitively challenging academic courses such as history, geography, maths, physics and, in the case of older students, philosophy.

The theories mentioned above were of course supported by the cases of those students who did not receive lessons in their L1. In contrast to the other group however these students tended to find it difficult to develop CALP skills in either their own L1 or the official L1 of the section to which they belonged. Thus, as described in Chapter 5, a Russian in the European School would normally fail to develop CALP skills in either English or Russian. Additionally, as indicted in Chapter 2, the high levels achieved by
such students in BICS tends to distract attention from the failure to develop the more demanding CALP skills (Vincent, 1996).

**Research Question 3: How Important is it for Pupils to Have Contact with Others who Speak Their First Language within the Group?**

One slightly surprising finding of the research was that most of the students interviewed did not seem to place particular value on contact with other speakers of their own language. Similarly, little communication between speakers of minority languages was observed in the classroom, although what there was tended to be between the speakers of EU official languages. Closer investigation however showed that this was highly misleading. What became evident was that the SWALS students felt under pressure to integrate into the section and that it was this that limited communication. As with the previous two research questions, there was a marked difference depending on the status of the language in question. Those SWALS students who had L1 support did of course have the opportunity to talk with others in their own L1, if only with the teacher. Even they however rarely spoke together in classes which were conducted in a different language. However, as detailed in Chapter 5, when they found themselves in a welcoming environment, speakers of EU languages did initiate conversation in their own language. When this happened it was clear that this was highly pleasurable for the students concerned. In contrast, with only one exception, speakers of non-EU languages were never observed to speak their language together, even when several other speakers of closely related languages were present.
As with the above research questions the finding in this area tend to support the importance of considering power structures within any educational programme. In this case the establishment of the European Schools could be seen as a part of a more general policy identified by Shore (1996) i.e. the adoption of policies to encourage conformity to dominant norms. This would of course be very much in line with Foucault’s view (1982) that the modern nation state only succeeds because it has developed strategies of ‘normalising’ individuals through discipline structures such as legal systems, prisons, and particularly important for any consideration of bilingual programmes, education. That it is the official languages of the European Union that are involved in this case underlines the point that, although English is often seen as a language which submerges others (Alptekin and Alptekin, 1984), other powerful languages may also show such tendencies.

**Research Question 4: How Important is the Educational Culture which the SWALS Students Bring with Them to a European School?**

As reported in Chapter 6 it was very clear that the educational 'culture' which the SWALS students brought with them from the educational systems in their previous education was a very important factor in how well they were able to cope with the European School System. The data seemed to suggest, perhaps unsurprisingly, that in general terms the greater the difference between the system from which they came and the European Schools (see Chapter 3), the more difficulties they were likely to experience. Such a view would very much support Bourdieu’s (1990) concept of ‘Habitus’ for it was clear that the large range of ‘scripts’ which they had learned from their previous system continued to affect them long after they have left the institutions and the societies in which they are imbedded.
The importance of 'Habitus' (Bourdieu, 1990) is shown clearly when students meet teaching styles which are based on a different set of 'scripts'. Any individual student will experience a range of different teaching styles in a European School. However, partly because of the influence of the home country (Germany in the case of ESK), many of the teachers use what would often be seen as a traditional approach to teaching and the system does tend to result in considerable use of formal testing (see Chapter 3). It was clear from the data that familiarity with such features was helpful to students i.e. where their 'Habitus' (Bourdieu, 1990) had features in common with the ones they encountered. It was therefore possible to draw up a rough 'profile' of the various geographical groups to explain the areas where each group would be likely to be either privileged or disadvantaged in the European School System. The following groups were identified: The Northern European Group, The Eastern European Group, The India/Pakistan Group, The International School Students Group. It is, however, important to stress that these are organisational tools only and, as will be explored later, there was much individual variation.

Many students from The Northern European Group found the European School system to be quite stressful. The systems they came from were seen by the students as less pressured, with far less emphasis on formal testing and much less homework. The systems which these students had left made far greater use of group based approaches and many of them had little experience of the teacher conducting the class from the front of the room. They had also been used to systems with developed pastoral care systems which included a less formal relationship with their teachers.

A major advantage enjoyed by this group, however, was the stress put on foreign language acquisition by the educational 'culture' from which they came. Thus many of the students joined the school with relatively high levels of English, as well as a willingness to learn
new ones. To some extent this was frustrated by the above factors, since they often found it hard to struggle with the traditional approach to language learning, with the heavy emphasis on grammar employed by some L2 and L3 languages teachers in the European Schools.

The Eastern European Students, by contrast with the above group, generally found the European School System to be less stressful than that in the schools which they had left. They were used to a system which puts enormous pressure on students, sets much homework and which makes extensive use of formal testing. They were also quite at home with more traditional teaching strategies, with the teacher leading the lesson from the front.

The major advantage possessed by this group was the typically very high levels in maths and science subjects which they had acquired in their previous systems. As indicated in Chapter 6, this helped the students from these countries to, in effect, buy time in the system. Thus the high, and often very high marks achieved by these students in these subjects meant that they were under less pressure with the languages courses, which sometimes caused them difficulties, coming as they often did from systems without a strong emphasis on languages acquisition.

The students from India and Pakistan, although they shared some of the characteristics of both of the above groups, seemed to have a different 'profile' which gave them both advantages and disadvantages within the European School System. Like the Eastern European Students, those from India and Pakistan were used to living in a culture which puts great pressure on students to work hard at school and has, typically, a high regard for education. They were also used to teachers who used traditional teaching methods, including extensive use of formal testing. They also expected to have a formal
relationship with staff. All these factors seemed to help the students to adjust to the European Schools, although they often found the languages programme challenging. They did, however, have the considerable advantage of having relatively high levels of competence in English in comparison with the Eastern European Group.

The last group which seemed distinctive is that which was identified in Chapter 6 as The International School Students Group. As already pointed out (see Chapter 6 and 7) the factor that this group had in common was that they didn't seem to fit easily into any particular language group. A good example was Hakan who, although Turkish was officially his L1, thought his English was at a higher level even though it was clear from his responses in the group interview that his level in English was certainly not at 'mother tongue' level, even as far as BICS (see Chapter 2) was concerned.

This group of students usually struggled with the European School Programme. The reasons for this were varied. Mostly they were used to schools and, sometimes parents, which put less pressure on its students to work hard. Similarly, they were not used to a rigorous routine of tests. Like the Northern European Group they were also used to schools with more fully developed pastoral care systems. Some of this group experienced additional difficulties because, in previous schools, their difficulties with English had led to them being withdrawn from parts of the curriculum so that they could be given extra English support. This meant that they often found the European Programme difficult to cope with in the areas that they had missed.

Where this group did seem to have an advantage was that they appeared to be, as described in Chapter six, more successful than any of the other groups in establishing social relationships within the groups that they joined. It may be that this was, at least
partly, the result of having more familiarity in changing school than was common in the other groups. However, this was a small group which may not have been typical of other, similar students.

That the educational 'cultural' background of the students should make a difference is perhaps not surprising given some of the previous research in this area. Thus, as pointed out in Chapter 2, Cortazzi and Jin (1999) wrote that learners who had a different culture of learning from their teachers were likely to experience difficulties. While they were writing about foreign teachers in a Chinese context, this insight would also, judging by the data obtained in this present study, apply to mismatches between the learning 'cultures' of students and teachers in a European School. Similarly, the unhappiness felt by many of the SWALS students, particularly those who did not have language support tends to support de Mejía’s (2002) view that mismatches between the cultural backgrounds of students and schools can lead to cultural shock.

**Research Question 5: How important is the Educational 'Culture' of the Group or Teachers Encountered by SWALS Students in a European School?**

The data gathered for the present study would seem to suggest that the ‘culture’ of the group joined by SWALS students was highly important in their adjustment to the European School system. Thus some of the SWALS students joined groups that were overtly hostile to newcomers, and whose behaviour was sometimes racist. Other students found themselves very welcome and found very few difficulties in establishing social relationships with the group. As indicated in Chapter 6 the history of the class seemed to play a very important role in the openness offered to outsiders. Those classes where there was a history of unhappiness and where some of the students were experiencing stress
caused by academic, social or family difficulties tended to be more unwelcoming than those where these were not significant factors. The history of the class was not always a perfect indicator of attitude to outsiders, however. Thus, the data produced information about two classes where there was a marked change of attitude towards newcomers. In one of these cases however this only happened after there had been a significant change in the makeup of the group, and where the number of students experiencing marked levels of stress had declined.

Not surprisingly, the 'culture' of the teachers encountered by the SWALS students was also important. Thus students frequently complained that some teachers made no allowance for the fact that English was not their first language and expected them to participate at L1 level right from the time that they joined the school. To a large extent the attitude of teachers could be predicted from the educational 'culture' from which they came. Most German teachers for example come from grammar schools and it may well have been this factor which sometimes made them less sensitive to some children's difficulties. Certainly they tended to share this characteristic with their French colleagues who had also, for the most part, taught in the French version of grammar schools. Having said this the match was never perfect the teachers being, like the students, influenced by a wide range of factors. Nonetheless, the influence of cultural background, as with the students themselves, indicates the importance of 'Habitus' (Bourdieu, 1990).

That the cultural background of some teachers would cause problems for SWALS students is itself unsurprising considering previous research on European Schools. Thus, as observed in Chapter 3, teachers in the European School receive no formal training in working in such an environment (Swan, 1989) and in such circumstances it is hardly likely that, largely autonomous as they are, they are heavily influenced by their own cultural

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backgrounds. Despite this lack of training however many of the teachers spoken to in the course of the present study did show much awareness of the need to take into account the backgrounds of the students. This was not however, as already mentioned, the impression held by the students who were interviewed.

**Research Question 6: To what Extent are 'Individual' Factors Important in Explaining SWALS Students Abilities to Cope with the European School System?**

As indicated in Chapter 2, cultures are never homogeneous. On the other hand, even 'individual' variations within a group are also likely to affected by cultural conditioning (see section 2.7.1.). Because of this the word 'individual' always needs to be treated with caution. Having acknowledged this point, the term seems useful in explaining the different experiences within groups. In the following section the 'individual' factors considered are: the level of support provided by parents; parental expectations; students' ability to cope with difficulties; worries about the future; level of difficulty in establishing friendships.

The data collected provides strong evidence that the students whose parents were able to support and re-assure them in their adjustment to the European Schools system were happier and better able to cope, partly because when the parents were stressed about the family’s new situation this seemed to be transferred to the students, increasing their own levels of tension. Parental expectations were a particularly problematic area. Those parents who had failed to adjust their perspectives to the new situation often added to the stress levels of the students concerned. As described in Chapter 6, some parents had unrealistic expectations and blamed the children for laziness when they failed to achieve the same high grades which they had achieved in their national systems.
This sometimes problematic role of the parent also had a bearing on students' abilities to cope with problems in the European School, particularly when they were new to the system. At a time when they were themselves often distressed or even humiliated by lower marks than in the past, the students whose parents were able to take a longer view and stress the positive sides of the experience, particularly in terms of foreign languages acquisition, tended to be both happier and more successful. As stressed above, the cultural background of the family was important in that some parents came from communities that seem to regard stress as a healthy motivating factor in education while this is usually not the case with families from Scandinavia, for instance. However, as pointed out in Chapter 6, the cultural background was an imperfect predictor with some of the Russian parents, a group which often put enormous pressure on their children, being very re-assuring to their children.

Another factor which affected students' ability to cope with the European Schools system was their level of worry about the future. Many students were unsure about how long they would be staying in the school and this caused much anxiety about how well they would be able to integrate back into their own systems. Again the cultural background of the students tended to affect the level of concern because those who came from highly competitive systems were often worried about whether they would be able to join the sort of school that they or their parents would consider acceptable. As with most other areas, the students who had had L1 language support exhibited less stress in this area since they were at least confident that their L1 level would be more or less at normal levels when they returned, something which worried many of those who did not have this support.

The last 'individual' factor which seemed of significance was the importance of making friendships within the group. Although what the students meant by friendship varied a
little, most of those interviewed felt that establishing close social relationships within a
group was very important. Certainly those who had difficulty in this area were made very
unhappy by their experiences. Various factors seemed to be important in explaining how
successful students were in establishing such relationships. As with the sections above, the
stress levels of the student seemed to make a big difference: those students who
immediately struggled with the system and were anxious about the future often found it
difficult to establish relationships. As indicated in Research Question 5, the 'culture' of the
class joined by the student was also very important; some students found themselves
joining very 'closed' groups, some students even experiencing racist taunts.

The complexity and interrelatedness of the above factors should comes as no surprise,
bearing in mind some of the previous research on bilingual programmes, particularly
Landry and Allard's (1991) view that such programmes are complex interactional
processes which involve both individual and societal variables.

7.3. Implications for the European School System.

The above comments summarise the findings of the present study. This section looks at
how these might be used to produce recommendations about changes to the European
School System. In even considering the formulation of recommendations, the complex
question of generalizing findings from one educational site to others must be revisited. As
a case study of a particular school, it might be argued that the present study is of little use
in commenting on other schools in the same system, several of which are far larger and
have an even greater number of language sections. While the problems of generalisation
are acknowledged, the position adopted here is, as already mentioned, that described by
Gomm et al (2000) who argued that researchers can systematically investigate the extent to which the population in the case study matches other cases. And while this study cannot fully consider the extent to which all the factors described in this project are present, it has presented evidence that some of the variables identified here are present in the other schools. Thus as noted in Chapter 3, there is very considerable evidence that the diversity within the language sections described here is also a factor in all of the schools. Similarly, it is clear from previous research that the influence of the host nation may lift the levels of L2 instruction to a point where they are unrealistic for genuine L2 learners. Thus using the approach advocated by Gomm et al (2000) it could be argued that the factors which have been identified by this project, are likely to also be present in the other schools, albeit in varying degrees. The precise extent of this match is, however, outside the scope of this study.

If the findings of the present study were found to be applicable for other European Schools, the implications for assessing the European School System would be enormous. It would mean for example that the rather positive assessment made by writers such as Baetens Beardsmore (1993, 1995) would need to be re-visited to see whether the high standards observed in the lessons taught through the medium of the L2 was more due to the presence of what really should be seen as L1 speakers in the classes. It may well be, however, that the enlargement of the EU, as well as economic pressures to increase the numbers of category 2 students leads to today's classes containing more diversity than was hitherto the case. Certainly, however, the extrapolation of the findings of earlier research (see Chapter 3) to the European School System of today would be very problematic. Furthermore, the findings of this study that, in one school at least, considerable numbers of students are being, in effect, immersed in a language which is not their L1, suggests that its stated aim of supporting the L1 (see chapter 3) is no longer being met by the system that
exists today. Perhaps the most important finding of this project is that which relates to the group of students who do not have an EU language as an L1. Although there was much in-group variation, the implication of this project that, in one European School at least, there is a group of students who are experiencing a 'negative' bilingual programme, i.e. one that pays no attention to the importance of their own L1.

As the European Schools were set up principally to support students’ L1 it should be a matter of great concern that this is possibly being compromised by the way in which the system is operating today. Indeed the very principles that resulted in the setting up of this system should also lead to a willingness to tackle a situation where they are under threat, if only for a minority of the school population.

7.4 Professional Recommendations

The next section looks at how the present study might assist, albeit in a very small way, the European Schools to deal with some of the issues raised in this chapter. Any change will however be very difficult in view of the problems involved in negotiating between the ministries of the 28 member states of the European Union.

Fortunately however there are staff and inspectors within the system who would like to raise the awareness of the problems encountered by some of the students within the programme. Some negotiation has already taken place with the inspector for learning support, with the idea that a summary of the findings of this study might be given a wider audience. The most likely way that this will happen is through publication through the European School’s own journal, ‘Schola Europea’.
It is intended that a greatly condensed version of this report will be published. This will have two sections. The first of these will focus on how well the schools meet their aim of supporting the first language (L1) of their students. The second part will make recommendation concerning the participants in the schools (The Board of Governors, the management, students, teachers, parents, teachers).
7.4.1. The Support of the L1

As mentioned several times in this study, the division of European Schools into language sections is a deliberate strategy on the part of these schools for defending the L1s of its students. Where the language of the section equates with the students this seems to work well so that the students maintain their L1 while at the same time learning their L2.

When the L1 of the section and the students is not the same there is a tendency for the programme to act as a negative bilingual programme in that the students are in danger of losing competence in their own L1. The importance of instruction in the L1 is very well demonstrated by the way in which SWALS students with language support progressed much better in their L1 and L2 than those who did not. As indicated earlier (see section 7.2) the support programme often allowed those in the programme to acquire high enough CALP levels in both L1 and L2 to contemplate higher level study in either language. Those SWALS students without this support, by contrast, often complained that their L1 was declining, particularly their ability to write the language. This should be a matter of very great concern to the system for it hits at the very principles of the European Schools. Indeed, as many of those affected come from less privileged socio-economic groups, the need for change could be seen as a human rights issue.

The influence of the host nation is always an important factor, particularly when there are many students who join the school with high levels of fluency in the language of the host nation. As indicated earlier (see section 3.4.4) this is frequently the case in Karlsruhe. Where this is the case the level of the L2 classes in that language are often unrealistically high. It is likely that the same situation may be present in varying degrees in other European Schools (see section 3.4.4). If this is the case, it is likely that there are
considerable numbers of students who are experiencing a 'submersion' bilingual programme.

While the European Schools do have some strategies for dealing with students who experience difficulties with keeping up with the high level of the L2 courses, these are clearly inadequate, a situation acknowledged even within the system (see Chapter 3). In particular, the allowance given to new students that the grades for subjects taught in the L2 do not count for promotion purposes in the first year in the school is wholly inadequate, particularly for students who join the system later. The reason why this is particularly problematic is that students take more courses in their L2 than other European School students since as indicated earlier (see section 7.2) they follow many courses of their host language sections. What this means is that, as they are being instructed in an L2 in a class which contains many L1 speakers, they are in effect following an immersion programme (see section 2.6.4.). The difficulty of coping with the high level of such courses is hardly surprising given that students would normally be expected to take several years to adjust to such a situation (Cummins, 2000).

The effect of the above factors seems to be increased by the lack of staff training for, as pointed out in Chapter 3, very few teachers in the system have any training for working within a multilingual languages programme. Even where staff do have some training in foreign languages teaching they will often have been prepared for teaching within a monolingual environment. The lack of training seems to have the greatest effect on those teaching L2 groups as one of the courses taught through L2, such as history and geography. New teachers of such courses often have no training for their new role whatsoever. It is hardly surprising if coming, typically, from the upper tiers of selective
systems, and being confronted by L2 classes where many of the students are really at L1 level, they apply norms derived from their home system.
7.4.2 Participants in the Schools.

It is suggested that the above issues could be tackled by the following concrete proposals for the participants in the schools.

The Board of Governors.

The Board of Governors needs to fully realise that the division of its population into language sections is an imperfect tool for dealing with the diversity contained within this system. While many students experience a schooling which affirms their sense of identity, this is not the case for all the students. Although this study covered a small sample in one European School, the same factors may well be present in the rest of the system. If this is the case it means that alongside the laudable system of supporting students L1's, there is a tendency for the programme to deny the importance of some languages for some students.

A body like the Board of Governors of The European Schools, with its close relationship with the European Union should not be prepared to tolerate such a system in its present form.

A report summarising the findings of this research project will be sent to the Secretary-General of the European Schools. It will also suggest that further research be undertaken to establish whether the language sections in other European Schools contain the same level of diversity as that suggested in the English Language Section in The European School of Karlsruhe. If that is the case it is suggested that the Board of Governors consider how the system might be altered. While it is highly improbably that all the first languages could be supported, it should be possible to promote a more inclusive atmosphere. At the very least
it could be impressed on the various stakeholders in the system that, care must be taken when supporting a selected list of European L1’s in the system: it is very important to assure the speakers of other L1s that their languages are important even though they are not supported in this system.

Similarly, the Board of Governors should also realise that the division of students into different categories is deeply problematic. For administrative reasons it is not surprising that the system wishes to know how many of its target population are educated by the schools. It is when this leads to different treatment within the schools that problems arise. As indicated earlier, the category 3 students are vital to providing a normal environment for the other categories. As such they should not be seen as being in any sense second class citizens. It is therefore proposed that once in the schools all students be given equal treatment, regardless of their background. In practice this means that L1 Danish support would be available to all students, rather than be dependant on the presence of a category 1 or 2 student, as is frequently the case.

The School Management.

The management of the schools needs to constantly re-enforce the notion that these schools are multilingual environments where national norms are not always appropriate because they may cause some students to face unrealistic targets. To this end they should take a more active role in negotiating with the national ministries to ensure that the staff in the schools fully support this idea. They also need to take a greater interest in the day to day operation of the language programme in the schools and the ways in which this may disadvantage some of their students. Where SWALS students experience learning
problems the management should ensure that the possible difficulties posed by this system are brought to the attention of the teachers and not seen simply as difficulties concerning individual students alone.

All syllabuses and working documents should contain a section about the diversity of the school population and the necessity for incorporating this into schemes of work and assessment.

**Teachers**

Where possible staff who teach either languages or subjects taught through the medium of the L2 (history, geography, economics) should have some experience of teaching in a multilingual environment.

The system should improve its induction training for all new teachers so that they are better able to work in such an environment. This should address the problems that such a system may pose for those who do not fit the classification system used by these schools. It is particularly important for teachers to realise that they may have to modify their lessons to take account of the different linguistic levels that are often present in the classes. As a budget for in-service training is highly unlikely to be provided, this could take the form of an introductory booklet which includes some of the material from this thesis, particularly the section about the conditions necessary for bilingual education described in chapters 2 and 3. Ideally, however, such material would be incorporated into training programmes which are specifically designed for bilingual and multi-lingual situations.
Parents

Like the teachers, parents need to be aware of the factors that lead to a successful multilingual environment. In particular they need to be aware of the difference between competence at BICS and CALP skills in a language. This would help parents to better understand and judge the progress of their children within the system, and to avoid unrealistic expectations.

To achieve this parents might be given a user friendly version of the teachers' guide, which would stress that national norms are not always applicable in the context of European Schools. It would be particularly useful if the system could stress to parents the importance of giving their children positive support, especially during the earlier parts of the programme.

Students

The way in which students' language competence is measured needs to be further developed. It is suggested that when students enter the school their level in the L1 and L2 should be assessed in the form of a written report which would then be used to determine their progress. This measure of 'value added' competence would be a far more flexible tool than the present crude 1-10 grade (see section 3.6.1) which is clearly greatly influenced by norm referencing in many classes with the effect that the norm is defined by members of L2 classes for whom the subject is really an L1. This might also lead to changes in grouping policy so that the L2 classes do not in future contain students for whom the
language is really an L1. This would help to make the L2 environment better suited to the learners for whom the language really is an L3.

7.5 Concluding Remarks

This study involved interviews with many students, parents and teachers who were involved with education at the European School of Karlsruhe. It is important to stress that most of the students encountered were experiencing only temporary difficulties and were clearly benefitting from being in such an unusual environment. This is an important point to make because, although this project has discovered serious flaws, the general underlying principle of these schools, that support of students' L1 is of paramount importance has benefited many thousands of students during the fifty year history of the programme and has much to teach anyone interested in bilingual education. Considering the historical and present difficulties between the member states that now make up the European Union, it is surprising that, despite the enormous problems of negotiation, a system that functions as well as it does is possible.

While acknowledging however the achievements of this particular programme, it also represent a very good example of the need for a critical attitude to any system, of the need to go beyond how it describes itself, of the need to fully explore the diversity that inevitably exists in any educational setting. Such an analysis it has been urged must look not just at the various 'Habitus' (Bourdieu, 1980) of all involved in the schooling process, but how these different 'scripts' interact with each other. In particular, this project has
urged that no analysis of a school system like the European School System is complete without the views of those most affected by it, i.e. the students themselves.
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Appendix A: The Choice of L2 made across the European Schools System

School population from 2000 to 2003
Category 2 population

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Source: Annual Report Of The Secretary-General of the European Schools (2003)
## Appendix B: The Size of the Category 1 Population in the European Schools

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Source: Annual Report Of The Secretary-General of the European Schools (2003)
Appendix C: The Size of the Category 2 Population In All European Schools

School Population from 2000 to 2003

Category 2 Population

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Source: Annual Report Of The Secretary-General of the European Schools (2003)
Appendix D: Interview Schedule

The following interview schedule was the one used for the interviews in the present study.

Introduction

I want to talk to you today because I am interested in your experiences of different schools and teaching methods. I am especially interested in your experience of learning different languages. Although I am interested in what you have to say, I won't be telling anybody that you said these things. If it's all right with you, I would like to record our conversation - it's very difficult for me to make notes and talk at the same time. I won't let anybody who might know you listen to this tape. When I have finished writing up my notes, I will show them to you to make sure that I have not made any mistakes.

1. I'd like to start by asking you to talk a little about your background, where you come from, your use of different languages, why you are in this part of Germany?

Possible probes

Where were you born?
Which countries have you lived in?
What languages do your parents speak?
What languages do you speak?
When do you use these languages and for what?
What language(s) do you speak at home?
If English is not a first language for you, when did you start learning English?
Does this school provide you with any instruction in your own language(s)?
Are you having any lessons in this language(s) out of school?
Do you have contact with any other people who speak your language?
Would it be good if you had more contact with people who can speak........?

2. In this next section, I'd like you to tell me about the other schools that you have attended.

**Possible Probes**

How different were the lessons different from those here? In what way?

How similar were the lessons to those here? In what way?

What sort of work did you do at the other school(s)

Are there any sorts of tasks that you did then, which you never do now?

Did you do any dictation?

How much homework?

How was the class organised for work? Was it mainly group work? Was the teacher mainly at the front of the class?

Did the teacher test what the students knew by questions?

How were the questions asked?

Was there any project work?

What about the assessment system?

What about the relationships between staff and children? Are staff here more or less friendly?

Was the atmosphere of the school stricter or more relaxed than here?

Were the teachers different? From here? In what way(s)?

In what ways, if any were they similar to teachers here?

What sort of things did you have to do to be seen as a good student in that school?
3. I'd now like you to say something about the European School and compare it with your other school(s)

Possible probes

When did you join the European School?

What was your first impression?

In what ways has this view changed or developed?

Is the way that you work in class here similar to what you were used to?

Can you think of any differences between the ways you work in class here compared with your old school?

Is the homework you are set here the same sort that you are used to? In what ways? How is it different?

Do you think that this is a good school? Why? Why not?

4. Perhaps you could now talk a little about how you have found life in classes where the language spoken is English?

Possible Probes

How easy did you find it to understand the lessons and work?

Perhaps you could say something about the work that involved speaking and listening.

What about the written work?

How difficult did you find the written work? Did reading activities cause you any difficulties.
Did the teachers notice that you were different from most of the other students in the class?

Did they do anything to help you?

Did the teachers make you feel welcome?

Did anybody make any comment about the fact that you speak another language?

Has anyone said anything positive or negative about your language group?

5. I'd now like you to talk a little about your impressions of what it is like to be someone like you in this European School.

Possible Probes

What is the reaction of people here to students like yourself?

Did you feel welcome here when you first arrived? What do you think was the reason for this.?

How long did it take you to find friends in the class?

Was this difficult?

Is there anybody else in the class, or year group who can speak your language?

Have you had many opportunities to speak your own language in the school?

If you were talking to someone from your own country who was coming to this school what advice would you give them?

6. Is there any other thing that you would like to say about your experiences at the school?

Conclusion
Thank-you for agreeing to be interviewed. It's always interesting to know what other people think about their experiences at this school. I'll be back in touch with you when I've written down what you said. If you think of any thing else that you want to add, please get in contact with me.

**General Prompts**

Prompts designed to encourage responses

Mmm, or 'uh-huh'

Sometimes this may also include a silent probe where the interviewer maintains eye contact.

Prompts designed to persuade the interviewee to explain something further.

Could you say a bit more about that?

Is there anything else you could say about this?

Would you explain this in greater detail?

Repeating the question

It may be necessary to repeat part or all of the question, particularly if it seems that the interviewee has not understood the question

**Transcription**

Each interview was transcribed as quickly as possible after the interviews. Punctuation was added to the transcriptions only when this seemed justified by the pauses in the original recording. A double full stop (..) was used to indicate a pause up to approximately two seconds. A longer pause is indicated by three full stops (…)

Occasionally a small comment was added, in parenthesis, to indicate the mood or meaning
of the speaker. In all cases, the interviews were divided into ‘turns’, which are used to
cross-reference the speech unit to the original recording.
Appendix E: Sample Interview

Name of Interviewee: Hege (A pseudonym)

The following interview transcript is one of the ones used for the present study. Only one transcript is provided because of the regulations concerning the length of the thesis.

Comment on the Interview.

Hege had left the European School and been attending university for four months when she was interviewed. The conversation seemed very relaxed. At the time of the interview it seemed that, as the conversation was covering the main areas, it was better not to overly 'steer' the interviewee, with the possibility of affecting the flow of conversation.

Introduction

I want to talk to you today because I am interested in your experiences of different schools and teaching methods. I am especially interested in your experience of learning different languages. Although I am interested in what you have to say, I won't be telling anybody that you said these things. If it's all right with you, I would like to record our conversation - it's very difficult for me make notes and talk at the same time. I won't let anybody who might know you listen to this tape. When I have finished writing up my notes, I will show them to you to make sure that I have not made any mistakes.
First question. I'd like to start by asking you to talk a little about your background, where you come from, your use of different languages, why you are in this part of Germany?

1. Hege: So, all in one go. Right. And you want to know the whole history?

2. Interviewer: Yes.

3. Hege: Let's think. Bit paranoid (not meant seriously!) Born in Denmark.. I think when I was...one and a half I moved to Germany. When I was three back to Denmark. And seven, to England. Twelve back to Denmark. Sixteen to Germany. Nineteen to Holland.

4. Hege: And well, er yes, so I speak Danish, German, English – obviously, and I am now also pretty good at Dutch. And my family has moved around so much because my father used to work for a multi-corporate corporation, BSAF, and they always transferred him around. Cos he would be selling products in different areas of Europe.

5. Interviewer: So, at home you speak Danish?

6. Hege: Yep

Pause of about two seconds

7. Hege: All the time really. I mean, the problem is now that I can't really write Danish anymore because I haven't done that in so many years.
8. Interviewer: Do you have any other contact with people who speak Danish?

9. Hege: Actually no. I really don’t. Family and .. that’s it.

10. Interviewer: You think it’s a problem that you can’t write Danish as well as you might like.

11. Hege: There’s five million people who speak the language - it doesn’t make that much of a difference.

12. Interviewer: Do you mean that it is such a small country and therefore it is not important to speak the language? Or you might have meant that there are enough people there to help you with any difficulties.

13. Hege: I had a classmate who spoke Danish and yeah, we would speak Danish to each other but then usually you don’t just, like, socialise the two of you, so there’s other people around you and it’s rude to speak a foreign language – not polite at least

15. Interviewer: It would be helpful if you could now tell me something about the other schools that you’ve attended. (Slightly modified version of question 3)
Pause of about three seconds.

16. Interviewer: When did you start learning English?

17. Hege: When I was seven

18. Interviewer: Seven

19. Hege: I didn’t speak a word before.

20. Interviewer: That must have been quite a shock.

21. Hege: Actually, there was a Danish girl in my primary school as well. But she really, basically, didn’t speak any Danish. I don’t even, when I think about it, I have no clue how I learnt, how to speak English. Cos I mean, really I just got there and then I was thrown into this primary school and I had this teacher like showing me all these different cards with all this stuff on it and everything. It didn’t take me that long to learn to speak English, something like a year, or something:

22. Hege: But, I guess if you are surrounded by it and it’s the only thing you hear every day. And I guess that children’s BBC is always good for education.

23. Interviewer: So you were there from seven until.. How old?
24. Hege: Twelve

25. Interviewer: So you went to secondary school for ?..


27. Interviewer: Whereabouts was that?

28. Hege: Erm..It was Marlborough Secondary School. It was in St. Albans.

29. Interviewer: And then you went back to Denmark

30. Hege: Yep

31. Interviewer: And what was that like?

32. Hege: That was, actually (laughs), really terrible, because I’d gotten so used to the English culture and it’s very polite, stiff upper lip thing, you know. I really think so.

Pause of about three seconds

33. Hege: And then you get back to Denmark and you’re sitting there in this class. There is no uniform and everybody, like, swears at the teacher, calls the teacher by the first name. Teacher doesn’t mind swearing either. (Laughs). I don’t know, it was such a shock it really was. And then I got into this class and it was really
unlucky that there were basically only boys and me. Five other girls and there was, like, a cliche and I got bullied out, and I had to switch class and everything. And, really it took me so long, again, because I was used to the English, you know.

34. Interviewer: What other differences do you think there were between being in the English culture and the Danish?

35. Hege: Well, I think, I don’t know if it’s got anything to do with the social class, or something, because, at the, like, at the secondary school I was just really concentrating, like, academically. I didn’t go out or do anything. I was only twelve anyway, I guess, you know, but I was really just concentrating on school and then I come back here (Denmark) and there’s like all these girls, telling me about their sexual experiences at age twelve or something. And I’m just like..euchhh.

36. Hege: You know, I really wasn’t prepared for it at all. I think, I really think, that the Danish culture is a tiny bit vulgar. That’s really (laughs), that’s what I think.

Pause of about three seconds.

37. Hege: Well, I mean, it’s really easy compared to here. Like, I think that the level which you achieve is nothing. But here (ESK) I didn’t know anything, I’d never, like, had any of the subjects that you have here. And, I mean, you come home, at one thirty or something, and, I mean there’s never really any homework, nothing
special and there’s... The only thing which I missed was there was always a lot of groupwork which you don’t have here.

38. Interviewer: No, that’s right.

39. Hege: Yeah, and as I said, teachers, you call them by the first name and it’s all like, very, informal but, I mean, I don’t really know...

40. Interviewer: Well, you spoke about the group work and that’s one feature. Did they also do the sort of thing that you’ve experienced quite a lot here. The teacher, really, being at the front conducting the lesson

41. Hege: It’s usually the students conducting the lesson..I really, I don’t know , I mean, my school, it might have been a really terrible one. I don’t know but nobody would ever listen to the teacher. There’d be a lot of chaos. It was pretty bad actually, I mean compared to here.

42. Interviewer: Well, how did they get through courses and things if no one was listening to the teacher

43. Hege: Well, in Denmark you can’t really fail. It’s far.. I mean, you’d have to be really, really, terrible. Hit a teacher or something. Other wise they’ll let you go all the way through till,  erm, the fifth year you know

44. Interviewer: What was the grading system like?
45. Hege: That goes from zero, zero to 13 excluding 11 and excluding, 01, 02 and 04. Makes sense, right (laughter).

46. Interviewer: So how do you end up as an 05

47. Hege: Erm I think you can get a five. I mean, you need a six to pass as well so it’s the same (as at ESK) Thirteen is the same as a ten, twelve doesn’t exist and then eleven is pretty good. But it’s a bit conf..I don’t know why they have that kind of stuff.

48. Interviewer: How did you get marked in class, then. How did you get these grades?

49. Hege: Well, you get, I think you get a grade for your written work for any essays which you did. And a bit of, like, the oral as well, how much you participated. And stuff. And I think when you make it to maybe eighth grade, in that system, which is a bit different.

50. Interviewer: Erm, how old would you be then

51. Hege: I think you’d be, maybe fifth year (at ESK) Yes, fifth year. Then you’ll go and do the exam at the end of the year which will contribute to your final grade.

52. Interviewer: O.K., what about tests and diktats, things like that?

53. Hege: You hardly, you have a couple of diktats at the beginning when you are younger, when you learn to write Danish. But you don’t... you really hardly ever
had tests. Had a few tests where, like, erm, arithmetic training, you know, not allowed to use any calculator. But other than that, really, you usually get, like, this take home exam, kind o’thing where you would have to do these exercises and you’d have like... Maybe that’s just like homework. You’d have maybe like five exercises. Have a month to do them. And then you’d have to hand them in written in your fanciest writing and stuff.

54. Interviewer: It was really an assessment, rather than a formal test?

55. Yeah, I mean you could go home do it with a calculator and so on.

56. **Interviewer:** I’d now like you to say something about the European School and compare it with your other schools. (Question 3)

57. Hege: I came in the fifth year, and, yeah, it was a pretty big shock coming here as well because, I mean, my parents had debated whether I should go into a German school except I didn’t speak German. And then they just concluded that it would be better to put me into an English speaking school so that it wouldn’t be such a big shock for me... And, yeah, like I said, the education system is really different. All of these subjects which I’d never had before. And, in the beginning it was really, really hard, you know. I mean, you’d come home and you’d just, your head would be just exploding with everything that you’d heard and you’d want to do your best and pass, you know. So... it was, it took a while to get used to that
58. Interviewer: When you arrived, what was your first impression during the first few days?

59. Hege: Errm.. A lot of crying I think. A lot of crying. I hated it at the beginning so much. Cos I was used to being able to just sit in class and, if you don’t want to do anything, it’s really ok. Later on you can do that here too. But in the beginning I was, like, really worried. I don’t know, you hear all these things, ok now you can actually fail and there’s a system for it Blah, blah, blah, I was really scared at the beginning and you get this. I don’t know, you never spoken German before really or slightly and then you get handed this, like, textbook which you’re meant to have read in a month or, you know, and it was really overwhelming in the beginning. And my English wasn’t that good either because I hadn’t spoken it really the whole time while I was (in Denmark) so I had to get that back up to scratch. Moving to a different country, ya.

60. Interviewer: Ya

Both laugh

61. Interviewer: So in what ways did this, your, impression change over time? Having left the school, looking back. How would you sum up the European School? Good and bad points maybe.
62. Hege: Erm The good points are that, yes, if you want to, you really have a chance to learn somethings because now, in my first year of uni. (lowers voice to conspiratorial whisper) I've hardly had to do any work! Because I've basically done it all before. And the bad points is, maybe, like socially, you think of yourself a bit higher. At least that's my opinion because my other uni. I know other people from the European School you know and they're all very (sharp looking down your nose expression) I don't know, we have this thing for being pretty spoiled.

63. Hege: And once like, you meet more regular people you’re a bit shocked at least I thought this year – in Holland I was like very I think I learned a lot. But that’s just because I guess the people who are here like the European Union all that kind of stuff. It’s a bit in-bred somehow.

64. Hege: Well, I mean, like, the thing was I was accepted straight away into the class you know, so I made a lot of friends which really helped and then the English, I mean, you’re just surrounded by it the whole time and I was pretty good at it before. You pick up on it pretty easily.

65. Hege: (71)Did you have a strong sense that people thought of you as being..not English?
66. Hege: Ermm, not really. But that’s just because I had the benefit that I’d lived in England so if were people were talking about, like, hoola hoops, or skips you know what they are talking about.

67. Interviewer: You think that helps?

68. Hege: Yeah, I mean, maybe Maiken (Another Danish student) is someone who doesn’t really know, she may have been more, I don’t even think she would have been, after a while you just like sort of adapt, you know.

69. Interviewer: Yeah.

70. Hege: Like, it doesn’t matter if you don’t know anything. I never care anymore – its not my fault and you can tell me what it is, or something. But I really never felt that it was. Only sometime if you have typically British English words. But as soon as you get them explained it’s really, it’s not a big deal at all.

71. Interviewer: Did you think that the class was welcoming? And what about the teachers?

72. Hege: Ermm. Some were very welcoming and a couple of others they, perhaps, weren’t so welcoming

73. Interviewer: No, OK.
74. Hege: I guess if you just get handed this like German book with no clue what it’s all about it’s a bit scary.

75. Interviewer: Were most of the difficulties outside the English system then, as far as the academic stuff was concerned?

76. Hege: I think so, but I think, like, maybe the English teachers also have more of an understanding because they know what’s going on, or maybe that’s something cultural, I don’t know.

77. Hege: It’s quite possible the case, yeah.

78. Hege: Was there a difference?.. Obviously your spoken English is excellent.. Was there a difference between the things you had to do in the English section which were spoken and..to do with speaking and listening, and those which were written. Were written tasks more difficult?

79. Hege: Eerm, well, obviously they were but, I mean, nothing that a dictionary won’t solve.

80. Hege: No, ok.

Both laugh
81. Hege: But it’s really true, it’s not, like, it makes that big a deal, it really doesn’t. I think you just really get used to it.

Pause of two-three seconds

82. Hege: Like, occasionally it would be like, yeah, Go Denmark, or The Danes, or something. But it’s not really anything mean, you know and, of course, you know like there’s a couple of Danish people working here not like you have that much contact with them and it is not like you’re special or different. Because when you think about it, there’s a lot of people here from a lot of different cultures and, I don’t know, it’s just a European School really.

83. Interviewer: That might be, that might be an important factor. I don’t know to what extent having someone who can speak your language in the group is a good or a bad thing.

84. Hege: But, I think the things is, like, when I think I don’t consider myself Danish really, or British or German, or anything really. That could also be something to do with because I also, like, this nationalistic feeling, or anything, you know. And then, I think, in my class nobody really had that either. Except maybe (lowers voice to a whisper) a few Germans.

85. Interviewer: Do you think that people need a sense of identity.

86. Hege: I’m doing ok up until now. I mean, I can just say that I am a European.
87. Interviewer: What do your parents think about that?

88. Hege: My mum, like, she always wanted to go travel and everything. Nowadays she’s always like asking, was it actually a good idea cos Christian is having a lot of trouble. And she’s like, well for you it didn’t go OK but like, with Christian we are really worried. Like, we’d never want to do anything like that to him again.

89. Interviewer: Christian’s (brother) experience has been a little different hasn’t it?

Do you think the L1 Danish has been helpful or not helpful.

90. Hege: Tthink it’s been helpful because it made it a lot easier, you know, I think if I’d had it too it would have been easier for me as well. But now, looking back, it’s not always best to take the easiest way out, you know. It’s also difficult to manage with so many languages you know. But he’s made a lot more friends. He says that he meets up with a lot of people who aren’t in his class any more.

91. Interviewer: Is there any other thing that you would like to say about your experiences at the school (question six)?

92. Hege: It’s really different, like, from person to person. I think you have to be like, you can’t be mad that your parents moved you, or something, you have to be, OK, a new page of the book or whatever. And you have to be willing to actually go up to people, be a bit pro-active, you know.
93. Hege: Cos, if you just like step back in yourself, calling your friends back in Denmark, then you’re gonna not integrate. You really have to try hard to integrate. That’s the most important thing. And then, whether it be taking lots of extra German lessons or sitting up until god knows when learning chemistry or physics and that’s really what you have to learn to do. You have to want to do it. Otherwise it’s not gonna happen. It really won’t.

Pause of about three seconds.

94. Hege: Well I must say, I really think that it is a good school. Like, you have a lot of opportunities from it and there’s always these conventions or whatever, organised where you can take part. Learn a lot of stuff about the European union. Everything. And, in general, I mean, like once you’ve, and you look back, you realise that it’s like this really closely knit environment. Mum’s talk with mums and everybody knows what everybody else is doing.

95. Hege: In general, I do think it’s a really good school. And I do think I will send my children to one too. If I ever have any!

Pause of about four seconds.
96. Hege: In the Danish culture, like, it’s always, like, really cool to have tried lots of stuff like be able to do this, done that kind of thing. And, like in general, the Danish pretty much have their feet down on the ground, you know, as a culture, as we this, you know. I don’t know what it is called in English. Where its not to think that you are better than everybody else. And the Danish actually live by it. If you ever think that you are better than anybody else then they’ll just rip you apart, you know. That was a problem coming from England, when I was smaller, you know. Because, as a British, you are really taught that you can, like do a lot of stuff yourself and that if you do this, and you can think that you’re good, that kind of stuff, and in Denmark like you come with this kinda attitude well, you know, I can do this, they just (mime of someone’s head being sliced off) knocked off your pedestal you know.

Pause of about five seconds.

Interviewer: Thank-you for agreeing to be interviewed. It's always interesting to know what other people think about their experiences at this school. I'll be back in touch with you when I've written down what you said. If you think of any thing else that you want to add, please get in contact with me.
Appendix F: Observation Record Sheet

The following document framework was used to record the observations made during the research period (see section 4.3.4)

Lesson observed: Subject

Observer: teacher

Teacher leading lesson: The teacher was anonymised  
Lesson code: The date was recorded but is replaced in the completed form by a code to protect the anonymity of the teacher

What contribution did the SWALS student/s make to more formal aspects of the lesson?
Possible areas: answering questions put by teacher; contributing to presentations, etc.

What communication took place between SWALS students?
Possible areas: talking with other SWALS students in L1; talking with other SWALS students in language of the classroom.

What communication took place between SWALS students and other members of the class?
Possible areas: Were SWALS students isolated? Did there seem to be as much communication between SWALS students /other students as between other members of the group?

Seating
Were the SWALS students sitting on their own, with other SWALS students, or next to other students?

Other Factors
Possible areas: Did the SWALS students seem happier or more anxious than the rest of the group?
Appendix G: Sample Observation Record

Lesson observed: English L1 3rd year class

Teacher leading lesson: Edwards Lesson code: 32

Observer: Duncombe

What contribution did the SWALS student/s make to more formal aspects of the lesson?
Possible areas: answering questions put by teacher; contributing to presentations, etc.

There were three SWALS present during the lesson (two Russians, one Georgian). It was quite a lively lesson with much participation by the students answering questions. The SWALS students were the only ones who did not answer a question at all. The teacher did not ask any of the SWALS students directly. None of them put their hand up to answer a question.

What communication took place between SWALS students?
Possible areas: talking with other SWALS students in L1; talking with other SWALS students in language of the classroom.

There was no communication between the SWALS even though the two Russian female students were sitting very close to each other.

What communication took place between SWALS students and other members of the class?
Possible areas: Were SWALS students isolated? Did there seem to be as much communication between SWALS students /other students as between other members of the group.

One of the Russians seems on friendly terms with another female student. When the class was working this student seemed to be helping the Russian with her work – writing in her book on several occasions. The Male Georgian student did not communicate with any other student.

Seating
Were the SWALS students sitting on their own, with other SWALS students, or next to other students?

The Georgian student was sitting on his own. One Russian was actively communicating with another non-SWALS student. The other Russian was sitting with a group of other female students but was not seen to communicate with them at all.
Other Factors
Possible areas: Did the SWALS students seem happier or more anxious than the rest of the group?

The class seemed to be rather happy and enjoying the lesson. The Georgian was clearly not being included in the group even though his spoken English (according to the teacher) is quite well developed. One of the Russians seemed well integrated in the class but the other seemed very unhappy.
Appendix H: Extract from Fieldnotes

May 17, 2004

Polish
Very interesting observation outside the Aula (school hall being used at the moment for the sixth year examinations). I was there at the end of the exam to see how the class felt they had done. 3 of the Polish speakers (2 names recorded but omitted here for anonymity) sat on a table outside in the corridor. I know two of them but the third must be in another language section. They sat on a table there at the entrance and had a long and loud conversation in Polish. It seemed to me that they were deliberately drawing attention to the fact that they were speaking the language.

This seems interesting in that I have twice in the last two weeks heard conversations in Polish. This has never happened before.

Follow up

1. Ask the Polish teacher whether he had heard the students using the language outside the classroom

2. Ask Bazyl’s mother the same question.

May 18, 2004

I briefly spoke to one of the students about yesterday’s conversation (name recorded but omitted here for anonymity). He just laughed and said: ‘The Polish are coming!’ The student concerned is bilingual English/Polish and has never been heard speaking the language before in school. I do now remember him speaking to someone at the Judo club in the language – there are several Polish speakers there.