Bilingual identities in two UK communities:

A study of the languages and literacies of
Welsh and British-Asian girls

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Abstract

This thesis considers the role of language and literacy in supporting the exploration of bilingual identities. Two groups of bilingual girls participated in the study when they were aged between 11 and 13. One group are British-Asian girls, located within an English inner-city; the other group live in North West Wales.

Like many bilinguals, the girls in this study experience the daily interaction of different – and sometimes dissonant – realities. These are represented both by their languages and by the varying cultural practices and values of their communities, many of which can be seen reflected in different literacy practices.

Early in the study, quantitative analysis of the reading practices of the research participants and their peers in both communities suggested significant differences in the amount and nature of the engagement with text that occurred in English and in minority languages. A series of interviews with the two groups of girls over the next two years allowed further insight into a range of complex factors that affected their engagement with their languages and literacies. The study offers a consideration of these interconnected factors.

It is argued that the interaction between languages and literacies experienced by these young bilinguals supports their ongoing negotiation of identities. The girls are shown to actively utilise the repertoire of cultural resources they experience as part of this process, using their languages and literacies as a space where they explore and demonstrate their bilingual identities.

Published Papers

Jones, S. (2006) 'One body and two heads: Girls exploring their bicultural identities through text', *English in Education*, 40: 2, 5-21

Jones, S. (2006) 'A Tale of Two Literacies: Girls growing up biculturally literate in two UK communities', in Hickey, T. (ed.), *Language Learning and Literacy*. Dublin: RAI, 99-113

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Origins of the study

The origins of this study are rooted in two aspects of my own personal experience, which may at first appear rather dissonant. The first experience is that of being a Welsh-English bilingual growing up in Anglesey, an area of Wales where, during my childhood in the early 1980s, 80-89% of the population were Welsh speakers (Baker, 1985).   I was educated bilingually at primary and secondary school and went on to study English and Welsh to Degree level at a college of the University of Wales.

I then trained as a secondary English teacher, this time at an English university, and subsequently worked in two schools in an East Midlands inner city. Working as a teacher in the second of these schools provided the second of the personal experiences to have influenced this study. Whilst working at this school, I saw echoes of my earlier life experiences begin to emerge.   Until this point in my teaching career, I had considered the experiences of the students with whom I worked to be considerably different from my own childhood and adolescent experience; this thinking was based mainly on linguistic and geographic criteria, as well as the usual ever-increasing chronological difference. Indeed, the dichotomy of rural Welsh life and that of an English inner city was often pointed out to me by colleagues intrigued as to my motives for relocation.   At this school, nearly half the students consisted of young people from homes where languages other than English were spoken. The majority of these students came from Pakistani and Indian heritage families who spoke Punjabi, or dialects such

as Patwari or Mirpuri. I began to explore the ways in which my own experience as a young bilingual compared with that of my students, living in a very different community to the one in which I had grown up. This study is rooted in this interest in both the common ground I felt I shared with some of my students, as well as the differences between our experiences.

On a worldwide scale, the experience of bilingualism is not in any way unusual. Crystal (2004) cites the fact that, according to the British Council, an estimated one billion people around the world are learning English at any one time, and that population growth in areas where English is a second language is three times that in areas with English as a first language. Bilinguals outnumber monolinguals in the world - a trend that is set to continue (Hamers and Blanc, 2000). As Viv Williams (2004:5) reminds us, therefore, 'on a global scale, multilingualism remains the norm'. Within the UK, however, bilingual communities remain in the minority, be they speakers of heritage languages[1] such as Welsh, Irish or Scottish Gaelic, or part of the increasing number of communities established by immigrants from areas such as South Asia or Eastern Europe. Many of these communities are concentrated within inner cities; the impact of their language practice on the UK as a whole, it could be argued, is varied. A recent annual school census within the UK found that the proportion of students who spoke a language other than English at home was rising, with about 1 in 7 primary school pupils and 1 in 10 at secondary level having English as a second or additional language (BBC, 2006). Bilingualism was not an unusual experience within the school at

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[1] The term 'heritage language' is used by Hickey (2005) to refer to what are known as the Celtic languages; she alludes here (appropriately, I feel) to the fact that these languages existed in some form within the British Isles and Ireland before the dominance of English. The term is used in the USA and Canada to refer to the languages of First Nation peoples (Williams, 2004: 11).

which I taught. Elsewhere in the city, and within the wider county, however, awareness of different language practices may not have been as acute. Indeed, the 'myth of monolingualism' (Viv Williams, 2004:3) was still present in the diverse community of this school. Many students, including those who were bilingual themselves, found it hard to believe that I spoke a language other than English, as they did. The fact that I did bore no significance for many; I was still a white, middle class teacher in their view and therefore I imagine my experiences were perceived by them to differ widely from their own. For a few, however, there was some acknowledgement of a shared experience. I recall being called on by a group of bilingual students to act in their defence when they were accused by monolingual English speakers of talking about them 'in their own language'. According to the students involved, I would be able to explain that when a bilingual is speaking a language other than that which is dominant in the context, it does not (always!) equate to an opportunity for malicious gossip. I would, apparently, 'know what it's like'.

Whether, on the whole, my students saw my bilingualism as reason to develop a greater affinity is, most probably, doubtful. However, from my point of view, I came to appreciate the particular insight I was afforded as a bilingual into this part of my students' experience. This insight led me to consider the content of the curriculum I was teaching in a slightly different light. As a teacher of English, I was responsible, of course, for teaching a range of texts, as prescribed by the National Curriculum. These included Shakespeare and pre-twentieth century texts, as well as those deemed to have come from 'other cultures and traditions'. The English department were keenly aware of the fact that a significant proportion of their students came from minority cultures and they had aimed to develop a stock room that reflected this. On my first visit as a new teacher, the head of

department informed me that certain texts, which were standards at my previous school, such as Arthur Miller's *A View From the Bridge*, were avoided in this setting because of cultural sensitivities. A look at the stock room also revealed attempts to reflect the multicultural makeup of the classrooms. Whilst I taught texts featuring international settings and characters, alongside others set in white British contexts, I began to consider the position of the students I was asking to read such texts.

For Booth (1983), reading is a process whereby the reader has to subordinate heart and mind to a book in order to enjoy it to the full. During the writing process, an author will create not only an image of the reader, but also a 'second self' for the writer. Booth argues that 'the most successful reading is one in which the created selves, author and reader, can find complete agreement' (p.138). Iser (1974) sees reading a novel as a two-way process whereby the work of fiction represents a complex system of norms and challenges to those norms that offer the reader the opportunity to explore and discover their own reality as well as those outside their experience which may be offered by the text. Based on such a view of the reading process, my concern grew regarding the opportunities that were available for young bilingual readers to engage with texts which would offer edifying insights into their own realities, be they texts in English or in their other languages.

If students were not necessarily able to 'see themselves' in the text they accessed in my classroom, I began to consider where the opportunities existed for them to do so elsewhere. These thoughts were very much based upon my own experience as a young reader, with vivid memories of the pleasure gained from reading texts in my own minority language, such as *Jabas* by Penri Jones - the exploits of a rural teenage boy which

highlighted his misadventures at school alongside his calamitous brushes with romance, or *Tydi Bywyd yn Boen!* by Gwenno Hywyn - the diary of a young girl embarking on adolescence with trepidation. These texts, which seemed to represent my own experience and that of my peers, were seminal in terms of the Welsh publishing industry's attempt to address the demands of young readers for books with contemporary themes.

Whilst working at this setting, I conducted a small-scale study of one hundred bilingual students from across the school. My concerns in this initial study were to quantify the amount of reading taking place in English and in the respondents' minority languages and to gauge the students' attitudes towards reading in both languages. I could then begin to answer my question of whether or not individuals from minority cultures were able to access texts in their minority languages which could offer a similar experience of reading to that described by Iser and Booth, allowing young bilinguals to see themselves represented in text.

The outcomes of this initial study suggested significant quantitative and qualitative differences between the reading undertaken by the students in English and in other languages. The respondents in this initial study were all from homes of Pakistani and Indian heritage, where the main languages used other than English included the formal versions of Urdu and Punjabi, which some respondents were only beginning to learn at school, as well as dialect forms such as Mirpuri or Patwari, which are spoken in the regions of Pakistan or Northern India from where the families had originated, and which were not committed to print.   In both cases, there were clear implications for the expertise of these young bilinguals in literacy in their languages other than English.   Added to this was the qualitative difference between the purpose of reading for pleasure in the home culture of many

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respondents and that which they experienced at school and in the wider dominant cultural model. As such, the findings showed very little reading of fiction in minority languages, for example, with far more respondents reporting that they read newspapers or religious material in these languages.

Within the context of varied language competence and the availability of texts in minority languages, I suggested in this study that more could be done to provide opportunities for young speakers of minority languages to engage with texts in these languages that represented their realities as young bilinguals engaging in different aspects of cultural reality. This, I argued, could be a positive step towards supporting burgeoning bilingual identities (Jones, 2002; 2004). I drew upon the model of minority language publishing seen in Wales, where young readers are specifically targeted with material that might appeal to their interests, and saw potential to replicate such practice in other minority languages within the UK. After the initial study was completed, however, I was interested to explore in more depth some of its key issues.

1.2 Outline of the current study

For the current study, I began to consider the ways in which my research questions could be more broadly applied to differing bilingual communities within the UK. As the key influence behind my interest in this area was my own personal experience of bilingualism in Wales, it seemed appropriate that I explore in more depth the reality of bilingual experience amongst young people within that community, twenty years on from my own. This community became one focus of the current study; the other remained the British-Asian community of which I had experience as a teacher of English.

I made an early decision to focus the research on the experiences of girls. Many significant studies have highlighted the differences in literacy practices between the genders, as well as the social and cultural influence of gender on the reading choices and abilities of boys and girls (see, for example, Davies and Brember, 1993; Benton, 1995; Millard, 1997; Hall and Coles, 1999; Coles and Hall, 2002). Millard (1997) gives a detailed account of the ways boys and girls are 'differently literate'. In describing the ways in which 'boys and girls position themselves very differently in relationship to the literacy experiences provided by schools' (p.30), she demonstrates the different attitudes shown between the genders towards reading and writing, both in terms of how they approach these activities as well as the way they feel about them. Girls tend to engage more emotionally with fictional characters, for example, whereas boys show a greater liking for non-fiction, or are more likely to see reading and writing as functional, rather than creative, processes. Both genders showed differences in narrative choices, with fewer boys listing a favourite author, and girls listing a greater range of genres as their favourites. More girls saw themselves as 'heavy readers', and boys had a generally poorer opinion of their own competence in reading. In exploring some of the reasons behind gender differences in literacy practices, Millard considers social and cultural constructions of gender, showing how children tend to cite female members of their family as reading the most, or representing those who supported or encouraged reading.

I feel that the volume and quality of work on gender and literacy has led to the argument over differences in boys' and girls' literacy being comprehensively won. In considering this area, I did not feel that my own research questions and design would be able to accommodate the added

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variable of differences in literacy practices between boys and girls. As such, and for no other reason than a sheer pragmatic decision to keep a close focus on the practice of one group without broadening the research into wider areas of gender difference, I chose to focus on the experiences of girls.

An exclusive focus on the practices of girls might suggest that I have adopted a feminist approach. I cannot claim to have explicitly taken such an approach, either during my data collection process, or in the subsequent analysis. However, focusing on girls in the particular communities I have chosen inevitably involved some foregrounding of gender issues. Equally, I would argue that my general ethos during the research, in first of all seeking out the experiences of minority groups, as well as in my chosen methodology, supports the underlying aims of feminist research, as described by Reinharz (1992), who advocates the 'active involvement of […] respondents in the construction of data about their lives' (p. 18).

1.3   The research: approaches and challenges

My original research questions were as follows:

- What are the current reading choices/ literacy practices of bilingual children and adolescents?
- What influence does the reading (particularly of fiction), both in the mother tongue and in English, have on the individual development and identity of a bilingual person?
- What are the possibilities for expanding the range of texts available in minority languages and the implications of doing so?

A concern with quantifying and describing the reading practices of participants is evident in the first question. The second, however, aimed to promote some exploration of the relationship between reading in both English and minority languages and developing bilingual identities. The third question emphasises the concerns I had noted in the earlier study about a lack of provision of material which could offer opportunities for young bilingual readers to experience 'a continued scrutiny of "who we are"' (Meek, 2001: vii).

The themes of these research questions were prominent in early interviews where I focused on gathering information about the participants' reading in both their languages and their thoughts on the texts they saw as available to them. Early on in the study, the quantitative answer to the first research question was, rather unsurprisingly, beginning to resemble the findings of the earlier study. The results of a questionnaire also verified the fact that reading in English and in other languages were two very different experiences. It was at this stage of the study that I began to look more closely at this question and realise the key misconception it represented.

As Gee (1990: 50) notes, 'humans tend to think in dichotomies'. My whole approach to the research had been based on a dichotomy between English and 'other languages'. In attempting to measure the difference between reading in English and these 'other languages' and to explore what I saw as the 'issues' which emerged as a consequence, I had unwittingly set up the study to replicate a deficit model which saw the experience of reading and literacy in English and in minority languages and cultures as representing essentially similar (if not identical) practices. Any quantitative analysis of the reading undertaken by young bilinguals in both their languages was

likely, therefore, to return an image of imbalance, and the dominant position of literacy in English: young bilinguals were reading less (if at all) in minority languages, and something should be done about this. I remain adamant that there *are* ways in which reading in minority languages can be supported in order to promote language use amongst young speakers, and have advocated these elsewhere (Jones, 2004). However, in my original research model, I had fallen into the trap that Rogoff (2003: 17) warns against:

> We need to understand the coherence of what people from different cultures
> *do*, rather than simply determining that some other group of people do *not*
> do what "we" do, or do not do it as well or in the way that we do it.[2]

In view of this realisation, I was keen to take a different approach to the research and, in the process, came to view the research outcomes as more of a narrative exploration of the practices described by the participants. This approach necessitated a broader view of literacy and its 'embeddedness in social life' (Barton, 1994: 32). Rather than determining the extent to which my participants didn't 'do' reading, therefore, this more grounded approach meant that I was able to use what I had heard and observed in order to offer a more positive account of the ways in which young bilinguals *did* engage with texts and with their experiences as bilinguals in different communities, in order to explore, consolidate and demonstrate their identities.

Van Maanen (1988) argues that culture itself is not visible, rather it is made visible only through its representation. In relating the experiences of the bilingual girls with whom I worked, I am aware that I present a narrative that I have constructed within a particular personal, cultural and

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[2] Emphasis in original

theoretical context. In Chapter 2, I offer an overview of the literature which contextualises the research and outlines the theoretical position I have taken in telling the stories of my research participants.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Bilingualism: definitions and key concepts

'Bilingualism' has been the subject of various definitions.   Reviews of such definitions (for example Hamers and Blanc, 2000; Abudarham, 1987) reveal a trend to focus on psycholinguistic matters of individual cognitive process, linguistic skill and language use.   Webster's Dictionary (1961) defines bilingualism as 'the constant oral use of two languages' and a bilingual as 'a person using two languages habitually and with control like that of a native speaker' (cited Hamers and Blanc, 2000: 2).   This emphasis on a 'native-like' level of skill was also a focus for Bloomfield in 1935 (ibid). As Hamers and Blanc note, a key issue with this interpretation is that it would probably be difficult to pinpoint a 'native-speaker' of any language who would be representative of the range which exists even within a unilingual context.

MacNamara (1967) offers a definition at the opposite extreme to the idea of 'perfect bilinguals'.   He suggests that a bilingual need only show a minimal competence in any of the four language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) in an additional language.   As Hamers and Blanc (2000) point out, this definition would therefore include those who may retain some school-level Latin, for example.

Later work on bilingualism reflects a realisation, articulated by Grosjean (1989), that a bilingual is more than the sum of two monolinguals, and that specific and unique language behaviour develops as a consequence of bilingualism.   Throughout their examination of bilingualism, Hamers and

Blanc (2000) emphasise the importance of recognising the continuous interaction between languages in contact, rather than treating a bilinguals' two (or more) languages as dichotomous.   This language behaviour is seen as a dynamic and culturally located interaction between psychological and societal levels of language.   Further discussion of the relationship between language and culture will follow a brief consideration of the variety of linguistic experience that exists between individual bilinguals.

2.1.2 Levels of bilinguality

Hamers and Blanc (2000: 25) consider bilinguality to be 'the psychological state of an individual who has access to more than one linguistic code as a means of social communication'; as such, this is seen as distinct from bilingualism, which refers to the social and cultural phenomenon of languages in contact.   They list various dimensions that affect the access of a bilingual to their linguistic codes, including relative competence, age of acquisition and cultural identity.   A summary of the psychological dimensions of bilinguality is given in Figure 2.1 below.   The types of bilinguality listed reflect the complexity of the phenomenon and the way in which it is impossible to consider bilingualism outside its psychological, social and cultural context.   However, within what seems a relatively comprehensive view of the various dimensions, further considerations exist which reflect the complex nature of bilinguality and its dynamic relationship to social and cultural contexts. I can offer myself as an example in order to illustrate what is equally relevant to my research participants.   As I described in the introduction, my languages are Welsh and English.   I would like to argue that my linguistic competence is equal in both my languages. There were times when I was at school, however, that more frequent use of Welsh, including in the home, meant that I felt more able

to articulate myself in that language. The reality at present is that, given a lengthy period of living outside Wales, working and interacting socially mainly in English, I probably feel my competence in English to be superior to that of my 'L1'.   Whether or not I can be described as a 'balanced' or 'dominant' bilingual, therefore, depends upon on the stage of my life referred to.   Equally, gauging the specific age of acquisition is a little problematic in my own context.   Although Welsh was the dominant language of my early years, and the first language acquired (therefore, my L1), as to whether English was acquired simultaneously or consecutively, I have no idea: this is partly problematised by the presence of English in the immediate environment of my infancy, through television and radio, for example, as well as the bilingual context of the area in which I grew up.

The dimensions listed by Hamers and Blanc do, however, provide a useful way to highlight the difficulty of making clear distinctions and assumptions about bilingual individuals. Each bilingual's experience is affected by their own constellation of psychological, social and cultural dimensions and, as I have tried to illustrate using myself as an example, these experiences vary again within different and specific contexts.

Figure 2.1 Summary of psychological dimensions of bilinguality (from Hamers and Blanc, 2000: 26).

Dimension	Types of bilinguality	Comments
1. according to competence in both languages	(a) balanced bilinguality	L_1 competence = L2 competence
	(b) dominant bilinguality	L1 competence > or < L2 competence
2. according to cognitive organisation	(a) compound bilinguality	L1 unit equivalent to L2 unit = one conceptual unit
	(b) coordinate bilinguality	L1 Unit = one conceptual unit (1); L2 Unit = one conceptual unit (2)
3. according to age of acquisition	(a) childhood bilinguality	L2 acquired before age of 10/11
	(i) simultaneous (ii) consecutive	La and Lb = mother tongues L1 = mother tongue, L2 = acquired before 11
	(b) adolescent bilinguality	L2 = acquired between 11 and 17
	(c) adult bilinguality	L2 = acquired after 17
4. according to presence of L2 community in environment	(a) endogenous bilinguality	Presence of L2 community
	(b) exogenous bilinguality	Absence of L2 community
5. according to the relative status of the two languages	(a) additive bilinguality	L1 and L2 socially valorised → cognitive advantage
	(b) subtractive bilinguality	L2 valorised at expense of L1 → cognitive disadvantage
6. according to group membership and cultural identity	(a) bicultural bilinguality	Double membership and bicultural identity
	(b) L1 monocultural bilinguality	L1 membership and cultural identity
	(c) L2 acculturated bilinguality	L2 membership and cultural identity
	(d) deculturated bilinguality	Ambiguous identity and anomic identity

2.2 The social context of bilingualism

For Fishman (2000a: 87), 'all bilingualism occurs in a social context' and 'this context is likely to influence both the manifestations and the concomitants of bilingualism'. Miller (1983: 110) equally sees bilingualism as 'a social phenomenon', explaining that 'its different manifestations are invariably shot through with the values accorded and attached to them'. There follows an exploration of some of the ways in which this social context has a direct bearing on bilingual experience, from directly influencing language choice in social contexts, to the ways in which bilinguals engage with and take advantage of the social and cultural capital represented by their languages.

2.2.1 Language domains

For bilingual communities such as those described in this study, different immediate social contexts, such as group membership, situation or topic, can affect language choice (Fishman, 2000b). A bilingual may interact with different groups, such as those represented in the work place and at home, in different languages.   In each context, the language chosen reflects identification with the 'group' represented. This is not to suggest that there is no occasion where other languages may be used in these settings, rather that certain language choices are usually adhered to.

Language choice can also be affected by the bilingual's perceptions of the 'style' of their languages. It is common for bilinguals to attribute different styles or qualities to their languages – one or the other may be seen as more colloquial, or more suitable for informal occasions, for example. Miller (1983: 59) gives an example of a bilingual who sees his two

languages –Urdu and Punjabi- as having different characteristics. For this individual, Urdu is more poetic and aristocratic, having 'deep manners', whereas Punjabi, associated with an atmosphere of relaxation, is colourful and humorous. As such, Fishman (2000b) argues that language choice, for the bilingual, can be influenced by the associations they have about the 'style' of their respective languages.

The third key influential domain of language choice is topic.   As Fishman says, 'even when reference group and situation agree in requiring a particular language [,] it is not uncommon to find that topic succeeds in bringing another language to the fore' (2000b: 92).   In a study of the language choice of adolescent Welsh-English bilinguals conducted by Gruffudd (1996; 1997), a balance is suggested between English and Welsh in talk about issues relating to school and religion, contexts where Welsh had been dominant, or at least equal to English, in the young people's lives.   However, it was also shown that young people preferred to talk about issues such as popular culture and current affairs in English.

Certain personal relationships, particularly those within the family, may represent domains of language use, according to Fishman (2000b), and even within the family, particular 'dyads' may represent differing use of language.   The use of minority language mainly with older relatives by younger members of immigrant communities has been noted (for example, by Rampton, 1995; Mills, 2001; Raschka, Li Wei and Lee, 2002).   There is also the factor of 'media-variance' (Fishman, 2000b: 96), where relative levels of competence in literacy, for example, can affect a bilingual's choice of language for such purposes.

So far, the outline I have given of the social influences on a bilingual's language choice is based on individual experience and preference. I now turn to consider the broader, socio-political context which has an immediate bearing on the lives and experiences, and therefore choices, of most bilinguals, as well as the ways in which language is seen as symbolic of wider socio-political influences.

2.2.2 Diglossia and the social capital of language

In many communities, two or more versions of the same language – most often standard and dialect versions - are used by speakers in different contexts.   Ferguson (1959) illustrated the way in which different versions of the same language, in certain cases, exist side by side, with very different roles and connotations attached to each. With specific reference to four examples of such 'diglossic' languages (Arabic, Swiss German, Haitian Creole and Greek), Ferguson identified key characteristics of such languages, where two distinct forms, labelled by Ferguson as H ('high') and L ('low'), are used in distinct contexts. Among these features are the highly specialised functions attached to both H and L forms, for example, religious ceremonies or literary traditions may utilise the H form, whereas informal conversation and talk with children will normally be in L. Prestige is attached to the H form, which is the subject of standardisation and academic study, and is often seen as more beautiful and appropriate for the articulation of ideas such as those concerned with religion. This is a feature of Qu'ranic Arabic, for example. H and L forms often have different grammar and lexicon, with more specialised and technical forms used in H. Ferguson thus defines diglossia as:

> A relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation (p. 338).

Fishman (2000a) extends the definition of diglossia to refer to any situation where there is functionally different language of any kind, where there are social structures that maintain boundaries between speech communities. These could include structures between ruling and working classes in certain societies. In Fishman's view, these boundaries are a necessity for minority groups in order for them to maintain their language, a situation where boundaries may dissolve often resulting in the minority language succumbing to the dominance of the majority.

Landry and Allard (1994) point out that both Ferguson and Fishman avoid any suggestion of the potential for conflict within a diglossic context; they argue that 'no situation involving domination-subordination can be nonconflictual' (p. 18). Bilinguals can be seen to respond to the conflict they observe within their language communities in different and imaginative ways. Caldas and Caron-Caldas (2002: 501) cite an example of English L1 adolescents creating a diglossic situation within their French immersion classrooms in Canada, using language in a way that differentiates them from the formal language of the academics, whom they perceive as superordinate in this context. Doran (2004) describes the use of Verlan amongst minority youths in a district of Paris; this is a peer-group language, 'both created by and belonging to the group' (p.104). In their creation and use of this language variety, this group is demonstrating

a proactive response to their subordination, through language, whereby in opposition to traditional diglossic contexts, their own language variety – which could be defined as 'L' in the conventional sense - is valorised by them as a distinctive feature of their group.

There are many ways in which bilinguals respond to the social context of their languages, demonstrating how, as Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (1982: 5) explain:

> communicative resources thus form an integral part of an individual's symbolic and social capital, and in our society this form of capital can be every bit as essential as real property resources were once considered to be.

One particular use of language amongst bilinguals that has long been recognised as a response to the differing social capital of language is codeswitching.

2.2.3 Codeswitching

Gumperz (1982:59) offers a basic definition of what is understood by the term 'codeswitching':

> the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or sub-systems.

With a linguistic focus on the grammar of codeswitching, Hamers and Blanc (2000: 259-60) list three different forms of codeswitching. The first type is described as 'extra-sentential', and is characterised by the insertion of phrases such as 'you know' from one language into an utterance that is entirely in another language. A bilingual speaker may

also engage in 'intersentential codeswitching', whereby they may change language at a clause/sentence boundary, with one clause being in one language, the other in a different language. Hamers and Blanc cite an example from a Puerto Rican bilingual to illustrate this: 'Sometimes I start a sentence in English *y termino en español*.' The third level of codeswitching outlined by Hamers and Blanc is 'intrasentential', where switches can occur within a sentence boundary, even within a word boundary, such as when there is blending of the root of a verb in one language with the ending of another. Hamers and Blanc illustrate this with the example of the English verb 'to check' changed to '*checker*' to reflect a French verb ending. This is also common amongst Welsh speakers, who are often heard to add the verb ending '*io*' to an English verb - for example, '*checkio*'.

Until the 1970s, the phenomenon of codeswitching had been considered a sign of incompetence in one or both of a bilingual's languages, and had not been the subject of any serious consideration (Hamers and Blanc, 2000). For many bilinguals, however, codeswitching is part of everyday communication. Many are unaware of the ways in which they combine their languages until it is brought to their attention, and even then some will not consider this way of speaking to be '"real" language' (Heller, 1988:7).   However, in recent decades, codeswitching has been the focus of much research, which has emphasised the way in which 'language choices in multilingual contexts [are] embedded in larger, social, political and cultural systems' (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004: 10).

Despite seeming to be an innocuous – and, in many cases unattended - linguistic practice, Heller points out that 'codeswitching may be conventional, or, on the contrary, anti-conventional' (Heller, 1992: 123).

In many contexts, particularly those that highlight the dominance of one linguistic group over another, codeswitching is seen as 'a conversational strategy used to establish, cross or destroy group boundaries' (Gal, 1988: 247). It is within this latter sense that codeswitching has been examined within the field of interactional sociolinguistics as a practice which 'is an important part of social mechanisms of negotiation and definition of social roles, network and boundaries' (Heller, 1988: 1). Examples of codeswitching in such a context include Heller's study of English monolingual adolescents in a French immersion classroom in Francophone Canada, who make deliberate use of codeswitching in order to feel they are able to redress the balance as they perceive it within in a French language dominated educational setting (Heller, 1995).

The 'markedness model' offered by Myers Scotton (1988) suggests that speakers choose to use a language that symbolises the 'rights and obligations sets' they wish to reinforce during the conversation. This choice is based on 'tacit knowledge' of the markedness of language choices, i.e. a speaker would know when or why to use certain forms of language in order to support or to destabilise the social expectations of the exchange. The speakers in Myers Scotton's study are bilinguals within a particular social context where one language has dominance (Kenya). She provides examples of speakers who chose to stick to conventions (making 'unmarked' choices), thus supporting the relationships symbolised through language use, and those who chose to negotiate their position by including 'marked' choices of language. As such, language choice can act as a 'marked' decision to destabilise social norms and negotiate boundaries within conversational contexts.

This model has since been criticised (as outlined by Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004: 9) by those who argue that language choice is not solely the product of identity exploration and demonstration and that an indexical relationship between language choice and identity offers a reductive approach to both the notion of identity itself, and of the practices of individuals within linguistic groups. It has also been argued that other factors, including linguistic competence, can also have an influence on codeswitching. However, the notion of codeswitching as an indicator of social relationships is still significant, I feel, particularly when it reminds us of the fact that 'multilingual speakers move around in multidimensional social spaces and that each act of speaking or silence may constitute for them and an "act of identity"' (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004:8).

With the linguistic facility of two or more languages, bilinguals have been shown to engage in a range of creative approaches to language choice in multilingual situations, which highlight the centrality of codeswitching within their experience as a means of exploring and negotiating identity. Carter (2004: 172) notes that 'the conditions of multilingualism and multiculturalism may favour creative production'. He cites an example of electronic communication between Cantonese speakers where the exchanges are characterised by mixing of English and Cantonese, including the English transliteration of Cantonese discourse markers (see also Fung and Carter, 2007a and 2007b). Carter argues that such linguistic practice emphasises the way in which individuals are able to explore and contest the boundaries represented by language within certain discourses in order to better express their own position. In this example of bilinguals' mixing of codes within a linguistic exchange according to Carter,

there is […] an implicit recognition that standard English has no clear value for them for the purposes of daily intimate e-mail exchange and accordingly new modes of speaking/writing are invented and developed. Both participants here creatively develop a discourse which is neither English nor Cantonese but one which expresses for both a dual identity and a dual linguistic affinity (p 176-7).

Creative language use can therefore play a central role in the exploration and demonstration of bilingual identities. Word play and punning are often evident in codeswitching and Heller (1992: 138) notes that the humour involved in such exchanges 'points to the benefits of bilingualism shared among those on the language border'. However, within certain social contexts, affinity with a social group can be sought through language choice by those who may be deemed to be outside that group. Rampton (1995) describes the phenomenon of 'crossing', which he observed during his study of a group of ethnic minority adolescents. He recognises examples of codeswitching by members of different ethnic groups as 'a device used to affirm participants' claims to membership and the solidarity of the group in contrast to outsiders' (p. 280). However, Rampton also notes the practice of 'code alteration by people who are not accepted members of the group associated with the second language they employ' (ibid). This, according to Rampton, shows 'a distinct sense of movement across social or ethnic boundaries [and] raises issues of social legitimacy that participants need to negotiate' (ibid). The incongruity of language use represented by code crossing did not seem to be accommodated within all contexts and discourses, and the instances of code crossing observed by Rampton were confined to moments where social constraints were lowered, such as in games. As such, Rampton

argues that crossing, as opposed to inter-group codeswitching, represents a practice that challenges boundaries from outside.

Creative language use within bilingual contexts is not solely represented by talk. Mor-Sommerfeld (2002) describes the concept of 'language mosaic', whereby young Hebrew-English bilingual learners combine the written features of their languages, as represented in different scripts. The form of 'written interlanguage' (p. 100) can include transference between languages using different scripts, transference between scripts within a single word and transference from one language to another using one script. Rather than suggesting interferences between languages, Mor Sommerfeld argues that for these young learners establishing the use of two languages and two scripts, language mosaic offers an opportunity for them to explore the relationships between their languages in a creative way, reinforcing positive attitudes towards the 'new' language. Language mosaic therefore offers a young bilingual another way of exploring their identity on the boundary between two languages.

The following sections take a closer look at the languages that are the focus of this study. Firstly, I explore the issue of terminology concerning languages in a bilingual context. There then follows a brief consideration of the context of the languages spoken by my research participants.

2.3   The 'language other than English': terminology

Some contention has resulted from the consideration of the most appropriate terminology for referral to the language spoken other than, in this case, English. The term 'mother tongue' is perhaps most commonly understood and used to refer to a bilingual's 'first' language. Hamers and

Blanc (2000: 2) cite the definition of mother tongue given by UNESCO in 1953: 'the language which a person acquires in early years and which normally becomes its natural instrument of thought and communication'. Although most people would use the term in this way, within any more thorough consideration of bilingual contexts, more attention needs to be given to the specific phenomena which arise when two or more languages are in contact (ibid). Having 'bedevilled' Tulasiewicz and Adams in their book on multilingualism in Europe (1998: 3), the term 'mother tongue' is used by the authors based on its familiarity to the majority of their readers. Their review of the various definitions of the term highlights the many emotive, and often conflicting, notions that surround it. 'Mother tongue' has equivalents in many languages (for example, *muttersprache, langue maternelle*), although the Polish – *język ojczysty* – refers to 'father tongue'. The most common understanding of the term is the first language acquired by a child, that which is referred to by linguists as 'L1'. However, it is also taken to mean 'the preferred language in a multilingual situation' (ibid: 3). This would suggest that a choice is available to the bilingual in a multilingual situation; this is not, however, always the case. As is recognised by Tulasiewicz and Adams, the preferred language may also not necessarily be the language first acquired by the bilingual.

Mills (2004: 162) describes the assumption that one's 'mother tongue' is 'the language that one learns first from one's mother'. According to Mills, there are associations made because of this term between the responsibility for the teaching of this language and the passing on of particular cultural practices or beliefs, the term therefore encapsulates women's responsibility in many cultures as guardian of that culture. Within Mills' study of mothers of Pakistani heritage, the term 'mother tongue' became the unsolicited preference of participants, who were aware of these

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connotations. Within the context of this study, however, the term is problematic, given that many of the participants do not speak the languages other than English (Welsh, Urdu, Punjabi, Mirpuri) as a 'first' language, and neither is it, in many cases, their preferred language.

The term 'home language' can be used to refer to a language spoken by bilinguals within their home communities that differs from that spoken, for example, at school. The term may also be used more specifically as a means of differentiating between 'dominant' languages and those that may be smaller or unacknowledged languages or dialects (Tulaisiewicz and Adams, 1998). Speakers of these languages and dialects often constitute small and distinctive communities with common heritage, located within larger 'dominant' culture communities. Although the 'home languages' may be spoken with some frequency and in a range of contexts within this community, they are not used outside, for example, for education or legal systems. The dialect of Mirpuri, spoken within the community of my British-Asian respondents, would therefore be an example of such a 'home language'. However, it is clear that Welsh does not fulfil these criteria. In this study, the term 'home language' is therefore avoided for two pragmatic reasons: firstly, to avoid confusion when discussing both groups of bilinguals together, and secondly, that the languages referred to are, in many cases, not the main languages of the home and were therefore not understood by my participants as their 'home language'.

The term 'non-dominating languages' is used by Robertson (2002: 119), and demonstrates the relative position of the language other than English within linguistic contexts similar to those encountered in this study. Gutièrrez (2008) makes use of the term 'non-dominant cultures' in the context of Latino communities in Los Angeles (where 'minority' would be

statistically inaccurate) because of its connotations of the imbalance of power between relative communities in this context. It would seem, therefore, that 'non-dominant' would be a helpful term to employ here. Although this term may offer an appropriate and efficient means of keeping the discussion located within a socio-political and cultural context, its use is not entirely unproblematic - within areas of Wales, for example, Welsh is the dominant language of many contexts, including education.

Amongst the commonest differentiating terminology surrounding multilingual contexts is that of minority and majority languages. Huws (1998) defines a minority language as 'one where the speakers of that language accept that they receive most of their culture and communication through the medium of the majority language, i.e. that its members must be bilingual in order to experience life to the full'. Implicit in Huws' definition is an assumption around the meaning of 'culture' within groups such as those in this study as being a site of deficit in comparison to that encapsulated and communicated through the 'majority language'. More nuanced differentiation between minority language groups worldwide would reveal the limits of this definition in this broad context; however, in the more local context of this study, I feel Huws gives a pragmatic description and clarification of the lived realities experienced by my participants, who do indeed report to use English as a means of communication and of accessing cultural practice which they regard as key part of their lives where no equivalent is available in their other language.

To move beyond merely pragmatic considerations, the use of 'minority' and 'majority' also foregrounds the socio-political realities of bilingualism in many communities, including those included in this study. Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004: 4) recognise the terms 'majority' and 'minority' to be

'problematic and dichotomizing'; nonetheless, they feel that to use this terminology, outside its general, numerical context, enables reference to 'situational differences in power, rights and privileges'. Hamers and Blanc (2000: 32) equally suggest that 'minority does not necessarily imply numerical inferiority, but refers rather to a subordinate status in the community'.

2.4   The languages and communities of the study

2.4.1 Welsh: a linguistic context

The Welsh language is part of the family of Celtic languages spoken in the British Isles, Ireland and parts of North Western Europe. Its immediate relatives include Breton, Cumbrian and Cornish while it is less closely related to languages such as Irish and Scottish Gaelic and Manx. Described by JRR Tolkien (1963: 35) as 'the senior language of the men of Britain', the earliest forms of Welsh appeared between 550 and 750 AD, with the earliest Welsh poetry dating from this time.

Welsh has a distinct alphabet, without letters j, k, q, v, x or z, whereas ch, dd, ff, ll, ng, ph, rh and th count as individual letters with distinct pronunciation. The syntax of the language also differs to that of English, with the most common sentence structure being verb-subject-object (Abley, 2005).

The first book was published in the Welsh language in 1548. Perhaps one of the most significant cultural events to have had an impact on the history of the language was the translation of the Bible into Welsh in 1588. The publication of religious material in Welsh after the Reformation, unlike in other languages such as Cornish, is believed to have been a significant

factor in its survival (Edwards, 1985). Welsh is a diglossic language, and its written form, which emerged after the translation of the Bible in 1588 and has historically kept its association with literary and academic forms, is traditionally very different to the spoken dialect forms of the language. These dialects vary greatly across the country. Both of these issues will be shown to have an impact on the attitudes of the participants in this study towards reading in Welsh.

2.4.1.2 The social and political history of the Welsh language

For centuries, the relationship between the Welsh language and English has been fraught. Welsh came under threat during the reign of Henry VIII, who insisted that all subjects in his kingdom speak the same language (of course, this was English). The nineteenth century, however, ultimately took its toll on the language due to both the industrialisation of regions of the country and the imposition of colonial values on the people of Wales, whereby the suppression of Welsh and enforcement of English in schools was believed by a parliamentary report of 1847 to be a way to civilise an unruly and immoral population. One consequence of this was the 'Welsh-Not': a practice whereby a wooden sign upon which was imprinted 'W.N.' was given to any child heard speaking Welsh in school. The sign was either held or, perhaps more iconically, worn around the neck, until it could be passed to the next child heard speaking the banned language. The individual in possession of the sign at the end of the day was punished (most often corporally). Although it has recently been argued that the actual instances of this practice were much fewer than have been believed (Davies, 2006), the Welsh-Not remains an iconic symbol of the oppression of the Welsh language (and, by emotive association, the Welsh people) by the English. The fact that this was an historic practice recognised and

referred to by the eleven-year-old Welsh participants in this study suggests, I think, the enduring emotive power of such a symbol.

Census figures tracked an alarming decline in the numbers of Welsh speakers over the course of the 20th century, from 930, 000 in 1901 to just over 500, 000 in 1981 (Coupland and Ball, 1989) with many commentators during this time predicting the death of the language by the early 21st century. Tensions mounted throughout the second half of the 20th century as the traditional strongholds of the Welsh language, *Y Fro Gymraeg*, came under threat from rural depopulation by native speakers and an influx of second-home buying and retirement by a non-Welsh speaking population. The language has had some strong advocates, however, with numerous groups and bodies set up with the aim of addressing social and political issues affecting its fate. One of the most significant has been *Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg* (The Welsh Language Society), set up in the 1960s, the decade that also saw *Plaid Cymru* gain its first parliamentary seat.

Despite the fact that devolution was rejected in a 1979 referendum, *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* was a vociferous force throughout the latter part of the twentieth century in Wales, with its members imprisoned for acts of protest in the name of the language. These included defacing English-only road signs and refusing to pay the television license fee until a Welsh language channel was established (for which several prominent campaigners were imprisoned). The first *Plaid Cymru* MP, Gwynfor Evans, staged a hunger strike in protest against the latter cause and in 1984, S4C (*Sianel 4 Cymru*) was launched as an equivalent to the new English Channel 4. S4C currently broadcasts programmes in Welsh for 32 hours a week on its analogue channel and for 80 hours a week on its digital channel (S4C,

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2008).   This programming is aimed at a broad demographic within the Welsh speaking community, and includes, for example, current affairs, sport, documentaries, farming, arts and music events and traditional entertainment such as *Noson Lawen* (a traditional locally held evening of song and entertainment), as well as drama, children's programmes and youth oriented shows.

In latter years, the Welsh language has gained strength.   The Welsh Language Act (1993) gives Welsh an equal footing with English in public life and there is currently pressure from language activists for an updated Act, to extend this protection of the language into the private sector.   The Welsh Language Board, established as part of the Act, exists to promote the interests of the language and runs schemes such as *Twf*, which promotes use of the language with young children, particularly in households where there may be only one bilingual parent and, traditionally, children are therefore raised to speak only English in the home. With such developments, and ultimately the establishment of the Welsh Assembly (1998) 'Welsh entered the twenty-first century in style' (Abley, 2005: 243) and it is believed that 'the tide is flowing in favour of Welsh ethnolinguistic vitality at present' (Coupland, Bishop, Evans and Garrett, 2006: 352).

The most recent census figures for those with some knowledge of the Welsh language stand at 797, 717 - 28.4 per cent of the population aged over 3 (Aitchison and Carter, 2004: 36). The impact of Welsh medium and bilingual educational can be seen in the rise in the number of Welsh speakers of school age. For example, the percentage of speakers of the age 5-9 rose from 14.5 per cent in the 1971 census to 24.7 per cent in 1991, the percentage of those speaking Welsh aged 10-14 rising from 17.0 per cent to 26.9 per cent over the same time period. However, concerns

have been expressed about the fact that the figures for Welsh speakers in the most 'socially influential' 25-64 age group, which have declined. The potential impact of this group, comprising among it parents and key workers, is part of the concern expressed by the Welsh Assembly Government in their document *Iaith Pawb*, which calls for a 'concerted, vigorous national strategy for the language' (Welsh Assembly Government, 2003: 6).

Potential for an optimistic future could lie, however, in the number of young people able to use the language, as well as the increased possibilities for them to be able to do so, not only in education or in formal work settings, but also in aspects of every day experience. From the Welsh-Not of late 19th and early 20th century to mandatory teaching of Welsh through the National Curriculum and Welsh-medium schooling, from the defaced English-only road signs to Welsh branches of many international retail chains, including Tesco, Ikea and Pizza Hut, now featuring bilingual signs, over the course of a century, the profile of the language has changed dramatically for young Welsh speakers. Coupland et al (2006: 352) are optimistic that

> the early years of the 21st century seem to offer a remarkable opportunity for
> a Welsh national consciousness to gel further and to be expressed in part
> through a burgeoning of Welsh language use across social domains.

The legacy of such a history is that the Welsh language has become the dominant political discourse of Wales (Williams, 1995) and this pervades all aspects of cultural practice, from political policy to popular entertainment. This was illustrated perfectly very recently with the success of Welsh-speaking contestants on the Channel 4 reality television show *Big Brother*. Glyn Wise, a contestant on *Big Brother* in 2006, is from North West Wales,

and was shown regularly conversing in Welsh with a fellow housemate, Imogen, who hailed from South Wales. Subtitles were provided for non-Welsh speaking viewers. The 'phenomenon' of young people speaking Welsh to each other was reported regularly in many media comments on the programme (for example Rogers, 2006). Upon their exit from the house, *Big Brother* housemates are interviewed by the presenter and shown a video montage of their appearance on the show. There may be reference to their behaviour or any relationship dynamics that had defined their experience. The exit of Glyn warranted a statement from the then First Minister of Wales, Rhodri Morgan, which was read live on the broadcast, in which Glyn was described as 'an inspiration for other young people in Wales' (Channel 4 broadcast, 18th August 2006), based on the way he had brought the Welsh language to the attention of a broader audience.

2.4.2 Asian Community Languages

2.4.2.1 The 'British Asian' Community

The girls from City Community School are part of a community that has been established over the last half a century by immigrants from South Asia and their families. This community is largely concentrated within one area of the city, although in latter years, the population of this area has also grown to include immigrants from other areas such as Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

Figures suggest the total population within the UK of those from South Asian heritage is close to 1.8 million (www.southasian.org.uk). Within the broad demographic group of South Asian origin, however, there exist many communities with different geographic links and religious affiliations. The

vast majority of those with South Asian heritage within the UK were born here. The largest age category is made up those who are under 16: 45 per cent of those of Pakistani heritage are of school age, as are 30 per cent of those from Indian heritage families.[1]

The British-Asian population of the city in this study is around 14, 000, 8.4 per cent of the total population of the city. Within this community, there are believed to be in the region of 8,400 people of Indian origin, 5, 550 of Pakistani origin[2]. The community of which the City Community School girls are a part is mainly comprised of families with origins in the Punjab region of Northern India and the Mirpur region of Pakistan, near the Kashmiri border.   There are four distinct religious groups within the community – Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus and Christians.   Further specific demographic details regarding the South Asian community in this city proved difficult to gather, despite my enquiries with public and charitable bodies working in the area.

2.4.2.2 Language use within the British-Asian community of the study

The different ethnolinguistic groups that make up the British-Asian community within the city are based around both geographic and religious connections and each group has a language that is most associated with it. Urdu is most associated with the Pakistani Muslim group, for example, Gujerati with the Hindus and Punjabi with the Sikh community. Within the area where the community is based, signage in these languages is common, and health and other public services within the city, such as libraries, also make use of these languages in their public communication.

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[1] Figures from www.southasian.org.uk/research_popreport.html , last accessed 21.9.08
[2] Figures taken from www.southasian.org.uk/research_popreport_app7.html#5, last accessed 21.9.08. No other demographic statistics were available to me during the research.

Speakers of Urdu and Punjabi report that there are some similarities between both languages which makes them mutually comprehensible to their speakers at an essential level. This is noted by Miller (1983: 47), who cites an example of one respondent explaining the way he sees the relationship between both languages:

> I think it's probably fair to say that people who speak Urdu can understand Punjabi, but can't speak it. The same applies to Punjabi. Those who speak Punjabi can understand Urdu to some extent, but they can't speak it.

The profile of language use within the British-Asian community is far more complex than might be suggested by a simplistic connection between languages and religious or cultural groups. Many people within the community speak dialects, such as Mirpuri - a dialect spoken at home by some of the Pakistani Muslim heritage girls involved in the interviews. These dialects are not committed to print. Urdu, which is commonly written in Persian script, is the language most associated with the Pakistani Muslim community, although its actual use is limited within a day-to-day context, as literacy in the language may not be acquired by all within the community. Reference to the questionnaire conducted at the outset of this study will help to provide an indication of the complexity of what is understood by speakers of community languages when they talk about their language use.   In the questionnaire, 48.7 per cent of Year 7 at City Community School indicated that they spoke a language other than English at home. 25.3 per cent said they spoke Punjabi while 23.6 per cent said they spoke Urdu.   However, a more accurate figure for those from Pakistani background speaking Urdu at home, according to the teacher of Urdu at City Community School, is 2 per cent, with the vast majority actually speaking a dialect form, such as Mirpuri. Edwards (1985) explains that 'dialect' is a term often used to refer to a form of language seen as

substandard without social prestige of powerful speakers. This could be the reason, therefore, that many bilinguals of Pakistani heritage at the school claim to speak Urdu, the official language of Pakistan, associated with education and status (Saxena, 1994). The Urdu teacher, however, suggests that many students are not aware that their spoken language differs from Urdu:

> Miss Yaqoob: They come from Pakistan; Urdu is spoken in Pakistan, so they think they speak Urdu.

Many young people from the Pakistani Muslim community who attend City Community School take the opportunity to study Urdu from the beginning of Year 8, continuing in many cases to GCSE or A'Level.   When they start the subject at school, many encounter for the first time the skills needed to read and write in Urdu, and also realise that the official language is somewhat different to that which they speak within the community. For many young people from the Indian Sikh community, the opportunity to study Punjabi at school, from Year 8 up to A' Level, is also the first time they encounter the specific graphology and vocabulary of this language. Success in the study of both Urdu and Punjabi, as measured by the results of external examinations, is notable within City Community School. During my time as a teacher there, this was often falsely attributed to the fact that students already had extensive experience of these languages from their homes. The teachers of Urdu were quick to remind me, however, when I interviewed them for this study, that this was seldom the case; although students may have been aware of these languages through relatives or texts within the home, or through attendance at community or religious centres, and some will have had experience in learning Urdu or Punjabi at an out-of-school centre, the majority had little expertise themselves in

these languages before they encountered them in their official form at school.

When discussing individuals from both Pakistani Muslim communities as well as Indian Sikh backgrounds, it is important to remember that the use of the term 'Punjabi' does not necessarily carry the same connotations in both contexts. According to Saxena (1994) communities originating in the Punjab, whether Muslim, Sikh or Hindu, continue to speak Punjabi. However, it is only the Sikh community that has developed Punjabi as a written language, using the Gurmukhi script. Other languages are more associated with Muslims and Hindus, with the varying scripts acting as a marker of sociocultural and religious identity. On occasion, Persian-Arabic and Devanagari scripts, more commonly used for writing Urdu and Hindi respectively, may be used to write in Punjabi. Individuals from UK Pakistani heritage communities may also use the term 'Punjabi' when referring to a dialect forms of language, in relation to Urdu as the official, standard language. This is in reference to the geographic roots of these dialects. References to 'Punjabi' made by some girls in this study who are from Pakistani Muslim heritage relate to a dialect form that differs to the Punjabi experienced by their friends of Indian Sikh heritage, which in their case includes a written form in Gurumukhi script.

The context of the languages spoken within the British Asian community focused upon in this study is therefore complex. There are issues regarding the definition and relative status of different versions of languages, as well as some potential confusion over the languages referred to by similar terms. Added to this is the significance of the fact that the actual spoken language of many within the community is not committed to print and, as such, reflects a very different experience to that offered by

more officially sanctioned versions, such as Urdu, which are taught in school and in out-of-school lessons. For many of the young people within this community with English as their main language, the use of minority languages is often confined to such classes, or to conversations with relatives and others of older generations. The literacy practices of such individuals within this community are therefore located within a complex and multiple reality of language use, as will be reflected in Chapter 6, during discussion of the girls' talk.

2.5   Language and culture

Raymond Williams (1990: xiii) lists 'culture' as one of five key words - along with 'industry', 'democracy', 'class' and 'art' - whose changing definitions during the late eighteenth century shaped the way in which we perceive our lives in today's society, in terms of our shared thinking about life, our social, political and economic institutions and the ways in which these relate to learning, education and the arts. Prior to this key period, according to Williams, each of these terms carried a meaning that was to broaden from connotations of smaller scale, personal action to denote institutions on a larger, society-wide level. For example, in the late 1700s, industry changed from a name for a particular attribute to be more commonly used as a collective word for manufacturing and productive institutions. 'Art' followed a similar pattern, changing from its original meaning of 'skill' to a more collective sense of 'a set body of activities of a certain kind' (p.xv). The word 'culture' originally signified the 'tending of natural growth', as well 'the process of human growth'.   Williams identifies four stages in the development of the term during this historical period. Firstly, it came to mean 'a general state or habit of mind', secondly developing to represent 'the general state of intellectual development, in a

society as a whole. Next, the term meant 'the general body of the arts'. During the late eighteenth century, culture came to mean 'a whole way of life, material, intellectual and spiritual' (p. xvi).

For Williams, the development of the word 'culture' in this historical context is indexical of the changes in usage for the other four terms he identifies:

> It might be said, indeed, that the questions now concentrated in the meanings of the word *culture* are questions directly raised by the great historical changes which the changes in *industry, democracy* and *class*, in their own way, represent, and to which the changes in *art* are a closely related response. The development of the word *culture* is a record of a number of important and continuing reactions to these changes in our social, economic and political life, and may be seen, in itself, as a special kind of map by means of which the nature of the changes can be explored (p. xvi-xvii). [3]

According to this view, the shared way in which we see our lives (and, indeed, the very fact that we define such a shared way of seeing our lives) is shaped by structures which have developed within society, being both reinforced and represented by those structures, such as those within industry or education.

Thinking in such macro-level terms about social and political institutions does not always enable an understanding of what may be considered more everyday scenarios. An individual and interpersonal perspective is seen in the definition of culture suggested by Heller (1987: 184). Recognising the way in which culture is made up of 'a set of values and beliefs that constitute our normal, everyday view of the world', Heller reminds us that culture, in essence, 'also includes our normal, everyday ways of behaving'. Viewing culture from such a perspective allows us to recognise that culture

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[3] Italics in original

is not only what happens at the highest level of social and political analysis, nor is it only manifested through elite 'high' arts practice; every part of our 'normal, everyday' lives is affected by the interaction between the institutions that structure them and our development of a shared understanding of these structures.

From its origin in a society's negotiation of meaning to its perpetuation through social and political institutions, the shared understanding represented by a culture functions predominantly through the use of language. For Hamers and Blanc (2000: 198), 'all definitions of culture agree that language is an important part of culture.'   For Kramsch (1998: 3), 'language is the principal means whereby we conduct our social lives' and it is 'bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways'.

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis represents an influential stance on the relationship between language and culture that gained some ground amongst linguists between the 1930s and 1950s.   Sapir and Whorf hypothesised that the structure and vocabulary of the language a person speaks affects the ways in which they think. Differences between cultures could, therefore, be attributed to the ways people saw the world as represented by their different languages.   Sapir, the mentor of Whorf, was confident that 'no two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality' (cited in Abley, 2003: 47).   The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of linguistic relativity has been broadly rejected in its original form, partly in response to the theory of generative grammar offered by Chomsky in the 1950s and 1960s. According to this theory, humans possess an innate capacity for language based on a hidden, structured network within the brain.   This theory presents a computational model of the mind and argues that all children are able to

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access the particular configuration of switches that constitutes their language at around the same developmental stage (Abley, 2003: 45). Pinker (1995: 4) sees language thus, as 'an instinct':

> Language is a complex, specialised skill, which develops in the child spontaneously, without conscious effort or formal instruction, is deployed without awareness of its underlying logic, is qualitatively the same in every individual.

Chomsky's model has superceded that of Sapir and Whorf, although there is still a general acceptance of linguistic relativity in a weaker sense. As Kramsch (2000: 13) notes, cultural differences do exist as a result of 'semantic associations evoked by seemingly common concepts'. However, Kramsch also emphasises the fact that 'language indexes our relation to the world, it is not itself this relation' (p.77).

Language and culture exist in relation to one another, therefore, as Hamers and Blanc (2000: 200) note:

> rather than a one-way causal relationship between language and culture we consider there to be a continuous interaction in which language can at times shape ideas and at other times result from the existing cultural values and behaviour.

Miller (1983: xi) argues that 'language is not simply an aspect of culture, its filter or its companion'. Rather, 'it is the way in which we learn to make sense of experience and to represent it to ourselves and to other people'. Through the shared understanding that leads to a culture, systems are generated which enable this exploration and representation of experience through language. The use of language, therefore, is key to the reflection of culture. For Kramsch (1998: 3), language symbolises cultural reality.

She sees language use as a cultural act in itself, 'because its users co-construct the very social roles that define them as members of a discourse community' (p. 35).

In summary, a definition offered by Hamers and Blanc (2000: 199) enables a clear view on the extent of the interaction between language and culture:

> Language is a component of culture along with other entities like, for example, values, beliefs and norms; language is a product of culture, transmitted from one generation to the next in the socialisation process; it also moulds culture, that is to say, our cultural representations are shaped by language. However, unlike other components of culture, language interacts in specific ways: for language is a transmitter of culture; furthermore, it is the main tool for the internalisation of culture by the individual. Although culture and language do not exist independently of each other they are, however, not homologous.

Given, therefore, the role of language in the experience of culture, the issue of bilingualism and culture is of significance. The following section addresses the issue of language and culture from the perspective of those with more than one language.

2.5.1 Bilingualism and biculturalism

Through the continuous interaction between both language and culture, individuals are afforded the opportunity to make sense of their experience of the world. Two questions might arise in relation to the role of culture in the lives of bilinguals: whether a person who speaks two languages sees the world in two different ways, or whether a 'bicultural identity' is developed which responds to the unique experience of bilingualism.

It should first be acknowledged, of course, as is highlighted by Kramsch (1998:10), that in referring to 'culture', it is accepted that this is a heterogenous concept and that 'members of the same discourse community have different biographies and life experiences'. Kramsch goes on to note how 'cultures change over time […] they are sites of struggle for power and recognition' (ibid). For bilinguals whose two languages represent two very different ways of understanding the world, there is an additional challenge. As Caldas and Caron Caldas (2002: 491) remark of their own study of young bilinguals:

> We would expect that bilingual adolescents immersed in a monolingual culture
> would have additional identity pressures, as they reconcile conflicting societal
> messages about what it means to be part of one – and more likely two –
> larger societies […] Also, bilingual adolescents have the added task of
> assimilating into their developing identities the dimension of 'bilingual person',
> a complexity which most of their peers do not have.

Some immigrant communities are faced with the challenge of reconciling two cultures on their first arrival in a new country. However, for the individuals in this study whose families are of immigrant origin, some of the initial work of integrating two different ways of meaning has been done by previous generations. This has meant that the issue of biculturalism suggests less of a conflict. In Wales, the co-existence of English and Welsh over many centuries has also meant that boundaries between what may once have been different ways of meaning have long since blurred.

Bilinguals involved in a study by Miller (1983: 16), some of whom were of the age of the girls in this study, 'saw the question of bilingualism in terms of biculturalism'. Hamers and Blanc (2000: 30) also define as bicultural an individual who identifies positively with the two cultural groups that

speak his languages and is recognised by each group as a member. A bicultural identity is assumed when an individual has acquired the cultural rules and language skills of a new culture and has integrated them positively with the primary culture (p. 205). Such a definition therefore assumes a bicultural identity evolving from the experience of living with two languages. Key to these definitions is the success of individuals in being able to become part of the second culture as well as integrating it into their heritage culture; this can depend on their own skills, or on the acceptance of others. In some situations, therefore, there may be bilinguals who are not accepted by their new culture; this acceptance is essential for them to be able to engage in the process of shared meaning and thus be part of this additional culture. For bilinguals such as those in this study, who are born in a bilingual community, this acceptance does not seem to be an issue.

The connection between language and culture has, nonetheless, been questioned in some bilingual contexts. Baker (1985) doubts that being bilingual in Wales equates to biculturalism, given that speaking the language does not in itself lead to involvement in Welsh cultural practices, however diverse these may be. Equally, language can sometimes be assumed as a cultural foundation in order to substantiate and maintain cultural difference. Kramsch (1998) illustrates this with the example of the promotion of the teaching of Punjabi by religious leaders from the Sikh community wishing to bolster public recognition of their cultural and religious identity. However, as Kramsch notes, 'seen objectively, neither the Punjabi language, nor the wearing of the turban is peculiar to Sikhism either in India, Pakistan or in Britain' (p. 69).

What is clear in both the example of the Welsh language in Wales, and in the above example of language use by some within the Indian Sikh community, is the way in which language, used as a marker of culture in a minority context, can assume great significance. Edwards (1985: 17) notes the difference in such cases 'between language in its ordinarily understood sense as a tool of communication, and language as an emblem of groupness, as a symbol, a rallying-point'. For those within minority cultures, language can therefore be actively utilised as a form of differentiation. The use of such 'symbolic tools', according to Rogoff (2003) is central to what she sees as the constantly evolving nature of culture itself. This very notion of culture being the result of negotiation and adaptation lies at the centre of this study, and the following chapters will demonstrate the ways in which my participants have themselves used the symbolic tool of language to engage proactively with their cultures, demonstrating the contention made by Rogoff that:

> culture is not static, it is formed from the efforts of people working together, using and adapting material and symbolic tools provided by predecessors and in the process creating new ones (p. 51).

This creative process involves individuals in the constant negotiation of meanings and values, throughout which they are called upon to consider their own positions within the culture(s) they experience as part of the negotiation of identities. The next section explores the issue of identity in more detail.

2.6   Identity

Hall (1996: 1) highlights the 'veritable discursive explosion in recent years around the concept of 'identity'. It has been described as 'a cornerstone

of ego development' (Erikson, cited Patterson, Sochting and Marcia, 1992: 9), and 'a powerful denominator of selfhood' (Afshar, 1994: 127); in fact, this view of identity as one of the most significant aspects of personal development is common to most definitions.   However, as Heller (1987: 183) notes, 'the definition of identity is negotiable and subject to change'.

The complexity of the concept and the difficulty in arriving at any succinct and easily applied definition means that any attempt to do so is well beyond the scope of this part of my thesis. However, the issue of identity does lie at the core of this study and my research questions include the consideration of the ways in which identity is explored and demonstrated by my participants. As such, there follows an outline of some ways in which the identity process has been viewed in recent times.

Jacobson (1998: 4) identifies 'two broad types' of theory on identity. The first is personality theory, which sees identity as 'a sense of personal distinctiveness, personal continuity and personal autonomy'.   The second perspective on identity is based on social psychology, and has 'a sense of identity formed from a dialectic between the individual and society', foregrounding the ways in which membership of social groups shapes or determines individual perceptions of themselves. Within the short space I have for reviewing this vast topic, and given that the overall theme of my thesis is the interaction between individuals and their social contexts, I shall therefore aim to draw my main focus in this chapter from the latter approach.

2.6.1 Models of identity development

For some, development from childhood to adulthood is defined as a process with a clear beginning and desirable end goals, achieved by proceeding through a series of negotiations with socially defined obstacles. According to this kind of analysis, there is an ideal end state that is achievable by most, barring problematic factors that may hamper the desired end product.

Erikson has been considered by many commentators to have developed one of the most influential theories of identity development (for example, Markstrom-Adams, 1992; Patterson, Sohting and Marcia, 1992; Rosenthal, 1987; Spencer and Markstrom-Adams, 1990). Erikson's model of psychological development (Erikson, 1982) shows eight stages, from infancy to old age. These stages progress in linear order, linked to social expectations and bodily maturation. Stage Five on this model is adolescence, characterised by Erikson as 'Identity vs. Role Confusion' (p. 250). At this stage in life, an individual is provided with the opportunity to 'try out a variety of possible commitments in occupation and ideology, eventually adopting a more or less permanent sense of who he or she is' (Patterson et al: 10).

Marcia (1980) further developed Erikson's model with his identity status approach. During the process of forging an identity, the individual is seen as moving through four distinct phases – or identity statuses. Identity diffusion is the least developmentally advanced of the four stages. People at this stage 'follow the path of least resistance' (ibid.11), due to a lack of internally consistent values or goals. Although this stage may be seen as a starting point, followed by exploration, it can also represent a resolved

identity - the least developed state, according to Marcia.   Identity foreclosure represents a high level of commitment.   A single set of values is adopted by those in foreclosure - commonly those of their parents - often without exploration*.*   It has been recognised in other studies that young people from certain minorities are more likely to experience foreclosure; this has been attributed to a lack of motivation to explore outside their own group because of the effects of racial prejudice and discrimination (Markstrom-Adams, 1992).   Moratorium is regarded as the process of forging an identity from the possibilities available to the individual working towards Identity Achievement, which represents the resolution of identity. Marcia describes individuals in moratorium phase as being '*in* an identity crisis' whereas 'identity achievements are individuals who have experienced a decision-making period and are pursuing self-chosen occupation and ideological goals' (Marcia, 1980: 161). As Patterson et al (1992: 12) note, 'it is the exploration of the moratorium period that distinguishes the flexible strength of identity achievement from the rigid strength of identity foreclosure'.

The model of identity statuses is structured with a clear goal of identity as a finished product, whether gained through exploration or not.   Such a view of the 'achievement' of identity can be seen in other analyses of the process of identity formation.   Markstrom-Adams (1992: 173), for example, highlights several distinguishable characteristics of a 'healthy' identity. Examples she gives are:

> (a) an understanding of the sameness and continuity of the self over space and time; (b) having direction and purpose for one's life as shown through identifiable goals; (c) a self that is integrated and characterized by a sense of wholeness; and (d) the self that is defined is valued by significant others.

Notions of completion, along with stages of 'achievement', 'commitment' and 'resolution', are common in interpretations of identity that follow developmental models. The three-stage model of ethnic identity formation suggested by Phinney, for example (Phinney and Rosenthal, 1992), moves from 'unexamined ethnic identity' to 'the exploration stage', culminating in a 'resolution of the conflicts and contradictions posed by minority status in society' (p. 150). At this stage, 'individuals make a *commitment* to *a particular way* of being a member of their group; they have an *achieved* ethnic identity, characterized by a *secure* sense of themselves as ethnic group members (p. 151).'[4] A model of systematic progression towards a completed individual has had its appeal for many writers. However, the idea that one's identity is a finished product at any stage of life, let alone at the end of one's teens, has been challenged.

Rather than a process of working towards completion, Wenger (1998: 154) sees identity as 'a constant becoming. The work of identity is always going on'. Hall (1996: 2) also challenges the way in which identity is seen as having a 'natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on its foundation.' Instead, he argues that a more discursive approach recognises identity as:

> […] a process never completed - always 'in process'. It is not determined in the sense that it can always be 'won' or 'lost', sustained or abandoned. Though not without its determinate conditions of existence, including the material and symbolic resource required to sustain it, identification is in the end conditional, lodged in contingency.

Hall's view of identity, then, is 'not an essentialist, but a strategic and positional one' (p.3). Part of the process of identification is 'the binding

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4 My italics.

and marking of symbolic boundaries'; as such, identity 'requires what is left outside'. Identities, according to this view, are the product of difference and exclusion, rather than a sign of unity.

> Identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions (p.4).

Hall's construction of identity foregrounds its incomplete nature, the fact it is 'constantly in the process of change and transformation' (p.4) and that it cannot be held as a sign of unity by virtue of being a process of the constant making of boundaries and intersections between conflicting practices and discourses. Hall characterises identity as a plural notion, therefore, and sees identities as 'points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us' (p.6).

Jacobson (1998: 23-4) points out that such a position could be problematic in that it may 'overestimate the extent to which individuals […] are able to pick and choose the various elements out of which they construct their identities'. However, this view of identity as an opportunity to engage with a multiplicity of subject positions could be regarded as supporting individuals wishing to explore plural and diverse socio-cultural influences, such as the girls in this study.

Despite what appear to be distinct models of identity development, there is agreement in much of the literature that the process of identity does not take place in isolation of its wider social context. This context is considered in the following section.

2.6.2 Social and cultural contexts for identity

Wenger (1998: 146) contends that identity is essentially a social construct and suggests that it should be considered thus, given the fact that 'even our most private thoughts make use of concepts, images, and perspectives that we understand through our participation in social communities.' The process of identity formation, according to Markstrom-Adams (1992: 174), 'is not wholly an individualistic process; rather the social environment exerts its power and influence'. Among the social factors to affect identity formation listed by Markstrom-Adams are family, ethnic group membership and religiosity. Rosenthal (1987: 158) also notes that 'one's sense of identity […] is synthesized from a number of social identities, such as female, sibling, parent, and student'.

Merchant et al (2006) outline two categories of identity demonstrated by school children in different contexts; these are referred to as 'anchored' identities, which are 'profoundly influenced by a long history of socio-cultural practice' (such as gender or religion) and those which are 'transient', namely those which 'are more easily made, re-made and un-made' (p. 25), such as affinity groups or fandom. Such classification illustrates the range of influences a young person may have to negotiate, also demonstrating the way that some of these will clearly have a more significant and lasting effect on identity than others. It has been argued, for example, that the issue of gender means that identity development for girls is 'an especially significant challenge' (Sarigiani, Camarena and Petersen, 1993: 138). Many of the pressures on young girls within the social and cultural contexts of this study are reflected in the talk of the participants; some of these pressures arise from their particular position as

members of minority groups within a dominant culture representing what may be very different cultural values.

The multitude of social factors influencing identity could each be the subject of in-depth focus to an extent that is beyond the scope of this thesis. Given the focus of the study on minority group identity in particular, greater focus is therefore given to this issue below.

2.6.3 Identity amongst minority groups

The negotiation of different social subject positions is a key part of developing a social identity. As Hamers and Blanc (2000: 201) note, this kind of identity 'exists within the same society and helps the individual to define themselves in relation to the roles and the social groups in that society'. However, the development of identity based on difference in culture or ethnicity is based on cognisance of 'the existence of other cultures inside or outside one's own society' (ibid.).

'Ethnicity', according to Heller (1987: 182) 'is based on boundaries; it does not acquire meaning except as a function of opposition to that which lies on the other side of the gap in social ties that differentiates one ethnic group from another'. It has been recognised that minority status has often been accorded based on the definitions of the majority, rather than those who are themselves within the non-dominant sectors of society (Tajfel, 1978). The concept of 'ethnic identity' has also been challenged as a function of the dominant hegemonic categorisation of social groups (Allen, 1994). In the context of this thesis, my use of the term is mindful of these considerations. My study aims to consider the ways the participants experience and position themselves within a range of social realities.

However, factors other than those represented by the dominant hegemony – such as religion, language or ancestry, for example - are a key part of this experience. In outlining the way I see the girls' interact with these social realities, I hope to avoid my own categorisation of the girls, but rather to represent the ways in which they position themselves with regards to the categories they perceive to exist in their experience.

Identity negotiation and formation is seen as a tricky process for all young people (Phinney and Rosenthal, 1992; Rosenthal, 1987; Spencer and Markstrom-Adams, 1990). However, for those from minority groups[5], there is suggestion that the process is further complicated by many factors. As Phinney and Rosenthal (1992: 145) state:

> For adolescents from ethnic minority groups, the process of identification has an added dimension due to their exposure to alternative sources of identification, their own ethnic group and the mainstream or dominant culture. Growing up in a society where the mainstream culture may differ significantly in values and beliefs from their culture of origin, these youth face the task of achieving a satisfactory and satisfying integration of ethnic identity into self-identity.

The development of minority identity is seen, therefore, as essentially a realisation of one's location in relation to a dominant group in society, and an evaluation of how the ways and values of that dominant group may differ from those of the minority group. Tajfel (1978) considers belonging to a minority group as a psychological issue, rather than merely economic, social or cultural. In considering ethnic group membership, the question, for Tajfel, is essentially: 'Do they or do they not feel themselves to be members of a particular social group which is clearly distinguished *by them*

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[5] My use of the term 'minority' here, as explained earlier, is not on a numerical basis.

from other groups?' (p. 3)[6]. He does however recognise that these feelings of belonging do not exist in isolation, and that the experience of belonging to a minority is, therefore, dependant upon the relative status, or 'social position' (p.3) of that minority within society as a whole. The complexity of this relationship between the minority and majority groups, and the effect of this on the individual members is suggested:

> Group 'affiliations' or group 'identity' can perhaps be best understood as blanket expressions concealing the complexity of the relations between the awareness that one is a member of a group which is clearly separate from others; the diversity of the evaluations associated with this awareness; and the strength and nature of the emotional investments that derive from these evaluations and, in turn, contribute to them (p. 6).

The emphasis here is on the response of the individual within a group to their position both as part of the minority and in relation to the majority group. Tajfel warns against the possibility of generalisation about minority groups. His emphasis is on the role of individual subjectivity in establishing and maintaining the concept of the group and their place within it.

All identity involves a level of differentiating the self from others; ethnic minority identity can be said to be part of the same process. In the words of Epstein (1978: 100) 'in its most immediate sense […] ethnicity is a matter of classification, the separating out and pulling together of the population into a series of categories defined in terms of 'we' and 'they'.' For Phinney and Rosenthal (1992: 147), minority identity is a construct that includes

> self-identification as a member of a group, feelings of belonging and commitment to a group, positive (or negative) attitudes towards the group, a

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[6] Italics in original

sense of shared attitudes and values, and specific ethnic traditions and
practices, such as languages, behaviour, and customs.

Further factors are also essential. These include an individual's expressed
sense of attachment, the extent to which an individual engages with the
group, in terms of language use or religious affiliation, for example. Given
the fact that an individual may not necessarily hold positive feelings
towards the group, the evaluative meaning given to group membership is
also assigned importance by Phinney and Rosenthal.

In Phinney and Rosenthal's consideration of ethnic identity development,
several factors are assumed to have an effect. Among these are the family
and the ethnic community.   The family is seen as the principal source of
knowledge and attitudes regarding the ethnic group.   A structured,
cohesive community is significant, particularly when this is a source of
institutions central to the individual's life, such as those involved in
education, religion and recreation.   For example, these factors have been
shown to have significant effects on the identity process amongst young
people from South Asian communities in the UK. Drury (1988)
demonstrates how the structure of the Sikh community in Britain
represents a strong base of social and cultural influence on young women
within this community. The influence of family in representing social and
cultural norms is reinforced within the wider network of the Sikh
community and its elders. The resources and institutions of the community
also have a strong influence on the socialisation of young Sikhs and
provide a significant base for the support of Punjabi socio-cultural
practices.   Within the Muslim community in the UK, older generations can
also feel a responsibility to maintain boundaries between their own
traditions and those of the dominant culture.   As such, family and

community institutions may become charged with additional responsibility of 'guarding' and reinforcing the minority identity of younger generations (Jacobson, 1998).

Positive minority group identity can, therefore, be supported by such factors as family and community. However, its negotiation is ultimately a personal endeavour. As part of this process, Spencer and Markstrom-Adams (1990: 292) see ethnic identity as having 'the potential of providing a conceptual framework for interpreting the ongoing experience or "fit" between the self and the environment'. As such, identification with a minority group can result from engagement with a wide range of social and cultural resources available during the identity process, from both within and outside, the minority community. In reality, therefore, ethnic minority identity development is part of a complex interaction with a social environment, which 'inevitably contains many contradictions' (Jacobson, 1998).

2.6.4 Factors influencing minority identity

What individuals from minority groups see as differentiating factors may vary. Equally, certain factors may work together as indistinguishable markers of a culture. In a study by Nesbitt (2000), for example, many Hindu and Sikh children used the term 'language' and 'religion' interchangeably for what she as a researcher termed 'culture' or 'ethnic group'.

Religion is often seen as a major differentiating factor between groups, although this has been recognised as more significant for religious-cultural groups that are outside the Judeo-Christian tradition (Rassool, 2004).

Haw (1998) sees religion as a uniting dimension amongst Muslim communities – the largest religious minority in the UK today - which may otherwise be multiracial, multicultural and multilingual. For Muslim communities, the sense of *Ummah*, or community of believers, can unite and be inclusive of diverse and plural identities. Although she sees ethnic and religious identity as separate, Jacobson (1998: 10) recognises that, in the case of many of those of Pakistani heritage, 'ethnicity as a source of identity is undoubtedly closely related to religion: the history of Pakistan – founded as a nation for India's Muslims – ensures that Pakistanis are likely to associate being Pakistani with being Muslim'.

Within Wales, what constitutes a Welsh identity has been the root of some contention. Thomson, Day and Adamson state that 'none of the 'traditional' markers of a distinctive Welsh identity has survived unscathed' (1999:57), whether linked to religious non-conformity, political Liberalism and radicalism or dominance in industries such as slate quarrying, coal mining and agriculture. Although spoken by a minority, Aitchison and Carter (2004: 20) argue however, that in Wales, 'the language can be seen as the only obvious remaining symbol of Welsh difference and identity'. A study involving respondents of primary age by Scourfield, Davies and Holland (2003) suggests that the central role of language in a perceived Welsh identity is seen in the attitudes of children across Wales, from homes which are both Welsh-speaking and not.

Thomson et al (1999) question the notion of a common national identity in any situation, as many theories of nationalism allow little room for individual, private articulations of identity. National identity is 'a fundamentally collective identity which acquires a popular resonance through public rituals' (ibid. p.52). This model of nationalism on a public

scale cannot be seen to represent the reality of an individual's response to their immediate social and cultural context:

> In addressing issues of language, religion, territory or 'culture' and their relationship to national identity, theories of nationalism tend to presume that these issues are both relevant for the individual and that each individual expresses a similar attitude towards them, rather than examining how these issues are made relevant by individuals through processes of negotiation with others (p. 54).

Thomson and his colleagues contend that the dissonance between a perceived or imposed national identity and that of the individual results in a range of national identit*ies*, whereby individuals each negotiate and make relevant the issues surrounding the idea of a national identity, along with others that affect them individually. In Wales, for example, Thomson et al cite examples of varying identities amongst the population; a prominent example is the 'Valley' identity of the South East, influenced by socialism and working-class collectivism. The North West is seen as occupying 'a privileged position within discourses of Welshness' (p.60). Here, there is a particular form of Welshness which is underpinned by the notion that the ability to speak the language leads to more involvement in and membership of the community. In this area, according to the study carried out by Thomson et al, 'even for non-Welsh speakers […] what is held to be 'Welsh' tends to be talked about in terms of an ability to speak Welsh' (p.62).

Bellin (1989: 81) has argued that presence of a minority language in itself does not equate to an ethnic minority status and that 'there is nothing particularly 'ethnic' as opposed to 'mainstream' about being a Welsh speaker, except from a 'dominant-centred' point of view'. Instead, Bellin

suggests that the claim made for a Welsh identity is for a territorial identity, where the language has been given a utilitarian value and linked to education, giving young people the possibility of material benefits and a chance of influence in their own territory.

For many who claim an ethnic or minority identity, however, the role of language in their identification is undoubtedly a significant one. This connection between language and identity is further explored below.

2.6.5 Language and identity

Emphasising the need for heightened awareness of the threat of language death, David Crystal (2004: 59) quotes Oliver Wendall Holmes, writing in 1860[7]:

> Every language is a temple in which the soul of those who speak it is enshrined.

This comment highlights the significance placed on language in the process of identity for all of us; from the perspective of those within minority groups, language can be the factor that is seen both as the most obvious and the most emotive symbol of belonging to a group.

As Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (1982: 7) see it, 'social identity and ethnicity are in a large part established and maintained through language'. Hamers and Blanc (2000: 208) also contend that language has a key role to play in the establishment and reinforcement of socialisation norms that contribute to the identity process:

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[7] Oliver Wendall Holmes (1860) 'The Professor at the Breakfast Table'. Boston: Ticknor and Fields, p.46

> …as language is the most important medium of socialisation, differences in language background are likely to influence the identification processes and the internalisation of values and behaviours.

If identity is seen as being built on self-perception and interpretation of similarity and difference between groups, then the language used to represent and communicate these realities is an obvious signifier of that commonality or difference. Heller (1987: 181) notes that

> shared language is basic to shared identity, but more than that, identity rests on shared ways of using language that reflect common patterns of thinking and behaving, or shared culture.

Language is seen by Heller as 'central to the formation of group boundaries' (ibid. p. 199). For bilinguals exploring their position both within minority and majority language groups, language can facilitate this exploration, providing unique opportunities for creative negotiation of the social realities represented by language in both groups. Codeswitching amongst English-speaking youth in a Canadian French immersion class is an example of such strategic exploration of the roles and expectations bound up in the use of language (Heller, 1987; Caldas and Caron-Caldas, 2002). Such use of language as a strategic tool for the transformation of assigned identity into self-defined identity is also seen within the Parisian minority youth community described by Doran (2004).

Language can be seen as a symbol of a distinct tradition and history (Tajfel, 1978). Mills (2001: 383) highlights the way that, for the British Asian children in her study, 'language played a significant part in managing identities and in stressing the core values of religion, and cultural and

community affiliation'. For these children, language was crucial to cultural attachment and a 'reminder to the person of their 'past-present[8] […] that is how one makes sense of the present by looking to the past' (p. 297).

For those who speak minority languages, the issue of language becomes even more central to their in-group identification. For children growing up using a language that is not represented extensively (or, indeed, at all) outside their cultural group, there is necessarily a narrowing of opportunity for engaging with those outside the group in this language. Thus, the minority language becomes a clearer marker of reality within the minority group, and, therefore, is afforded greater significance as a factor in identification, to the point where identity may be described as ethnolinguistic (Hamers and Blanc, 2000: 202). In certain 'extreme cases', the language might become 'the sole cultural core value', as is seen in the case of the Flemings in Belgium, the Quebecois in Canada (ibid.) This could also be said of the population of Welsh speakers in Wales, of course.

Language can also be a key component of group identity for those with little or no proficiency. This is often the case with heritage languages, which acquire a symbolic value for immigrant communities (Drury, 1988; Jacobson, 1998; Mills, 2001). In such communities, individuals may refer to the heritage language as 'my language' even though they do not speak it themselves (Hamers and Blanc, 2000: 204).

Language, then, can be important as a symbol of and in upholding identities within groups. The use of language as a salient feature of identity is also demonstrated in a study cited by Hamers and Blanc, whereby young American bilinguals were shown to use more plural pronouns than their monolingual counterparts; in their use of 'we', Imbens-

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[8] Mills is citing Bhabha (1994) here.

Bailey claims these young bilinguals were showing identification with a broad group of others, from different cultural environments, whom they saw as bilingual (Imbens-Bailey, cited in Hamers and Blanc, 2000: 211).

The symbolic power of language in the cohesion of group identity can be extended to a national level. In cases where language is connected to national identity, Blackledge (2004: 71) has recognised that 'the symbolic status of language can create identity and discontinuity, and can both unite and divide, as it can become a battleground, an object of oppression and a means of discrimination'. This situation is represented for Blackledge by the example of the discourse around the nationalisation of immigrants to Britain that followed the so-called 'race riots' seen in northern English cities in the summer of 2001. Desforges and Jones (2000: 30), writing about language and national identity in Wales, also acknowledge the potential for language to be used as a means of social exclusion, highlighting the fact that 'despite the role that language plays in affording sustenance to a nation and its national culture, difficulties often arise when mastery of a particular language is deemed to be a requirement for full membership of a given nation'.

Language, then, as the source of practical boundaries between different groups, and as symbolic of the relative status between groups, is therefore a formidable determiner of group identity. Individuals from different language groups can utilise their position on the boundary in order to negotiate their multiple engagement with different groups, often making unique and creative use of language in order to demonstrate their multiple positions, as will be discussed in later chapters. The process of negotiation of identity for those within minority groups is considered further below.

2.6.6 Negotiation of identity within minority groups

With the emergence in the 1970s and early 1980s of the second generation of families who had arrived in the UK from what were previously colonial locations, a discourse developed which expressed concerns about their position 'between two cultures', of having to live within both the traditions of their families and those of the wider, dominant community. This discourse characterised much of the empirical study of ethnic minority communities in the 1970s and early 1980s (a point noted by Jacobson, 1998 and Drury, 1988).   Such a position has been criticised for its portrayal of young people as 'passive victims of their circumstances' (Jacobson, 1998: 65). Drury takes issue with such a discourse and the way in which it oversimplifies culture, reducing young people of immigrant heritage to being 'simply caught up in a vacuum [or] cultural desert' (in Jacobson, 1998: 65).

There is also a strong theme within writing about ethnic and minority identity which implies that the socio-cultural norms to which young people are exposed may represent contradictory, if not antagonistic, positions, thus leading to a situation of conflict between two cultures and a challenge for those young people to negotiate in terms of their identity. My own work prior to this study could be seen as an example of such thinking (Jones, 2002).   This section will explore some of the ways young members of minority groups have been seen to address the challenge of living within two cultures, and how the situation may be conceptualised in a more positive light than merely that of conflict.

In contrast to the dichotomisation of cultures in earlier discourses of the 'in-between', many more contemporary studies of young people from

minority groups emphasise the complex negotiation of varied positions that is undertaken, often resulting in a broad range of identity positions influenced by both minority and majority cultures. Several studies report a tendency amongst young people from minority groups to identify with the dominant majority, at least for a stage in their identity development. For Tajfel, this period is notably between the ages of six and eleven (1978: 10). 'Out-group identification' is suggested by some to represent a less secure ethnic identity, and may be the result of a perceived lack of valorisation of the minority within society as a whole (Phinney and Rosenthal, 1992; Spencer and Markstrom-Adams, 1990). Other studies note a tendency amongst those from linguistic minorities to show more allegiance to the language of the dominant group than to that of their own (Gruffudd, 1996, 1997; Caldas and Caron-Caldas, 2002; Hamers and Blanc, 2000). In many cases, these young people 'return' to identify with their minority group in the later teens, after a period of exploration and subversion of what they hold as a representation of familial values. This negotiation and acceptance of difference can be a significant part of positive identity development. For example, Sarigiani and her colleagues (1993) note that for young women of African-American heritage, the realisation that white standards of beauty, such as hair colour or body shape, did not apply to them was a significant stage in the development of their minority group identity.

Drury (1988) found that young Sikh women were able to negotiate a range of influences, both from Punjabi and Sikh communities and those which she characterises as 'British norms and values', such as schools and the media. The result of this negotiation was not homogenous; some young women responded with willing conformity to their home traditions in light of their experience, whilst others 'broke away' from their Sikh heritage. A large

group were described by Drury as having taken positions in between these two extremes. Mills (2001: 390) describes the way in which individuals who experience two cultures can create for themselves a 'third culture, where individuals have taken on aspects of both'.

The notion of a 'third culture' is an evocative image for the way in which many of those living with two cultures have responded to their situation. As Jacobson (1998: 79) notes, the process by which a member of the second generation negotiates his or her position within both the minority and the wider society is likely to feel like 'a peculiarly open-ended and uncertain project'. It is this open-endedness that facilitates a flexibility of subject positions for those in minority groups. Through their engagement in different socio-cultural norms, boundaries between groups have become 'semi-permeable in that they are increasingly easy to cross in certain situations, and generally do not insulate the minority from other cultural influences' (ibid: 83). The fluidity of boundaries for the young person living in two cultures can result in a lack of a sense of certainty; Jacobson speculates that in these circumstances, some young people may turn to traditional values and practices as a means of regaining this certainty. However, for many, the situation affords the perfect opportunity for creative approaches to self-expression. These renegotiated boundaries can result in what may be termed dual or hyphenated identities, arising from cultural hybridity (Rassool, 2004). The reshaping of boundaries requires active engagement, rather than passivity, and, as such, the young people who are involved in the task of shaping identities from complex and multifarious influences have been dubbed 'cultural entrepreneurs' (Bhachu, in Jacobson, 1998).

For Wenger (1998), membership in different and multiple communities constitutes the different parts of identity for all individuals. Multimembership is 'the living experience of boundaries' (p. 161). The 'nexus of multimembership' entails 'the experience of multimembership' and 'the work of reconciliation necessary to maintain one identity across boundaries', and is seen by Wenger as key to the very notion of identity (p. 158). This work of reconciliation offers exciting opportunities for the active and creative renegotiation of boundaries. Given the different profile of each individual's multimembership, the resultant reconciliation of the nexus is therefore unique and very personal. Wenger regards 'the careful weaving of multimembership into an identity [as] therefore a very private achievement' (p. 161).

We all engage with this process, according to Wenger, regardless of our social position or cultural heritage. It is recognised that greater challenges may face young people negotiating identities within two different cultures, in terms of reconciling potentially incompatible features. However, there is clear evidence that suggests that these young people are able to skilfully synthesise their experiences and find ways of positioning themselves in relation to them, utilising their identities in the way described by Hall (2008: 88) as 'resources that can be employed in the construal of the self.' This very process is the focus of this thesis, in which I hope to illustrate the ways in which the girls are able to negotiate and demonstrate their multimembership of different realities.

2.6.7 Identity: a summary

The notion of identity, then, is highly complex. There is a strong tradition of depicting identity development according to a linear and finite model: an

individual progresses through stages of identification, negotiating socio-cultural as well as personal factors, before 'achieving' a particular identity. This identity may well be multifaceted and relate to several, sometimes opposing, aspects of the individual's lived experience. Such a model of identity has been challenged in some quarters, with a more fluid and dynamic model suggested which emphasises the fact that identity is a constant process of 'becoming' which is seen in direct relation to one's attachment to various socially constructed subject positions.

In both views, identity is seen as being a greater challenge to those from minority groups. All individuals negotiate a complex range of norms and experiences; this is further exaggerated for the individual who may need to negotiate potential areas of conflict between minority and majority groups. This has been shown to be an opportunity for many to engage creatively with their cultures, exploring and synthesising different ways of belonging and utilising socio-cultural features such as language in order to represent their unique positions.

The following section draws a specific focus on literacy as a practice through which individuals may engage in the varied cultural norms of their social groups, as well as an opportunity for identity negotiation.

2.7   Literacy

The main focus of this study are the ways in which the girls within my sample groups explore and demonstrate their bilingual identities through the use of practices around text in its different forms.   This section

provides an overview of the theoretical position I came to take regarding literacy over the course of my research.

The use of the term 'literacy' has evolved over the past few decades. As Lankshear and Knobel (2003: 3) point out, forty years ago, 'literacy' was used primarily within non-formal education settings, and mainly in relation to adults who were deemed to have significant challenges with reading and writing – or, in other words, who were deemed *illiterate*. Literacy, therefore, was a term which suggested a necessary skills base to be acquired by those outside formal schooling in order for them to better function within society; it was not necessarily associated with the institution of school. As opposed to 'reading and writing', which were suggestive of psychological processes, 'literacy' when used in this context carried with it connotations of a more sociological emphasis, linked to the development of the skills of a particular class or social group.

During the 1980s, however, researchers began to consider the broader ways in which people within different communities and social groups engaged with text as part of their daily lives, and not just as part of the school curriculum. In 1983, Heath published her seminal ethnography of different communities in the Piedmont Carolinas, in which she highlighted the ways in which literacy was part of the lives of people within these communities, in particular in the ways in which they interacted with each other in the home. She showed the ways in which the black community of 'Trackton' and the white working-class community of 'Roadville' engaged with their children through talk and play, and the different experiences encountered by the young members of each community before they began school. Once the children from these communities entered school, however, a contrast was clear between the skills they had learnt at home

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and those of the children who lived in 'Maintown', a more middle-class area where it appeared that children were more versed in 'school' literacy. Heath showed how the different experiences of children within these three communities were not all necessarily equally valued within the school, and that this had an effect on the relative achievements of children. For example, children in Trackton were encouraged to engage in the rich oral tradition of their community, and children under three years old were observed giving rich oral descriptions and telling imaginative stories. However, within school, a focus on more structured writing, for example, meant that the home practices of these children were marginalised. In her description of the ways the different families interacted, Heath focused on what she termed 'literacy events', namely 'any action sequence, involving one or more persons, in which the production and/or comprehension of print plays a role' (Heath, 1983: 386). All three communities demonstrated different ways of interacting around literacy events, not all of which were equally valued within school.

There has been much subsequent attention given to the different ways in which individuals can engage with texts, and the ways in which the practice of reading and writing is far broader than that which was characteristically associated with two of the '3 Rs' at school. Having been illustrated so successfully by Heath in the early 1980s, much research around literacy has come to concur that, in the words of Lankshear and Knobel (2003: 8), that 'literacy is a matter of social practices'. This focus on the sociological context of our engagement with text has led to close examination of the different ways in which we do so, as well as the varied ways in which such practices are valorised within society.

2.7.1 New Literacy Studies

At a similar time to Heath's study, Street began to consider the need to elaborate our concept of literacy to include the varied and multiple ways in which people use text, along with the attendant ideological issues involved in these practices.   In an ethnographic study based in 1970s Iran, Street observed what he classified as different types of literacy being practiced in different contexts (Street, 1984). 'Maktab' literacy was practiced within the Islamic schools, which were anxious to address issues relating to what they perceived as advances in the West.   This literacy was adapted for use by merchants in the fruit markets, to what Street terms 'commercial literacy'. Both of these practices were in contrast to the literacy of the newly built local state school, which had a focus on developing the literacy levels of the community within the context of the international profile of the country.   Street observed that rather than considering the universal skill of literacy, each of these very different practices around print - or litera*cies* - should be considered within the particular social and political context in which it is located.

Street called for a new perspective on literacy, which would take into account not only 'the richness and variety of literacy practices' but also recognise 'the central role of power relations in literacy practices' (Street, 1993: 1-2).   He called this approach the 'New Literacy Studies'. Street was critical of what he dubbed the 'autonomous model' of literacy, which he felt had dominated thinking prior to the New Literacy Studies (Street, 1984; 1993) - the exponents of which 'conceptualise literacy in technical terms, treating it as independent of social context' (Street, 1993: 5).   In response to this, and to illustrate what indeed was 'New' about this

approach to the study of literacy, Street developed an 'ideological model' of literacy (Street, 1984; 1993) which emphasised the view of

> literacy practices as inextricably linked to cultural and power structures in society, and to recognise the variety of cultural practices associated with reading and writing in different contexts (Street, 1993: 7).

It is important to note here that a key contention of the New Literacy Studies is also to avoid the reification of the written word over oral practices, which, perhaps even more than reading and writing, involve participants in intense and dialogic interaction (Street, 1995). However, a focus on reading and writing could be said to foreground socio-cultural issues related to the different forms these practices take within different communities.

Influenced by the emphasis on the rejection of the 'uniform model of literacy that tends to be purveyed with the modern nation state' (ibid: 1), many researchers have since developed the ideas of the 'New Literacy Studies', and provided accounts of the range of ways in which people engage with literacy within particular contexts (for example, the authors within Pahl and Rowsell, 2006 and Gregory, Long and Volk, 2004; Zubair, 2001; Saxena, 1994). The emphasis in much of this work is on the ways in which literacy is not only multiple and varied – and, as such, should be considered in the plural, as litera*cies* – but also how these literacies are all inextricably linked to ideological contexts. In explaining the relationship between literacy and its ideological context, Barton (1994:32) suggests an 'ecological' model:

> Rather than isolating literacy activities from everything else in order to understand them, an ecological approach aims to understand how literacy is

embedded in other human activity, its embeddedness in social life and in thought, and its position in history, language and learning.

The perspectives of the New Literacy Studies significantly shaped my own approach in this study. As I outlined in the Introduction, I came to realise relatively early on in the process that my initial research questions were not only formulated in such a way as to frame minority language literacy within a deficit model, but were also representative of a narrow, singular and 'uniform' position on literacy itself. As such, I had been guilty of a tendency that Street (1993: 3) recognises:

> it is difficult to learn anything new or see anything different in the world of literacy since we see only our own reflections when we look at others, our own literacy when we look at the literacies of others.

By considering my study from the perspective advocated by the New Literacy Studies, I immediately found myself not only able to observe a far richer and more diverse picture of literacies within the communities of my study, but also in a position where I could explore the implications of the relationship between 'school' literacy as the girls perceived it and the broader examples of 'literacy practices' which they demonstrated. This is a term employed by Street (1993; 1995), which is mindful of Heath's definition of 'literacy events' as single interactions with print. 'Literacy practices', for Street (1993: 12-13), however, represent

> a broader concept, pitched at a higher level of abstraction and referring to both behaviour and conceptualisations related to the use of reading and/or writing. 'Literacy practices' incorporate not only 'literacy events', as empirical occasions where literacy is integral, but also 'folk models' of those events and the ideological preconceptions that underpin them.

Barton (1994) similarly places emphasis on the literacy event, 'an occasion in everyday life when the written word has a role' (p. 36), and literacy practices – the 'general cultural ways of utilizing literacy which people draw upon in a literacy event' (p. 37).   In exploring these cultural ways of using literacy, we are required to acknowledge the way different people are positioned in relation to the literacies which dominate within a society. There has been much research, influenced by the New Literacy Studies, which has done this, and which has also highlighted the ways in which individuals are able to utilise their linguistic resources to negotiate their position within multilingual and multiliterate worlds.

2.7.2 Multiliteracies and multilingual literacy

A basic concern of the New Literacy Studies, then, is to avoid the notion of 'literacy' as a single, universal practice. As Barton (1994: 38) explains,

> a literacy is a stable, coherent, identifiable configuration of practices such as *legal literacy*, or the literacy of specific workplaces. In multilingual situations, different literacies will often be associated with different languages or different scripts.[9]

Within this view, literacy within a school context is only one example of many literacies.   Gee (1990: xv) sees literacy as one of many 'Discourses' – namely, 'integral combinations of sayings-doings-thinkings-feelings-valuings'. He argues that 'reading' and 'writing' can only be conceptualised as 'reading or writing *something* […] in a certain way, with certain values, while at least appearing to think and feel in certain ways' (p. xvii). The literacy of school, and indeed each of the many different ways students are called upon to read and write in school, would be

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[9] Italics in original

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examples of a 'certain way' of engaging with text. For Gee, literacy is a secondary Discourse, learnt along with many other 'ways' after one has mastered one's primary Discourse, 'which is a framework, or base for their acquisition of other Discourses later in life' (p. 151). Secondary Discourses are developed through having access to and practice in the institutions they represent. Each Discourse will have an associated use of language. Gee contends that 'literacy' is 'mastery, or fluent control over a secondary Discourse. Therefore, literacy is always plural' (p. 153). Within this plurality, however, there are some literacies which are valorised over others, and these dominant literacies provide 'avenues to acquiring social goods' (Lankshear, 1997: 69). There has been much interest in the balance of power within this relationship between community practices and the dominant discourses of school. The latter are most often represented in English. It is acknowledged that there are many literacies in English which are not necessarily represented within school, however, and much research has recently been conducted, for example, on the role of digital literacies in the lives of young people outside school (for example, Davies, 2006; Dowdall, 2006). However, within the context of this study, I wish to focus here on the diverse experience represented by multilingual literacies.

Lo Bianco points out that 'as the largest signifying system and set of practices available to humans, languages represent the embodiment of pluralist alternatives' (p. 100). However, he goes on to highlight the lack of support given to a plural model of language and literacy:

> Many children utilise complex literacy awareness and talent daily; literacies
> which invoke ethnic, ideological, religious, script, technical and nation-identity
> statuses [Saxena, 1994] in a marketplace of authorised, traditional and hybrid

forms. Like spoken language, diversity in the plural literacy practices of minority children is often relegated to the margins of their lives (p.101).

Apart from denying ourselves access to the richness of worlds which are 'linguistically and intellectually closed to us', Lo Bianco also warns of the dangers to multilingual children and communities of a shift in the balance of power that would result from 'the normalising or "naturalising" of English language and literacy with consumer capital society' (ibid).

Many studies of literacy practices within different communities have highlighted the diverse 'literacy strengths' (Robertson, 2002) demonstrated by even the youngest children. Gregory and Williams (2000: 10-11) propose a model of early reading success which is 'based on the belief that contrasting rather than similar home and school strategies and practices provide a child with a larger treasure trove from which to draw for school learning'. They describe the multilingual literacy practices seen in communities in London. For example, Bangladeshi-British children were shown to attend Qu'ranic classes for seven hours a week, where they were learning to read the Muslim holy book in Arabic. The children also learnt to read, understand and write in standard Bengali in community classes they attended for six hours a week. At home, dyads of children and older siblings worked on school-set homework in English, whereas the whole family shared experiences of watching television and videos in Hindi and English (p.168).

Robertson (2000) explores the ways in which such multilingual learning can be seen as having an additive effect on the developing skills of young learners. In her study, a young Pakistani-British child is observed engaging in the 'Literacy Hour' in his classroom. Here, the emphasis is on

establishing meaning and there are clear benefits to the child from accessing certain aspects of cultural knowledge, such as 'English middle class story reading practices' (p.122). This class is followed once a week at lunchtimes by an Urdu class taken voluntarily by a teacher at the school. In this class, literacy skills are based around alphabet and pronunciation, with the children expected to show high levels of metalinguistic awareness. Literacy in Urdu, the official language of Pakistan, has high value within the community and learning the language provides an opportunity to engage with one's heritage and continue family ties with the country of origin. Outside school, the young boy attends Qu'ranic Arabic classes, which are attended by Pakistani children in the area from the age of five. The values represented by literacy in this class are once again different, as children are not expected to undertake a quest for 'meaning', but to develop the skills to decode symbols and sounds in a language they do not understand in order to recite and memorise the holy book as an act of worship and community.

Measured against the model of early literacy represented in the National Curriculum, this young boy and others like him show positive advantages in terms of linguistic and psycholinguistic knowledge. However, as they are learning two or more languages simultaneously, they may be disadvantaged by having different stages of progress to that of their monolingual peers. Robertson also argues that socio-cultural knowledge may be broadened by engagement in various practices, but this may also serve as a disadvantage when 'the literacy capital that many emergent bilingual children […] have inherited from their homes does not count in schools' (p. 122).

The impact of 'conflicting visions of what it means to be literate' is also explored by Sarroub (2002: 147). She describes the engagement of Yemeni-American teenage girls, whom she terms *hijabat*, in culturally located literacy practices representing contesting norms. School-based literacy practices are highly valued by the girls, who are shown to be motivated to achieve at school both to fulfil their personal potential as well as to maintain the family's reputation in the USA and in Yemen. Alongside their engagement with school-based literacy, the girls also attend Arabic classes and *muhathara*, or all-female lectures and discussions of holy texts. Here, there is an emphasis on text as representing truths, which sanction behaviour. For example, the girls are guided in their wearing of the *hijab* according to these holy texts. Sarroub also cites examples of texts as representations of the 'in-betweenness' of these girls' experience, where they secretly share and discuss texts that present American values, evaluating these within the context of their own lives. Although Sarroub feels that the textual practices of the community she observed often served to reinforce marginalizing discourses for the girls, she argues that dominant pedagogies of literacy that do not account for multiple literacies can marginalize even further those from minority communities.

Other studies have explored multilingual literacy outside the context of school (such as Saxena, 1994; Jones; 2001; Zubair, 2001). Hartley (1994), for example, describes the shared experience of literacy within a Pakistani Muslim community in East Lancashire. Literacy in Urdu was not universal within the community, particularly so amongst women. However, Hartley notes that 'those with literate skills were seen as having responsibility to use these for the benefit of all' (p. 32). Letters from relatives in Pakistan were shared and discussed within the whole family, and the reply was equally a joint effort, scribed by a literate individual.

Similarly, reading was shared in the form of newspapers, which were read aloud to the family. Formal communication in English was often left to teenagers to explain, and children's developing English literacy was admired and respected, although there was some concern from some women over the lack of ability to share the enjoyment of reading in English with their children.

Within the Welsh context, Jones (2001) observed the multilingual literacy of a community of Welsh-speaking farmers as they engaged with the English bureaucratic systems enforced by the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food and the European Union. She observed the way in which Welsh speaking 'institutional delegates' representing these official bodies were able to negotiate social relations in the locality and mediate the effect of the dominance of English language bureaucracy on local practice.

It is widely recognised, therefore, that literacy is a plural concept, taking multiple and varied forms, which represent different socio-cultural realities. Some of these forms have achieved a higher status in society than others, which most often include multilingual practices. There is much support for the belief in the additive effect of an individual's engagement in different literacies, and the following section explores a theoretic model that I have used to conceptualise the way in which the participants in my study have been able to draw influence from different literacies they experience in their negotiations of identity.

2. 8   The concept of space

There has been a growing focus in recent decades on the concept of space as a discursive model in relation to social and cultural practice. In describing what he saw as 'the social character of space' (p. 27), Lefebvre (1991) developed a trialectic that outlines the ways in which social realities are designed and produced.

The physical embodiment of society around us is classed by Lefebvre as 'perceived space': the urban realities of spaces designed and assigned as places for work, leisure or 'private' life.   An example of a perceived space, therefore, might be a school or a classroom. 'Conceived space', for Lefebvre, represents conceptualised spaces that impact on daily realities. In an educational context, a conceived space may be the school curriculum, which is a socially produced space, representing a dominant embodiment of a society.   The third space described by Lefebvre is the 'lived space': this space is dominated by conceived space and hence the lived space represents the individual's passively experienced reality within a space. It is in the lived space that individuals within a society can use their imaginations to appropriate the space and make symbolic use of its objects.

Lefebvre describes the relationship between producers and users of social space to be one of dominance:

> …the producers of space have always acted in accordance with a representation, while the 'users' passively experienced whatever was imposed upon them inasmuch as it was more or less thoroughly inserted into, or justified by, their representational space (p. 43).

Representations of space in this sense include the conceived spaces of social practice. The 'users' are characterised as passive in the sense that their lived realities are supported by the conceived spaces of dominant social practice around them. For the users of a school curriculum, for example, such a dominant social practice could be said to shape their realities in terms of social expectations: these could include engagement with certain literacies, discourses around academic achievement or the reinforcement of values suggested by curriculum content. However, Lefebvre emphasises that the lived space is a space which 'imagination seeks to change and appropriate' (p.38). As such, the lived space can represent the ways in which people's daily realities differ to the dominant spaces imposed upon them and the lived space can become a space where such dominance is challenged and negotiated. Such 'contradictions to dominant, conceived space enable the impossibility of the production of fixed, stable space' (Sheehy and Leander, 2004: 4).

Foucault (1984) considers the significance of space within society in his lecture entitled 'Of Other Spaces', where he argues that 'the anxiety of our era has to do fundamentally with space, no doubt a great deal more than with time' (p. 23). For our society today, 'space takes for us the form of relations between sites' (ibid). It is this interaction between spaces that concerns Foucault, and without 'the assertive foregrounding of an explicit political project' that Soja (1996: 156) argues is characteristic of Lefebvre's consideration of the production of space, Foucault explores the 'external space' (Foucault, 1986: 23) within which we live our lives.

In much the same way as Lefebvre described individual imaginative interaction with spaces, thus negating the possibility of fixed and stable space, Foucault contends that

the space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs, the space that claws and knaws at us, is also, in itself, a heterogenous space. In other words, we do not live in a kind of void, inside of which we could place individuals and things […] we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another (p. 23).

The particular spaces upon which Foucault concentrates are those which 'have the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror or reflect' (p. 24). In contrast to utopias, which he sees as 'sites with no real place' (ibid), Foucault constructs the idea of 'heterotopias', which are 'places […] outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality' (ibid). He goes on to explore a list of principles which apply to such spaces.

Foucault's first principle of heterotopias is that they are a feature of all cultures, albeit in varied forms. Heterotopias in general may be classified into two categories, however, the first being 'crisis heterotopias', which exist in primitive societies, which are 'reserved for individuals who are, in relation to the society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis' (p.24). Such individuals may be adolescents, pregnant women or the elderly. Although with no real place in our society, remnants of these spaces are still to be found, such as the boarding school, for example. Foucault argues that crisis heterotopias are being replaced by what he terms 'heterotopias of deviation', where 'individuals whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed' (p.25). Such places include psychiatric hospitals or prisons.

Societies can change the historical function of heterotopias, the example given by Foucault being that of the cemetery, which was once a space located at the heart of a city, but which has gradually moved to its outskirts reflecting society's changing attitude towards death. Heterotopias are also capable of 'reflecting in a single space, several sites that are in themselves incompatible'. In this case, the example of the cinema is given. As a fourth principle, Foucault suggests that 'heterotopias are most often linked to slices of time' (p.26) – the museum and the library, for example, reflect this capturing of time within space.

Foucault's fifth principal of heterotopias is that they 'always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable' (ibid). Entry into such spaces requires permission or gesture of one kind or another, whether enforced (as in the case of a prison) or not. Finally, the last principal of heterotopias relates to their 'relation to all the space that remains' (p. 27). The 'extreme example' (ibid) of a colony is given by Foucault to illustrate the way heterotopias have been created in an attempt to have a space that is other, that is 'as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed and jumbled' (ibid).

This emphasis on the interaction between spaces has been the key focus in much of the discursive work on space. As Sheehy and Leander (2004: 1) note:

> Space is the product of socially dynamic relations. Space is not static – as in metaphorical images of borders, centers and margins - it is dynamically relational.

Massey (1994: 120-1) also notes the importance of this relational aspect of space:

> Thinking of places in this way implies that they are not so much bounded areas as open and porous networks of social relations. It implies that their 'identities' are constructed through the specificity of their interaction with other places rather than by counterposition to them.

Consideration of space does not always involve material settings and locations, but can also include mental and metaphorical spaces invoked by cultural and social interactions. hooks (1990) refers to metaphorical space when she describes herself as 'choosing the margin' as a political standpoint. For hooks, engagement with diverse cultural offer can be achieved through moving 'out of one's place'.

> For many of us, that movement requires pushing against oppressive boundaries set by race, sex, and class domination. Initially, then, it is a defiant political gesture. Moving, we confront the realities of choice and location (p. 145).

However, hooks argues that in developing an expressive voice, one must understand 'not just who I am in the present but where I am coming from' (p.146). The particular 'experience of space and location' (p. 148) that is part of hooks' own history as a black woman in America led her to invoke the image of the margin as a space which is 'part of the whole but outside the main body' where 'we looked from both the outside in and from the inside out' (p. 149). In actively choosing for herself this location on the margin, hooks recognises that marginality is 'much more than a site of deprivation; in fact […] it is also the site of radical possibility, a space of resistance' (ibid). Space, therefore, in a metaphoric as well as material sense, is a powerful factor in human agency:

> Spaces can be real and imagined. Spaces can tell stories and unfold histories.
>
> Spaces can be interrupted, appropriated, and transformed through artistic and
>
> literary practice.
>
> As Pratibha Parma notes, "the appropriation and use of space are political
>
> acts" (p. 152).

Many scholars have developed particular interests in the idea of space as a place of interaction and transformation, as is discussed below.

2.8.1 The Third Space

Soja (1996), in his consideration of the ways in which space has been theorised in recent decades, develops a definition of a particular discursive model, which he calls 'Thirdspace':

> I have chosen to call this new awareness Thirdspace and to initiate its
>
> evolving definition by describing it as a product of a "thirding" of the spatial
>
> imagination, the creation of another mode of thinking about space that draws
>
> upon the material and mental spaces of the traditional dualism but extends
>
> well beyond them in scope, substance and meaning. Simultaneously real and
>
> imagined and more (both and also) the exploration of Thirdspace can be
>
> described and inscribed in journeys to a "real and imagined" (or perhaps
>
> "realandimagined" place (p. 11).

Soja's particular concern is in the relationship between physical and social space, and the rejection of traditional binary oppositions between categories of space. "Thirdspace" offers the potential to discuss "how physical space operates in the socialization of human interaction and, concomitantly, how social spaces can shape the physical" (Moje et al, 2004: 42).   Defining spaces in opposition to one another – such as academic versus everyday literacy – involves necessarily selective and

exclusive assumptions about these practices. The concept of Thirdspace suggests an alternative, which recognises the complex interactions between spaces which may be otherwise narrowly defined.

Bhabha (1994) has also used the term third space in his exploration of the problematic notion of cultural identity.   Bhabha calls for thinking around culture that is 'theoretically innovative', and he describes

> the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences. These 'in-between' spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself (p. 2).

'The interstitial perspective' (p.4) is at the heart of Bhabha's image of third space, as a space located at the joining together of language and cultures. This is a space, Bhabha contends, that prevents the polarisation of cultures, and encourages the renegotiation of meanings through interaction. He uses the image of a stairwell between two rooms, describing this space as 'a liminal space' (p.5), which allows 'temporal movement' (ibid) and the very existence of which 'prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial fixities' (ibid).

The third space as an interstitial space has a profound effect on meaning making within cultures. It is this space, according to Bhabha – the 'inter' – that is 'the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *inbetween* space that carries the burden of meaning in a culture' (p. 56).[10]   This is because meaning within culture relies on both a symbol and a culturally

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[10] italics in original

located context within time and space, which provides the context for its symbolization. The point at which both these factors meet is where the act of interpretation takes place. This space is also governed by the general conditions of language. Hence, the very process of interpretation is ambivalent: this 'third space' at the meeting point of a sign and its culturally located meaning is where the potential lies, according to Bhabha, for 'the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meanings and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew' (p. 55).

The term 'third space' is also used in a more explicitly educational context by many who are interested in redefining traditional notions of 'home' and 'school' as oppositional spaces. Moje and her colleagues (2004) see home and community as the 'first space' and school as the 'second space'. Third space allows for the interaction between these two locations. Gutiérrez, Rymes and Larson (1995) and Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López and Tejda (1999) see the third space as a pedagogic resource for 'more authentic interaction' (Gutiérrez et al, 1995: 446) between the discourses represented by the home and school lives of students. This could be in the form of linguistic interaction within the classroom, taking the form of hybrid language (Gutiérrez et al, 1999) or register (Gutiérrez et al, 1995). The third space in this regard is also a platform for students to bring in their own 'knowledges' (Moje et al, 2004: 41), as well a means to encourage 'sociocritical literacy' (Gutiérrez, 2008), where students' own worlds are privileged and everyday literacies reframed in the institutional context.

2.8.2 Literacy and the third space

The third space has been conceptualised as a place of interaction, where meanings are challenged and negotiated. As has been seen, this is a potent concept in educational contexts where consideration of the diverse experiences and knowledge of students can support the breakdown of traditional binaries of school and home which have proven so detrimental to many individuals.   With specific regards to literacy, the concept of space has also enabled interpretation of practices that goes beyond the consideration of places such as the classroom or bedroom as 'readily apparent material settings' (Sheehy and Leander, 2004: 3).   For those who see space as a theoretical lens through which to view literacy practices, 'context is brought to the fore as an ongoing process and practice deeply tied up with the word' (ibid).

For Moje (2004: 16), 'all spaces are in some sense "literate" spaces'; that is to say that people, in their everyday engagement with spaces, make use of a range of written texts and other forms of representation, such as dress or icons.   'In the same sense', she argues, 'all spaces are spaces of identity enactment, and these enactments shape and are shaped by literate practices' (ibid).   In her research with Latino/a youth in a midwestern American city, Moje has notes how these young people resist singular notions of ethnic, gender or class identity, through their negotiation of a range of spatial positionings, which afford them opportunities to support or contest diverse aspects if their identity. Moje traces this by following her participants on a walk around the city, observing 'how people make sense of and act in spaces' (p.18). Her account of the walk describes the way 'youth had access to different material, textual, discursive, and human resources in different spaces'

(p.36).   She recommends, therefore, that there would be pedagogical advantages to working within such 'life spaces' as these, 'rather than against them' (p.37).

Literacy in its diverse forms can also represent a space of negotiation of meaning, where 'different lifeworlds can flourish' (the New London Group, 2000: 16).   The New London Group explore the way in which different literacies can be seen as 'forms of Designing' (ibid: p.22).   The act of reading or writing, according to this model, is based on encounters with 'Available Designs', represented in different discourses of literacy within the individual's experience.   These encounters also invoke the reader/listener's experience of other Available Designs 'as a resource for making new meanings from the texts they encounter' (p.23).   This meeting of the new resources encountered and the existing Available Designs involves an individual process of meaning making which 'in turn transforms the resources they have received in the form of Available Designs into The Redesigned' (p. 23).   Engagement in literacy practices, therefore, could be seen as a form of third space between the text and the meaning created by the reader (or writer).   In this third space, there is room for the negotiation and meanings and creation of alternatives.   Moreover, the New London Group argue that in the process of engagement with text – which they term Design – 'meaning makers remake themselves' (p.23).

> They   reconstruct   and   renegotiate   their   identities.   Not   only,   has   the
> Redesigned been actively made, but it is also evidence of the ways in which
> the active intervention in the world that is Designing has transformed the
> designer (ibid).

Literacy, therefore, may be aligned closely to the concept of space – both in terms of the material representations of discourses within which individuals interact, as well as the metaphoric realm of meaning making and negotiation of identities. In both senses, the concept of space is one that is significant in my analysis of the language and literacy practices of the girls in this study.

At this point, I turn to an outline of the methodological issues relating to the study itself, before beginning to relay the narrative I have constructed of the experience of language and literacy in the lives of my participants, based on the data collected during my research.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1   Research design

I considered a research design that would allow me to broaden my previous consideration of bilingual literacy practices (Jones, 2002).   Two communities of which I had personal experience provided clear examples of very different experiences of bilingualism; as such, I identified two schools within these communities to approach in order to gain access to a sample of respondents.   The schools were chosen as a convenience sample. Pseudonyms are used for both schools: Ysgol Gymraeg is the school in Wales, and City Community School the inner city English school. All individual participants are also assigned pseudonyms, as they were assured during the interview process.

Ysgol Gymraeg was my own former secondary school in North West Wales, which at the outset of the research still had the same headteacher, and at which a relative of mine was about to begin Year 7. My intention was to have my relative as part of the research group in order to provide an opportunity for me to more easily gain further insight into the experience of the participants outside the school context. City Community School was the last school at which I had taught; as such I had personal contacts within the staff and had tentatively agreed with the headteacher before I left my teaching post that the research would be possible.

I identified the profile of participants with whom I hoped to work as bilingual girls within the Year 7 cohort who had started at the school in September 2003. I then decided upon a schedule of six interviews with

each group, to be conducted at the rate of one per term at each school, over the course of Years 7 and 8.   As well as this, at the outset of the research, I designed a questionnaire which was to be administered to the whole of Year 7 at each school - bilingual and non-bilingual, boys and girls - in order to gather data to contextualise the literacy practices of the interview group.

3.2   Sample selection

The definition of bilingualism is open to debate, as I discussed in the literature review.   Given the age of the participants in this study, as well as their varied experiences of bilingualism, I decided that a single, easily understood definition should be used for clarity.   This was important during the administration of the questionnaire in particular, as it would be difficult to negotiate different definitions with such a large number of participants. The definition given, therefore, was this: if an individual spoke a language other than English at home, even if for part of the time, they could class themselves as bilingual.   With regards to the questionnaire, therefore, the identification of bilinguals (and, indeed, those who were literate in more than one language) would be through self-report.   This definition is not unproblematic. For example, 12 of those who responded 'No' to the question of whether or not they spoke a language other than English went on to complete the Welsh version of the questionnaire, suggesting that they could indeed read and write in Welsh, presumably having learnt at school.   This group made up 8.8 per cent of Ysgol Gymraeg's sample, although no data could be gathered on the minority language practices of these respondents because the structure of the questionnaire guided them away from questions aimed at 'bilinguals'.   The self-report of bilingualism could also be seen to account for the range of

bilingual experience represented in the questionnaire data. The use of this definition for selection also reflects a range of bilingual experience within the interview groups, with the broadest range seen in the inner city school.

Once access had been agreed with the respective headteachers at the sample schools, the sample of girls was to be identified for the interviews. The identification of participants for the interview stage of the research was partly negotiated with school staff. At the school in Wales, classes were organised into Welsh medium, bilingual and English medium teaching groups, based on parental choice. The headteacher offered me a free choice of classes and suggested that the interviews take place during the timetabled tutor time, which incorporated the pastoral/PSHE curriculum. As I had hoped to involve my own relative within the research, I chose her class.

At City Community School, the headteacher, with whom I had agreed that the research would be possible, had in the meantime been seconded to other duties. I therefore had to negotiate with the acting head, who had been the deputy head during the time I had worked at the school. He suggested that the research be negotiated with the head of English. As my former line manager and colleague, the head of English was keen to be of assistance and offered her own English class as a sample.

Within each class, a smaller group of respondents was to be identified. This was to be based around the criterion for bilingualism that was given to the students when completing the questionnaire: that is, that if an individual spoke a language other than English at home, then they could define themselves as bilingual. At Ysgol Gymraeg, the class identified for my sample was a Welsh-English bilingual class, and the headteacher

reported each member of the class to be bilingual. As I had no criteria for selection other than bilingual girls, and I wished to involve my relative in the group, I felt my selection could not be random. My research group was therefore identified as all of the girls in this class. As it happened, this particular class had a significant imbalance of gender; this meant that the group I met at the first introductory meeting consisted of nineteen girls.

The initial introductory meeting with my respondents at Ysgol Gymraeg therefore resembled a lesson, with almost a full class. The girls were invited to share information about themselves such as their use of language at home as well as their interests, family etc. To facilitate this with such a large group, a short 'Personal File' was designed for each to complete in written form, followed by a short discussion about the research and answering of questions.

Following this initial meeting with the respondents, I quickly came to the conclusion that the number of girls in the group was too great to allow for detailed discussion during subsequent interviews. The enthusiasm of the girls for the project and their willingness to participate was clear to me, however (although this may well have been partly due to the potential for regularly missing tutor time!). I felt it would be difficult to exclude half of the girls, and also felt unsure of any fair criteria upon which to do so. Before the next session, which would be the first interview proper, I therefore decided to split the group into two, envisaging a group who would contribute in recorded oral discussion, which would then be transcribed, with the remainder constituting a group that would respond to the interview points in written form in their own personal notebook, which I would be able to take away and analyse for validation purposes. I had an idea of which girls to ask into which groups, but felt self-selection to be

fairer. When the group was asked their preferences, they divided themselves into two groups of ten and nine, without further intervention. The two groups closely approximated the individuals whom I had partly envisaged in each, based on a mix of background as well as confidence in talking about their experiences. Subsequent interviews were therefore conducted according to this structure, with nine girls participating orally in the recorded interview, and ten of the girls writing in the background. It is data from those who participated in the interviews that makes up the main part of analysis in this study; data from the written responses was used solely for validation purposes.

At City Community School, it had been agreed with the head of English that the sample be comprised of bilinguals based on self-report. I was invited into the start of a lesson where she asked those who felt they fulfilled the criteria of being bilingual to take part. This left me with a group of nine girls: five girls from families of Pakistani Muslim heritage, two of Indian Sikh heritage, with two girls of mixed heritage: one of these has a mother of Indian Sikh heritage and a Jamaican father, and another has a father of Pakistani Muslim heritage and a white British mother.

3.3   The focus groups

3.3.1 Contexts

The community of the Welsh group of bilingual girls is in the heart of *Y Fro Gymraeg*, the Welsh speaking heartland. It is an area where over 80 per cent of the population have some knowledge of the Welsh language and of those, 71.8 per cent are able to speak, read and write in the language (Aitchison and Carter, 2004). Welsh is the main medium of education in

this area and, at primary level, it is the sole medium of most pupils' education, with English not being introduced to classrooms in this area of Wales before age 7. At secondary level, pupils are divided into groups, based on parental choice, which are taught either more or less wholly in Welsh or bilingually, with a minority educated predominantly in English. At the time of the interviews, the girls in the interview group were in a class that was taught bilingually.

The community of which the British-Asian respondents are a part is a well-established immigrant community in an inner city in the midlands of England; the girls themselves are of the second and third generation of immigrants from India and Pakistan. The immigrant community within the city is made up predominantly of those of this heritage, but is growing in number following more significant migration from Eastern Europe. The main community languages within the south Asian population of the city are Urdu, Punjabi and Gujerati. Literacy in these languages is represented around the city in the form of signs and in public information literature such as leaflets; this is specifically noticeable in the district that is home to the main body of the community. Dialect forms of these languages, such as Patwari and Mirpuri are more commonly spoken in the home. However, these languages are not committed to print.

3.3.2 The groups

A range of bilingual experience was represented within the Welsh interview group, from those who spoke very little Welsh at home, having English speaking parents who chose for them to be educated bilingually, to those whose families interacted solely in Welsh. Equally, the girls of British-Asian heritage brought varied experiences to the group, of different

languages within different contexts, as well as varying levels of literacy within these languages.

Hennessy and Heary (2005) recognise the potential for focus group interviews to encourage responses in a safe peer environment where individuals can share experiences and gain confidence from each other. The varied experiences of the girls as well as their daily interaction in school life meant that there was a plenty of opportunity within each interview for responses to spark those of others, or for individual responses to be challenged, and therefore clarified or extended (Lewis, 1992: 414).

The nature of the group interaction is, however, clearly important to the data gathered. During the analysis, it became clear that data needed to be considered in light of the particular dynamic that existed between the girls and the impact this had on discussion. As Delamont (2002: 128) notes, 'group interviews with school pupils [can] encourage them to reminisce, share experiences and even "egg each other on"'. This was seen, for example, when the British-Asian girls discussed their trips to the subcontinent, where discussion moved from consideration of family links and identity to the bodily functions of farm animals in public places. The focus group has, however, been acknowledged as a particularly useful method because of the potential to analyse participants' interaction as part of the research data (Oates, 2000). The girls in Wales, for example, used interpersonal interaction as a means of displaying loyalties to the cause of the Welsh language, as will be outlined in more detail during later analysis.

3.4   Conducting the research: gatekeeping issues

Staff at both schools were extremely helpful in the initial stage of the research. This was possibly due in part to the personal connection I had with the schools in question.   The research was organised and arrangements made for it to commence when difficulties arose due to changes in leadership at Ysgol Gymraeg.

The headteacher with whom I had made the initial arrangements, including those for administering the questionnaire, retired at the end of the first term of the research. He had begun to delegate the matter of my research to the pastoral deputy, but difficulties arose when the full implications of the school's involvement did not seem to have been communicated. The first difficulty came when I arrived at the school to administer the questionnaire early in the spring term of the first year. Despite prior confirmation on the telephone that arrangements were in place, the school denied any knowledge of this when I arrived.   This meant the arrangements for administering the questionnaires had to be modified, as detailed below.

The interview programme continued during the first year, but when the time came to make arrangements for the fourth interview, in the first term of the second year, Ysgol Gymraeg decided that it could no longer accommodate my research and that their involvement was no longer possible.   However, after more detailed communication with the headteacher, the school fortunately felt that the research could continue and three more interviews were conducted.

Although working with City Community School was less complicated, partly due to my own geographic proximity and personal connections with staff, changes in the English department and the fact that interviews were arranged for lesson time meant that organisation of access to the group was complicated by issues of timetabling and the demands of the curriculum. Nevertheless, there were no issues over the willingness of the participants, and the interviews were all eventually conducted as planned and the required data gathered.

3.5   The questionnaire

A self-completion questionnaire was designed to gather data about a range of literacy and language practices of students from the whole of Year 7 of both schools involved in the study, male and female, bilingual and non-bilingual. I felt that gathering data from all groups would be important in order to contextualise any findings from the interview stage, providing a fuller picture of the reading choices and literacy practices of not only the girls within the study but also their peers. My intention was that analysis of the quantitative data gathered by means of the questionnaire would enable key themes to be drawn out to underpin the main focus of the study.

The questionnaire was modelled on one I had used in my preliminary study, which gathered similar data from one smaller group of mixed age bilingual respondents (Jones, 2002; Jones, 2004). I expanded the original questionnaire for the current study, drawing as its model that used by Hall and Coles (1999) in their study of children's reading choices.

A range of open and closed questions covered seven areas of literacy and language practice related to both bilingual and non-bilingual respondents'

experience both within school and at home. Questions were divided into sections on: Talking, Writing, Reading, Television and Film, Experience of School, respondents' own opinions about reading and writing and their lives outside school. All respondents were given the same questionnaire, with questions structured for bilingual students to provide information about mother tongue practices where relevant, whilst non-bilingual respondents were asked to move to the next relevant question, as indicated. A bilingual version was administered in the Welsh school on the request of the Head, reflecting the cultural norm within the setting. Respondents were advised that they had a free choice of language in which they could respond.   The majority responded in Welsh, in line with linguistic profile of the school. However, fifteen of those who could be classed as bilingual (13.5 per cent of this group) chose to answer in English.

The main body of the questionnaire had been used in my previous study, where I had administered it with small groups and had been on-hand throughout to discuss any difficulties. I also conducted a small pilot of both English and Welsh versions of the newer text prior to administration and made the relevant changes, which were minor and mainly concerned the wording of questions and the layout. For instance, the addition of 'Yes, a little bit' was suggested by the fact that some respondents did not feel their own skills fully warranted the 'Yes' response to the question 'Can you write in language other than English?' Others who took part in the pilot suggested arrows, which directed their attention to the relevant areas in which to answer.   I therefore believed that as far as possible, the design of the questionnaire would be appropriate in the context in which I intended to administer it.

Arrangements were made with both schools to administer the questionnaire early in the spring term of 2004, i.e. just over one term after the respondents had started Year 7. The initial arrangement had been for the Year group to gather in the school hall and complete the questionnaire at the same time, and that I would be present to give instructions and provide support for the staff and students involved. However, due to logistical arrangements at both schools, it transpired that this would not be possible. The questionnaires therefore had to be left at the school to be administered to the year group by staff, class by class. In Wales, this was undertaken in form time, whereas in the English school, the task was undertaken by teachers of English during their lessons. Instructions were provided both to the students on the front of the questionnaires, and to staff, in order to try and maintain anonymity and individuality of responses. However, the nature of the administration must be considered when regarding the data gathered.

As Robson (2002) indicates, there are many disadvantages to a self-completion questionnaire. Not least in this context is the fact that a response bias may be seen in terms of the ability of some respondents to read, understand and respond to the questions. From conversations with staff who administered the questionnaire, no doubt influenced, at least in part, by my request that there be minimal influence from the teacher on the responses, there seemed to be a range of support available to the students, from literally being told to get on with it on their own, to having support staff read and scribe answers for them. There is also the issue of the time given to students to complete the questionnaire. Based on the pilot, I suggested that staff allow between 15 and 30 minutes for students to complete the questionnaire, depending on their reading ability. However, there were a few questionnaires which were not wholly

completed, and one can assume that time may have been a factor here, along with motivation, as it is not unreasonable to assume that respondents with a more negative attitude towards literacy may not particularly enjoy having to answer questions on the subject. On this theme, however, the self-administration and anonymity of the questionnaire seemed to provide a positive opportunity for some to share honestly their opinions about English and minority language literacy practices.

Again, given the nature of the questions, one can also assume some degree of social desirability bias, where respondents may choose to portray their reading in a more positive (or perhaps in some cases, negative) light than is accurate. The manner of administration was similar to that described by Denscombe and Aubrook (1992), who recognise that while a high response rate can be secured through school administered questionnaires, the ethics of assumed participation must also be considered. Participants were ostensibly being asked to give their responses freely; however, within what Denscombe and Aubrook have recognised as what might be regarded as 'just another piece of school work' (p.113), it is probably the case that there was an assumed obligation on their part to fill in the questionnaire. The institutional context of the administration in this case reflected the authority relationships within which students approach their work in school. As such, interpretation of the data should be mindful of the particular circumstances of its gathering. For example, where respondents were filling out their questionnaire in front of their English teacher, a particular attitude or approach towards literacy practices may be foregrounded. There may be some pressure to portray a more positive attitude towards the mother tongue within the context of a Welsh medium school, for example, or for a bilingual sitting next to a non-

bilingual. Hopkins (1993: 145) highlights the 'problem of "right" answers' which can be seen to possibly influence the responses of some, particularly when it came to whether or not they were actually bilingual, preferring to respond in the affirmative, despite their responses indicating that they did not, in fact, fit the definition provided for them.

In terms of the study as a whole, the questionnaire characterised my early research focus on what could be seen as a narrow, rather positivist view of literacy practices, with a focus on reading and writing in the school setting. The data gathered does, therefore, reflect the particular types of literacy practices which are foregrounded by the questions asked. This data is useful to an extent in adding to the picture of literacy practices of both groups of bilinguals and was also a useful form of validation for some of the comments made during the interviews. However, as the study evolved to consider a broader approach, the data gathered from the questionnaire constituted a less substantial part of the picture. The data and analysis presented in Chapter 4 are intended, therefore, as part of the overall context of the language and literacy practices of the research participants.

3.6   The interviews

As has been discussed, a key objective of this study, as it evolved, was to avoid generalisation and to create a narrative which represented individual experiences. The richness of experience within a particular context cannot be gleaned from quantitative methods alone (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004). Through the use of semi-structured interviews, I hoped to conduct research that was inclusive, which involved the participants in the ongoing generation of their own narrative, through regular opportunities to review

and discuss the data gathered.   Examples of interview schedules are included in the Appendix.

3.6.1 Logistics and context

As outlined above, for the main part of the research, a series of semi-structured interviews was conducted with both groups over two years. The themes of each interview were based on the issues of bilingualism and literacy, with focus shifting each time within this frame.

The interviews took place within the school setting in each case. Given the hectic nature of a secondary school, it was somewhat understandable that the logistics of my interviews did not feature as a key priority on many occasions; this meant that interviews had to be conducted in various locations including the school hall, on the floor of the girls' gym changing rooms, in the library (with another lesson taking place within the same space) and in unused offices (where support staff were not always informed of our presence!).   As such, it is testament to the enthusiasm and integrity of the participants that they remained focused for the most part and that I was able to gather quality data within these contexts.

Equally, the communication of my requests to interview staff was not always reliable, which led me have to 'collar' teachers on my last visit to Ysgol Gymraeg in order to conduct interviews at very short notice. These interviews were clearly not conducted in the best circumstances, therefore, but the professionalism of the teachers in this situation meant I was still able to elicit their responses on key issues.

The interviews at Ysgol Gymraeg were carried out in Welsh; these were transcribed into English for analysis. Interviews at City Community were conducted in English. A discrepancy could well be identified here in the methods of data collection with both groups. However, I was clear at the outset that data of a very different nature would be gathered from Wales had I have conducted the interviews in English, and my ability to interview the girls about their language in that language enabled me to have insight into 'some of the minute linguistic details' revealed (Li Wei, 2000). Moje et al (2004: 48) also acknowledge the benefits of being able to conduct interviews in participants' own language in order to 'communicate effectively, while also assessing language practices *in situ*.' Indeed, I felt the nature of the interview itself and my own ability to forge a relationship with the participants would be affected given that I knew the girls could all speak Welsh and that they knew I could do so. At City Community School, the minority languages within the group included Urdu, Punjabi, Mirpuri and Arabic. I was unable to conduct an interview in any of these languages, and, as was found by Mills (2001) in her study of third generation Asian children, participants at City Community School reported that they did not have the fluency in these languages to discuss the issues covered in the interviews.

3.6.2 Implications and considerations

Although I found the interview schedule to have been an effective method of gathering quite a volume of data on the themes I wished to explore, during this process, and in the subsequent analysis, I became aware of some key considerations. Reinharz (1992) outlines several methodological advantages to the interview, including the opportunity for researchers to access individuals' thoughts in their own words, in order to provide 'a

valuable reflection of reality' (p.19).   Indeed, I had expected the interviews to be a perfect opportunity for the girls to articulate the complexity of their position, given the fact that, as Rogoff (2003: 85) states, 'people who have experienced variation are much more likely to be aware of their own cultural ways'.

However, as Silverman (2001: 29) points out, 'what people say in answer to interview questions does not have a stable relationship with how they behave in naturally occurring situations.'   This was particularly born out in the comments made by some of the Welsh girls that suggested a level of nationalism and pride in their language, which did not correlate with the negative generalisations they made about literacy practices in the Welsh language. These points are related in detail in Chapter 5.

As Greene and Hill (2005: 6) reflect, 'people report on their motivations and emotions only to the extent that they are aware of them and only in the manner that they have come to interpret them'. This became an important consideration during the interview process and I aimed to revisit in each session key themes such as the girls' conceptions of bilingualism and how they related aspects of this to their developing identity, in order to develop a picture of the ways in which the girls were aware of these aspects and the context in which they were interpreting them. A closer focus on this as an explicit feature of the girls' talk is also explored in Chapter 5.

3.7   Validation

During the process of collection and analysis of data, several measures were taken in order to validate responses. Much of the data gathered

during interviews that related to specific literacy practices could be validated by the quantitative data gathered in the questionnaire. Triangulation of interview data was supported in Wales by instituting the notebook process with half of the group. Responses to written prompts identical to those which shaped the semi-structured interviews provided some validation for key attitudes towards both specific literacy practices as well as more general attitudes to the larger themes of bilingualism and identity.

Interviews were conducted with key members of staff at both schools. These included staff from the English and Welsh departments at Ysgol Gymraeg, and community language teachers at City Community School. Their responses provided a context for much of the data gathered through the girls' interviews, as well as being useful for validation.

My initial thoughts and findings after each interview were fed back to the girls during the next session, often providing a platform for further discussion of any key issues, or for further clarification of their attitudes and ideas. Towards the end of the research, I presented my observations to the girls of both groups in the form of a validation exercise. Statements were listed on a sheet to represent a range of opinions and assumptions around the key themes of the interviews. Some of these were those articulated by the girls in the interviews, others represented varying degrees of opposition to them. Girls were invited to check this list and highlight the responses that they felt most accurately reflected their own views. This exercise provided important validation of my findings and a valuable chance to discuss the research findings with the girls at the end of their participation.

For the City Community girls, the opportunity arose for them to record video diaries using university facilities. A trip was organised with the assistance of their Head of Year, and each of the girls recorded their thoughts and experiences on video, based on the key themes of the research.

The interpretation I ascribe to the girls' talk and to their particular literacy practices has been reached, therefore, with the support of the participants themselves.

3.8   My own role

Li Wei (2000: 475) asserts that

> the identity of the researcher is extremely important, as it affects the aims and objectives of the research, the relationship with the people being studied and the choice of theoretical and methodological perspectives.

Reflection on my own role within this study suggests many important issues to be considered during the analysis and discussion of the data. The study has its origins in very personal experience and involves settings with which I have had close contact, as well as the participation of a close family member. In his monograph on ethnography, Van Maanen (1988: ix) sees this method as 'highly particular and hauntingly personal'. Although this study cannot be described as an ethnography, I feel that these particular features of ethnographic method have still had a strong influence on my approach.

The research represents levels of personal involvement that situate my role as researcher at the heart of the work in many ways. The implications of my own position within the research are different for both groups. These issues need to be explored, therefore, as potentially having an impact upon the data gathered and its analysis, both with regards to the individual cases laid out for each group, and the thematic connections made between them.

For the group in Wales, I came to the research with my own autobiography, which was, in many ways, advantageous to the data collection. Interviews could be carried out in the main language of the group, and the benefits of a native speaker as researcher have been noted (Li Wei, 2000; Moje et al, 2004). Hennessy and Heary (2005: 242) also recognise the fact that 'children may feel more comfortable when discussing topics if they can readily identify with the moderator'. However, it should also be recognised that such a position could be problematic in terms of both data collection and analysis. Silverman (2001: 86) notes that 'interviewer and interviewee actively construct some version of the world appropriate to what we take to be self-evident about the person to whom we are speaking and the context of the question.' During the interviews, it occurred to me that the participants' responses may well be influenced by their perception of my role as an adult Welsh speaker. As such, they may have interpreted my questions within the discourse of established attitudes towards bilingualism and the Welsh language, and be giving the answers that they perceived I would want or expect to hear. Equally, in terms of the analysis process, I had to remain aware of my own autobiography and consider the participants' responses independently of this; that is, I should not impose my own story onto theirs.

During the research in the inner city school, my position was slightly different. Not only was I not a speaker of the languages in question, I was also ethnically excluded from the community I was researching. Edwards (1990) discusses the issue of researchers interviewing across ethnic groups and concludes that there can be implications for the information given by one group to a person they see as a representative of the other. In the interviews conducted with the British-Asian girls, there were instances when my skin colour was seen by the girls as a difference between them and myself. In a discussion on the way 'white people' appear paranoid when community languages are spoken around them, one of the girls, Sonia, offered the following contribution:

> Sonia: You know white people, if you're talking about them, they know you're saying 'gordi' so my mum says 'jitti'.
> Rukhshana: That's a new one, that is.
> Sonia: No offence, Miss.

The difference in experience between the participants in the inner city school and myself became clearer after the first few interviews and preliminary analysis was conducted. The assumptions which underlay the research questions, about the role of reading and the potential for further publication in minority languages, were based on what I realised were fundamentally culturally incompatible assumptions about literacy and its importance in different contexts. The girls in this focus group, through their interview responses, enabled me to move from a starting position of the deficit model of literacy in the community languages to what I felt was a richer analysis of the context of this literacy and the positive role played by text in their lives.

My role as a teacher was another factor to consider. Some of the girls had friends and siblings who remembered me as a teacher at the school, and I was recognised in and around the school when in the girls' company. This will no doubt have had some impact on their perceptions of me as an adult within a school setting. In fact, throughout the interviews, the girls addressed me as 'Miss', as in Sonia's comment above. The interviews could therefore be considered an extension of their experience of the discourse of school and their own position within it.

However, as Li Wei (2000: 482) points out, 'perhaps the most significant and noticeable effect of the researcher's identity is on the relationship that he or she can build up with the speaker whose language behaviour he or she intends to study'. Over the course of the interviews, a warm relationship was established with the girls in both groups, and particularly so in the inner city school. In general, these girls were more open in their discussion, compared to a more laconic and serious approach from the girls in Wales. This may be partly due to cultural factors beyond the scope of this study, such as personal relationships within the class, or the general ethos of the school, or could be due to an overexposure to issues surrounding their bilingualism in a country where this has come to dominate much of the discourse, even at an everyday level, as will be seen in later analysis. Within the British-Asian group, the enthusiasm to share their experiences could be attributed to the fact that they were given an opportunity, within the context of their everyday school lives, to focus on their own identities and cultures, rather than the English-dominant culture of the school. The fact that I was seen as an outsider in this perhaps meant that they felt free to offer any information they felt relevant without feeling what they were saying would be judged inaccurate or inappropriate. My position as a bilingual also meant that there was an understanding at one

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level of a common experience, and the girls were often interested to hear my own answers to questions raised, such as 'what do you like about being bilingual?'. One participant, a year into the research, said that being involved in the interviews, speaking into a microphone and having associations with the university, had made her feel 'glamorous'. The trip to the university campus to record video diaries had an impact on some of the girls who remarked that they had enjoyed talking about their experiences, one suggesting they should now write a book! On reflection, therefore, I felt that my own experience as a bilingual was beneficial in developing relationships with the respondents, who, as 'the ultimate gatekeepers in deciding what they are going to say or do' (Mitchell and Reid-Walsh, 2002: 26) gave me considerable and privileged access into their world.

3.9   Analysis process

Analysis of the data gathered from the questionnaire was conducted electronically by means of SPSS software, which proved an invaluable tool in answering those research questions that were of a more quantitative nature. The level of analysis required consisted of descriptive and simple comparative statistics, which meant that only relatively straightforward processes were needed, such as chi-square tests for establishing reliability.

The main concern of the study, however, is with individual experiences. The next stage of the analysis was to begin to explore the reality behind the figures, as revealed by the interview data. In my analysis of the qualitative data gathered my aim was to create a system of categories and codes that enabled a narrative to emerge from the data. As Moje and her colleagues found (2004), analysis of data according to this approach does not presume a lack of guiding questions and theories, and I was aware

throughout that I was bringing 'particular perspectives and views to the analysis that shaped what [I] was able to see in terms of data categories' (p. 50).

Relatively early on in this process, I was forced to radically modify the initial research questions which, I came to realise, had framed literacy practices in minority languages from the hegemonic position of a dominant language culture. The thoughts and experiences articulated by the girls enabled me to move away from the deficit model of reading in minority languages suggested by these questions - a position I had taken in previous work (Jones, 2002; 2004) - to consider the rich cultural and political context of both communities and explore the ways literacy is used by both groups for exploration and representation of identity. Hence, the quantitative imbalance represented in both groups in the kinds of reading taking place in English and in minority languages takes lesser priority in the final analysis than does the far more complex, varied (and, ultimately, to my mind, interesting) practices which the girls describe.

3.10   Organisation of the thesis and notes on transcription

The findings from the questionnaire are outlined in Chapter 4, with analysis and discussion incorporated in order to more efficiently draw out the key themes to emerge from this initial stage of the research. Greater focus is then given to the two groups studied: the Welsh girls in Chapter 5 and the British-Asian girls in Chapter 6. Each of the chapters concludes with a vignette of a particular literacy practice that I feel represents the complex and interactive way in which the participants engage with literacy practices to explore and demonstrate their identities. These vignettes are intended to provide further insight into the girls' practices, which may not

necessarily have been represented in their interviews (Rampton, 1995: 5). They also serve as examples upon which the theoretical conclusions of the thesis rest, as outlined in Chapter 7.

Quotations from the transcribed interviews are, in the case of Ysgol Gymraeg, translations from the original Welsh. As such, it is hard to reflect some of the more colloquial tone and style of some comments, although I have attempted to do this where appropriate. Excerpts of the girls' talk taken from City Community interviews are represented as accurately as possible to reflect the particular way in which the girls spoke; as such, they include grammatically incorrect colloquialisms. Clarity, in this case, is not affected unduly, I feel, and authenticity retained - with the benefit of the reader being relieved of the constant interruption of '(*sic*)'.

Chapter 4

QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

4.1   Introduction

In this chapter, I use some of the data gathered from the questionnaire to give an outline of the linguistic contexts of both schools, before focusing on findings that relate more directly to the reading and writing of the young people in the two communities of the study.

Data from both schools are presented together. These data are not sufficiently robust to allow me to generalise about bilingual literacy in two very different bilingual communities. However, I have noted similarities and differences between the groups where I feel it reflects variation in the experience of bilinguality between the two communities. Although this study does not intend to offer a detailed account of differences in the literacy practices of boys and girls, I have included points of difference between the female and male respondents in this chapter, when I feel they contribute to an overall picture of the practices of the girls who form the main interview groups.

The purpose of the quantitative data collection, gathered by means of the questionnaire, was to inform some of the preliminary themes of my research. However, as I illustrated in Chapters 1 and 3, my research evolved considerably during the course of the study and moved away from the original emphasis on the quantitative analysis of bilingual reading choices. This chapter is presented at this point in the thesis, therefore, to provide some context for the more detailed consideration of literacy practices that follows in subsequent chapters. Quantitative data drawn

from the questionnaire are also used to inform discussion in Chapters 5 and 6 about specific aspects of literacy practices described by the girls.

4.2   The sample

The questionnaire was administered to the whole of Year 7 at both the schools involved in the study. The total sample included 365 cases: 136 at Ysgol Gymraeg and 229 at City Community School (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Numbers of respondents at each school

	Year 7 questionnaire respondents	
	Number	%
City Community School	229	62.7
Ysgol Gymraeg	136	37.3
Total	365	100

Of the whole sample, 53.4 per cent were boys, 46.6 per cent girls. Within schools, however, there was an imbalance between sexes, with 59.8 per cent boys at City Comprehensive School, 40.2 per cent girls, while the position was almost reversed at Ysgol Gymraeg with 42.6 per cent boys and 57.4 per cent girls (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Number of respondents by gender

	Boys		Girls		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
City Community School	137	59.3	92	40.2	229	100
Ysgol Gymraeg	58	42.6	78	57.4	136	100
Whole sample	195	53.4	170	46.6	365	100

Responses to the first question of the questionnaire established each respondent as bilingual or not. Given the complexities of defining bilingualism, which I outlined in Chapter 2, the notes supporting teachers administering the questionnaire included a specific definition which they were asked to explain to respondents: a bilingual person, in the context of this questionnaire, was one who spoke a language other than English at home, even if this meant for only some of the time. For clarity therefore, the following data assumes that respondents who answered 'Yes' to the question 'Do you speak a language other than English at home?' were bilingual, and those who answered 'No' were not. It is fully acknowledged that this definition of bilinguals on the basis of self-report may lead to the inclusion of cases which defy particular definitions of bilingualism and, likewise, exclude others. In fact, a total of 12 respondents who answered 'No' to the question about whether or not they spoke a language other than English at home completed the Welsh version of the questionnaire. However, in the context of explaining the concept to a large group of 11 and 12 year olds, the definition given seemed most appropriate. Details of responses to Question 1 are given in Table 4.3 below.

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Table 4.3: Response to 'Do you speak a language other than English at home?'

	Yes	% Yes	No	% No
City Community School (n=229)	112	48.9	117	51.1
Ysgol Gymraeg (n= 136)	111	82.2	24	17.8
Total (n=365)	223	61.1	142	38.9

Bilinguals made up just under half the population of Year 7 at City Community School. It is perhaps unsurprising, given the geographic context, that far more students at Ysgol Gymraeg were bilingual. The imbalance between the sexes at both schools is reflected within their bilingual populations (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4: Bilingual respondents at both schools by gender

	Boys		Girls	
	No.	%	No.	%
City Community School (n=112)	70	62.5	42	37.5
Ysgol Gymraeg (n=111)	43	38.7	68	61.3

4.3   Languages other than English and their use

Respondents answering 'No' to the first question, 'Do you speak any languages other than English at home?' were guided to later questions, whilst those who answered 'Yes' were asked details about the languages they spoke.

The rubric explained to those who spoke a language other than English at home that the language(s) they named would thereafter be referred to as their 'mother tongue'. The complexities of the use of such a term were discussed in more detail in Chapter 2 (as well as in Jones, 2006a and Jones, 2006b). However, 'mother tongue' was a term commonly used in both communities, as was reinforced during the interview stage of research. Its use in the questionnaire was intended to make its vocabulary as accessible as possible. For simplicity, I retain the term in reporting and discussing the data gathered in response to questions that referred to 'mother tongue'.

Table 4.5 shows the languages reported by respondents to be spoken at home other than or in addition to English. A greater range of languages was spoken by the bilinguals of City Community School. Virtually all (99.1 per cent) of Ysgol Gymraeg's bilinguals reported that they spoke one language other than or in addition to English at home, a claim made by 71.1 per cent of their counterparts at City Community School. Over a quarter of bilinguals (28.8 per cent) at City Community School noted two languages in response to this question. No respondents at either school said they spoke more than two languages as well as English at home.

In the first section of the questionnaire, bilingual respondents were also asked to detail the people with whom they spoke these languages. There is no significant difference between schools in terms of those named as the people with whom respondents spoke their mother tongue, although more of Ysgol Gymraeg's bilinguals noted that they spoke a language other than English with all their family and friends (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.5: Languages reported to be spoken at home, other than or in addition to English

Language	% City Community School bilinguals (n=112)		% Ysgol Gymraeg bilinguals (n=111)	
	No.	%	No.	%
Welsh	0	0.0	111	100
Punjabi	58	51.8	0	0.0
Urdu	54	48.2	0	0.0
French	8	7.1	1	0.9
Arabic	8	7.1	0	0.0
Jamaican/Patois	6	5.3	0	0.0
Gujerati	2	1.7	0	0.0
Hindi	2	1.7	0	0.0
BSL	2	1.7	0	0.0
Thai	1	0.4	0	0.0
Dialect Form	1	0.4	0	0.0
German	1	0.4	0	0.0

Table 4.6: People with whom mother tongue spoken

	% City Community bilinguals (n=112)	% Ysgol Gymraeg bilinguals (n=111)
All family and friends	32.1	45.0
Specified family members	37.5	32.4
One parent	5.3	11.7
Siblings	1.8	1.8
Friends	0.0	1.8
Grandparent(s)	3.6	3.6
Other (e.g. Visitors)	2.6	0.9
Not answered	16.9	2.7

Respondents may have not been very specific when naming members of their family or friends, or in not naming others with whom they spoke their

mother tongue; hence, these figures should only be taken as a guide to the use of the mother tongue at home.   No respondents specified teachers in their answer to this question; this perhaps reflects the emphasis on the home context early in the questionnaire.

Bilingual respondents were also asked in this first section to estimate the time spent each day speaking the languages they had named. There is a significant difference between bilinguals at both schools in response to this question, as outlined in Table 4.7 (p=<0.001). The majority of the Welsh respondents reported speaking their mother tongue for more than five hours a day.   A third of City Community School's bilinguals reported doing the same. Nearly half reported that they spoke a language other than English for less than two hours a day.

Table 4.7: Estimated time spent speaking a language other than English each day

Time	% City Community bilinguals (n=112)	% Ysgol Gymraeg bilinguals (n=111)
Less than an hour	26.1	6.3
Between 1-2 hours	21.6	7.2
Between 2-3 hours	9.9	6.3
Between 3-4 hours	9.0	6.3
More than 5 hours	33.3	73.9

4.3.1 Use of languages other than English at school

The experiences of living within a bilingual community varied greatly for the pupils at both schools, as is shown by the significant differences in the use of languages other than English at school to speak, to read and to write, shown in Tables 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10 (p=<0.001).

Table 4.8: Bilinguals' use of languages other than English to speak at school

	% City Community School (n=112)	% Ysgol Gymraeg (n=111)
A lot	14.4	79.4
Sometimes	43.3	12.7
Hardly ever	23.1	4.9
Never	19.2	2.9

Table 4.9: Bilinguals' use of languages other than English to read at school

	% City Community School (n=112)	% Ysgol Gymraeg (n=111)
A lot	6.4	40.6
Sometimes	14.9	41.6
Hardly ever	13.8	7.9
Never	64.9	9.9

Table 4.10: Bilinguals' use of languages other than English to write at school

	% City Community School (n=112)	% Ysgol Gymraeg (n=111)
A lot	5.4	80.2
Sometimes	14.1	15.8
Hardly ever	10.9	2.0
Never	69.6	2.0

4.4 Involvement in lessons outside school

All respondents were asked to give details of their involvement in lessons out of school. Overall, 48.1 per cent of the total sample reported attending such lessons, 51.9 per cent said they did not. Amongst the bilinguals, however, 68.2 per cent of City Community School said they attended

lessons out of school, as did a slightly greater number (73.9 per cent) at Ysgol Gymraeg.   Details of the lessons reported by bilingual respondents are given in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Out of school lessons reported by bilinguals attending such lessons

Lesson	% City Community School (n=76)	% Ysgol Gymraeg (n=82)
Mother tongue	15.2	0.0
Religious/cultural	15.2	0.0
Music	3.6	25.2
Sport	18.8	30.6
Drama	1.8	5.4
Educational/tuition	4.5	1.8
Other	1.8	3.6

The pattern of these activities illustrates some of the ways in which the experience of bilinguality differs for young people in these two communities. All of those who reported that they attended classes devoted to religion or community languages were from City Community School. Significantly more Welsh bilinguals were involved in sports (p=<0.05) and music lessons (p=<0.001).

The main focus of the questionnaire was on reading and writing, but the majority of questions did not specify that respondents should answer based on school activities.   However, it would be fair to assume that many respondents may have located these practices in the school context, particularly given the fact that the questionnaire was administered in school, as explained in Chapter 3.   The dominance of school-based literacy within the lives of young people should also be acknowledged as a factor in any interpretation of their literacy practices, particularly based on data gathered in this way.   However, in the response to this question

about out of school lessons, some insight is provided into the different literacy practices in which the respondents would have engaged. For the bilinguals at City Community School, these practices may reflect different cultural values for literacy, such as the emphasis on memory and pronunciation in Qu'ranic Arabic classes, for example (Robertson, 2002). For Welsh bilinguals involved in out of school music activities, there may be an emphasis on literacies relating to music theory examinations, or to the specific cultural practice of institutions such as the eisteddfod.

The following section is based on the parts of the questionnaire that focused specifically on reading.

4.5   Reading

The questionnaire asked first whether or not respondents could read in a language other than English. 85.4 per cent of all the bilingual respondents indicated that they could read in another language, with 14.6 per cent of the bilinguals answering 'No'. Between schools, there was a significant difference in ability to read in a language other than English, with 71.3 per cent of respondents at City Community reporting that they could read in their mother tongue, compared to 99.1 per cent of their Welsh counterparts (p=<0.001).

4.5.1 What respondents were reading

All respondents, bilingual and non-bilingual, were asked to indicate on a given list the types of texts that they read. They were also asked to add any other types they read that had not been included. Lists were given for texts in both English and, for bilinguals, the mother tongue. There is no

significant difference in the types of texts read in English by bilinguals and non-bilinguals, although it would appear that fewer bilinguals (71.7 per cent) read magazines in English than their monolingual counterparts (81.4 per cent). Table 4.12 indicates the responses for the types of texts read by the whole sample in English and the types of text read by those reading in an additional language.

Table 4.12: Types of text read in English and in mother tongue

Text	% total sample who read in English (n=365)	% bilinguals reading in their mother tongue (n= 186)
Newspapers	49.3	41.9
Magazines	75.6	34.9
Comics	54.6	25.8
Novels	52.1	39.8
Websites	59.9	36.6

When the English reading choices of the boys and girls within the whole sample are compared, significant differences can be seen in the reading of magazines, a choice highlighted by 82.2 per cent of girls and 69.6 per cent of boys (p=<0.01), and also comics, read by 65.1 per cent of boys compared to 42.6 per cent of girls (p=<0.001). This data reflects the findings of other studies into children's reading choices that have explored differences in reading habits and preferences between the sexes (e.g. Hall and Coles, 1999; Millard, 1997). Amongst the bilinguals reading these texts in their mother tongue, girls were more likely to read both novels (ticked by 49.5 per cent girls, compared to 30.1 per cent boys) and websites (44.1 per cent girls, 29.0 per cent boys).

Table 4.13 indicates the types of text cited by respondents when asked if they read anything other than the types of text listed.

Table 4.13: Responses given to 'Do you read anything else?'

Text	% total sample (n=365)	%bilingual readers (n=186)
Personal Communication	41.9	35.9
Specified genre	10.4	10.8
Non-Fiction	8.8	6.3
Other	4.9	3.1
Religious	4.9	8.1
Mother tongue named text	2.5	4.0
Poetry	2.2	0.9
Educational	1.9	3.1
Learning mother tongue	0.8	1.3
No response	21.6	26.5

The relatively high level of reporting of personal communication as a reading choice may have been influenced by the prompts given after the question: ('e.g. letters, e-mails, other types of books'). Significantly more bilinguals reported to read educational (p=<0.05) and religious (p=<0.001) material (the majority of these were from City Community School) as well as, obviously, mother tongue specified texts. More non-bilinguals read personal communication (p=<0.01), non-fiction (p=<0.05) and poetry (p=<0.05). More detailed discussion in later chapters explores some of the issues around reading in minority languages, where the range of material available to readers is a key factor. In their answers to this question, bilingual respondents may be reflecting an imbalance in the types of texts available to them in their minority language.

Bilingual respondents were asked to indicate the language in which they read the other types of texts they had named as their favourites. Overall,

15.2 per cent said they read them in their mother tongue, 65.5 per cent read in English, with 19.3 per cent reporting that they read them in both languages. There is a significant difference between both schools here, with more City Community School bilinguals reading these other texts specifically either in their mother tongue or in English (p=<0.001). Their Welsh counterparts seemed more likely to read them in both languages, perhaps as they may have been texts that were more readily available in Welsh as well as English.

4.5.2 Preferences

Respondents were asked to identify which of the types of text listed in Tables 4.12 and 4.13 they most enjoyed reading. The results are given in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14: Preferred types of text

Preferred type of text	% total sample (n=365)
Newspapers	9.3
Comics	18.1
Magazines	41.1
Novels	21.4
Websites	15.1
Personal communication	1.1
Non-fiction	0.5
Mother tongue specified text	1.9
Other	1.1

There are key differences in the preferences of boys and girls, with more boys preferring newspapers (12.3 per cent compared to 5.9 per cent of the girls). 22.6 per cent of the boys reported that they enjoyed comics,

compared to 12.9 per cent of the girls (p=<0.05). However, significantly more girls (51.8 per cent) than boys (31.8 per cent) preferred magazines (p=<0.001). The small number of respondents who indicated that they enjoyed reading personal communication the most were also all girls.

Significantly more of all the bilinguals (p=<0.001) indicated that they enjoyed reading newspapers - 13.9 per cent compared to 2.1 per cent non-bilinguals. More bilinguals (p=<0.05) also reported enjoying reading websites (18.4 per cent compared to 9.9 per cent non-bilinguals). This again could be taken as an indication of the types of text more commonly available to bilinguals in minority languages.

4.5.3 Favourite author or series

Asked whether or not they had a favourite author or series, 69.0 per cent of the total sample answered positively, whereas 30.0 per reported that they did not have a favourite. There appeared to be no significant difference between bilinguals and non-bilinguals in response to this question. On the whole, however, significantly more girls answered 'yes' to this question, with 81.9 per cent reporting to have a favourite author or series, compared with 57.6 per cent of boys (p=<0.001). Favourites are detailed in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15: Favourite author or series

Author or series	% of sample naming favourites (n=252)
Jacqueline Wilson	24.4
Other	16.4
J. K. Rowling	14.2
Roald Dahl	9.9
Lemony Snicket	4.7
J. R. R. Tolkien	4.1
Mother tongue author/series	4.1
Non-fiction	2.2

The favourites of bilingual and non-bilingual groups were not significantly different, but between sexes, tastes varied significantly. Amongst the girls, 47.6 per cent indicated that Jacqueline Wilson was their favourite, whereas only 4.1 per cent of boys named this author (p=<0.001).   J.K.Rowling was a favourite amongst more boys (19.5 per cent) than girls (8.2 per cent) (p=<0.01).   Tolkien was another favourite amongst more of the boys, named 6.2 per cent of boys compared to 1.8 per cent of girls (p=<0.05). More bilingual girls named a mother tongue author or series (6.5 per cent) than their male counterparts (2.1 per cent) (p=<0.05).

Respondents were asked 'What gave you the idea to start reading these books?' Answers were coded and are detailed in Table 4.16 below.

Table 4.16: Reasons for first starting to read a favourite author or series

Inspiration to start reading authors or series	% of those responding that they had a favourite author or series (n=252)
Friends or peers reading it	22.4
Book itself – blurb or cover etc	17.7
School or teacher	16.4
Parent	10.8
Film of the book	7.3
Television – advertisement or programme	6.0
Liked one then read more	6.0
Other reason	6.0
Library	4.3
Boredom	3.0

There are significant differences (p=<0.001) between boys and girls in terms of inspiration for reading a favourite author or series. Girls were more likely to respond to friends' recommendations, with 25.0 per cent citing this as their reason for reading their favourites, compared to 19.0 per cent of boys. Girls also cited television as a big influence (9.8 per cent compared to 1.0 per cent of boys). This may reflect a trend for television adaptations of popular books, with many citing examples of Jacqueline Wilson adaptations in particular. Equally, the types of books recently made into film adaptations (*Harry Potter* and *Lord of the Rings* being two which were favoured more by boys in this study) may account for the fact that more boys cited film as their inspiration (14.0 per cent compared to 2.3 per cent of the girls). Girls were a little more likely to be inspired to read by their teacher's recommendations (18.9 per cent) than boys (13.0 per cent), although slightly more boys seemed to get their ideas for reading from the library (5.0 per cent compared to 3.8 per cent girls). Loyalty to a series was also slightly more notable amongst girls, as 9.1 per cent said

they had read one book then continued to read the others in the series, compared to 2.0 per cent of the boys.

The responses of bilingual and non-bilingual groups to this question are significantly different ($p = <0.01$), but there is no significant difference between the bilingual populations of both schools. The most important sources of inspiration and motivation for reading for pleasure for many bilingual readers do not seem to come from the home or from friends, but from within the institutions of the school and library. As a whole, bilinguals indicated that their main source of inspiration for favourite books was school and their teachers – 22.2 per cent of bilinguals citing this compared to 6.9 per cent of non-bilinguals. Equally, the library was an important source for bilinguals, with 6.3 per cent responding that this is where they found their favourite books, compared to 1.1 per cent of non-bilinguals. This slight tendency for speakers of languages other than English to make greater use of the library can also be seen in responses to other questions involving the library, discussed below, and was also reported by Hall and Coles (1999). Bilinguals were less likely to get inspiration from their friends (18.8 per cent gave this as their answer, whereas this was the main response given by non-bilinguals, 28.7 per cent of whom read what friends had recommended). Parents seemed to have less of an impact on bilinguals' favourite texts, with 9.0 per cent citing them as their source of inspiration, compared to 13.8 per cent of non-bilinguals. However, film and television have more of an effect on their reading choice than those of their non-bilingual peers, a total of 16.6 per cent of bilinguals citing these compared to 6.9 per cent of non-bilinguals.

The differences seen here highlight key issues in the consideration of the reading practices of bilinguals. Within the communities of this study,

reading for pleasure could be seen as being associated with the practices of these institutions such as the school and library. On the other hand, media also has a big influence on reading choices, showing the impact of this important aspect of the dominant culture upon the lives of these young people.

4.5.4 Sourcing reading material

Respondents were asked to indicate, from a list of options, where they found things to read, both in English and also, for bilinguals, in their mother tongue. Details are shown in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17: Sourcing reading material

Where reading material is found	% English reading material (n=365)	% mother tongue reading material (n=186)
I buy them myself	60.7	40.6
They are already in the home	41.1	44.7
I borrow from friends and family	20.1	17.8
Gifts from friends and family	33.7	20.8
From the library	48.2	32.0
From school	47.6	32.0
Other	4.1	7.1

There is little significant difference between the sexes in response to this question, other than the fact that more girls say they borrow reading material from friends and family - 25.0 per cent compared to 15.7 per cent boys ($p=<0.05$). Also, slightly more girls are given reading material as gifts – 39.3 per cent, compared to 28.8 per cent boys ($p=< 0.05$).

Between bilingual and non-bilingual groups, significantly more of those who are not bilingual receive English reading material as gifts (41.1 per cent) compared to their bilingual peers (29.0 per cent). Consistent with the responses for their inspiration for reading favourite authors and series, more bilinguals get their English reading material from the library (54.4 per cent compared to 39.0 per cent non-bilinguals ($p=<0.01$) or from school - 54.4 per cent bilinguals as opposed to 37.6 per cent non-bilinguals ($p=<0.01$). This, again, reflects the differing literacy practices and perceptions of reading within the communities of the study.

Table 4.18 illustrates the responses of the bilinguals of both schools when they were asked where they found reading material. The only significant difference in the sourcing of English texts can be seen in the use of the library; this is named by 66.7 per cent of City Community School's bilinguals as one of their sources for English reading material, whereas 41.5 per cent of Ysgol Gymraeg's bilinguals use this resource for English texts ($p=<0.001$). This suggests a positive attitude towards the library at City Community School as well as the public libraries in the area. It also reflects perhaps the difference in the role of reading within the homes of some of the bilinguals at City Community School, where material for leisure reading in English may not have as prominent a place, and is therefore more likely to be sourced from the library. Further details about the library use of the whole sample are given in section 4.5.5.

Table 4.18: Sourcing of reading material by bilingual readers at both schools

Where reading material is found	% City Community bilingual readers (n= 80)		% Ysgol Gymraeg bilingual readers (n= 110)	
	English	*Mother tongue*	*English*	*Mother tongue*
I buy them myself	60.4	38.9	53.8	42.1
They are already in the home	39.6	51.1	43.8	39.3
I borrow from friends and family	16.2	20.0	20.8	15.9
Gifts from friends and family	24.3	13.3	34.0	27.1
From the library	66.7	22.2	41.5	40.2
From school	52.3	6.7	56.6	53.3
Other[1]	1.8	14.4	3.8	0.9

It is perhaps unsurprising to find that there are differences between the English and Welsh schools in terms of texts in the mother tongue. More Welsh bilinguals ($p=<0.05$) receive reading material in the mother tongue as gifts (27.1 per cent) than their City Community School counterparts (13.3 per cent). Despite making less use of the library in general than City Community School bilinguals, when sourcing minority language reading material, the Welsh bilinguals were more likely ($p=<0.01$) to find it in the library than those at City Community School (40.2 per cent compared to 22.2 per cent). Given the bilingual nature of the education system in Wales, it is also hardly surprising that significantly more Welsh respondents (53.3 per cent compared to 6.7 per cent at City Community School) found reading material in the minority language at school ($p=<0.001$).

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[1] 'Other' sources of mother tongue texts include the Mosque (0.8 per cent), Punjabi class (0.5 per cent), grandparents (0.3 per cent) or the computer (0.3 per cent)

Consistent with the whole sample, more bilingual girls ($p=<0.05$) received reading material in the mother tongue as gifts from friends and family (27.7 per cent, compared to 13.5 per cent boys). Amongst the bilinguals, however, slightly more girls borrow mother tongue reading material from their library or say they get it from school (38.6 per cent) than boys (25.0 per cent) ($p=<0.05$).   This perhaps reflects the pattern of leisure reading observed by others (e.g. Hall and Coles, 1999; Millard, 1997), where it was found that it was an activity enjoyed by more girls. As such, they may be more likely to pursue the texts of their choosing, or indeed, be given such reading material as gifts.

The questionnaire then asked bilingual readers: 'Is it easy to find things you enjoy reading in your mother tongue?' 47.7 per cent responded 'Yes', with 52.3 per cent saying 'No'. There is no significant difference between sexes in response to this question, or between the bilingual populations of both schools. Interestingly, this response seems to concur with that recorded by Hall and Coles (1999: 106), where 'half of those who could read in a second language found it easy to find materials they enjoy reading in this language'.   The fact that just under half of the questionnaire sample found it difficult to locate minority language reading material validates some of the attitudes towards reading in minority languages which were expressed in the interviews, discussed more fully in later chapters.

4.5.5   Library use

Just over two thirds of the whole sample (68.7 per cent) reported that they borrowed books from a public library.   Although slightly more of all the girls (71.2 per cent) said they made use of their library than the boys (66.5

per cent), there is no significant difference between sexes in response to this question.

Table 4.19 outlines the use of the library by the whole sample, by gender and by both bilingual and non-bilingual groups. Table 4.20 then gives details of library use amongst the bilingual populations of both schools.

Table 4.19: Library use by per cent total sample

Frequency of use	% library users (n=239)	% boys who use the library (n=123)	% girls who use the library (n=116)	%bilinguals who use the library (n=153)	% non-bilinguals who use the library (n=86)
About once a week	22.7	24.2	21.1	25.2	18.6
About once every two weeks	13.0	9.7	16.7	11.9	15.1
About once a month	18.8	16.9	21.1	17.9	19.8
Only sometimes	45.4	49.2	41.2	45.0	46.5

Table 4.20: Library use by bilinguals at both schools

Frequency	% City Community bilingual library users (n=90)	% Ysgol Gymraeg bilingual library users (n= 63)
About once a week	29.2	19.4
About once every two weeks	14.6	8.1
About once a month	13.5	24.2
Only sometimes	42.7	48.4

As was seen in responses on the sourcing of reading material, within the whole sample, bilinguals are more likely to borrow books from the library - 72.5 per cent compared to 62.5 per cent of their non-bilingual counterparts (p=<0.05). There is a significant difference in library use between the

bilingual populations of both schools, however, with 81.8 per cent of City Community School bilinguals using their libraries, compared to 62.4 per cent of Ysgol Gymraeg's bilinguals (p=<0.01). More City Community School bilinguals reported that they used the library at least once a fortnight, with more of Ysgol Gymraeg's bilinguals reporting less frequent visits.

Bilingual readers were also asked the languages of the books they borrowed from the library (see Table 4. 21). 53.7 per cent of all bilinguals who used the library borrowed books in English, with 41.5 per cent borrowing books in both their mother tongue and English. Only 4.8 per cent said they borrowed books in their mother tongue alone. A significant majority of those bilinguals borrowing English books were from City Community School (p=<0.001). Books in both mother tongue and in English were borrowed by significantly more Welsh bilinguals. Ysgol Gymraeg bilinguals were also slightly more likely to borrow only mother tongue books.

Table 4.21: Language of books borrowed from the library by bilinguals at both schools

Language of books borrowed	% City Community bilingual library users (n= 90)	% Ysgol Gymraeg bilingual library users (n=63)
English only	71.1	29.0
Mother tongue only	2.4	8.1
Both languages	26.5	62.9

4.5.6 Books at home

There is a strong connection between library use and the number of books respondents estimated that there were in the home (p=<0.001), with 78.2 per cent of the whole sample who used the library reporting to have 'lots' of books at home and 90.0 per cent of those who made no use of the library having 'hardly any'. Further details about respondents' estimates of the number of books in their homes are given below.   Table 4.22 details the perceptions of the whole sample of the amount of books there were at home.

Table 4.22: Respondents' perceptions of the amount of books at home

	% total sample – books at home in English (n=365)	% bilinguals – books at home in mother tongue (n=223)
Hardly any	2.8	27.6
A few	17.1	36.7
Quite a lot	37.4	20.1
Lots	42.7	15.6

Asked if they owned any books themselves, 84.9 per cent of all respondents said they did, 15.1 per cent indicating 'No'. Slightly more girls (86.8 per cent) said they owned books than boys (83.2 per cent).   A significant difference in book ownership was found between bilingual and non-bilingual groups at City Community (p=<0.01), but not at Ysgol Gymraeg (see Table 4.23).

Table 4.23: Difference in book ownership amongst bilingual and non-bilingual populations of both schools

	City Community (n= 229)		Ysgol Gymraeg (n= 136)	
	% own books	*% don't own books*	*% own books*	*% don't own books*
Bilingual	82.7	17.3	76.4	23.6
Non-bilingual	94.8	5.2	83.3	16.7

Table 4.24 details the numbers of books reported to be owned by all respondents, both in English and, for bilinguals, in their mother tongue, with details from the bilingual groups of both schools given in Table 4.25.

Table 4.24: Respondents' estimates of number of books they own

Number of books	% total sample owning books in English (n=287)	% bilinguals owning books in mother tongue (n=119)
Up to 10	22.3	56.3
Between 11 and 25	22.3	25.2
Between 26 and 50	24.7	15.1
Between 51 and 100	20.2	2.5
More than 100	10.5	0.8

Table 4.25: Book ownership of bilingual respondents by school

Number of books	% City Community School bilinguals specifying amount		% Ysgol Gymraeg bilinguals specifying amount	
	English (n= 78)	Mother tongue (n= 61)	English (n=76)	Mother tongue (n=56)
Up to 10	37.2	72.1	14.5	39.3
Between 11 and 25	21.8	19.7	23.7	32.1
Between 26 and 50	16.7	6.6	30.3	25.0
Between 51 and 100	11.5	1.6	26.3	3.6
More than 100	12.8	0.0	5.3	0.0

4.5.7 Amount of reading

Respondents were asked to give an indication of the amount of reading they thought they did (see Table 4.26).

Girls reported to read more in English (p=<0.001): 34.8 per cent reported to read 'A large amount' compared to 21.3 per cent of boys, and 28.0 per cent of girls said they read 'Quite a lot' compared to 20.7 per cent of boys. There seems to be little difference between the sexes amongst the bilingual readers reading in their mother tongue, although the girls again tended to say they read slightly more than the boys - 12.0 per cent and 19.6 per cent reading 'A lot' or 'Quite a lot' respectively, compared to the same responses by 7.8 per cent and 12.2 per cent of the boys.

The amount of reading by bilinguals in the two schools differed slightly in English, and more considerably in their mother tongue ($p = <0.05$), as outlined in Table 4.27.

Table 4.26: Perceived amount of reading by per cent total sample and per cent bilingual readers

Perceived amount of reading	In English: % total sample (n= 365)	In mother tongue: % bilingual readers (n=190)
A large amount	27.8	9.9
Quite a lot	24.2	15.9
About average	29.0	28.0
Not very much	13.1	27.5
Only a little	6.0	18.7

Table 4.27 Perceptions of amount read by per cent bilingual readers in both schools

Perceived amount of reading	City Community School (n=80)		Ysgol Gymraeg (n=110)	
	English	Mother tongue	English	Mother tongue
A large amount	30.2	10.0	28.3	10.2
Quite a lot	31.3	16.3	22.2	16.3
About average	19.8	23.8	35.4	32.7
Not very much	11.5	21.3	12.1	30.6
Only a little	7.3	28.8	2.0	10.2

There are strong connections between the perceived amount of books in the home and the amount of reading in English claimed by respondents, with 20.5 per cent of those who say they have 'quite a lot' and 39.5 per cent with 'a lot' of books at home claiming to read 'a large amount', while 80.0 per cent of those who say they have 'hardly any' books at home claim

they read 'about average' or 'not very much' (p=<0.001). The link is not as strong between bilinguals having English books at home and reading in their mother tongue, or having mother tongue books at home and reading in English. However, there is a strong relationship (p=<0.001) between the number of mother tongue books in the home and the amount of reading in the mother tongue (see Table 4.28).

Table 4.28: Perceived amount of reading in mother tongue/ amount of mother tongue books in the home

Perceived amount of books in mother tongue	Perceived amount of reading in mother tongue % bilingual readers (n=190)				
	A large amount	Quite a lot	About average	Not very much	Only a little
Hardly any	0.0	4.7	18.6	30.2	46.5
A few	4.3	12.9	35.7	37.1	10.0
Quite a lot	10.8	29.7	29.7	21.6	8.1
lots	38.5	19.2	23.1	7.7	11.5

4.5.8 Reading the previous evening

Asked if they had read anything the evening prior to completion of the questionnaire, 61.1 per cent responded that they had, with 38.9 per cent indicating they had not. This figure roughly accords with the findings of Hall and Coles (1999: 14), where 65 per cent of their sample reported to have read the previous evening.

Details of what was read by respondents in this study are given in Table 4.29. Girls were more likely to have read English fiction, mentioned by 42.4 per cent compared to 28.7 per cent of the boys (p=< 0.01). They are

slightly more likely to have read mother tongue fiction, which was named by 4.7 per cent of the girls compared to 1.5 per cent of the boys, and more girls (3.5 per cent) mentioned newspapers than boys (1.5 per cent). More boys had read non-fiction, which was mentioned by 8.2 per cent, compared to 2.4 per cent of the girls (p=<0.05). Computer-based texts were also mentioned by more boys, as were religious texts.

Table 4.29 Texts read by those who read the previous evening

What was read	% those who read the previous evening (n=224)
English fiction	57.1
Periodical	19.6
Non-fiction	8.9
Religious text	4.0
Newspaper	4.0
Mother tongue fiction	4.9
Computer based text	2.2
Personal communication	0.4

The largest difference between the reading of bilingual and non-bilingual respondents the previous evening, aside from mother tongue fiction, was in the reading of religious texts, mentioned by 8 bilinguals compared to only 1 non-bilingual, all of whom attend City Community School.   On the whole, there are no significant differences between what was read by the bilingual populations of both schools, however, or in whether or not this material was in English or another language. Slightly more Welsh bilinguals read in English (71.9 per cent) or in both languages (19.9 per cent) than those at City Community School (69.4 per cent and 17.7 per cent respectively), more of whom reported to have read in their mother tongue (12.9 per cent compared to 8.8 per cent Ysgol Gymraeg). This could be accounted for in the number of City Community School's bilingual readers

who reported to have read religious texts the previous evening, which may have been in a language other than English.

4.6   Bilingual writing

In response to the question 'Can you write in a language other than English?' 57.2 per cent of the whole bilingual group said they could. Following the pilot, an additional option of 'Yes, a little bit' was included, to which 22.1 per cent of the sample responded, with 20.7 per cent saying they could not write in a language other than English.

There is a significant difference between the bilingual populations of both schools in terms of bilingual writing, shown in Table 4.30 (p=<0.001).

Table 4.30: Responses to 'Can you write in a language other than English?'

Can you write in a language other than English?	% City Community bilinguals (n=112)	% Ysgol Gymraeg bilinguals (n=111)
Yes	25.2	89.2
Yes, a little bit	34.2	9.9
No	40.5	0.9

Within the analysis that follows, those who said they could write 'a bit' are included as bilingual writers.

Those who said they were able to write in a language other than English were asked, 'What do you write in your mother tongue?'. Some prompts were provided ('e.g. letters, diary, e-mails…'). Table 4.31 shows the responses given.

There are significant differences between the schools in terms of what was written, with Welsh used for a significantly wider range of written purposes. More Welsh bilinguals wrote 'Anything' or, probably unsurprisingly, wrote at school in their mother tongue. Personal communication and other personal writing, such as diaries, were also far more likely to be written in the mother tongue at Ysgol Gymraeg, as was creative writing. City Community bilinguals were more likely to have experienced writing in their mother tongue as short or functional tasks, such as writing their name in Arabic script or scribing a birthday card to family in Pakistan, both examples given by respondents. Expertise in the mother tongue at the level of that of their Welsh counterparts was still being acquired by many bilinguals at City Community School; use of the mother tongue also has different cultural values and purposes, as shown by its use for religious purposes, for example.

Table 4.31: Writing in mother tongue by per cent bilingual writers at each school

	% City Community bilingual writers (n=67)	% Ysgol Gymraeg bilingual writers (n=110)
Very little/example of a phrase	12.5	2.7
Anything/All kinds of writing	2.7	17.1
School work	1.8	29.7
Personal Communication[2]	15.2	47.7
Personal – diary, notes etc	5.4	16.2
Scribing for family	0.9	0.0
Religious	0.9	0.0
Creative	7.1	13.5
Learning mother tongue	7.1	0.9

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[2] The relatively high response in the category may have been influenced by the prompts given in the question

For the majority of bilinguals at City Community School, the ability to write in languages such as Urdu and Punjabi has a certain significance attached to it. In the case of those from Pakistani Muslim heritage, for example, Urdu, as the official language of Pakistan is associated with the educated classes. Literacy in Urdu and Punjabi is a valuable, shared resource within communities such as that of City Community School (Saxena, 1994; Hartley, 1994). Hence, there may be certain pride to be detected in the responses of some City Community bilinguals to this question, where they may tick 'Yes', to indicate that they are able to write in their mother tongue, but when asked what it is they write, they provide an example such as their own name in Persian or Gurmukhi script. In my experience as a teacher at City Community School, students who were beginning to learn Urdu or Punjabi enjoyed practising and doodling in these scripts in other lessons, often inciting fascination amongst their non-bilingual friends and requests to write certain words for them, with those with greater levels of expertise often called upon to help. Learning to write in the mother tongue therefore not only brings with it a certain status within the community as a whole, but also in the classroom. Not only was there a sense of pride and achievement for these students in having access to such a significant part of their home culture, but the shift in the balance of power that bilingual writing skills could bring into the context of ordinary school literacy practices was also emphasised by the inability of many of their teachers to understand what was being written.

4.7 Perceptions of ability in reading and writing

Respondents were asked to indicate how good they felt they were at reading and writing, and were given a list of five prompts ranging from 'Very good' to 'Poor'. Once again, the context of the questionnaire should

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be considered in any interpretation of responses to this question. As skills which are directly assessed within the school model of literacy, reading and writing may hold connotations for some respondents, whether positive or negative, which reflect their experience of assessment. For example, it is easy to see how a student who becomes used to receiving lots of comments about the accuracy of her writing may come to see writing as a difficult or unrewarding task, the main purpose of which is to be 'correct', rather than seeing it as an opportunity for expression, for instance.

Respondents' perceptions of their reading and writing abilities reflected similar patterns (see Table 4.32), although slightly more respondents saw themselves in a better light in terms of reading than for writing.

Table 4.32: Perceptions of reading and writing by per cent total sample

Perception of ability	Reading: % total sample (n=365)	Writing: % total sample (n=365)
Very Good	34.1	21.6
Good	40.1	40.8
Average	19.2	25.3
Not very good	5.2	9.8
Poor	1.4	2.6

Within the bilingual populations of both schools, considerably more City Community bilinguals felt themselves to be 'Very Good' readers than their Welsh counterparts (p=<0.001). There was a tendency for bilingual respondents on the whole to be more positive about their writing abilities than their non-bilingual peers (p=<0.01). However, the tendency remains for more of City Community School students to see themselves in the best light as writers (although this is still fewer than for reading), with more of Ysgol Gymraeg's bilinguals describing themselves as 'Good' or 'Average'

(p=0.001). Table 4.33 shows the perceptions of the bilinguals from both schools of their reading, with perceptions of writing ability given in Table 4.34.

Table 4.33: Perceptions of reading ability: bilinguals by school

	% City Community School bilinguals (n=112)	% Ysgol Gymraeg bilinguals (n=111)
Very Good	44.0	14.6
Good	38.5	54.4
Average	11.0	22.3
Not very good	5.5	7.8
Poor	0.9	1.0

Table 4.34: Perceptions of writing ability: bilinguals by school

	% City Community School bilinguals (n=112)	% Ysgol Gymraeg bilinguals (n=111)
Very Good	35.2	10.7
Good	34.3	59.2
Average	19.4	24.3
Not very good	8.3	4.9
Poor	2.8	1.0

In terms of the whole sample, there is a strong relationship between the amount of reading in English claimed by respondents and their perceptions of their own reading ability, with 62.6 per cent of those who reported that they read 'a large amount' describing their reading ability as 'very good', whereas 77.7 per cent of those who felt they read 'only a little' described their reading ability as 'average' or poorer (p=<0.001). A similar

relationship exists between the amount of reading that takes place and respondents' perceptions of themselves as writers (p=<0.001). Of those who reported to read 'a lot', 79.2 per cent described their writing ability as 'very good' or 'good', whereas the majority of those who claimed the amount they read was 'about average' (38.9 per cent) felt the same of their writing ability. However, 47.0 per cent of those who report to read 'only a little' described their writing as 'very good', with 41.2 per cent feeling their writing ability was 'not very good' or 'poor'.

4.8   Attitudes towards reading and writing

Respondents were asked to indicate their opinions about reading by using three or four words to complete the phrase, 'I think reading is….'. This question was not completed by all respondents, possibly due to the time factors and the position of the question at near the end of the questionnaire.   Some may have found the open-ended question more taxing than ticking boxes. The answers of the 344 respondents (94.2 per cent) who completed this question were coded into general categories.

The responses of the majority would suggest that reading was seen in a positive light, as has been found in other studies of children's reading (e.g. Gorman, 1987). 65.3 per cent of respondents in Hall and Coles' study gave a positive response to this question (Hall and Coles, 1999). In my own study, counting the 'positive', 'neutral', 'educational' and pastime' categories together, shows that 86.6 per cent of respondents viewed reading in a way that could be regarded as positive.   As Hall and Coles point out, children's attitudes towards reading change as they grow older, and given this sample is aged 11 to 12 years old, they may still be young enough to have fond feelings about reading without the associations of

exam pressures which come further up the school. However, there is still a strong association between reading and educational benefit, stronger than that seen in a similar age group by Hall and Coles, for example, where 4.6 per cent of those aged 10+ and 7.9 per cent of those aged 12+ gave a response in this category (Hall and Coles, 1999: 12).

Within the whole sample, girls were slightly more positive than boys about reading, with 91.3 per cent of the girls giving what was counted as a positive response, compared to 82.6 per cent of the boys.

More of Ysgol Gymraeg's respondents saw reading as an educational endeavour than those at City Community, where significantly more (p=<0.001) gave responses which described reading in a purely positive light (52.3 per cent compared to 33.3 per cent at Ysgol Gymraeg).

> I think reading is fun because you can learn.
> I think writing is a bit less fun.
> > Bilingual boy, Ysgol Gymraeg

> I think reading is very important in life.
> I think writing is less important than reading.
> > Bilingual girl, Ysgol Gymraeg

As was found by Hall and Coles (ibid), negative responses towards reading tended to focus on it being 'boring', or seemed to be based on a lack of confidence or perceived lack of ability.

There is a less significant relationship between reading in the mother tongue and attitudes towards reading in general. Whereas 100 per cent of those who said they read 'a large amount' in their mother tongue felt

positive about reading in general, 69.7 per cent of those reading 'only a little' still gave a positive response to reading in general.

As with the question about reading, respondents were asked to choose three or four words to complete the sentence, 'I think writing is…'. Responses were coded according to the key ideas expressed.

The general response towards writing was, on the whole, positive, with over two-thirds (68.8 per cent) describing writing in a positive light. This is a considerably lower figure than those expressing positive opinions of reading.   It is interesting to note that fewer respondents saw writing as having academic benefits than those who felt this way about reading. The majority of those who had negative feelings towards writing said that it was boring, with quite a few commenting on the physically taxing aspects of writing.

> I think reading is very fun and I like the description.
> I think writing is boring and it aches your arm.
>> Bilingual boy, City Community School

> I think reading is fun and if you don't have anything to do it makes you not bored.
> I think writing is kind of fun, but it takes a long time.
>> Non-bilingual girl, City Community School

> I think reading is fun.
> I think writing is tiring.
>> Bilingual boy, Ysgol Gymraeg

As with reading, however, girls were slightly more likely than boys to have a positive view of writing. Fewer bilinguals expressed negative ideas about

writing than their non-bilingual counterparts. They were also slightly more likely to see writing in a context of academic achievement.

There seems to be very little significant link between respondents' attitudes towards writing and the amount of reading done in English or by bilinguals in their mother tongue.

4.9   Summary

The main minority languages of the sample were Urdu and Punjabi at City Community School and Welsh at Ysgol Gymraeg. There were significant differences in the use of these languages within both communities, in terms of the people with whom they were spoken, the time spent speaking the language(s) and their daily use in school for reading, writing and speaking. The majority of bilinguals at City Community School reported that they 'never' used their minority language at school, whereas in Wales, most respondents indicated that they used Welsh a lot for most school activities. The data on out of school lessons also showed that some bilinguals at City Community School were developing their expertise in their minority languages outside school, reflecting a key difference in the reality of bilingualism within both communities.

The data collected about reading suggests that reading in minority languages is a very different experience to reading in English. Virtually all of Ysgol Gymraeg's bilinguals reported that they could read in Welsh, whereas the ability to read in their minority language was only reported by 71.3 per cent of their counterparts at City Community School. Differences in reading practices are partly related to cultural practices and partly due to availability and choice of texts. Certain texts – newspapers, religious

and educational material – tended to be more frequently read by bilinguals. Those who spoke languages other than English were also more likely to make use of the library, although significantly more of City Community School's bilinguals did so than their Welsh counterparts. Those library users from City Community School were more likely than their bilingual peers in Wales to borrow books specifically in English, whereas Ysgol Gymraeg's library users seemed to borrow more books in both English and Welsh. Nearly half of bilinguals said they found it easy to locate enjoyable reading material in their minority languages. In terms of book ownership, Ysgol Gymraeg's bilingual readers claimed to own more minority language books. However, more of City Community School's bilinguals reported to have read in their mother tongue the previous evening. Generally, there was a more positive perception of abilities in reading than in writing, and a more positive attitude shown towards reading than writing by the majority of respondents. More Ysgol Gymraeg bilinguals viewed reading and writing as educational endeavours than those at City Community School, where more respondents described reading in a purely positive light.

Significantly more Welsh bilinguals could write in their minority language, and a difference was seen in terms of what was written by the sample as a whole. A greater range of writing was conducted in Welsh by the bilinguals at Ysgol Gymraeg, whereas their counterparts at City Community School tended to engage in shorter, more functional written tasks in their minority languages, perhaps indicating a different level of expertise, or a different cultural emphasis on this skill.

In terms of gender, on the whole, girls were more likely to have a positive view of both reading and writing. Specific preferences of the girls included magazines, whereas more boys said they liked comics. Girls claimed to

read more than the boys did, gaining more inspiration for reading from their friends and family than did their male classmates.

This quantitative description of the linguistic context and literacy practices of both communities has provided some background, therefore, to the more detailed discussion of language and literacy that follows in the next chapters, where key issues raised by the findings of the questionnaire are also further developed.

Chapter 5

YSGOL GYMRAEG

PART 1: BILINGUALISM AND IDENTITY

5.1.1   Introduction

One of the first questions asked during the interview schedule was 'what does it mean to be bilingual?' Anna answered first with the only response, both during the interview in question and during all subsequent interviews, to give what could be considered an objective definition of bilingualism:

> Anna: Being able to speak two languages.

In her definition, Anna highlights the fact that bilingualism involves 'being able to' speak two languages – this may not necessarily involve the practice of doing so and certainly does not allude to any of the ideological issues attached to bilingualism. As such, Anna's definition hides what was subsequently revealed by the girls' talk to be a highly politicised situation where daily realities are often never far from ideological debate.

The following analysis aims to demonstrate how the girls in this study saw their bilingualism. From their talk about the state of 'being able to speak two languages' comes a picture of their position at the joining together of reality and ideology, of their home life and relationship with their peers, of school life and leisure choices, of a dominant and minority language and culture and the shifting balance in the relationship between them.

This section focuses on the themes arising from the girls' discussion of the issues of bilingualism and language. These permeate many aspects of the girls' lives and are themes that emerge again and again in the study.

5.1.2 The Welsh language and Welsh identity

As I outlined in Chapter 2, the relationship between the Welsh language and a 'Welsh' identity is significant, with the language remaining for many - both Welsh speakers and not - one of the clearest symbols of group identity within Wales.   The following discussion about 'what makes you Welsh' reveals how this is an attitude which the girls themselves replicated. Although national symbols were evoked, in considering what differentiated them as 'Welsh', the girls found it hard to think beyond the language, and as such, talk gravitated around this:

> SJ: What makes you Welsh?
>
> Llio: Speaking the language.
>
> Ffion: We have the gift.
>
> […]
>
> SJ: Ok, so the language is an important part of it. Something that's been given, as you say, like a gift? A privilege? Does anything else make you Welsh, apart from the language?
>
> Sara: The red dragon.
>
> SJ: The red dragon? How important is that to you?
>
> Sara: I don't know. Because it's on our flag.
>
> SJ: How does that feature in your life? How does the red dragon…
>
> Sara: In games and things.
>
> Llio: What's special to me is that we've got out own culture and *etifeddiaeth* [inheritance] and *treftadaeth* [heritage][1] and things like the daffodil, which are, like, us.

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[1] I have included in the original Welsh terms here, with what I feel are the closest translations in English - the English terms do not, however, seem as resonant of the emotive qualities I felt were alluded to by Llio in her use of the Welsh terms.

SJ: Like a symbol? Is it important to you to keep up things like that, or do you feel that you're doing that just because that's what Welsh people do?

Llio: There are lots of people in this school who speak just English. I don't know why you come to Wales is you can't speak Welsh!

SJ: Right, so the language is an essential part of it to you then? Anyone else […] Does anything else make you Welsh?

Ffion: Football team.

Anna: Being born in Wales.

SJ: Being born in Wales. Does that make you Welsh?

Anna: And speaking the language.

SJ: Right. What about people who are born in Wales but don't speak the language?

Ffion: It's time they learnt.

[…]

Llio: The anthem is important.

[agreement]

Llio: Some of them [*the Welsh rugby team*] just go like that [*miming*] and some just stand there. But those who speak Welsh, they sing it.

It is reasonable to assume that anyone living in Wales (or indeed any other country), of any age, might find it hard to respond to questions like those asked in this discussion. I myself would probably not have responded any differently, and would perhaps, when pushed, also include symbols such as the Welsh dragon or daffodil.   It is unfair, therefore, to think that twelve year olds could offer any more insight into a question that is notoriously problematic. Llio comes close to a more in depth analysis of the abstract nature of what constitutes a national identity when she tries to explain her pride in her *etifeddiaeth* and *treftadaeth* (translated literally as inheritance and heritage, but the connotations in the Welsh language evoke an almost spiritual connection with one's cultural heritage). These are represented, for Llio, by such cultural events as the eisteddfod. It is also interesting that Ffion describes her language as a 'gift', again evoking something far

more than happenstance in the fact that she can speak Welsh and signalling the context in which the language is seen by some of its speakers.

However, the central position of the language in the perceived national identity described by the girls is clear. Later discussion will explore the ways in which this is perpetuated by cultural and political institutions in Wales. The following section explores some of the ways in which the girls negotiate the dissonance between political and personal notions of identity. This will show how the 'the lived realities of a Welsh identity, like any other, are complex' (Peate, Coupland and Garrett, 1998: 99) and that the girls make use of many aspects of their engagement with language in order to negotiate and demonstrate their identities.

5.1.3 Language backgrounds

Individually, the girls in this study came from varied language backgrounds. Some volunteered information about the language profile of their home regularly throughout all of the interviews. Such information about family background was offered, in many cases, as a means of articulating the ways in which the girls defined themselves. Asked how they would describe themselves within the context of being Welsh-English bilingual, many responses were firmly rooted in family background.

> SJ: How would you describe yourself?
>
> Charlotte: Half and half.
>
> Sara: I would say I was Welsh, but with an English dad.
>
> Catrin: And me too.
>
> Anna: I would say I was English and could speak Welsh […] My mum and dad
>
> are English.

Llio: Everyone in my family is Welsh, nobody is English, but I've got second cousins who are English.

SJ: How would you describe yourself then?

Llio: Happy!

SJ: Happy?

Llio: Welsh and proud of it! All my family are Welsh.

For Llio above, the fact that all of her family are 'Welsh' is a point to celebrate. It is interesting to note here, and for reference throughout the analysis of the Welsh interviews, that it is Llio's responses that seem, over and above the others, to steer discussion into the realms of nationalist debate. Other girls, from bilingual homes, are also able express an eloquent awareness of the complexity of their situation, which is seen below.

The girls explain their varied language use on a day-to-day basis:

Catrin: In lots of places like clubs, I speak English and piano lessons, I speak English, and talking with Dad and Dad's side of the family. But I speak with my friends in Welsh and a few of Mum's family, and well, everybody else.

Llio: I speak Welsh all the time, I don't often speak English, only on Mondays and Fridays because we've got English lessons.

Anna: I speak English in the morning when I get up because Mum, Dad and my brother speak English, and then when I go to school, I speak Welsh all day and then when I go home I speak English.

Elin: Just when I see my friend on the corridor, they're English, so I speak English, but otherwise, it's Welsh at home and here.

Ffion: In the morning, I speak Welsh then in school, it depends on who I talk

to in school because sometimes people speak English and sometimes Welsh.

When we go home, children on our bus speak English usually.

Practically, therefore, the varied language of each situation has an impact on the day-to-day realities of these girls. Their differing language backgrounds are reflected clearly when they consider the language in which they engage with thought and subconscious processes:

Llio: All my dreams are in Welsh.

Catrin: If I'm speaking English, I think in English, but if I'm speaking Welsh, I think in Welsh.

Llio: I think in Welsh, I never think in English…until I see English.

Anna: I think in both.

In his analysis of domains of language behaviour, Fishman (2000b) outlines the ways in which a bilingual's choice of language in any one situation is dependant upon factors which are, in reality, more complex than is suggested by the girls' depiction of their day-to-day language use, as shown above. Factors such as reference group membership, topic and situation all contribute to a bilingual's choice of language in any one setting. For example, Ffion indicates that the children on the school bus 'speak English usually'. Based on the demographic of the area and population of the school, it highly likely that the majority of the children on this particular bus speak Welsh as a first language. However, the social context of the school bus drives a need to speak English. The bus may well be seen as a space in opposition to the school environment, and, much like many of their peers across the UK and beyond, the pupils see this as a prime location for subversive behaviour. In this case, the subversion is executed at the level of language choice, where there is not the imposed supposition that one should speak Welsh, as there is at school. For Ffion,

therefore, the school bus is seen as a domain dominated by the English language. The analysis of the ways in which languages are used (or not used) in differing domains is key to any exploration of language maintenance or language shift, an area of vital importance in the Welsh context. The theme of varying language use in different contexts will be revisited during later discussion of the girls' use of text in both their languages.   However, Fishman's key point about the complexity of a bilingual's language choice in various settings underlines the notion of bilingualism in this context as a continuum rather than a dichotomy, and that 'one stage along this continuum may shade into another' (Fishman, 2000: 101).

Anna and Sara eloquently express the complex relationship between their languages:

> Anna: English is like a half mother tongue for us, isn't it?
> Sara: A second mother tongue.

English and Welsh have parity in the mind of Anna as her 'mother tongue', a term usually attributed to a single language.   According to the definition given by Tulasiewicz and Adams (1998:3), the mother tongue can be classed as the user's first language or 'the preferred language in a multilingual situation'.   Anna's description of English as a 'half mother tongue' could therefore suggest a language in which the speaker is half as fluent, or the preferred language half of the time. However, for the girls in Wales, the term 'mother tongue' – *mamiaith* - is one with which they are familiar through its use to define them at school as speakers of Welsh as a first language. For example, class groupings of those with Welsh as a first language, from Welsh-speaking homes, are commonly referred to as

'mother tongue' groups. As such, it is a term used frequently by the girls themselves to refer to Welsh; despite the issues attached to its use as a generic term in this study as a whole, outlined in the Chapter 2, its use was not contested within the context of the interviews. Anna's use of 'half mother tongue' is taken to suggest here, therefore, that English shares the same place as Welsh in her view of her own language use.

Sara picks up on Anna's theme and uses the term 'second mother tongue', combining notions of a second language and mother tongue. She has obviously internalised the notion of a second language speaker – again, the term *ailiaith* (literally 'second language') is commonly used within the school and wider Welsh speaking community to describe those who are Welsh learners or those for whom Welsh is not their first language, however fluent they may be. However, she does not feel entirely akin to those with Welsh as a second language, seeing her 'second language' (English) as another mother tongue. Sara evokes an eloquent image to describe how she sees her reality as a bilingual:

> Sara: If I was daydreaming that I was bilingual, I would have one body and two heads – one speaking Welsh and one speaking English.

Heller (1987: 99) argues that 'bilinguals *are* the boundary' between languages. It is this being 'in-between' (Bhabha, 1994: 2) that affords the girls the opportunity to engage with their two languages creatively to explore this position as 'neither the One nor the Other but something else besides, which contests the terms and territories of both' (ibid: 28).

5.1.4 Uses of bilingualism

Responses to the question 'what does it mean to be bilingual?' perhaps reflected the ambiguity in the question itself. As has been said, Anna's was the only response to give a 'technical' definition of the term 'bilingual'. Other responses suggested an interpretation of the value of being bilingual. A theme to subsequently emerge in the analysis of the interview data was the uses and advantages of bilingualism.   These range in character from practical and intellectual advantages to the deliberate use of bilingualism for inclusion and exclusion.

Ffion, who is from a Welsh speaking home but whose wider family consists of non-Welsh speakers, believes there to be a perceived intellectual advantage to being bilingual. She also feels it is useful in order to broaden the range of people with whom one can communicate.

> Ffion: People think you're clever and it's handy if there's someone in the family who's English or Welsh, you can talk to them.

Bilingualism has other practical advantages, according to Ffion.

> Ffion: You can watch different telly. […] And you can read different books and things.
> Anna: Yes, you've got the choice.
> Ffion: And you can watch different telly, and magazines.

It is not clear from these comments where exactly the advantage lies, either in speaking English or in speaking Welsh. The issue of choice in television and books is a key concern for the girls. I assume, as will be born out by later discussion, that the girls are referring here to the wider

choice afforded them by being able to speak English in addition to Welsh, rather than vice versa.

In a later interview, Llio explains what she sees as an educational advantage to her bilingualism:

> Llio: People who speak English, they can't speak Welsh because it's hard. But because we can speak Welsh we can speak lots of other languages and we can pick up English easily.

It is clearer in Llio's comment that she sees Welsh as her first language and that English is in addition to that. Her use of the pronoun 'we' to denote Welsh speakers is a feature of many of the girls' comments regarding the use of bilingualism, and here suggests a notion of exclusivity that is far more explicit in other comments made, not only by Llio, but also by others in the group.

5.1.5 Inclusion and exclusion through language

A common theme to occur during the interviews when discussing bilingualism was the use of language for the deliberate exclusion of others. Kramsch (1998: 8) notes that 'to identify themselves as members of a community, people have to define themselves jointly as insiders against others, whom they thereby define as outsiders'. It was clear from aspects of the girls' talk about being bilingual that language choice in a particular setting was a common method of thus defining themselves as part of a Welsh-speaking community. In doing so, those who were excluded could range from individuals in other countries, to members of their own families.

Here are some of the first comments made when the group was asked what bilingualism meant:

> Llio: Say you don't want people to hear, you can speak your own language.
> [*laughter*]
> Charlotte: That's what I do with Dad.

For Charlotte, her bilingualism had clear advantages in negotiating her relationship with her father; this remark could perhaps be seen as one that many adolescents would make if they had the facility. Being able to use another language created the space for Charlotte, and the other girls who also admitted to the practice, to behave subversively on a small scale within her family dynamic (such practice by adolescents is also noted by, for example, Caldas and Caron-Caldas, 2002).

The use of language to include and exclude others was also described by the girls as a factor in the creation and maintenance of friendships.

> Llio: You want to be polite to someone who's English and doesn't understand Welsh, but if you're not that keen on them you want to say something, you can say it in Welsh, can't you?
> Elin: That's what I did in Scotland!

In a later interview, the girls were asked, 'how important is it to you, as a person, that you can speak Welsh?'

> Siân: If you're speaking Welsh then other people don't understand what you're saying.
> SJ: So it's important between you and your friends?
> Siân: Yes.
> Charlotte: When we were on holiday we were talking in Welsh and these boys didn't understand us!

Comments about the use of the Welsh language as a marker of identity in other countries were common in the interviews. Elin admitted to speaking Welsh in Scotland in order to exclude others from a conversation; she also claimed that speaking Welsh had a similar advantage in France. Sara echoed this:

> Sara: If we go over to France, or go to America […] we speak Welsh because other people don't know what we're talking about.

Choosing to use language in this way has different purposes, therefore. It can allow secrets to be passed within a small group of Welsh speakers within a non-Welsh speaking context; it can create a communication 'exclusion zone' within the family home as well as giving the playful and flirtatious appearance of the exotic to those who have no knowledge of the language in other countries. The girls' comments seemed to suggest that they felt such a use of language was in no way a bad thing; their remarks were playful, and they saw the humour in a situation where they were able to take what they saw as the upper hand, often resulting in the surprise or intrigue of the excluded parties who had no knowledge of the language they were speaking. In this sense, 'being able to speak two languages', and choosing to do so, had clear benefits in the eyes of the girls.

If we look more closely at the comments made by the girls about their language, however, it is possible to detect other ways in which they saw their bilingualism as a means not only to exclude but also to create an inclusive group to which they themselves belong. Llio, in one of her first remarks about what bilingualism meant to her, made clear through her

choice of words the notion of Welsh speakers as an inclusive group separate from the dominant English language community and culture.

> Llio: I'm pleased we've got our own mother tongue. Instead of English, just English.

Llio saw the language as her own and one of its key advantages was that it was not English. At another point, she described the position of Welsh speakers thus:

> Llio: We are…we are in our own world.

Other girls concurred with the idea that being a Welsh speaker set a person apart from others:

> Sara: Yeah, everybody speaks English.
> Ffion: It makes you unique, doesn't it?
> Elin: Because everybody speaks English, not everybody speaks Welsh.

This theme emerged again in later interviews:

> Siân: English people, no offence, but if you're just English and you only know one language.
> Ffion: No, they could understand French, German.
> Siân: Yeah, but Welsh is the hardest you can get, isn't it?

Inclusion in the exclusive group of Welsh speakers also seemed to reflect on one's intellectual and linguistic skill. This idea of bilingualism as a skill was picked up again by Anna:

> Sara: [The Welsh language] is special to us.

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Anna: There aren't that many people with the skill, are there?

Ffion: It's something personal to you, isn't it?

The assumed pride at the possession of the language by its speakers can also be seen in the phenomenon that exists amongst the Welsh-speaking community whereby any individual who learns the language is always defined as 'a learner', however fluent they may become. This can be the source of frustration for some learners, who may well have, by virtue of their study, a greater technical knowledge of the language than some first language speakers.   This is clearly in Sara's mind when she talks about her father, who learnt to speak Welsh after moving to live in Wales.

Sara: My dad learnt Welsh when he was about 21. And he learnt it in about two months.

Ffion: Can he speak fluently now?

Sara: He can speak, you know, proper Welsh.

Ffion: Where does he come from?

Sara: Hull.

Rampton (1995) notes a similar tendency amongst adolescents within the British-Asian community in his study to be conscious of the English language aptitude of their parents. For them, this could be a source of humour or embarrassment, but it is also held as a sign of continuity and progress within the community.   There is pride, if not a certain defensiveness, in Sara's statement about her father, and she was keen to reiterate during subsequent interviews the fact that he had learnt Welsh. Sara clearly saw this as a positive move on the part of her father. Like Rampton's participants, she saw it as a sign of her father's integration into his new community, and a development that reflected the desires expressed by some of the other girls in the group for the community of Welsh speakers to develop by more incomers learning the language. By

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association, her father's learning the language also reflected more positively on Sara's own position within the inclusive discourse of the Welsh language. However, there is a sense of some differentiation in Sara's words between speaking Welsh and speaking 'you know, proper Welsh'; this seems a feat of which to be particularly proud and which, therefore, warrants unquestionable inclusion within the group of Welsh speakers as defined by the girls. It would seem that Sara did not want to feel as if her father was excluded from the community of which she herself was a part, because, as a member of this group and as one who was able to exclude others from it, she understood fully what was signified by such exclusion.

In the last interview, Ffion described her bilingualism as a 'gift'. There is pride in belonging to an exclusive group. Kramsch (1998: 65) describes the way individuals within a community 'draw personal strength and pride, as well as a sense of social importance and historical continuity from using the same language as the group they belong to'. In Wales, this social importance and historic continuity, whilst having its advantages, is also tinged with a sense of duty, however.

> Llio: The Welsh language is dying out now.
>
> Elin: Yes, it is.
>
> Llio: And we want it to carry on.

From seeming to regard Welsh as being in the more advantageous position, the girls went on to discuss the fate of the language. When their talk turned from their own day-to-day reality to the discourse of the more ideological concerns of the language, it was interesting to note a change in their language which reflected the way Lefebvre (1991: 44) sees 'ideology, to the extent that it remains distinct from knowledge, [as] characterized by rhetoric, by metalanguage'. The girls' choice of words, in particular the use

of personal and possessive pronouns, was laden with the theme of inclusivity – a divisive 'us and them' mentality was quite clear. There was an assumption of an unspoken understanding amongst the group (myself included) of who 'they' were in this context; I myself interpret the girls' understanding of 'they' as the English, in the amorphous guise of those set up as the dominant majority, the villains of the piece within the discourse of Welsh as a threatened language. The metalanguage of this discourse can also be seen to rely on the metaphor of a battle, with the girls' talk drawing on the semantic field of political struggle ('right'; 'our own language'; 'they can't take it away from us'):

> Ffion: It is important [*to speak Welsh*] because it's like your own language and you don't want anybody to destroy it.
>
> Siân: Because it's our own language, you know, Wales, they can't take it away from us, can they? Because it's […] our language.
>
> Ffion: We've got a right to speak Welsh.

Ffion, in her comments on the future of the language, was keen to remind the group that entry to the community of Welsh speakers seems to bestow a duty of protection of the language. The use of the language to create an inclusive community suggests that these bilinguals are involved in what Wenger (1998) describes as a community of practice. Such a community is 'created over time by the sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise' (ibid. p. 45). The enterprise in question here, it would seem, is the defence of the minority language spoken within the community. The defence of the language is a common thread in the discussion during the interviews, and, as such, it is interesting to explore this aspect of the girls' talk about their language.

5.1.6 The politicised Discourse of Welsh as a language under threat

Gee (1990: xv) uses the term 'Discourse', with a capital D, to describe the 'integral combinations of sayings-doings-thinkings-feelings-valuings' that occur within social structures. During the discussion on bilingualism and the Welsh language it was apparent from early on in the interview schedule that the girls in this study were firmly positioned within what is a particular and distinctive discourse on the subject. Williams (1995: 114) asserts that 'the dominant political discourse in Wales is the politics of language'. For a community striving to assert its identity, and for individuals within that community looking for markers with which to align themselves, one can see how this situation has arisen. The historical position of the language and the campaign for its preservation, in which the media as well as government agencies have played no small part, will have permeated aspects of these young Welsh speakers' experience growing up as the minority not only within the UK, but also within Wales. It is clear from their attempts to define 'Welshness' and their discussion of their bilingualism, that the Welsh language was inextricably linked to identity for these girls. The ideology of the language, however, is also very much part of their experience.   The mutually constitutive relationship between language and identity is explored by Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004: 14), who reflect that:

> On the one hand, languages, or rather particular discourses within them, supply the terms and other linguistic means with which identities are constructed and negotiated. On the other, ideologies of language and identity guide ways in which individuals use linguistic resources to index their identities and to evaluate the use of linguistic resources by others.

Llio, in sharing her memories of reading at primary school, described how the politics of language influenced her teacher's pedagogical approach:

> Llio: She wasn't strict [*about us reading in Welsh*] but she was a bit because the Welsh language is going a bit and she wanted everyone to learn it.

Llio confessed that she was also under some pressure at home to speak Welsh:

> Llio: I get told off by my mum if I speak English with anyone and she's there and knows I can speak Welsh because sometimes I put English words in the language and it confuses everything.

Below are some of the comments made during the interviews that reveal the ways in which some of the girls were immersed in the political Discourse of Welsh as a threatened language and were able to engage in the script of this Discourse with some passion:

> Llio: People make more of a fuss over English because there's only one Welsh channel.
> Ffion: Yeah.
> Llio: And there's every other channel – BBC 1, 2, 3.
> Ffion: I don't think it's fair that there's only one.
> Llio: There should be at least two Welsh channels and two English.
>
> Elin: Wherever you go there's someone who's English.
> Llio: Because the Welsh language is dying out now.
> Elin: Yes, it is.
> Llio: And we want it to carry on.
>
> SJ: How important is it to you to be bilingual?
> Ffion: It is important because it's like our own language and you don't want anybody to destroy it.

Llio: Yes, Ffion and I are working on a drama [*at a local theatre workshop*] and it's about words dying out and that the Welsh language is going to go. Everybody is destroying all the books and in the end, we stick at it…because everybody wants to text and not use the proper words, not like proverbs and things like that.

Llio: Everyday there are at least ten languages dying that we don't know about and Welsh is quickly going to die.

Elin: You know Welsh people, they come from Britain, don't they?
SJ: Yes.
Elin: Then from London they spread all over Wales and wherever they go they start to speak English and they get their families and it's just going to be English people living there. And there won't be much Welsh.

There are clues within these comments regarding the social and cultural influences on the girls' thoughts. Strauss and Corbin (1998) point out that unless respondents are extremely insightful, they may not be fully aware of why they behave in the way they do; their comments must therefore be considered in the context of the conditions behind them. When exploring the 'conditions' of the girls' responses in the case of this study, it must also be considered that the nature of the interviews themselves might have led them to make such remarks about the Welsh language. It is possible, as I argued in Chapter 3, that my own position and the location of the interviews at school might have led the girls to make comments which, at some level, they felt I wanted to hear.

The nature of comments made, for example about immigration and Welsh-language media, as well as global language death, suggest that these were prominent Discourses on the Welsh language, and which the girls were able to freely rearticulate in this particular context. Through education, the media and other cultural institutions, such as the drama class attended by

Llio and Ffion, these themes were more than familiar to them.   A walk around towns in the local area also showed that the politicisation of the Welsh language was clearly visible within the textual landscape of these girls (a term used by Carrington, 2005a).   During the time of the interviews, a local branch of a national high street store was undergoing renovations, and a monolingual English sign apologising to shoppers for the inconvenience was defaced by graffiti reading '*Ble mae'r Gymraeg?*' ('Where's the Welsh?').   Up and down the high street, such graffiti was a common sight, with English-only street names and shop signs defaced and Welsh language slogans demanding political change in support of the language scrawled across many walls.

Gee (1990) contends that Discourses are inherently ideological. In Wales, the politicised ideology surrounding the language has grown directly from its history. The very fact that within a few decades, the language has moved from a point where its extinction was predicted within half a century to a position of strength where it has become a 'successful instance of a revitalised language' (Crystal, 2004: 57) is testament to the strength of its advocacy within cultural and political institutions.   Political policy is responsible for much of the language's higher profile within Wales, with particular impact seen in the areas of education and the media. This policy itself, of course, has been the consequence of decades of effort by Welsh speakers in support of their dying language.

One consequence of this politicisation of the language is cultural and linguistic elitism (Williams, 1995; Thomson et al, 1999).   The girls were asked what makes a person Welsh.

Sara: Well, if you're born in Wales, then you're Welsh, then, aren't you? But speaking Welsh makes you more Welsh. […]

Llio: There's being Welsh and being pure Welsh.

Ffion: You have to have the Welsh language to be solid Welsh.

There is, therefore, some irony in a situation whereby the language that has for centuries been in a minority position within Wales, and continues, statistically, to be so, exists today as one of its strongest political forces. In this respect, being part of a prominent Discourse of language 'can lead to acquisition of social goods (money, power, status)' (Gee, 1990: 142) in Welsh society. For example, a significant Welsh Language Board policy, *Twf*[2] aims to increase the use of Welsh within homes with young children where one parent is not a Welsh speaker. In such cases, it is statistically likely that the children will not speak Welsh in the home, the key area in which to foster the language within any effort at language revitalisation (Fishman, 2000b). The literature provided by this campaign outlines six 'good reasons for making sure your children can speak Welsh', thus giving them 'the best start':

at school, in the family, at work, in the community, around the world; in life[3]

In a more detailed pamphlet, the economic benefits are further emphasised:

There are definite economic advantages later on when your child is looking for a job, as more jobs in Wales today ask for bilingual skills than ever before.[4]

---

[2] *Twf* literally translates as 'Growth'

[3] *Twf* publicity literature, *Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg*, no date

[4] *Raising bilingual children- advice for parents, Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg*, no date

Interestingly, within the same list of benefits, it is suggested to parents that speaking Welsh 'can help people to feel a sense of belonging to Wales'. Given that this literature is aimed at those who may not speak the language themselves, this points to a particular political stance on the relationship between language and Welsh identity. There are certainly echoes to be found in this literature of the words of the girls themselves: it could be argued that the pamphlet is telling its readers that 'speaking Welsh makes you more Welsh' or 'You have to have the Welsh language to be solid Welsh'. In any case, it is easy to trace connections between the words articulated by the girls and their possible sources within one of the most prominent Discourses of the Welsh language.

There exists somewhat of a paradox within this Discourse similar to that described by Heller (1995) within the context of francophone Canada. The driving concern of the Discourse of Welsh as a threatened language centres on concerns about historical subordination of the language and culture of Wales due to English language domination. This is certainly the picture given of the Discourse at the level with which the girls in this study are engaged. However, where policies exist which promote such features as the necessity of Welsh within the workplace and, by inference, its necessity to a Welsh identity, then the position of the Welsh language shifts from that of subordination to that of domination, at least in these spheres. As Heller (1995:379) explains of the Canadian context, 'this makes it difficult to explicitly address problems that arise from the domination of francophones over others – since in theory the issue is the subordination of francophones, not their dominance'. Further tensions within this Discourse are discussed below, where the dissonance between the ideological and personal realities of the girls is explored.

5.1.7 Tensions within the Discourse

Gee (1990) lists the main facets of a Discourse, many of which can be illustrated by the girls' remarks about the Welsh language. Firstly, Discourses:

> crucially involve a set of values and viewpoints about the relationships between people and the distribution of social goods (at very least about who is an insider and who isn't) […] one must speak and act, at least appear to think and feel, in terms of these values and viewpoints while being in the Discourse otherwise one doesn't count as being in it (p. 142).

The girls clearly demonstrated how they were aware of who was an 'insider' within the Discourse of Welsh as a language under threat, and who was not. Even within their very small-scale engagement in the Discourse during the interviews, they also demonstrated how their grasp of its 'rules' meant they are able to include and exclude virtually on the spot.

Any group interview will bring with it the dynamic of the group as it exists 'outside'. The girls all came from the same class in a school located within a small community and, as the termly interview schedule went on, their personal relationships were reflected in some of the comments made. It is interesting that some individuals utilised the political Discourse of language to play out residual personal tensions. These exchanges reflected their inherent awareness of Gee's second point about Discourses:

> Discourses are resistant to internal criticism and self-scrutiny since uttering viewpoints that seriously undermine them defines one as being outside them (ibid).

Throughout the course of the interviews, perhaps the most interesting dynamic was seen played out between Llio and Anna. Aside from any personal differences the girls may have had, which were, of course, beyond the scope of this study, there were differences in the life experience of the two which may be relevant to an analysis of their interaction. Llio, as seen in her comments above, was from an entirely Welsh-speaking family; she was vociferous about this and about the Welsh language in general. Anna, on the other hand, came from an English speaking home, and she, it will be remembered, was the one who gave the only definition of bilingualism which could be seen as objective. Both girls were keenly aware of the facility they had to undermine the other within this relatively public setting through engagement in the Discourse of the Welsh language.

When first asked to explain how they would describe themselves, Anna explained that she was:

> Anna: English, but able to speak Welsh. […] Mum and Dad are English.

Llio immediately jumped in at this point as if to trump Anna in terms of her Welsh language credentials:

> Llio: All of my family are Welsh, nobody is English.

At a later stage of this interview, Anna explained how she spoke English at home and Welsh at school:

> Anna: I haven't got any family living in Wales, so there's not a lot of family
> who are Welsh so, only my mum, dad, brother, who I know, well mum can't
> speak Welsh actually, so those two, brother and dad, who I can speak to in
> Welsh. So I don't get lots of practice, apart from in school.
> Ffion: With me!

SJ: So would you like more practice or do you think it's OK?

Anna: OK.

Llio: She could speak Welsh all the time with me.

Anna: 'Cos you don't talk enough, do you Llio?

Tensions mounted during the interview and there were clear opportunities for the girls to invoke the politicised Discourse of language to attempt to include and exclude each other. Conversation led to the subject of when and where the girls would use both their languages.

Llio: What's the point of speaking English when…because sometimes I hear Ffion and Anna speaking English even though they can both speak Welsh.

Ffion: Yeah, but we're used to-

Llio: But what's the point of speaking English when you can speak Welsh?

Ffion: That's just what I do.

Anna: What's the point of speaking Welsh when you can speak English?

In her initial remark here, Llio's one-upmanship was aimed at giving the opportunity to others to feel included in the group by means of agreeing with her on a key Discourse of the Welsh language. Ffion appreciated the nature of the accusation made against her and was willing to try and defend her right to speak English, knowing that this would possibly mean taking a stance firmly outside this Discourse. Anna's retort to Llio clearly communicated that the particular stance made by Llio did not represent a Discourse of which she wished to be a part. To do so would be to ignore a significant part of her identity. Her retort served as a challenge to those listening: how fair is this Discourse when I am excluded from it because of the language spoken by my family?   It was a bold move on her part; within the context of the interview, as discussed above, the dominant ways of speaking and acting as perceived by the girls were most likely to be those maintained by Llio. Ultimately, however, Anna and Llio were taking

advantage of the topic of discussion in order to engage in a personal interchange reflecting the dynamic between them as individuals.

The fact that this exchange did not succeed in engaging anyone else, aside from what it might suggest about the strength of character of the two girls and the particular dynamic of the group around them, also signifies how the other girls were probably innately aware of the nature of the Discourse in question and its contradictory messages in relation to their own lives. Ffion's valiant attempts to defend her position are interesting in this regard. Ffion herself comes from a Welsh speaking home, but has extended family who are non-Welsh speaking, with whom she has close ties. She was also uniquely aware of my own position as having monolingual English-speaking family members. During this part of the interview, Ffion was experiencing how 'it is psychologically uncomfortable to disagree strongly with other people about the content and value of one's own identity' (Liebkind, 1995: 82). As such, she perhaps felt a personal duty both to her friend and to myself to attempt to bring a good-natured conclusion to this part of the discussion:

> Ffion: That's up to others, other people's business if they want to speak in Welsh or in English.
> Llio: That's how the Welsh language is dying out. Everybody's choosing to speak English.
> Ffion: Everyone's got their own opinion which language they want to speak, haven't they? They can speak Chinese if they want to!

Ffion had already made an impact during the interviews with her comments regarding the fate of the language and the necessity of it to a Welsh identity. Her remarks during this exchange illustrate Gee's fourth point about Discourses, namely that they 'can call for one to accept values in

conflict with other Discourses of which one is also a member' (p.142). The discussion is an example of how the girls, like other bilinguals around the world, are engaged in identity negotiations where they attempt to balance the role of both group and individual values in their lives (Liebkind, 1995). In arbitrating this discussion, Ffion was called upon to draw on her experience as a bilingual in Wales of navigating and negotiating the values of differing discourses.

This point is at the core of this study: the ways in which the girls were making use of language to negotiate a position for themselves within different discourses. The next part of this chapter takes a closer look at the girls' literacy practices in both languages, where the complexity of their bilingual lives is further represented.

PART 2: LITERACY PRACTICES

5.2.1 Introduction: reading in Welsh and English

Children in some areas of Wales learn to read and write in Welsh from the beginning of their school lives. As reported in Chapter 4, the questionnaire administered at the outset of the research showed that Ysgol Gymraeg had a Year 7 consisting of 136 pupils, 82.2 per cent of whom spoke at least some Welsh at home, and saw themselves as bilingual according to the criterion specified. The data shows that 99.1 per cent reported being able to read in Welsh, demonstrating the fact that in this area, virtually all children, some of whom may not come from Welsh speaking homes, learn to read in Welsh. Given that no data was made available to me as to the actual reading abilities of the group from non-bilingual homes, it has to be assumed, therefore, that they were able to read in Welsh at least to a degree where they felt able to report this to be the case.

The main issues to emerge from the questionnaire analysis relating to the literacy practices of bilinguals at Ysgol Gymraeg are substantially qualified by the interview data, where the girls discussed their thoughts on issues related in particular to reading in Welsh and English, demonstrating some of the complexities that exist when it comes to a discussion of bilingual literacy in the Welsh context. As will be shown in the discussion of this data, literacy practices in both languages can be seen to have been affected not only by educational policy, but also by broader linguistic, geographic, economic and historic issues.

5.2.2 Reading preferences amongst the interview group

As reported in Chapter 4, not one bilingual at Ysgol Gymraeg indicated a preference for reading material solely in Welsh over that in English. It will also be recalled that of the bilinguals who had reported reading during the evening prior to the survey, far more did so in English only than in Welsh or in both languages.   The bilingual readers at Ysgol Gymraeg owned fewer books in Welsh than they did in English. A similar pattern exists when respondents were asked about their perceptions of the amount they read in both languages.   Welsh authors were named by 10.3 per cent of respondents claiming to have a favourite author or series. The issue of preference in reading material also became a key theme in the interviews which followed.

The opening question of the first interview aimed to elicit an early indication of the kinds of material the girls liked to read. They were asked to imagine they could speak to a character from a book of their own choice. They were then asked to suggest one question that they might ask that character. At this stage in the interviews, the group was still quite large (nineteen). Of this number, only one (Llio) mentioned that she would ask a question of a character in a Welsh language book, *Tân ar y Comin*, a classic children's novel by T. Llew Jones, one of the most prolific children's writers in the Welsh language during the twentieth century, and certainly one of the most well known to Welsh school children. This was also a class reader in Year 7 at the school.   The other most popular titles mentioned were the *Ballet School* series by Alexandra Moss, Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, and *Harry Potter* by J.K. Rowling.

Although this was a very quick task at the start of the interview, the response demonstrates an imbalance between the popularity of the English texts, here all internationally published series, and the one book mentioned in Welsh. This response reinforces the findings of the questionnaire, where English authors and series outweighed those of the minority language. Subsequent discussions during the interviews themselves also reinforced this idea:

SJ: Who do you like to read?

Llio: T. Llew Jones.

Catrin: Jacqueline Wilson.

Elin: Lemony Snicket!

Ffion: Lemony Snicket!

SJ: Sara, what do you like to read and why?

Sara: I like to read things like the book I'm reading now, *The Howling Ghost*, I like to read scary things. I don't know, it's just fun. And I like to read T. Llew Jones because every book he writes finishes with a question mark, so you kind of think what's going to happen next.

SJ: Ah, I see. Catrin?

Catrin: I like Lemony Snicket, Jacqueline Wilson, T. Llew Jones, um, JK Rowling, um I don't know what else!

SJ: Have you got one favourite author or series?

Catrin: Jacqueline Wilson. […]

SJ: Gwenno?

Gwenno: I like *Princess Diaries* and things like *Mean States* […] *Point Horror*, *Hugs and Kisses*, things like that. And I like Jacqueline Wilson.

[…]

Anna: Um, Lemony Snicket and Jacqueline Wilson.

The same names continued to emerge across the interviews, with some of the girls expressing a particular affiliation to Jacqueline Wilson. Her popularity as an author is well documented. *The Observer* newspaper rated her seventh of the fifty most influential people in publishing, two

places above J.K. Rowling (McCrum, 2006). In his evaluation of Wilson, Tucker (2001: 69) finds that in these books, 'children encounter plenty of everyday truths about themselves and others [through] writing that is constantly lively, daring and compassionate'. The girls in this study echoed such thoughts:

> SJ: Why do you like [Jacqueline Wilson]?
>
> Catrin: Because they're more or less about girls, kind of thing, and, um, I just enjoy them.
>
> […]
>
> Gwenno: 'Cos they're about girls liking boys and things like that!
>
> […]
>
> Anna: It's like the same things that happen to us. So you can relate to it.
>
> Ffion: Yeah, like real life stories, she writes.
>
> Catrin: But ones she makes up, based on real life.
>
> […]
>
> Llio: I like Jacqueline Wilson books because they're adventurous books, and they, I like that sort of thing because they are about ourselves.

There is no lack of effort on the part of the Welsh publishing industry to appeal to these very tastes in their books for the young audience, from children to pre-adolescents and teens. *Cyngor Llyfrau Cymru* - The Welsh Books Council - is a body that exists to promote and co-ordinate the publication of books in Wales, both in the Welsh language as well as texts in English with a Welsh connection. According its website, a total of 225 books were supported financially by the Council in the year 2005/6, as well as 16 magazines. £244, 250 was paid to authors and illustrators, and £36, 285 to booksellers in Wales.   The Council's distribution centre distributes material to 800 outlets on behalf of 350 publishers and sold 656,660 items in 2005/2006, grossing £4,422,000.   In the year 2005/6, the Council oversaw allocation of £1, 63,594 in grants to publish Welsh language

books, magazines and other materials, such as audio books and CDRoms. The Council also runs Welsh language book clubs within primary schools and 2005/06 saw the sale of 18, 557 items, worth £97, 066, to 11, 830 buyers in Welsh primary schools (*Cyngor Llyfrau Cymru*, 2007). The Book Council's 2006 Catalogue of Children's Books featured 3,500 items, 490 of which were newly published. New titles aimed at young adult readers included, for example *Aminah a Minna* by Gwyneth Glyn, a novel centring on the experiences of a dyslexic boy, *Dawnsio Gwirion a'r Duw Rhyw*, by Siân Summers, the diary of a teenage girl, and *Ffêc Tan a Tships*, by Caryl Lewis. The blurb for this title in the English language catalogue reads: 'Fake tan, sudoku and being raised by two men above a chip shop – that's the strange world of one girl' (*Cyngor Llyfrau Cymru*, 2006). One could argue that these are books that seem to engage in 'everyday truths' and are 'lively' and 'daring', to use Tucker's description of Jacqueline Wilson above. However, these, and the many other titles featured in the catalogue, do not feature prominently in the preferences of the particular girls in this study.

5.2.3 Aliteracy in Welsh?

Despite the efforts of the Welsh publishing industry, the overwhelming image of reading in Welsh to emerge from both the questionnaire and the interviews reflects what Irwin (2003: 29) describes as 'aliteracy', that is 'the lack of reading habit in capable readers who choose not to read'. The 'aliteracy' of the girls in the study group can be represented by Anna's comments on what she had read the previous evening:

> Anna: Last night I read twenty pages of this Welsh book because I have to by
> tomorrow. I only started it last night. And Lemony Snicket. The new book.

SJ: What was the Welsh one?

Anna: Something…by someone!

SJ: Was it ok?

Anna: [*shakes her head*]

SJ: You read it because you had to, not through choice?

Anna: No, we had to, by tomorrow.

SJ: What is it about the Welsh book..?

Anna: It's just dull.

SJ: Story, characters...? The fact it's Welsh?

Anna: They use long words we don't understand, thinking they're clever and the characters are boring. The story was about an Indian boy […], which sounds exciting, but they make it so dull. There aren't that many good Welsh books, though, are there?

This last statement from Anna is another phrase to echo through the interview data. The reasons given by the girls for their lack of engagement in Welsh language reading material reflect a complex network of issues that impact on many minority languages. Some of these are explored below. Each of these issues in relation to literacy practices works together to create an image in the minds of these young readers about reading in Welsh. Influenced by George Kelly, Irwin uses personal construct psychology in order to explore the phenomenon of aliteracy. According to this theoretical approach, each individual assesses experiences in life through a template created from their evaluation of reality as they have experienced it:

> Whatever the world may be, man can come to grips with it only by placing his own interpretations upon what he sees.
>
> (Kelly, 1970, cited by Irwin, 2003: 29)

Such a personal construct may apply to the experience of reading; for example, an adolescent male may see reading fiction as an effeminate

activity as a result of the experience and evaluation made of it. According to Irwin,

> the construct is the means through which a learner can categorise everything with which he or she comes into contact. It combines thoughts, emotions and moral judgement. […] People are driven by a need to anticipate events, and to form theories about themselves and their world that will help to predict probable outcomes of any activities (p. 30).

It could be argued that for the young readers in this study, a particular construct of reading in Welsh had been established and was being routinely applied to the experience.

> SJ: You've said - nearly all of you – have said that you'd prefer English//
> Siân: The Welsh ones are boring! Boring! Boring!
> Anna: But there are really good books in English, aren't there?
>
> Gwenno: I don't like Welsh stuff. It's boring.

Some of the ideas the girls expressed about reading in Welsh help to clarify the ways in which this negative construct has been established and is being perpetuated.

5.2.4 Choice

At the heart of the issue with reading in Welsh for the girls was a basic supply problem: there was not the choice of material in Welsh.

> Anna: I don't think there are that many good Welsh books around.
> [Assent]
> Llio: Yes, there's T. Llew Jones.
> Catrin: But not that many.

Llio: But T. Llew Jones is in his nineties now.

Anna: But look at the English ones.

Ffion: They're awfully good.

Catrin: Hundreds of them.

Anna: To compare the Welsh ones with the English ones, there's not a lot.

SJ: How does reading in Welsh compare to reading in English?

Sara: Reading in English is easier for me.

Elin: You can read more.

Catrin: There's a shop full of, hundreds, shelves and shelves of English ones.

Sara: Me personally, I like scary stories. More than scary films.

SJ: Can you get books like that in Welsh?

Ffion: Not many.

Sara: Not good ones. My mum bought one for me before, like a scary one,

and I, like, read it, and it was so boring. It was similar to the one I've just

read, but it was not so interesting. They made the characters so boring.

In a later discussion on magazine reading, the issue of choice was again raised.   This time both the choice of titles was raised, as well as the material within the magazines, reflecting the stark contrast between the reach of Welsh and Anglo-American cultures:

Anna: There's not a lot of choice in Welsh.

SJ: No choice?

Catrin: They mention people you all know. Like, they're only one programme

in Welsh, but in English, there's lots, so it's about them.

[…]

Siân: I read English ones because there are more things happening than in

Welsh ones.

[…]

> Ffion: There's not a lot of choice in Welsh, just things like CIP[5]. I've seen
>
> that and they always write about things like Eden[6]. I wouldn't buy it. But if I
>
> had to, that's the one I'd have.
>
> […]
>
> Anna: In the English ones, there's a lot of people sending in, so there's a lot
>
> of choice. In the Welsh ones, they'd have to put in what they got.

These comments highlight the obvious obstacle facing those aiming to promote reading in Welsh, that is its status as a minority language existing alongside such a dominant language and culture as that represented by English. As the teacher of Welsh explained, 'it is impossible for Welsh to compete'.

I return again to the point that, perhaps aside from magazines, to which discussion will return below, texts do exist, albeit in a smaller number, which *could* appeal to this age group. Not one of the contemporary Welsh language titles aimed at teen readers was mentioned at any stage of the interviews by the girls. Neither did they suggest that they did read in Welsh and they had just run out of things to read. There is therefore more to the negative construct of reading in Welsh than the purely economic argument.

The issue of lack of choice merges in the mind of Anna with a lack of quality, suggesting the way she has created a construct of reading material in Welsh being of poorer quality than English.

> Anna: There aren't that many good books in Welsh, are there? The English
>
> books are good. So we read them and we don't want to read the Welsh ones
>
> because they're boring.

---

[5] *CIP* is a Welsh language magazine produced by *Urdd Gobatih Cymru – 'Yr Urdd'* - a Welsh Language youth movement, and is aimed at upper primary aged readers.
[6] An all-girl Welsh language pop group.

The essential quality of the experience of reading in Welsh for these first-language speakers is therefore different for them than it is in English.

5.2.5 Translation of English books into Welsh

Translations are available of many popular authors, including Jacqueline Wilson and J.K. Rowling. The first *Harry Potter* book appeared in Welsh in 2003. This was arguably a little late for those already caught by the Potter bug, who would have been on the fifth volume in English by then. The girls, however, were in some agreement that this was a positive step towards promoting reading in Welsh, and awareness was shown of the connection between engagement in cultural practices in the Welsh language and its preservation.

> SJ: Would you read books like Jacqueline Wilson of they were available in Welsh?
>
> Ffion and others: Yes.
>
> Ffion: It would be worth trying, I suppose.
>
> SJ: Elin, do you think it would be a good idea to translate more books from English into Welsh?
>
> Elin: Yes, because the Welsh people may have seen a television programme or something before reading the book in English, say, and they want to know the real story, it would be easier for it to be in Welsh. And more Welsh people would get more Welsh books to carry on the language.

The success of some Welsh translations can be seen in the following comment by Llio:

> Llio: *Clwb Cysgu*[7] has been translated into English too.

---

[7] *Clwb Cysgu* is the Welsh version of *The Sleepover Club* series of books

This is surely a remark that would hearten anyone concerned with the profile of the Welsh language.

5.2.6 Language differences and difficulties

Despite positive viewpoints being expressed, it was still hard for the girls to shake the negative construct of Welsh reading.   Another key issue perceived by the girls as an obstacle to their enjoyment of texts in Welsh was the language they said they found in them.

> Gwenno: Even when they translate them [*into Welsh*], they have difficult words in them.

Here, Gwenno expresses her difficulties with the written form of her language. As a diglossic language, there is a large gap between the formal written variety of Welsh and that spoken in the different areas of Wales. Written Welsh, which emerged after the translation of the Bible in 1588, and has historically kept its association with literary and academic forms, is traditionally very different to the spoken dialect forms of the language. There are areas of Welsh grammar that are notoriously difficult to master when writing, such as mutation of initial consonants dependent on the syntactical context. As such, the contrast between formal written language and that which is spoken can be extensive. As the influence of Welsh language television has grown over the previous generation, making the different aspects and varieties of the language more accessible to all, this has been reflected in the written word, with non-standard versions and dialects of Welsh now more commonly seen in printed texts.   I would argue, however, that a construct of the difficulties of the language in its written form has evolved over centuries and persists in creating a barrier

for many Welsh speakers. I have observed this attitude in generations older than myself, and it was certainly still fairly pervasive when I was educated in the 1980s.   Based on the girls' comments about reading in Welsh, it would appear that it has lingered into this generation, perhaps passed on unwittingly by Welsh-speaking parents and perpetuated by peers.   The linguistic difficulties associated with reading in Welsh are certainly a significant obstacle for the promotion of Welsh language literacy practices for the girls in this study. Information about the girls' reading abilities in Welsh was not made available to me, although one teacher of English reported anecdotally that she did not believe there to be a huge difference between reading skills in Welsh and in English. Where there were problems, in her own experience, she suggested that this was because Welsh-speaking students of lower ability were more likely to experience difficulties with their second language, i.e. English. I believe, therefore, that the lack of confidence with the written word demonstrates how the girls have internalised the construct of difficulty to the extent that they have made it a reality.

As such, although the girls were positive about translation in principle, their response to the fact that *Harry Potter* was translated into Welsh also reflected the issue of language difficulty:

> Llio: They've translated *Harry Potter* now.
> Others: It's hard!

Asked which language they preferred in different settings, Siân asserted that she preferred English for school work:

> Siân: I'd choose English because I understand the work better. Welsh words
> can be hard. […] There's really complicated words.

Ffion also described how, for her, the experience of reading in Welsh was very different from English:

> Ffion: When you're reading in Welsh you have to think about what's written there and then you don't understand what's happened, so you have to read it again.

Any teacher of reading will be aware of how ungratifying this cycle can prove to a reader, as well as the danger that it can switch off any motivation to read. There is also a danger of what Stanovich (1986) terms 'the Matthew Effect', whereby a less fluent reader will spend more time on decoding to the detriment of comprehension and, therefore, engagement with the text, potentially ruling out enjoyment in reading, making it an onerous task rather than a pursuit of pleasure. This, according to Stanovich, can lead to a phenomenon where a poor reader only gets poorer by this lack of engagement, whereas the reading of a more fluent peer, able to access texts without difficulty, is enriched by each reading experience.

One of the recommendations the girls made with regards to the promotion of reading in Welsh was that the issue of language disparity be addressed. Elin said that she would read more in Welsh if authors made use of 'words that we use.' This may seem easy to do, particularly in the contemporary multimedia move away from traditional diglossic representation of the language. Increased use of regional dialect and slang as well as the language of computer-mediated communication are now frequently seen within Welsh language texts, particularly those aimed at young readers. The range of such texts has expanded in recent years, many of these titles

aimed at younger readers. For example, *mrch dd@* by Meleri Wyn James (2005), is the story of a young girl's experiences in internet chat rooms, and is written both in a dialect of South Wales as well as in the abbreviated form of the protagonist's internet and SMS communication. For example, the novel opens as follows:

NGS I ELI

PEN_BLDD HPS!!! GES T BE T ISIE?

:-}

NGS I CHARLOTTE

BE TN FDDWL?

(p.9)

The success of this particular novel can be measured in one way by the fact that it won an award sponsored by the Welsh Books Council. However, its impact on the young readers in this study does not reflect its reputation elsewhere. Despite her recommendation for more 'words that we use', Elin admits that, where such language is commonly used, such as in teen magazines, 'English is better because it's more of a slang language. It's not the same in Welsh.'

Even when a book is written in dialect form, the attitudes of speakers of various regional dialects towards each other, which can often be pejorative (Peate, et al. 1998), can, once again, create a barrier to enjoyment:

Siân: It would be better if Gogs[8] wrote it. Because the only thing you get is what the Hwntws[9] have written. […] You need a dictionary to understand them!

---

[8] Nickname for the people of North Wales, from *Gogledd*, meaning North

[9] The name given to the people of South Wales by those in the North, possibly deriving from '*tu hwnt'*, meaning beyond or far away.

Interestingly, as was found by Gruffudd (1992; 1996), this is not a factor that seemed to affect the girls' enjoyment of television programmes in Welsh, where a range of dialects and accents were to be heard. It would seem that the negative construct of reading in Welsh encompasses many aspects of the language.

5.2.7 Literacy at home: magazine reading

This section offers an exploration of the girls' talk about reading magazines. These were significant texts in their lives, representing, in many cases, the majority of their more enjoyable reading experiences.

Along with the fiction they described in English, the girls also reported reading a range of magazines, a practice they shared with many of their counterparts across the UK (Hall and Coles, 1999).   Magazines were preferred to books for some of the girls, although there was an acknowledgment that magazines and books fulfilled different roles:

> Ffion: I like [magazines] because there's more…things about people, personal things, they put them in magazines, but I enjoy reading books as well.
> Elin: I like both the same, but I like magazines because they're not as long as a book and it takes less time to read but I like books too.
> Siân: I like magazines because it's got things about celebrities and people with problems and stuff like that, you can read about them, it's a lot better than books.
> Catrin: I prefer magazines because they're more updated, more, like, gossip that's kind of *now*. And books are like a story and that can be quite old.

The magazines performed a different role to fiction books in the reading practices of the girls.   Magazines appealed to the girls for their contemporaneity, the facility they offered to read discontinuously for short

amounts of time and for the connection they gave them to the wider (Anglo-American) culture of celebrity.

The range of titles read by the girls would be familiar to anyone with a connection with girls of this age group:

> Ffion: I usually read English magazines because there's more, kind of, gossip and things, in English ones. I usually read *Shout!* Or *Bliss* or, you know, things for girls our age.
>
> Elin: I read English ones too because they have lots more stuff about celebrities and English pop which is more recognisable and things like *Top of the Pops*, or *Bliss* or *Shout!* or something.
>
> Siân: I read English ones because there are more things happening than in Welsh ones. I read things like *Shout!* and *Bliss* and *Sugar* and things like that because they tell you about celebrities and things like that.
>
> Ceri: I'm the same as everyone else, I read English things because there are more things in English magazines. I read *Shout!* and things like that.

Interestingly, many of the girls classified their magazines as 'English' and felt some need to justify their language choice by proclaiming the superior content of English magazines (although no direct reference was made at this point to Welsh magazines). The fact that there was a wide range of titles to choose from added to the appeal of magazines in English, as the girls enjoyed visiting the shop, browsing and flicking through each before making a purchase. Although there was some loyalty to a particular title, the girls were clear that the magazine's content was the main factor in its appeal:

> SJ: How do you choose the magazine you're going to read?
>
> Catrin: I just flick through it and see what's in it and see if there's anything I like in it.

> Elin: I don't really stick to one comic, but the one I do read most often is
> *Bliss*. I look to see in case there's stories in it that I like. If I notice a story or
> a title I like, I'll buy that one.

Magazines also played a role in providing information to girls about issues which concerned them and it is to these features that they often turned first, and subsequently returned to during future rereading. 'Embarrassing moments' were popular, as were features on celebrity gossip.   As well as the complex economic and linguistic context of the girls' reading choices, the taste for texts such as these in English may also be related to 'the perceived trendiness' (Gruffudd, 1997: 207) of magazine celebrity culture.

> Anna: There's not a lot of choice in Welsh.
> Catrin: They mention people you all know. Like, there's only one programme
> in Welsh, but in English, there's lots, so it's about them.
>
> Elin: In the Welsh ones, there's only about four pages and you haven't heard
> of the celebs in them.

Features on celebrity gossip were one of the main areas of appeal to the girls. Such information provided a forum for discussion amongst friends. Similarly, items on fashion and make-up facilitated shared activities, from the act of reading itself to the shopping and experimenting with friends at home:

> Charlotte: Sometimes I read with my cousin.
> SJ: At the same time? Does anyone else do that? Read with someone else?
> Ffion: Yes, when I'm going on the bus or something, I read [a magazine] with
> Anna.
> SJ: And do you discuss what's in it?
> Elin: Yes. And then if we want to go shopping or something, we look at the
> magazines to see what to get.

> Ffion: I always read it first, then I tell my friends to read it. To read one bit. Like, if I read one true story, she'll read the other true story.
>
> […]
>
> Ffion: Say if a magazine gives you lipgloss, if you look inside, there's tips about how to use it.
>
> Llio: There's tips about, like celebrities, they show how they look and then tell us what to use.

The important role played by magazines in providing information, entertainment and facilitating friendships was clear in the comments made by the girls. They saw these texts as an opportunity to read away from the expectations of schooled literacy, both in English and Welsh. The freedom to choose a title, to leaf freely and select items to read at random, and to return to favourite sections for re-reading showed how the practice of reading magazines was different to the way in which reading texts at school was described. The magazines held powerful information about the celebrity and fashion world, which the girls were able to utilize in order to engage meaningfully in what they perceive as their culture. The fact that the Welsh language is not part of this counter culture of magazines means its association is still with literacy at school and the space the girls create for themselves outside the classroom becomes dominated by the English language.

There was a suggestion in the interviews that the adults around the girls showed some disapproval of their magazine reading. This was partly due to what was perceived as age inappropriate or explicit content within the magazines, but interestingly, the main discussion revolved around the kind of language used; the main concerns were not over choice of English over Welsh, but rather over stylistic issues and the impact of such texts on general literacy skills:

> Llio: They haven't got the right vocabulary in them. They're like gossip and
> things like that. They don't have…
>
> SJ: It's more like slang?
>
> Llio: Yes.
>
> Ffion: They write, like in text. Like 'I want U 2.'
>
> SJ: Do you mind that when you read it yourself?
>
> Ffion: No, but Mum sees it and she's, like, 'oh, this is rubbish'.
>
> Elin: In things like *Top of the Pops*, they only put, like, speech bubbles and
> things and they only have about two words in them, so we don't get…
>
> Llio: They are more interesting for young people to read, because the way
> they put things in is different, in a different style, and there's pictures and
> things, but they don't use, like, the same words, they don't use big words so
> we can learn.

The fact that the girls did not mention others' concerns over the fact that they were reading in English rather than Welsh perhaps reflects a broader acceptance that historically, Welsh language magazines have not been able to capture the interest of Welsh speakers. It has been generously estimated that the maximum attainable audience for a magazine in Welsh is 10, 000, a narrow band of those able to speak Welsh. A Welsh-language women's magazine – *Mela* - was launched in the early 1990s, but struggled to achieve 2,000 readers and lasted only 2 years (Thomas, 2006: 49). More successful Welsh magazines tend to appeal to special interest or 'high-brow' audiences (Thomas, ibid), and reflect a tendency within the Welsh language elite to portray themselves as either religious or literary (Brooks, 1998).   The gap in the market for magazines which appeal to young Welsh speakers has not just been evident to commentators, but also to the potential readership themselves:

> Llio: You know Welsh [magazines], the people who do them could go round
> schools and ask for feedback to know what to do, ask the young people who'd

read it for feedback about how to improve it and then perhaps they'd get more money from the *Urdd*[10], because the *Urdd* does give a lot of business to the magazines.

Magazine reading is one area that has clear potential for engaging young readers with text in the Welsh language. The added value of the fact that these are texts read out of choice means that successful engagement through the medium of Welsh could well secure further success for the future of the language.

The following discussion centres on school based literacy practices, where, once again, a complex network of factors is seen to influence the reality of reading in Welsh for the girls and their peers.

5.2.8 Reading at school: the girls' perspective

Early in the schedule of interviews, the girls were asked to share some of their memories of reading. They were asked which books they remembered first reading, and to share any thoughts they had on their early reading histories. Virtually all the comments in this discussion involved reading at school. As was mentioned earlier, the medium of education for all these girls at Key Stage 1 was Welsh. As such, it is not surprising that many of the texts they recalled from their early reading experiences were in Welsh.

> Siân: I remember reading *Sali Mali*, *Jac y Jwc* and *Pry Bach Tew*.
>
> Anna and Elin: We remember *Smot*[11] – *Smot* was our first book.

---

[10] *Yr Urdd* (*Urdd Gobaith Cymru*) is the Welsh Language Christian Youth organisation that is involved with many aspects of promoting the language amongst young speakers. One of its remits is publication.
[11] Smot is the Welsh translation of *Spot* by Eric Hill

SJ: Yes, *Smot* is still very popular. Anyone else?

Anna: *Elfed*[12].

SJ: Elfed the elephant, yes?

Anna: Yes.

The girls also revealed the important role of individuals in the community in helping to develop their early reading skills.

Sara: When I was in primary school, Year 2, Gwenno's mum used to come to read with us and it was her that helped me to read.

Elin: We had that in [our primary school] and there were three people who came in…in turns…and we read with them.

The Welsh Assembly Government has expressed concern over the decline in Welsh speakers amongst the 'socially influential' group of adult age (Welsh Assembly Government, 2003: 6). Here is an example of the key role that can be played by such individuals within the community.

The girls recall their early reading with fondness and enthusiasm, showing none of the negative connotations often used in reference to reading in Welsh during secondary age. These recollections of reading, right up to Year 6, were often shared memories recalled warmly. However, reading in Welsh had begun to take on more significant connotations by the end of primary school:

Llio: When we were in Year 6 we had to read every day. [Our teacher] wasn't strict, but she was a bit because the Welsh language is going a bit and she wanted everyone to learn it.

---

[12] *Elfed* is the Welsh translation of *Elmer* by David McKee

The discussion about reading histories took place one term into the girls' secondary school career. Already, their impression of reading in secondary school was clear. Reading is part of the National Curriculum in the subjects of both English and Welsh. The girls revealed, however, how their experiences differed in both subjects. In English, there was a timetabled library lesson once a week where the students were expected to choose a book, changing it each fortnight, and spend time reading or engaging in activities based on their book. Each student had an exercise book, or 'Reading Log', in which to complete reviews and other written exercises on their chosen book, and they were also asked to engage in oral tasks based upon it. This was clearly a different system to the one they had been used to at primary school:

> Llio: In primary school you didn't have to write anything and you have to write a lot more now with [our English teacher].

The Welsh department, at the time of the research, did not have a timetabled library lesson, which seemed to formalise reading in the minds of the girls. As such, the perception of what they had done in this subject was different:

> Llio: We don't do much in Welsh, just read in the class.
> SJ: Read in the class..?
> Llio: *Tân ar y Comin*…There's a reading corner…
> SJ: Do you have a lot of writing on that?
> Sara: No, as a class.
> Llio: We've not done that much, just drawn pictures.
> Ffion: You know, like a cartoony thing.

The girls again referred to the issue of choice, stating that reading in secondary school was 'better' because there was more choice.

> Anna: You've got more choice here.
>
> SJ: Is that true of Welsh and English?
>
> All: More in English.
>
> Siân: [*gesturing around the library*] These are the Welsh shelves…those are
> all English.
>
> SJ: Right, three or four shelves of Welsh books…the rest in English…
>
> Sara: And those over there.

A year into secondary school, the girls' perceptions of reading in their Welsh class did not seem to have improved. The negative construct of Welsh reading obtained and a perception of disparity between the subject areas of Welsh and English had developed.

> Anna: All we get in Welsh are really old.
>
> Catrin: Perhaps they were good back then, but not now.
>
> Anna: But there's lots of really good books in English aren't there?

By the end of Year 8, there was an astute reading by the girls of the relationship between subject areas. The same issue continued to concern the girls, namely the lack of a range of stimulating material. However, they were beginning to consider the situation in terms of its implications:

> Llio: We've only got old things. But in English, all new things. Just new
> things. In the library, in Welsh, there's only a small section.
>
> SJ: So not as much choice?
>
> Llio: They say they can't afford them, but they can afford English ones, but
> not Welsh ones. There's only really ancient ones.
>
> Ffion: They could get more people speaking the language if they tried.

I was unable to access information about the funding of curriculum areas in this particular school. Anecdotally, however, I was led to believe that there

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was no significant difference in the way the Welsh and English departments were funded. It does seem rather puzzling, therefore, that the perception of an imbalance in resources was so strong. This might well relate to issues regarding the sourcing of books in Welsh due to the fact that they may go out of print relatively quickly compared to English texts. Hence, a scheme of work might have been taught with books perceived by the students to be old, because replacement copies could not be sourced.

The last remark above by Ffion once again echoed the core irony of the girls' talk throughout the interviews, that the Welsh language needed more speakers, and, despite identifying ways in which they felt this could be achieved, they were reluctant to engage in these practices themselves without finding a hitch at every turn.

> Gwenno: The books are all old fashioned.
>
> SJ: So more of a modern choice then? The same kinds of things you read in English?
>
> […]
>
> Catrin: Real life stories are good. There are a few, but they're all about bullying, I'd like something different. The Welsh ones are all about bullying.

The situation of the Welsh language in relation to the domination of Anglo-American culture means that, for it to retain its strength, every opportunity should be exploited to engage the younger generation of speakers in various practices through the medium of the language. The promotion of positive attitudes to reading in the language is therefore of key importance and school seems the most obvious setting for this to take place. The girls' perceptions suggest that it has not succeeded in this case. The following section takes a look at the thoughts of some of the teachers involved in

literacy education at the school in order to try and contextualise the situation depicted by the girls.

5.2.9 Teacher interviews

The following discussion is based on two individual interviews, one with a teacher of Welsh and the other with a teacher of English. The teacher of Welsh was, at the time, acting Head of Department. Our interview was conducted in Welsh. The intention of the teacher interviews was to gauge the opinions and experiences of a range of staff involved in literacy education at the school. However, my attempts to arrange such interviews were thwarted when my communication with the relevant staff was not passed on and the arrangements that had been agreed over the phone were not made before my arrival. Hence, I was only able to interview one member of each department at extremely short notice. The teacher of English was the only member of the English department free during the time I was at the school. The teacher of Welsh agreed to see me during her (very short) lunch break. Both teachers were more than willing to help, although the constraints on their time were clear. The interviews were carried out separately, but both teachers were asked the same questions, within the contexts of their own department. They were not asked directly to compare their departments with each other, but rather to comment on their own practices. With this in mind, the data gathered is not assumed to reliably reflect any uniformity of practice or attitude amongst the staff at the school, nor is the discussion intended to reflect a verifiable reality about the ways in which the departments work. The following is offered purely as a means to contextualise the remarks made by the girls in their interviews and in some way reflect the position of the

adults responsible for the promotion of literacy practices amongst this group.

5.2.9.1 Practice and pedagogical approach to reading

Both teachers confirmed the timetabled arrangement regarding use of the library. The Welsh department, at the time of the interviews, had no timetabled sessions for library use, whereas the English department had sessions timetabled once a week for all Key Stage 3 classes. This arrangement was due to change in the academic year following the interviews (2005-6), with the Welsh department allocated regular timetabled time in the library with all Key Stage 3 groups. Within the timetabled English library sessions, students were expected to choose a different book every fortnight and complete a task at the end of each book. A reading log was kept by each student and this was monitored by the teacher.

With regards to reading in the classroom, practices were quite similar between the departments:

> Teacher of Welsh (TW): We have a class novel, for example, Year 7 do *Tân ar y Comin*, for example. There are various class novels for Year 8 and 9. We read as a class, they read in a group, they read individually. There are activities then to do based on those books.

> Teacher of English (TE): We do have class novel, two a year for each class at KS3, and we tend to use them as springboards for the rest of the work we do.

5.2.9.2 Resources

The range of texts available was mentioned early on by both teachers. In fact, this was the first point made by the teacher of Welsh and was a key factor that underpinned many of the girls' comments on the differences between reading in both departments.

> TW: Well, they're supposed to, if resources allow, because a lack of resources is our problem, if resources allow, they are given a new individual reading books each fortnight, but, like I say, that doesn't always happen because we haven't got enough resources.

> TE: We've got lots of new ones. We fit in lots of the classics too. At the moment, I'm doing *Treasure Island* with Year 9, someone else is doing *Skellig*. Someone else is doing *Private Peaceful*. You know that one? Michael Morpurgo? The new one. Beautiful text. Yeah, so we've got lots of new and old.

The teachers were asked about the texts available for the classes to read. For the teacher of Welsh, the issue of resources was once again at the forefront of her mind. Reference to the length of the book was also key issue, a sign that the attitudes of the classes towards reading may be shaping the approach of the teacher.

> TW: As long as money allows, we try to get the newest, most recent things for them, and we do make an effort to choose books which appeal to boys. Things like *Cyfres Pen Dafad*[13], things which are easily accessible, not things which are too thick.

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[13] *Cyfres Pen Dafad* is a series of short, contemporary novels published by *Y Lolfa* to target reluctant readers in Welsh

The texts to which students were introduced in the English lesson were outlined by the English teacher.

> TE: In the lesson, they don't choose, obviously. We choose. But we do try over the Key Stage to get a good mix of pre-twentieth century and the modern and American and with a Welsh slant. That's all covered. We've got to do that for the National Curriculum, so we do the full range, yeah. So, over the Key Stage, they do, if you look at mine, for example, they've done Betsy Byars, which is American, they've done *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, they will do, next year, *Carrie's War*, Welsh, set in Wales, anyway. They'll probably do, or will do a modern, haven't decided yet. *Skellig*, possibly. In Year 9 we may do *A Christmas Carol*, we may do another American, we may do, y'know, if you've got a good group, we may even do Golding. And a double narrative. We've got a few texts with double narrative in, so they can see that. You've got first person, third person. We try to get the full range. Our store cupboard is very, very good. And we do a couple of plays every year, and of course, a selection of poetry.

Although the teacher of Welsh did not offer a long list of texts to illustrate the range in the Welsh department stock cupboard, the fact that she chose to mention that two key elements in the department's choice of text were its length and contemporary style demonstrate how she felt that teachers of Welsh were up against strong competition and felt they must appeal to these factors in order to engage readers. The English department, in contrast, had the significant advantage of a range of texts in many different styles in order to engage readers and to fulfil every aspect of the curriculum. The contrast between the choice in both languages was, once again, at the heart of the issue. For the teacher of Welsh, who mentioned problems with resources six times during the interview, the issue was clearly significant. The teacher of English, on the other hand, was in the privileged position of being able to comment on the excellent choice available to her and her colleagues.

The apparent contrast in resources was evident throughout the interviews and seemed to impact on the practices of the two departments, not only during lessons but also in extra-curricular activities.

> TW: We don't, again because of a lack of resources, have a reading club, so we tend to depend more on what we do in the lesson.

> TE: We have two reading clubs, one for upper and one for lower school. The lower, at the moment, the Red House reading club have a prize, and the readers are allowed to nominate, so they're reading all the nominations at the moment.

The English department originally set up the reading club because they 'wanted to challenge the more able students who weren't being challenged enough in the classroom.' Initially, therefore, students were 'handpicked' for the club.   The clubs then evolved and those who began dropped out, while others joined. The club was described by the teacher of English as consisting of 'a hardcore of girls', but, as she suggested in the comment above, they were involved in constructive reading activities which promoted their wider reading and engaged them in a range of texts at different levels. Due to lack of resources, the Welsh department did not feel able to offer a similar club.

5.2.9.3 Teachers' perceptions of students' attitudes towards reading

The teachers were asked to describe their perceptions of students' attitudes towards reading. Unlike the vehemently negative remarks made by the girls about reading in Welsh, the generalisation the Welsh teacher

made about her students' attitudes to reading reflected reluctance mainly among the boys:

> TW: The majority of [the students] are quite happy to read, um, there are a lot of them who don't like to read. Boys, especially. Um… They're –the boys- are keener to read factual things, with pictures, a little bit of writing! Girls, the girls, like reading. They're fairly happy to read, as long as the book doesn't look too thick and boring, it looks…they are keen [to read]. They like doing things like reading in a group. Um…most can read a book in a fortnight. The weaker ones, they struggle a little, but on the whole, most like to read. But it is a struggle with individuals and it's a little bit of a struggle with the boys. But on the whole, they quite enjoy it.

After considering the context of reading in English, however, she conceded that 'it's a bit more of a struggle in Welsh to get them to read, definitely.' Again, as the girls frequently remarked in their interviews, the disparity between the two languages in terms of cultural material seemed an impossible hurdle:

> TW: There's more of a choice for them in English. Because of that, I think, they're keener to read books in English. *Harry Potter*, for example, there's so many books for children that have been adapted into films, and because of that, they have more interest in things like *Lord of Rings* and so on.

A key issue to emerge from the interview with the teacher of Welsh was that, in the context of the contrast with English books and a general reluctance to read in Welsh amongst her students, the choice of texts made by the department seemed to have evolved around the common factors that appealed most to the students. Reference was made to the length of a book and its appearance as key factors in eliciting readers' enthusiasm and enjoyment. Another key factor was the language used:

> TW: With Welsh books, if the cover looks OK, and it doesn't look too thick,
> and if they've heard from somewhere that it's a good book, or we've
> discussed the book in class and they think 'Oh, that sounds good' or if there's
> a little 'Bloody Hell' or a fart somewhere, they like it.

This is evocative of Elin's remark that books would be more interesting if they used 'words that we use'. A significant number of titles aimed at young adult readers do now use more colloquial language. This issue, along with the taste for shorter texts, is addressed by Welsh publishers *Y Lolfa*, who have created a series, *Cyfres Pen Dafad*, aimed at reluctant readers. Books such as these are popular amongst the readers at Ysgol Gymraeg, according to the teacher of Welsh:

> TW: The books that work best are things like *Llinyn Trons, Pwdr Rhech*. […]
> They do like their teachers reading and having to say things like '*blydi hel',*
> '*be ddiawl*' and things like that.

Whereas hearing a teacher swear or use language they would deem inappropriate to use in class would be a source of humour for any student, I think there is a deeper issue at the heart of the success of these colloquial texts in Welsh classrooms which reflects the history of the language and its literacy practices. As was seen earlier in the girls' remarks, there were still remnants of the attitude attached to the language in its diglossic state, where the difference between the written and spoken word was significant, the connotations of the former being firmly religious, literary and academic. A significant part of the appeal of the kind of language use seen in these texts comes from this particular cultural context. References to underpants (*Llinyn Trons*) and farting (*Pwdr Rhech*) are not only appealing to the humour of these readers but are also particularly subversive within the context of the literary tradition of the

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Welsh language. '*Be ddiawl'* (What the devil?) is also particularly powerful for its blasphemous connotations, as this is a phrase some Welsh speakers of older generations would still regard as a fairly serious profanity. These texts appeal because they are examples of the blurring of boundaries between establishment language and that of the readers' own reality. Their appeal at school perhaps does not extend as far as the home because there, the language may not seem as subversive, and could be heard either in use by friends and family, or certainly on some television programmes. However, the use of this subversive language in order to move away from the historic connotations of Welsh texts seemed to be one key to success in promoting reading within school.

The appeal of a book in Welsh, therefore, seemed to involve its length and the use of colloquial language and humour. The girls themselves referred to such texts with enthusiasm:

> Anna: *Sothach a Sglyfath*!
>
> Others: Oh!
>
> Catrin: That was in primary school.
>
> SJ: What was that about?
>
> Elin: Disgusting, but it was funny!
>
> Anna: It was hilarious.
>
> Elin: In the end we chose not to finish it because it was too long.
>
> Anna: We want short books.

The issue of length is fascinating in that it seemed to be a genuine concern for both the readers and their teacher. It confirms, perhaps, the fact that there *was* limited tolerance of reading in Welsh, and suggests a belief that any engagement that could be achieved should not be strained beyond its limits by an overly lengthy text. Whereas the teacher of Welsh did not

suggest in any way that these were the only texts used in her classroom, she did emphasise that they were the most popular and their style was most likely to impact on decisions when restocking. The success of this model of text would suggest, in utilitarian terms, that it should be embraced if it engages readers with their language. However, the extent to which the length of a book is more significant in its success than its content suggests a rather narrow and inhibiting experience of literature in Welsh.

Another feature mentioned by the girls was a book's relevance to their own lives. In this regard they were quite dismissive of Welsh books, particularly when they had a wealth of material available from Jacqueline Wilson alone in English. However, the teacher of Welsh saw this as another key factor in appealing to her students:

> TW: If they get a book – I'm talking now about children who are average to lower ability – if they get a book, this sounds awful, that's quite thin, they can finish it quickly, something they understand, something that relates to their own lives, something that makes them laugh, we're OK.
> SJ: When you say something they can understand, do you mean in terms of language, or situation, or –
> TW: Their situation. Someone they can, a story and a character they can relate to. A character, perhaps, a bit of a rebel, a bit of a bad boy or girl. In Year 8, they're doing *Morwyn y Dŵr* by Tudur Williams. In that there's a girl, she goes with a boy and she gets pregnant. It's a bit juicy, to start with, you're thinking am I doing the right thing doing this with Year 8? But they like it. They're like, 'when are we doing *Morwyn y Dŵr* next?' You need to be a bit adventurous with them, sometimes. They like that.

The teacher of Welsh was asked about translations in this context, as many of the texts available in Welsh to readers of this age group are translated

from English. In her opinion, their use was not particularly helpful, for reasons that were partly practical:

TW: There are many translation here, things like *Y Garreg Neidr*[14], and things like that. What we find sometimes is that they've already read them in English.

SJ: Oh, right.

TW: I don't like…I like to see something original in Welsh, because it's not the same having been translated. That's my feeling. […]

SJ: Do you go for originals as policy?

TW: When I get a chance to order books, I tend to go for the originals. I don't know, maybe it's me, I just feel they're better. They're slicker, they're more natural. There's something about translations that I don't like. Maybe the kids can't tell the difference, I don't know. But, like I say, we have had problems in the past where they say, 'oh, I've read this in English'. So, it's not the same, it doesn't work the same, does it?

[…]

TW: The books that work best [...] don't try and copy English things, they have a Welsh flavour, and they're in the world of the children. And there's humour there.

The difficulties expressed by the teacher of Welsh here reflect the attitude of many towards translated books. Chambers (2001) advocates that reading books sensitively translated from other languages provides an opportunity for readers to gain insight into other ways of thinking and of living. The task of effective translation is, however, according to Chambers, beset by 'linguistic and stylistic problems' (p.121) and representing 'the spirit rather than the letter' (p.120) is not always easy and the result not always effective. In her unease about using translated books, the teacher of Welsh echoed the concern expressed by Chambers that 'translators and editors tend to flatten a text by rendering in

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[14] *Y Garreg Neidr* is the Welsh translation of *The Snakestone* by Berlie Doherty

conventional, familiar language an author's quirkiness' (p.124). Her preference is for original material in Welsh, where these stylistic idiosyncrasies seem natural rather than forced.

Ultimately, however, anyone responsible for promoting reading, let alone in a minority language, is in a difficult position when trying to appeal to a whole group of readers of different tastes. Although she identified what worked best in her classroom in terms of getting the students to read, she was still aware of the fact that this may not be the best approach for all:

> TW: There are still 'nice kids', in inverted commas, they still exist and they still like to read about nice things, like *Tân ar y Comin*. The mixture of what children like and what appeals to them is unbelievable. In the effort to appeal to children who like to read about hard stuff, we shouldn't forget about the other, more innocent, countrified children, like we get here.

The teacher of Welsh depicted a particular image of the attitudes of her students towards reading and the ways in which her department attempted to respond to them. Issues of the length of a book, its use of colloquial and 'inappropriate' language as well as a contemporary theme were paramount to a book's success in her classroom. As such, it would appear that these were important forces driving the reading curriculum in this department. This was also, of course, within the context of an apparent restriction on resources.

The teacher of English described her perceptions of her students' attitude to reading:

> TE: They're a mixed ability class. And I don't think there's one girl who
> doesn't like reading, or enjoy reading. I think I'm quite secure in saying that.
> And even the boys, is you just find the right texts.

The caveat, 'if you just find the right texts', is interesting here. Both teachers had a similar experience of a generally positive attitude towards reading amongst their students. Where there may have been those who were not so positive, these tended to be boys. However, where the teacher of English clearly had the advantage was in her facility to 'just find the right texts'. She described the success of Anthony Horowitz books amongst the boys in her class, books which they appeared to have discovered themselves. This was, of course, far easier for them to do with an English-language author, given the power of marketing behind children's books in English, and the sheer number of titles on offer. As such, the teacher of English seemed to be at an advantage in promoting the reading of other texts in her classroom, as the first significant part of the work, in her opinion, was done for her to some degree:

> TE: In think, once they've discovered how, or what good stories, they can
> actually find in books, then [they] will take to it. Right?

Another key to promoting positive attitudes to reading, in her opinion, was the attitude shown by the teacher:

> TE: I also think a lot of it is to do, at the risk of blowing my own trumpet, I
> think it's to do with, you've got to be enthusiastic themselves [sic]. I know
> children who've been to other schools where perhaps they've not had an
> English specialist teacher themselves. So their enthusiasm falls. The
> enthusiasm for stories hasn't been there and it's not worked. So it's
> enthusiasm of the introduction to – like the librarian we have at the moment.
> She's so enthusiastic. You can't go into the library and not be enveloped in
> the same enthusiasm. So that's got a lot to do with it, I think.

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This picture of reading is very different to that given by the teacher of Welsh, where the conditions of successful reading revolved far more around material issues related to the book. It is not appropriate for me to suggest that the teacher of Welsh was not enthusiastic in her teaching of literature, or that she would disagree with the comment of her colleague above. It is interesting to note, however, that, alongside this comment from the English teacher, the initial thoughts of the teacher of Welsh with regards to what makes for successful reading seem far more perfunctory. The reason behind this may well be the fact that her experience had taught her that getting her students reading, first and foremost, was her main concern. The teacher of English was, of course, in a very different position. In her own words:

> TE: [In the Welsh department] they haven't got the range. I mean, look at the range we've got, I mean, y'know. It's phenomenal. The literature we have available to us, it's just not the same, it's not comparable.

The range available, in itself, aided the promotion of positive attitudes towards reading which extended beyond the classroom:

> TE: I also find, if you've read something in class, like we did *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*, and I would say, four of the group then went and read all of the *Chronicles*. […] We're reading *Midnight Fox* by Betsy Byars and they'll look her up and find something by her.

In her list of texts to which Key Stage 3 students were introduced, there was no mention of aiming to appeal to a need for a particular style or, indeed, length. Not every individual in the class will enjoy every book, undoubtedly; however, it seems that the two great advantages the English

teacher had – a vast range of material and the context of the dominant Anglo-American culture – meant that an atmosphere of enthusiasm and enjoyment was reflected not only in her own words, but also in those of the students themselves, as was seen in the girls' interviews.

Both teachers were asked what they saw as priorities for promoting reading amongst this age group in the language of their department. For the Welsh teacher, the question was interpreted in the wider context of promoting the language in Wales, which, in itself, represented the difficult context of the issue:

> TW: The influence of English is so, so strong. And you can't stuff Welshness
> down their necks either. If I had the answer to that question, I'd be worth a
> fortune. I don't know. I do not know.

For the teacher of English, the response is far more relaxed, and in itself also demonstrates the struggle that her colleague faces to promote reading:

> TE: I suppose it would have to be enthusiasm. For introducing texts. And
> having the resources.

These requirements are not, however, mutually exclusive; a difficulty in one area is very likely to affect the other, as we can see demonstrated in the girls' attitudes towards reading in Welsh.

5.2.10   Literacy Practices: a summary

Fry (1985: 96) suggests that 'what we choose to read, or simply the books we have in our possession, are indices of the ways in which we want to be

seen and the ways we see ourselves'. Studies have indicated that there is little difference in the reading choices of ethnic groups (Hall and Coles, 1999; Pinsent, 1997; Jones, 2004). As I found in this study, English is also a dominant language in the reading choices of my Welsh bilingual participants. One could assume, therefore, that minority language reading material does not have a huge influence on these young bilingual readers.

The following section provides a vignette of one particular literacy practice that came to my attention towards the end of the research, when the interviews were over and I was beginning to consider the perspective I had gained on the participants' experiences of language and literacy. The observation of this practice, however, enlightened this perspective and enabled me to see a further dimension to the girls' engagement with the complex and multiple discourses related to the different aspects of their lives as bilinguals. This analysis of digital literacy practices is given as a practical example of how the girls were beginning to put text to interesting use in order to explore and demonstrate the reality of living with two languages.

PART 3: ELECTRONIC DISCOURSE AND THE EXPLORATION OF BILINGUAL IDENTITIES

5.3.1 Introduction

Towards the end of the interview schedule my attention was drawn by one of the research participants to a practice in which she and many of her friends engaged which provided a fascinating illustration of the ways in which these bilingual girls were exploring and demonstrating the reality of living with two languages. Like their peers across the world, many of the girls in my study group had set up personal web pages, using Piczo, a site that provided a scaffold for a personal homepage, with downloadable graphics and suggested content. As well as creating these homepages, the girls were also beginning to engage in the use of Instant Messaging (IM) through MSN Messenger. After the interview data was collected, I was able to explore further the use of electronic media by observing one of the girls, Ffion, during an IM session, and gaining access to her own personal homepage and those of some of her friends. I feel it is important to note, as Carter (2004) does in his analysis of electronic discourse, that in the following analysis of digital texts produced by the girls and their friends, I acknowledge my own position as an outsider, and would like to highlight the provisional nature of my interpretation and framing of aspects of these texts without further input from the individuals responsible for them.

The use of digital media by children and adolescents to explore their identities has been well documented (e.g. Valentine and Holloway, 2002; Valentine, Holloway and Bingham, 2000; Merchant et al., 2006; Dowdall, 2006). Davies (2006; 2004) draws attention to the use of digital technology such as personal homepages and interactive games by girls in

particular. The girls in my own study were seen to be making use of the internet in ways very similar to their peers in many respects. My own interest in their use of digital media is primarily based, however, on the language choices they made on-line and the ways in which, as bilinguals, they explored their identities through language use in this 'in-between' space (Bhabha, 1994: 2).

5.3.2 *CymraesCymreig.com*: Personal homepages

Karlsson (2002) explores of the notion of personal homepages as examples of literacy practice. Indeed, in discussing the majority of the content of these pages, one is mindful of the fact that very little in the way of the traditional concept of literacy, in particular, writing, has taken place in their construction. The kind of multimodal representation seen on these pages demonstrates a visual literacy, the roots of which are in the scrap book or photo album (Karlsson, ibid). The composition of the majority of the webpages created by the girls was heavily reliant on material downloaded directly from supporting websites or other personal homepages. As such, the girls themselves took on the role of a producer, perhaps, rather than what could be described as an author, in the traditional sense. They put together a visual representation of the way in which they wished themselves to be seen. Valentine and Holloway (2002) suggest that ICT enables this form of carefully considered representation as there is more time for an individual to think about how they wish to be represented than in a face-to-face interaction. Certain elements will be foregrounded over others, dependent on the context of the homepage - from the perceived audience to the electronic material available for downloading, as well as individual competence and access to electronic resources. Davies (2006: 66) sees personal homepages 'as if they were fairground mirrors where the

impressions given are crafted with care'.   Within months of my initial study

of these websites, in fact, many no longer existed, including Ffion's, the

girls having moved on to create newer representations of themselves.

The identities created on these websites can be seen to begin with the

name. Some of the girls opted for names that immediately pronounced the

Welshness of the creator: *CymraesCymreig*, *Angelcymru*.   Others,

however, chose names that were English, some even anglicising their own

Welsh name: *loopy-lowz*, or *loisy-mez*. The websites were heavily reliant

upon material gleaned from other sites, and as such, each page was

'furnished' with 'virtual objects that correspond to one's interests' (Turkle,

1996: 258). Many of the range of graphics chosen communicated images

of a perceived girls' culture, representing in virtual form the real space of a

girl's bedroom (Mitchell and Reid-Walsh, 2002): cute animals, fashion logos

and Disney characters are frequently seen on these homepages.   Also

common were what Karlsson (2002: 16) describes as 'attitude makers',

generalised visual representations of one's interests, such as the choice of

background or lines of hearts separating parts of each page.   There were

interesting examples of the ways in which graphics were used as a way of

demonstrating an affiliation with Wales, a common sight being the use of

the Welsh flag as a signifier of identity.   On some homepages, the

representation of the flag was glittery, in keeping with the 'attitude'

generated by other images on the site. On one particular website, a small

Welsh flag appeared as the cursor as one navigated the content of the

homepage, which was itself dominated by images of American rap artists,

with a link to a video of a leading rap star located centrally on the screen.

5.3.3 Language choice and identity on the personal homepages

Much of the content of the sites was, therefore, based on visual representations of identity, borrowed and shared amongst the community of *Piczo* users. However, there was also evidence of original contributions from both the creators and those who visited the websites.   The organisation of each site into various themed pages along with the written content is perhaps more suggestive of a text-based literacy practice in the traditional sense (Karlsson, 2002), with the creators of each page clearly conscious of the needs of the reader when considering the structure of their material. Titles, bullet points and captions are all used.   The written content of the pages came in two forms: the personal information offered by the producer as part of the page content, as well as the interactive element represented by the 'guest book'.

The main language used for the body of the websites was English; this reflects the dominance of English seen in the on-line communication of other bilingual communities (Paolillo, 1996; Warschauer, El Said and Zohry, 2002). There was, again, a heavy reliance on downloaded material and phrases such as 'Sign My Guest Book'. Although the main audience of the websites was a circle of friends and associates, as some websites showed, the number of 'hits' on each could reach the thousands and the girls obviously did not anticipate all of these to be from Welsh speakers. The space of the internet, away from the discourse of school, and possibly family, was a place where the girls showed that they recognised the value of language as a symbolic resource within their reality, to use the words of Heller (1992), and they used the opportunity to subvert and redefine its values.   As we have seen in previous discussion, for many Welsh-speakers, these values are inescapably evident in many everyday

environments and, for young Welsh speakers in particular, these values have a significant influence on the expectations others have of them. The on-line language choice of these girls is a further example of the subversion of language expectations seen in young people of a similar age to the girls in my study (Gruffudd, 1997; Caldas and Caron-Caldas, 2002).

Turkle (1996: 258) sees a webpage as a place where 'one's identity emerges from whom one knows, one's associations and connections'. As such, the network of the guest books, as well as the IM 'buddies' to be discussed below, was key to this particular exploration of identity. There is evidence in these communications of complex linguistic practice used to both establish and consolidate the social identity of the group. Jones (1997: 16) describes on-line communities such as the one inhabited by these girls as those where 'our sense of identity is not only derived from our identification with the group, it is derived from our understanding of the group identity'. For these girls, this seemed to include the visual representations seen on the homepages. It was also, however, significantly, about the way language is used. What is seen in the electronic discourse of this group of girls demonstrates, as Heller (1987: 181) notes, that 'identity rests on shared ways of using language that reflect common patterns of thinking and behaving, or shared culture.'

Below are examples taken from two guest books, a facility on the homepage where a visitor may contribute their thoughts, possibly on the quality of the homepage itself. This meant that those visiting the site who were not part of the girls' circle of friends, or were perhaps from further afield and had happened upon the site through *Piczo*, could communicate, mainly about the homepage itself, commenting on individual images, or use of music, for example. However, the guest book was seen to evolve

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into a form of communication between many of the girls themselves, and some comments reflected what may be seen in an e-communication network similar to Instant Messaging or e-mail. The extracts shown below are followed in italics by my own 'translation':

Example 1: Extracts from personal homepage guest books

Haiia bbz v hebdi weld chdi ers ages na (missin u) *lol*

[*Hiya babes – I haven't seen you in ages, have I? (missing you) *laugh out loud*]*

Diolch am gyrru site t i v

[*Thanks for sending me your site*]

The first example shows how codeswitching is a base for the creative language use of these bilinguals, with phrases such as 'haiia bbz' and 'missin u' added to what is essentially a communication in Welsh.

Both examples demonstrate an interesting version of what Mor Sommerfeld (2002:99) describes as 'language mosaic', a process whereby bilinguals employ not only visual but also phonetic representations of language in order to communicate in a 'coherent (new) form' (ibid). In the second example above, the author is substituting the letters 't i v' to represent the words '*ti i fi*' ('you to me'). In doing so, they are combining letter names from both English and Welsh (the letter 'v', for example, does not exist in Welsh). The technique of using a rebus to represent and abbreviate words is a common characteristic of computer-mediated language use (Crystal, 2001).   However, here, and throughout much of their electronic communication, the girls included a metalinguistic dimension in their choice of language. On her page about 'mi family', Ffion, for example, wrote

about 'My 9', the Welsh for grandmother (in the North, at least) being *nain*. The success of this communication relies upon the metalinguistic awareness of the reader, who must, letter by letter, switch between languages.

The codeswitching seen in these examples is evidence of the breaking down of barriers between languages (Gal, 1988; Heller 1987; 1988). The manipulation of phonetic features of one language to represent another further demonstrates the way participants 'creatively exploit conventional associations between patterns of language use and social activities' (Heller, 1988: 269) in this context, in relation to their on-line representations of the self. For Heller's English-French bilinguals in Canada, punning and codeswitching 'neutralize the tension between [their languages], and they allow the bilinguals to be both French and English at the same time, and yet neither one alone' (ibid: 199). Gal (1988: 247) argues that codeswitching often occurs in the context of a 'state-supported and powerfully legitimated language in opposition to a stigmatised minority language that has considerably less institutional support.' Ironically, in many contexts within Wales, the state-supported language and the minority language could be seen as one and the same. However, the general sense of Gal's proposition is appropriate in the context of the girls in Wales. In their electronic discourse, they show themselves, like Gal's subjects, to 'respond symbolically to relations of domination between groups [and] understand their historic position and identity' (ibid: 247). Further discussion of the girls' creative use of language to explore cultural identities continues below, with reference to the language used in their Instant Messaging.

5.3.4 Instant Messaging

Communication via the guest book became the main attraction of engagement in digital media for many girls and many moved quickly from the interest in websites to more active engagement in Instant Messaging (IM), using MSN.

One of the girls, Ffion, agreed to be observed during an IM session in April 2006, when she was aged 13. Ffion was keen to be involved in 'MSN-ing' when her friends started to do it and actively sought assistance from family members in order to download the appropriate software on her family computer. Like many of her friends, MSN became a central focus in her life both in and outside of school, with conversations taking place at school about MSN, and subsequent MSN 'convos' focusing on the events of the school day. Digital communication became an important way to maintain friendships out of school for those living in a rural area such as this (as was observed by Valentine and Holloway, 2002, in their study of the on-line communities of young people).

Ffion's mother expressed some reservations about her daughter's use of MSN, and, like many other parents, she subsequently restricted the time Ffion was allowed on-line (such practice is noted by, for example, Merchant, 2001). The mother's concerns were partly due to cost and the fact that lengthy MSN sessions, before the family installed broadband, meant that the phoneline was frequently engaged. She herself did not feel as confident on the computer as Ffion and felt, therefore, that her ability to monitor her daughter's on-line activity was compromised. As time went on, and the use of MSN became more prevalent amongst the friendship group, Ffion's mother also expressed concern over the pernicious nature of

some of the communication, and that it was in fact leading to conflict at school between certain girls. A key worry expressed was, however, the fact that the language in which Ffion was communicating with her friends was not what she deemed appropriate, and that it might have a negative effect on their literacy in both English and, in particular, Welsh. This is a concern that has been expressed by many following increased use of SMS (as outlined by, for example, Crystal, 2001; Merchant, 2001; Carrington, 2005b).

The following extracts are taken from the observed IM session with Ffion. At the time of observation, Ffion was involved in on-line conversations - or 'convos' - with six others on MSN. It was clear from observing these varied exchanges that Ffion's on-line identity was not static and she made full use of linguistic experimentation in her interactions with her 'mates', assuming throughout a series of varying identities, or 'temporary attachments' (Hall, 1996:6). Language is a defining feature of these relationships (see Table 5. 1 below). Where the use of both Welsh and English is indicated, there was evidence of codeswitching both within and between each individual's contributions.

Table 5.1: IM and Language choice

Name	Language usually used by Ffion in spoken communication	Language used by Ffion for IM
Helen	English	English
Terri	Welsh	Welsh and English
Ger	Welsh	English
Daniel	Welsh	Welsh and English
Llio	Welsh	Welsh
Lea	Welsh	Welsh

The social world of IM, as has been observed, is closely related to that of the off-line social network of school (Dowdall, 2006; Lewis and Fabos, 2005; Valentine and Holloway, 2002). It has also been noted that much of the content of electronic discourse such as this is taken up by day-to-day mundanity (Davies, 2006; Fung and Carter, 2007a). Unlike the bilingual electronic communities studied by Paolillo (1999; 1996) and Warschauer et al (2002), where the participants are geographically distant from each other and have only interacted through the internet, the on-line community of which Ffion and her friends are a part seems to be primarily based around her off-line social circle. As such, much of Ffion's on-line interaction was with these friends and contacts about incidents either at school or from the out-of-school experiences of the group (see Example 2 below). Ffion and some friends had stayed over at another girl's house the previous evening, which became the main subject of much of one 'convo'. Another topic was Ffion's burgeoning relationship with a new boyfriend; Ger, one of the 'mates' involved in the IM session, is a friend of this boyfriend.

The nature of the relationship between Ffion and her on-line communication network is perhaps part of the reason why such creative language use exists within the interactions. Their position as bilinguals is one factor, as Carter (2004:172) suggests that 'conditions of multilingualism may favour creative production'. Carter and McCarthy (2004) report that the more participants in a conversation are involved in shared experiences and ideas, the more likely there is to be creative language use amongst them. Paolillo (1999) also suggests that more non-standard vernacular variants of language are seen in groups with strong ties, characterized by frequent interaction, such as family and close friends. Merchant (2005:302) notes that 'much of the creativity in digital

technology derives from playful interaction'. Rampton (1995), in his study of language use by multiethnic adolescents, saw more instances of language crossing in situations where young people were away from socially ordered settings, such as when they were in the playground – it could be argued that the on-line setting of Ffion's IM session is another example of such a context.

The following extracts are taken from different 'convos', and each reflects the variety of language use seen on the websites as well as the range of codeswitching both used by and directed at different contributors. Common features of computer-mediated language, such as 'u' for 'you' and 'z' for 's' are seen here, as well as borrowings from English ('masiv', '2 minz') embedded within Welsh phrases. There is again evidence of language mosaic at work, with the use of 'r' to represent the Welsh word *ar* (in this context as part of the phrase *ar y funud*, meaning 'at the minute'). This use requires a switch to English for the letter 'r' to be phonetically significant in this phrase, as it is pronounced differently in Welsh. On another occasion, in the last excerpt cited in Example 2 below, an exchange has taken place wholly in English.

Example 2: *extracts from 'convos' during Ffion's observed IM session*

> Be nath u neud yn ty Einir?
> *What did you do in Einir's house?*

> Ma lpool a hini masiv da sdi
> *Liverpool are really good, you know*

> Fedraim shaz r munud kk 2 minz
> *I can't talk at the moment ok 2 mins*

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Whos dat in ur d/p

Who is that is your d/p (display picture)?

Example 3 is a longer exchange between Ffion and Lea on the subject of
what they had been up to that day.

Example 3: IM exchange between Ffion and a friend

Lea: so be t bd n neud hddw

Ffion: went 2 einir's bday party lst night aye u?

Lea: V d bd i bangor

Ffion: Kl

efo pwy?

Lea: Nia a Sally

Ffion: did ya gt anyfink nice?

Lea: b'day prezzies i Nia!

Ffion: omg

Newydd gofio

Lea: lol

Tuesday ma o!

Ffion: kk

Thnx huni

Wt did ya get er den?

Lea: mna kk

Top ace ma a poster

Ffion: o lle?

Lea: new look nath ni cal top hi o!

Ffion: wt poster di dya get er?

Lea: parental advisory thing ma! Man ciwt sti!!

Lol!!

Ffion: kl bbz

Lea: so be t neud?

Ffion: n/m

Table 5. 2 below indicates the languages used by both girls in the brief exchange shown in Example 3. Contributions are classed as Welsh if they are predominately in the Welsh language, with perhaps one borrowing from English of a conversational filler such as 'so'. Contributions which rely more heavily on both languages are classed as codeswitching, with those wholly in the English language classed as such.

Table 5. 2: Use of language by Lea and Ffion by individual contribution

	Welsh	Codeswitching	English
Lea	5	4	0
Ffion	1	2	6

Much of the English content of this exchange is based around standardised forms common in computer-mediation communication, such as 'lol; 'thnx'; 'kl bbz'; 'kk' (Crystal, 2001). Their use, it could be argued, is based on the linguistic norms of the context. However, the general movement between languages during the exchange is intriguing.

The 'convo' is initiated in Welsh by Lea, albeit in an abbreviated SMS-style form: '*so be t bd n neud hddw?*' (So what you been doing today?). Here again, English letters are used, in the form of a rebus, to phonetically represent Welsh words ('t' for *ti* and 'n' for *yn*), along with the dropping of vowels ('*bd': bod*), which again is common in such communication. Interestingly, the 'Welshness' of this phrase, despite its reliance on anglicised abbreviation, could be characterised by the retention of the Welsh consonant *dd* in '*hddw*' (*heddiw*: today).

Ffion chose to answer Lea's opening question in English: 'went 2 einir's bday party lst night aye u?'. More rebus is used by Lea in her Welsh reply 'V d bd i bangor' (V: *fi*; d: *wedi*).

The structure of the ensuing exchange can then be roughly described as a series of questions asked mostly in English by Ffion about Lea's shopping trip to buy her friend's birthday present: 'did ya gt anyfink nice?'. Lea's answers are mostly in Welsh: '*new look nath ni cal top hi o!*' (We got her top from New Look!)*,* However, when Ffion realises she's forgotten the friend's birthday, following the interjection 'omg' (Oh my God!) she seems to revert back to a more standard Welsh '*newydd gofio*' (Just remembered), which is without even a dropped vowel, as if it were a face-to-face conversation with Lea, which would be carried out in Welsh.

Lea then chooses to respond by switching code: '*Tuesday ma o!*' (it's on Tuesday), which perhaps her most obvious borrowing from English. Ffion, despite her earlier use of a more standard Welsh phrase, now moves back to English – 'wt did ya get er den?' - only to then revert back to Welsh to ask where the birthday present had been bought '*o lle?*' (where from?)

The remainder of the exchange then relies on more formulaic phrases: ('lol!!'; 'kl bbz'), with Lea reverting back to her original question, '*so be t neud*?, (what're you doing?) to which Ffion responds with another common internet usage: 'n/m' (nothing much).

It seems that, for Ffion, the context of IM drove the need for using language more heavily influenced by English, and her codeswitching can be seen as an attempt to create or evoke a particular identity both as an individual and as part of a social group (Gal, 1988), which in this case,

exists online. This specific use of language can be seen, to use the words of Doran (2004: 105), as 'a defining element of the we-group'.

The use of language displayed by the girls does represent some of the factors seen in other studies of bilingual computer-mediated communication (Paolillo, 1999; Warschauer et al, 2002). There is a bias towards English for the phrases most associated with the genre, such as 'lol' or 'kl'. Given the standard keyboard is set up to type in English, orthographic features of many languages around the world are not easily accessed at the speed required by participants in these interactions. As such, creative alternatives are often found to facilitate quicker interaction. Warschauer et al (2002) and Palfreyman and al Khalil (2003) cite examples of the use of numerals in IM to phonetically represent certain Arabic sounds in Roman orthography. Cantonese discourse markers have been observed by Fung and Carter (2007b) to have been transliterated for similar reasons. Although there are some orthographic issues when typing in Welsh (the most prevalent and problematic being the circumflex which can occur over all vowels) these are not as common as in other languages, and are, indeed, often ignored even within some more colloquial print-based writing. However, for the girls in this study, substituting English letters for short Welsh words seems to play a similar role as accepted shorthand as it does for speakers of languages which differ orthographically from the Roman alphabet.

Warschauer et al (2002) report the use of languages other than English among bilingual groups to communicate humour, greetings and ideas connected to cultural markers, such as food or holidays. It is interesting to note that in the interaction between Ffion and Lea, the more 'natural', and perhaps more intimate, conversational contributions, which veered away

from the formulaic responses typical of such a 'convo', often occurred in Welsh, such as when Ffion realised she had forgotten her friend's birthday or when she asked where the present had been bought.   English is the language most associated with computer-mediated discourse for these girls, as it is in many multilingual communities around the world. Its use is partly pragmatic, in facilitating more speedy exchange via the keyboard, but it does also hold significance in the social identities created for themselves by those involved in on-line interaction. It could be argued, however, based on the small snapshot seen in the example from Lea and Ffion, that the use of English is firmly attached to the on-line identity in a way it is not off-line, and exchanges between friends which include emotive content, such as the shock at remembering a forgotten a birthday, revert to Welsh, perhaps as a sign of the convergence of both off- and on-line identities.

The freedom to experiment with both her languages on-line was one of the things Ffion enjoyed most about her IM sessions. Pleasure in bilingual linguistic creativity is also seen in the English-Cantonese e-discourse analysed by Carter (2004). Ffion admitted that English more readily facilitates the use of 'slang', although both she and her friends were clearly adept at being able to express themselves imaginatively in Welsh through SMS-style language. Carter and McCarthy (2004:64) suggest a range of purposes for creative language use, which include humour and the entertainment of the listener.   However, such language use can also express a certain attitude and make 'the speaker's identity more manifest'. Heller (1992) acknowledges the role of wordplay in codeswitching, partly due to its effect in neutralising tension that may exist between languages, but also as it allows those on the 'language border' (p.138) to share one of the benefits of bilingualism. The relished enjoyment of a shared resource is

clear in Ffion's exchanges with her 'mates'. The symbolic capital of this resource is well understood by those involved, if not obviously foregrounded during every exchange.

'MSN-ing' for Ffion also meant that she was able to play around with something that is taken so seriously by those around her, from family to teachers and political leaders. The place of language in the lives of these young bilinguals is significant, and their electronic use of language demonstrates its place in their cultural identities. Doran (2004: 96), in her study of the use of Verlan by the youth of a suburban Paris, agues that, from a post-structuralist perspective:

> language is recognized as a central tool for the strategic enactment of multiple subject positions; individuals are seen as activating different parts of their linguistic repertoires selectively in order to highlight particular aspects of their social identities (and to downplay others) in particular settings.

In much the same way as it does in the reading of fiction, a 'standard' form of the Welsh language holds no real significance for Ffion and her friends in the realm of electronic discourse. As is described by Carter (2004) as occurring in the context of Cantonese-English on-line exchanges, a new way of communicating is developed by the girls whose interaction I observed. This language use is 'hybrid in a double sense' (Fung and Carter, 2007b). The features of speech and writing are blurred, as they often are in monolingual electronic discourse (a point noted by Lewis and Fabos, 2005). However, in the bilingual contexts the boundaries are also blurred between the languages themselves. Ffion's IM provides another example of how electronic media can facilitate young people's agency in managing their own lifeworld (Valentine, Holloway and Bingham 2000): on-line, she is able to explore her bilingual identity and locate herself within it

through creative use of her languages. Ffion and her on-line community of friends, much like Carter's sample of Cantonese students involved in internet chat, develop 'a discourse […] which expresses […] a dual identity and a dual linguistic affinity' (2004: 176-177).

The girls' electronic exchanges with their social network reveal how, away from the political connotations of the relationship between their languages, they are able to creatively utilise digital literacy as a space in which they can explore and demonstrate their own identities. Discussion of the ways in which electronic discourse represents the girls' as 'active creators of third space' (Moje et al, 2004), will be continued in Chapter 7.

Chapter 6

CITY COMMUNITY SCHOOL

PART 1: BILINGUALISM AND IDENTITY

6.1.1 Introduction

For the girls of City Community School, bilingualism was not wholly about language. Their early definitions of what bilingualism meant to them illustrate that their associations were linked to the broader experience of being part of a defined cultural group:

> Jaspreet: I like being […] bilingual, because you can speak it with your friends and your family.

The beliefs and behaviours of this group, rather than being defined by language use, appear to be demonstrated by it. It seemed that religion, for example, was equally important to the girls' identities as part of the British-Asian community, as were other cultural markers, such as dress or food.   These markers made the community culture more easily differentiated for some of the girls from what they saw as Western or Anglo-American culture, and a few of them made distinctions along these lines between different aspects of their lives. However, much of the girls' talk of their experience suggests that their lives represented a complex network of cultural practice and some the practices they described represent their position at the meeting point of these cultures. Both their minority languages and English had a significant role in the girls' exploration of their identities, making bilingualism a key part of their experience.

6.1.2   The experience of bilingualism: day-to-day interaction

The girls explained the way their languages were used in different settings. There were clear indications that the girls' language domains (Fishman 2000b) were characterised in relation to others involved in the conversation, and that language choice was affected by the language most associated with their interlocutor:

> Shabnam: My mum likes speaking Punjabi. She loves it – I don't know why, she just loves it. She loves speaking it and she loves other people talking to her in Punjabi, right. And we don't speak Urdu, I just learnt that in school. We don't speak, because my mum can't speak English that much, I speak Mirpuri.

> Zobina: English, I can talk to my friends when I'm out at school and stuff like that. When I'm at home, sometimes, I speak, like, a mixture. And when I go to my grandma's house, I speak Urdu then with my aunties I speak English.

> Farah: For me, like English, I can talk to my friends a bit more about that, and it's a bit more understanding, sort of thing. Urdu, I speak with my family, and my cousins and my brothers I speak English.

The change of language for inter-generational interaction was evident in many of the comments made by the girls, and is characteristic of many immigrant communities (Rampton, 1995; Mills, 2001; 2004). Generally, for the girls in this study as well as their peers in other immigrant communities, the language choice of interaction with peers and siblings is English, with parents they may speak a mixture, and interaction with grandparents is commonly in a community language.

Priya: We don't talk [Punjabi] as much. When I do talk it, it's only when it's necessary, like when some of my, like my grandmothers and stuff, they, like, can't speak English, so I speak to them [in Punjabi]. It's kind of weird for me, 'cos I don't know all the words, innit, so it's, like, I stop and think about what I have to say. But I think, yeah, it's only a bit of it, because I'm normally speaking more English anyway, but I do still speak [Punjabi].

Rukhshana: You know, like Farah, I do speak to her in, like, Urdu, but it's like, you know my mum, she speaks English to me, we don't really speak that much Urdu. My dad does. But we speak English at home, all of us, you see. So when my grandma and granddad come, we have to speak, like, Urdu to them, because, obviously, they don't understand.

There is a sense of obligation expressed in these comments with regards to speaking the minority language; it could indeed be construed as a duty, to accommodate members of the extended family. The following remark by Sonia reflects this:

Sonia: I think that my mother tongue doesn't come out much when I'm at home because my mum speaks English. But when she shouts at us, she always speaks Punjabi! When I'm [visiting family], my auntie, she's a freshie…
[*laughter*]
Sonia: She comes fresh from India and she don't really know how to speak English. So I have to speak Punjabi to her and she understands a bit.

The predominance of English amongst the younger members of the family reflects the fact that they are most likely to have been born in the UK and attend English-speaking school. There is more likelihood, possibly, that the experience of this third generation has been filtered down through that of their parents, where there may have been the first stages of convergence between Asian and British cultures, which is reflected in their own attitudes to language and culture when raising their own children (Haw, 1998;

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Drury, 1988). Sonia's description of her mother's communication with her children, in the above comment, could be seen to reflect this convergence of language practice. Currently, within the UK as a whole, nearly half of the population of Pakistani heritage are aged under 16[1] and the pattern of language use amongst this group is similar to that seen amongst the girls in this study, with the majority making routine use of English as their main language, with community languages spoken only within certain family contexts. In some instances, this is becoming a source of concern within British-Asian communities (Mills, 2001).   The extent to which English is seen as part of the linguistic identity described by the girls in this study can be illustrated by Rukhshana's description of her father, born in Pakistan, who 'speaks proper English, just like we are now.'   This remark (similar to that made by Sara of the Welsh group, with regards to the language proficiency of her father, a Welsh learner) signals that Rukhshana defined herself and her friends within a group separate to her father and his peers, with linguistic proficiency as a marker of group membership; she, as a member of this group who speak 'proper English', could grant her father access to it through her judgement of his proficiency.

Rampton (1995) discusses the issues surrounding the difference in the linguistic proficiency between generations of British-Asian families, with the adolescent participants of his study showing some embarrassment about their parents' weaker grasp of English or those who still retained strong accents. There is some of this attitude demonstrated in Sonia's description of her aunt as a 'freshie', a comment greeted with laughter from the rest of the group, suggesting dissociation from the cultural and linguistic connotations of family newly arrived from South Asia. As was noted by

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[1] This is according to data provided on www.southasian.org.uk

Rampton of his respondents, however, there was still a reverence in the general attitude of the girls of City Community School towards their family; this was seen in Sonia's pride at being able to help her aunt learn English. For Sonia, this provided a valuable space for her to occupy within the family. Despite her admission that she did not speak Punjabi that well, her position at the convergence of English and Indian language and culture gave her a significant role to play and valorised her identity as an English speaker. Like many of the young bilinguals from the same community who were part of my previous study (Jones, 2002; 2004), the girls reported their pride at having the role of translator within the family.

Shabnam: I like being bilingual because if there's someone that don't know English, you can help them, or if someone doesn't know Urdu, you can help them.

Rukhshana: Yes.

Priya: Like, if you've got Parents' Evening, you can translate…

Shabnam: Yes, like my mum, she don't know English, so I can help her.

Shabnam: My mum can't speak English and I'm trying to actually help her because it's helpful and it makes me feel proud, helping my mum.

Zobina: You know that I can speak two languages, right, I'm proud of it. Because if people ask me what that means and what this means I can tell them.

Sonia: My auntie, she comes from India and when she first moved here, she got married to my uncle and she found it really hard to understand what people were saying and my granddad was teaching me how to speak Punjabi and I felt kinda proud helping her out in speaking English.

The girls represented a generation within the community which has close connections with English-language culture and they showed how this was clearly a significant part of their identity. They were also keen to articulate

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that the community's minority languages were very much part of their lives. However, there were certain issues that emerged from the girls' talk about their minority languages, which reflected the complexity of their bilingual experience.

6.1.3 Proficiency

A key theme to emerge from the girls' talk about their minority languages was the issue of their proficiency and confidence in speaking in these languages. The term 'expertise' has been used in multilingual contexts (Rampton, 1995; Martin-Jones and Jones, 2001), to foreground a 'cultural interpretation of a person's relationship to a language' (ibid, p.15), whereas terms such as 'skill' or 'competence' are more firmly suggestive of the psychological and cognitive dimensions of language use. In my use of the term 'proficiency', I refer to the different levels of ability the girls in my study had at speaking and listening to the minority languages used by their families, as well as the level at which they were able to engage in literacy in these languages, where they are committed to print. According to their accounts of their engagement with these languages as they learnt them, I see it as involving psychological and cognitive processes as much as cultural engagement, and therefore feel that proficiency is an appropriate concept to employ here.

The girls' enthusiasm for the languages was clear, as expressed by Jaspreet and Priya:

> Jaspreet: I love speaking the language, and learning how to speak it and read
> it and write it.
> Priya: And me.

However, a lack of confidence in speaking the minority language with others became a frequent caveat to any expression of enthusiasm:

> Rukhshana: I think that, when you speak something like Urdu or Punjabi, I think, well I can't speak my language too much, well I can, but I think it's quite hard. Sometimes I can't say any words properly.
> [*Some agreement from others*]

> Priya: What I speak, it's kinda hard in my language because sometimes my aunties and that ask me questions in Punjabi I don't understand but sometimes you kind of get it at the end of it and then you start speaking it back. But it's quite hard to say some of the words.

It is interesting to note that in both these comments, despite the girls' apparent lack of confidence in speaking Urdu and Punjabi with their relatives, they both still referred to these languages as 'my language'; this has been recognised as a common trait in younger members of immigrant communities who may not have fully mastered the heritage language (Hamers and Blanc, 2000: 204), and was seen in the studies of young British-Asians carried out by Jacobson (1998) and Mills (2001). In their remarks above, the girls in this study were clearly defining themselves as part a community, but they were equally suggesting that, to them, language was only one part of that community, and that one's level of proficiency should not be a barrier to inclusion within it. The enthusiasm demonstrated for increased proficiency (and the acquisition of literacy, which will be discussed later) also demonstrates how the girls saw this as a way of consolidating their membership of this community. A lack of proficiency in some cases precluded the use of language as a mere tool of

communication. In this sense, these languages fulfilled a symbolic role for the girls as 'an emblem of groupness' (Edwards, 1985: 17).

6.1.4 Language as symbol of identity

The bilingual girls of City Community School spoke enthusiastically about their bilingualism, but suggested throughout their comments that their languages, including English, were only one part of what they saw as their identity. This is the way Edwards (1985: 22) sees the relationship between language and identity:

> Although we can say that language can be an extremely important feature of identity, we cannot endorse the view that a given language is essential for identity maintenance.

As shown in Chapter 5, where the historic and political associations of language were seen to influence the Welsh girls' attitudes towards bilingualism, the interviews with the girls of City Community School demonstrated the wider connotations carried by their languages, which highlight the complex function of languages in the process of identity.

6.1.4.1 Language and geographic links

A connection was often made by the girls in their discussion of bilingualism between their minority languages and Pakistan and India. Farah felt that her ability to speak her languages other than English was most useful to her when she was in Pakistan:

Farah: It's important to me [to be bilingual] because I've got a dad and a stepdad, y'get me? And my language, it's kind of good with both. Because where I'm from, it's called Gullasudad, and they speak loads of different languages, Punjabi and Urdu and loads of different ones. Then my mum and dad got divorced, so I had to go and live with my stepdad and his family in Pakistan, which is Rawalpindi, and they usually speak a language which I wasn't so sure of, it's like [made me] more confident.

Speaking these languages had served Farah well within her own family, therefore, and continued to be very much part of the reality of her relationships with members of her family in Pakistan. It is interesting that this was the example she gave of why it was important to her to be bilingual, rather than an example that reflected benefit to her in her life in the UK. During another discussion, the way that her languages were associated with different countries was made clear. In the following comment, Farah was exploring the possibility of producing more texts (here, magazines) in minority languages within the UK:

Farah: It's kind of straightforward. This is England. Your mother tongue is either in India or Pakistan. If you're in India or Pakistan, the only basic magazine that you will get is in that language. If you're in England, you're obviously gonna get English magazines. But y'know, you can get other languages, Urdu books and stuff like that, but they ain't that popular 'cos you have, like, a few shops in a few regions of your mother tongue. You think, y'know, this is England. I can go to Pakistan and read them there.

During discussion of the role of bilingualism in their lives, comments often developed into remarks about India and Pakistan, and reflections on the

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girls' visits there. Priya began a discussion on the theme of bilingualism reflecting part of a wider geographic identity.

> Priya: I'm proud to be who I am and what I am as well, bilingual, and to carry, like, my mother's tongue, 'cos, like, my aunties, my uncles, my mum and dad are all from India, my grandparents, so that's good.

Her phrase 'to carry my mother's tongue' suggests a belief that her language evokes a genetic link to her heritage in India. Her pride at being part of the continuation of this heritage is clear. However, within the same response, Priya went on to demonstrate how, on a far more pragmatic level, she felt her family were connected to the UK:

> Priya: Y'know, when I went to India, it smells, and you're not used to it and one area, my cousin was telling me when she went to her wedding, there's this place where they've just got rubbish and you're not used to it and you're used to England now [...] you can never be used to Pakistan or India, 'cos when my mum lived there, now she's come back, when she went there again, she's not used to it, she's used to England.

This triggered similar comments from other girls sharing their experiences of trips to India or Pakistan:

> Shabnam: It's kind of different in Pakistan because it's mostly hot there. It does rain sometimes. And it stinks as well.

> Sonia: When I went to India last year, it was OK for the first week, then I got really, really bored, 'cos I had, it's like the same thing, eating chapattis and curry over and over again. So, the McDonald's there was OK, but eating chapattis and curry all the time, it did make it very slimming!

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Sonia's words give a concise example of the way these girls felt their lives to be based within Anglo-American cultural realms (iconically represented in this comment by McDonald's), with the lifestyle they have experienced in South Asia often representing something very different. A closer look at this discussion reveals the extent to which some of the girls dissociated themselves from the lifestyle of their extended family abroad:

> Rukhshana: Y'know, when I went, when they make dinner, they don't make it in a pan, they make it in this thing.
> Sonia: Yeah.
> Shabnam: Karahi.
> Rukhshana: D'you know, when we eat, we eat with forks, don't we? They eat with their hands.
> Jaspreet: What's urgh about that? They eat with their hands!
> Rukhshana: And their houses, they don't have roofs on […] And the string things to sleep on.

Rukhshana's choice of pronouns clearly indicated the position she adopted in association with her relatives. She continued to generalise in her selection of details about her extended family's lifestyle – eating and sleeping in what she deemed to be inappropriate ways. The details seemed calculated to project the starkest contrast with a Western lifestyle. However, as Jaspreet was keen to interject, the attitudes demonstrated by Rukhshana are Western, projected onto aspects of the lifestyle of her own family, which were part of Rukhshana's own heritage.

It is worth noting here that the girls' unfolding discussion around South Asian lifestyles (which quickly degenerated into comparing experiences of toilets and farm animals) may well have been a diversion which was partly to satisfy young, scatological humour. However, my own position as

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interviewer might have had some influence on this, and the picture portrayed of India and Pakistan could have been exaggerated for my benefit, as someone perceived to have had no experience of they way of life the girls had experienced in these countries.

Many of the girls do not seem to have identified with the environment and lifestyle of their heritage countries. However, the girls cited the languages spoken by extended families in these countries as an important symbolic link with their heritage. As was seen in the questionnaire data, literacy in minority languages often supports this link, with many of the younger generation within the British-Asian community having responsibility for writing to relatives on the subcontinent, a practice that embodies the role of language in preserving a connection across the miles.

6.1.4.2 Language and religion

For many of the girls in the group, religion became a prominent theme in their comments about their minority language and culture. For these girls, many of whom spoke English in the home with the majority of their relatives, their main experience of a minority language was based on religious practice.

> Priya: Mum still speaks Punjabi because she goes to gurudwara and stuff, she
> knows it obviously, but she can't read it.

Within the community, mainly comprised of those who follow either Islam or Sikhism, religion is a key definer of identity and can be used

interchangeably as a description of someone who speaks a particular language:

> Rukhshana: When I'm in [an Asian clothes shop], they're Indians or Sikhs, yeah, they speak Punjabi to me and I'm, like, what are they saying?

> Farah: In this school, there's basically English people, people who speak English, people who speak Urdu and people who speak Punjabi. And that's really easy for us, right, because we obviously speak English at school, when we learn. We can speak our language with the Muslims, and, because Hindi and Punjabi and Urdu are similar, we can understand it, so I can speak that as well with Jaspreet and Priya.

Pride in the connection between language and religion was clearly expressed by some of the girls in comments such as the following:

> Priya: The thing about being bilingual is […] you can be proud of who you are. As in 'I'm a Sikh and I'm proud to be that' but I can speak English as well.

> Farah: What I like about being bilingual is you've got two religions-
> Zobina: Two languages!
> Farah: Languages, whatever. Then if someone who's English wants to ask you about something, then you can always tell them, like, in Islam, you can explain more and it helps.

In her comment above, Priya equates speaking Punjabi directly with her Sikhism.   It could be argued that Farah subconsciously made a connection between language, culture and religion in what was taken as a slip-up about having 'two religions'. She went on to explain the expediency of being able to discuss Islam if one is familiar with Urdu (or possibly Arabic,

as Farah was able to read in Arabic), as this, in Farah's mind, facilitated a greater understanding of the religion. As was seen in previous remarks made by Farah on her bilingualism, she was clear in her mind that both languages (or English and her minority languages) were distinctly associated with different aspects of her life, both in the UK and in Pakistan, both as part of the Anglo-American culture, and as a Muslim. In the following comment, she explored with remarkable eloquence her perception of her bilingualism and its role in her life:

> Farah: D'you know the perfect thing about being bilingual? It's like, when you die, and you go, like, and see God, this is my belief, you go and see God and he, like, asks you 'what have you done with your life?' you can say, I've done *this* with my own life, with my mother tongue I've done *this*, and also, to add it on to my good deeds, I've also done *this*. And that's the English part.

For Farah, her religion provided a basis for her life, and, based on the above, the language she associated with this was not English. English 'deeds' are very much an extra in her experience.

The role of religion as part of the girls' identities will be returned to in further discussion of the girls' literacy practices.

6.1.5 Inclusion and exclusion through language

> Sonia: One thing I like about being bilingual is you're different from everybody else, and not, you ain't the same, 'cos I like being different. And, um, that's it. I just like being different from everybody else.

The girls of City Community School demonstrated in their talk the use of language as a defining feature of a particular community, and its

subsequent use as a signifier of inclusion and exclusion from that community. The girls saw themselves as part of an English-speaking community, on occasion excluding other members of their own family in doing so (or in the case of Rukhshana above, explicitly including them by virtue of their perceived proficiency in English). However, their discussion of their use of minority languages suggested that they also defined themselves in relationship to another community of practice (Wenger, 1999), which differentiated them from monolingual peers. At some stages, concern was expressed by some of the girls that their use of minority languages was being targeted by others as a means of highlighting their difference:

> Farah: When you talk to your own mates and you've got people around you and you don't want them to know what you're talking about, and you talk in your own language, then the people say, like, the white people, they take it offensive.
>
> Sonia/Rukhshana: Yeah!
>
> Farah: They think you're swearing.
>
> Sonia: The boys in our class, they're always thinking we're doing that.

However, the girls were also ready to choose their language in order to deliberately evoke a community and exclude others from it:

> Zobina: The thing I like about being bilingual is, um, because, with your friends, if they're bilingual as well, they speak the same language as you, then, if there's somebody else there then you can tell them secrets in your own language.
>
> SJ: Do you speak [in Punjabi and Mirpuri] with your friends?
>
> Farah: Yeah, mainly.

Pryia: If we wanna keep something away from people.

Rukhshana: I'm not saying English people are bad, but you know if they can, like if they know Urdu, I would've told them everything, but they're different to us.

SJ: So you sense there's still a difference?

Rukhshana: Yeah. They're a bit…I don't know why, but they're different.

Priya: We can talk to them, but it's like, kind of awkward.

Shabnam: They don't understand. When we speak Urdu or Mirpuri, right, the Christians, they think we're swearing at them.

Sonia: Don't say Christian, that's a culture. Say white people or black people or something.

Sonia felt that her bilingualism afforded her a position of some authority when her monolingual peers made attempts at her minority language.

Sonia: You know, I know I shouldn't say this, right, but Indian swearings are a lot worse than English ones and it's funny hearing some of the white kids and black kids come out with stuff in our language, it's really funny!

Sonia: In that film, *Bend it like Beckham*, I was in the cinema watching it and there was loads and loads of white people there and then, when the mum was speaking Punjabi, everyone was trying to listen to her and then they were pretending to laugh.

In this situation, the minority language speaker holds cultural capital. Rampton (1995) explores such 'crossing' - the use of Punjabi by non-Asian youths – and sees this as reflecting an attempt by individuals to create an identity for themselves as part of a group of which they are, ostensibly, not members. *Bend it Like Beckham* (2002) is a British film about the fortunes of a young female from an Indian heritage family living in London, who has particular skill in playing football and follows her ambition to play

professionally, despite her family's concerns. The film was mainstream, following the traditional cinematic formula of the thwarted protagonist fulfilling a dream. In the particular case of *Bend it Like Beckham*, however, the use of Punjabi in a popular cultural artefact elevated Sonia's status as party to a particular discourse within the film, where she was allowed access to an additional level of entertainment denied to those who did not speak the language and were not part of the culture. The humour was, of course, partly drawn from the language itself, but in the main from the context and relationship represented between the characters as recognised by a viewer who may have had experiences of that cultural world. However, as Sonia expressed, there was also a sense of a gentle private joke at the expense of the non-Asian audience, who were, unusually, the 'outsiders' in this situation.

Like their peers in Wales, the British-Asian girls of City Community School showed how they perceived their language in a way in which Williams (1995: 128) describes as 'a boundary marker [which] can be raised or lowered'.

6.1.6 Language as marker of community

In the comments above, a theme emerged which suggests that, for the girls, particular language use was associated with the different ethnic populations of their school. Monolingual peers were seen as 'white' or 'black', whereas the girls' own bilingual community was represented as one, regardless of any differences in language between individuals. The very fact of their bilingualism united the girls as a group. The girls perceived that, as British-Asian speakers of different minority languages, they shared more factors that constituted a community of practice than

they might have done with other peers in their class. Indeed, as speakers of different languages, the girls themselves were aware of the connections that existed between their languages and saw this as an additional unifying factor.

> Shabnam: You know Urdu and Punjabi, they're kind of the same, really.
>
> Sonia: Some of the words are the same, some words are different, yeah.
>
> Jaspreet: I speak Hindi as well.
>
> Sonia: Some of the words are the same but then they're all, like, mixed into the three different languages. […] You know sometimes, like when we say hello, it's the same, innit?
>
> [*Others agree*]
>
> Sonia: Or some of the words, like food or whatever…
>
> Shabnam: *Pani*
>
> Sonia: Yeah.
>
> Pryia: In our language, we say, like 'car' like that, it's the same as the English word as well.
>
> Shabnam: *Gurdi*
>
> Priya: You can say it as a 'car' as well, and like a *gurdi* as well.
>
> Sonia: Yes, Miss, and there's this curry called lentil, but some English people say *dhal*, call it *dhal*, that way.

The description of the way words are borrowed across languages is interesting and suggests that in the minds of the girls, the relationship between English and community languages was equitable, where words cross between both and are shared by both groups of speakers.

The connection between the minority languages themselves was also clear in the girls' comments. This was possibly because the languages they referred to may have been, in some cases, more closely related than they perceived, as in the case of Mirpuri and Urdu among the Pakistani heritage girls. The girls explored connections between their different heritages and

languages, and discussed the benefits of these in terms of their representation of the community within the school:

> Farah: We can speak our own language with the Muslims and we can speak, because Hindi and Punjabi and Urdu are similar, we can understand it, so I can speak that as well with Jaspreet and Priya as well.
>
> Priya: It's weird for us, for me and Jas, because we understand their language when they're talking…
> Jaspreet: I can. I can understand what they say.
> Sonia: [*to Farah and Shabnam*], I can understand a bit of yours but I can only understand Punjabi a bit more.
> Shabnam: I can understand [Priya and Jaspreet].
> Rukhshana: They're similar, Punjabi and Urdu.
> Sonia: Same as ours, innit?
> Rukhshana: Yeah, but just a bit different.

The similarities between the languages provided an additional unifying factor among the girls, perhaps more so than if they were a group of bilinguals speaking different languages.

Language, therefore, offered a significant resource, in both practical and symbolic ways, for the girls of City Community School in their exploration of their identities.   In the following section, the complex role played by language their lives is further explored, with a closer focus on the girls' literacy practices.

PART 2: LITERACY PRACTICES

6.2.1 Introduction

At the start of the research, the British-Asian girls were beginning to realise the difference between the reading they had experienced at primary school and the experience of reading at secondary level.   They showed a generally positive attitude towards reading and were keen to share their memories of their early literacy experiences.   Given that for some of the girls, the minority language of which they had knowledge is not committed to print, the experience within the group of reading in these languages was diverse, from those who read no Urdu or Punjabi at all, to others who attended after school Punjabi classes and one girl in particular who reported being an avid reader of Urdu poetry.

In the second year of the research, the girls had embarked on what was for some of them the first stage in the acquisition of literacy skills in either Urdu or Punjabi, with formal lessons beginning at school in Year 8.   Those who already had experience of learning these languages in out-of-school classes had a head start in learning their different alphabet and graphology, which would have been hitherto unfamiliar to them. Whatever their prior experience, however, all the girls were already familiar with the difference in the literacy practices they experienced as part of dominant cultural practices and those in their minority languages.

6.2.2 Early reading experiences

The first interview explored the participants' early memories of reading. The girls shared their experiences of learning to read in different contexts, and of the books that played a key role in this experience.

> Rukhshana: I learnt at school and home and the teacher would take us in the other room and the book that I remember reading, Miss, was *Kipper* […] there was a race and when they started the race, their car, like, wouldn't work. Something like that. It was really good.

> Farah: I started learning at nursery and playgroup and […] my favourite book was *Snow White* and *Cinderella* and because I couldn't really read very well then, we used to do these little plays, like, and I always used to be Snow White and Cinderella. And that would make us understand.

> Zobina: I learnt at infant school and at home, my mum and dad a little bit. The books I started with …um… *Biff, Chip* and *Kipper* books. And, um, the way that I read it was…the person that I was reading to would read me a word and then I would repeat it and then I'd read a whole sentence.

> Jaspreet: Our teacher said we have a partner, a person that is a bit more better than you, with you - a partner – and they would write about the way you read and they would tell you if you can change your book or not.

> Rukhshana: When I used to learn reading, my dad bought me this thing, right, Miss, with all the alphabet – A to Z. And there's animals, and you press the thing, it says 'A for Apple' and then there's this thing, you can use it to help with spellings and that.

> Priya: I remember how I read. My cousin said, like, 'if you know your ABCs and to write them, it'll be easier for you.' And when I was at infants, the teacher would, like, let you read to see how you were doing.

In their detailed discussion about early reading memories, the girls showed how key books stayed in their minds – mainly reading scheme books such as those from *Oxford Reading Tree*, which feature the characters of Biff and Chip.   They also indicated the significance of the individuals who had input into their early reading, whether these were teachers, parents and family members or peers.   Each of the early reading memories reflected learning to read in English, with parents keen to have an input into the process.   The texts which were mentioned by the girls were all English texts, and the process of learning to read firmly located within the classroom experience, with reading at home seen either as an introduction to the basics, or as additional support, such as the electronic toy described by Rukhshana.   It is interesting to note that it was not until they were explicitly asked that the girls shared experiences of reading in languages other than English, and it transpired that the process of learning to read in these languages was, for many of the girls, at a very different stage to that of their reading in English, as will be discussed below.   It is also interesting to note that when asked about early reading memories, it is the schooled literacy route that many describe, with the key texts and processes representing common practice in many classrooms.

6.2.3   Experiences of reading and the school library

The girls' memories of their earlier literacy were expressed fondly, partly due to its connection in their mind with the practices surrounding literacy in the primary school.   Discussion of the library became a key theme in the first interview on reading histories.

> Sonia: In the library [at primary school] there was a round table there, and
> the chair was there, and, like, red sofas there, and like, on that side there was

all books. There was one section with non-fiction, Miss, one with storybooks and one with French and German books.

SJ: Did you look forward to going to the library?

Jaspreet: Oh, it was wicked!

SJ: Yes? Why? Because it was different – it looked different? There were comfy chairs?

Sarayah: Yeah, and we got our own library tickets.

Rukhshana: What I like about my library was, we used to take turns so when people take out books we stamped them.

Jaspreet: And, um, at the library, Miss, you will have to have, like your own number, and you would have to, like type that in, and it would take a long time to choose a book because there were quite loads of books and, say if you went out without putting your number in with the book, Miss, it would go 'beep' and, like, make a sound, so it was//

Sonia: Beep beep!!

Jaspreet: It would, though!

Farah: A couple of people, and I was one of them to be chosen and we made this, like, um list type thing up of books that we liked and books that we wanted to read and have in the library and stuff and the teacher would look at it and the ones that were the most, they'd choose. They used to do that every month, so we used to have all the new books.

Being included in the logistical processes of literacy learning at school clearly had some impact on the girls. In some cases, perhaps this was more the case than the reading itself, as, according to their comments, their memories of primary school reading revolved more around physical experiences than memories of particular texts.

At this stage of the research, the girls were getting used to their new setting in secondary school, and perhaps the opportunity to reflect on their old school encouraged a level of fond reminiscence of shared practice in an

environment that was very different. Perhaps to illustrate the contrast, the girls' compared their old libraries to the secondary school library:

> Rukhshana: I think it's different because in my primary school, you used to just get a book and read it, Miss, there used to be […] red comfy chairs and it was really comfy, and you can relax and read your book. You could concentrate and you could lie down//
>
> Priya: Bean bags//
>
> Jaspreet: Take your shoes off//
>
> Rukhshana: But in this library, Miss, when you get a book out […] the chairs are horrible.

The role of the library was significant in the literacy practices of these girls, and their expectations were based on fond memories of primary school. Some girls also mentioned regular visits to the public library after school, to do homework and access the internet. As was noted in Chapter 4, an interesting point to arise from the questionnaire at the start of this study was the fact that young bilinguals at City Community School were significantly more likely to get inspiration for reading fiction or to source it from school or the library rather than from home.   Also worthy of note at this stage is the fact that, like their counterparts in Wales, the girls of City Community School shared fond memories of reading as young children and at primary school, with this interest declining by the early teens. Interestingly, at the interview stage, both groups referred to their school libraries at secondary school less favourably than those at primary. Although the reasons for the decline in interest in reading in older children and young adults are complex, and the role of the school library is a small part of a wider debate for which there is no room in this study, the comments about the school libraries in the schools of this study perhaps provide some representation of this phenomenon.

6.2.4 Preferences and attitudes towards reading

The list of preferred reading given by the girls reflected popular favourites of the age group, including their contemporaries in Wales. To open discussion on reading, the girls were given the task of imagining a question that they would like to ask a character in a book. The responses highlighted familiar titles and favourite characters, including the work of Jacqueline Wilson and Roald Dahl, again reflecting the data gathered in the questionnaire.

The girls' preferences for the most popular authors and series were expressed throughout the interviews:

> Jaspreet: I like to read Jacqueline Wilson books, um, like some funny ones or scary ones.

> Priya: I like Roald Dahl books and Jacqueline Wilson, I don't really read those, but I like them.

> Sonia: I like R. L. Stine books 'cos I like scaring my sister - I know it's cruel, but she deserves it! Anyway, I like Roald Dahl's *The Twits*, I love that book and I love Jacqueline Wilson's *Sleepovers*.

However, during the second year of interviews, as the girls' tastes developed, more negative comments regarding the reading of fiction began to emerge.

> Shabnam: No, I don't read books, no. Books are boring. I don't like reading.
> SJ: Why do you think they're boring?
> Shabnam: I don't like it. Some of them, yeah, they are interesting.
> Sarayah: Jacqueline Wilson.
> Shabnam: Yeah.

Sonia: Except *Sleepovers*. That's proper boring.

Sonia's tastes had clearly moved on in the time between the two interviews above, and a more generally negative construct of reading was seen from the girls. This may be an example of dissociation from the practices of childhood, particularly given the change of heart experienced by Sonia with regards to Jacqueline Wilson. More independent tastes were emerging, with fiction not prominent among them. This reflects the pattern in reading habits seen in much of the literature on reading choices (e.g. Hall and Coles, 1999).

However, within the same discussion the girls expressed a positive image of reading for relaxation that, not tied to a particular author or series, suggested a move towards the reading they may have seen modelled for them by certain family members and in the media:

Sonia: Ultimate winter getaway is sitting in a nice warm room with a big book and a big massive mug of hot chocolate. And just relaxing, and letting your imagination take you away with a book.

The girls made no reference to texts in minority languages in the discussion, which focused on favourite texts or attitudes towards reading. Perhaps this was not surprising given that, as will be discussed shortly, the type of fiction in these languages does not equate to the texts to which the girls will have been exposed in English. Also, unlike their Welsh peers, the British-Asian girls may have had a construct of minority language literacy that was more clearly defined outside the domain of school, hence their association with English titles and characters within the context of the school-based interview.

The popularity of Jacqueline Wilson amongst this group reflects similar reasons to their contemporaries in Wales:

Sarayah: They're teenage books and they're only for girls, 'cos it's got stuff about boys in it.

For some of these girls, Wilson represents a significant part of their experience growing up as young women.   Sarayah's comment also highlights the way in which the girls are 'dealing with a sense of themselves as gendered readers' (Moss, 1993: 124).   It is in this regard that the role of such texts is interesting in the experience of girls who are living within two cultures.   The dissonance between the values of both cultures and the role of literacy within them is even clearer when discussion turned to the potential for translation of these popular texts into minority languages.

6.2.5 Reading in Urdu and Punjabi

Fiction did not have a dominant place in the minority language reading of the British-Asian girls in this study. Dwyer (2000: 214) states that in India the study of literatures in indigenous languages is seen as a pursuit to be followed by those who cannot gain admission to the more prestigious courses (which include English Literature).   As was outlined above, there was no explicit reference made to reading fiction in Urdu or Punjabi by the girls at any stage of general discussion around reading preferences. When the focus was drawn to talking about reading in these languages, however, linguistic, religious and cultural issues were raised which suggested a complex context for this practice which I had not fully considered at the

outset of the research, when I had framed the initial research questions around bilingual reading practices in such a way that assumed all minority language literacy practices could be analysed in a similar way to those in English.

6.2.6 Proficiency and its impact on the experience of reading in Urdu and Punjabi

All the data to which I refer here regarding reading in languages other than English is based on self-report. The questionnaire revealed a range of literacy skills within the population of bilingual Year 7 pupils at City Community School.   Within the interview group, the girls reported increased proficiency at reading in Urdu and Punjabi as they moved through Years 7 and 8, as well as an increased desire to learn and an associated expression of the cultural benefits of doing so. It should be considered, however, that the girls' own descriptions of their abilities and practices may be affected by being in a group situation. This seemed particularly relevant when the girls discussed the reading of religious texts.

In the first interview, the focus was mainly on reading in English; although this was not explicitly stated in any question, by virtue of both the context of the interview and the level of proficiency in Urdu or Punjabi reported by the girls at that time, it was probably unsurprising. At the end of the interview, I asked the girls specifically about reading in languages other than English. There was a difference in the level of skill within the group, but generally, it was characterised by a lack of confidence in literacy in both Urdu and Punjabi:

Sonia: I can't read in Punjabi, I can only speak.

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Priya: So can I, Miss.

Sarayah: I used to go to Urdu classes, but now I don't.

Jaspreet attended Punjabi class after school where she was working through different levels of textbook. For the majority of the group, therefore, their experience and levels of proficiency in literacy in Urdu and Punjabi were based around the early stages of learning. Farah, however, in this first interview, reported enjoying reading poetry:

Farah: In Mosque we read [*unclear*] and I bring something like poems.

SJ: In Arabic?

Farah: Yes. And they're gorgeous. And songs.

Farah's enjoyment of poetry was something she returned to in later interviews, which suggests how she was able to access reading material in different languages and engaged emotionally with them in a way she found difficult with texts in English.

Farah: I read any English book that people recommend me, but books that I like to read myself are in Urdu, because I can read Urdu, and I like reading poems. I really like reading poems and stuff and I don't like reading stories very much because I'd rather watch them, in a film. I like watching stories, reading poems.

Farah: In English books you mostly have loads of comedy and stuff. That is good, but I like a bit of emotion in books as well. You don't find emotion in English books and I read Urdu books at bedtime every night, like, I just read it, it's comforting. I've got this massive book and it's all about emotions and if you ever feel upset or anything, you just turn to one of the chapters and just read it and it gives you comfort.

> Farah: You know, you get these really beautiful poems in Urdu, and they're really beautiful, you know how you get English poems, they're nice, but when you get the Asian type they're more deeper and they're more feeling, so I like reading them like that. You don't get them in English.

For some of the other girls, this access to text in Urdu or in Punjabi was not as easy, and their experience of such texts was therefore very different to Farah's. For some girls, the difficulty with the language was a barrier to enjoyment and significantly different to their experience of reading in English.

> Shabnam: I don't really like reading books in Urdu because I can't understand them.

> Rukhshana: Now I'm doing Urdu, I find that a bit difficult, I think English reading books aren't.

For others, the experience of text in a minority language was reliant upon others reading with them:

> Priya: I can't, 'cos I got the mother tongue, but I can't really, like, read them, but sometimes when I hear the stories I like them, they're good as well, but I like more English ones, 'cos I can read for myself and understand it.

> Zobina: I can't really read in Urdu, I can a bit, but not much, but if I listen to a story that's sweet or something, I like it.

As the girls progressed with lessons in Urdu and Punjabi at school, however, their comments reflected some evaluation on the role that their newly acquired skills may have in the development of their cultural identities.

6.2.7 Learning Urdu and Punjabi: school and language classes

Many of the group attended, or had previously attended, extra-mural classes within the community in Punjabi and Urdu (as well as, in some cases, Arabic). Such classes, based in temples, mosques and community centres, were established in many immigrant communities during the 1960s and 1970s in response to a growing concern within these communities over the 'ethnocentric nature of the educational curriculum and racialised practices in schools' (Brah, 1996: 36). The purpose of such classes was to reinforce group identity in the face of threats made against it from the dominant culture. Attendance at such classes is still common practice in the community of the girls in this study.

For the Pakistani heritage girls with Mirpuri as their main minority language, lessons in Urdu, the official language of Pakistan, are seen as an important link to their heritage, and a means for communicating with family.

> Farah: If I read in my own language it's usually if I'm learning in school, if I'm reading a letter from my family in Pakistan, because they usually write in Urdu, if I'm reading that.

A large proportion of the girls' reading experiences in Urdu or Punjabi come in the form of educational texts aimed at language acquisition.

> Rukhshana: In Mosque, first we read this easy thing.
> Usma: *Alibata*
> Rukhshana: Yeah.
> Farah: I read through that, Miss, it's the alphabet.

Jaspreet: I go to after school, five 'til six, Monday to Wednesday, I go to a Punjabi class and first we learn, like, the alphabet, and there's like six books from easy to getting harder and I'm on the fifth book, Miss, and you read stories and write stories and like, you can, Miss, you can write on the board and you answer questions and things.

Priya: I don't really know how to read [Punjabi]. I think my auntie learned me how to, like, write my name. But I've got these books that help me do, like, the ABC. And I've got this other book that has paragraphs in it.

Rukhshana: I like reading Urdu books and I can speak a bit of Urdu but I like reading that because I know most of the words but there's words that I don't know. There are these stages of the book, like.

Although the girls described their use of language to be dominated by English much of the time at home and in school, even at the start of the research, the girls expressed a desire to be able to engage further with the languages used within their community. Some were already in extra classes, others looking forward to Year 8 when they would be able to learn the language at school:

Priya: 'Cos I can't read in my mother tongue, but I can read in English, that's why I'm going to start Punjabi in school, so that I can read and write it, instead of just talking it.

Zobina: It's important to read in Urdu as well, 'cos if you're in Pakistan or something and you see road signs, you need to read them […] I'm gonna do Urdu next year, Miss.

By the second year of the interviews, the girls had started Urdu and Punjabi lessons within school, and their opinion was that their proficiency was increasing. Farah, who reported in the first interview being already

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able to read in Urdu, found the lessons a useful extension to her knowledge of the language:

> Farah: You know when you go to school, as soon as you go to school you start, all you learn is English, basically. And you grow up, and now basically in Year 8, most school, now in Year 8 we start to learn other languages. We've just started to learn our own language. We already know it, so we learn it more in a kind of, you know, learning how to read it properly.
> SJ: The technical side of things?
> Farah: Technical, yeah. Because if you start English, I don't know what to say, you're just a little kid. But when you're at City Community School you have the help from your parents, the help from your friends, so straight away when you get in the class you're on a [*Level*] Three, so it's, like, easier for us.

The experience was not as straightforward for others, however. Rukhshana, for example, found the lessons a challenge:

> Rukhshana: You know, for me, I think English is, like, that's easy I think because I've been learning that all my life. Urdu is a bit hard because I don't know what some of the names mean and, like, I can't even speak it as much as well.

For Rukhshana, and the others who found these language lessons challenging and, unlike Farah for example, were less able to access texts outside the lessons, the texts with which they engaged are key to the kind of learning experience they had. The teacher of Urdu at City Community acknowledged the fact that, as the majority of the textbooks used to teach this language are published in Pakistan and are often outdated, they do not match the needs of young people in the UK today. As such, she recognised how the learning experience of her students differs to their peers learning French or German.

Nevertheless, there was enthusiasm to learn Urdu and Punjabi amongst the group. In Priya's comments on her Punjabi lessons, there is an indication that the formal lessons provided the skills to facilitate further access into the community, and more knowledge of the language equated to more engagement with her heritage and culture:

> Priya: I think that as you get older, you learn more Punjabi when you talk it. But my cousin said to me that the way my teacher teaches us Punjabi, then you know it better. She got an A, so did all my other cousins. And my brother, he wasn't the best at Punjabi, but he's getting better as well. He's in Year 9 now and he's been doing it from Year 8 to Year 9 and I think that English will be easier for me, because obviously I'm going to speak it more than Punjabi, but I think that, as I get older, I'm going to learn more Punjabi anyway. […]
>
> Sometimes I get the gurudwara's paper and because I don't know all the sound symbols, so I don't know half the words in it. But you try to read it anyway.

6.2.8 Cultural issues: Translation

Given the popularity of teen fiction expressed by the girls during discussion about their reading, I introduced the possibility of translation, in the context of reading in languages other than English. For some, this seemed a positive idea, and one that might encourage engagement with these languages amongst this age group of readers. This is reflected in Priya's consideration of the potential for translating her favourites into Punjabi:

> Priya: I think I probably would [read books in translation], it would make things a lot better to read in our language, a bit more proud of being bilingual and stuff like that.
>
> […]

> I wouldn't mind [books] being in English, but when I start learning Punjabi, and I haven't read it I would try and read it in Punjabi, so it helps me understand, what, in Punjabi, and how it's pronounced. And if I did do something wrong as well, you can check it in the other book.

However, some girls showed that their awareness of an area of dissonance between their cultures was clear:

> Farah: To me, it wouldn't work because my mother tongue, it just doesn't suit stuff like that [...] *In Girls in Tears*[2] they cry because they've lost their boyfriends. In Urdu, you don't have boyfriends.

Farah's words here concisely express the context of the girls' experiences of literacy with two (or more) languages and cultures. Unlike their peers in Wales, practices may not easily cross cultural boundaries, however much the girls themselves occupy positions on both sides.

6.2.9 Religious texts

> Shabnam: I like reading Islamic books in English.
> Others: Yeah!
> Shabnam: Because you can learn more and you know what's wrong, you know what's right, you know what to do, and basically, it's good as well, you learn more.

The reading of religious texts, particularly the Qu'ran, was one of the key practices mentioned by the girls in their talk about their engagement with texts in different languages. For many young Muslims, 'finishing the Qu'ran' is a key part of their engagement with their religion, the act of

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[2] by Jacqueline Wilson

reading becoming a rite of passage and one of the definitive demonstrations of one's faith.

> Rukhshana: I read the Qu'ran because I believe that you should as well, I've read it about six, seven times altogether.

The girls' Urdu teacher felt that this practice may be on the wane in the community and says that many parents see this as a further step towards the Westernisation of their children:

> Miss Yaqoob: They [*young people*] can't finish the Qu'ran. If not, you can't push them. Kids just don't want to.

Rukhshana describes receiving a copy of the Muslim holy book from her sister:

> Shabnam: Was it in English or was it//
> Rukhshana: Yeah, Arabic. You know what, it's in Arabic, it says it on the side in English. So it tells you, like, the meaning. The stories, like, you should never swear and that.
> Shabnam: But do you still sit in the position to read it?
> Rukhshana: Yeah, you have to.
> Shabnam: You don't have to always.
> Rukhshana: Say your feet are there, you can't put the Qu'ran underneath them.
> Shabnam: And you can't turn your back on it either.

Much of the focus when referring to reading of the Qu'ran was on physical aspects of the process. This seemed to reflect not only the place of ritual and physical action in the experience, but also how much the girls perceived this to distinguish this part of their lives from any dominant cultural literacy practice. Rukhshana's copy obviously allowed access to

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those who may not be able to read all the Arabic for themselves; Shabnam's response, however, seemed to suggest that this may afford Rukhshana more physical freedom in her reading, and, therefore, the bilingual text provided a less authentic experience. Farah disagreed:

> Farah: Even if you read the English, and it's in the Roman writing, it's still the same, because you're still reading it, it still comes into your mind, still goes into your heart.

She explained further the exact procedures she perceived to be involved in this reading practice.

> Farah: You know the Holy book, it's holy, it's from God, merciful God. If it goes under your feet, anything like that, it's a very, very big sin […] When you don't clean yourself […] when you don't make yourself pure, you can't touch it until then. And when you touch it, you have to be calm, you have to be relaxed, you have to be happy. If you be sad, then God takes it the wrong way.

For Farah, the meaning of this reading, as well as the process, was significant:

> Farah: If you read the meanings of the actual words, then that's not classed as reading the Qu'ran, that's classed as understanding it.
> SJ: Ah, so there's a difference between reading it and understanding it?
> Farah: Understanding, yes.
> Shabnam: I can't understand it, though.

Farah's words reflect the way Maddox (2007: 667) describes 'the process of religious reading, [which] while having some 'ritual qualities', was also an intellectual and spiritual exercise that involved reflection on and engagement with textually mediated knowledge'.

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For some of the girls from Pakistani-Muslim heritage, reading the Qu'ran was seen as a key part of their lives as young Muslims, and they felt able to demonstrate their faith through the physical process of reading. As Farah suggests, however, it is too simplistic to reduce this practice to its physical attributes. Maddox warns against a view of Qu'ranic literacy as ritual, suggesting that this mirrors a colonialist dichotomy which represents literacy according to the Western model of reading for understanding, meaning that other forms of engagement with text, such as reciting religious texts in Arabic which are not 'understood' in the conventional sense, are therefore 'somehow lacking the characteristics of "full" literacy' (ibid. p. 665). For Maddox, Qu'ranic reading can represent a community of practice, where meaning is accessed through shared practice.

Engagement with the Qu'ran therefore requires more than a following of ritual and decoding of words although, for some of the girls in this study, it would seem, this proved difficult at this age. However, the Muslim girls indicated that this literacy practice was one that they used to explore and demonstrate the significance of religion in their lives, as well as to engage in a practice that is at the heart of their community's identity.

6.2.10 Literacy practices: a summary

There is a stark contrast between the girls of Ysgol Gymraeg and those at City Community in terms of literacy practices. The former group *could* read in their minority language from early primary years, had significant opportunity to do so, and yet chose not to engage in the forms of reading practice offered by school and cultural institutions such as the publishing industry. This was despite clearly showing awareness of the risks faced by

their minority language. The latter were generally less proficient at reading in their minority language, but were nonetheless often desperately keen to develop their skills, in order to further explore and engage with what they felt was a key part of their identities.

For the girls of City Community School, reading fulfilled different functions in different languages. The girls described the way in which their reading of fiction in English was dominated by texts by mass marketed authors such as Jacqueline Wilson. However, the contrast between the content of such books and the cultural expectations of many of their homes serves to illustrate the dissonance between the role of reading as the girls saw it in both English and in their minority languages. The girls reported to enjoy their increasing skills in reading of languages such as Urdu and Punjabi, and saw this as an additional means for their engagement with their home cultures. However, it was clear from their talk about reading in these languages that it represented a very different purpose and practice to that in English. This is illustrated by their talk about reading the Qu'ran, and the ways in which specific practices hold particular and significant meaning when related to the holy book.

In many ways, the dissonance between the nature of literacy in English and in the girls' minority languages is illustrated well by a particular example of reading which will form the basis of the vignette in the final section of this chapter. Magazine reading was popular amongst the girls, and in the following exploration of their reading, I aim to demonstrate the ways in which they used this engagement with text to negotiate their position within both dominant and minority cultures.

PART 3 - MAGAZINE READING

6.3.1 Magazines as key texts in the identity process

Magazines were by far the most prominent text to emerge from the City Community School girls' discussion of their reading. Aside from their favourite early childhood texts, magazines seemed to animate the girls' discussion most significantly, and they were keen to share their thoughts on the ways in which they enjoyed these texts and the reasons why they did so, demonstrating in the process the role that magazines played in the development of their identities.

This section of the thesis aims to focus on magazine reading as a literacy practice that plays a particular role in these girls' exploration and demonstration of their identities. My aim is not to offer a particularly in-depth textual analysis of the magazines read by the girls: this is has been done in detail elsewhere (for example, McRobbie, 1995; Pinsent, 1997; Hall and Coles, 1999). The features highlighted in this analysis inform my discussion of the magazines read by my participants, but my main aim here is to explore the role of magazine reading in their lives. Through analysis of the girls' talk about magazines, I hope to demonstrate the ways in which these texts provided the girls with opportunities to explore issues of significance to them as they approached their teenage years, as part of an active engagement in the cultural practice of both their home and dominant cultures. Magazine reading as described by the girls is an example of the way in which literacy is a social practice; for these girls, the interaction with others through the device of the magazine is a key part of its use in the work of identity development. Magazine reading can also provide a forum for the girls' negotiation of their position as part of two

cultures, and I aim to show the ways in which reading magazines led the girls to establish their own space within the often contesting realities represented by their cultures.

6.3.2 Teenage magazines in context: consternation and contestation

The popularity of periodical reading amongst children and young adults is well documented (for example, Hall and Coles, 1999; Pinsent, 1997; Millard, 1997; Venn, 1996; Gorman, 1987). In the study by Hall and Coles of the reading choices of some 8000 children aged 10, 12 and 14, at least half of the respondents at each age group reported buying one magazine each month, with 32.3 per cent of 12 year old reporting regularly buying two or more (Hall and Coles, 1999: 57). Magazines were bought and read predominantly by girls in the Hall and Coles survey. The most popular title was *Just 17* – read by 51.4 per cent of twelve-year-old respondents. In my own survey of the reading of Year 7 pupils at both my study sites, magazines also proved to be the most popular reading material, with 75.6 per cent of the total sample saying that they read magazines and 41.1 per cent citing magazines as their preferred reading material. A significantly greater proportion of those who favoured magazines were girls – 51.8 per cent - compared to 31.8 per cent of boys.

The content of teenage magazines has been a key subject of discussion for cultural theorists for over two decades, although focus has shifted along with the marked change in content and style within the texts. Over this time, girls' magazines became popular 'field-sites' for feminist analysis (McRobbie, cited by Mitchell and Reid-Walsh, 2002: 131) with critiques in

the 1980s of titles such as *Jackie* characteristically focusing on the portrayal of the female reader as shallow, passive and only interested in the pursuit of boys as part of the long term goal of domesticity (for example, McRobbie, 1995; Walkerdine, 1984). Hudson (1984: 49) summarises the concerns of this period:

> The emphasis on leisure and fun as opposed to work and study; the preoccupation with romance; the conspicuous consumption and prominence of gossip, the lack of comment on the hard work necessary for success, in the sections on pop stars; the discouragement of enlarged social, geographical or occupational horizons; the stereotypical white, bland prettiness of the models; the telegraphed, slangy language […]

Over a decade later, the focus of debate was still on the perceived inappropriate content of girls' magazines, although the nature of this content had shifted considerably in the terms of the way it portrayed teenage girls' interests. A critical incident in the history of teen magazines came in 1996 when a Tory MP presented a Private Member's Bill as a result of what he saw as the inappropriately sexualised content of magazines aimed at teenage girls (this is described by McRobbie, 1997; Knight, 1997; Hall and Coles, 1999). He dismissed the content of a copy of *Sugar* he had bought for his daughter as 'squalid titillation, salaciousness and smut' (cited by Knight, 1997: 26). This furore, according to McRobbie (1997), had grown out of an attitude towards women's magazines which had previously deemed them trivial so as not to warrant any call for the responsibility of their content. The moral panic regarding teenage girls' magazines that arose within the mid-1990s, therefore, forced magazine producers to account for their actions in bringing such overt sexuality into the content of magazines which were targeted at girls in their early to mid teens (and actually read by those even younger). As McRobbie states,

(p. 159): 'it was as though they suddenly were forced to recognise that "girls" were no longer sweet and innocent and that women were no longer "ladylike"'.

Titles such as those at the centre of this debate in the 1990s – *Sugar*, *Shout!, Bliss, Mizz* - are among the magazines that the girls of City Community School said they enjoyed the most. They were very aware of the way the adults around them responded to such reading material. In some cases, the concerns they saw expressed by the adults around them were born of cultural dissonance between the expectations and traditions of immigrant communities and those of the dominant popular culture. As I have described above, however, such concerns are not isolated within this community.

Tucker (1997: 1) sees the reception by many adults to such titles as *Sugar* and *Shout!* as part of a 'tradition of irritated liberalism which saw magazine fiction as something like the new opiate of the people'. The scares and moral panic over the content of these popular texts can be seen as part of a wider condescension that has historically been shown towards popular culture. Hoggart (1984: 131), for example, expresses some surprise at the reluctance of even Marxist critics to engage with 'the literature that the proletariat themselves read'. Venn (1996: 130) describes the difficulty faced by teachers as a result of a perceived clash between popular culture and 'high' culture, and the challenge 'of enabling children to access and to engage with 'deeper' literature which is embedded in high culture'. As Block (1998: 155) points out, however, the term 'popular culture' is used 'by those of us who imagine themselves intelligent enough to actually know another culture than that of the popular variety'.

There is an increasing focus on popular culture as a site for the contestation of ideas and the negotiation of meanings (for example, McRobbie, 1995; Massey, 1998; Mitchell and Reid-Walsh, 2002; Gough-Yates, 2003). With regards to magazines in particular, commentators have elucidated the ways in which young female readers do not have to be characterised as passive recipients of dominant discourses represented in these texts. Pinsent (1997), for example, describes the ways in which magazines may appear to represent an ideal form of femininity to which the readers could be obliged to aspire. However, she is cynical of this view:

> The text-reader dynamic is however more complex than this and […] I am
> confident that most teenage girls are able to resist these blandishments and
> to use the magazines for their own purposes (p. 7).

In her analysis of girls reading such magazines, Pinsent concludes that they are engaging in 'resistant' or 'negotiated' reading (p. 22) establishing their own meanings and, as such, are 'unlikely to remain as simply commerce fodder for the publishers'. Gough-Yates (2003: 10) similarly sees women's magazines as sites where 'marked elements of ideological negotiation were discernible'. Readers, therefore, are not obliged to embody the representations presented to them on the page: the savvy consumer eager for adulthood. Rather, she may choose to place her own value on the representations on offer, and create her own meaning from what she reads.

In my own analysis of the magazine reading of the girls in my study, I aim to explore the ways in which the respondents use magazines as part of their ongoing task of negotiating identities. As I hope to show, this

involves the reader in the work of both incorporating her own meanings and experiences as well as the attitudes of others towards the texts, in a way which means that rather than being passive receptacles of dominant ideologies, they are actively engaged in the process of establishing their positions within the realities represented by their cultures.

6.3.3 Magazine reading amongst the girls of City Community School

The favourite titles reported by the girls at City Community reflect the best selling titles in the genre[3].   The girls also revealed a taste for popular magazines aimed at the Asian market:

> Priya: I like the magazines that you can read what happens in the soap operas and stuff like that and some like Farah brings and things like *Sugar* and stuff like that. Like Jaspreet said, it's got good articles in and you can get reading and there's this one with hair ideas in, you just read that and learn about some hair ideas. […] It's just called *Hair Ideas*. […] And there's Indian ones as well, that my cousin gets for me as well. *Cineblitz*, yeah.

> Sarayah: I like *Mizz*, *Sugar* and *Star*. […] Because in *Star*, it has articles about celebrities and stories and it also has this thing where it tells you where she, where the person eats and gets their clothes from and everything, gets their hair done and then I like *Mizz* 'cos it has problems and it has cringes in it, that's it.

> Rukhshana: I like reading *Top of the Pops* and *Smash Hits* because it has all the gossip in it about celebrities and it has song words in it and it has these

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[3] Data for teenage magazine sales can be seen at http://www.mediatel.co.uk/abcroundup. Figures for July to December 2007 show *Sugar*, for example, to be by far the top selling magazine of this genre with a circulation of 157, 261, with *Shout!* selling 86, 618 and *Mizz* also popular with sales of 71, 092

games things […] I like reading some magazines, they're good. About actors and they show you some clothes and stuff.

Shabnam: I like reading *Bliss* because it's got lots of jokes in them as well as stories, it tells you stories as well. And I like reading Asian ones as well, because they've got nice posters.
Pryia: Yeah, like [*Bollywood actor*]
Rukhshana: He's so fit!

Sonia: I like *Sugar*, because some of the stories in there, they do relate to some of the stuff that happens when you're becoming a teenager or you are a teenager. And I like some of the Asian magazines that my grandma brings home. I like that *Stardust* one, that's nice. […] And I like *Blush* as well because some of the stories in there are good and I like the free stuff that they have in the packets as well. Freebies.

I will begin with a focus on the titles aimed at teenage girls. Discussion of 'Bollywood' magazines will follow later. In their initial descriptions of their favourite magazines, the girls have summarised the key attraction of these texts (as noted, for example, by McRobbie, 1997; Pinsent, 1997; Hall and Coles, 1999).   The most popular features named by the girls were also those listed as featuring most heavily in the sample of magazines analysed by Pinsent (1997: 8). Material on pop stars was the most common feature (the titles viewed included a mixture of those based on 'lifestyle' and on television and pop music).   Readers' letters and 'true' stories also featured heavily in Pinsent's analysis, along with information about sex and relationships.

The popularity of these features emphasises the key functions represented by the magazines. They are a source of information for girls growing into adolescence, and this is provided through both factual content as well as

the sharing of personal crises of other readers through 'real life' stories and the vicarious enjoyment of other readers' embarrassing moments. These sections – the 'cringes', as dubbed by my respondents – provide an opportunity for the girls to consider what they may feel in a certain situation, or to reflect on similar situations in their own experience with the reassurance that 'it happens to us all'. These features emphasise the role of the teenage magazine as a means of support and of allowing readers to cope with difficulties they may themselves encounter, 'without too much explicit consciousness of doing so' (Pinsent, 1997: 17). Hermes (1995: 41) refers to this feature of magazines as providing an opportunity for readers to become 'connected knowers', where they can access other people's experiences in order to gain knowledge about them.

In their remarks about their favourite titles, the girls also showed how they engaged with the magazines as consumers, with tastes for various titles based on the quality and variety of posters or the actual consumer merchandise given away 'free' with the magazine in the form of 'freebies'. In their discussion of the freebies in various magazines, the girls showed how they were not necessarily drawn wholly into unquestioning loyalty to a title or to the representation of reality suggested by the magazine based on the 'free' gifts; rather they demonstrated some emergent consumer awareness by being able to evaluate these products, and, as such, made their judgements on the magazines themselves:

> Farah: [*after a long list of favourites*] And there's also *Top of the Pops*, which is nice, I get that every month as well. They have nice freebies. *Sugar* has all this designer stuff, really nice designer stuff […] And then, because I'm subscribing [to *Stardust* magazine], […] they send you this like, box, and you

have the magazine in there, and you get the freebie if there is one and you

get an extra freebie because you subscribe.

Sonia: I did that with *Sugar* and you get, like, this Pantene Pro-V kit thing.

These girls are recognising the added material value of becoming regular consumers of their favourite magazines.   However, they retained a level of criticality with regards their position as consumers, showing awareness of the ways in which the magazines try and win their allegiance:

Farah: You get this really nice stuff, like you can get these things like the actors wear. They had, like, once, I didn't get this one, but they had the top that Kareena Kapoor wore in one of her films.
Priya: Yeah, right.
Farah: You didn't get it, you could win it. It was a prize draw.
Priya: I don't think it was like her proper top, was it?
Farah: Yeah. It wasn't the one she was wearing. The same one.
Shabnam: A copied one.

The girls saw the quality of the freebie as representative of the quality of the magazine, with loyalty riding on satisfaction with such merchandise. Rukhshana showed some disappointment and a sense of being undersold after parting with her cash for a magazine with a substandard freebie. Notably, she didn't give any details about the magazine itself, or what she had read in it; it was written off because of the poor quality of the giveaway, which suggests how the girls, as keen consumers, were very aware of what they could expect for their money:

Rukhshana: You know, last night I bought this magazine, and I didn't, sometimes I don't like the freebies. They gave this love heart, and it had, like, someone – I've forgotten – someone from Blazin' Squad.

Sarayah: What's his name?

Priya: I hate Blazin' Squad.

Rukhshana: [*sneering*] Yeah. It was Kenzie in a love heart. And you put batteries in and it lights up.

SJ: Oh.

Rukhshana: I bought it. There's something faulty with it now though.

The freebies are an embodiment of the values presented by the magazine and a real opportunity for readers to engage with them; this may be an emphasis on taking care of one's appearance, as in the shampoo given away, or - in the case of the Bollywood star's clothing -the potential for a more direct connection to the stars around which the magazine revolves.

I will now turn to focus in more detail on the content of the magazines and the ways in which the girls engage with this in their continued negotiation of identity.

6.3.4 The content of teenage girls' magazines

As I have described, the content of teenage girls' magazines has been under close scrutiny in the past, with most recent attention being given to the trend towards more explicitly sexual content. Whereas the City Community School girls did refer to the more explicit content of their favourite reading, this was only within the context of a broad range of appeal they found in the pages of their magazines. This suggests the way in which magazines are able to fulfil a range of purposes for their readers.

I asked the girls to imagine they were magazine editors and to explain what they would include in their magazines:

Jaspreet: I'd make sure it had jokes and funny stories and, like, jokes and information about pop stars and things, and just, like, funny things.

Priya: I'd make sure there was a freebie as well, so that attracts their attention. They got the soaps, so that they know what's gonna happen, um, stories, um real life stories and, like, jokes, and horoscopes and celebrities, posters and stuff, like, teenage girls could look at…y'know…the magazine would be generally, kind of, attractive and it's like, telling you information plus being funny at the same time.

Sarayah: I'd make sure it had stories about real life and, um, embarrassing moments, problems and I'd make sure it had posters […] and I'd make sure it had free stuff.

Rukhshana: I'd put the top ten songs, then put some song words in and write some funny stuff. Then I'd write some horoscopes and star signs.

For many of the girls, therefore, the main function of their favourite magazine was entertainment, with jokes and funny stories being popular. Another key function was escapism and desire, fulfilled to an extent through horoscopes and posters. Sonia described the magazine she would edit as also having this balance of entertainment and information, of fantasy and reality:

Sonia: I would definitely have horoscopes in it, 'cos I can't have a magazine without horoscopes. I love the horoscopes – even though they never come true, but I like, um, hearing. I like, I'd definitely put some real life stories in it to keep some teenagers cautious of what might be around.
SJ: You think that's a good reason to have real life stories?
Sonia: I'm not saying I like them, I just saying they're//

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Priya: They're interesting.

Sonia: It's not interesting, they're just good to read to keep you cautious of what's out there.

None of these girls mentioned explicitly sexual content as being a factor in their preference for certain magazines.   This may be because such content is not the main reason they read these magazines, or it may well reflect the fact that such content is taken for granted – just 'telling you information', as Priya put it. It must also be considered that they did not want to discuss such matters with me as an adult.   However, they did show a strong awareness of the purpose of the 'real life' material in these magazines and that they were able to use it to gain information and brief themselves about experiences they may encounter.

6.3.5 Negotiating meanings within contesting cultural practice

Tucker (1997) highlights the fact that teenage magazines such as *Sugar!* are a dramatic expression of the movement away from sexual ignorance in females as the cultural norm, and the removal of the sense of shame around sex which has been seen as contributing to the subordination of women.   However, within the community of which these girls are a part, beliefs and practices around female sexuality differ, and as such, Tucker emphasises the value of the role played by girls' magazines in offering information and advice for those who may not be able to seek it elsewhere. This role has not been lost on the girls of City Community School:

Sonia: Don't take this the wrong way, you lot, right, but some Muslim girls

[…] if they have a problem, say they start their period or something like that,

and they don't want their mum or dad to know, magazines they can turn to.

In the following comment, Sonia shows again how she felt the content of the magazines could be useful to their readers:

Sonia: Some magazines, they have a lot, since about May, April time, it's has

a lot of stuff about sex in it.

[*laughter*]

Sonia: And it was saying 'Do you think-'

Rukhshana: Dirty girl!

Sonia: I'm not being dirty, I'm just saying something!

Shabnam: It's not her fault! It's not dirty!

SJ: I just asked what was in the magazines, and Sonia is telling us.

Sonia: There was a questionnaire that they had and they asked these

thirteen to seventeen year old girls if they think they should be allowed to

read *Sugar* and most of them said yeah, 'cos they said they should be able to

read what they want 'cos some of their parents don't really like talking about

sex with them 'cos they think they might fill their heads with something, like.

Farah: How does it feel? I just wanna know.

Sonia: Basically.

This part of the girls' discussion is interesting for many reasons. Sonia felt strongly about her need to discover information and the important role magazines had in that respect. In citing the example of the survey, she was not exposing herself fully as seeing the sexual content as important, but merely highlighting what 'most readers' think. Rukhshana was not entirely serious in her interjection of 'Dirty girl!' but it did echo attitudes with which the girls were probably familiar. Shabnam's defence of Sonia suggests that she too felt this was an important point and she refused to be considered a 'dirty girl' for appreciating the need for this type of content

in her favourite magazines. Farah's remark, and Sonia's concurring response, revealed how sexual matters were important for these girls, even though these were situations some of them were unlikely to encounter without seriously compromising the expectations of them within their community. They nonetheless felt theirs was a reasonable concern that was justifiably supported by the magazines they read. Texts that represent cultural norms other than those of the home community are also seen to have a similarly valuable role in the lives of Yemeni-American girls in a study by Sarroub (2002), who argues that they allow girls 'to adapt pragmatically and hypothetically through text to a possible […] situation on which they realistically cannot take part' (p. 138).

In this discussion, the girls also revealed how they used magazines to explore their developing, and culturally located, identities as young women. In this case, the curiosity around sexual issues as supported by the magazines was at odds with the image of femininity represented by their community's beliefs. This is perhaps best highlighted by contrasting Farah's remark above with the one she had made regarding the possibility of having teenage fiction translated into Urdu: 'In Urdu, you don't have boyfriends'. Farah was clearly aware of the expectations of her as a girl within Pakistani-Muslim culture. However, as a girl living in the UK and reading girls' magazines, she is also very aware of the discourses of femininity within the broader, dominant cultural context. Her two comments clearly demonstrate the way in which texts can represent different aspects of her identity. In the following comment, Farah went on to describe an occasion where she found herself addressing the potential conflict between the cultural positions she found herself representing:

Farah: You know, 'cos I bring my magazines in and I stack 'em up, don't throw them away. Once my stepdad came in and he looked round and because in *Sugar* they have, like, fashion thing for the summer and they has, like, bikinis and, like, stuff like that, y'know. And y'know, 'cos he, y'know, in our religion you don't wear stuff like that and stuff. When he looked through them he told me off and he said that why do you get these magazines and I said I don't get them 'cos of that, I get them 'cos of other stuff and he said alright, then, make sure you don't, y'know, things, stuff like that.

This situation, is, of course, not confined to British-Asian communities, as I have shown. However, in this context, it is a window into what some might see as the position of women described by Afshar (1994: 131), where they are 'perceived as transmitters of cultural values and identities and are standard-bearers of the group's public and private dignity'. Sarroub (2001; 2002) also describes the way in which family reputation rested to a significant degree on the conduct of the Yemeni-American girls in her study. In their experience of both the public school system and a home community defined in many ways through 'ritual and sanctioned norms' (2001: 390), these Yemeni-American girls are described by Sarroub as being engaged in a delicate exploration of the different 'ways of "being"' (p. 391) they encountered. However, she argues that 'invariably, it was to the Yemeni girls' advantage to maintain cultural mores […], otherwise the consequences were dire' (p. 398). The Yemeni-American girls used texts which represented American values as part of their negotiation of their 'in-betweenness' (Sarroub, 2002), but these were confined to private spaces away from the gaze of other members of their community, for fear of a compromised reputation. Farah's defence of her magazine reading can be located in a similar context to these girls, in terms of the cultural expectations of femininity she alludes to. However, hers is a different experience, partly perhaps because she is of a younger age and yet to

encounter the full constrictions of these cultural expectations. Farah's community also represent a different locus of cultural influences, where the engagement of its younger members in diverse experiences as part of their negotiation of identity has already had an impact on pervading attitudes. Farah's own confident defence of her magazine reading can be seen to have led to such a modification of attitude, however small, within her home culture.

6.3.6 Representations of minority groups within teenage girls' magazines

The model of femininity depicted in the girls' favourite teenage magazines is not unproblematic. Criticism of girls' magazines has also been directed at their presentation of girls within the magazines as stereotypically white: a 'class-less, race-less sameness, a kind of false unity which assumes a common experience of womanhood or girlhood' (McRobbie, 1995: 69). Noting the fact that it is a 'largely white world' that is represented in the magazines, Pinsent (1997: 6) suggests that this may be due to publishers' market research as well as that of the ubiquitous advertisers. Although only a tiny representation of the readership as a whole, the small group of British-Asian girls in this study did not strike me as being unusual in their taste for such reading material. It would seem odd, therefore, that the images presented to them of girls 'like them' are, on the whole, white.

To explore the pertinence of this criticism, I looked at the magazines the girls were reading at the time of the interviews. An edition of *Shout!* current at the time of the interviews featured a cover model who was white

(although with dark features which may suggest mixed heritage). Other images on the cover included celebrities, one of whom was Latina and another, African-American. Six other images of people on the cover all showed white individuals. Within the magazine, images of ethnic minorities were centred on celebrities, including an interview feature with a black British singer and images of six other international pop stars who were either black or Latina. There is one image of an Asian family (taken from the soap opera, *Coronation Street*). Aside from images of celebrities, there is only one image of a black girl, in the form of a stylised cartoon in the feature 'What a Bummer: The secrets of your bum revealed!' The image shows a girl who looks horrified at the thought of her 'wide bum'. However, being categorised as such, according to the magazine, means that 'you're a talented singer, dancer or actress, even though you might not know it yet…' (*Shout!,* 2003: 58). The magazine includes fashion spreads – 'Top ten zip-ups!' - where all ten models are white, a four-page problem section, where all nine models (including those representing a mother and boyfriend) are white. Other features, including a makeover and flowchart quizzes such as 'What's your talent?' and 'Are you cool and confident?' all show white girls. A double page spread inviting the reader to compare their own favourite females from television with those of her friends features characters who are all 'white' (this includes *The Simpsons*).

An edition of *Sugar* from the same period also relies heavily on images of white girls to 'represent' the reader or her friends. For example, a double page feature 'How can a girl turn your head?' asks fourteen boys what they like about girls – all of the boys are white. A four-page fashion spread has

ten images of white girls. Ethnic minorities (black and Latino/a) are represented only by pop stars and in one advertising feature.

If one regards teenage girls' magazines as having a strong influence on their readership, as many have done on both sides of the debate around sexualised content, then one must assume that the images which face readers could be problematic in terms of girls' negotiation of their identities within both dominant and minority groups. Sarigiani et al (1993: 142) suggest that a major adjustment for girls approaching adolescence is based on changes in physical appearance: 'this new physical appearance is evaluated on standards created within cultural contexts and supported by family, friends, and other social contacts.' Different groups have different standards and expectations for what is acceptable; there is no doubt that teenage girls' magazines represent a strong discourse around what is deemed acceptable within the dominant culture. However, as we have seen, this is not always reflected within the minority culture and readers such as those from City Community School therefore are left to negotiate this aspect of their identities. There is no representation in magazines such as *Sugar* and *Shout!* of girls who may be in a similar position to them, girls who have a keen interest in issues featured in the magazines, but who have to balance this with other demands made of them from different cultural perspectives. I have no evidence to suggest that the lack of ethnic minority models in teenage magazines had led the girls I interviewed to compare themselves negatively with the girls they saw in the magazines. In fact, in the interviews, the girls spoke of their interest in fashion and physical appearance in a way which showed they were conscious of wanting to explore their changing appearance within the traditions of their different cultural models:

Priya: Sometimes some girls say to me, 'how do you tell the difference between a Muslim and a Sikh?' and I go –

Sonia: Hm, sometimes people say they think I'm a Muslim and stuff like that.

Priya: Some girls wear scarves, like Farah wears one –

Sarayah: You can tell she's not a Muslim, 'cos she wears skirts all the time.

Priya: Or they wear – what do you call those?

Zobina: Salwar Kameez.

Sonia: How our body shapes are and stuff like that, some girls can be quite critical of that, some girls like it.

Priya introduced the idea here of the different standards for physical appearance between groups, emphasising that even as 'British-Asians', the girls are not a homogenous group; differences are drawn out not only between clothes, but between body shapes. Sonia hints that differences in body shape are the subject of comparison by some girls, emphasising further the girls' heightened sensitivity to what they saw as markers of difference between groups.

Avid readers of girls' magazines such as Rukhshana and Farah are not obviously represented in their favourite texts. Nowhere in the magazines they mention are there girls featured who may share experiences such as the ones they describe here:

Rukhshana: I am allowed to wear English clothes, but that's, like, only if I'm doing something, like, while I'm living under my parents' rules, I have to, like, wear what they say.

SJ: Is that something you mind?

Rukhshana: Yeah, because my mum would shout at me!

SJ: If you had your own choice, though?

Rukhshana: If I had my own free choice, I'd probably...I'd just wear a mix.

Farah: I like what I'm wearing now, salwar kameez, because I'm a Muslim

[…] I like wearing the traditional clothes, because I'm proud of what I am or

my religion.

However, the girls clearly feel that other aspects of their identities are represented by the magazines, and their continued discussion of the ways in which they find this type of reading engaging and useful to them suggests the different ways in which magazines do support their continued negotiation of identity.

Focus so far has been on magazines representing dominant popular culture within the UK. As has been argued, there is no doubt that, despite concerns expressed about their content and the narrow representation of reality within them, these texts were regarded by the girls of City Community School as an important feature of their lives. As well as the teenage girls' magazines, however, titles mentioned frequently by the girls included those aimed at the Asian market, such as *Stardust* and *Cineblitz*, which focus on the Bollywood film scene. The next section explores the nature and content of these magazines, and the role they play as part of the girls' literacy practices.

6.3.7 Bollywood magazines

Among the girls' favourite magazines were those aimed at an Asian market and which take as their main subject the stars of Bollywood cinema. Titles such as *Stardust* and *Cineblitz* form part of a sub-genre of film magazines originating in India, which have as their main focus the stars of Bollywood

films, rather than the films themselves. Such 'star magazines' have the highest circulation of any magazine in India (Dwyer, 2000).   Many titles have international editions, of which *Stardust* and *Cineblitz* are two examples, and these are sold in the UK and some European countries such as Holland, as well as in the USA, Canada, South Africa and the Gulf. *Stardust* has been said to have the largest circulation of any of these magazines, with sales in India including 125,000 for the English edition, with a further 75,000 sold of the Gujarati editions, and 30,000 in Hindi. The international circulation for *Stardust* has been cited as 40,000 (Dwyer, 2000: 174).

The general reception for such magazines in India has been tinged with hostility similar to that which meets much of the market for magazines in the UK. Dwyer (ibid: 168) describes the fact that the content of the magazines has often been characterised as trivial:

> Not about film at all, but consisting instead of stories of the exciting and scandalous lifestyles of the film world presented in a manner guaranteed to titillate bored, middle-class metropolitan housewives.

However, in much the same way as magazines in the UK have been defended as providing opportunities for the discussion of otherwise taboo subjects, Dwyer sees the star magazine has fulfilling a useful function in the lives of its readership.

There is no doubt that for the girls in this study, the experience of reading a magazine such as *Stardust* or *Cineblitz* differs greatly to that of reading

Sugar. The girls suggested this by virtue of the way they categorised the magazines in their descriptions of what they read:

> Jaspreet: I like to read *Mizz* and *Sugar* because it's got good stories in it.   I like to read these Indian magazines that my mum brings, like *Cineblitz* and *Stardust*, it's got like information about the actors and actresses in.

> Zobina: I like reading any magazines I see, like *Mizz* and *Shout!* and stuff like that. And I like reading the real life stories and the funny ones they have, the embarrassing moments. Anything like, they have interesting stuff in it and I like reading Asian ones as well 'cos they have new film coming out and stuff like that.

The girls listed the magazines separately, giving different reasons for liking them, which suggests the way the girls viewed these texts. In response to being asked what they would include in their ideal magazine, Farah suggested once more that teenage girls' magazines differ in her mind to those she describes as 'Indian':

> Farah: If I had an English magazine, I'd do, it's definitely gotta have day to day horoscopes, it's gotta have real life stories and, y'know, freebies? […] and all the normal things, like cringes and everything, y'know. And if I had an Indian magazine, I'd have films, music and actors. I'd have posters, massive double sized posters.

There is a sense that the Bollywood star magazines offer a level of fantasy and escapism, which - although catered for with such features as the horoscopes and celebrity interviews and posters - is not the main focus of teenage magazines. The preoccupation with actors and their lifestyles seems to be the main attraction for the girls in reading the Bollywood magazines, and they do not seem to feel the need for the magazine to

offer advice or emotional support in the way they appreciate their other magazines do.

Part of the escapism offered in Bollywood magazines is in the form of the advertising, which Dwyer sees as 'Stardust's *raison d'etre'* (p. 171). In a copy of the magazine current at the time of the interviews, 28 of the 122 pages of the magazine were devoted to full-page advertisements for products which ranged from tea to mobile phones, restaurants (in New York) to hair removal products, chappati flour to psychics and palm readers.

A significant element of escapism within *Stardust* is afforded, however, through the vicarious enjoyment of the access 'into' the lives of the film stars featured. There is a balance of male and female stars, with interviews which focus on eliciting gossip about their romantic liaisons as much as anything else. The gossipy tone of the magazine is characterised by the column that features at the front of the magazine: 'Neeta's Natter.' This five-page column is rich in conspiratorial tone and innuendo about the stars of the Bollywood scene:

> Some forces *de* reckoning are tacitly going about their conquests. Take Katrina for instance. Salman watchers can have debates on whether or not she is the one who will wear the Khan's band on the wedding finger, but meanwhile, she has Sallu wrapped around her little finger. So much so that the hunky himbo was willing to cancel all prior film publicity commitments to help her recoup from her bout of contagious measles. Hope Kat uses the measles to weasel a commitment out of 'Garv' Khan. [4]

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[4] *Stardust* Magazine, July 2004, p. 8

The style of this column suggests an inclusive and intimate exchange between reader and writer – the sharing of romantic gossip and the presence of the author through devices such as 'Hope…' Other linguistic devices, such as the alliterative 'hunky himbo' and rhyming 'measles to weasel' add to the playful tone of the piece.

Punning and innuendo are most exaggerated in 'Neeta's Natter', although they are common throughout the magazine. This is seen, for example, in an interview with actress Soha Ali Khan, which features the fatalistic headline 'So Happens', playfully evoking the more explicit version of this expression while maintaining the level of propriety that would not compromise the celebrities featured. Such linguistic devices contribute to the overall characteristic style of the magazine.

The language used in the magazines has been described as 'their own brand' (Dwyer, 2000: 182). The most popular Bollywood magazines, even in India, are in English, reflecting their supposed audience. Dwyer sees this audience as the section of society with the most buying power. In India, this socio-economic group may well use English as a first language, or at least see it as an aspirational language. However, a characteristic feature of *Stardust* is the use of 'Hinglish' or 'Bombay English', 'a mixture of non-standard varieties of English with the odd Hindi, Marathi or Gujarati word or phrase inserted' (ibid: 182).

Some of them head home like homing pigeons while others are so impressed by foreign lands that they are to be brought kicking and fussing and strapped onto the *hawai jahaz* by a seatbelt.[5]

Before everyone saw the '*inheta*' of his patience, he made a hasty exit. Not disappointing was the Khan *bahu* Malaika…

Currently, home-maker Madhuri seems to have thoroughly learnt and mastered the lesson of independence and dancing to the cherub's tunes. *Ek do teen*![6]

The reader is also called upon to draw on their knowledge of other English texts (Dwyer, 2000). In one edition of Stardust, for example, headlines for features included 'These are a few of my favourite things', invoking the Hollywood film *The Sound of Music*, 'Wild Encounter', perhaps making a deliberate juxtaposition of the fiery star featured with the more subtly romantic film *Brief Encounter*. Such language is used, according to Dwyer, 'to add spice' (p.182), given that the majority of the stars interviewed would be the subject of derision for what would be judged as their poorer standard of English should this style be a reflection of the actual way in which they spoke. Dwyer also suggests that the use of 'Hinglish' distances the magazine from the connotations of social group and region associated with more everyday language in India.

Overall, this is the magazines' attempt at a lively, fun style. Indeed, one could argue that such as style allows for more editorial freedom where there may be concerns over taste or propriety. Language play allows the magazine to address issues of sexuality, for example, in a light hearted

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[5] *Stardust* magazine, July 2004, p. 12
[6] *Stardust* magazine, February 2004, p.12

and distanced manner. Much of the content of star magazines revolves around sexuality: potential relationships between stars or thinly veiled allegations of falls from grace or caddish behaviour. The actors portrayed are shown close up, heavily made up or theatrically posed, with much comment on their physical appearance.

> People who thought Dia Mirza can't look sexy, watch out![7]

> Anything in any way beautiful derives its beauty from itself and asks nothing beyond itself. Praise is no part of it, for nothing is made worse or better by praise. But still, I can't check myself from praising the 'beauty' that my eyes 'behold'. [8]

Other magazines, such as *Cineblitz*, have an equal fascination with the romantic interests of stars. The front cover of one edition emblazoned with stories such as 'Shocking betrayal! Priyanka's trauma!' and 'Vivek buying a love nest?'[9]. Inside, a four-page photo spread recounts the 'blind date' of 'sexy single' Shilpa Shetty and 'eligible and good looking' Rahul Sharma. Although such content would not seem out of place in the teenage magazines read by the girls in this study, what is notably different is the tone of the discourse around sexuality, even when presented through innuendo. As Dwyer (2000: 187) notes, in India, 'these magazines are the sphere in which […] major discussions on sexuality are sited outside of state locations such as educational institutes, medical discourse, population control and censorship.' As such, they seem to play a similar role to the teenage magazines popular with girls in the UK.

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[7] *Stardust* magazine, p. 90
[8] Feature on Aishwarya Rai, ibid. p.96
[9] *Cineblitz* magazine, January 2004.

However, sexuality in the Bollywood magazines is located firmly within discourses of virginity and a woman's honour.

Bollywood star magazines provide a similar level of entertainment for the girls of City Community School as the teenage magazines, with content appealing to the desire for escapism and a style which draws in the reader, making them feel included in the 'circle' of imagined readers. However, both types of magazine represent different discourses around sexuality. I would not suggest these discourses were in opposition, given the fact that no editor of a teenage magazine would probably admit that they were against sexual abstinence on the part of their youngest readers. However, the cultural expectations for women are different within the discourses presented by both types of magazine, and as such, they present a different reading experience for the girls who say they enjoy them. Bollywood magazines provide the girls with an accessible medium for engagement with their minority culture, and in their talk about their reading of magazines, they reveal that this engagement is not undertaken alone – Bollywood magazines provide an opportunity for shared experiences of culture through the act of shared reading. The following section explores in more detail the ways in which magazines represent a social activity through which the girls of City Community School are able to mutually explore aspects of their identities.

6.3.8 Reading communities and reading spaces

Moss (1993: 120) highlights the way reading can be seen as a social activity - 'something that takes place at particular moments in time, in

particular settings, involving particular participants.' In their talk about reading magazines, the girls of City Community School made frequent reference to its social context, emphasising the way in which the location of their reading, the way in which they read and with whom were all factors that contributed to the experience. These factors are the focus of the following discussion.

It is clear from the girls' talk about magazines that they themselves saw magazines as catering for specific social groups. The categories defined by the girls as being catered for by the magazines are based both on age and gender. Discussing others' responses to teenage magazines, the girls were keen to emphasise that these were texts for their age group only:

> Sarayah: My mum likes reading magazines, not, like, y'know, ones for little kids, ones like Real Life Stories.
>
> Rukhshana: My mum reads them.
>
> Sonia: Things like *Closer*.
>
> Sarayah: Yeah, and OK! She doesn't read *Top of the Pops* or *CD:UK*, just when I get them she's like, 'Oh let's have a look at that'. Unless I get *Sugar*, she don't want to look at that.
>
> SJ: Why do you think that might be?
>
> Sarayah: Because *Sugar*'s boring and she likes ones for adults.
>
> Farah: It says, 'Britain's Number One Teenage Magazine'.
>
> SJ: I see.
>
> Farah: It's too young.

Interestingly, although the girls themselves were not technically teenagers at the point of this interview, and the magazine *Sugar* is marketed at girls older than them, Farah and Sarayah were keen to emphasise that it was not appropriate for someone who is *too* old.   The girls were not claiming

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that the magazine is too old for *them*. As Pinsent (1997: 10) notes, 'for most adolescent girls, the desire to be older and more sophisticated far outweighs any fear of wishing their childhood away too soon'.   The girls therefore saw the readership of magazines such as *Sugar* as being defined by age.   The appeal of magazines to a younger audience would also have been emphasised to the girls by the responses of some of the adults around them to their tastes in reading:

> Priya: My parents know that I read magazines and books, anyway, so they don't really mind. 'Cos I even tell my dad, 'cos I joined a book review club and stuff, so he knows I still read books and stuff, I've got book collections and stuff. And I've still got my magazines as well.

Some of the girls felt that their parents regarded book reading as 'proper' in the sense of being educational and more socially and culturally accepted. In ensuring that she read plenty of books, Priya felt this bought her the right to read magazines 'as well'.

I drew the girls' attention to the data I had gathered from the questionnaire, referring specifically to the difference in magazine reading between boys and girls and asking them for their thoughts on this.   Their responses showed how they also categorised their reading along gender lines, based on the content of the magazines.

> Sonia: Some magazines, well actually, most magazines, they always relate to girl problems, like, y'know, PMT and stuff like that. It relates to stuff like that, like if girls have spots and stuff like that, they give cleansers and Clearasil and stuff like that to them and give loads of posters. But with boys, it's not the same.

Farah: It goes, y'know, boys don't have that many problems, if they do have
problems, they speak to their dad. When we speak to our mum, she goes,
'Look, right, they're nothing to worry about'. We're like, yes there is. […]
Men don't really care about horoscopes. Or getting raped.

Magazines, therefore, served a purpose that the girls didn't feel was
needed by their male counterparts.   The association made by the girls
with a particular group based on age and gender seemed to be
unquestionable. Despite her gross generalisation, Farah quite accurately
highlighted the way that magazines such as *Sugar* cater for a specific
social group, and in doing so, respond to (or, some might argue, create) a
need for material that provides information readers deem valuable.   In
imagining this exclusive audience and dismissing boys' interests in their
physical and emotional development, the girls did not recognise the
potential benefits of boys being able to access material which dealt with
these significant issues. In their minds, this was reading that was *theirs*.

The sense of community created by being readers of these magazines is
reflected in the actual practice of reading these texts. The girls referred to
sharing magazines within their friendship groups. For example, Priya
mentioned reading magazines like Sugar, 'that Farah brings'.

Farah: I get *Sugar* I get that every month. And I bring it to school and my
mates look at it and everything.

This collaborative reading has been noted as a feature of the way girls read
magazines (Pinsent, 1997; Hall and Coles, 1999). Such reading 'can form
a socially cohesive bond among teenage girls' (Pinsent, 1997: 11). It also

reiterates the role of magazines as a unifier of the experience of growing up:

> Zobina: You can talk to your friends about the magazine.

Teenage magazines were guarded by the girls as their own social territory. In their description of reading Bollywood star magazines, however, a different socially defined group emerged. Jaspreet said that she enjoyed the Indian magazines that 'my mum brings'.   Priya, likewise, enjoyed magazines such as *Cineblitz* 'that my cousin gets for me'. Sonia said she liked reading 'some of the Asian magazines my grandma brings home'. The picture the girls created of reading these titles, therefore, was one of interaction of female relatives across generations.

> Farah: Because I'm subscribing [to *Stardust*], well first my auntie did it, innit, then I did it, she recommended me to do it as well.

Such reading of Bollywood star magazines represented an opportunity for these girls to engage with their minority culture with female relatives across the generations, who may well have acted as cultural role models. At other times during the interviews, the girls suggested female relatives as their role models, rather than any famous people (as were chosen by their counterparts in Wales):

> Farah: My big influence, my role model, is my sister, Sairah. She knows everything. She thinks the same as me. And although she's, like, double the age of me, we always whenever we go out somewhere, we always have a laugh, share secret things. She's just a proper influence on me.

This kind of comment was in direct contrast to those about younger siblings:

> Sonia: I don't like going in my room, because my little sister, she's always in there, with paints and everything.
>
> Rukhshana: Innit!
>
> Sonia: She's really annoying.

Sharing the reading of Bollywood star magazines, with their association with the minority culture and their culturally sanctioned presentation of sexuality could be seen to provide an opportunity for these girls to explore ways of becoming young women, based on the role models offered by others, many of whom will have also grown up within two cultures.

The shared reading of magazines is also partly a function of the *way* in which they are read. Unlike the closed world of a book, where the reader engages privately with an imaginary world, a magazine is open to a different kind of reading, which encourages collaboration and discussion. Frazer (1987) has noted the way in which magazines of the kind read by these girls are often read lazily, a point also raised by Dwyer (2000: 170), who cites the argument made by Hermes that 'readers of women's magazines enjoy the fact that they can read them intermittently'. McRobbie (1995: 76) notes that the style of such magazines 'once established, facilitates and encourages partial and uneven reading'. The girls in this study describe this kind of 'dipping in and out' of their favourite texts in a way very different to reading a book:

> Sonia: I always go to the back of the magazine and read the horoscopes first,
> then I go to the cringe pages. I think it's in the middle, then I just go to the
> stories, then I just read the rest of it.

Magazines are read in many different locations, the kitchen being popular amongst the girls in this group. This is a shared public space within the home – and possibly female dominated - where the reading may be part of general discussion:

> Sonia: I read in the kitchen. 'Cos my mum always comes into the kitchen and
> she says 'what ya reading?'

For Priya, her magazine reading can sometimes be part of a broader interaction with her siblings:

> Priya: When I'm having my snack I read my magazine and my brothers are,
> like, trying to peer around, they snatch it off me so I have to chase them
> around the house.

The social groups which the girls established through their magazine reading can be defined as communities of practice (Wenger, 1999) which exist as sites for the shared negotiation of meanings as represented by the texts. Such reading can be seen as what Wenger terms a 'joint enterprise' (p. 73). Such practice is constituted by three key features: mutual accessibility, interpretation and response; mutual engagement and a shared repertoire (suggesting common artefacts, style, actions and concepts, for example). By engaging with magazines with both their peers and their female relatives, therefore, the girls form a community which shares the negotiation of meaning offered by these texts.

For some of the girls, however, reading magazines came to represent both a material and imaginary space away from specific cultural expectations. Unlike a number of the girls who suggested that their magazine reading was supported at home, including Farah, who had used her magazine reading as a site of negotiation with her stepfather, some girls described the way in which experience of magazine reading was very different and that the expectations of them from their home culture meant restrictions on their reading:

> Shabnam: You know those magazines that tell you about Coronation Street and Eastenders? I get them sometimes.
>
> Rukhshana: *Inside Soap*.
>
> Shabnam: They don't really mind because they know it's not going to be rude or anything, so.
>
> SJ: If there was something that they might think, 'hmm..'?
>
> Shabnam: I don't show my parents really.
>
> Zobina: Sometimes, magazines in the middle, they have rude bits in it and you don't know it's there and you get it.
>
> Others: Yeah.
>
> Zobina: If your parents see it they think you did it on purpose.

Zobina's trepidation at being in possession of material of which her parents would not approve is further illustrated in the following comment she made about what she does once she has bought her favourite magazines:

> Zobina: You know, when I go to the shop and I do get magazines if I like them and you know, when I come home I like, put it in my bag and take it in my coat or something and put it in my room. Under my pillow. Just in case my dad and my mum's there. My mum don't really mind, but my dad looks through it to see what's in it to see what I'm reading and stuff.

This is a vivid image of the location of magazine reading for Zobina, hidden away by many degrees of secrecy – her bag, her coat, her room, her pillow. She has taken a step in asserting her own agency in choosing her own reading material and buying it herself (McRobbie, 1995). However, she then has to actively allocate a space where she can engage with the text she has chosen. Her room provides this space to explore aspects of the culture with which she wishes to engage and which are in contestation with those of her home.   This space has grown out of the site of interaction between cultures as represented by the content of the magazines and the expectations of the minority culture which represents Zobina's home life.

Exploration of space is continued in my concluding chapter, where I locate literacy practices such as those I have described here within a theoretical framework that focuses on the interconnectedness of cultures and the ways in which the girls of both Ysgol Gymraeg and City Community School utilised the resources of these cultures in creating spaces for the negotiation of meaning and the exploration of identities.

Chapter 7

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY PRACTICES AS SPACES OF IDENTITY NEGOTIATION

7.1   Introduction

In their talk, the girls of Ysgol Gymraeg and City Community School revealed their engagement in multiple discourses reflecting the complexity of the interaction between different aspects of their bilingual lives. In this final chapter, I explore the way in which language and literacy practices represent opportunities for the girls to negotiate these different discourses, as well as how they utilise such practices as means for the exploration and demonstration of their identities.

A key concept within this chapter is that of space. As I suggested in Chapter 2, this is a concept which does more than just describe the role of material spaces in social interaction; it emphasises at an imaginary level the way in which discourses shape human experience and how, ultimately, individuals can make use of the interconnectedness between such spaces in order to negotiate their own position and meaning.   My aim here is to describe the ways in which the girls in my study negotiated the multiple spaces they experienced and were able to delineate their own 'third space' in which they utilised the resources available to them as bilingual and bicultural individuals in order to explore and demonstrate their identities. I first describe what I saw as the key spaces of the girls' experience, based on their talk in the interviews, before going on to consider the ways in which they made their own use of the interconnectedness of these spaces.

7.2   Space and the bilingual experience in both communities

As they described their perceptions and experiences of being bilingual, the girls revealed how key markers of their cultural identities were strong influences on their lives. These markers included language, religion and other aspects of their heritage cultures, and the girls showed in the interviews how they were well versed in discourses related to these aspects of their lives, whether the politicisation of the Welsh language, or the specific material and intellectual practices related to the reading of the Qu'ran. As well as identity markers specific to the minority language cultures of both Wales and the British-Asian community, the girls talked about their interaction with what could be seen as representations of the dominant, Anglo-American culture, particularly as represented by literacy practices. This is not to suggest that there were always clear divisions between dominant and non-dominant aspects of their lives: as was shown in Chapters 5 and 6, the complex interconnection between the two was never far from the surface, making it difficult to conceptualise the girls' experience according to a simple, dichotomous model of 'two cultures'.

Moje et al (2004: 41) describe the way in which home and school (or other dominant institution, such as work or the church) can be characterised as 'First' and 'Second' spaces respectively. This labelling is essentially arbitrary, however, and can be easily reversed; there is often reference to 'First Space', for example, as 'that space which is privileged or dominant in social interaction'. For Moje and her colleagues, the key notion is 'the sense that these spaces can be reconstructed to form a third, different or alternative space of knowledges and Discourses' (ibid). In the following exploration of what is represented by ostensibly 'First' and 'Second' spaces, the difficulty of assigning such labels within the communities of my study

will I hope become clear, as will the fact that what I see as the most potentially transformative practices are located within the reconstructed 'third spaces' created by the girls themselves.

7.3   Spaces encountered by the girls of Ysgol Gymraeg

The girls of Ysgol Gymraeg were articulate in the politicised discourse which can surround the Welsh language and were often at their most animated during discussion of issues where they engaged in discourses including language death and the threat posed to the language by immigration. Despite seeming to feel a strong sense of duty to their minority language, the reality of the girls' daily language use was not always in keeping with the support of a language in peril.   This is not the only irony to emerge from my exploration of the girls' experiences, and is just one indication of the complexity of interaction between discourses that exists in this context.

In describing the spaces the girls encountered, I will begin by suggesting that a dominant discourse around the Welsh language is represented within school – both specifically within the Welsh curriculum and in the hidden curriculum represented by the school's structures and cultural practices. It is obviously acknowledged that Ysgol Gymraeg is a bilingual school, and as any school, it is an organic entity with multiple and diverse issues which affect it. However, amongst these many issues, schools in Wales can be seen as one face of the official dominant discourse of the Welsh language. The school has a political role in implementing statutory decisions regarding the language (such as the compulsory teaching of Welsh as part of the National Curriculum), as well as a cultural role in promoting practices such as the eisteddfod and institutions such as *Yr Urdd*. In this regard, it

could be seen as a 'First Space' in terms of dominant positions on the language.   However, as will be shown below, a minority language such as Welsh faces increasing challenges from global cultural forces.   As a 'First Space', therefore, it has significant imperatives to adapt and be open to negotiation with other worlds such as those described by the girls in their interviews.

The labelling of the home as 'Second Space' is equally problematic in the Welsh context when it suggests significantly different discourse.   For girls such as Anna, the use of language was a key differentiating feature of the space of school and home – at school she spoke Welsh, at home English. For the majority of the girls, however, there was not this simple linguistic divide between their 'First' and 'Second Space'.   The girls rather gleefully recounted their stories of how speaking Welsh out of school afforded them advantage against those who spoke 'only English'.   Girls such as Sara and Charlotte held interesting positions as speakers of Welsh in relation to their fathers, who had learnt the language, and in explaining their own sense of themselves as speaking Welsh in their homes, they reflected ideas of what was 'proper Welsh' which echoed aspects of dominant politicised discourses of the language.   Welsh as the language of the home did not always represent a discourse that was dissimilar to that of school, as Llio pointed out when she told the group of her mother's reprimands when she heard Llio speaking English.

Despite such apparent similarities at a linguistic level between practices at school and home, it was clear in the girls' talk that Anglo-American cultural discourses did have a considerable influence on their choices and their negotiation of their identities as young bilinguals.   A symbol of this was offered by Ffion in her description of the way in which some individuals, in

perhaps the ultimate physical 'liminal space' (a term used by Bhabha, 1994: 5) between school and home, chose to move away from the dominant language of these spaces and spoke English on the school bus.

Despite such examples, however, a simple model of school and home as offering different experiences is not entirely unproblematic in the Welsh context. I now turn to focus specifically on literacy as symbolic of the ways in which the values of these spaces interconnect.

7.4   Literacy spaces at Ysgol Gymraeg

Gwenno: I don't like Welsh stuff. It's boring.

Elin: English is more of a slang language.

The girls described their experiences of literacy at school in very different terms to their own literacy choices 'outside'. Perhaps the most obvious distinction made between these spaces was in language choice. Within school, Welsh is part of the core curriculum, and within the discourse of language policy, the school is a key location for the fostering of future speakers. The girls were clear, however, that certain practices within school held no attraction or sense of relevance to them, and these were predominantly those they encountered in Welsh.   In describing their own choices, however, English-language texts dominated the girls' talk. This is not to say that the Welsh language had no room in their out-of-school lives, as described above.   There exists, therefore, a complex dynamic between school and home experiences, which I explore below.

As a bilingual school, Ysgol Gymraeg offers Welsh and English as core curriculum subjects. For those who have Welsh as their first language, the Welsh curriculum could be described as similar in content and aims to that found in English classrooms across the UK: the study of language and literature within a frame which encourages the development of language skills as well as introducing a particular canon of literature and forms of response. For those with Welsh as a second language, Welsh lessons reflect the practice of Modern Foreign Languages classrooms to an extent, depending on the fluency of the group. The girls in the interview group, however, were within the former category, and therefore experienced Welsh within the curriculum as having a focus on literacy and oracy, as well as the development of response to literature. All this, of course, is framed within a discourse of what it is to be 'good' at Welsh, with the broader social objective of creating individuals who show competences in the kinds of Welsh that are valued in Welsh-speaking society. The particular political context of Wales means that there is an increased demand for those with such academic competence in Welsh to support bilingualism within the public (and, increasingly, private) sector. There is a discourse, therefore, evidenced in the Welsh Language Board literature referred to in Chapter 5, of Welsh being 'a good thing to be good at' in terms of personal economic potential as well as in terms of the longevity of the language.

However, the teacher of Welsh interviewed as part of this study was ready to admit that, despite representing what could traditionally be seen as a dominant position, the particular situation of having to negotiate her students' collective attitudes towards the literacy practices which were part of her curriculum meant having to renegotiate positions which reflected a blurring of boundaries between the literacies of the 'First' and 'Second' space.

As the girls suggested, there are complex and historic factors influencing their attitudes towards the literacy they encountered in Welsh at school. These range from a tradition of diglossia and geographic variations which affect the language itself, to the economic reality of publishing minority language material which is competitive within the Anglo-American context. English-language material, for them, held more appeal because of its contemporaneity, the range of choice available and the nature of English in their eyes as 'more of a slang language', to use Elin's phrase. These factors seemed to have worked to reinforce the construct of reading in Welsh as a negative experience in the eyes of these girls.

However, one particular practice described by both the teacher and the girls is suggestive of a 'Third Space', which brings together the pedagogical (and, it could be argued, political) need for engagement in the Welsh curriculum, with the lives of students outside school, including their language use. The incorporation of shorter, colloquial texts such as *Cyfres Pen Dafad* into the Welsh classroom may be criticised by some as a form of watering down of a rich literary canon in order to win the engagement of students who may otherwise be switched off to the literary offer of the Welsh classroom – much like the girls in this study, for example. However, I did not get the impression that the introduction of this genre of short, contemporary and colloquial text was threatening the rest of the content of the curriculum. Rather, I would argue that this reflects the model of third space as a pedagogical resource, as outlined by Gutièrrez and her colleagues (1995; 1999). According to this model, the third space can facilitate a connection between different experiences, where the valorisation of 'outside' knowledge within the 'dominant' space represented by the school curriculum can support student engagement, and motivate them to the develop skills they will require to access positions within the

dominant cultural hegemony. The incorporation of *Cyfres Pen Dafad* into the classroom could be described as such a platform – a third space between the worlds of traditional Welsh literature and that which was so prominent in the lives of students outside school.

This is one example, therefore, of the third space within a pedagogic context, where school and out-of-school experiences are brought together in order to scaffold learners' journeys through the curriculum. However, I would concede that the girls' own agency in this is somewhat limited: despite the fact that they did indicate that they enjoyed the texts when they were read, there is little to suggest that this practice led to any significant exploration of identity, other than the fact that the girls recognised the language and situations of the books as more 'real'. Reading such texts as part of an imposed curriculum also limits the opportunities offered by this particular third space for the *demonstration* of identity. As such, I feel that it is in their practice of electronic discourse that the most exciting potential lay for third space to be realised by the girls of Ysgol Gymraeg as a resource not only in negotiating, but also in demonstrating identities.

7.5 Electronic third space as a negotiation and demonstration of bilingual identities

As we have seen, the girls of Ysgol Gymraeg were adept at moving between discourses that were an everyday part of their lives as bilinguals in Wales, at times occupying what were in many respects opposing positions. In their electronic discourse, they showed themselves to be 'active creators of third space' (Moje et al, 2004: 65) where the resources of these multiple discourses were utilised to facilitate their negotiation and

demonstration of identities.   To use the terminology of Lefebvre (1991), these online worlds could be seen as examples of 'lived' spaces, reflecting an imaginative response to the 'conceived space' of school and dominant Welsh cultural expectations.

Sheehy and Leander (2004: 3) eschew the notion of space as being a purely material context for what happens within it. The spaces of literacy practices in particular, they argue, should be 'brought to the fore as an ongoing process and practice deeply tied up with the word.'   The virtual space of online communication is a good example of the way in which the space itself interacts with the practice it hosts.   The online language choices of the girls in this study reflected the profound effect the setting had on their practices, both in instigating the use of context-specific practices as well as providing the flexibility, away from more institutionally defined literacy and language contexts, for experimentation with language and negotiation of their bilinguality.

In many ways, the online spaces of Ffion and her friends are evocative of Foucault's heterotopias (Foucault, 1986). The notion of heterotopia has been applied to girls' web pages in other studies (Mitchell and Reid-Walsh, 2002; Davies, 2006).   Web pages, similar in many ways to those of the girls in this study, are seen as heterotopias of deviation, spaces where users are able to express views that differ from the majority culture. In this case, the girls, through their choice of language alone, positioned themselves as 'deviant' from a discourse of the Welsh language that dominated much of their lives. This language use was also a way of controlling access into the space (and excluding others, such as Ffion's mother, for example). In this regard, they reflect Foucault's fifth principle of heterotopias, whereby they 'presuppose a system of opening and closing

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that both isolates them and makes them penetrable' (ibid: 26). The online worlds of Ffion and her friends represent spaces of heterogeneity, interaction and negotiation.

The electronic discourse shows the way in which its creators occupy positions on the boundary between languages. The historic critical discourse on this position has suggested negative connotations (as outlined by Jacobson, 1998; Drury, 1988). However, the powerful potential of such 'borderline engagements' (Bhabha, 1994: 3) is clearly evidenced by the imaginative language use demonstrated by these girls. For hooks (1990), such deliberate occupation of the margin is an empowering action, as she sees the margin as a site of resistance. Language, for hooks, is also 'a place of struggle' (ibid: 151). Although in a very different political context, the girls of this study who engaged in electronic discourse were also using language as a site for the active negotiation of their identities as bilinguals, living within a diverse range of linguistic and cultural practice. The site of this negotiation is an 'in-between' space, which, according to Bhabha (1994: 2), is where 'strategies of representation or empowerment come to be formulated in the competing claims of communities'.

For these bilinguals, the medium of electronic discourse is used to create a space where 'the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity' (Bhabha, 1994: 55). The symbolism of language in this form of communication exists only in so far as it reflects the carefully constructed identities of the individuals involved. The multimodal codeswitching seen in the Instant Messaging is an example of signs 'appropriated, translated, rehistorized and read anew' (ibid.) and illustrates Bhabha's contention that 'it is the space of intervention emerging in the cultural interstices that introduces creative invention into existence' (ibid. p. 12).

I do not wish to suggest that the identities demonstrated in these on-line spaces should necessarily be regarded as more 'real' than any others shown by the girls throughout their interviews. However, the girls realised that their electronic discourse was a space they themselves created and controlled. As such, there was more freedom for them, away from the historic and political discourses so prevalent around them, to draw from their multiple resources as an active part of what Hall (1996: 4) describes as 'the process of becoming'.

Although in a community which is different in many ways, the girls of City Community School were also involved in the active negotiation of space, and it is to this group that I now turn, to describe the spaces they experienced and their responses to them.

7.6   Spaces encountered by the girls of City Community School

The spatial metaphor is perhaps especially apt in the context of City Community School's girls given the emphasis they themselves placed on material space as part of their lives. Cultural and linguistic identities were closely linked for them to geographic locations, and they saw religious practice as connected to material locations such as the mosque or temple. For example, Priya described her mother's use of Punjabi as being confined to the temple, and some of the girls learning Arabic did this specifically at the mosque. The practice of Qu'ranic reading was also related to interaction with physical space for the girls, their comments showing their understanding of where the holy book should be located and how one should position oneself, physically as much as mentally, when reading it.

Another way of seeing First and Second space in this context is to consider the home culture and wider Anglo-American culture as two spaces that the girls traverse. Again, there are key differences between these two spaces, which could support such a model. In many ways, these differences were reinforced by the girls, who in some cases assigned different practices to these spaces: Farah is a good example here, when she described the way she imagined facing her god at the end of her life and outlining the good work she had done in her mother tongue, before adding those done in English as extras. Rukhshana's distancing of herself from the practices of her relatives in Pakistan also showed the way in which she saw that aspect of her life as very different to her life in the UK.

In some ways, the use of a model of First and Second space may be more easily applied to the community of City Community School. This is because of the fact that, on many levels, the worlds of home and school for the respondents from this community did represent some key differences. These included language use, religious practice and other cultural markers such as dress and food. The girls attended a monolingual school where young members of their community made up just under a half of the population. The girls themselves were occasionally the subject of 'othering' – either by their own design, when they chose to use different language or to describe themselves in 'other' terms, or by their peers, whom the girls described as highlighting differences in personal appearance, dress or language use.   The practices and expectations of the home environment sometimes differed to that of school, perhaps most clearly represented in the religious practices described by the girls, or in the values they saw their parents as holding with regards to the content of their magazines, for example.

However, as Sarroub (2002) notes, 'home and school spaces often overlap one another and are inherently related'. She argues that the boundaries between these spaces are the subject of constant shift as individuals negotiate them. The state of 'in-betweenness', for Sarroub, results in 'the immediate adaptation of one's performance or identity to one's textual, social, cultural, and physical surroundings' (p. 134). The City Community School girls also showed that, to a large extent, it was the interaction between spaces that characterised their own experience of 'in-betweenness', and their engagement with aspects of both spaces led to the construction of a third space representing the opportunity for the dynamic negotiation of identity.

One example of this negotiation across spaces of dominant and non-dominant cultural practice is given by Sonia, when she describes her role in teaching her newly arrived auntie to speak English. Shabnam describes the similar role she had in her home of translating for her mother and supporting her in learning English. The pride of the girls was clear when they spoke of these roles, which could be seen as third spaces that they occupied as members of the different linguistic and cultural discourses.

With specific regard to the literacy practices of both majority and minority cultures, the girls also showed how they were able to utilise the resources of differing discourses in their exploration of identities.

7.7   Literacy spaces in the lives of the girls of City Community School

In Urdu you don't have boyfriends.

What does it feel like, I just wanna know?

Farah

As Farah's first comment above shows, some of the girls saw certain literacy practices as symbolic of the differences between the dominant and non-dominant cultures with which they engaged. It will be remembered that this was Farah's succinct explanation of the way she thought that the novels of Jacqueline Wilson in particular could not be translated into languages such as Urdu and Punjabi. This suggests the way that majority and minority practices were clearly delineated in her mind. It also emphasises the ways in which dominant and non-dominant literacies differ not only in terms of language, but also in the purposes they serve and the values they hold within their respective communities.

Much of the girls' talk about reading for pleasure revolved around institutions such as the library and the school. These were the main sources of material for reading in English for many of the group, partly because of the way in which many had not yet acquired the requisite skills to engage with texts in their minority languages and partly, as suggested by Farah, because of the fact that reading (and literacy in general) serves different purposes and holds different values in these languages. School and the library were therefore key spaces of literacy in English for the girls. For some, the significance of these institutions in supporting their English reading emphasises the way in which this particular literacy practice is located within not only a material space, but also within the symbolic space of dominant cultural practice.

Minority language literacy for many of the girls was acquired later than that in English. There was a strong sense of pride in being able to read and

write in Urdu and Punjabi, partly related to the value attached to these skills in these official languages by the home cultures of these girls.   A lot of their pride, however, seemed to come from the ability to engage with the non-dominant culture as part of their own identity: the girls seemed to see the ability to read the Punjabi paper, as their grandparents did, for example, as a significant marker of belonging to a particular cultural group.

The girls' main source of reading for pleasure provided a key influence in their use of text to explore identities.   Their magazine reading cannot be wholly associated with the literacy spaces of either school or minority language practices; rather, it was a practice with which the girls themselves engaged as part of their negotiation of their position and it became one way in which their construction of third space was seen most clearly.

Farah was clear in her mind about the role played by magazines in her developing identity, as she emphasised in the second remark above, in reference to their sexualised content.   This was despite stating her views on the irrelevance of teen fiction to her non-dominating culture. The reading of magazines provided a space of negotiation for Farah when challenged by her stepfather about their content. This encounter could be seen to represent what Bhabha (1994:3) describes as the way in which traditional meanings are essentially temporal and subject to negotiation as part of such 'borderline engagements':

> The borderline engagements of cultural difference may as often be consensual
> as conflictual; they may confound our definitions of tradition and modernity;
> realign the customary boundaries between the private and the public, high
> and low; and challenge normative expectations of development and progress.

As well as the particular example of Farah's interaction with her stepfather, many aspects of magazine reading, as illustrated in Chapter 6, provided the girls of City Community School with opportunities to construct a third space for the negotiation and demonstration of their identities as young women engaging with multiple discourses.

7.8 Room for manoeuvre: magazine reading as third space for exploring identities

As was outlined in the previous chapter, magazine reading provided the girls of City Community School with spaces for the negotiation of different identities. This could be in the content of the texts themselves, which the girls explained they felt was a valuable part of their development as young women. This content – whether overtly sexualised, or demonstrating in more subtle ways the models of femininity that may have been in contrast to those within the non-dominating culture – was negotiated by the girls within a space where they could be seen to draw upon the resources of different discourses and communities. The words of Farah above emphasise that dominant cultural representations of femininity have some relevance to her life, although she was aware that she did not have to passively accept all of the messages she received from these texts, as she was keen to explain to her family.

The magazines also facilitated the creation of social spaces of interaction, whether between peers or between female relatives of different ages. Such groups provided the girls with an opportunity to reflect on the cultural resources they experienced and to negotiate their own position in relation to others within dominant and non-dominant contexts.

A strong image to emerge from the girls' talk about magazine reading was that of the bedroom – both as a material location for the reading, and as a metaphorical space which characterised the nature of this particular reading and its position within both dominant and non-dominant cultures. I expand this metaphor of the room as a space for identity negotiation below.

The cultural significance of children's bedrooms has been noted by Mitchell and Reid-Walsh (2002), who point out that the bedroom is often presented in popular culture as a reflection of the 'inner-self' (p.135). This discourse is rooted within the issue of space in relation to contemporary, Western models of childhood. The spaces of childhood, argue Mitchell and Reid-Walsh, are often those that are defined by others – either in terms of where children *can* go, or where they *cannot*. Children are, in many areas, no longer allowed to roam freely, but are taken to officially designated or specifically organised places to play, where their actions are regulated by the adults who supervise them. '"In their rooms", then, seems like the safe place for children to be' (ibid: 140).

The bedroom, for Zobina, is a 'safe place to be' in terms of her reading of magazines. She vividly described her actions after she had purchased a magazine – the act of taking it home in her bag, under her coat, then relocating it to her room, under her pillow. This was because of her fear of being found in possession of material that contested the values of her home. For Zobina, as well as a material space where her reading is physically located, the bedroom supports the imagined third space where she is able to read her chosen text and explore her own position in relation to it. Brown, Dykers, Steele and White (1994: 817) see the bedrooms of

the teenagers of their study as a 'haven, the one place in the house where they could be themselves without fear of the judgemental eyes of parents or the larger world'.   For Brown et al, the bedroom is a 'mediating device', in Vygotskian terms, which 'plays and important role in [the] process of self-definition' (p. 814); the bedroom is a site of the negotiation of media and popular culture, such as music and television, where teenagers can use these resources in order 'to see both who they might be and how others have constructed and reconstructed themselves' (p. 814).

Zobina is by no means alone in reading in her bedroom; it is a commonly preferred location for many from different backgrounds, as noted by Davies and Brember (1993).   Zobina's bedroom is clearly a literal and physical space and she is active in locating her reading there.   This is a space where she is unsupervised and 'allowed'.   However, I also see Zobina's room as a representation of the third space created by the girls in their reading of magazines from both dominant and non-dominant cultures. This space is one that supports the negotiation of meanings and the representation of selves within a repertoire of discourses.   As has been argued by Frazer (1987: 419), meanings represented by texts are often 'undercut […] by […] readers' reflexivity and reflectiveness'.   The girls' magazine reading provides them with an opportunity for this reflexivity, and for reflection on the representations offered to them. Magazines are important sites of negotiation for these girls, and they use these texts to construct and contest their own identities.   As Dwyer (1998) notes, as part of this process of identity construction, the girls also contribute to the developing cultural processes of their communities. Although Zobina did not reflect on the impact her reading was having at the time of the interviews, other girls, like Farah, had made more open use

of this third space and could see its effect on the transformation of meaning.

7.9   Conclusion

The lived experiences described by the girls in this study reflect the many ways in which they drew upon the varied resources they saw as available to them, and used these in an active process of the negotiation and demonstration of their identities.   Their creation of third spaces is an example of how individuals engaged in the process of identification, as well as being shaped by the various demands and expectations of cultures, are also able to shape the cultures themselves (Rogoff, 2003). As bilinguals, uniquely positioned on the boundary between these multiple discourses, the girls in this study showed the way in which they were able to engage with and influence many aspects of these discourses. As Bhabha (1994: 303) contends, it is as the result of such interaction between discourses that 'newness enters the world'.

Through their engagement in multiple discourses and their active reconstruction of the spaces many of these discourses represent, the girls of Ysgol Gymraeg and City Community School also demonstrate a key point about the nature of identity, as Hall (1996: 4) emphasises:

> Though they seem to invoke an origin in a historical past with which they continue to correspond, actually identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we came from' as much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves.

I was able to witness some of the ways these in which the girls in my study were involved in this process, but in drawing to the end of my presentation of their experiences as I saw them, I am aware that the story I am able to tell reflects just a small part of the reality. The part played by their interaction with the specific literacy practices I have described here is a small feature of a wider picture that was not only beyond the scope of this study, but also continues to be drawn as they move along their journey to becoming.

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Appendix

Pupil Questionnaire

Sample Interview Schedules

Bilingual Readers : Student Questionnaire

What is this booklet?
I am a researcher from Nottingham University, researching the reading of young bilinguals – that is, young people who speak a language other than English at home. To see how their reading might compare with that of young people who are not bilingual, I am asking the whole of Year 7 at your school to fill in this questionnaire.

What you need to do
All your answers will be kept private. You do not have to give your name.

Some questions will ask you to put a tick next to your choice of answer, like this: √
Others with ask you to write a few words in the space next to the question. Don't worry about spelling.

Some questions start with, "If you are bilingual"… **If you speak a language other than English at home, please answer these questions**.
If you always speak English at home, please don't answer the questions which start "If you are bilingual…" You should answer the other questions, including the ones which start with "In English…"

First of all, please tick whether you are a boy or a girl:

BOY   GIRL

Then, turn over to answer the questions.

Section 1 - Talking

1. Do you speak any language or languages other than English at home?

   Yes   No

   If you answer 'Yes', which   If you answer 'No', go on to
   language or languages?   question 7 and carry on
                                                    answering all the questions
   ……………………………..   apart from the ones which
   ……………………………..   start with 'If you are
                                                    bilingual…'

   If you have written a language other than English above, this language will be
   called your "**mother tongue**" in the following questions.

   If you speak a language other than English at home, please answer **all** the
   following questions, including the ones which start with "*If you are bilingual…"*

2. With whom do you speak your mother tongue?

   ……………………………………………………………………………………..

3. Try to estimate how much time you spend speaking your mother tongue each day:

   Less than an hour
   Between 1-2 hours
   Between 2-3 hours
   Between 3-4 hours
   More than 4 hours

Section 2 - Writing

4. Can you write in a language other than English?

   Yes   Yes, a little bit   No
   If you answer 'Yes',   If you answer 'No',
   or 'Yes, a little bit'   go to question 6.
   carry on with the next
   question.

5. What do you write **in your mother tongue**? (e.g. letters, diary, e-mails…)
   (Look back at question 1 if you are not sure what "mother tongue" means)

   ……………………………………………………………………………………..

Section 3 – Reading

6. Can you read in a language other than English?

   Yes   No

7. (a)Which of these do you read? Tick the box next to the ones you read.

In English: If you are bilingual, in your mother tongue:
    Newspapers   Newspapers
    Magazines   Magazines
    Comics   Comics
    Novels   Novels
    Websites   Websites

(b) Do you read anything else? (e.g. letters, e-mails, other types of books)
If so, write down what you read

……………………………………………………………………………..

(c) If you are bilingual and you have written something at 7(b), please tick
whether what you read is in your mother tongue, in English or in both.

    Mother tongue   English   Both

8.   Which of the things listed in Question 7 do you most enjoy reading?

……………………………………………………………………………..

9 (a) Do you have a favourite author or series of books?

    Yes   No
    If you answer 'Yes', please   If you answer 'No',
    write down the name below: carry on with question 10.

……………………………………………………………………………..

9 (b) What gave you the idea to first start reading these books?

……………………………………………………………………………..

10(a) Where do you get things to read in English?

    I buy them myself
    They are already in the home
    I borrow them from friends or family
    I get them as gifts from friends or family
    From the library
    From school
    Other (please explain) ………………...

If you are bilingual, carry on with questions 10 (b) and 11. Otherwise, go on to
question 12.

10(b) Where do you get things to read in your mother tongue?

   I buy them myself
   They are already in the home
   I borrow them from friends or family
   I get them as gifts from friends or family
   From the library
   From school
   Other (please explain) ………………...

11. Is it easy to find things you enjoy reading in your mother tongue?

           Yes   No

12. Do you own any books yourself?

           Yes   No
           If you answer 'Yes',   If you answer 'No',
           about how many do you own?   go on to question 13
                    ↓   ↓
   In English: If you are bilingual,
                                        in your mother tongue:

    up to 10   up to 10
    Between 11 and 25   Between 11 and 25
    Between 26 and 50   Between 26 and 50
    Between 51 and 100   Between 51 and 100
    More than 100   More than 100

 13 (a) About how many books are there in your home?

       hardly any   a few   quite a lot   lots

If you are bilingual, carry on with the next question. Otherwise, go on to question 14.

(b) About how many books in your mother tongue are there in your home?

       hardly any   a few   quite a lot   lots

 14. How much reading do you think you do?

   In English: If you are bilingual,
                                        in your mother tongue:

       A large amount   A large amount
       Quite a lot   Quite a lot
       About average   About average
       Not very much   Not very much
       Only a little   Only a little

15 (a) Did you read anything last night? (Don't count any reading a
    teacher asked you to do)

      Yes   No
If you answer 'Yes',   If you answer 'No',
write down below what   go to question 16.
 you read.

……………………………………………………………………………..

If you are bilingual, carry on with the next question. Otherwise, go on to question 16.

(b) Was the reading you did last night in your mother tongue, in English or both?

      Mother tongue   English   Both

Section 4 - Television and Films

16. How much time do you spend watching television every **week**?

      Less than 1 hour
      Between 1 hour and 3 hours
      Between 3 hours and 5 hours
      Between 5 hours and 7 hours
      More than 7 hours

If you are bilingual, carry on with the next question. Otherwise, go to question 18.

17. If you are bilingual, do you ever watch television programmes in your mother
    tongue?

      Yes   No
If you answer 'Yes', about how   If you answer 'No'
long do you spend watching these   go to question 18
programmes every **week**?

      Less than 1 hour
      Between 1 hour and 3 hours
      Between 3 hours and 5 hours
      Between 5 hours and 7 hours
      More than 7 hours

18. What type of programmes do you watch on television?

In English: If you are bilingual, in your mother tongue:

      Comedies   Comedies
      Documentaries   Documentaries
      News   News
      Young people's programmes   Young people's programmes
      Dramas or soaps   Dramas or soaps
      Sport   Sport
      Other (please explain)   Other (please explain)

19. Which of these types of programmes do you prefer? Underline your favourites in the list at question 18, like this: <u>Sport</u>
If you are bilingual and have a different favourite in English and your mother tongue, underline them in both lists.

20(a) Do you ever watch films?

Yes	No
If you answer 'Yes', where do you see them?	If you answer 'No', go to question 23

       Cinema
       At home, on TV
       At home, on video/DVD

If you are bilingual, go on to 20 (b). Otherwise, go on to question 21.

(b) Do you ever watch films in your mother tongue?

Yes	No
If you answer 'Yes', where do you see them?	If you answer 'No', go to question 21.

       Cinema
       At home, on TV
       At home, on video/DVD

21. About how many films do you see in a week?

In English …………   If you are bilingual, in your mother tongue:………

22. What is your favourite type of film?

       Comedy
       Horror/thriller
       Romance
       Action/adventure
       Other (please explain)……………………

If you are bilingual and have a different favourite in English and your mother tongue, mark the English one with an **E** and the one in your mother tongue with an **M**.

Section 5 - At School

Questions 23 and 24 refer to reading and writing in general – that is, in English and, if you are bilingual, in your mother tongue.

23. Do you think you are good at reading? Put a tick in the box you choose.

>   Very good
>   Good
>   Average
>   Not very good
>   Poor

24. Do you think you are good at writing? Tick the box you choose:

>   Very good
>   Good
>   Average
>   Not very good
>   Poor

If you are bilingual, go on to the next question. Otherwise, go on to question 26

25. If you are bilingual, how often do you use your mother tongue in school :
i)   **to speak**   ii)   **to read**   iii)   or **to write?**

>   A lot   A lot   A lot
>   Sometimes   Sometimes   Sometimes
>   Hardly ever   Hardly ever   Hardly ever
>   Never   Never   Never

Section 6 - Your own opinion

Again, questions 26 and 27 refer to reading and writing in general – that is in English and, if you are bilingual, in your mother tongue.

26. What do you think of reading? Complete the following sentence using three or four words:

I think reading is…………………………………………………………………………

27. What do you think of writing? Finish this sentence using three or four words:

I think writing is…………………………………………………………………………

Section 7 - Outside School

28. Do you go to other lessons outside school?

Yes	No
If you answer 'Yes', please explain the kind of lessons you go to:	If you answer 'No', go to the next question.

…………………………………….

…………………………………….

29. (a) Do you borrow books from a public library?

Yes	No
If you answer 'Yes', how often do you borrow books?	If you answer 'No', go to question 30.

     About once a week
     About once every 2 weeks
     About once a month
     Only sometimes

If you are bilingual, go on to question 29 (b). Otherwise, go on to question 30.

29 (b) Are the books you borrow from the library:

     Mother tongue   English   Both

30. Make a list of the people you live with. Fill in the details that you are able to. You do not need to give any details about yourself.

Name *or* Relation e.g. 'Ann' *or* 'Mum'	Age (if you don't know, put an approximate age)	Are they male or female? (Write M or F)	Does this person read a lot at home? Tick if 'Yes'	If you are bilingual, tick if they read in your mother tongue

Thank you very much for answering these questions.

Darllenwyr Dwyieithog: Holiadur Disgyblion

Beth ydi'r llyfryn hwn?
Ymchwilydd ydw i o Brifysgol Nottingham a dwi'n ymchwilio i mewn i ddarllen pobl ifanc dwyieithog – hynny yw, pobl ifanc sydd yn siarad iaith yn ogystal â Saesneg. I weld sut mae eu darllen nhw yn cymharu hefo darllen pobl ifanc sydd ddim yn ddwyieithog, dwi'n gofyn i bawb ym Mlwyddyn 7 yn eich ysgol chi i lenwi'r holiadur yma.

Beth fydd rhaid i chi ei wneud
Bydd eich atebion i gyd yn gyfrinachol. Nid oes rhaid i chi roi eich enw.

Mae rhai o'r cwestiynau yn gofyn i chi roi tic yn y bocs gyferbyn â'ch ateb, fel hyn: √
Mae rhai eraill yn gofyn i chi ysgrifennu ychydig o eiriau yn y bwlch ger y cwestiwn.
Peidiwch â phoeni am syllafu.

Mae rhai o'r cwestiynau yn dechrau hefo, "Os ydych yn ddwyieithog…" **Os ydych yn siarad iaith heblaw am Saesneg adref**, atebwch y cwestiynau yma os gwelwch yn dda.
Os ydych yn siarad **dim ond Saesneg** adref, peidiwch ag ateb y cwestiynau sydd yn dechrau hefo, "Os ydych yn ddwyieithog…" Dylech ateb y cwestiynau eraill, gan gynnwys y rhai sy'n dechrau hefo "Yn Saesneg…"

Yn gyntaf, ticiwch os ydych yn fachgen neu'n ferch os gwelwch yn dda:

BACHGEN   MERCH

Yna, trowch drosodd i ateb y cwestiynau un ai yn y Gymraeg *neu* yn Saesneg.

Bilingual Readers : Student Questionnaire

What is this booklet?
I am a researcher from Nottingham University, researching the reading of young bilinguals – that is, young people who speak a language other than English at home. To see how their reading might compare with that of young people who are not bilingual, I am asking the whole of Year 7 at your school to fill in this questionnaire.

What you need to do
All your answers will be kept private. You do not have to give your name.

Some questions will ask you to put a tick next to your choice of answer, like this: √
Others with ask you to write a few words in the space next to the question. Don't worry about spelling.

Some questions start with, "If you are bilingual"… **If you speak a language other than English at home, please answer these questions**.
If you always speak English at home, please don't answer the questions which start "If you are bilingual…" You should answer the other questions, including the ones which start with "In English…"

First of all, please tick whether you are a boy or a girl:

BOY   GIRL

Then, turn over to answer the questions either in Welsh *or* in English

Rhan 1: Siarad

1.   Ydych chi'n siarad iaith neu ieithoedd heblaw am Saesneg adref?

      Ydw   Nac ydw

Os ydych yn ateb 'Ydw',	Os ydych yn ateb 'Nac ydw',
Pa iaith neu ieithoedd?	ewch ymlaen at gwestiwn 7, gan ddal
	i ateb y cwestiynau i gyd heblaw am y
…………………………	rhai sy'n dechrau hefo "Os ydych yn
…………………………	ddwyieithog…"

Os ydych wedi ysgrifennu iaith heblaw am Saesneg uchod, dyma'r iaith fydd yn cael ei galw yn eich '**mamiaith'** yn y cwestiynau sy'n dilyn.

Os ydych yn siarad iaith heblaw am Saesneg adref, atebwch y cwestiynau sy'n dilyn i gyd, gan gynnwys y rhai sy'n dechrau hefo "Os ydych yn ddwyieithog…"

2.   Hefo pwy ydych chi'n siarad eich mamiaith?

     ………………………………………………………………………………………..

3.   Ceisiwch amcangyfrif faint o amser yr ydych yn siarad eich mamiaith pob dydd:

      Llai nac awr
      Rhwng 1-2 awr
      Rhwng 2-3 awr
      Rhwng 3-4 awr
      Mwy na 4 awr

Rhan 2: Ysgrifennu

4.   Ydych chi'n gallu ysgrifennu mewn iaith heblaw am Saesneg?

Ydw	Ydw, ychydig	Nac ydw
Os ydych yn ateb		Os ydych yn ateb
'Ydw' neu 'Ydw, ychydig',		'Nac ydw', ewch
ewch ymlaen at y cwestiwn		at gwestiwn 6.
nesaf.		

5.   Beth ydych chi'n ysgrifennu **yn eich mamiath**? (e.e. llythyrau, e-bost, dyddiadur…)
      (Edrychwch yn ôl at gwestiwn 1 os nad ydych yn siwr beth yw mamiaith.)

     …………………………………………………………………………………

Rhan 3: Darllen

6.   Ydych chi'n gallu darllen mewn iaith heblaw am Saesneg?

      Ydw   Nac ydw

7.   (a) Pa rai o'r rhain ydych chi'n eu darllen? Ticiwch y bocs gyferbyn â'r rhai 'rydych yn eu darllen.

Yn Saesneg: Yn eich mamiaith:

   Papurau newydd   Papurau newydd
   Cylchgronau   Cylchgronau
   Comics   Comics
   Nofelau   Nofelau
   Safleoedd y We   Safleoedd y We

(b) Ydych chi'n darllen unrhyw beth arall? (e.e. llythyrau, e-bost, mathau arall o lyfr?)
Os ydych, ysgrifennwch beth 'rydych yn ei ddarllen:

…………………………………………………………………………………..

(c) Os ydych yn ddwyieithog ac wedi ysgrifennu rhywbeth fel ateb i 7(b), ticiwch os ydi hwn yn eich mamiaith, yn Saesneg neu'r ddau.

         Mamiaith   Saesneg   Y ddau

8   Pa rai o'r pethau a restrwyd yn cwestiwn 7 ydych chi'n eu mwynhau fwyaf?

………………………………………………………………………………………

9   (a) Oes gennych chi hoff awdur neu gyfres o lyfrau?

         Oes   Nac oes
   Os ydych yn ateb 'Oes',   Os ydych yn ateb 'Nac oes',
   ysgrifennwch yr enw isod: ewch at gwestiwn 10.

   ……………………………………………………………………………….

(b) O ble gaethoch y syniad i ddechrau darllen y llyfrau yma?

   ……………………………………………………………………………….

10   (a) O ble'r ydych yn cael pethau i ddarllen yn Saesneg?

      Rydw i'n eu prynu fy hun
      Mae nhw yn fy nghartref yn barod
      Rydw i'n eu benthyg gan ffrindiau neu deulu
      Rydw i'n eu cael fel anrhegion gan ffrindiau neu deulu
      O'r llyfrgell
      O'r ysgol
      O rywle arall (eglurwch)…………………………………………………

Os ydych yn ddwyieithog, ewch ymlaen hefo cwestiwn 10 (b) a 11. Fel arall, ewch at gwestiwn 12.

(b) O ble'r ydych chi'n cael pethau i ddarllen yn eich mamiaith?

Rydw i'n eu prynu fy hun
Mae nhw yn fy nghartref yn barod
Rydw i'n eu benthyg gan ffrindiau neu deulu
Rydw i'n eu cael fel anrhegion gan ffrindiau neu deulu
O'r llyfrgell
O'r ysgol
O rywle arall (eglurwch)…………………………………………………………….

11   Ydi hi'n hawdd dod o hyd i bethau diddorol i ddarllen yn eich mamiaith?

Ydi   Nac ydi

12   Ydych chi'n berchen ar lawer o lyfrau eich hun?

Ydw   Nac ydw
Os ydych chi'n ateb 'Ydw',   Os ydych yn ateb 'Nac
tua faint ydych chi'n berchen   ydw', ewch at gwestiwn 13.
arnyn nhw?
↓   ↓
Yn Saesneg: Os ydych yn ddwyieithog, yn eich mamiaith:

Hyd at 10   Hyd at 10
Rhwng 11 a 25   Rhwng 11 a 25
Rhwng 26 a 50   Rhwng 26 a 50
Rhwng 51 a 100   Rhwng 51 a 100
Mwy na 100   Mwy na 100

13   (a) Tua faint o lyfrau sydd yn eich cartref?

Dim llawer   Ychydig   Eithaf tipyn   Llawer

Os ydych yn ddwyieithog, ewch ymlaen at y cwestiwn nesaf. Fel arall, ewch at gwestiwn 14.

(b) Tua faint o lyfrau yn eich mamiaith sydd yn eich cartref?

Dim llawer   Ychydig   Eithaf tipyn   Llawer

14. Faint o ddarllen ydych chi'n meddwl 'rydych chi'n ei wneud?

Yn Saesneg: Os ydych yn ddwyieithog, yn eich mamiaith:

Llawer   Llawer
Eithaf tipyn   Eithaf tipyn
Eithaf canolig   Eithaf canolig
Dim llawer   Dim llawer
Dim ond tipyn bach   Dim ond tipyn bach

15 (a)Wnaethoch chi ddarllen unrhyw beth neithiwr? (Peidiwch â chyfri
   unrhyw ddarllen gofynnodd eich athrawon i chi ei wneud)

     Do   Naddo
     Os ydych yn ateb 'Do',   Os ydych yn ateb 'Naddo'
     ysgrifennwch isod   ewch at gwestiwn 16.
     be wnaethoch chi ddarllen

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

Os ydych yn ddwyieithog, ewch ymalen at y cwestiwn nesaf. Fel arall, ewch at gwestiwn 16.

(b) Oedd y darllen a wnaethoch neithiwr yn eich mamiaith, yn Saesneg neu yn y ddau?

     Mamiaith   Saesneg   Y ddau

Rhan 4: Teledu a Ffilm

16 Tua faint o amser ydych yn ei wario'n gwylio'r teledu pob **wythnos**?

     Llai na 1 awr
     Rhwng 1 awr a 3 awr
     Rhwng 3 awr a 5 awr
     Rhwng 5 awr a 7 awr
     Mwy na 7 awr

Os ydych yn ddwyieithog, ewch ymlaen at y cwestiwn nesaf. Fel arall, ewch at gwestiwn 18.

17 Ydych chi'n gwylio rhaglenni teledu yn eich mamiaith?

     Ydw   Nac ydw
     Os ydych yn ateb 'Ydw', tua faint o   Os ydych yn ateb 'Nac ydw', ewch
     amser ydych chi'n wario'n gwylio rhain at gwestiwn 18.
     pob **wythnos**?

     Llai na 1 awr
     Rhwng 1 awr a 3 awr
     Rhwng 3 awr a 5 awr
     Rhwng 5 awr a 7 awr
     Mwy na 7 awr

18. Pa fath o raglenni ydych chi'n eu gwylio ar y teledu?

Yn Saesneg: Os ydych yn ddwyieithog, yn eich mamiaith:

     Rhaglenni comedi   Rhaglenni Comedi
     Rhaglenni dogfen *(documentaries)* Rhaglenni dogfen (documentaries)
     Newyddion   Newyddion
     Rhaglenni pobl ifanc   Rhaglenni pobl ifanc
     Dramau neu operau sebon   Dramau neu operau sebon
     Chwaraeon   Chwaraeon
     Rhywbeth arall (eglurwch)   Rhywbeth arall (eglurwch)

     ………………………….   ……………………………

19. Pa fath o raglenni sy'n well gennych chi? Tanlinellwch eich ffefryn neu ffefrynnau yn y rhestr sydd yn cwestiwn 18 fel hyn: <u>Chwaraeon.</u>
Os ydych yn ddwyieithog ac yn hoffi gwahanol raglenni yn Saesneg ac yn eich mamiaith, tanlinellwch eich ffefryn yn y ddwy restr.

20. (a) Ydych chi'n gwylio ffilmiau?

Ydw	Nac ydw
Os ydych yn ateb 'Ydw', ble 'rydych yn eu gwylio?	Os ydych yn ateb 'Nac ydw', ewch at gwestiwn 23.

Yn y sinema
Adref, ar y teledu
Adref, ar fideo neu DVD

Os ydych yn ddwyieithog, ewch ymlaen at 20 (b). Fel arall, ewch at gwestiwn 21.

(b) Ydych chi'n gwylio ffilmiau yn eich mamiaith?

Ydw	Nac ydw
Os ydych yn ateb 'Ydw', ble 'rydych yn eu gwylio?	Os ydych yn ateb 'Nac ydw', ewch at gwestiwn 21.

Yn y sinema
Adref, ar y teledu
Adref, ar fideo neu DVD

21. Tua faint o ffilmiau ydych chi'n eu gwylio mewn **wythnos**?

Yn Saesneg……………   Os ydych yn ddwyieithog, yn eich mamiaith…………….

22. Beth yw eich hoff math o ffilm?

Comedi
Arswyd/ ias a chyffro
Rhamant (*Romance*)
Antur
Math arall (eglurwch)……………………………………………………

Os ydych yn ddwyieithog a rydych yn hoffi math wahanol o ffilm yn Saesneg ac yn eich mamiaith, marciwch yr un Saesneg hefo **S** a'r un yn eich mamiaith hefo **M**.

Rhan 5 : Yn yr ysgol

Mae cwestiwn 23 a 24 yn cyfeirio at ddarllen ac ysgrifennu yn gyffredinol – hynny yw, yn Saesneg ac, os ydych yn ddwyieithog, yn eich mamiaith hefyd.

23. Ydych chi'n meddwl eich bod yn darllen yn dda? Rhowch dic ger y bocs o'ch ddewis:

        Da iawn
        Da
        Cymhedrol
        Dim yn dda iawn
        Gwael

24. Ydych chi'n meddwl eich yn ysgrifennu'n dda? Rhowch dic ger y bocs o'ch dewis:

        Da iawn
        Da
        Cymhedrol
        Dim yn dda iawn
        Gwael

Os ydych yn ddwyieithog, ewch ymlaen at y cwestiwn nesaf. Fel arall, ewch at gwestiwn 26.

25. Pa mor aml ydych yn defnyddio'ch mamiaith yn yr ysgol:

i)	**i siarad**	**ii)**	**i ddarllen**	**iii)**	**i ysrifennu**
	Llawer		Llawer		Llawer
	Weithiau		Weithiau		Weithiau
	Yn anaml		Yn anaml		Yn anaml
	Byth		Byth		Byth

Rhan 6: Eich barn eich hun

Eto, mae cwestiwn 26 a 27 yn cyfeirio at ddarllen ac ysgrifennu yn gyffredinol - yn Saesneg ac, os ydych yn ddwyieithog, yn eich mamiaith hefyd.

26. Beth ydych chi'n feddwl o ddarllen? Cwblhewch y frawddeg nesaf mewn ychydig o eiriau:

Dwi'n meddwl bod darllen yn…………………………………………………………………

27. Beth ydych chi'n feddwl o ysgrifennu? Cwblhewch y frawddeg nesaf mewn ychydig o eiriau:

Dwi'n meddwl bod ysgrifennu yn …………………………………………………………..

Rhan 7: Tu allan i'r ysgol

28. Ydych chi'n mynd i wersi tu allan i'r ysgol?

Ydw   Nac ydw

Os ydych yn ateb 'Ydw', eglurwch   Os ydych yn ateb 'Nac
pa fath o wersi: ydw', ewch at y cwestiwn
                                             nesaf.

………………………………….

………………………………….

29. (a) Ydych chi'n benthyg llyfrau o'r llyfrgell gyhoeddus (hynny yw, dim llyfrgell yr ysgol)?

Ydw   Nac ydw

Os ydych yn ateb 'Ydw', pa mor   Os ydych yn ateb 'Nac ydw', ewch
aml byddwch yn benthyg llyfrau?   at gwestiwn 30.

Tua unwaith yr wythnos
Tua unwaith pob pythefnos
Tua unwaith y mis
Dim ond weithiau

Os ydych yn ddwyieithog, ewch ymlaen at 29 (b). Fel arall, ewch at gwestiwn 30.

29 (b) Ydi'r llyfrau 'rydych yn eu benthyg o'r llyfrgell:

Yn eich mamiaith   Yn Saesneg   Yn y ddau

30. Gwnewch restr o'r bobl sy'n byw hefo chi . Llenwch gymaint o'r manylion ag y medrwch.
Does dim angen i chi roi manylion amdanoch chi'ch hun.

Enw *neu* Perthynas
 	
e.e. 'Ann'
   neu
   'Mam'
	Oedran
	
	(os nad ydych yn siwr, rhowch fras amcan)
		Bachgen / dyn neu
		merch / dynes?
			Ydi'r person yma'n darllen llawer?
			
			Rhowch dic os ydyn nhw.
				Os ydych yn ddwyieithog, ticiwch os yw'r person yma yn darllen yn eich mamiaith

Diolch yn fawr iawn am ateb y cwestiynau yma.

Interview 2

The following represents the schedule for the semi-structured interviews that took place in the spring term of 2004, in the first year of the research.

1. What does it mean to be bilingual?

2. What differences are there when you speak [minority language] and English?

3. How important is it to you that you are bilingual?

4. How does being bilingual affect your life?

5. What are your favourite television programmes? Why?

6. What music do you like? Why?

7. What things do you like to read? What do you like about them?

8. Do you talk about what you read with other people? What do other people think about what you read?

9. How does reading in [minority language] compare to reading in English?

10. Can you think of a 'Top 5' of things you're interested in at the moment?

Interview 3

The following schedule focused specifically on magazine reading, which had emerged during earlier interviews as a significant literacy practice amongst the girls of both groups. The interviews took place in July 2004, at the end of the first year of the research.

1. Do you read magazines?
   If so, which? If not, why not?

2. How does reading a magazine compare with other things you read?

3. Imagine you have just got hold of the latest edition of your favourite magazine. What happens next?

4. What do you do with magazines once you've read them?

5. What do others think about the magazines you read?

6. Imagine that when you leave school, you are the editor of a magazine for girls your age. What would you make sure your magazine had in it?

7. Why do you think magazines are so popular, especially with girls?

8. In the questionnaire you did last term, 75% of people said they read magazines in English. 35% said they read them in their mother tongue. Why do you think that might be?

9. Lots of people, especially girls, say that magazines are like chatting to a friend. Is that true? If so, do you think it makes a difference the language it's in? How would it feel to read your favourite English magazines in your mother tongue?