TRANSPORTABLE LITERACIES AND TRANSFORMATIVE PEDAGOGIES:

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE TENSIONS AND CHOICES IN THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION FOR BILINGUALISM AND BILITERACY

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Submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

August 2005

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated bilingual education as implemented and perceived at one primary school setting in Melbourne, Australia. The inner city school, catering mainly for students from immigrant and refugee backgrounds, operates a Vietnamese-English and a Mandarin-English bilingual program for its students in the first two to three years of their school education. It is one of only four government schools of over 1600 in the state of Victoria that implements such a program for mainly English-language learners.

Bilingual education is a highly contested pedagogical arrangement (Crawford, 2000a; Cummins, 2000a; May, 2001; Ovando & McLaren, 2000; Tollefson, 1995): especially when implemented with students from non-dominant language backgrounds. Against a background of the diminished status of immigrant and minority languages, this investigation drew on critical ethnographic methodologies that aim to foster empowering outcomes for the community under investigation (Corson, 2001; Fine & Weis, 1998; Fine et al., 2000; May, 1994a, 1998).

This research employed a mixed methods research design (Mertens, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003) to investigate the perspectives of those at the heart of bilingual learning: the students, their parents and their teachers, and link these perspectives to levels of English literacy achieved by students whose learning had taken place in two languages. Specially designed data collection tools engaged research participants in considered reflection of issues of first language maintenance and second language learning in a society where the hegemony of English is entrenched and where, in recent times, anti-diversity discourses have been in the ascendant.
The findings of the study reveal that the bilingual arrangements at the school are perceived by the students to meet their needs for reasons of family and social necessity, educational advantages, and possible future benefits. Parent participants saw their children’s bilingualism as a means of facilitating family cohesion, maintaining links with ancestral linguistic and cultural traditions, and making future success in Australia more possible. Divergent opinions amongst the parents revealed some to be content with merely foundational first language maintenance, while others stressed the importance of stronger forms of biliteracy. Teachers saw the students’ bilingualism as important in terms of identity enhancement. These data, however, revealed a need for greater certitude that bilingual education does not diminish learning opportunities in English: a key feature of government policy and curriculum objectives. Student achievement data revealed that – by the end of their primary schooling – bilingually educated students, in the main, have achieved levels of English language proficiency specified as government targets.

Despite the clear commitment to bilingual learning at the school, the tensions and uncertainties uncovered by this investigation led to the development in this thesis of a “Model for Bilingualism and Biliteracy for English-language Learners”. This conceptualisation identifies the personal, political and pedagogical dimensions that I argue schools need to be attentive to in aiming for a pedagogy that might transform students’ lives through equipping them with transportable literacies that they can draw on in their current and future lives.
DECLARATION

This is to certify that

i. the thesis comprises only my original work except where indicated in the preface,

ii. due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all material used,

iii. the thesis is less than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

Signed_____________________________
DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To the community at the heart of this study – the students, parents and teachers at this site of multilingual practice – I offer my deepest thanks. I dedicate the fruits of this research to you, and to our ongoing efforts to deliver pedagogies of hope and empowerment to our linguistically and culturally diverse students.

I felt totally supported by the interest, input, and encouragement provided by my principal supervisor, Dr. Jeni Wilson. Her incisive eye, critical appraisal, and focussed feedback assisted me at all stages of the investigation. In the second half of my thesis journey, Dr. Sally Godinho joined Jeni as co-supervisor. Her guidance and wise counsel greatly assisted me to complete this project. In addition, my long-term mentor, professional guide and personal friend, Marilyn Woolley, guided me through this thesis, as she has with other parts of my professional life. Many thanks, Jeni, Sally and Marilyn.

I am indebted also to the community of research students with whom I shared many of the highs and lows of doctoral research. In particular, the support and friendship provided by Getnet Bitew, Cosmas Cobbold, Barbara Cox, Nola Firth, Fida Sanjakdar and Joel Windle is gratefully acknowledged. I thank colleagues at The University of Melbourne for their support and encouragement, particularly Julie Hamston, Kieran O’Loughlin, Janet Scull and Sophie Arkoudis. For valuable input and advice, I thank Professors Joseph Lo Bianco, Bridie Raban and Michael Clyne, Associate Professor Ray Misson, Irene Donohoue Clyne and Michèle de Courcy. For vital support at key stages of the investigation, I am indebted to Linh Vu, Juliana and Kim Luu Nguyen.

To my friends and family who kept me sane (and, when necessary, facilitated much-needed insanity) – I thank them as always.
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<td>AARE</td>
<td>Australian Association for Research in Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AEAC</td>
<td>Australian Ethnic Affairs Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALEA</td>
<td>Australian Literacy Educators’ Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALLP</td>
<td>Australian Language and Literacy Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATSIC</td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>BELS</td>
<td>Boys’ Education Lighthouse Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>BICS</td>
<td>basic interpersonal communicative skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>CALP</td>
<td>cognitive academic language proficiency</td>
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<tr>
<td>CMEP</td>
<td>Child Migrant Education Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>COAG</td>
<td>Council of Australian Governments</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSF</td>
<td>Curriculum and Standards Framework (Victoria)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CTMLS</td>
<td>Committee on the Teaching of Migrant Languages in Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUP</td>
<td>Common Underlying Proficiency</td>
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<tr>
<td>DSP</td>
<td>Disadvantaged Schools Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a second language</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and communication technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILEC</td>
<td>International Language in Education Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>KLA</td>
<td>Key Learning Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>First language</td>
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<td>L2</td>
<td>Second language</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEP</td>
<td>limited English proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>LOTE</td>
<td>Language other than English</td>
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<tr>
<td>LBOTE</td>
<td>Language background other than English</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCEETYA</td>
<td>Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEP</td>
<td>Multicultural Education Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>NALSAS</td>
<td>National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>NESB</td>
<td>Non-English-speaking background</td>
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<td>NPL</td>
<td>National Policy on Languages</td>
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<td>OMA</td>
<td>Office of Multicultural Affairs</td>
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<td>PETA</td>
<td>Primary English Teaching Association</td>
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<td>SES</td>
<td>socio-economic status</td>
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<td>SLA</td>
<td>second language acquisition</td>
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<td>SOSE</td>
<td>Studies of Society and Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUP</td>
<td>Separate Underlying Proficiency</td>
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<td>TESOL</td>
<td>Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages</td>
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<td>VATME</td>
<td>Victorian Association of TESOL and Multicultural Education</td>
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CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION

It is not enough to say that everyone is welcome in the ‘big tent’ of literate culture without acknowledging that they will bring new materials with which to make the tent. (Brandt, 1990:124)

Investigating Bilingual Learning

This thesis investigates bilingual education. It is explored in one specific setting: an inner city primary school in Melbourne, capital city of the state of Victoria, Australia. This school offers bilingual learning opportunities to many of its English-language learners: students from predominantly immigrant and refugee backgrounds whose first or home language is not English, but who are living and learning in this largely English-speaking country. These are students who, in Brandt’s (1990) terms, bring to their learning ‘new materials’ or forms of cultural and linguistic knowledge that often have little place in the mainstream school system. This knowledge is frequently undervalued or dismissed, even denigrated or vilified, in the schools themselves and by society at large.

In this thesis, I argue that many schools, by offering bilingual education programs, actively seek to value diverse forms of cultural and linguistic knowledge, and subvert limiting, hegemonic views of the forms of knowledge that have educational or societal value. These schools view the development of multicultural perspectives and bilingual ability as benefiting students linguistically, psychologically and educationally. Becoming bilingual and biliterate offers students, like those in this study, transformative possibilities for ways to engage with the worlds of home, school, and society. As such, strong foundations are laid for these students to develop positive bilingual and bicultural identities. Proficiency in more than one language, I maintain, also endows bilingual children with a highly transportable range of language skills
that enrich not only their lives, but augment the resources of the community as a whole.

However, despite a plethora of international research highlighting the value of bilingual education for students of both majority and minority language backgrounds (for example, August & Hakuta, 1997; Gándara, 1999; Lo Bianco, 2000b; Ramírez et al., 1991; Thomas & Collier, 1997), the extent to which this form of learning effectively meets the language and learning needs of, especially, minority language background children remains controversial and contested. It is against and within this area of contestation that this research is located.

By investigating bilingual education at a school site where this form of teaching and learning operates, my study reveals some of the tensions and choices a school encounters when it embarks on this pedagogical path. Through exploring the perspectives of those on the inside: the students, parents and teachers, a clearer understanding emerges of what challenges and benefits this program – and others like it – offer their learners. While site-specific in its focus, it is hoped that the findings of this research will resonate with those working in similar settings.

**Background to the Study**

Bilingual education, whereby students learn in two languages for approximately equal amounts of in-school time (Romaine, 1995) or where a non-dominant language is used as the medium of instruction during a substantial part of the school day (Corson, 2001; Cummins & Corson, 1997), is rare in Australian education. In the state of Victoria, only 15 from a total of more than 1600 government schools offer bilingual education programs. These schools meet the Victorian government definition of bilingual education by providing:
- instruction in at least two curriculum or ‘key learning areas (KLAs) in
  the target language/s; and
- face-to-face teaching in the target language/s for at least 7.5 hours per
  week.¹

This lack of bilingual instruction is perhaps surprising given Australia’s
Cultural and linguistic diversity, as analysis of the most recent national census
highlights (Clyne & Kipp, 2002). And while Australian federal and state
government commitments to foster and fund instruction in languages other
than English (LOTEs)² (Lo Bianco, 2001b) have largely been honoured, there has
been little government commitment to bilingual education as a form of
learning. While acknowledging the benefits of learning one’s background or
heritage language, the most recent Australian national languages policy
statement (Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth
Affairs (MCEETYA), 2005), makes no mention of bilingual education as a
possible mechanism by which this – or other policy goals – might be achieved.

The lack of bilingual learning arrangements in Australia is consistent, however,
with the observation that linguistic and cultural diversity is under threat in
many parts of the world (Baker, 2001; Corson, 2001; Crawford, 2000a;
Cummins, 2000a; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Recently exacerbated fears of
international terrorism have intensified already-existing tensions about
migration levels and ethnic diversity in many countries. These socio-political
insecurities co-exist with ongoing educational tensions about perceived declines
in English literacy levels in the United States, the United Kingdom and
Australia: the so-called ‘literacy crisis’ (Dooley, 2004; Hammond, 1999; Luke et
al., 1999; McQuillan, 1998) being a perennial and well-worn educational topic in
the popular discourses of these countries.

¹ See the Victorian Bilingual Schools Project website at: www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/lem/lote/lbil.htm
² In the most recently published data, 91.3 percent of the total of 1279 Victorian government
primary schools offered some form of LOTE program (Department of Education and Training
(Victoria), 2002b).
Central to this literacy-related debate has been the issue of the education of students from a language background other than English (LBOTE). Staunch advocacy and heated criticism of innovative bilingual education programs have raged, especially in the United States. The benefits of, motives behind, and outcomes of such programs have been both vilified and valorised. This has led to increased consternation in school communities that have bilingual programs which aim to honour, affirm and validate a diversity of cultural and linguistic traditions, whilst also developing student competence in the majority language of that society. In the international context, a vivid analogy has depicted bilingual children caught in the crossfire of highly emotive, politically-driven and increasingly vitriolic attacks on linguistic and cultural diversity (Cummins, 2000a; Ovando & McLaren, 2000).

In Australia, it has been argued that the whole of this country’s history has been marked by tensions between monolingualism and multilingualism; monoculturalism and multiculturalism (Clyne, 1998). I have summarised these historical tensions in a time-line (see Appendix 1), where they are linked to key language policy initiatives in Australia. I also address them in Chapter Two: “Literature Review” as part of an exploration of the political dimension of education for bilingualism and biliteracy.

Therefore, it is within this social, cultural, political and educational context that my mixed methods research is positioned. It is ethnoographic, in that the study embraces critical socio-cultural description and interpretation (Anderson, 1989; Carspecken, 1996; May, 1997; Stewart, 1998; Van Maanen, 1988, 1995; Wolcott, 1995a), and is a case study (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995, 2000; Yin, 2003) in that it seeks to probe and understand a phenomenon within its real life context.

**The Research Question**

Given the contested issue of bilingual education for English-language learners, this research investigation posed the following question:
To what extent does the provision of a bilingual education program meet the language and learning needs of a group of primary school-aged English-language learners, in terms of:

- these students’ perceptions of their language and learning needs;
- their parents’ perceptions of their children’s language and learning needs;
- their teachers’ perceptions of their students’ language and learning needs; and
- government targets for student achievement?

This question has been investigated using a mixed methods research design (Morse, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). It explores the perceptions of students, parents and teachers about bilingual learning in one specific school, and links these views to student learning outcomes, as measured by government mandated curriculum standards, frameworks and benchmarks (Board of Studies (Victoria), 2000a, 2000b). How this was undertaken is discussed in detail in Chapter Three of this thesis, “Methodology.”

What needs to be discussed at this point is the dual emphasis at the heart of this research: investigation of the language and learning needs of the students. Key socio-cultural theories of education (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991) stress the inter-relationship between language and learning. Learning – or the development of cultural understandings – is embodied in language used and scaffolded (Wood et al., 1976) in social interactions. Learning or knowledge is therefore reflected and demonstrated through language, and the input of language and ideas in turn shapes learning. Through numerous universal and culture-specific linguistic practices that involve talking, reading, writing, performance, gesture and visual representation, ideas are explored, thoughts are clarified, and learning is
articulated and shared. This is the case regardless of whether the learner is a native speaker of the language of instruction, being educated in a second language, or building linguistic and cultural knowledge in two or more languages. As Snow notes:

In successful bilingual programs of any sort, ... two things happen: children learn a second language, and children learn content through a second language. (Snow, 1992: 16).

Therefore, language and learning are inextricably entwined. In terms of this study, investigation into how the opportunity to learn and express knowledge and identity bilingually is perceived necessitated the linking of language and learning in my research question.

This research question, and the decision to pursue it in the methodological manner chosen, arose from ongoing tensions being played out in the socio-political, as well as education spheres in this country. These are now explored in terms of contextualising this study further.

**Why Investigate Bilingual Education? - Context and Justification of this Study**

This Australian study of a bilingual education setting can be justified for the following reasons:

1. Bilingual education is uncommon in Australia despite this country’s multicultural, multilingual reality.
2. Bilingual programs for English-language learners are under-reported and under-researched in Australia.
3. Investigations of Australian programs supporting immigrant or refugee students’ first languages need to be undertaken before decisions can be made as to whether bilingual education should be implemented more widely in this country.
4. Documentation and evaluation of innovative programs is strongly advocated (Bialystok, 2001).
5. Bilingual programs are controversial, especially for English-language learners and, as such, are vulnerable to attack and potential loss of funding.

The diverse reality of Australian society, an immigrant nation built on the dispossession of an indigenous population, continues to be a matter of debate and division more than one hundred years after nationhood. Assimilation or maintenance of immigrants’ linguistic, cultural and religious traditions remains an unresolved tension in the national discourse. Australia’s language policies have served to enshrine the dominance of English over all other indigenous, immigrant or international languages (Clyne, 1991). These policies have been seen as coercive attempts to forge a sense of white, English-speaking Australianness, wherein an immigrant’s first language and any insistence on its value were seen as interferences to monolingual homogeneity and Anglo-conformity (Singh, 2001a).

Educational governance in Australia is a delicate interplay between state and territory governments who have overall responsibility for school education, and the federal government which provides much of the funding for school education, thereby exerting strong influence on policy and practice. The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), made up of federal and state education ministers, coordinates strategic policy across the education sectors, including the school sector. The development of state education policies is linked to the work of MCEETYA, and the influence of the ideological stance of the federal government at this forum is considerable. In the current context, this is of great concern for those interested in education for diversity.

Bilingual education in Australia, therefore, cannot be conceptualised in isolation from these socio-political realities. We inhabit a domestic and international climate often hostile to linguistic and cultural diversity, it is
argued (Crawford, 1998, 2000b; Cummins, 2000a; Dicker, 2000; Giroux, 1993, 2000; Lo Bianco, 2002c; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). In contemporary Australia, this can be evidenced by the rolling back or abandonment of Aboriginal bilingual education programs in the Northern Territory (Lo Bianco & Rhydwen, 2001; Nicholls, 2005), the abolition of the elected indigenous representative body, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), the closure of key government agencies and research institutions such as the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA), and the cessation of federal funding for a key Asian languages education initiative: the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools Strategy (NALSAS) (Lo Bianco, 2002a).

It is therefore not difficult to imagine - at the stroke of a pen - the sudden, irreversible disappearance of the few bilingual programs currently operating in Australia, especially those programs catering for comparatively powerless indigenous or immigrant students. In fact, at the school site chosen for this research, the very presence of many of the children within the Australian education system was, at the time of the data collection, under review. The Chinese-speaking background students at the school - mostly refugees from East Timor - were in the throes of fighting possible deportation moves by the Australian government. In the current socio-political context largely unsympathetic to asylum seekers, and generally dismissive of minority languages, one fears that the cessation of bilingual programs catering for mainly immigrant children would meet with only localised opposition.

The city of Melbourne, Australia’s second biggest city, where this research was undertaken, has a population of over 3,200,000. Melbourne embodies contemporary Australia’s multicultural and multilingual diversity, with 26.5 percent of its inhabitants using a language other than English in the home (Clyne & Kipp, 2002). At least partly in recognition of this cultural and linguistic diversity, the teaching of a LOTE, usually for two hours per week, is undertaken in most Victorian government primary schools. Few primary
schools in Victoria attempt to implement stronger forms of LOTE instruction, such as bilingual education. This paucity of bilingual education school sites is indicative of the situation in the other states of Australia. Because of this, those programs in existence need to be documented and evaluated in order for schools to make informed decisions about whether or not this form of pedagogical provision warrants wider implementation.

There are several very valuable accounts of Australian schools offering bilingual programs for students for whom English is their first language (Clyne et al., 1995; de Courcy et al., 1999; Fernandez, 1996), but descriptions of bilingual learning contexts for students from LBOTE are few (Barratt-Pugh & Rohl, 2001; Lo Bianco, 2000b), or not current (Lam & Merrell, 1990; Moutsos, 1982). In a Victorian government publication detailing schools’ English as a Second Language (ESL) provision (Department of Education (Victoria), 1997) only two of the 36 schools profiled as exemplars in this field operate any form of bilingual program. This omission strongly supports the need for contemporary evaluative accounts of minority language background students learning bilingually.

The need to document and evaluate innovative programs has also been emphasised by key writers in the areas of qualitative, case study research (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2000; Yin, 2003). Bialystok (2001: 152) has observed that “despite the ubiquity of bilingual children in the school system, ... surprisingly little research has been expressly dedicated to this population.” This observation has pressing international research ramifications, in that, despite estimates that between half to two thirds of the world’s population is bilingual or multilingual (Baker, 2001; Padilla, 1990), “the research literature into the development of bilingual children is disproportionately thin” (Bialystok, 2001: 248).
The maintenance and development of immigrants’ and refugees’ home languages when these languages differ from the majority language of their country of resettlement is highly controversial as an educational practice. It has been criticised, both in Australia and internationally, as unsupportable on both social and academic grounds (Imhoff, 1990; Porter, 1990; Rossell & Baker, 1996; Schlesinger, 1991). Particularly in the United States, bilingual education for minority language speakers has been a source of considerable controversy for over 20 years (Crawford, 2000b; Cummins, 1986, 2000a, 2001b; Krashen, 1996; Macedo, 2000a, 2000b; Moses, 2000; Wong Fillmore, 1997).

Critics of bilingual education programs aimed at English-language learners, or minority language speakers (Baker, 1992; Baker & de Kanter, 1983; Imhoff, 1990; Porter, 1990; Rossell & Baker, 1996), believe children often emerge from such programs not knowing enough English to succeed at higher levels of school, or enter the workforce with insufficient English-language skills to gain meaningful employment. However, supporters of bilingual education claim that all-English instruction in a regular classroom often disregards, devalues or fails to capitalise on the cultural and linguistic resources that English-language learners potentially bring to their learning (Baker, 2001; Barratt-Pugh, 2000a; Clyne et al., 1997) and thereby diminishes their sense of self-worth or identity (Cummins, 1986, 2000a, 2001b).

This ongoing argument about the usefulness and effectiveness of bilingual education raises the need for further research into how students from minority language backgrounds can best be taught in ways that:

- develop their proficiency in the majority language to the same level as native-speakers (even if this takes a longer period of time to achieve);
- validate and affirm their home language and culture, and build on the cognitive and linguistic development that has occurred in that language; and
• foster their self-concept and sense of identity that reflects both a positive orientation to their families’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and to the dominant linguistic and cultural forms of knowledge of the society in which they live.

It was from this need for a greater understanding of the place a child’s first language and culture might occupy within an educational system and society where proficiency in English is viewed as paramount, that this study’s focus emerged.

**Why Now? - Further Contextualisation of the Study**

This investigation of bilingual learning in relation to students from minority language backgrounds is very timely for both contemporary socio-political and educational reasons. There is also a social justice or human rights imperative in relation to the status and treatment of minority language speakers that underlies this research. In recent years, Australia’s multicultural diversity and migration and refugee intake have been vehemently debated within the country, and the resulting fallout well critiqued (Clyne, 2002a, 2003; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000b; Hage, 1998, 2003; Le, 2001; Mackay, 1999, 2001; Manne, 2001; Mares, 2002; Marr & Wilkinson, 2003; Stratton, 1998).

This controversy about Australia’s societal composition has, in part, focussed attention on the education of newly arrived migrants and with what ease - or difficulty - they are able to access, and contribute to Australian society. The place of immigrants’ cultures, beliefs and languages within a society that, it has been argued (Burke, 2001; Clyne, 1998; Singh, 2001a, 2001b), has never fully moved on from its historically restrictive and racist immigration policies, has ramifications for educational policy-makers, schools, teachers and students across the country. Given this broader context, the aim of this study has been to explore bilingual learners’ circumstances as they themselves perceive and describe them.
The need for research such as this also finds support when considering the socio-political reality in which minority language speakers often find themselves in many countries other than Australia. The rights of minority language speakers have sparked heated debate in countries as disparate as Sweden, Turkey, Kenya and Spain (Fishman, 2001b; Hassanpour, 2000; Paulston, 1994; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1984, 2000).

In our increasingly globalised world, it is argued (Baker, 2000), human diversity is threatened. Language shift and language death have enormous implications for this planet’s cultural resources and accumulated human knowledge (Fishman, 2001b; Nettle & Romaine, 2000; Singh, 2001a). A need to foster bilingualism has never been more apparent, Baker (2000) has vehemently asserted, lamenting that:

... bilinguals often live in circumstances where there is relatively little power, little political influence, sometimes being marginalized and the targets of racial or ethnic attack. (Baker, 2000: vii)

This is an emotive and passionate plea that supports the importance of studies like mine. The subaltern status of many linguistic and cultural minorities and the vilification of educational programs that support the languages and cultures of these groups are inextricably linked. It is a drama being played out in the contemporary international and domestic political climate all too often marked by xenophobia and racism, (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000b; Cummins, 2000a; Hage, 2003; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Stratton, 1998; Wong Fillmore, 1997) which has seen the abandonment of commitments to linguistic diversity in settings as diverse as remote Australian Aboriginal communities to urban immigrant communities in several U.S. states (Crawford, 1997, 2000a; Lo Bianco & Rhydwen, 2001). Additional research in the area of bilingual learning is sorely needed, as the impact of these policy shifts may have long-lasting and detrimental consequences in the communities affected - and in the wider community. In this context, a case study of a school setting where a commitment to bilingual learning has long been part of the curriculum is potentially very valuable. I now make a case for the chosen research site.
Why this School? Selection of the Research Site

The research site at which this Australian research was pursued is a primary school located in the inner city of Melbourne, in a suburb that has long been identified as an area with a strong working class tradition. Along with other inner city Melbourne suburbs that were home to labourers and manufacturing industries over the 19th and 20th centuries, this suburb became home to many newly arrived immigrants. This was particularly the case after the Second World War and from the 1960s when high-rise public housing allowed for low cost accommodation close to local factories, workshops, and other places of often low- or unskilled employment.

Once a suburb with a strong Greek immigrant character, it was transformed over the 1970s and 80s by newly arrived migrants and refugees from Asia: particularly Vietnam and East Timor. Due to its proximity to Melbourne’s central business district, other areas of this suburb have, since the 1970s, attracted a more professional, educated population, with a subsequent rise in real estate prices and a marked overall gentrification of the suburb. In the area of the school under investigation, however, the population demographic is still predominately lower socio-economic status and non-English speaking background.

A primary school of 180 students at the time of the data collection, 93 percent of students were from language backgrounds other than English, notably being speakers of various forms of Chinese, principally Hakka (48 percent of the total school population), and Vietnamese (27 percent of the total school population). It is a school that:

- has, for over 20 years, offered bilingual learning opportunities for students of Chinese- and Vietnamese-speaking backgrounds;
- operates its bilingual program in the first two years (for Vietnamese-background learners) or three years (for Chinese-background learners) of
students’ schooling with half the weekly instruction over the school week in English, and half in Chinese (Mandarin) or Vietnamese;

• caters almost entirely for students from families of lower socio-economic status (most of the students living in high-rise, high-density public housing);

• has enshrined in school policy its aim to develop and affirm students’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds (See Appendix 2); and

• recognises the critical importance of developing students’ English-language proficiency, as evidenced by its school charter and by internal funding priorities that consistently reflect this goal.

The school itself is strongly identified by its commitment to its students and their families on a number of levels. Pedagogically, it has embraced arrangements such as bilingual education, integrated curriculum planning, team teaching, multi-age class groupings, and strong multicultural perspectives that are intended to support and build on the linguistic and cultural strengths of the students. It is therefore a school that, while attending to explicitly mandated government directives and guidelines in its organisational decision making and curriculum provision, has chosen to undertake initiatives in the areas of cultural and linguistic maintenance and affirmation that Australian schools usually do not attempt. The bilingual education arrangements at the school epitomise this innovative approach to curriculum planning. A detailed account of the school’s bilingual program: its establishment, philosophy, principles and practice is provided as “Chapter Four: Bilingual Education at the Research Site: Philosophy, Principles and Practice”. It is included at that point of the thesis in order to contextualise the data that follows more clearly, whereas the aim in this section is to provide an account of the school’s situation, character and overall pedagogical emphases.

In many ways, the school and its community embody a spirit of survival and resistance. Many of the families originally came to Australia as refugees, having suffered under invasion, oppression or loss of human rights in their
countries of origin, especially East Timor and Vietnam. This spirit of struggle and determination exemplified the type of home-school links that, in the decade preceding this research, had seen the school community mobilise to:

- challenge severe staff cutbacks imposed by the state government (1993-4);
- oppose the imposition of statewide, standardised testing, through a School Council-led boycott (1995-8);
- refuse to join an economic rationalist model of school devolution: remaining the last mainstream government school in the state to maintain that stand (1996-9);
- form part of a united, harm-minimisation community response to increased illicit drug distribution and use and drug-related crime in the vicinity of the school and the high-rise flats in which most of the families live (1998 onwards);
- support those students and families who felt affronted and afraid by a resurgence of anti-Asian sentiment sparked by a populist right wing politician and her political party (1996 onwards);
- lobby for the rights of those families in the school community whose refugee protection visas were expiring and were faced with deportation to a very unstable, newly independent East Timor (2001-3) (see Appendix 3 for a related newspaper article); and
- continue and extend bilingual education opportunities for students at the school when the trend in Victorian education was strongly focused on English language instruction (1997 onwards).

In the midst of these issues, the school – the bilingual classrooms, in particular – became important venues for parents to gather. These informal forums became a vital conduit for the concerns of parents to be voiced and heard by the staff at the school. It led to the school taking a strong advocacy position in relation to the rights of the students, their families, and the community in which they lived.
As such, the immigrant and refugee, minority language, and low socio-economic status of the school community chosen for the study mirror the situations with which many immigrant, indigenous and refugee communities struggle. Teaching and learning in such school settings is likewise often a struggle and this intersection of poverty, under-resourcing, and minority-majority linguistic and cultural differences, often accompany student under-achievement or failure (Au, 1995; Cairney & Ruge, 1998; Comber, 1997b; Comber et al., 2001; Cummins, 1986, 1994, 2000a, 2001b; Cuttance, 2001; Lucas et al., 1990). While student failure or dropout in such communities is all too common, it is not inevitable, especially when curriculum programs, school operations, and human relationships at the school nurture, affirm and respect the learners’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds, as local and international research has shown (Coelho, 1998; Cummins, 2000a; Del Valle, 1998; Eckermann, 1994; Freeman, 1998; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; May, 1994a, 1994b; Skutnabb-Kangas & Cummins, 1988; Trueba, 1989).

Therefore, an investigation of a school environment of this type raises the possibility of facilitating a better understanding of how the optimum learning conditions for potentially vulnerable English-language learners can be created. Luke (1998: 306) argues that, instead of looking for system-wide answers to questions of best literacy education practice, the emphasis should be on investigation of pedagogies that “better address the knowledges, practices and aspirations of communities most at risk in the face of new technologies and economic conditions”. Support for such investigations also emerges from the literature around bilingualism and second language acquisition:

Most of the research on children’s language acquisition has been concerned with monolinguals rather than bilinguals, despite the predominance of bilingualism in the world’s population. Moreover, most of it deals with the acquisition of English … , and is largely biased towards middle-class children. (Romaine, 1995: 181)

My research responds to these concerns, as it was conducted amongst lower socio-economic status children learning English while simultaneously
maintaining and developing their first languages. At this point, it is necessary to explain my interest in investigating this topic, the prior experiences, beliefs and disposition with which I entered the research domain, and my feelings about undertaking potentially sensitive research at this particular site.

**Why Me? - Positioning the Researcher**

As a primary school teacher for over twenty years and, more recently, a researcher and teacher educator, the language and learning needs of socio-economically disadvantaged students, and those from language backgrounds other than English have been of fundamental interest to me. As a student myself, I attended school with other children from mainly working class backgrounds. Despite being a native English-speaker from a lower middle class family (my mother was a full-time housekeeper; my father in a secure government public service position), I came to understand the challenges faced by other students whose first language was not English, or who possessed skills and knowledge that were not what schools or teachers valued or recognised. Since becoming a teacher myself, my professional career has been devoted to working with such students (largely as a result of the schools in which I have chosen to teach), and my professional goals have always centred on improving my teaching practice – particularly in the areas of language and literacy.

As a young teacher in the 1980s, I learned very quickly that the socio-political contexts of schools and schooling are as integral to student learning as are issues of pedagogical positioning and approaches to curriculum planning and delivery. As a result, I sought improvement on a systemic level, as well as on a personal, professional level. I came to see that positive educational outcomes for the students I taught relied on me being attentive to both issues of iniquitous school funding and resourcing, and to curriculum policy and practice that offered transformative possibilities that challenged discriminatory curriculum and assessment practices.
Educationally progressive pedagogies that recognise and affirm student linguistic and cultural diversity have always had appeal for me professionally. Early in my career, whole language teaching and learning (Cambourne, 1988; Goodman, 1986; Harste et al., 1984) offered a degree of student ownership, voice and choice that I found empowering for myself and for my students. Around the same time, integrated curriculum planning (Pigdon & Woolley, 1992) allowed for more contextualised, negotiated, and inquiry-based learning that grew out of students’ needs and interests, and allowed opportunities for the taking of social action: using newly acquired skills and knowledge in the real world. Multi-age classrooms offered opportunities to truly engage with students’ strengths and stages of development in family-like classroom settings that fostered cooperative learning and cross-age tutoring. Multicultural perspectives within an integrated curriculum (Kalantzis et al., 1990; Kalantzis et al., 1989; Ministry of Education (Victoria), 1986) likewise appealed to my sense that, all too often, schools’ curriculum frequently offered limiting, sanitised views of a certain form of reality – one from which students from poor, immigrant, indigenous and refugee backgrounds were routinely excluded.

When I formally encountered the notion of critical approaches to ideas and texts (Comber, 1997a; Freebody & Luke, 1990; Luke et al., 1996) these ideas resonated with the skills I believed active, engaged language users needed in order to be empowered in the contemporary world.

My first direct encounter with bilingual education came in 1993 when I was appointed, as curriculum leader for language and literacy, to the school at which this research was undertaken. At that time, the school population was considerably larger than when this research was conducted; and the bilingual learning opportunities offered to its largely ESL student population struck me as at once very powerful and incredibly complex. I could immediately see that

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3 Demographic changes over the past decade have resulted in a decline in student numbers in schools in inner city Melbourne. In addition, less families being placed in high rise housing like those near the school has resulted in a decreased school population at the site under investigation.
bilingual learning at the school was a well-established feature of the school’s programs: much admired in the educational community for its championing of linguistic diversity, and very popular amongst parents who prized linguistic and cultural maintenance as a mechanism for improved inter-generational family relations.

In the years that followed, an increased systemic emphasis on basic skills English literacy; national (English) literacy benchmarks; and standardised, statewide testing – in many ways – marginalised issues related to ESL and the need for linguistic diversity. The notion of different pathways to common outcomes (Clay, 1998) was replaced by a discourse stressing the commonality of all students regardless of their family, linguistic or cultural background (Hill & Crevola, 1999). The school’s bilingual learning arrangements continued as before, with minor changes in staffing and scheduling – but, in my mind, more and more resembled an artefact from an earlier, more enlightened time. A time when multiculturalism was championed, and diversity – at least in terms of government rhetoric – was seen as an asset.

I sensed that bilingual education, as I knew it, was a potentially endangered phenomenon and my natural inclination was to support and protect it. Yet, deep within me, I had concerns and reservations. I knew – in general terms – that maintenance and development of the first language (L1) assisted acquisition and mastery of the second language (L2). I was convinced that the self-esteem of students from LBOTE would be enhanced if they recognised that there was a meaningful place in the school curriculum for their reserves of linguistic and cultural knowledge. Yet, I wondered – in an era where I perceived more sophisticated literacy knowledge and proficiency was needed to operate in an increasingly technology-driven world – whether a bilingual program that offered students in the early years half their instruction in their home language was going to assist them reach the levels of language proficiency they would require in later life. When I heard the argument that
children who are not well underway with reading and writing after their first year of school were at risk of educational failure (see for example, Slavin, 1994), I wondered whether more, rather than less English might assist them get ‘underway’ with literacy. When, as a teacher, I encountered a small number of students who – despite having been at the school for several years – still spoke and wrote a form of English that reflected a limited awareness of the academic registers of English, I wondered how the pedagogies these students were engaged in might better assist their development of academic language proficiency.

Around this time, I worked for two month-long periods on the Multigrade and Bilingual Education Project – an educational innovation in Vietnam. The curriculum for the country’s ethnic minority students was being redrawn and the teams of local and international teachers, teacher educators, policy makers and education officials, of which I was a part, developed new pedagogical arrangements allowing a portion of the curriculum in ethnic minority schools to:

- draw on topics of local interest which would reflect the cultural knowledge of the different ethnic minority groups; and
- be undertaken using the various ethnic minority languages as the medium of instruction, and vehicle for developing students’ literacy.

During this process, instructional materials in the form on enlarged text ‘big books’ were developed by teams of local educational officials, expert teachers and ethnic minority elders. Bilingual texts in a variety of written genres (explanations, reports, narratives, etc.) were created on topics such as Khmer pagodas, Hmong hunting rituals, Cham musical instruments, and Bahnar housing. The satisfaction and joy expressed by the members of ethnic minority communities as these texts were devised and field-tested in ethnic minority multigrade schools was evidence of the degree of identity enhancement and cultural and linguistic pride this curriculum renewal engendered. For the first time, people from these communities were seeing their linguistic and cultural
knowledge valued enough to be included in the official school curriculum for their children.

This Multigrade and Bilingual Education Project became the focus of my Master of Education research (Molyneux, 1998) and later publication (Molyneux & Woolley, 2004) both of which reported on the mechanisms for collaborative change that the project embodied. One of my research informants, an elderly provincial education official who had worked and lived amongst ethnic minority communities for forty years, spoke about his hopes for future generations. He saw promise in the curriculum innovations that gave long-overdue recognition to ethnic minority language and culture within a traditionally highly centralised curriculum that enshrined narrowly conceptualised views on Vietnamese language, history and culture. Yet, he also commented on the need for ethnic minority students to master the language of national power: Vietnamese, and even the language of international power: English. His concern for bilingualism and biliteracy in the languages of the ethnic groups and of the mainstream society resonated with what I was experiencing at my own school workplace back in Australia.

It was a concern I took with me during my two-year residence in New York where, from 1998 – 2000, I worked as a school-based staff developer at some of the city’s poorest schools. In these settings, my understanding of institutionalised disadvantage deepened. I worked with dedicated teachers and delightful, spirited children in situations of great hardship. I participated in Spanish-English bilingual classrooms where teachers were ill-prepared and under-resourced for the teaching challenges they faced. I taught in Second Grade classrooms where African American boys had been ‘held over’ (not promoted to the next grade) for failing to reach literacy benchmarks on tests that were culturally and linguistically insensitive to the forms of knowledge such children possess. This teaching experience highlighted how schools can be places that break the spirit of students and diminish their sense of identity.
On returning to Australia in 2001, I recommenced teaching at what became my research school and began preparations for this thesis. At the end of that year, as I embarked on my thesis and laid the foundations for data collection, I took leave from teaching duties at the school. This permitted me a degree of distance from the daily operations of the school, while allowing me to retain an insider status as a known and trusted colleague of the staff and former teacher of the students. This ongoing contact assisted in the development of the research focus. With input from, particularly, staff at the school, I decided I needed to investigate the teaching and learning arrangements that might offer students ‘double power’, as Wignell (1999) describes it: the opportunity to learn about the word and the world (Freire & Macedo, 1987) in both the language of their family or community and that of wider society. At the time, I could think of nothing more important to research. Four years later, I still cannot.

Ultimately, I have come to view education as a vehicle by which children’s lives might be transformed. Regardless of their linguistic or cultural backgrounds, children have the right to be valued and affirmed as individuals and members of different communities within wider society. It is their right and our responsibility as teachers to ensure this happens. All too often, it does not. Yet models of what has been articulated as a ‘transformative pedagogy’ have been posited, from its original conceptualisation (Freire, 1970a; Freire & Macedo, 1987) to more recent re-interpretations (Giroux, 1995; Kincheloe, 2004; McLaren, 2003; Pennycook, 2001). However, it is the application of these theories to the area of bilingual learners that highly influenced my current thinking (Cummins, 2000a, 2001b) as this study evolved. This linking of transformative teaching possibilities and bilingual students is returned to later in this chapter and is developed further throughout the thesis. But, it was a passionate, but under-theorised understanding of the idea that the lives of students, teachers and the community in general could be transformed by pedagogies of love, hope and empowerment with which I commenced this study.
As a result of my teaching experiences and professional beliefs, I entered into this research as far removed from the text-book ideal of the dispassionate researcher as could be imagined. To my relief, the field of critical ethnography (Anderson, 1989; Carspecken, 1996; Goodman, 1998; Jordan & Yeomans, 1995; May, 1997; Quantz, 1992) offered me a construct whereby I could openly acknowledge the disposition with which I entered the research setting. I strongly identified also with the notion of socially responsible research of the type that empowers and informs communities of practice, rather than exploits the usually wide divide between researcher and researched (Fine & Weis, 1998; Fine et al., 2000). As such, I state here that I embarked on this research with a strong belief in education that pursues and struggles for equity and social justice. I also embarked on this research so that my teaching colleagues and I might better understand what form this education for equity and social justice for the students I taught can take. As I describe fully in my Methodology chapter (Chapter Three), my research has been designed with these moral imperatives firmly in the forefront of my mind.

In recognition of the orientation with which I approached this research, I have tried to ensure that my data collection and analysis has been transparent in order to meet the levels of methodological reliability, validity and trustworthiness required by such a study. I believe I have been highly critical and self-analytical as a result of my professional beliefs, in order to pre-empt and minimize potential accusations of researcher bias. From the commencement of my research, I was open to my professional beliefs and understandings being strengthened, challenged, even overturned, by the research I was about to undertake. As such, I viewed this research project as an unparalleled opportunity to:

- immerse myself in the literature that spoke to my passions and concerns;
- participate in conversations with, especially, students and parents in order to uncover stories of lived bilingual, bicultural experience;
- augment and add more certainty to my teaching practice and that of my colleagues; and
- gain a deeper understanding of how progressive language policies and practices (like those of the school under investigation) could be repositioned for these ‘New Times’ (Hall, 1989) with their ‘new literacies’ demands (Lankshear et al., 1997; Lankshear & Knobel, 2003; New London Group, 1996).

**Why this Type of Study? - Justification of the Methodological Approach**

This investigation of bilingual learning foregrounds the perspectives of the key stakeholders at this site of practice: the students, their parents and their teachers. Data collection devices were specifically designed for this study in order to elicit qualitative responses and to allow relevant quantitative analysis.

These methods are explicated fully in Chapter Three: “Methodology”, where I detail previous investigations of bilingualism and bilingual learners (Dorian, 1981; Martin & Stuart-Smith, 1998; May, 1994a) that influenced my own study. At that point, I also justify my methods in terms of epistemological perspectives that emphasise the need for multiple perspectives and fine-grained research to truly illuminate complex social phenomena (Bourdieu, 1999; Corson, 1998; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; May, 1998; Nieto, 1999; Rampton, 1995).

**Some Necessary Definitions**

It is necessary, at this point, to discuss and define some terms that are used throughout this thesis. In the field of bilingual education and second language acquisition, a number of terms are used to describe learners and learning contexts. Some are highly appropriate. Others often convey (sometimes unintended) negative connotations. A number of these key terms and considerations are now explored.
Identifying Students as Learners

A variety of terms are used in the literature to describe students who are living and learning in English-speaking countries, but for whom English is not their first language. These terms include English as a Second Language (ESL) students, limited-English-proficient (LEP) students, non-English-speaking background (NESB) students, students from language backgrounds other than English (LBOTE), language-minority or minority language students, and English-language learners. I have generally used the term English-language learners to describe these students as I feel it does not imply a deficit position in relation to their learning, does not reduce them to an acronym, yet accurately describes their learning situation, regardless of the type of classroom in which they are learning.

I have also used the term bilingual learners or emergent bilinguals, although these terms – positive as they are – have limitations in that they can describe both students from minority and majority language backgrounds. Minority language or minority language background student are terms I have used throughout the thesis. However, they are terms not altogether free of negative connotations. While accurately describing students whose first language is not the main or official language of the country in which they reside, they regrettably, convey subaltern, inferior status connotations in some anti-immigrant discourses. In addition, the term ‘minority’ is sometimes inaccurate, in that the ‘minority’ language population may actually outnumber the ‘majority’. The term non-dominant language background perhaps more accurately describes the students from language backgrounds high in population numbers, but low in terms of the status or power of that language in the wider society. As such, I have utilised this term when appropriate.

When citing comments made by students (or references made to teachers) in reporting on the data collected, pseudonyms have been used at all times. Safeguarding research participants’ anonymity has been the goal.
Describing the Child’s Languages

Caution also needs to be expressed about use of the terms *home language*, *mother tongue* or *first language* (L1), as well as *second language* (L2). Often, a child’s *first* or *home* language cannot be clearly stated, or has changed over time. The term *second language learner*, frequently used to describe a minority language speaker, may erroneously be applied to a child learning a third, even fourth, language. Baker (2000) has pointed out the problematic nature of the term *mother tongue* by noting that the role of mother varies in different family contexts. He has also noted that this term marginalises the role of the father and other significant family members and his/her (perhaps different) language, and does not allow consideration of an eventuality whereby the *mother tongue* is replaced by a more dominant language. While problematic, these terms have been used when directly quoting or discussing an author or researcher. However, I have avoided over-applying them to a range of contexts, and have pointed out when the term has mixed connotations, for instance in regards to a specific student in the study.

Additive and Subtractive Bilingualism

The notions of ‘additive’ and ‘subtractive’ language education programs are terms widely used in discussion of bilingual learning arrangements (for example, Baker, 2001; Corson, 2001; Cummins, 1976, 1986, 2001b; Diaz & Klingler, 1991; Garcia, 1993; Lambert, 1990; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Minami & Ovando, 1995; Romaine, 1995). Additive bilingualism refers to situations where both languages are supported and allowed to develop in conjunction with each other, whereas with subtractive bilingualism, the first language is subsumed and eventually lost as a result of increased use and instruction in the second (Diaz & Klingler, 1991). What stands in stark contrast is that, in subtractive forms of learning, the minority language is seen in deficit terms; whereas in additive forms of learning, it is viewed as an asset. Exploration of the types of learning arrangements that are commonly linked to additive and subtractive forms of bilingualism is undertaken in “Chapter Two: Literature Review”.
Bilingualism and Biliteracy

Bilingualism and biliteracy are closely related, particularly when viewed in the context of an additive bilingual education program. Lotherington (2000) links bilingualism to the ability to fulfil communicative functions in two languages. She argues that:

If you can communicate in a range of situations in a second language, you can consider yourself to be bilingual. (Lotherington, 2000: 48)

Romaine (1995: viii) also notes that “bilingualism cannot be understood except in relation to social context”, highlighting the idea that bilingualism is a skill that is demonstrated through communication with others. This communication is often oral and, therefore, one could be considered bilingual without having the skills necessary to read and write in two languages. Baker (2001: 350) notes that “minority language oracy without literacy can disempower the student” likening such a situation to almost a colonial context where “the majority language is used for all literacy purposes and the vernacular language is used purely for oral communication” (Baker, 2001: 350). As such, biliteracy is a term which specifically refers to an ability to read and write in two languages, a position taken by Hornberger (2003a) and Niyekawa (1983). Biliteracy therefore implies a strong grasp of communicative and academic functions across the dimensions of language: reading, writing, listening and speaking. The goal of additive bilingual programs is therefore to achieve bilingualism and biliteracy. This central goal of this thesis is to better understand how bilingualism and biliteracy for English-language learners can be achieved.

Thesis Content

This thesis draws on a number of theoretical perspectives and conceptual frameworks in pursuing its research goals. These are elaborated more in the Literature Review and Methodology chapters, but I would like to foreground them here as a segue into description of the thesis structure.
Focussed as it is on language use and language teaching in a specific school and community setting, this thesis adheres to the view that literacy (and, therefore, biliteracy) is socially situated. It holds that reading, writing, listening and speaking are always related to specific social functions and purposes (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Gee, 1996b; Maybin, 1994). As such, sociolinguistic studies of language use (Cairney, 1998; Gregory & Williams, 2000b; Heath, 1983; Lotherington, 2003; Martin-Jones & Bhatt, 1998; Martin-Jones & Jones, 2000) have resonated with this study.

Within these socially situated frames, theoretical positions emphasising that successful negotiation through the hybrid and multi-modal world of today involves awareness and proficiency in a range of literacies or discourses have strongly influenced this study’s direction and design. The pedagogical implications of those working and writing in the fields of New Literacy Studies (Gee, 1996a, 1996b, 2002; Street, 1995, 2000, 2003); genre theory (Christie, 1998; Christie & Martin, 1997; Rothery, 1984) and its classroom applications (Derewianka, 1990; Wing Jan, 2001); and Multiliteracies pedagogies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000c; New London Group, 1996) have helped me frame what it means to be literate in today’s world.

In the area of second language acquisition, those writing with a particular view to exploring issues of the L1-L2 interface amongst often subordinated linguistic minorities (Auerbach, 1995; Corson, 1999; Crawford, 2000a; Cummins, 2000a, 2001b; Lippi-Green, 1997; Nieto, 2000; Tollefson, 1995) gave deeper levels of meaning to the insights gained from those writing about bilingualism in more general or personal contexts (Bialystok, 2001; Ellis, 1997; Romaine, 1995). The area of identity formation or negotiation amongst bilingual learners (Cummins, 1994, 2000a, 2001b, 2003b; Miller, 2003; Norton, 2000; Norton Peirce, 1995; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004b) became central to my understanding of how schools can best cater for these students’ needs.
Theorisations highlighting the differentiated levels of symbolic capital accorded to different forms of cultural and linguistic knowledge - see Bourdieu (1991, 1977) - enabled me to engage with the idea of schools as sites of cultural and economic reproduction. Consequently, I found much relevance in resistance positions aimed at countering structures that subordinate different groups in society. As such, critical orientations to schools and pedagogy (Apple, 2004; Freire, 1970a; Freire & Macedo, 1987; Giroux, 1992, 1995; Kincheloe, 2004; Lankshear & Knobel, 1997; Macedo, 1994; McLaren, 2003) have strongly influenced the shape this thesis has taken. Those writing of critical approaches to pedagogy in the areas of language and learning (May, 1998, 1999a; Norton & Toohey, 2004; Pennycook, 2001) have been highly informative. In particular, the writings of Jim Cummins (2000a, 2001b) in terms of his conceptualisation of transformative pedagogies for bilingual students reverberate strongly through the pages of this thesis, providing an invaluable lens through which to assess bilingual learning for students like those in my study.

**Thesis Structure**

**Chapter One: Introduction** has provided an overview of the study. The research question at the centre of the investigation, and key terms, have been defined and explored in the context of its significance, background, and purpose. An overview of methodological considerations and important theorisations from the research literature has been provided. The choice of the research site has been explicated and defended, and the disposition and research interests of myself as the investigator detailed.

**Chapter Two: Literature Review** reviews the research literature related to bilingual learning. I have conceptualised three dimensions of bilingualism and biliteracy: the personal, the political, and the pedagogical. The personal dimension explores theories integral to the development of bilingualism in the individual. Notions of linguistic interdependence, language distance, and language thresholds are explored. Problematic notions of proficiency are
likewise addressed. The political dimension places personal, individual bilingual development within a socio-political framework. Issues of language and power are emphasised in this section of the chapter, and anti-bilingual rhetoric is linked to notions of symbolic violence to which linguistic and cultural minorities are often exposed. The pedagogical dimension explores the literature around successful schooling for English-language learners. It ranges from discussion of the school effectiveness research literature, to the bilingual teaching and learning arrangements that offer transformative educational possibilities for these students.

**Chapter Three: Methodology** documents the methodological considerations and decisions that were made in relation to this study. Case study and critical ethnographic research considerations are examined, especially in reference to cross-cultural investigations and encounters. The problematic nature of how best to research bilingual learning in minority language communities is particularly explicated. This chapter outlines the data gathering procedures and protocols that were built into the study to ensure methodological rigour, and to minimise limitations. It describes how these were developed when planning the research, or how they emerged as the study progressed.

**Chapter Four: Bilingual Education at the Research Site: Philosophy, Principles and Practice** describes the school’s bilingual program in terms of its foundation in the mid 1980s, and its development through to the time this research was undertaken. It places the program within the socio-political and educational context of the time it was established, and tracks the changes in terms of its implementation that have taken place since then. It discusses the transitional nature of the program, along with its additive intentions, a contributory factor to understanding the data collected.

**Chapter Five: Research Results: Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Students’ Language Use and Attitudes** focuses on data collection from the
students that highlights their patterns of language use and their attitudes to the languages in their spoken and written repertoires. The multilingual nature of the student population at the school is revealed across a range of domains. Positive attitudes to both English and home languages are revealed, along with a sizable majority of students who value instruction in their L1 and English. These largely quantitative data provide a broad-based context for the more qualitative data that follows in the ensuing chapter.

Chapter Six: Research Results: Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Students’ Bilingual Abilities and Bilingual Learning details the in-depth methods and subsequent insights gained from students about their perceptions of their bilingual abilities, and their bilingual learning arrangements. It reports on students interview data and what they perceive as the benefits and challenges of the bilingual education opportunities in which they were currently, or formerly, engaged.

Chapter Seven: Research Results: Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Parents’ Perspectives reports on the data that emerged from parent questionnaires and a series of bilingual consultations with parents. The data from the questionnaires are explored systematically, and the rich, passionate voices from the group consultations augment and amplify these responses.

Chapter Eight: Research Results: Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Teachers’ Perspectives and Student Achievement reports on the data that emerged from teacher questionnaires and from analysis of student achievement data. Combinations of teacher goodwill and pedagogical uncertainty are exposed and explored. The student achievement data reveal that students, having engaged in bilingual education over the early years of their primary schooling, are able to reach English language targets for student achievement by the end of their primary schooling. These results are contextualised with the ‘double power’ of bilingualism and biliteracy that they now possess.
Chapter Nine: Research Implications and Recommendations draws meaning from the extensive data collection by making explicit links between the data collected from the different stakeholders. In this chapter, the research data is linked to the research literature within the constructs of the personal, political and pedagogical dimensions of the development of bilingualism and biliteracy. A visual conceptualisation of the key features and interplay between these dimensions is put forward. In addition, eleven conditions under which bilingual education for the English-language learners in this study can be enhanced are advanced. Linked to these, fourteen recommendations for improved, transformative practice are posited.

Chapter Ten: Final Research Reflections draws together the major aims and findings of the research, evaluates the effectiveness of the data collection methods, and suggests further areas for possible research. In particular, I discuss what the completed research has meant for me, how I hope it will impact on the school at the heart of the study, and what insights it might give those working and studying in similar settings.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW - BILINGUAL LEARNING: PERSONAL, POLITICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL DIMENSIONS

Research on language learning and bilingualism confirms that the language spoken in the home by a minority and the language of the dominant group in society need not be regarded as rivals, where one can only succeed in being maintained by displacing the other. (Smolicz, 1999: 80)

Chapter Overview

To facilitate a comprehensive review of the literature around bilingualism and bilingual education, this chapter is divided into three sections. These correspond to what I have identified as three key dimensions in the development of bilingualism and biliteracy in children from non-dominant linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

The first section, which follows these initial overview pages, explores personal factors in children’s bilingual development. This discussion embraces those aspects of language learning or bilingual development that, essentially, reside within the individual. These include notions of linguistic interdependence, language proficiency, and expectations about second language acquisition rates: the L1 – L2 interface, in essence. Identity issues are canvassed in this section, though issues of identity, self-worth and self-esteem – while located within the individual – are, in no small part, a reflection of externally transmitted messages and influences.

The socio-political influences on English-language learners’ bilingual development are explored in the second section of this chapter. This focus on what I have termed the political dimension of emergent bilingualism and biliteracy links to issues of power. In this section, the status of the languages within a child’s emerging linguistic repertoire (along with the status of the child’s cultural background) are demonstrated as pivotal to how the child is
oriented towards school, language learning, society, and – most importantly – him or herself. Additional links to the contemporary Australian socio-political context are made.

The final section of the chapter concentrates on pedagogy. Arising from what is revealed about personal and political dimensions of bilingualism, the ramifications for teachers and schools who are serious about empowering their students linguistically and culturally is discussed. The chapter concludes by remarking on what remains unanswered and under-researched in the area of bilingual education. The case is made for an investigation of the sort this thesis documents.

**Tensions in the Field of Bilingualism and Second Language Learning**

Acquiring a second language is a complex process that can take place for a wide variety of reasons, and be achieved at vastly differing rates depending on differences in both the individual learner and in the socio-cultural context of that learning (Baker, 2001; Bialystok, 2001; Collier, 1995; Davies & Elder, 1997; Davies et al., 1997; Ellis, 1997; Wong Fillmore, 1991a). The learning of a second language might result in the loss of the individual’s first language, or might facilitate strengthening and development of both (or all) the learner’s languages. This study focuses on an additive learning context where English – a second (and often a third or fourth) language – is added to the students’ home language(s).

Six distinct types of bilingual child have been identified (Romaine, 1995), from children living with parents applying the “one person, one language” approach (Döpke, 1993), to situations where the family linguistic environment draws on a non-dominant language that has little or no community support. In addition to Romaine’s (1995) identification of different categories of bilingual child, there are many additional internal and external variables which have been suggested, making the possible learning pathways of immigrant or refugee English-
language learners as varied as the learners themselves. These factors, explored below, highlight the need to exercise caution when attempting to ascribe any common characteristics to those students whose first language is not English, but who are learning in and about English in an English-speaking society and school system.

Since the 1970s, central to much of the research into second language acquisition has been the question of why some learners from minority language backgrounds acquire a second language more easily and comprehensively than others. Yet, the diverse realities or contexts of how, when, and why these languages are acquired make a precise definition of what constitutes a “good language learner” elusive, as Bialystok (1991) has observed.

The extent to which supporting and developing the first language of minority language background students assists or impedes the acquisition of the majority language has been at the centre of intense debate over this same period. In terms of understanding the complex relationships between a learner’s first and subsequent languages, key theorists have emphasised the need to consider the interaction of both internal and external factors (Baker, 2001; Bialystok, 2001, 1991; Corson, 2001; Cummins, 1991; Cummins & Swain, 1986; Ellis, 1997; Krashen, 1981; Romaine, 1995, 2000; Wong Fillmore, 1991a).

Internal factors in relation to second language acquisition are described by Davies, Grove and Wilkes (1997) as including those that relate to the individual’s inner processing of new linguistic input, and the mechanisms by which linguistic and cognitive connections are made between first and subsequent languages. In addition, individual characteristics, such as the developmental path on which the learner has progressed in acquiring the two languages, are emphasised, as are factors related to the age, previous knowledge and experiences, aptitude, motivation, and learning preferences and beliefs (Ellis, 1997; Lightbown & Spada, 1999).
Explorations of external factors in second language acquisition often focus closely on the pedagogical arrangements under which the second language is taught and learned (Cisneros & Leone, 1995; Coelho, 1998; Jones Diaz, 2001; Makin et al., 1995; Ovando & Collier, 1998; Swain, 1996), in addition to the wider socio-political context within which that learning takes place (Beykont, 2000; Cummins, 2000a, 2001b; Martin-Jones & Saxena, 1995; Tollefson, 1995). Many theorists and researchers who stress these externally influenced or mediated factors make explicit links between successful school learning and the levels of pride and self-worth students feel about their home language and cultural background (Cummins, 1986; Delpit, 1999; Freeman & Freeman, 1998; Gibbons, 1992b; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Lucas et al., 1990; Swain, 1996; Wrigley, 2000). This is often referred to as a process of identity negotiation within which students’ language use and attitudes (and those of the school and society) play a central role in shaping the way they construct notions of themselves as individuals and learners, and what sort of future these identity constructs make possible (Cummins, 1986, 2000a, 2001b; Miller, 2003; Norton, 1997, 2000; Norton Peirce, 1995; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004b).

Arising from these internal and external factors, a number of ongoing tensions characterise the field of bilingualism and second language acquisition for learners from non-dominant language backgrounds, central to which is the issue of first language maintenance. The tensions that most directly relate to this research thesis are described below.

- **Maximum exposure/time on task versus linguistic interdependence:**
  The ‘maximum exposure/time on task’ position argues that – to develop proficiency in the majority language – students from minority language backgrounds require the greatest possible amount of teaching and learning in that majority language (see Rossell, 2004). In contrast, the ‘linguistic interdependence hypothesis’ argues that minority language maintenance and development has many benefits, including aiding L2
acquisition through transfer of both conceptual and linguistic knowledge (Collier, 1995; Cummins, 1979, 1991, 2000a).

- **Separate versus common systems of language processing:** This involves the notion that the internal operating systems for the processing of the languages in an individual’s repertoire operate either separately (that is, in isolation and potential conflict with each other), or in combination (and potential support) with each other (Baker, 2001; Cummins, 1980, 1984; Cummins & Swain, 1986).

- **Unitary versus multi-faceted views of language proficiency:** The unitary position depicts language proficiency as involving the development of fixed, generic competencies (regardless of the learner’s specific socio-cultural needs); whereas multi-faceted views of language learning recognise that language knowledge and proficiency responds to a range of social and academic needs, and that these reflect the learner’s interpersonal communication needs as well as more complex academic language structures needed in schools and other formal settings (Cummins, 1984, 2000a).

- **Standardised versus discourse views of language use:** Closely related to the previous point, the tension here refers to whether a standard form of language, supposedly reflective of all native speakers, should be the sole or over-riding goal in second language education, as opposed to the view that language use is variable, determined by its social contexts and protocols, communicative intentions, and audience expectations (Gee, 1996b; Gregory & Williams, 2000a; Luke, 1993; Street, 1995).

- **Emic versus etic perspectives:** This tension relates to the amount of credence given to the views of outside researchers, as opposed to the perspectives of the insiders: the language learners and users themselves (Bailey & Nunan, 1996; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Merriam, 1998). In terms of language policy development and research methodological design, this relates to the degree to which the rights and perspectives of non-dominant language speakers are recognised or sought.
• **Oppositional views on the political nature of language learning**: This refers to the extent to which societal power structures are recognised as playing a significant role in the subordination and marginalisation of certain groups in society. This tension embraces arguments as to the degree to which schools serve to reproduce existing social hierarchies and power differentials, with minority language background learners thereby disadvantaged (Bourdieu, 1991; Cummins, 2000a; Giroux, 1993; Hassanpour, 2000; McLaren & Muñoz, 2000; Miller, 2003; Pennycook, 2001).

• **Social mobility versus ghettoisation assumptions**: Mastery of majority languages is often depicted as evidence of one’s aspirations for social mobility, whereas maintenance of a minority language can be negatively portrayed as a sentimental retreat to insularity and immobility. The false dichotomy (see May, 2001, 2003) centres on the supposed ‘instrumental’ value of the majority language, as opposed to the limited ‘identity’ aspects of minority language maintenance.

These tensions are of direct relevance to this research, and they embody the personal, political and pedagogical dimensions of second language learning, which impact on immigrant or refugee students like those in this study. They also raise methodological issues as to the type of research that should be conducted into language use and acquisition amongst such communities. Therefore, if the language and learning needs of English-language learners are to be better understood, the interplay of personal, political and pedagogical factors needs to be comprehensively investigated. I explore these three dimensions of language learning throughout the remainder of this chapter. The methodological choices faced and decisions made are explored in the following Methodology chapter.
Bilingual Learners: The Personal Dimension

Key Personal Issues in Bilingual Development
On the individual or personal level, a number of key questions are central to understanding how a second, majority language is best acquired by students from minority language backgrounds. The answers to these questions impact directly on the extent to which bilingual education as an educational arrangement for English-language learners can be justified. As such, they are central to the research study this thesis reports on. The questions are:

• To what extent does maintenance of a child’s minority language benefit or hinder majority language development?
• Is there any correlation between bilingualism and students’ cognitive skills?
• How can language proficiency be best conceptualised, particularly in relation to second language learners?
• How long should it take an English-language learner to develop proficiency in the majority language?
• What links are evident between maintenance and affirmation of a student’s L1 and notions of identity and self-esteem?

In order to effectively explore these issues, it is necessary to look at what research over nearly a century has revealed. Over ninety years have passed since the seminal early work investigating the bilingual development of an individual child (Ronjat, 1913). Yet, attributing a definitive description to the linguistic and cognitive processes that take place when a second language is learned remains contentious. The mental processes involved in language acquisition are by their nature internal and, as such, cannot be so much observed as inferred (Baker, 2001). Furthermore, it is argued, these processes cannot be examined in isolation from the social, economic, and political circumstances of life which have a large bearing on how children will develop linguistically and cognitively (Bialystok, 2001: 6).
Bilingualism and Cognition

Prior to the 1960s, much of the research investigating the effects of bilingualism on the cognitive processes of knowledge acquisition, reasoning, thinking and perception, found that knowledge and use of two languages was detrimental to the individual’s cognitive growth, as noted by Baker (2001) and Romaine (1995). Now spuriously viewed, these research accounts linked instances of minority language students’ lower levels of verbal performance, poor academic performance, and perceived lack of adjustment in schooling to their bilingualism, according to Corson (2001). The view in some quarters was even that bilinguals were inherently untrustworthy because of their ambiguous identities, uncertain loyalties, and awareness of more than one system of cultural and linguistic knowledge, a view deplored by Corson (2001) and Cummins (1984).

Many early studies of bilingualism relied on the highly problematic measuring of ‘intelligence’ through tests that were often insensitive to the cultural and linguistic understandings of those tested, it has been noted (Baker, 2001; Cummins, 1984; Romaine, 1995). Much of this research is now thoroughly discredited, particularly in light of a pivotal research publication (Peal & Lambert, 1962), which overturned previously dominant notions of bilingual inferiority, according to Bialystok (2001). This study, as Moran and Hakuta (1995) note, established new methodological standards in the area of bilingual research.

This Canadian investigation (Peal & Lambert, 1962) studied groups of bilingual and monolingual ten year olds from similar socio-economic backgrounds. The research was undertaken using a broad range of measures, and tested different aspects of intelligence, both verbal and non-verbal. In addition, it investigated students’ attitudes and school achievement and, importantly, measured language proficiency in both the children’s first and second languages. Now widely seen as a ground-breaking publication substantially advancing scholarly
understanding of bilingualism (Baker, 2001; Bialystok, 2001; Corson, 1998; Minami & Ovando, 1995; Moran & Hakuta, 1995), Peal and Lambert (1962) observed a greater degree of mental flexibility in bilingual children than in like monolinguals. Their study concluded that the notion of bilingualism as an asset held more currency than that of it being viewed as a liability. Subsequent research has generally re-affirmed the benefits of being bilingual in terms of bilinguals’ greater capacity over monolinguals to think divergently (Ricciardelli, 1992), be metalinguistically aware (Galambos & Hakuta, 1988), and show greater attentiveness to the language appropriate to different contexts or settings (Bialystok, 1992).

However, caution regarding over-zealous adherence to the perceived inherent cognitive benefits of bilingual learning has been urged, even by those who acknowledge the significance of the paradigm shift in understanding that followed Peal and Lambert’s study (Baker, 2001; Bialystok, 2001; Garcia, 1993; Moran & Hakuta, 1995). The problem in apportioning greater levels of cognitive flexibility to bilinguals has been likened to a chicken and egg quandary (Baker, 2001; Moran & Hakuta, 1995) in terms of the difficulty in categorically stating which comes first: bilingual ability or cognitive flexibility. This has led even strong academic advocates of bilingualism and bilingual education to comment that:

> There may well be specific areas of cognitive functioning in which bilingual children differ from monolinguals, but broadly based statements about intellectual superiority are probably excessive and unsupportable. (Bialystok, 2001: 188)

Likewise, Cummins (2000a) tentatively states that the development of literacy in two languages possibly entails cognitive advantages for bilingual students, though he emphatically adds that there is no research evidence pointing to any cognitive disadvantages in becoming bilingual either for minority or majority language background speakers.
Many research studies investigating bilingualism and cognition have been criticised for too often choosing established bilinguals or middle-class bilingual children as their subjects, rather than students from lower socio-economic status backgrounds whose bilingualism is still emerging (Baker, 2001; Bialystok, 2001). It should be noted that my research has responded to this criticism. While not specifically investigating issues of bilingualism and cognition, it was undertaken with students of low socio-economic status across all levels of academic achievement and bilingual development.

**Bilingualism and Linguistic Interdependence**

Historically, there was a propensity to link bilingual language development, especially amongst students of minority language backgrounds, with deficit notions of ‘confusion’ and ‘interference’, as noted by Ellis (1997) and Romaine (1995). Romaine describes ‘interference’ as the overlapping of two languages, or application of two systems to the same item; and states that what has often been called ‘interference’ is ultimately a product of the bilingual individual’s use of more than one language in everyday interactions. Notions of linguistic confusion or interference suggest situations whereby the two languages compete against each other within the brain of the individual, potentially inhibiting the acquisition of the majority language, and thereby restricting the academic tasks or social functions a bilingual student can perform in that language. Language interference or confusion can also imply that, when two language systems are being learned or used, they are compartmentalised separately within the brain, and develop (or languish) in isolation from each other, with little or no transfer of linguistic knowledge from one language to another.

This notion has been conceptualised as a ‘Separate Underlying Proficiency’ (SUP) (Cummins, 1980, 2001b) view of language processing and, if adhered to, could be used to justify the suppression of a student’s first language on the grounds that this is necessary for proficiency to develop in the majority
language. It could therefore provide theoretical support to schools wishing to suppress the use of minority languages, or coerce minority language parents into speaking only English at home with their children. Romaine’s (1995) response to this form of language engineering is unequivocal:

> There is no evidence that a switch to English in the home would improve the child’s English. If anything, it might entail a lower quality and quantity of parent-child interaction and thus be detrimental in the long run (Romaine, 1995: 275).

In reality, SUP is widely seen as an inaccurate representation of how languages are acquired and processed in the brain, though the notion of language interference has been described as “one of the most hotly debated phenomena of bilingualism” (Romaine, 1995: 51). Romaine notes that, because of the potentially negative connotations of the term ‘interference’, the more neutral expressions ‘transference’ and ‘crosslinguistic influence’ have been suggested as substitutes.

It is widely believed amongst bilingual education advocates (see Baker, 2001) and in the field of cognitive psychology that, when two languages are being learned and used, the human brain, in fact, has the ability to draw on a ‘Common Underlying Proficiency’ (CUP), (Cummins, 1980). In essence, this means that linguistic and conceptual knowledge in either language occupies a shared internal space or system, whereby linguistic knowledge and conceptual understandings can be readily transferred between languages – especially when both languages are well developed.

This ‘linguistic interdependence hypothesis’ (Cummins, 1979) conceptualises how understandings bilingual individuals possess about their two languages can inform and strengthen each of those languages, and augment or consolidate academic or conceptual understandings learned in either – or both - languages. For minority language speakers, in situations where there is likely to be serious erosion of the first (minority) language, L1 maintenance can have positive benefits for academic performance, according to Corson (2001). Despite much
research evidence supporting Cummins’ (1979) linguistic interdependence hypothesis, it remains misunderstood, mired as it is in the politicised nature of the debates around bilingual education provision and the L1/L2 interface.

Cummins himself has acknowledged that maintenance and instruction in a student’s L1 is not essential for L2 mastery, noting that many English-language learners succeed academically without any form of bilingual instruction (Cummins, 2000a, 2001a). However, he argues that this L2 development comes at a great cost: the loss of the L1, and a diminished linguistic ability and weakened sense of identity as a result.

**Language Distance and Linguistic Interdependence**

One area particularly relevant to my research, and linked to the interdependence of first and subsequent languages, is that of language distance. This refers to the degree to which structurally similar (or dissimilar) languages inform or support each other. In a review of the literature related to language distance and its impact on second language acquisition, Davies and Elder (1997) described the ‘language distance hypothesis’ (Corder, 1981, 1994), as being a situation where, if the student’s first language is structurally similar to the new language being learned, the student will typically move more rapidly towards proficiency in that language than if the two languages were structurally different.

This notion of language distance has been conceptualised in the following continuum highlighting the distance from English of different languages (Rutherford, 1983):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>Mandarin &amp; Arabic</th>
<th>Japanese/ Korean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Closer</td>
<td>Distance from English</td>
<td>Further</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If the language distance hypothesis were a valid proposition, it would mean that native speakers of Spanish would generally experience less difficulty in learning English, than native speakers of, for example, Mandarin or Korean. It would also mean that native English speakers would generally make faster progress learning Spanish than other languages more structurally different from English.

While, for anyone who has attempted to learn another language, this proposition might seem reasonable, it is widely acknowledged that language distance is but one factor affecting second language acquisition. Even those stressing the importance of language distance note:

> it is difficult (perhaps impossible) to disentangle … the many other variables that influence language learning. (Davies et al., 1997: 44)

Some additional factors that have been cited as influential in some, but not all, learners’ acquisition of a second language include individual learner characteristics (intelligence, aptitude, personality, motivation and attitudes), as well as their knowledge of other languages and preferred styles of learning (Davies et al., 1997; Lightbown & Spada, 1999).

Despite undertaking research that showed the language distance hypothesis to be, at best, only partly supported, Davies and Elder (1997) state that:

> we may surmise that younger children whose L1 is more distant from English are likely to face greater problems in acquiring literacy in English than comparable children where L1 is closer to English. (Davies & Elder, 1997: 105)

As a result, they contend that a child’s first language may only be a useful springboard for second language acquisition if it is close to that second language. They maintain that if the L2 is distant from the child’s L1, “other factors, such as L2 exposure, may be more powerful” (Davies & Elder, 1997: 105).
The implications of this assertion, if true, are immense for students like those in my research study. As students from Chinese- and Vietnamese-language backgrounds, it could be argued that – given their first languages are more linguistically distant from English than Spanish, for example – bilingual education programs will be of less benefit to their L2 development than maximum exposure to English.

While not critiquing this language distance hypothesis directly, Cummins (2001b) details the significant body of research evidence supporting the idea of linguistic interdependence, across a range of first and second language contexts, such as Arabic-French, Dutch-Turkish, Japanese-English, Chinese-English, and Basque-Spanish programs. As he comments:

An impressive number of research studies have documented a moderately strong correlation between students’ L1 and L2 literacy skills in situations where students have the opportunity to develop literacy in both languages. It is worth noting that these findings also apply to the relationships among very dissimilar languages in addition to the languages that are more closely related, although the strength of relationship is often reduced. (Cummins, 2001b: 176)

Additional research studies have also pointed to the benefits for second language acquisition in maintaining and developing the child’s first language, even when this is distant from the majority language. These studies have involved the interface between Russian and English (Abu-Rabia, 2001); Arabic and English (Abu-Rabia & Siegel, 2002); Spanish and Catalan (Huguet et al., 2000); and Turkish and Dutch (Verhoeven, 1994). Thomas and Collier’s (1997) large scale investigation of school effectiveness for minority language speakers found that the L1 of the learner was not a strong variable in long term academic achievement. To illustrate this point they state:

We have found that Spanish speakers make the same rate of progress in L2 as speakers of Arabic or Mandarin Chinese or Amharic or Korean or Russian or Vietnamese. (Thomas & Collier, 1997: 38)

Given the disputed notion of linguistic interdependence, particularly for English-language learners whose L1 is viewed as structurally distant from
English, my study of students in Mandarin-English and Vietnamese-English bilingual education programs is a much-needed addition to this body of research.

The ‘Thresholds Hypothesis’ and Levels of Bilingual Proficiency

The linguistic interdependence hypothesis is closely linked to another theoretical position: the ‘thresholds hypothesis’ (Cummins, 1976; Toukomaa & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1977). Just as the interdependence hypothesis argues that well-developed and maintained languages support and inform each other, the thresholds hypothesis contends that both these languages need to be developed beyond merely foundational levels, to higher levels of competence that enable students to engage in rich, age-appropriate language use. Therefore, it is argued, that through a process of age-appropriate, cognitively demanding instruction in both languages students are most likely to become established bilinguals best able to make strong conceptual and linguistic transfers from one language to the other (Baker, 2001; Cummins, 2000a, 2001b). Cummins has also argued that, in order for students to reach higher thresholds of L1 and L2 ability, classroom language exposure and use needs to move students gradually from scaffolded learning that is ‘context-embedded’ to an ability to successfully manage linguistic forms and cultural knowledge that are ‘context-reduced’ (Cummins, 1991, 2000a, 2001b; Cummins & Swain, 1986). How this can be achieved in discussed later in this chapter in relation to the pedagogical dimension of bilingual development.

For students from minority language backgrounds, whose cognitive and conceptual development prior to commencing school has often occurred predominately in a LOTE, the thresholds and linguistic interdependence hypotheses provide conceptual and theoretical foundations to underpin any serious, additive bilingual learning they might undertake. The thresholds hypothesis, therefore, emphasises the importance of building students’ L1 and L2 skills to age-appropriate levels. In particular, it recognises the necessity for
students to develop both basic conversational, interpersonal skills that they
employ in everyday social encounters, and more complex academic registers of
language needed to succeed in school. However, before exploring these
notions, the problematic nature of terms such as ‘proficiency’ and ‘competence’,
as applied to second language acquisition, needs to be addressed.

**Language Proficiency: A Highly Problematic Notion**

What constitutes language proficiency, and how it can be measured, is still
unresolved, particularly in relation to second language acquisition (Bialystok,
2001; Corson, 2001; Cummins, 1991, 1992b; Romaine, 1995). Essentially, the
problem centres on the issues of what level of ability in one or more languages
constitutes proficiency, who makes that determination, and how it is made
(Bialystok, 2001). In addition, the idea of language proficiency implies a
monolithic notion of a singular language (or variety of language) in which one
can become proficient. Recent critical discussion of second language acquisition
(Miller, 2003; Pennycook, 2001) renders this depiction highly problematic. Such
a representation of language proficiency also risks diminishing or ignoring the
linguistic resources students bring to their learning.

Devaluing students’ existing linguistic and cultural knowledge can result in low
student self-esteem, subsequent lack of motivation and, as is the situation
especially in the United States, the over-representation of minority language
speakers in special education classrooms, or amongst those who drop out of
the linguistic knowledge of students is measured and responded to has
important ramifications in the Australian school system, where English-
language proficiency measures, very much linked to performance standards as
measured by national/state benchmarks and tertiary entrance examinations,
risk minimising the diverse language skills English-language learners possess.
Language proficiency, particularly at the times in students’ development where they are still acquiring first and subsequent languages, needs to be understood and assessed in terms of the purposes for which a language is needed and the contexts in which it is used (Harley et al., 1990). Romaine (1995: 12) suggests the following key areas that impact on this notion of bilingual proficiency within the individual:

- the degree to which each of the languages has been developed;
- the social purposes or functions each language fulfills; and
- the extent to which an individual alternates between languages or manages to keep the languages separate.

The case of classic novelist, Joseph Conrad, who had an exemplary command of written English, but reputedly never developed an ear for English phonology, has been cited as highlighting how uneven one’s language proficiency can be, and why arriving at an all-purpose definition of language proficiency is therefore so difficult (Bialystok, 2001; Romaine, 1995).

Despite the difficulties of defining language proficiency, Bialystok (2001: 13) advocates the establishment of some system of fixed criteria that allow for critical points in language acquisition and mastery to be described. She proposes the measuring of an individual’s oral, literate and metalinguistic competence in terms of both the degree of control over a set task a language user possesses, and in terms of the level of analysis at which a language user can perform. This helps her arrive at the following highly useful definition of language proficiency.

Language proficiency is the ability to function in a situation that is defined by specific cognitive and linguistic demands, to a level of performance indicated by either objective criteria or normative standards. (Bialystok, 2001: 18)

Hornberger’s ‘continua of biliteracy’ (Hornberger, 1989, 2003b; Hornberger & Skilton-Sylvester, 2000) is a highly useful research and pedagogical framework which emphasises the diverse contexts, content and media that comprise bilingual development and proficiency. For example, Hornberger’s continua
highlight the need for bilingual, biliterate individuals to be able – in each of their languages – to negotiate different levels of contextualised and decontextualised content; to develop both oral and written capabilities; and to move between often dissimilar structures and divergent scripts.

Therefore, any definition of bilingual proficiency must take account of the nature of the languages in question, and the contexts in which they are used or required. In addition, assessment of an individual’s level of proficiency needs to acknowledge that different levels of competency may exist on a number of levels across the dimensions of receptive and productive language, and that skills in basic communication will develop in advance of those requiring more sophisticated, academic language forms. It is this differentiation between conversational and academic language ability that is particularly useful in terms of understanding issues related to second language acquisition.

**Developing Conversational and Academic Language Ability**

While noting the lack of consensus on the issue, Cummins (1984, 2000b) and Cummins and Swain (1986) posited two dimensions to language proficiency, to which Cummins (2001b) has recently added a third. In its initial conceptualisation (Cummins, 1984; Cummins & Swain, 1986), language proficiency was seen as embracing basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). As described by Romaine (1995), BICS refers to the development of conversational skills which second language learners tend to master quickly, as such interactions are very much related to common social purposes and day-to-day personal, context-embedded transactions. However, CALP, being the more complex language skills or context-reduced academic demands that a student is required to master as part of their school achievement, takes a longer period for second language learners to develop.
The third dimension of language proficiency later emphasised by Cummins (2001b) is the knowledge of discrete language skills reflecting the “specific phonological, literacy and grammatical knowledge that students acquire as a result of direct instruction and both formal and informal practice” (Cummins, 2001b: 65). These discrete language skills are applied in the conversational and academic encounters in which the second language learner is engaged.

These constructs of conversational and academic proficiency, while in some ways difficult to define, have use for educators when planning and assessing language programs (Romaine, 1995). Because they are inclusive of the formal and informal use of language(s) across different contexts or domains, they resonate with Cummins and Swain’s (1986) depiction of communicative competence as involving four areas:

- discourse competence (which focuses on mastery of cohesion and coherence);
- sociolinguistic competence (the degree to which spoken or written language is appropriate to the social context or setting);
- grammatical competence (which centres on extent of vocabulary, word and sentence formation, spelling and pronunciation); and
- strategic competence (or the use of effective strategies to maintain communication or enhance the effectiveness of spoken discourse or written text).

Cummins and Swain’s framework is supported by later contributors to the field (Baker, 2001; Harley et al., 1990; Romaine, 1995) who also view grammatical, discourse, and sociolinguistic competencies as key constructs in the area of language proficiency. Collier’s Prism Model (Collier, 1995; Thomas & Collier, 1997), which I explain more fully in the next section of this chapter, also draws on similar components of second language proficiency which are seen as embracing an interdependent interplay of language, cognitive, socio-cultural and academic processes.
Slightly different perspectives have been posited by Minami and Ovando (1995) who outline three areas of language proficiency: functional literacy, concerned with minimum skills necessary for daily survival (reading road signs, etc.); cultural literacy, which encompasses literacy in relation to fulfilling cultural requirements in a given society; and critical literacy, the ability to analyse and interrogate texts (Freebody & Luke, 1990) as a path to personal empowerment. The need for students to be literate in a multiplicity of areas has been expounded in ‘multiliteracies’ theory (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000c; Gee, 2000; Kalantzis et al., 2002; Kress, 2000; Lo Bianco, 2000a; New London Group, 1996). This expanded view of the literacies required for proficiency and engagement in the world of the 21st Century emphasises the multimodal nature of exchanges of meaning and information. These notions of multiliteracies, critical literacy and empowerment are taken up later in this chapter when considering the political and pedagogical dimensions of bilingualism.

**Developing English-Language Skills: How Long Should it Take?**

In recognition of the numerous contexts in which second languages are acquired, it logically follows that it is unwise to attempt to make any definitive statement about how long English-language learners might take to reach English levels that approach those of native speakers. Nonetheless, one of the most commonly asked questions about the education of these students is how long they need special services, such as ESL and bilingual education to reach and sustain on-grade-level achievement in their second language (Hakuta et al., 2000; Thomas & Collier, 1997). This question is asked by parents of English-language learners, as well as by their teachers and school administrators. Bialystok (2001), noting parents’ concerns and hopes for their children, observes:

> Parents want their children to do well; they do not want them to do well for an immigrant. (Bialystok, 2001) (Bialystok’s emphasis)

In light of the differences between basic interpersonal communication (BICS) and academic proficiency (CALP), the need to break down the “how long?”
question into the following sub-questions has been suggested (Hakuta et al., 2000):

- How long does it take minority language students to learn basic oral English skills?
- How long does it take minority language students to learn academic English skills to no longer be handicapped in their opportunity to learn in instructional settings that do not accommodate their language needs?
- How long does it take minority language students to learn academic English skills to no longer be handicapped when they take high-stakes assessments required for state grade promotion, access to gifted and talented programs, and graduation? (Hakuta et al., 2000: 15)

Collier’s earlier-mentioned “Prism Model” (1995) identifies four major components that impact on the answers to these questions. These are the socio-cultural factors related to the students’ home, school, community, and broader community; linguistic factors which include the degree of oral and written skills the students possess in their first and second languages across all language domains; students’ academic development or curriculum knowledge; and their cognitive development, notably the engagement of students in age-appropriate complex thinking skills in L1 while building skills in L2. She argues that the students’ socio-cultural circumstances strongly influence, in both positive and negative ways, their cognitive, academic, and language development, factors which are mutually interdependent. Therefore, Collier (1995) maintains, it is crucial that educators provide a socio-culturally supportive school environment which allows natural language, academic, and cognitive development to flourish. The provision of this type of environment, therefore, strongly impacts on how long L2 proficiency takes to achieve.

Though the bulk of the relevant research derives from North American studies, there are consistent trends across countries and cultural/linguistic minorities (Collier, 1989, 1995; Cummins, 2000a, 2001b; Hakuta, 2001; Hakuta et al., 2000; Ovando & Collier, 1998; Thomas & Collier, 1997). The shared view of these studies, as highlighted by the major U.S. study undertaken by Thomas and Collier (1997), is that language minority students learning solely (or almost
entirely) in their L2 make significant gains in the early years of their elementary schooling but, in these contexts, the gap between native and non-native speakers widens as the academic demands increase in later years. They find, however, that many students educated bilingually are able to sustain the gains in their L2 and, as they move through the secondary years of school, in some cases achieve even higher standards than typical native-English-speaking students.

The specific amount of time required for minority background speakers to develop their second language to academic levels like those of native speakers varies slightly in different studies or reviews of the literature, but the following accounts indicate a general level of consensus. An early study by Collier explicates the “how long?” issue in terms of different types of students, as the following paraphrased statements reveal (Collier, 1989: 526-7).

1. Students schooled in both their first and second language generally take four to seven years to reach national L2 norms in reading, social studies, and science, and as little as two years for mathematics and language arts (spelling, punctuation, simple grammar).

2. Immigrants aged 8 to 12 with at least two years L1 instruction in their home country generally take between five and seven years to reach national L2 norms in reading, social studies, science when they are schooled exclusively in the second language after arrival in the host country, and as little as two years for mathematics and language arts (spelling, punctuation, simple grammar).

3. Young arrivals with no previous schooling in their home language may take seven to ten years to reach national L2 norms in reading, social studies, and science, and sometimes never reach these targets.

4. Adolescent arrivals with no previous L2 exposure, who are unable to continue academic work in their first language while they are acquiring their second language, do not have enough time left in high school to make up for the lost years of academic instruction.
5. Consistent, unbroken cognitive academic development in all curriculum areas over the course of a students’ schooling is more important than the number of hours of L2 instruction in terms of academic achievement in the second language.

These findings are re-iterated in a later synthesis of research undertaken by Collier (1995) and are supported by another study focussing on English-language learners across four United States and Canadian school districts. This study (Hakuta et al., 2000) found that, at the very least, basic oral proficiency takes three to five years to develop, and academic English proficiency can take four to seven years. Similar findings of five to ten years for students with no L1 support (longer if there was no formal L1 base to start with) and four to seven years for students with bilingual support have been reported (Ovando & Collier, 1998) and at least five years to reach academic profiency has been suggested in Cummins’ recent review of the literature (Cummins, 2001b). It should be commented that these findings suggest that educational policies assuming rapid acquisition of English - with extreme cases like California’s Proposition 227 calling for “sheltered English immersion during a temporary transition period not normally intended to exceed one year” - are extremely unrealistic (Hakuta et al., 2000). This body of U.S. research should result in sober reflection here in Australia as the pressure felt by teachers of English-language learners – and by the students themselves – to reach literacy benchmarks (Curriculum Corporation, 2000) takes little account of these periods of L2 acquisition.

What must be emphasised is that a proportional link has been found between the amount of quality bilingual instruction that English-language learners receive and their enhanced academic achievement across the years of their schooling, in comparison to matched groups being schooled monolingually in their L2 (Thomas & Collier, 1997). In Thomas and Collier’s (1997) study, it was found that ongoing support for a student’s linguistic and cognitive
development in their L1 outweighed other background variables such as age, 
student’s first language, and socio-economic status as the most powerful 
predictor of academic success in L2. They found this to be true whether L1 
schooling is received only in home country or in both home country and the 
status (SES) issues as significant, stating that:

We have known that socio-economic status (SES) is a powerful factor in 
predicting student achievement in traditional content areas, such as reading 
and math, regardless of whether they are language minority or native 
speakers of English. It now appears certain that SES is powerful in 
predicting rate of English acquisition. (Hakuta et al., 2000: 13)

These findings further support theories of language transfer or linguistic 
interdependence, along with the idea of a ‘common underlying proficiency’ that 
were explored earlier (Baker, 2001; Cummins, 1979, 1991; Cummins & Swain, 
1986). They alert us to the potential impact SES has on language learning, and 
to the challenges minority language speakers face, especially considering that 
the majority language speakers are themselves developing deeper levels of 
English proficiency. As such, native English-speakers are a moving target, not 
waiting for the English-language learners to catch up to them (Collier, 1995; 
Cummins, 2001b; Thomas & Collier, 1997).

Ultimately, whatever the learning situation, English-language learners face 
significant challenges in developing proficiency in English. A positive 
orientation to their own emerging bilingual and bicultural identities has been 
posited as being hugely influential in enabling such students to meet these 
learning challenges.

Identity Issues

The successful development of an individual’s bilingualism and biliteracy is 
highly dependent on the social context, embracing the socio-economic, socio-
cultural and socio-political circumstances of the individual English-language 
learner (Brisk, 2000; Collier, 1995; Cummins, 2000a, 2001b; Nieto, 2004; Ovando
& Collier, 1998). Our social contexts strongly influence how we identify ourselves and how, in turn, we are identified by others (McNamara, 1997). For children, as their social context changes, subtly or substantially – from school to home, from teacher to teacher, amongst different friendship groups – so too does the way they enact and interpret their identities. Norton (1997, 2000) remarks that one’s sense of identity is continually being constructed and re-negotiated as a result of one’s interaction with others, and as mediated by a range of institutions such as families, schools, and workplaces.

This notion of identity as complex, changing and multidimensional makes the plural form *identities*, more useful and appropriate, particularly to discussions of second language acquisition amongst immigrant and refugee children. As these students’ sense of their complex identities evolves, and as they come to understand more clearly the ways their teachers and their school positions them and their various forms of cultural and linguistic knowledge, the following description of identity construction becomes more salient:

> how people understand their relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how people understand their possibilities for the future. (Norton, 1997: 410)

If schools actively affirm diverse forms of linguistic and cultural knowledge, the development of students’ self-esteem, sense of identity, self-belief, attitude to school-based learning, and sense of a personal future is likely to be positive, regardless of their background. By contrast, if students’ non-dominant linguistic or cultural knowledge is identified by schools as a deficit, as a problem to be overcome or ignored in developing proficiency in the majority language and in the goal of embracing the majority culture, a diminished, devalued sense of student identity becomes more likely. Cummins (2000a, 2001b) describes schools that successfully cater for linguistically and culturally diverse students as being those that foster strong, positive student identities through the promotion of collaborative power relations between educators, students and the school community. All too often, he argues, schools reinforce
coercive relations of power where diverse student identities related to linguistic and cultural background, gender, race, or sexuality are devalued or dismissed.

Drawing on both social constructionist and poststructuralist conceptualisations, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004a) propose that notions of identity or ‘subjectivity’ (Pennycook, 2001) are shaped by the narratives, discourses and ideologies that surround language as used, and as viewed, within specific contexts. Rather than being defined by single aspects such as gender or ethnicity, identities have been viewed as multiple, fragmented and hybrid, constructed around overlapping possibilities for identification and affiliation such as “age, race, class, ethnicity, gender, generation, sexual orientation, geopolitical locale, institutional affiliation, and social status” (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004a: 16). Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004a) also support the view that identity formation is strongly embedded in power relations. This point is likewise emphasised by Pennycook (2001) who argues that – central to what he terms critical applied linguistics – reductionist or essentialised views of second language learners must be challenged, and that understanding language learning in social context necessitates the acknowledgement of power as an essential dimension in this process. He links manifestations of power to the ways second language learners’ identities or subjectivities are constructed, co-constructed, negotiated and transformed in classroom and wider societal contexts.

May (2003), like Pennycook, rejects essentialised and homogenised constructs of language groups. Yet, he acknowledges that, for some, language can clearly be a highly “important and constitutive factor of their individual and, at times, collective identities” (May, 2003: 141). While agreeing that language may be one of several possible markers of identity, May (2003) stresses that identity constructs based on language have become salient where coercive or proscriptive language laws have been enacted. One needs only to consider the Afrikaans-English issue in the Soweto uprising in 1970s apartheid South Africa.
or the ways regional languages have been emblematic rallying points and identity markers in post-colonial India to see his point.

Giroux (1992: 207) also argues that identities “are constructed in multi-layered and contradictory ways” constantly undergoing transformation and change, and inextricably linked to the socio-political context of the individual. This is a common theme in the literature around identity: that, while it resides within the individual, it is forged by social interactions in which power is inextricably implicated. As such, identity construction is seen as fluid, shifting and context-related, but pivotal to the way students construct themselves in terms of who they understand themselves to be now, and what they might become in the future (Norton, 1997).

Kanno (2003) links bilingual and bicultural identity construction to how and where bilingual individuals position themselves between two languages and two (or more) cultures, and how they incorporate these languages and cultures into their sense of who they are. (Kanno, 2003: 3)

While potentially essentialist, different stages of cultural – or bicultural – self-identification that follow a common trajectory have been articulated (Phinney, 1989; Tse, 2000). An early childhood period marked by an unawareness or lack of consciousness of ethnic/cultural identity, is seen, in many cases, to lead to a period of adolescent ambivalence or evasion when assimilation into the dominant group is strived for. Self-definition around bicultural, hybrid constructs is seen to emerge in adulthood. Whether this bicultural orientation is positively viewed within the individual might reflect, in no small part, the role played by powerful institutions such as schools in identity formation. For immigrant, refugee, indigenous and students from low socio-economic backgrounds, negotiation of identity necessarily involves recognition of the identity-shaping ideological, pedagogical and social practices associated with differentials of power as exercised by these powerful institutions. It is this
central issue of power that is addressed in the next section of the Literature Review.
Bilingual Learners: The Political Dimension

To understand what it is about minority groups, their cultures and languages that makes crossing cultural boundaries and school learning difficult for some but not for others, we must recognise that there are different types of minorities. (Ogbu, 1992: 8)

Key Political Issues in Bilingual Development

To investigate bilingualism or minority educational provision merely in terms of the personal mechanisms by which a second language is acquired, or the pedagogical conditions that support it, would be to overlook an area essential to understanding the complexities of the issue. The socio-political circumstances of bilingual learners need to be strongly taken into account in any study of bilingualism or bilingual learning, as is widely emphasised (Beykont, 2000; Corson, 2001; Cummins, 1986, 1994, 2000a; Macedo, 1993, 2000a; Pennycook, 1995; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Macedo (2000a), for example, rejects any scientific or research agenda that seeks to investigate school or student failure without studying (and critiquing) the societal conditions into which such failure can be contextualised. Tollefson (1995: 1), likewise, states that “research in applied linguistics must incorporate, as a central concept, the issue of power.” Pennycook (2001) argues that researchers need to do more than link language learning to society, stressing attention must be paid to critical questions of “access, power, disparity, desire, difference and resistance” (Pennycook, 2001: 6).

Issues of power, status and politics are central to understanding why some bilingual education programs succeed, while others founder and fail their students, it is argued (Bialystok, 2001; Bialystok & Cummins, 1991; Corson, 1999, 2001; Cummins, 1986, 2000a, 2001b; Nieto, 2004). Many studies and theorists researching and reporting on English acquisition amongst minority language speakers find socio-economic status is closely linked to diminished student learning opportunities and increased likelihood of school dropout or failure (Baker, 2001; Garcia, 1993; Garcia, 1995; Hakuta et al., 2000; Krashen,
1996; Marjoribanks, 2002; Romaine, 1995; Tollefson, 1995). When circumstances of poverty disproportionately affect specific sectors of the population, thereby limiting their levels of educational access and societal power in comparison to more affluent groups, a political dimension is opened up that requires closer examination.

In order to explore the political dimensions, status incongruities, and power disparities which impact on minority language speakers, their schools and their communities, the following section of the Literature Review addresses a number of key questions:

- In what specific ways can linguistic practices and language use vary across diverse cultural and other societal sub-groups?
- How is the higher value attached to certain linguistic and cultural practices manifested?
- How can the notion that contrasting values are attached to different forms of cultural and linguistic expression be conceptualised?
- In terms of bilingual education and other minority educational issues, how is this ‘symbolic violence’ played out?
- In what ways can these power relations and imbalances be recognised and effectively addressed?

These questions are relevant to my study in that the bilingual learners under investigation are being educated in a setting that, through validating and extending the linguistic and cultural knowledge the students bring from home, is making a strong political statement about the value typically attached to majority and minority languages in schools.

**Linguistic Diversity and Non-Standard Varieties of Language**

In immigrant societies like Australia and the United States, the diversity of languages known and used by members of the population is augmented by the many spoken and written varieties that can be found within languages. The
language(s) we speak, the registers of language we draw on in different social contexts, and how we sound when we speak can be strong markers of identity, both in terms of how we view ourselves and how others view us (Barratt-Pugh, 2000b; Ferdman, 1990; Lankshear et al., 1997; Miller, 2003; Norton, 1997, 2000). Language is inextricably linked to myriad social purposes and context-specific functions (Gee, 1996a, 1996b; Luke & Freebody, 1997; Maybin, 1994; Street, 1995, 2000, 1993) and, as such, is “constitutive of and constituted by a language learner’s identity” (Norton, 2000: 5). The language or variety of a language a speaker or writer uses often marks them as a member of a particular societal group (university educated, migrant, ESL student, urban youth, Latino/a, Aboriginal person, etc.), and this triggers a range of possible responses in the listener or receiver of such language.

‘Language variety’ is a term used to describe any “standard or non-standard variety of a language, whether a geographical or social dialect, a patois, a creole, or some other code of a language” (Corson, 2001: 67). What signifies a valued ‘standard’, as opposed to an often less-than-valued ‘non-standard’ variety of language is inextricably entwined in the history, dominant culture and power structures of society (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Corson, 2001; Delpit, 1988; Devine, 1994; Fairclough, 1989; Macedo, 1994; Pennycook, 1995; Street, 1994, 1995; Tollefson, 1995).

‘Standard’ language forms are inevitably those spoken and used by the more powerful group(s) in society. These language varieties become privileged and normalised – the ‘language of power’ (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993) in schools and society. They become identified as the proper way to speak or write, and serve as the benchmark against which the population at large can be measured. In this way, children raised in homes already speaking a society’s ‘language of power’ are educationally advantaged from their first day of school, as they already possess forms of linguistic and cultural knowledge – or a discourse – valorised by schools and society. The form of standard English, which vary
from country to country (Standard Australian English, etc.), most valued in schools is best exemplified by the essay style academic register that equates to successful educational outcomes (Gee, 1994). Those children whose home language or variety of language is deemed ‘non-standard’ (usually children from low SES families, native speakers of immigrant languages, and indigenous children) risk marginalisation unless they develop competence in the standard language form (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Delpit, 1988, 1995).

Non-standard varieties of English clearly identified with specific groups within society include speakers of African American Vernacular English in the United States (Corson, 2001; Delpit, 1988, 1995), speakers of Koori or Aboriginal English forms in Australia (Harkins, 1994; Malcolm, 1999, 2002), and the hybrid ‘Spanglish’ forms spoken in U.S. Latino and Chicano communities (Anzaldúa, 1990). Other non-standard varieties of English might emerge from a number of factors, such as the location of the speaker or speech community: non-standard language forms often being found in inner-urban environments or remote rural regions (Corson, 2001).

Different methods of communicating, including the linguistic structures and varieties of language that are commonly used in different social contexts by diverse societal groups and sub-groups, have been identified as ‘Discourses’ (Gee, 1996b, 2002). Distinctly capitalised, Gee’s notion of ‘Discourse’ can be described as specific ways that humans present themselves, articulate ideas, and interact with the world around them; and that the forms of Discourse people use or embody are determined by who they are (or perceive themselves to be) and the immediate social context of the individual (how they are perceived by others).

Particular languages or forms of language are appropriate to specific contexts and environments, and competent social interaction necessitates the appropriate choice of language or language form for a particular situation.
However, certain languages and language forms are generally valued more highly than others, carrying more power and authority. This issue of status is pivotal to an understanding of the political issues surrounding the language of non-standard or non-English speakers in Australian schools. It links to my study in terms of the subaltern status of many immigrant languages in the Australian school system, and the lack of strong educational programs which aim to maintain and develop them through additive bilingual learning arrangements.

**Manifestations of Language Power and Status Issues**

Since the seminal theoretical works on language varieties (Bernstein, 1971, 1975, 1973; Labov, 1972) and ethnographic studies of language use in homes, communities and schools (Heath, 1983; Hymes, 1974, 1981; Wells, 1986), there have been many, often long-term sociolinguistic studies undertaken in diverse communities. These have frequently documented differences between the language and culture of school and those of the home or community (Barone, 1999; Cairney & Ruge, 1998; Durgunoglu & Verhoeven, 1998; Martin-Jones & Jones, 2000; Ogbu, 2003; Saxena, 2000), in particular exploring the idea of a ‘mismatch’ between the language (or form of language) spoken at home, and that which is prized and affirmed by schools and society at large.

In many school settings, the minority language background speaker, or the non-standard language user is often denigrated and coerced into refraining from using the language of the home, and compelled to adopt the language of the school. As Beykont (2000) observes of the U.S. context:

> Young people struggle to take pride in their native language while being pressured to abandon it and replace it with English. (Beykont, 2000: viii)

Instances of these exertions of power between majority and minority language speakers have been well documented in studies of both classroom discourse practices and language use in society (Cummins, 2000a; Donahue, 1995; Martin-Jones & Jones, 2000; Romaine, 1995; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). They have also
been attested to in many minority background students’, parents’ and teachers’ reflections on educational provision for English-language learners (Calderón & Carreón, 2000; Clachar, 1997; Leistyna, 2002; Soto, 2002; Thompson, 2000). Nonetheless, the teaching of socially powerful literacies for all students is vigorously advocated, even by educationists strongly committed to affirming diversity and combating racism (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Delpit, 1988, 1995; Macedo, 1994). However, the psychological and educational impact of linguistic denigration or suppression needs to be confronted by schools and teachers who risk over-zealously attempting to initiate minority students into the literacy of power.

**Linguistic and Cultural Capital: What is Valued and What is Not**

In her analysis of the political and pedagogical contexts of bilingual learners in the United States, Beykont (2000) remarks that, while the U.S. is demonstrably multilingual and multicultural in terms of population demographics, it continues to be ideologically monolingual and monocultural in terms of politics and power. Similar tensions and conflicts have been observed in the Australian context (Clyne, 1998; Lo Bianco, 1999, 2001a), as commented upon earlier. These contradictions were also explored and critiqued by Corson (1999) who noted that while the voices of minorities are increasingly heard, these socio-cultural identities often have little value in the marketplace. As a result, “students and teachers from diverse backgrounds find that their interests are still missing from education” (Corson, 1999: 4).

The idea of cultural and linguistic ‘capital’ (Bourdieu, 1991; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) is a very helpful conceptualisation in terms of explicating social realities that esteem certain forms of cultural and linguistic knowledge above others. Bourdieu – and those influenced by his theories (Barratt-Pugh, 2000b; Luke, 1993; May, 1994a; Miller, 2003; Norton, 2000) – argue that possession of valued forms of linguistic and cultural capital can be highly advantageous as one negotiates school learning, as it is the school system that affirms the cultural
knowledge and linguistic competencies that define, accompany or mirror high status languages and language varieties. Drawing on Bourdieu’s theories, Corson (1998) portrays “the culture of the school as a creation of the dominant culture, whose practices are reinvented and perpetuated through education” (Corson, 1998: 9).

What is of critical importance in this understanding of cultural and linguistic capital is the fact that, while many students from class, gender, or cultural backgrounds that differ from the school-recognised norm do not already possess these forms of knowledge, schools often operate as if they do (Corson, 1998, 2001; Delpit, 1988, 1995). As Corson (1998: 10) explained, “the school passes on training and information which can be fully received only by those who have had the culturally appropriate training that the school itself does not give.” He suggested a sinister reason as to why this might not occur, this being:

that school qualifications lose their value if too many people gain access to them, so schools begin to place more value on other factors, especially the cultural capital prized and possessed by dominant groups, such as style, presentation of self, and use of high status language. (Corson, 1998: 10)

Bourdieu (1998) was equally damning in positing his explanation of why schools fail to pass on these powerful forms of language and knowledge to students who lack them:

the school, once thought of introducing a form of meritocracy by privileging individual aptitudes over hereditary privileges, actually tends to establish, through the hidden linkage between scholastic and cultural heritage, a veritable social nobility. (Bourdieu, 1998: 22)

In this way, entrenchment of power elites in their positions of authority results in the perpetuation of the disenfranchised position experienced by those societal groups whose cultural and linguistic capital is not viewed as being of sufficient worth to warrant access to positions of societal power. Bourdieu (1991) likened this to a display of ‘symbolic power’ on the part of the power elites of society, who inflict ‘symbolic violence’ on those without status, power and authority.
What has been noted by some (Giroux, 1992) as absent or under-emphasised in this depiction of ‘symbolic power’ and ‘symbolic violence’, is the possibility for these trends to be resisted and countered by individuals, families, schools, and communities. These assertions that Bourdieu’s theories are too deterministic have been countered, notably by May (1994a), though have not been laid to rest (see Pennycook, 2001). One productive outcome of this dilemma has been a focus on the notion of ‘agency’, which refers to the:

ways in which some people are able to take a standpoint, to show initiative, even where there may be an asymmetry of power relations, and to use discursive resources to represent themselves and to influence situations to their own advantage. (Miller, 2003: 115)

Focussing specifically on schools, the notion of individuals or groups being agents in effectively responding to discriminatory educational policies and practices has been emphasised in recent second language acquisition research (May, 1999a; Miller, 2003; Norton, 1997; Norton & Toohey, 2001; Pennycook, 2001).

In light of this, if schools are to make sincere attempts to empower minority students, the need emerges to explicitly unpack the literacies of power with these students, thereby giving them the opportunity to both acquire and critically examine them (Delpit, 1988, 1995, 1999). This need for minority language students to learn (and critique) a society’s dominant language is often mis-represented by lobbyists opposing bilingual education programs as a justification for “English Only” instruction. In fact, precisely the opposite argument emerges from a review of the research literature, the vast pedagogical ramifications of which will be explored in the final section of this Literature Review.

‘Symbolic Violence’ and its Manifestations

If one accepts that schools cater for the needs and interests of some more privileged groups in society at the expense of the interests of some other socio-cultural groups (Corson, 2001), the only humane response is to attempt to
redress this injustice. This can best be achieved by striving to understand how entrenched power is maintained, and by developing democratic, transformative pedagogies that might effectively empower students as agents to respond to this fact. This activist path reflects reshaped, critical approaches to education, particularly literacy education that addresses:

the interests of marginalised groups of learners, who on the basis of gender, cultural and socio-economic background have been excluded from access to the discourses and texts of dominant economies and cultures. (Luke, 1997: 143)

The methods employed to privilege certain forms of cultural and linguistic knowledge and demean and devalue others have been widely discussed (Corson, 1998; Cummins, 2000a; Dicker, 2000; Donahue, 1995; Romaine, 1995; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). On a macro, societal level, arguments have been posited that diversity divides (Huntington, 2004; Sheehan, 1998), and that bilingualism closes doors of opportunity that monolingualism would strangely open (Schlesinger, 1991). Likewise, claims that – as an outcome of bilingual education – “becoming a ‘bi-illiterate’ is hardly better than having the same lack of ability in one language” (Barry, 2001: 215) create a broad context in which multiculturalism and multilingualism are routinely vilified. This makes the subsequent denigration of diversity on the micro, school level more possible: with the more common coercive practices being the discouragement or punishment of students for using their home language at school, the subtle or overt ridiculing of non-standard discourses, and the absence of meaningful multicultural perspectives from the school curriculum. The following testimony personalises this reality.

I remember being caught speaking Spanish at recess - that was good for three licks on the knuckles with a sharp ruler. I remember being sent to the corner of the classroom for “talking back” to the Anglo teacher when all I was trying to do was tell her how to pronounce my name. (Anzaldua, 1990: 203)

American educator, Linda Christensen recalls her own school days with anger where her ‘non-standard’ variety of language was mockingly used as an
example of how not to speak, and how it was only much later that the political, power dimensions of this form of symbolic violence became apparent.

It wasn’t until I studied the history of the English language that I realized there might have been a reason, other than stupidity, laziness, or ignorance for the way my family pronounced words and used verb tenses. And I was angry that I hadn’t been taught that history, that I’d been allowed, in fact, made, to feel ashamed of my home language. Today I am outraged by that experience. (Christensen, 1999: 209)

These personal testimonies of the systemic ‘symbolic violence’ experienced by many minority background students highlight what leads to the disengagement of many minority students from their learning. This, in turn, has a cyclical or spiralling effect: these students adjust their expectations downwards and these lower expectations become part of the way they look at the world (Corson, 1998; Nieto, 2004). Their identities, their sense of cultural, linguistic and personal worth, are greatly diminished in the process. The result is increased disengagement from school-based learning.

How success and failure are judged in schools is inextricably linked with what is valued, or what has status or capital. This calls into question assessment procedures, or what Corson (1998: 10) terms “the slanted criteria schools use to judge success.” These procedures are supported, in his view, because minority students and their parents submit to them, willingly or otherwise, simply by playing the game of schooling.

Symbolic violence is enacted when minority students’ languages are devalued or dismissed and their cultural knowledge and prior experiences are denigrated, when parent participation is undervalued, and when assessment practices discriminate unfairly and ‘blame the victim’ (Cummins, 1986). When these negative practices intersect, the results can be devastating for the minority student. Corson (2001), in reporting the readiness of minority language or non-standard speakers to stigmatise their own language variety, observes that this
means they often condemn themselves to silence in public settings for fear of offending norms they themselves sanction.

‘Symbolic Violence’ in Australia

Australia is a country where a highly selective, exclusionist immigration policy over the course of its history has ensured the dominance of the English language, and the perpetuation of Anglo-Australian hegemony (Jupp, 2002). As a result, the importance of English-language proficiency has always been paramount in official government policy. Lo Bianco and Freebody (2001) see Australia’s embracing of a policy of universal English-language literacy as evidence of the view that English is what really matters: for the individual to gain meaningful employment, develop and maintain a range of personal pursuits, participate in civic and cultural life, and contribute to the economic life of the nation, a deep knowledge of English is vital.

At the government level, languages other than English have traditionally been viewed as obstacles to national cohesion, despite the fact that multilingualism was a feature of Indigenous Australia prior to the arrival of the British and others after 1788, and regardless of the many languages immigrants have brought to Australia over the past two hundred years (Clyne, 1991; Djité, 1994; Smolicz, 1999). For native English-speakers, knowledge of a language other than English has been viewed as evidence of an elite, sophisticated education; or has been seen as beneficial in terms of facilitating economic engagement with other countries, particularly those in the Asia-Pacific region (Council of Australian Governments, 1994; Lo Bianco, 1999).

By contrast, the official attitude towards the maintenance of the languages of immigrant communities in Australia has rarely been anything other than dismissive. Lo Bianco (2000a) has observed that mastery of high status, essentially non-immigrant languages has been seen as a skill that contributes positively to society,
however, when the languages are less foreign, when emotional attachment and mastery may be high, their study, public use, and maintenance ‘threaten civilisation’. (Lo Bianco, 2000a: 99)

The tension surrounding these differing bilingual contexts has been likened to a ‘skill versus sedition’ dichotomy (Lo Bianco, 1999, 2000a). Hakuta and McLaughlin (1996) refer to the same tension as being evidence of ‘elite versus folk bilingualism.’

Despite Australia’s official bi-partisan embracing of a national multicultural policy (see timeline in Appendix 1), the federal election victory of the Howard Liberal-National Coalition in 1996, with other right wing, anti-multicultural, anti-immigration forces in the ascendant, saw language policy re-locate squarely on issues of English language proficiency. A “back to basics” sentiment was embodied in discourses of literacy crises, falling standards, school reform, and the need for zero tolerance of educational failure. The ‘school improvement model’ articulated by Hill and Crevola (1999) underscored this discourse, though these views are widely critiqued (Hammond, 1999; Hargreaves et al., 2001; Luke et al., 1999). It is in this continuing climate which disregards linguistic and cultural diversity, and marginalises ESL issues (Lo Bianco, 2001a) that bilingual programs are so vulnerable, and the cultural and linguistic resources of bilingual students so undervalued.

During the 1996 – 2005 period, the symbolic violence inherent in government and corporate media rhetoric has been overt with, at various times, the targets being Asian migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, Muslims, ‘ethnic enclaves’, and the ‘bleeding heart liberals’ who advocate for them and for societal diversity and harmony. This anti-diversity discourse has been strongly reflected in the increasingly narrow views of curriculum and pedagogy. A recent national framework for ‘values education’ in Australian schools, depicting World War One era soldiers in front of an Australian flag
(Commonwealth Department of Education Science and Training, 2005) (see Appendix 4) epitomises this regressive backward-looking trend.

**Minority Success and Failure: Some Important Differentials**

Two arguments used by proponents of English-only instruction for immigrant/minority language students go something like this: “In the good old days when there were no special arrangements like bilingual education and ESL classes, immigrant students learned English better and faster than today” and “If bilingual education is so important and valuable, why do many immigrant students learn English just fine without it?” These sorts of remarks are often vociferously expressed to educators advocating multicultural and bilingual education arrangements. I have re-iterated them here in the vernacular in which they are often expressed, as this exemplifies the tone of argument that defies empirical research data, instead relying on a type of imposed folk wisdom impervious to reason or research. However, given that these arguments are the ones that often feature prominently in, and shape public debate, they need to be soundly critiqued. As Ovando and Collier (1998) observe in relation to bilingual education:

> Popular attitudes ... rarely stem from scientific understanding of second-language acquisition or pedagogy; yet they have exerted a major influence on policy makers. (Ovando & Collier, 1998: 29)

First, the ‘good old days’ notion is highly problematic. Beykont (2000) refutes the idea that earlier generations of immigrant children learned English faster than today, stating that in the past, industrial society was ready to absorb large numbers of students with less than perfect levels of English and less than a high school degree, which is not the case today. She also argues that, in the past, many immigrant and minority students did not succeed in school, with large numbers being consigned to special education classrooms. Lastly, Beykont scrutinises the social cost of language loss, arguing that replacement of immigrant languages by English created – and still creates – family fractures in that communication between generations within families is disrupted.
In response to the second riposte made by anti-bilingual assimilationists, it should be noted that even the staunchest bilingual education advocates admit that immigrant students can, and do, learn English in school situations where their first language is not supported (Cummins, 2000a, 2001a). However, it needs to be remembered that this comes at a cost. As mentioned earlier, continuing the development of a child’s first language, while aiding the acquisition of a second, often allows for academic language proficiency to develop in both languages sooner than if just English were taught in a ‘subtractive’ learning environment (Collier, 1989, 1995; Hakuta et al., 2000; Ovando & Collier, 1998; Thomas & Collier, 1997).

Additive bilingual learning for students from non-dominant language backgrounds also strongly links to identity issues (Cummins, 2001b, 2003b; Norton, 1997, 2000), and the long-term impact of language loss through schools’ and society’s undervaluing of diversity is painfully evident in the words of an academic colleague of mine who reflected on her own schooling in Melbourne in the 1970s.

As a child I didn't know a word of English when I started school...culturally times were different for students like myself in the 1970s...being multilingual (sic) was not seen as advantage, rather a handicap and something that was shamed. The only language was English otherwise you weren't fully human....or so it felt. Understandably I have lost much of my mother tongue and I am totally distressed by that now... people often say "Why don't you just take some classes?" but they don't understand the issue. ("Jenny": personal email communication, 2003)

My feeling on reading her testimony is that, if this is how a successful university lecturer feels, how do other students from the past feel? Clearly, Jenny feels that her educational success was achieved with the unnecessary loss of her first language and aspects of her ancestral culture. It begs the question as to what residual memories are now held by those students whose identities the school system so demeaned that they failed or dropped out well before they should have?
What needs to be recognised in examining issues of school failure or success amongst English-language learners is that the vast majority of these students currently learn in school contexts where their home language is not supported (Baker, 2001; Cummins, 2000a; Nieto, 2004). So, if there are disproportionate levels of school failure experienced by these students, factors other than bilingual education opportunities need to be examined.

“Different types of minorities”

In exploring factors affecting educational success and failure amongst cultural and linguistic minorities in the United States, a plea has been made for differentiation between minority groups in society, according to criteria linked to historical migration issues, past and present status, socio-economic factors, and identity issues: orientation towards themselves as a group and to the rest of society (Ogbu, 1978, 1983, 1991, 1992, 1993, 2003). Ogbu argues that, as a result of historical and contemporary factors, educational success becomes far more difficult for those minority groups that suffer most from racial discrimination, cultural vilification, material deprivation and linguistic subjugation. Ogbu (1991) also highlights the challenges faced by students whose communities’ values or beliefs are, to some significant level, at variance with the dominant culture and values of the school and the wider society.

Ferdman (1990) provides examples of groups both favourably and unfavourably disposed to the dominant culture’s schooling and societal values in the United States. First, he describes the oppositional stance taken by some Mexican-American/Chicano students for whom doing well at school and being involved in classroom learning signals a form of surrender to a school system that systematically devalues the linguistic and cultural forms of knowledge that mark their Chicano identity. Second, he contrasts this with many Japanese-American students whose linguistic and cultural capital is more positively valued in school contexts (their perceived values of studiousness and
compliance being affirmed in schools, no matter how essentialised this representation), and who did not therefore see their bilingual or bicultural identities as being compromised by their success in the American school system.

Ogbu’s observations of minority issues, and his identification of different types of minorities have international resonance, and help explain aspects of school failure in many diverse settings. Ogbu (1991, 1992) draws the distinction between minorities who are ‘voluntary’, having migrated to their country of residence more or less freely in order to seek a better life (e.g. Japanese- or Korean-American families), and those who are ‘involuntary’, best exemplified as indigenous or subjugated minorities (e.g. Australian Aborigines, Native Americans, Mexican-Americans), as well as African Americans whose ancestors’ arrival in the Americas was anything but voluntary.

Particularly in relation to self-image and relation to the dominant, majority group in society, Ogbu has also conceptualised minorities as being either ‘autonomous’, ‘immigrant’, or ‘castelike’ in status (Ogbu, 1978, 1983). As suggested by the name, ‘autonomous’ minorities, while having distinct identities, are not subordinate to the dominant majority and are unlikely to be affected by disproportionate or persistent levels of school failure. These groups often are well-established groups, sometimes hard to distinguish from the majority group: Dutch or German immigrants in Australia, for example.

‘Immigrant’ minorities have usually moved willingly to their new home, and while they may be affected by low status and lack of power (particularly in the first years after arrival), motivation to learn and succeed is often high, and adjustment to school and success there is achieved by large numbers of students. Ogbu (1978) saw Cubans, Filipinos, Japanese and Koreans in the U.S. as examples of this immigrant category. In the past Australian context, students of Italian or Greek backgrounds might have best fitted this description.
In current times, many students from Asian backgrounds would match Ogbu’s notion of immigrant minorities.

‘Castelike’ minorities, in Ogbu’s terms, are those with the least status and power in society, often working in the lowest paid jobs, reliant on welfare and recipients of poor quality education. Often these minorities have been permanently and involuntarily incorporated into the ‘host’ society, and experience disproportionate failure at school, which in turn fosters a low self-image (Nieto, 2004). As a result, an ambivalent or oppositional collective identity often develops in relation to other more dominant societal groups, who frequently have negative and discriminatory attitudes towards them (Baker, 2001; Cummins, 2001b; Ogbu, 1978). Indigenous groups in many countries, and colonised or transported minorities like Puerto Ricans or African Americans in the U.S. fit this description, while in Australia, many indigenous learners would most closely correspond to this definition.

Ogbu’s categories correlate closely with those suggested by Corson (2001: 102) who described three main types of language minorities in modern societies: ancestral or indigenous peoples; established minorities (such as the more long-standing Spanish-speaking communities in the U.S. or post-Second World War European immigrants in Australia); and new minorities (made up of recently-arrived immigrants, refugees or asylum seekers, foreign workers living semi-permanently in their new home, and expatriates serving in countries tied in a loose community).

While categorising groups of people risks simplistic stereotyping and can overlook variation within groups of people, valuable insights can be uncovered by exploring differences between ‘castelike’ and ‘immigrant’ minorities, both of whom experience hardship, discrimination, and disorientation in unfamiliar or unsympathetic socio-cultural settings (Baker, 2001), albeit to differing degrees and for differing durations. Cummins (2001b: 39), in exploring differences
between voluntary and involuntary minorities, finds that the subordinated groups which tend to experience the highest levels of academic disadvantage are those that have never been accepted into the societal mainstream, have consistently seen their language and cultural identity denigrated, and have been subjected to inferior, sometimes segregated forms of schooling.

Nonetheless, Cummins (1986) has observed:

Widespread school failure does not occur in minority groups that are positively oriented towards their own and the dominant culture, that do not perceive themselves as inferior to the dominant group, and that are not alienated from their own cultural values. (Cummins, 1986:22)

Two striking examples can be provided of how a more sympathetic societal and educational environment can not only enhance student achievement, but overturn previous patterns of educational failure. The buraku, a Japanese outcaste minority group, experience discrimination and failure in Japanese schools, but have met with comparative success in American schools, where their status as erstwhile Japanese is highly regarded (Corson, 2001; Ikeda, 2001; Ogbu, 1978). Likewise, the failure rate of Finnish students in Swedish schools where their status is low (Honkala et al., 1988; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988, 2000) contrasts with their high success rate in Australian schools (Corson, 2001). These contrasts lead Corson (2001) to remark that there is clearly something happening that has little to do with language, and more to do with identity construction within educational systems supportive or unsympathetic to such students’ linguistic and cultural resources.

In terms of my research site, the challenges faced by students of Chinese- and Vietnamese-speaking backgrounds cannot be compared to those faced by colonised, castelike minorities like Aboriginal Australians. However, it needs to be remembered that the Australian socio-political landscape has, in recent years, seen often savage and crude attacks on Asian immigration levels, as critiqued by Cope and Kalantzis (2000b), Hage (1998), and Jupp (2002). In addition, unsubstantiated and ill-explored links drawn between organised crime and ethnicity, as analysed by Hage (2003) and Stratton (1998) have
unfairly linked sections of the Australian Vietnamese community with drug dealing. Finally, a punitive government immigration policy ensuring the ongoing uncertainty of refugees on temporary protection visas, like many of the families at the school chosen for the research – a policy phenomenon and social context documented by MacCallum (2002), Mares (2002), and McMaster (2001) – has placed these ‘new minorities’ (Corson, 2001) in positions of great vulnerability.

Given the range of issues faced by immigrant groups and other minorities, it would be simplistic to suggest that bilingual instruction or first language maintenance alone would suffice to address these students’ needs. As Cummins (2001b: 264) attests, “bilingual education, by itself, is not a panacea for students’ underachievement.” What is needed rather is a transformed pedagogical landscape where linguistic and cultural diversity is valued, and the rights of marginalised communities strongly championed.

**Developing Partnerships for Student, Parent and Community Empowerment**

The educational research literature contains many examples of where partnerships between the school and students, parents, and the community have served to counter hegemonic educational policies and practices. These include:

- exemplars of bilingual provision for English-language learners in Australia (Barratt-Pugh & Rohl, 2001; Lo Bianco, 2000b);
- models of dual language education in the U.S. (Calderón & Slavin, 2001; Freeman, 1996; Lindholm-Leary, 2001);
- accounts of how new information and communication technologies can enhance (multilingual) home-school partnerships (Chow & Cummins, 2003);
- investigations of critical multicultural education in action in settings as diverse as urban American classrooms (Delpit, 1995; Nieto, 1998) and
amongst mainly Maori and Pacific Islander children in New Zealand (May, 1994a); or

- discussions of how critical approaches to texts have been meaningfully and successfully integrated into the literacy curriculum in Australia (Comber, 1997a; O'Brien, 2001) or internationally (Bigelow et al., 1994; Christensen, 1999; Searle, 1998).

While the diversity of programs amongst this selection is huge, a common disposition towards knowledge and learning pervades the classrooms, teacher motivations, and attitudes amongst and towards students in all settings. Whether explicitly stated, or unconsciously enacted, the schools that develop such programs – often in close cooperation with students, parents, and community – choose to disrupt hegemonic educational policies that legitimate only certain forms of linguistic and cultural knowledge. Instead, they aim to valorise the diverse interests, understandings and repertoires that students bring to their learning while augmenting these with additional layers of knowledge, ideas and ways of seeing and being. Such schools recognise the power inequities in society that potentially disenfranchise some learners, while understanding that transformative approaches to teaching and learning offer real possibilities for students to become agents in their own empowerment. These pedagogical possibilities are explored in the final section of this chapter.
Bilingual Learners: The Pedagogical Dimension

Human relationships are at the heart of schooling. The interactions that take place between students and teachers and among students are more central to student success than any method for teaching literacy, or science or math. When powerful relationships are established between teachers and students, these relationships can frequently transcend the economic and social disadvantages that afflict communities and schools alike in inner city and rural areas. (Cummins, 2001b: 1)

Key Pedagogical Issues in Bilingual Development

Teachers make a difference. The role teachers play in inspiring, motivating, fostering curiosity, building knowledge, developing thinking skills, and advocating for their students has been seen as pivotal to students’ academic engagement and success. This finding has consistently emerged from sources ranging from formal research studies of schools, curricula, and innovations in education (August & Hakuta, 1998; Cuttance, 2001; Cuttance & Stokes, 2000; Delpit, 1999; Dunne & Wragg, 1994; Hill & Crevola, 1999; Joyce et al., 1999; Levine & Lezotte, 1990; Lindholm, 1990; Lucas et al., 1990; Reynolds & Cuttance, 1992; Stockard & Mayberry, 1992) to individuals’ personal reminiscences of their formative educational experiences, as documented by Barone (1999) and Poplin and Weeres (1992).

Cummins (2001b) reminds his readers of those educators many of us remember whose skill, knowledge, and engagement with students transformed not just our learning, but our view of ourselves and the world around us. Barone’s (1999) longitudinal study of 26 children who were pre-natally exposed to crack cocaine found that, once the children’s home lives were stabilised, each child could succeed academically, provided they were educated in supportive and challenging learning environments. Laquisha, one of the children in Barone’s study who had experienced numerous school and foster home placements, remembered with strong affection the teachers who had shown care and empathy while motivating her to learn.
As teachers, it is both reassuring and challenging that the impact we have on our students is so significant. It reinforces for committed teachers that the long hours of preparation and evaluation outside class hours are worth it; yet also highlights the importance of maximising our effectiveness through strategic, informed teaching. Especially in relation to English-language learners, teachers need to be well informed about the pedagogical principles and their classroom applications that will best address the language and learning needs of these students.

Despite Cummins’ (2001b) incredulity that some education policy makers continue to lament a supposed dearth of research evidence to support or refute the benefits of bilingual learning, there remains a widespread perception that teachers are still struggling to identify the most effective practices in providing a meaningful education for many minority language students (Collier, 1995). This final section of the Literature Review aims to explore the pedagogical factors that have proven to be effective for English-language learners. In particular, the research focussed on bilingual learning arrangements for language minority students will be closely critiqued.

In order to explore these pedagogical dimensions in a comprehensive manner, answers to the following questions will be pursued:

- What has research revealed about the school features, especially their pedagogical practices that best support the language and learning needs of minority language background students?
- What has research revealed about the effectiveness of bilingual education arrangements for minority language background students? What outcomes can be expected from different types of bilingual programs as opposed to monolingual forms of instruction?
- Which student, program and instructional variables strongly affect the long-term achievement of language minority students?
• What additional insights are required to augment our understanding of bilingual education arrangements and the extent to which they meet language minority students’ language and learning needs?

Successful Schools for Language Minority Students

Nieto (2004) states that no educational philosophy or program is worthwhile unless it focuses on two primary concerns:

• raising the achievement of all students and thus providing them with an equal and equitable education; and
• giving students the opportunity to become critical and productive members of a democratic society. (Nieto, 2004: 2)

These dual goals underpin many researchers’ and writers’ suggestions for possible pedagogies to cater more effectively for minority language background students.

The nature of teaching and teachers is to strive continually to improve student outcomes, and this is reflected in the breadth of published educational literature on school effectiveness. The field is very extensive, and the literature specifically focussing on school effectiveness and improvement for linguistic and cultural minorities is, likewise, comprehensive.

While offering valuable insights, a number of the school effectiveness studies (Cuttance, 2001; Hill & Crevola, 1999; Joyce et al., 1999; Levine & Lezotte, 1990, 1995; Mortimore et al., 1988; Stockard & Mayberry, 1992) make only tacit mention of cultural and linguistic diversity and its educational implications. As such, these studies risk diminishing the educational challenges faced by many minority background students, as well as potentially undervaluing the range of cultural and linguistic resources these students bring to their learning. School effectiveness studies which focus on diversity in schools are ultimately more useful in explicating how best to maximise learning opportunities for all students. These studies (Brisk, 2000; Coelho, 1998; Delpit, 1995, 1999; Gibson, 1991; Gregory & Williams, 2000a; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995b; Lindholm-
directly address issues of educational access, equity, engagement and opportunity as Nieto (2004) suggests.

Significantly, there are many similar findings in the Australian and international studies of school effectiveness cited in the preceding paragraph. Consistently identified factors which foster improved student learning are:

- visionary school leadership and organization (Brisk, 2000; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Marjoribanks, 2002);
- whole school involvement in, and commitment to, shared beliefs and goals (Cairney & Ruge, 1998; Hill & Crevola, 1999);
- high quality teaching and learning, facilitated through collaborative staff arrangements and practice-oriented staff development (Hill & Crevola, 1999; Lucas et al., 1990);
- a curriculum that reflects students’ needs and interests, and meaningfully draws on their cultural and linguistic knowledge (Coelho, 1998; Cummins, 2001b; Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1994);
- comprehensive and ongoing student assessment (Moran & Hakuta, 1995);
- high expectations of student achievement (Brisk, 2000; Cairney & Ruge, 1998; Moran & Hakuta, 1995; Thomas & Collier, 1997); and
- parent and community support and input into school programs (Cairney & Ruge, 1998; Gibson, 1991; Marjoribanks, 2002; Ovando & Collier, 1998).

All of these areas are complex, especially in the context of school communities dealing with issues of cultural and linguistic difference. Within the scope of this study, I have chosen to explicate the areas that are frequently linked to the school success of minority background students, or are specifically related to bilingual learning arrangements: those of curriculum provision, and pedagogical practices.
Exemplary Pedagogical Provision for English-Language Learners

Within the constructs of educational arrangements that value linguistic and cultural diversity, the notion of a student-centred classroom is entirely consistent. As Cummins (2001b) so passionately argues in the quote that precedes this section of the chapter, the development of a warm, supportive rapport between teacher and student is the foundation upon which the best teaching and learning takes place. In fact, a student-centred curriculum and classroom emerges from the literature as vital to successful student learning outcomes. Here in Australia, recent state and federal government curriculum policies and guidelines emphasise these pedagogical features (Department of Education (Queensland), 2000; Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2005a).

A description of the exceptional New Zealand bilingual learning arrangements at Richmond Road (Cazden et al., 1992) stresses that “the kids always come first.” May (1994b), also reporting on Richmond Road, identified the key features that demonstrate the school’s student-centred ethos. These encompass classroom structures which value students’ expertise as well as teacher knowledge, and provision of opportunities for students to engage in both independent and cooperative, collaborative learning. Other ways students’ needs are seen as paramount, as reported in the literature, are summarised in the table below.
TABLE 2.1 SUCCESSFUL FEATURES OF STUDENT CENTRED LEARNING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature of Student Centred Schooling</th>
<th>References in Professional Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classrooms that are supportive, low-threat sites of deep student learning.</td>
<td>(Gregory &amp; Williams, 2000a; Hamayan, 1994; Handscombe, 1990; Joyce et al., 1999; Lindholm-Leary, 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools that emphasise student welfare and safety.</td>
<td>(Barone, 1999; Martin-Jones &amp; Jones, 2000; Murray, 1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers who recognise and build on students’ strengths.</td>
<td>(Delpit, 1999; Gregory, 1996; Gregory &amp; Williams, 2000a; Ladson-Billings, 1994)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers who show themselves to be culturally sensitive and aware.</td>
<td>(Coelho, 1998; Corson, 2001; Kwong, 2000; Nieto, 2000, 2004; Pease-Alvarez &amp; Vasquez, 1994)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools that foster high levels of staff-student morale.</td>
<td>(Marjoribanks, 2002; Stockard &amp; Mayberry, 1992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools which see their role as being advocates for often marginalised students and communities.</td>
<td>(Cummins, 1986; Lucas et al., 1990)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A curriculum that provides choices for students in recognition of their different learning styles, interests and dispositions is strongly emphasised (Lucas et al., 1990; May, 1994b), as are the selection of units of work, topics and activities that motivate students to learn (Cummins, 1986; Handscombe, 1990; Wrigley, 2000). Curriculum integration (Murdoch & Hornsby, 1997; Pigdon & Woolley, 1992), whereby links between ‘content’ and ‘process’ subjects are maximised, is a teaching philosophy especially beneficial for second language learners. It fosters deeper knowledge as it contextualises learning more than traditionally compartmentalised subjects, draws on prior knowledge, foregrounds inquiry learning (Wilson & Wing Jan, 2003), and fosters critical thinking skills (Hamayan, 1994; Ovando & Collier, 1998; Thomas & Collier, 1997).

The need for student learning to be challenging is also consistently stressed (Freebody & Luke, 2003; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Marjoribanks, 2002), albeit within a teacher-student dynamic that sets high expectations of student achievement while providing a supportive environment that renders those expectations achievable (Cairney & Ruge, 1998; Gibson, 1991; Gregory & Williams, 2000a). This support is encouraged in the form of the ‘scaffolding’ of student learning (Wood et al., 1976), whereby unfamiliar language forms are
modelled and demonstrated, ideally drawing on students’ prior knowledge and linguistic understandings, taking them from the known to the unknown. Scaffolding student learning is well documented in terms of ESL learners (Gibbons, 2002; Gregory, 1996; Gregory & Williams, 2000a) speakers of non-standard varieties of English (Delpit, 1988, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1994) and indigenous literacy education in remote Australian settings (Rose et al., 1999). Gregory and Williams (2000a) describe the notion of scaffolding as leading to a form of ‘syncretic literacy’ which blends literacy traditions and practices; and makes connections between different home, school, and cross-cultural reading and literacy practices.

Scaffolding forms a major underpinning of the ‘multiliteracies’ pedagogy (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000c; Gee, 1996b, 2000; Kalantzis & Cope, 1999; New London Group, 1996; Unsworth, 2002). The four key components of ‘multiliteracies’: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice, emphasise the explicit teaching of powerful forms of literacy while reaffirming diverse languages and language forms. Scaffolding within a multiliteracies pedagogy sits comfortably with notions of bilingual learning, wherein the student’s first language knowledge effectively scaffolds development of understandings in a second language. Lo Bianco (2000a: 105) goes as far as saying that “a multiliteracies pedagogy cannot but be multilingual.”

**Bilingual Program Effectiveness**

As the bilingual debate is one that seems likely to continue to rage, given the well resourced opponents of this form of education in the United States, it is beneficial to contemplate the consensus that exists within applied linguistics on the issue (Cummins, 2000a):
• bilingual programs for students from minority and majority language backgrounds have been implemented successfully in countries around the world;
• bilingual education, by itself, is not a panacea for students’ underachievement;
• the development of literacy in two languages entails linguistic and perhaps cognitive advantages for bilingual students;
• significant positive relationships exist between the development of academic skills in L1 and L2; and
• conversational and academic registers of language proficiency are distinct and follow different developmental patterns.
(Cummins, 2000a: 202 - 203)

All these areas have been explored earlier in the chapter, but re-iterating them here is timely in that they remind us that investigating whether bilingual education works is actually superfluous. Baker (2001) argues that what does have use are investigations into the conditions in which bilingual education works best, building understanding of the optimal teaching and learning conditions for children who are either bilingual, becoming bilingual or wish to be bilingual. Moran and Hakuta (1995) also argue for investigations of how bilingual programs can better respond to the diverse communities they serve. Just how unnecessary it would be to mount further generic investigations into the effectiveness of bilingual education can be clearly seen in Cummins’ (2001b) calculation that over 150 research studies in numerous countries over the past 30 years have consistently revealed and re-inforced the cognitive, linguistic and psychological benefits in minority language speakers learning bilingually. Nonetheless, observations continue to be made along the lines of:

there is a lack of clear consensus about the advantages and disadvantages of academic instruction in the primary language in contrast to early and intensive exposure to English. (Snow et al., 1998)

Before critiquing and comparing the evaluations that have investigated different forms and outcomes of bilingual education, a closer investigation and differentiation between the strong (additive) and weak (subtractive) forms bilingual learning needs to be undertaken.
Types of Bilingual Education Programs

Many educational arrangements which profess to be bilingual programs are nothing of the sort (Corson, 2001; Hakuta & Mostafapour, 1996; Romaine, 1995). All too often, Baker (2001) laments, the term ‘bilingual education’ is used to describe classroom contexts where bilingual children are present, but where the program’s aims are, in fact, to replace that student’s first language with another: the majority language of that society. Likewise, Cummins (2001b) distinguishes between the ‘means’ and ‘goals’ of bilingual education programs: some may only offer dual language instruction as a means to replace the minority language with the majority one, while others may have the explicit goal of fostering proficiency in both languages. This distinction necessitates a closer examination of ‘additive’ and ‘subtractive’ forms of bilingual education, defined in “Chapter One: Introduction”, and referred to at various points of this thesis so far.

Drawing on conceptualisations made by Baker (2001: 194), Lotherington (2000), and Cummins (2001b), I have attempted to identify, in broad terms, the main types of learning arrangements that Australian minority language speakers might find themselves involved in: both additive and subtractive. I have outlined these in Tables 2.2 and 2.3. I recognise the artificiality of these constructs, and their limitations in that categories and labels for different types of bilingual programs vary from country to country. In addition, as Baker (2001) observes, bilingual classrooms are dynamic and constantly evolving, which means there are wide variations within a given model. Nonetheless, broad descriptions of program types can be of use when investigating the specific features and benefits of different forms of bilingual education programs. In light of this, I have described three forms of subtractive education arrangements below in Table 2.2:
### TABLE 2.2 SUBTRACTION FORMS OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Program</th>
<th>Typical Type of Child</th>
<th>Language/s of Instruction</th>
<th>Description of learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submersion Education</td>
<td>Language Minority</td>
<td>Majority language</td>
<td>Student placed in mainstream classroom where English is the sole language of instruction. Student possibly receives some ESL support (in class or withdrawal). No instruction or support in the student’s L1. Student’s L1 seen as an impediment to learning and school success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submersion Education with some L1 support.</td>
<td>Language Minority</td>
<td>Majority language with some L1 support.</td>
<td>Student placed in mainstream classroom where English is the sole language of instruction. Student receives some L1 instruction (usually a maximum of 2-3 hours per week) and possibly some ESL support (in class or through withdrawal). Short or long term maintenance or development of student’s L1 not a school priority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional Bilingual Education</td>
<td>Language Minority</td>
<td>Moves from minority language to majority</td>
<td>Student is supported in L1 until familiarised with L2 (majority language), along with school routines and culture. Often called “early exit programs”, the language of instruction then moves to majority language; L1 maintenance or development is no longer a school priority.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These conceptualisations of subtractive learning are especially common to the experiences of English-language learners in Australia. Very rarely does the student even experience the support offered by a transitional bilingual education program, let alone stronger forms of dual language support. Often, the school they are enrolled in has insufficient resources – in terms of staff expertise and training, as well as financial and material resources – to support students’ first languages, even if it was motivated to do so. Therefore, most English-language learners are educated in submersion classrooms where their first language is not actively supported. Intensive ESL instruction may be offered, in an attempt to help these students ‘swim’ rather than ‘sink.’ But often, submersion education means English-language learners are placed in
stressful learning situations, encounter problems with social and emotional adjustment, and find school a disorienting, threatening place (Baker, 2001; Cummins, 2000a, 2001b; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1984, 2000).

In an attempt to give validity to this unsatisfactory educational arrangement, many anti-bilingual lobbyists in, particularly, the United States have labelled submersion education as ‘immersion’, as noted by Nieto (2004). This is a cynical attempt to link this form of subtractive language teaching to the highly successful additive immersion classrooms in Canada which have, for 40 years, successfully developed student proficiency in English and French (Cummins & Swain, 1986; Swain & Lapkin, 1982). As such, they are the antithesis of the submersion arrangements under discussion here.

While a slight improvement on submersion models, transitional bilingual education programs are designed to support the students’ first language only until they are able to transfer into mainstream English-language classrooms. While there is a level of temporary L1 maintenance implicit in transitional bilingual learning arrangements, it is often a form of ‘static maintenance’ where attempts are made to prevent home language loss but not to increase skills in the first language (Baker, 2001). Transitional bilingual education programs often operate on a deficit model, in that the child’s first language is seen as a barrier to learning rather than an asset which might be of benefit in its own right, and even facilitate learning in the majority language. In the United States, these transitional bilingual arrangements are often restricted to students assessed as having the lowest levels of English language proficiency, and often have a ‘special education’ stigma attached to them in the minds of parents and teachers. Like the criticisms made of submersion education, it has been argued that students in quick-fix transitional bilingual programs often display “lower levels of second language proficiency, scholastic underachievement, and psychosocial disorders” (Hakuta & Mostafapour, 1996: 42).
Strong, additive forms of bilingual education are all too rare for both native English speakers and English-language learners in Australia. Again, drawing on the work of Baker (2001: 194), Lotherington (2000), and Cummins (2001b), I have put in tabular form these forms of learning arrangements, as they relate to language minority immigrant and indigenous students in Australia.

### TABLE 2.3 ADDITIVE FORMS OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Program</th>
<th>Typical Type of Child</th>
<th>Language/s of Instruction</th>
<th>Description of learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Maintenance</td>
<td>Language Minority</td>
<td>Bilingual with emphasis on L1, often decreasing as student gets older.</td>
<td>Students learn through both the home language and, increasingly, through English. Often termed “late exit programs”, exposure to both languages is prolonged, and reflective of student’s cultural knowledge and the realities of the need to engage in the wider society. Biliteracy – or written and spoken proficiency in both languages is the educational aim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Way/ Dual Language</td>
<td>Mixed Language Minority &amp; Majority</td>
<td>Usually equal amounts of minority and majority languages.</td>
<td>Student is learning in a class of approximately equal numbers of minority/majority language speakers. Both languages taught within a culturally inclusive context. Bilingualism and biliteracy are the educational aims.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Developmental maintenance bilingual education programs are intended to support and develop the first language of immigrant and/or indigenous communities, at the same time as introducing the majority language of English. In these programs, the student’s home language is seen as a personal and societal resource that is under threat from the dominant majority language of English.

In order to protect and develop the endangered language, while developing necessary skills in the majority language, various developmental maintenance bilingual program designs have been implemented. These range from programs where the minority language is almost entirely used as the language of instruction in the early years of a child’s schooling, to models where the
student learns in each of the languages for equal amounts of time. Developmental maintenance bilingual education programs are staffed in several ways: one bilingual teacher delivering the instruction in both languages; team teaching arrangements; and teachers sharing classrooms and operating morning-afternoon or alternate days programs in the minority and majority languages. Though not plentiful in Australia, there are some accounts of different additive bilingual arrangements (Barratt-Pugh & Rohl, 2001; Lam & Merrell, 1990; Lo Bianco, 2000b) to which this study, and linked publications (Molyneux, 2004) can be added. More studies have emerged from international sources (Ballenger, 1999; Brisk, 1998; Freeman, 1996, 1998; Lindholm & Fairchild, 1990; Ovando & Collier, 1998; Roberts, 1995; Wrigley, 2000), which offer enlightening, and varied portraits of bilingual practice. Whatever forms these programs take, their aim is to develop students’ bilingualism and biliteracy (Baker, 2001), and to foster self-esteem and a sense of pride in the linguistic and cultural traditions of their families, along with the skills to engage in academic use of the majority language.

Dual language classrooms, also known as two-way bilingual education programs, are educational arrangements in which approximately equal numbers of minority and majority language speakers side by side learn a minority and the majority language (Baker, 2001; Corson, 2001; Lindholm-Leary, 2001). Such linguistic diversity in the classroom provides students with models of both majority and minority language amongst their peers, and ready-made contexts for meaningful use of both languages. As such, bilingual learning takes place through student interaction as well as through direct teacher instruction. There is also a greater likelihood of enhanced cross-cultural communication and awareness, than there is in classrooms made up exclusively of minority or majority language speakers (Baker, 2001; Genesee & Gándara, 1999; Lindholm-Leary, 2001).
Lindholm-Leary (2001) notes that dual language programs are usually implemented in 90:10 or 50:50 ratio models, with the minority language usually emphasised in the early years of the 90:10 model, moving to a 50:50 arrangement in the later primary/elementary school. Despite its obvious advantages, Baker (2001) notes the practical difficulty in bringing together equal numbers of minority and majority background students in one school. In countries where large populations of minority language students equates to poverty, and where monolingual mainstream schooling is more attractive to parents, Baker (2001) argues that it is only when dual language schools are able to demonstrate high curriculum success rates for both minority and majority background students that they will begin to overcome this problem.

Therefore, research results highlighting the successes or benefits of bilingual education might attract larger numbers of native English-speakers to schools offering such programs, making dual language structures, as defined by Lindholm-Leary (2001) more possible. Yet schools like the chosen research site are ultimately judged (by governments at least) on the effectiveness with which they teach the national standard variety of English to speakers of regional or ethnic varieties and to second language learners such as immigrants and refugees (Corson, 1999). As such, research into the educational effectiveness of the variety of bilingual education arrangements is generally focused on English-language learning outcomes above bilingual proficiency or any other possible advantages such as identity enhancement, improved cognitive functioning, deeper cross-cultural understanding, expanded economic opportunities, and stronger community-school connections (Beykont, 2000). Arguably, a categorical emphasis on English-language proficiency is a highly lopsided premise under which to judge the effectiveness of bilingual education arrangements. Nonetheless, it underpins many of the evaluations of educational arrangements for English-language learners, which I now discuss.
Within the literature, there are research studies which have been conducted on broad, macro levels (Ramírez et al., 1991; Thomas & Collier, 1997); meta-analyses and major reviews of research studies (August & Hakuta, 1997; Collier, 1992; Gándara, 1999; Greene, 1997; Rossell & Baker, 1996; Willig, 1985); and smaller, highly contextualised investigations of sites of bilingual learning (Barratt-Pugh & Rohl, 2001; Fernandez, 1996; Freeman, 1996; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; May, 1994a; Oliver & Purdie, 1998). While lacking unanimity, the findings from these various forms of research come down consistently in favour of well implemented, additive bilingual education programs.

Large Scale Evaluations of Bilingual Education

Conducting large scale investigations into the effectiveness of bilingual education arrangements is highly problematic according to Baker (2001) who observes a lack of academic consensus as to what “effective” bilingual education programs encompass. He also perceives problems when studies overlook the broad range of different levels of learning and achievement within a specific bilingual program, let alone across similar or diverse programs. He likewise notes the limitations within many research studies and reviews of the literature that often reflect bias in relation to terms of reference, questions asked (and not asked), and schools, sites or types of programs investigated. Corson (2001: 116) also noted that drawing conclusions from large scale studies is difficult because:

- there is huge variation in bilingual practice amongst schools; and
- many schools with bilingual programs are bilingual in name only, making little use of the child’s first language.

For all these reasons, generalisability, which large scale evaluations aspire towards, becomes – at best – tentative.

An additional concern from the Australian perspective is that most of the large scale evaluations of bilingual learning have taken place in the United States (Ramírez et al., 1991; Thomas & Collier, 1997), where the educational and socio-
political situations under which bilingual learners operate are not directly comparable to Australia. This is despite some commonalities in both countries in relation to issues of power and the hegemonic practices that valorise English above other immigrant languages. These concerns notwithstanding, the results of such major studies warrant attention.

A congressionally mandated longitudinal study of bilingual education in the U.S. was undertaken by Ramírez and his colleagues (Ramírez et al., 1991). It was conducted across five states, and involved a four year analysis of the educational achievement of over 2300 Spanish-language background students from 554 Kindergarten to Sixth Grade classrooms. Using measures of achievement in English Language, English Reading and Mathematics, the study compared the academic progress of students engaged in three different types of learning:

- English monolingual arrangements, where the language of instruction was entirely – or almost entirely – English;
- Transitional or early-exit bilingual, where Spanish instruction, in general, amounted to one-third of students’ first two years of school; and
- Developmental Maintenance or late-exit bilingual, where Spanish instruction continued throughout the students’ elementary schooling, typically ranging from 100 percent in Kindergarten to about 40 percent by Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Grades.

The methodological design and data analysis procedures in the Ramírez study have been considerably scrutinised and critiqued (Baker, 1992; Collier, 1992; Cummins, 1992a; Dolson & Mayer, 1992; Rossell, 1992; Thomas, 1992) in terms of the omission from the study of strong forms of bilingual education, such as two-way, dual language arrangements; and the exclusion of attitudinal, self-esteem and identity enhancing outcomes from the investigation’s definition of educational success (Baker, 2001). Notwithstanding these criticisms of the research, it was found that, by the time students reached the Sixth Grade, the
late-exit bilingual education arrangements resulted in higher achievement in English and Mathematics than the levels achieved within the other programs. The Ramírez study unequivocally rendered as unsupportable the ‘time on task’ hypothesis: the notion that the more time English-language learners spend learning English, the greater their subsequent proficiency in that language (Cummins, 2001b; Ramírez et al., 1991).

Another large scale investigation into school effectiveness for language minority students in the United States was undertaken by Thomas and Collier (1997). This study, using the academic records of 700,000 students, investigated the learning outcomes of over 40,000 English-language learners involved in different forms of instructional arrangements. It has been termed “one of the largest investigations of educational effectiveness ever conducted” (Cummins, 2001b: 180). The investigation involved analysis of the academic records of language minority students over a period stretching from 1982 – 1996. It found that students learning exclusively in the majority language of school and society usually make significant gains in the early years of their elementary schooling, but the gap between native and non-native speakers widens as the academic demands increase in later years. Thomas and Collier’s (1997) study concluded, however, that students educated bilingually are often able to sustain the gains in the majority language, and in some cases, to achieve even higher than typical native-English-speaker performance as they move through the secondary years of school.

Thomas and Collier’s (1997) research found three key predictors of academic success for language minority students. These were:

- maintaining cognitively complex on-grade-level academic instruction through the students’ first language for as long as possible, along with cognitively complex on-grade-level academic instruction in English for part of the school day;
• active learning and interactive teaching approaches connecting students’ prior knowledge and experiences to new learning, and integrates language learning and academic content in a variety of ways so that all students are advantaged;
• a “transformed socio-cultural context” that provides the English-language learner with the same sort of supportive environment for learning in two languages that the monolingual English-language background student typically experiences for learning in English.

While recognising that socio-economic status is a powerful predictor of school achievement in many research studies in education, Thomas and Collier (1997: 39) found that “a school’s well-implemented bilingual program for English learners can indeed overcome the effects of low SES on long-term student achievement”. In terms of both its scope and its identification of key predictors of academic success for language minority students, Thomas and Collier’s (1997) study builds on the findings of those undertaken by Ramírez and his colleagues (Ramírez et al., 1991). Cummins (2000a) commends Thomas and Collier’s (1997) study, in particular, for its methodological strengths and its findings that link to theory and provide strong policy guidelines.

As broad ranging evaluations of bilingual learning, the like of which have not been undertaken (and are not perhaps not possible in Australia), both studies highlight that bilingualism and biliteracy deserve promotion as educational goals for both minority- and majority-language students, even if no one model can cater for the diverse characteristics of bilingual learners in the disparate contexts in which bilingual learning might occur (Cummins, 2001b).

Meta-analyses and Major Reviews of Bilingual Education Research
In addition to large scale evaluations like those discussed above (Ramírez et al., 1991; Thomas & Collier, 1997), several major reviews and meta-analyses of bilingual education have been conducted over the past twenty years. Many of
these investigations (August & Hakuta, 1997; Baker & de Kanter, 1983; Greene, 1997; Rossell & Baker, 1996; Slavin & Cheung, 2003; Willig, 1985) have proven highly contentious, and have revealed contrasting findings. Nonetheless, they have shaped and epitomised much of the debate surrounding educational issues for English-language learners. In this section, I briefly outline what claims these studies make about bilingual education and its effectiveness for language minority students; then detail the ensuing criticism of them, particularly on the grounds of their detachment from theorised positions on bilingual education (Cummins, 1999, 2000a).

In an educational and political climate increasingly uneasy with the notion of bilingual education for English-language learners, a major review of transitional bilingual education as opposed to English-only instruction was commissioned by the U.S. government and undertaken in the early 1980s (Baker & de Kanter, 1983). This study initially investigated 300 previous studies, rejecting all but 39 of them as being methodologically unsound or inappropriate for the purposes of the review. Using measures of student English language achievement along with academic results achieved in other curriculum areas, Baker and de Kanter (1983) found that English-only instruction was preferable to transitional bilingual learning arrangements for minority language background students. This major review has been severely criticised for its narrow definition of what constitutes success for school-aged children, its failure to consider stronger forms of bilingual education, its philosophical orientation towards assimilation and integration, and its essentially intuitive method of analysis (Baker, 2001; Cummins, 2001b; Willig, 1985).

An arguably more rigorous methodological technique for scrutinising related research studies is the approach known as ‘meta-analysis’. As defined by Baker (2001: 247), meta-analysis integrates empirical research studies, by examining the amount of effect or difference between them. Willig (1985) undertook a statistical meta-analysis of 23 studies from Baker and de Kanter’s (1983) review.
Willig concluded that, while generalisation was unwise due to the variety of bilingual learning arrangements, those programs that supported the L1 of English-language learners appeared consistently superior to those that concentrated solely on English. The advantages were found to range from small to moderate in terms of students’ achievement in English reading and language skills, Mathematics, and across the overall curriculum.

Findings highly critical of bilingual learning arrangements for English-language learners were reported in a later review undertaken by Rossell and Baker (1996). They examined 300 bilingual program evaluations, but found only 72 of these to be “methodologically acceptable” which, in the researchers’ opinion, were essentially those that were structured around treatment and control groups; controlled or eliminated additional educational treatments; and measured outcomes in terms of normal curve equivalents, not grade equivalents (Rossell & Baker, 1996: 13). In analyzing these studies, they found that structured immersion (that is, basically English-only instruction) was overwhelmingly superior to transitional bilingual education in the areas of English reading, mathematics and general English language awareness.

Rossell and Baker’s (1996) study was immediately met with a critical response and counter-arguments. Cummins (2000a) has provided a detailed critique of the Rossell and Baker review, condemning it for its arbitrariness in deciding which studies were “methodologically acceptable”; its inconsistent method of labelling different program types; the exclusion from the review of programs designed to promote bilingualism and biliteracy; and its misrepresentation of the results of early French bilingual programs (Cummins, 2000a: 213).

Greene (1997) revisited the 75 studies investigated by Rossell and Baker (1996) and, applying his own interpretation of the same methodological worthiness criteria employed by Rossell and Baker, found only 11 of them “methodologically acceptable.” Using meta-analysis as a tool for analysis,
Greene’s (1997) study contradicted many of Rossell and Baker’s (1996) findings. Greene’s meta-analysis found that at least some first language instruction, as opposed to English-only instruction, is likely to assist the average minority language background student’s achievement in English, as measured by standardised tests in that language. His cautious advocacy of bilingual education for English-language learners is tempered, however, by his inability to draw conclusions as to how much first language instruction is desirable.

Around the same time, a high profile review of bilingual education for language minority students (August & Hakuta, 1997) was commissioned by the United States National Research Council. The report’s findings were supportive of bilingual education for English-language learners, concluding – like the Thomas and Collier study (1997) – that, in many cases, bilingualism can benefit children’s overall linguistic, cognitive, and social development.

Yet, the report drew tentative conclusions in relation to program models, stating that there was little benefit in trying to evaluate which type of program was best for all children in all settings. Rather, they asserted in this (August & Hakuta, 1997) and a later publication (August & Hakuta, 1998), that there appeared to be benefits in both bilingual education programs and in some structured immersion educational arrangements. Instead of trying to find one form of education for widespread implementation, the investigators urged educators to look for “a set of components that works for the children in that community of interest, given the goals, demographics, and resources of that community” (August & Hakuta, 1997: 147). This finding supports the type of site-specific identification of language use, attitudes, needs, and perceptions that I undertook and document in this thesis.

Later reviews of the research literature have highlighted the benefits quality bilingual programs offer. The review undertaken by Linguistic Minority
Research Institute at the University of California, (Gándara, 1999) concluded that:

... while no single program is best for all children under all circumstances, a well-implemented bilingual program can provide outcomes “at least” as positive as a well-implemented English only program, and has the added advantage of potentially providing students with a second language – a considerable asset. (Gándara, 1999: iii)

A very recent review of 17 research studies that investigated instructional arrangements for English-language learners (Slavin & Cheung, 2003) revealed results that surprised the researchers themselves. When compared to English-only classroom settings, the students educated bilingually were shown to have made equal or greater advances in English reading achievement in all of the studies. Slavin and Cheung (2003) stress that these advances were most pronounced in classrooms where children were being taught to read in both their L1 and in English at different times of the school day. They argue that this refutes the claims, principally, of those arguing for English-only instruction for English-language learners, but also serves to temper the calls for these students to be taught to read in the L1 before receiving instruction in English. They suggest that:

Teaching reading in two languages, with appropriate adaptations of the English program for the needs of English language learners, may represent a satisfactory resolution to the acrimonious debates about bilingual education. (Slavin & Cheung, 2003: 40)

A rare Australian literature review (Davies et al., 1997) exploring issues around the interface between a first (minority) and second (majority) language emphasised the cognitive benefits of bilingualism, stressed the potential interdependence of a child’s L1 and L2, reaffirmed the conversational/academic language distinction (Cummins, 1984, 2000a, 2000b), and highlighted non-academic issues of self-esteem and social identity as being linked to linguistic maintenance. It emphasised a number of factors, in addition to language issues, that influence English-language learners school success, stating:
Languages differ, learners differ, contexts of learning differ, and the L1-L2 relationship differs. It is incumbent on researchers and teachers therefore to take account of previous learning and at the same time not to assume that previous learning in the L1 is necessarily what matters most for subsequent learning in the L2. (Davies et al., 1997: 61)

Davies and Elder (1997) confirm that it is not essential (or possible) to support all students’ first languages in order that they acquire a second, a position also held by even the staunchest bilingual education advocates like Cummins (2001b). However, the view that bilingual education programs potentially hold great value for both minority and majority language background speakers is widely supported by the vast majority of academics in the areas of applied linguistics and education (Bialystok, 2001; Bialystok & Cummins, 1991; Clyne, 2000; Corson, 2001; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Lindholm, 1990; Minami & Ovando, 1995; Moran & Hakuta, 1995; Nieto, 2004; Romaine, 1995). An analysis of research publications over a ten year period in the United States (McQuillan & Tse, 1996) found that 82 percent of research studies reported favourably on bilingual education. An interesting contrast is that only 45 percent of U.S. newspaper articles took a similar positive view of that form of learning.

Ultimately, what often emerges from these major evaluations, reviews and meta-analyses are confusing and unhelpful accusations and counter-claims of methodological sloppiness, selective sampling, skewed results and ideological biases. Romaine (1995), speaking specifically about the Rámirez (1991) report, articulates the feeling of uncertainty generated by many of the studies discussed here.

Research findings such as these can be taken to support two very different positions: one is that instruction in a minority language does not retard progress in the majority language. The other is that similar levels of attainment in English can be achieved by ignoring the children’s first language. Disregarding the child’s language is often easier since this is already what happens in many cases anyway. (Romaine, 1995: 259)

As flagged earlier, Cummins (1999, 2000a) has a specific criticism of many of the studies discussed here (August & Hakuta, 1997; Baker & de Kanter, 1983;
Greene, 1997; Rossell & Baker, 1996; Willig, 1985). He believes their findings lack conviction and credibility as they are not sufficiently tested against key theoretical positions underlying bilingual education or English-only programs. Cummins argues that these studies would have been able to make more conclusive policy recommendations if their findings were linked to theoretical positions or hypotheses related to, for example, Thresholds, Interdependence, Time-On-Task, Conversational and Academic Language Proficiency. To illustrate this point, Cummins (2000a) argues that the ‘time on task’ hypothesis, supporting the maximum possible exposure to the majority language, is thoroughly debunked by even those studies that are overtly critical of bilingual education like Rossell and Baker’s (1996). By supporting, disconfirming, or modifying existing theory, research studies which make this research-to-theory connection will, according to Cummins (1999, 2000a), carry more scientific credibility, and that the implications for policy and practice arising from them will be truly grounded theoretically. By employing this “Research-Theory-Policy” paradigm (Cummins, 1999, 2000a), the development of policy will potentially have the dual advantage of drawing on research-supported theory, while addressing the diverse realities and needs of the school communities and student populations for (and with) whom decisions of educational provision need to be made.

Small scale evaluation studies should, therefore, take account of the specific features and needs of the community under investigation, highlight the perspectives of those at the selected community of practice, and attempt to make links to research-supported theory on bilingual education or second language acquisition. While not suggesting that individual case studies can stand alone as evidence of the effectiveness of bilingual education, Cummins (2000a) remarks that when such studies consistently demonstrate a robust “pattern of findings across a wide range of sociolinguistic and socio-political contexts” (Cummins, 2000a: 216), better informed policy decisions can be made
about how programs aiming to develop bilingual proficiency and bicultural self-esteem can best be implemented or improved.

My own study exemplifies one of the individual case studies that – when read in the context of other studies in school settings – helps contribute to a pattern of findings amongst bilingual learning as diverse as these learners in inner city Melbourne, Somali refugee students in the U.S. (Farah, 2000), and Turkish-language background students in the Netherlands (Verhoeven, 1994). When the patterns of findings within these research studies are linked to theory, clearer understandings emerge of ways to best cater for English-language learners’ needs. In addition, further questions arise requiring investigation. The following section reviews a number of such studies.

Small Scale Accounts and Evaluations of Bilingual Learning
Site specific, localised studies of educational arrangements catering for bilingual learners offer insights that broad based investigations and reviews cannot. First, they can provide concrete descriptions and evaluations of the various ways that schools are responding to the linguistic and cultural diversity of their students. Second, they often communicate how those closely involved in these educational innovations perceive the program in terms of its effectiveness or impact.

The small number of recent Australian research studies in the area of bilingual education have illuminated a number of these issues in relation to the education of English-language learners, and how these students’ emerging bilingualism can impact on their learning and sense of self-esteem. An investigation of a Khmer-English bilingual program in Western Australia (Barratt-Pugh & Rohl, 2001) explored students’ perceptions of the program and its benefits to them. The students commented on a number of benefits they perceived in being bilingual. These related to advantages as diverse as improving their cognitive development; being useful for travel to Cambodia; intrinsic enjoyment in
learning the language and the assistance it renders for learning; and enhancing their future prospects.

Barratt-Pugh and Rohl (2001) found that students at the bilingual education site they investigated were achieving literacy in both Khmer and English, were demonstrating the ability to transfer strategies from one language to the other, and were perceived to be developing an awareness of the linguistic culture of both languages. As such, their research supports Cummins’ (1979) linguistic interdependence hypothesis. In addition, high levels of metalinguistic awareness were reported in the older children from the program, and students were seen to possess a dual sense of cultural and linguistic identity. However, Barratt-Pugh and Rohl (2001) noted this self-esteem was under challenge by conflicting and hostile messages in and out of school, and that children were caught between wanting to be in the bilingual program and not wanting to stand out as different. Such findings mirror Tse’s (2000) classification of different stages of (bi)cultural identification, whereby students often are ambivalent about their ethnic minority status trying, during childhood and early adolescence, to assimilate into the dominant group.

Another Western Australian study (Oliver & Purdie, 1998) explored the language attitudes of bilingual language minority students from four different schools and a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The study revealed that students saw knowledge of their home languages and English as advantageous for different social and academic reasons. Two noteworthy features emerging from the research highlight how the often subtle, sometimes overt, subordination of minority languages or cultures can impact on students. First, students’ perceptions of the attitudes of adults (parents, teachers and principal) were that it was the use of English that was valued, in the classroom particularly. In addition, longer-term residents (students who had been in Australia more than four years) felt less positively about their L1 than did newer arrivals. These findings highlight that, even when there is apparent
support and acceptance of the languages of the community, Bourdieu’s (1991) notion of ‘symbolic violence’ can, in fact, be played out. Bicultural ambivalence as revealed by students’ different views on first and second language use in different domains, needs to be countered, according to Oliver and Purdie (1998), by ensuring that L1 maintenance is seen as an asset both in terms of the learning of English and of learning in general. Findings such as those reached by Oliver and Purdie (1998) highlighted the need for my own study to incorporate data collection devices to measure students’ attitudes to the languages within their repertoires.

Cairney and Ruge (1998) also undertook research across four Australian school sites that were identified as being innovative in acknowledging and affirming diversity. Their research aimed to identify ways that the educational outcomes of students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds can be enhanced. It drew on the notions of literacy as a social practice (Gee, 1996b; Luke & Freebody, 1997); the theory of cultural discontinuity or cultural difference in the form of home/school mismatch (Jacob & Jordan, 1993); and theories of structural inequality (Gibson, 1991; Giroux, 1993; Ogbu, 1993, 2003). However, while it recognised the way ahead was to assist teachers to open up classroom discourse to reflect diversity of student language and culture, and made a number of useful organisational suggestions, Cairney and Ruge’s (1998) study did not specifically make recommendations about first language maintenance or bilingual learning arrangements. As such, it highlighted the need for studies that investigate emergent bilingual students’ learning and make strong theory-supported recommendations for pedagogical practice.

A detailed evaluation of an immersion German-English bilingual program for English-language background students at a school in Melbourne (Fernandez, 1996) revealed that immersion of this sort increased students’ German proficiency without any detrimental effects on their English abilities. This finding adds to the strong body of research evidence, including another
Australian research study (de Courcy et al., 1999), that highlights the benefits of bilingual learning for majority, as well as minority language background students.

These studies offer Australian support to similar international research studies that reveal the power of transformative pedagogies in enhancing learning outcomes for students from diverse backgrounds. Such studies take the form, for instance, of critical ethnographies or case studies of schools with strong multicultural perspectives (May, 1994a; Mehan et al., 1995), and/or additive bilingual learning arrangements (Calderón & Slavin, 2001; Freeman, 1996, 1998; Lindholm-Leary, 2001).

All too rarely are the voices of students, parents and teachers built into such studies’ research designs. When, for example, the perspectives of bilingual students have been sought, understandings have emerged about their language use and attitudes (Ding-Fariborz, 1997; Gregory & Williams, 2000b; Martin-Jones & Bhatt, 1998; Oliver & Purdie, 1998; Saxena, 2000; Sneddon, 2000; Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002); and their views on effective learning arrangements (Collins & Harrison, 1998; Smith, 1999; Soto, 2002), identity construction (Martin & Stuart-Smith, 1998; Miller, 2003; Short & Carrington, 1999), and power differentials between majority and minority languages and cultures (Clachar, 1997; Galguerra, 1998). These studies had a powerful effect on my own methodological decisions, which I describe in the next chapter.

Investigations of teachers’ perspectives of bilingual education have taken the form of teachers’ narratives (Lemberger, 1997), inquiries into teachers’ levels of support for bilingual education (Shin & Krashen, 1996), and studies of the pedagogical challenges teachers face and how they respond to these (Yeh et al., 2002). Shin and Krashen (1996), who surveyed nearly 800 K-12 teachers from six California school districts, found there was strong acceptance for the underlying rationale of bilingual education. However, there was less support
for actual participation in bilingual education, a discrepancy that requires further investigation, in Shin and Krashen’s opinion.

The study undertaken by Yeh et al. (2002) investigated the views of teachers of Asian bilingual students. Pedagogical challenges reported by the teachers included lack of culturally relevant materials, variation in the students’ language proficiency, and differences in student learning styles. Pedagogical strategies commonly employed were found to include thematic planning, active learning situations, cooperative group work.

Studies investigating parents’ perspectives of their children’s emerging bilingualism, and the educational arrangements that support or suppress this outcome (Craig, 1996; Lee, 1999; Nicholson et al., 2001; Shin, 2000; Young & Tran, 1999; Zammit, 1999), revealed high levels of support for bilingual education for both instrumental and integrative reasons. Of particular relevance to my study is Young and Tran’s (1999) research which investigated Vietnamese parents’ attitudes to bilingual education. The majority of the 106 surveyed parents preferred their children to be enrolled in a classroom where Vietnamese was part of the curriculum regardless of students’ English proficiency. The parents involved in the study articulated several advantages in their children being bilingual: that bilingual education allows children to comprehend subject matter while acquiring English; that developing literacy in Vietnamese facilitates their English acquisition; that bilingualism has practical, career, and cognitive related advantages; and that it is necessary to maintain one’s language and culture.

However, in Lee’s (1999) study of 290 adult Latinos, many of these parents, while believing that the use of two languages facilitated their children’s development of English, added that they would prefer their children be placed in English-only classes. Lee suggests this may have something to do with a
perception of bilingual education for students of minority language background in the United States as being sub-standard and segregationist.

Some parent studies have focused on minority parents’ aspirations for their children but neglected to probe the degree to which L1 maintenance might facilitate these aspirations (Louie, 2001). The role L1 maintenance and bilingualism might play in their children’s future lives was an aspect I ensured was built into my data collection and, as will be seen, was an area of which parents were very mindful.

Other small scale studies that have focused on issues of L1 maintenance from a family-oriented perspective (Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002), but have not stressed educational implications of these perspectives. Other studies which have specifically investigated immigrant parents’ views of bilingual education (Craig, 1996; Lee, 1999; Shin, 2000; Young & Tran, 1999) have generally emerged from the United States and, while they have revealed consistent support for bilingual education, Australian studies of parent perspectives would be a welcome addition to the field. The educational implications of my study are a key feature of the data analysis and discussion in Chapters Nine and Ten of this thesis.

**Bilingual and Multicultural Education**

The opportunity to maintain and develop students’ home languages while they learn English is a crucial curriculum provision cited in many studies examining successful schooling for English-language learners (Brisk, 2000; Brisk & Harrington, 2000; Coelho, 1998; Collier, 1995; Corson, 2001; Cummins, 1986, 2001b; Farah, 2000; Gregory & Williams, 2000a; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Makin et al., 1995; Ovando & Collier, 1998; Thomas & Collier, 1997). Unfortunately, many English-language learners in Australia find themselves in a school setting where there are a mix of students from a variety of language backgrounds,
making the support of their home languages extremely difficult for the school to organise (Miller, 2003).

Aside from the opportunity to learn bilingually, pedagogies that reflect and affirm diverse cultural backgrounds are emphasised in the professional literature (Corson, 2001; Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Martin-Jones & Jones, 2000; May, 1994a; Nieto, 2004). If, in the English-speaking world, bilingual learning arrangements are an effective means to affirm linguistic diversity; multicultural education perspectives potentially provide a complementary means of teaching about and valuing forms of cultural knowledge that lie outside the dominant societal and educational discourse. In response to the criticisms of tokenistic, politically neutral/neutered forms of multicultural education, as raised by antiracist advocates (Figueroa, 1995; Mullard, 1984; Troyna & Hatcher, 1992; Troyna & Williams, 1986), a ‘critical multiculturalism’ which addresses concerns of both politics and pedagogy has been advocated (Kanpol & McLaren, 1995; May, 1999b).

Critical multiculturalism, according to May (1999a: 32) needs to do more than just affirm and valorise cultural difference, it needs to assist students to recognise and contest why different forms of cultural knowledge in fact carry different value or ‘capital’ (Bourdieu, 1991) in the education system and wider society. May (1999a) sees a curriculum which centrally positions critical multicultural perspectives as beneficial to all students - be they members of cultural and linguistic minority or majority groups. In May’s view, critical multiculturalism enables minority students to autonomously construct politically aware notions of group and individual identity, without being constrained by traditionalist or limiting, essentialist definitions imposed from within their communities or from outside. For majority students, a critically multicultural curriculum allows them to critique normalised or universalised notions of national, “white” identity and contrast this with discourses of
ethnicity which are exclusively invoked in relation to minority, “other” cultural and linguistic groups (May, 1999a).

Nieto (1999), likewise, believes critical multiculturalism to be a means of challenging hegemonic knowledge, while affirming - without trivialising - students’ cultural backgrounds. In addition, critical multiculturalism is seen as a means of transcending liberal, superficially pluralistic notions of multiculturalism, along the lines of the model operating in Australia since the 1970s (Kalantzis & Cope, 1999). Through such re-invigorated, politically engaged conceptualisations of multiculturalism, school-based education stands a greater chance of addressing issues of access and success for minority background students. This can be achieved by moving beyond naive and often patronising recognition of minority languages and non-standard language forms, and developing the range of literacies that matter for the students, while recognising the power differentials between them (Kalantzis & Cope, 1999).

Quality bilingual education programs, therefore, in conjunction with critical multicultural inquiry, offer a potentially powerful organisational device for recognising and responding to linguistic and cultural diversity. Within these over-riding educational frameworks, a number of concomitant curriculum features and pedagogical practices are consistently emphasised in educational and instructional effectiveness literature.

**Effective Instruction to Enhance Literacy Learning**

Literacy proficiency requires students to not only be competent decoders and composers of a range of text types, but to critically analyse the written and visual texts that they encounter in school and in the wider community (Giroux, 1993; Lankshear & Knobel, 1997; Luke *et al.*, 1996; Luke & Freebody, 1997; McLaren & Muñoz, 2000). Freebody and Luke’s (1990) highly influential ‘four resources’ model describes comprehensive literacy teaching as assisting students become astute text decoders, text participants, text users, and text
analysts. For the second language learner especially, decoding and making literal meaning of the multimodal features of a text is an essential pre-requisite to developing a deeper ability to use, adapt or critique that text, as Durrant and Green (2000) note in their discussion of operational, cultural and critical text practices. Nonetheless, critical orientations to texts allow students to:

examine what is taken for granted … and what is accepted as business as usual. … Further, a critical pedagogy works at figuring out where the taken-for-granted, business-as-usual came from, what it’s connected to, and whose interests it serves. (Edelsky, 1999:14 - 15)

For the minority language speaker, critical literacy is a vitally important vehicle for developing an understanding of why certain languages and forms of language are more socially powerful than others. Effective critical literacy skills enable students to understand the need to master powerful forms of language, while at the same time empowering them to recognise, critique and challenge the inherent injustices in this social and educational reality (Corson, 2001; Cummins, 2000a, 2001b; Delpit, 1988, 1995; Gee, 2000; Macedo, 1993, 1994; Murray, 1996; Ovando & Collier, 1998). Courts (1997) states:

It is our job as teachers of literacy to provide learners the knowledge and opportunity to choose and control their discourses and to know when they are being discriminated against because of their non-dominant dialects/discourses. (Courts, 1997: 2) (Courts’ emphases).

Becoming critically literate can be achieved through providing opportunities for cooperative group learning arrangements (Dalton, 1985; Murdoch & Wilson, 2005), whereby students develop new understandings, generate questions and solutions, and collaboratively plan follow-up action. These powerful, active learning contexts that foster inquiry and critical thinking are advocated by many writers who focus on the teaching and learning issues facing minority and marginalised groups (Cummins, 2000a, 2001b; Gee, 2000; Gibson, 1991; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; May, 1994b; Murray, 1996; Ovando & Collier, 1998; Thomas & Collier, 1997). As collaborative learning situations, they embody the notion that true learning is socially situated in ‘communities of practice’ (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).
The complexity of language input - and opportunities for language output - are much discussed by educational writers interested in second language acquisition (Corson, 2001; Cummins, 1991; Cummins & Swain, 1986; Ellis, 1997; Handscombe, 1990; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Lindholm, 1990; Nunan, 1999; Romaine, 1995). The notion of ‘comprehensible input’ first articulated by Krashen (1981, 1985) posited the need for input in the target language to be at a level just ahead of that which can be fully understood by the learner. Lindholm-Leary (2001) argues that language input for the second language learner needs to be adjusted to the comprehension level of the learner; and be interesting and relevant, of sufficient quality, and challenging. The notion of ‘comprehensible input’ was later augmented by identification of the importance of ‘comprehensible output’ as a means to second language acquisition (Cummins & Swain, 1986; Swain, 1995). ‘Comprehensible output’ embodies the need for second language learners to be given meaningful classroom opportunities to produce and use the target language. Earlier-mentioned cooperative group work provides an ideal opportunity for students to speak, listen, read and write in the target language.

It can be argued that these pedagogical precepts, arrangements and strategies - from multiliteracies and critical literacy to cooperative group work and integrated curriculum planning - foster the reshaping of literacy education in the interests of marginalised groups of learners, who on the basis of gender, cultural and socio-economic background have been excluded from access to the discourses and texts of dominant economies and cultures. (Luke, 1997: 143)

In terms of the students at the heart of this thesis, however, it is the opportunity to learn bilingually that offers the greatest potential for their learning to be maximised. And while, as revealed by this review of the literature, strong arguments for its implementation can be made, there is a need for further investigations on this area.
The Need for Additional Insights

This review of the literature related to the personal, political and pedagogical dimensions of bilingualism, particularly the development of bilingualism and biliteracy in students from immigrant or refugee families, has revealed areas that require additional research. On a personal level, there is a need for a deeper understanding of issues related to language use amongst Australian students whose language backgrounds are other than English. My study provides such a portrait, being a detailed investigation of a community of emergent bilingual students, their parents and their teachers. In exploring issues of the comparative importance this community places on the development of ability in both the language of the home, and the dominant one of school and society, it also provides much needed multiple perspectives. On an international level, these viewpoints are rarely explored (Lindholm-Leary, 2001; May, 1998; Nieto, 1999; Rampton, 1995), and even less so in Australia, despite the cultural and linguistic diversity of this country.

As a study that is cognizant of the socio-political complexities of the immigrant/refugee experience, this research is potentially very timely in that it investigates a school community’s views on bilingual learning at a time that, arguably, cultural and linguistic diversity in Australia is undervalued.

On a pedagogical level, this study investigates an unusual educational arrangement. Bilingual education in Australian schools is rare and under-researched, particularly in terms of studies that investigate both the perspectives of those closely involved with this form of education, and the educational outcomes these students attain, as measured by government mandated standards. This research aims to make a much-needed contribution by addressing these areas of limited understanding and research.

Above all, in traversing rarely explored research terrain, this study aims to provide new insights into what bilingual students think about their languages
and their learning, and make recommendations about how their educational needs can be advanced without jettisoning key features of their cultural and linguistic heritage.

Nearly 30 years ago, it was remarked that, if bilingualism and biculturalism were embraced by all of society, and if bilingual education moved beyond being seen by some as a “sop to the poor” or a “gimmick for the disadvantaged” it could advance humanity’s quest for a “better society and a saner world” (Fishman, 1976: 9). It could well be argued that, in today’s world, this notion holds even more relevance. It was with this inspiration that this research was mounted.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

It should become clear that so-called “difficult” spots (“housing projects” or schools today) are, first of all, difficult to describe and think about, and that simplistic and one-sided images ... must be replaced by a complex and multi-layered representation capable of articulating the same realities but in terms that are different and, sometimes, irreconcilable. ... We must work instead with the multiple perspectives that correspond to the multiplicity of co-existing, and sometimes directly competing, points of view. (Bourdieu, 1999: 3, his emphasis)

Structure of this Chapter

The methodology underlying this research thesis centres on the belief that much can be learned from the perspectives of the multiple stakeholders involved in an educational community of practice, as Bourdieu (1999) remarks. The often marginalised or silenced voices of immigrant or refugee students and parents are deliberately foregrounded in this research. I made this methodological decision in order that the views of those most engaged in the specific bilingual education arrangement under investigation would be clearly aired. The purpose of this chapter is to explicate how this desire to give voice to the silenced was brought to reality. The decisions made in terms of research design are recounted; with methodological options explored, subsequent decisions justified, and the data collection procedures explicated.

I have organised this Methodology chapter in two sections. In Part One, I describe the methodological issues and considerations that I faced, and decisions I made, when planning this investigation. I begin by re-iterating the key questions at the heart of my research, then follow this with discussion of research imperatives posited by key writers, researchers and theorists whose interests are, at least in part, in the field of bilingual education.

This leads me to explore the methodological choices I faced in designing my study. I consider the features of different research paradigms, and specifically
discuss qualitative and quantitative approaches to research, in relation to how effectively each paradigm might address my research goals. I justify the use of a primarily qualitative methodology, though I argue that contextualised quantification of responses from, particularly, students and parents enhances the clarity and resonance of the participants’ voices, as they emerge from the data collected. Arising from this choice, I discuss the nature of critical ethnographic and case study research, and explain how these approaches complement my research aims. I particularly explore the implications when these forms of research are carried out in cross-cultural contexts.

In Part Two of this chapter, I explain each step of my data collection process, detailing the development of my research tools, the trialling of them, and their administration with the research participants. I justify my research design by making links to the aims and data collection methods employed in previous investigations related to my topic. I comment on these related studies in terms of their relevance to my research focus, and outline the lessons, inspiration, and applications they offered my study. I articulate research limitations I anticipated before, or perceived during, the data collection, and explain the procedures I put in place to minimise these. This leads me to address issues of trustworthiness, and how I attended to this in my research design.

Part One: Methodological Issues in the Development of this Research
While I introduced and discussed the question at the heart of my research in Chapter One of this thesis, I restate it here before leading into specific issues of methodology.
Reiteration of the Research Question

To what extent does the provision of a bilingual education program meet the language and learning needs of a group of primary school-aged English-language learners, in terms of:

• these students’ perceptions of their learning needs;
• their parents’ perceptions of their children’s learning needs;
• their teachers’ perceptions of their students’ learning needs; and
• government targets for student achievement?

This research, therefore, explores the perceptions of the above-mentioned stakeholders, in terms of the extent to which they believe the provision of the school’s Mandarin-English and Vietnamese-English bilingual education programs meet the language and learning needs of the students. These students are predominantly English-language learners whose home languages are Vietnamese and various fangyan - inappropriately translated as ‘dialects’ (Clyne & Kipp, 1999; DeFrancis, 1984) - of Chinese, mainly Hakka. The study also examines these students’ academic achievement levels in relation to English, as key curriculum priority of the government of Victoria.

The research question in its final form emerged from my exploration of the literature in relation to the current state of knowledge about English-language learners’ educational provision. The procedures used to answer my research question were also influenced by previous investigations of bilingual students and educational arrangements for immigrant students (Donohoue Clyne, 2000; Kalantzis et al., 1989; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Martin & Stuart-Smith, 1998; May, 1994a; Oliver & Purdie, 1998; Saxena, 2000; Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002). The data collection methods used in these studies shaped the selection and development of my research tools, which are detailed in Part Two of this chapter.

Undertaking Qualitative Research

The contextualised, multi-voiced nature of my study clearly suggests the application of a qualitative research methodology. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) view qualitative research as locating the researcher in the real world of human interaction and lived experience. Qualitative research, they argue:
consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: 3).

The qualitative researcher wants to describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals’ lives (Burns, 1997; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), and to do this, collects and studies a variety of empirical material - case studies; personal experiences; introspections; life stories; interviews; artifacts; cultural texts and productions; observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The qualitative researcher has been likened to a *bricoleur* who pieces together different individuals’ perspectives of reality in order to better understand the specifics of a complex situation or phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Qualitative research is inherently multi-method in focus (Flick, 2002), and emphasises multiple meaning structures and holistic analysis (Burns, 1997). As opposed to quantitative research, which views reality as fixed, value-free and immutable (Neuman, 2003), qualitative researchers acknowledge that, in the social sciences, things are not so unproblematically explained. The central tenets of qualitative research are articulated in Lincoln and Guba’s axioms of naturalistic inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1999; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Although Guba and Lincoln now prefer the term ‘constructivism’ (Guba & Lincoln, 1998), these axioms are essentially re-iterated in methodological texts focussed specifically on second language acquisition (Bailey & Nunan, 1996). These axioms postulate that realities are multiple, constructed and holistic, and that there is a symbiotic, complex, and, at times, indistinguishable relationship between the knower and the known, and between cause and effect. In the context of a study like mine, these features of qualitative research resonate, in that I administered diverse data collection tools to a range of stakeholders in order to elicit their viewpoints about a evolving phenomenon in which they were actively engaged on a daily basis, and within which the inter-relationships
and boundaries between students’ forms of linguistic understanding, culture
knowledge and identity construction were dynamic and shifting.

My research was shaped by naturalistic inquiry axioms in that it was
undertaken in a natural setting, and used qualitative methods and purposive
sampling in gathering data. Data were collected from students, parents and
teachers using mainly qualitative methods; such as individually administered
student questionnaires which allowed opportunities for qualitative, descriptive
responses; group and individual student interviews; and bilingual consultations
conducted with groups of parents. These data were analysed from a grounded
theory perspective (Flick, 2002; Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 1998; Neuman, 2003;
Nunan, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) in that data collection and analysis
processes led to
descriptions of patterned behavior that participants use to make sense of
their social surroundings [and] generalizations were induced from
systematic analyses of data that take the form of searches for patterns.
(Hatch, 2002: 15)

**Drawing on Mixed Methods**

Despite a qualitative methodology being most appropriate for this
investigation, I argue the effectiveness of this research is enhanced by judicious
use of some quantitative measures and analysis, particularly in terms of
quantifying issues of language use and student achievement. This is
notwithstanding the fact that criticisms of the application of quantitative
research methods to studies of language acquisition and language use have
been strongly expressed. Quantitative methods have been seen as reproducing
“only a certain kind of science, a science that silences too many voices” (Denzin
& Lincoln, 2000: 10) or as

an extremely blunt instrument for measuring and/or comparing the
educational achievement of different ethnic groups within education (May,

Focussing also on the area of language program evaluation, Lynch (1996) has
noted the move away from quantitative research methods, such as tightly
controlled experiments and standardised measures of student achievement. Yet, Lynch argues for researchers to take the pragmatic stance of allowing a combination of methods from both qualitative and quantitative paradigms, if they best address the research focus, and provided the researcher can articulate what will be considered as research evidence and why. Neuman (2003), also, sees justification in mixing qualitative and quantitative approaches to research design and data collection in that such mixing might afford a greater level of triangulation of methods, thereby increasing the trustworthiness of the findings. This view is supported by Miles and Huberman (1994) who attest that there are three good reasons for resorting to numbers:

- to see rapidly what you have in a large batch of data;
- to verify a hunch or hypothesis;
- and to keep yourself analytically honest, protecting against bias.

(Miles & Huberman, 1994: 253)

Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003) believe that a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods can answer research questions that other methodologies cannot. They argue that mixed methods research can provide stronger research inferences; and allow for the presentation of a greater diversity of views. And, focussing specifically on research linked to linguistic diversity, Corson (2001) stated that a combination of data collection methods can help overcome potential weaknesses in research design which can arise when outwardly positivist methods such as questionnaires are used in interpretive research.

In regards to my own research study, I justify selective use of quantitative methods on two main counts. First, certain data collected from the large number of student research participants (143 Years Prep to Six students from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds) are best analysed quantitatively in order to discern specific trends and patterns. Individually administered questionnaires centred on language use and language attitudes lend themselves to some degree of quantitative analysis, which serves to augment the qualitative comments made when these data collection measures were implemented. Questionnaires collected from parents likewise suggest quantitative tallying
and comparison of responses, in addition to qualitative scrutiny of written questionnaire data and interview transcripts.

Second, the area of my research centred on the degree to which students educated bilingually met government targets for student achievement also presented an opportunity for focussed quantitative description and analysis. I have misgivings about applying statewide assessment frameworks to students with language skills and cultural knowledge beyond the scope of what is measured (or valued) by such standards or benchmarks, concerns shared by others in the Australian ESL context (Davison, 1999; Gibbons, 1992a; Hammond, 2001a; McKay, 2001). However, I justify this approach with reference to May’s study of bilingual and multicultural learning at the Richmond Road school in New Zealand (May, 1994a, 1994b, 1998). May used the levels of English language literacy achieved by students as a key performance indicator and a quantitative means of analysis. While acknowledging this as problematic, he argued that incorporating this quantitative measure into his study might nullify critics of multicultural or multilingual educational approaches and demonstrate that resistance to hegemonic patterns within education does not inevitably lead to further ghettoisation or failure of traditionally marginalised students. (May, 1998: 167)

I justify my use of government mandated English literacy benchmarks and standards as quantitative measures in my own study on similar grounds.

These quantitative data collection and analysis procedures are fully described in Part Two of this chapter. I believe they add clarity and help contextualise the vast amounts of qualitative descriptions and interpretations provided by the research participants involved in this study.
Ethnography and Case Study

My assembling of a bricolage (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) of descriptions of a school culture, as articulated by its student, parent and teacher community, and interpreted by myself as a long-term observer and participant in the school’s practices, renders this study an ethnography (Bailey & Nunan, 1996; Corson, 2001; Durgunoglu & Verhoeven, 1998; Geertz, 1973; Heath, 1995; Nunan, 1992; Tedlock, 2000; Van Maanen, 1995; Wolcott, 1988, 1995b). The ‘boundedness’ of the site of my investigation in a real-life context, and its drawing of data from multiple sources also define my research as a case study (Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 1995, 2000; Sturman, 1999; Yin, 2003).

I wish to pursue this potentially clumsy notion that a study like mine can be both case study and ethnography. It is a case study in that it meets the commonly stated criteria for that form of inquiry: its contemporary, real-life context (Yin, 2003); its unitary nature: one school, one phenomenon (Stake, 1995, 2000; Sturman, 1999); its bounded context (Miles & Huberman, 1994); and the intensive and holistic description of the phenomenon under investigation (Merriam, 1998).

However, it moves into the area of ethnography in that it is deeply concerned with the cultural context and cultural interpretation of the phenomenon under investigation (Nunan, 1992). It is this emphasis on cultural description and interpretation that is at the heart of ethnographic study, but is not necessarily a feature of case study research (Nunan, 1992; Van Maanen, 1995; Wolcott, 1988, 1995b). As such, notwithstanding a category of neo-ethnographic case study offered by Nunan (1992) drawing on Stenhouse (1983), I believe ‘ethnography’ just as accurately describes my study’s intent, conduct, and method of reporting.
The key principles of ethnographic research – as related to a study of second language learning or acquisition have been characterised by Nunan (1992: 56) as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contextual</td>
<td>The research is carried out in the context in which the subjects normally live and work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unobtrusive</td>
<td>The researcher avoids manipulating the phenomena under investigation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longitudinal</td>
<td>The research is relatively long-term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>The researcher involves the participation of stakeholders other than the researcher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretive</td>
<td>The researcher carries out interpretive analyses of the data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic</td>
<td>There is interaction between questions/hypotheses and data collection/interpretation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, there are a number of aspects of ethnography or, more specifically, the way ethnographic research is often portrayed and undertaken that I find problematic in relation to my research. Traditional ethnography, as discussed by Van Maanen (1995) requires:

- the swallowing up and disappearance of the author in the text;
- the suppression of the individual cultural member’s perspective in favor of a typified or common denominator “native’s point of view”;
- the placement of a culture within a rather timeless ethnographic present; and
- a claim (often implicit) for descriptive or interpretive validity based almost exclusively on the author’s own “being there” experience.

(Van Maanen, 1995: 7)

This form of ethnographic writing underplays the role of the researcher in determining whose and which of the research participants’ points of view are emphasised. By rendering the researcher near invisible, such ethnography does not easily allow for the researcher’s history and biography to be explored, nor their attitudes and biases to be self-critiqued. In such studies, the culture under investigation risks being decontextualised from wider social, political and economic forces. In recognition of the need for the researcher to do more than offer “thick description” (Geertz, 1973), Wolcott (1995b) has noted that the most
incisive ethnographies also engage in attempts at cultural interpretation or explanation.

In addition, the tendency to essentialise is another risk in conducting ethnographic research (May, 1999a). As Shirley Brice Heath, who conducted a seminal ethnographic study of language use in rural and regional American cultural contexts (Heath, 1983), later remarked, implicit in terms like “multicultural community” or “ethnic community” is an assumption of non-whiteness and homogeneity (Heath, 1995). This, she states, is erroneous and unhelpful in terms of undertaking effective ethnographic research.

From the earliest planning stages of my study, I felt the use of qualitative, ethnographic research methods was amply justified in the literature, and appropriate to my study. What remained problematic was how a qualitative investigation of this nature could be explicit about the social, economic, and political issues experienced at the research site; how it could be something revealing and empowering for those involved; and how my role as researcher could be fully explicated. Many social researchers have struggled with these issues, and the field of critical ethnography has developed in response to these concerns. In terms of my own research goals, I found the tenets of critical ethnography particularly apposite as a model for constructing an ethical study that was socially, economically and politically situated.

**Critical Ethnography**

Responding to instances of clinical and unproblematically presented qualitative, ethnographic studies, there have been calls for investigations of educational settings to employ more critically conceived, politically aware, and socially contextualised interdisciplinary approaches (Anderson, 1989; Beykont, 2000; Corson, 2001; May, 1997, 1999a; Ovando & McLaren, 2000; Smyth & Shacklock, 1998). While the traditional ethnographer has been presented (or idealised) as a ‘disinterested’ participant-observer who enters the field neutrally
and allows meaning to emerge from the data (Hammersley, 1992; Van Maanen, 1988), critical ethnographers believe no research is value-free and no researcher can be wholly disinterested, in that he/she inevitably enters the field with some preconceived theoretical disposition (May, 1997).

Therefore, critical ethnography calls on researchers to detail the personal belief systems and the biography they bring to their research, explain their motivation for embarking on their chosen form of research, cite the theoretical precepts underpinning their inquiry, articulate how the choices about participant selection and data collection methods were made, and describe how research findings were reached (Fine et al., 2000; Goodman, 1998; Smyth & Shacklock, 1998). In Chapter One, I position myself and my research interests quite explicitly. As the data are analysed in Chapters Five to Eight, in particular, I attempt to fully explicate how my findings were reached. These research protocols or practices embody the notion of ‘critical reflexivity’ (May, 1997, 1998; Smyth & Shacklock, 1998), whereby the researcher self-reflects and critiques the inquiry’s intentions, choices, and processes. This process explicitly acknowledges the idea that, rather than being found, most ethnographic data is emerges from the researcher’s singular interpretation of the culture or phenomenon under investigation (Simon & Dippo, 1986).

Active acknowledgement of the socio-political context of a research investigation is a key concern of critical ethnographers. They believe that no setting or phenomenon under ethnographic investigation is untainted by outside socio-political realities, as Smyth and Shacklock (1998) attest:

Phenomena, from a critical vantage point, are not considered to stand on their own but are implicated, embedded and located in wider contexts that are not entirely innocent. (Smyth & Shacklock, 1998: 19)

Critical ethnography acknowledges that societal power, which privileges certain groups above others, mediates the research itself, in that it shapes the type of research undertaken, and influences the nature of involvement by
research participants (Carspecken, 1996; Tripp, 1998). As a form of research, critical ethnography explicitly seeks to explore and expose these power relations. Through a critically engaged positioning of the researcher in relation to the research site and research participants, Corson (2001) saw the prospect of ‘reality’ emerging, albeit a reality (or realities) contextualised in the descriptions and accounts provided by participants themselves, as interpreted by the researcher. Inherent in such research are, according to Corson (2001: 192) and May (1997), emancipatory implications, whereby the ideas and knowledge shared, documented and analysed within the research can, and should, serve to benefit and empower the participants (Cohen *et al.*, 2000; Quantz, 1992).

Researchers engaged in critical inquiry in marginalised or subordinated communities, like that of this research setting, are, in particular, urged to be mindful of possible negative or harmful effects of the research on the community under investigation (Fine & Weis, 1998; Griffiths, 1998; Levinson, 1998). They are cautioned to consider the moral and ethical dimensions of research amongst those who are already vulnerable, and may be increasingly so after the research is completed. An activist role is suggested as one way of leaving the community under investigation better off for having been host to an ethnographic researcher for, sometimes, a considerable period of time. It has been noted that, while many academics investigate issues of social concern, “few are really grappling with trying to meld writing about and working with activists within these communities.” (Fine & Weis, 1998: 25, their emphases).

Ultimately, critical ethnographers are concerned about social inequalities, and direct their work toward positive social change (Carspecken, 1996). The notion of taking action to counter inequalities and hegemonic practices, rather than merely critiquing unequal power relations in educational settings or society at large, has been posited as a necessary outcome of critical ethnographic research (Anderson, 1989; May, 1997, 1998). Suggesting possible mechanisms for improvement and change gives hope to communities often lacking in that
commodity, even though real change in certain contexts might not be achieved without wider social change.

So, in summary, involvement in critical research involves a number of ‘critical frames’ (Lather, 1992) which are synthesised by Smyth and Shacklock (1998) as:

- studying marginalized or oppressed groups who are not given the authority to speak;
- approaching inquiry in ways that are interruptive of taken-for-granted social practices;
- locating meaning in broader social, cultural and political spheres;
- developing themes and categories from data, but treating them problematically as being open to interrogation;
- editing the researcher into the text, and not presuming that she/he is a neutral actor in the research;
- being reflexive of its own limitations, distortions and agenda; and
- concerned about the impact of the research in producing more equitable and just social relationships.

(Smyth & Shacklock, 1998:4)

In my educational research, I have been keen to confront each of these aspects of critical ethnographic inquiry. Specifically, I have built into my research design significant opportunities for the rarely heard views of immigrant and refugee students and parents to be expressed. These views are contextualised in their specific social, cultural, and political situation, as I understand and experienced it.

**Foregrounding Participants’ Voices**

There is much justification in the literature for a research study that seeks to explore multiple perspectives of key stakeholders, as mine does. Bourdieu (1999) remarked that investigation of a social phenomenon is invariably complex, and necessitates consideration of the diverse, often contradictory, viewpoints of those whose lives shape, or are shaped by that phenomenon. The deeply textured, ethnographic accounts of issues facing labourers, pensioners, the unemployed, and immigrants he and his colleagues collected (Bourdieu, 1999) are given additional potency by the way the voices of those carrying ‘the weight of the world’ are allowed to resonate. Such accounts served as an
inspiration and a model for giving prominence to participants’ voices in my own research.

In the area of bilingual education, there is also much support for fine-grained, detailed studies of bilingual learning. Corson (1998: 4) rejected simplistic solutions, instead calling for researchers to pay more attention to the multiple viewpoints of students, teachers and those communities who have a stake in the practices and aims of schools. In addition, it is argued that the studies that are likely to yield the greatest benefits are those which are located in specific cultural contexts, and address questions of particular concern to those involved in that particular learning community (Moran & Hakuta, 1995). The type of small, highly focussed study of bilingual learning like the one I have undertaken, is also advocated by Meyer and Fienberg (1992). Moss (1996: 20), too, calls on educational researchers to expand the dialogue and include the voices from different research traditions and from the communities being studied. Such studies have the benefit of informing theory and policy on a regional, state or national level when integrated with other localised studies (Cummins, 2000a; Moran & Hakuta, 1995).

Lindholm-Leary (2001) pointedly calls for teachers, parents and students to be consulted in investigations of bilingual learning. She notes that little research has been undertaken into levels of teacher satisfaction with, and perceptions of, language education in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. In terms of parents of bilingually educated students, she states that:

relatively few studies have explored the parents of these children to determine their backgrounds, involvement, attitudes towards bilingualism, reasons for enrolling their child in a bilingual program, or satisfaction with the language education program in which their child is enrolled.
(Lindholm-Leary, 2001: 143)

And, as for students, Lindholm-Leary (2001) believes developing a better understanding of students’ attitudes to their learning could lead to improved academic achievement and language proficiency. Observations have been made
that students more often figure “as objects of concern rather than as potential partners in dialogue” (Rampton, 1995: 323) and the need for exploration of the sociolinguistic insights of minority pupils themselves in research is strongly advocated. Nieto (1999) raises ethical dimensions to this methodological issue when noting:

Students are the people most affected by school policies and practices, but they tend to be the least consulted about them. Consequently, they are ordinarily the silent recipients of schooling. (Nieto, 1999: 191)

Certainly, such contextualised studies that have been conducted (Ding-Fariborz, 1997; Martin & Stuart-Smith, 1998; Oliver & Purdie, 1998; Pham, 1998) highlight the potential insights that students can bring to a study. May (1998), in critically revisiting his earlier ethnographic study of multicultural and bilingual learning in New Zealand (May, 1994a, 1994b) also argues for greater attention to the perspectives of students in such studies. My investigation which has, as its core, the perspectives of students currently or previously enrolled in a bilingual program, as well as those of their parents and their teachers, directly addresses these research concerns and imperatives.

**Responding to Criticisms of Critical Ethnography**

By being explicit about the dimensions and repercussions of power differentials in society, and in denying the possibility of a totally disinterested participant-observer conducting the research, critical ethnographies have been accused of pursuing set interests and agendas, and potentially failing to live up to their emancipatory intentions (Hammersley, 1992). In response, May (1997) suggests that such criticisms can be overcome through employment of democratic, consultative research practices and critical reflexivity, whereby the investigation’s design and analysis mechanisms are thoroughly critiqued.

Likewise, Carspecken (1996) sees no inherent conflict between the value orientation with which a critical ethnographer enters the field and the subsequent findings of the research. He argues that the orientation of the
researcher, which in the case of a critical ethnographer might be a value-driven compulsion to conduct research “as a way of bettering the oppressed and downtrodden” (Carspecken, 1996: 6), does not determine the ‘facts’ found in the field. Carspecken believes that, while important to explicate the value orientation of the researcher, this, in itself, does not ‘construct’ the object of the study: the same ‘object’ can be examined for a large variety of reasons, under a large variety of motivations, and yield the same findings. (Carspecken, 1996: 6)

Therefore, to ensure the veracity of my own research procedures and findings, I ensured that the data devices themselves allowed for meanings to be negotiated with the research participants. This took the form of probing and clarifying participants’ responses, particularly during the individual administration of student questionnaires and interviews, and as part of the parent focus group discussions that were undertaken bilingually. These procedures, which increased researcher/ participant collaboration, made the data collection process more democratic, as suggested by May (1997: 201) and Jordan and Yeomans (1995). I also found it particularly pertinent to reflect on the considerations put forward by Fine et al. (2000: 126-7) in order to help critical researchers be more reflexive about their investigations. They ask researchers to ponder their privileged position as often middle class, removed researchers entering poor, subordinated communities. In particular, they suggest ethnographers or other researchers critique their studies and respond to the following types of questions:

1. Are the “voices” and “stories” of individuals connected back to the set of historic, structural, and economic relations in which they are situated?
2. Have multiple methods of data collection been employed so that different kinds of analysis can be constructed?
3. Have mundane incidents, as well as the exotic or the sensational been described? Given that the everyday constitutes so much of life, it “should not be relegated to the edited-out files” (Fine et al., 2000: 126).
4. Have some informants/constituencies/participants had the opportunity to review the material and interpret, dissent, and challenge researcher interpretations? And, if so, has the researcher reflected on how these departures/agreements in perspective are reported?

5. Is there a point at which the words of informants become over-theorised? Fine and Weis (1998) note the tendency for certain types of responses to be heavily critiqued, yet others are allowed to stand on their own. While there may be valid reasons for doing this, they urge caution and careful consideration. Researchers, when remarking on their informants, have the propensity to “theorize generously, contextualize wildly, rudely interrupting them to reframe them” (Fine & Weis, 1998: 27).

6. Could the data be used for progressive, conservative, or repressive social policies? Fine et al. (2000) urge the researcher to ponder how raw or interpreted data might be heard, misread, or misappropriated. They even posit the notion that the researcher might need to add a “warning” about potential misuse.

7. Has the researcher retreated into the passive voice in order to avoid taking responsibility for researcher interpretations? In other words, has the researcher hidden behind the narrations or participatory interpretations of the research participants? The result can be that “our informants are then left carrying the burden of representations as we hide behind the cloak of alleged neutrality” (Fine et al., 2000: 109).

8. Is there any fear attached as to who might see these analyses? The researcher is urged to consider who is rendered vulnerable, responsible or exposed by these analyses. The researcher should consider, according to Fine et al. (2000), whether to show any of the participants the contents of the thesis before publication, and how this could be justified and reported.

9. What dreams is the researcher having about the material presented? Fine et al. (2000) ask researchers to explore any issues that are pulling at/out of the researcher’s own biography, and whether these have been over- or underplayed.
10. To what extent does the research analysis offer an alternative to the “commonsense” or dominant discourse, and what challenges might very different audiences pose to the analysis presented?

The originators of these ten issues themselves state that there are no right answers (Fine et al., 2000), but instead posit them as reflexive frames for critical researchers to consider when researching in, particularly, marginalised and disenfranchised communities. As they acknowledge:

... not all of us will answer in the same ways. But we will clarify why we answer in the ways we do. (Fine et al., 2000: 127)

Attending to these research considerations posited by Fine et al. (2000) answer the key criticisms of critical ethnography and, as such, shaped my research design and thesis writing. In Part Two of this chapter, I articulate how I have addressed many of these considerations. However, in the case of my research, the remarks made by Fine et al. (2000) raise vital issues of cross-cultural ‘border crossing’ which I now wish to explore.

Cross-Cultural Issues in Ethnographic Research

Undertaking ethnographic research in vulnerable or marginalised communities raises cross-cultural issues, in addition to the moral and ethical considerations discussed above. Engaging the involvement, support and trust of research participants in any setting is challenging. Researching in communities that are linguistically or culturally dissimilar to that of the researcher presents further challenges. It is this exploration of methodological issues to facilitate and enhance communication and understanding between researcher and participants, when their linguistic and cultural backgrounds differ, that encompasses ‘cross-cultural communication’ in the context of this research.

While noting that Scollon and Scollon (2001) use the terms ‘intercultural communication’ or ‘interdiscourse communication’, I have chosen the term ‘cross-cultural communication’, as it is more frequently used in the literature.
when discussing these research issues (Beuselinck, 2000; Minichiello et al., 1995; Padilla & Lindholm, 1995; Pauwels, 1995; Street, 1994; Verhoeven, 2000; Zinn, 1979).

Research in minority cultures or communities by a researcher of a society’s majority culture or linguistic community can be potentially exploitative or, through researcher ignorance of the culture of research participants, can yield results that are inaccurate or distorted (Zinn, 1979). Resistance to ‘outsiders’ investigating others’ lives and cultures is therefore problematic and researchers’ motives can be suspiciously viewed, misunderstood or even met with resistance (Minichiello et al., 1995; Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

Central to the phenomenon of the white, educated, middle class researcher (as I am most certainly perceived in the research setting under investigation) conducting a study in an immigrant/refugee community is the issue of power. Perceptions of the status of the esteemed, all-knowing researcher can potentially silence those who perceive themselves to be far less knowledgable, and therefore less confident, even less worthy of speaking their views. People such as recently arrived immigrants or refugees, whose personal histories may testify to the dangers inherent in the voicing of opinions, may feel less than disposed towards expressing their innermost thoughts about anything, even a topic as seemingly innocuous as a bilingual learning program. Immigrant communities often place high value on the benefits of education for their children and perceive that they are better off in their new country than they were in their home country, as Gibson (1991), Hartley (1995), and Hartley and Maas (1987) remark. These factors might explain, in part at least, any unwillingness to appear critical of an education system that is supporting their children. Therefore, facilitating open, honest communication, while appreciating this disposition, is another concern cross-cultural researchers need to consider when designing their research.
In his dissertations on contemporary Australia, Hage (1998, 2003) critiques multiculturalism as being, in many ways, a construct that allows entrenched white hegemonies to maintain power. Much of the current discourse about levels of migration and the composition of Australian society are seen by Hage as framed solely by, and in the interests of, those that hold, and wish to maintain their hold on power. As I see it, the ramifications for cross-cultural research, in both data collection and analysis, are to be wary of donning the mantle of the ‘benevolent multiculturalist’ who deigns to validate (or not) a cultural or linguistic phenomenon that lies outside the norms of generally accepted educational practice. It is better, as has been suggested (Corson, 2001; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; May, 1998; Meyer & Fienberg, 1992; Moran & Hakuta, 1995; Moss, 1996), to, where possible, ‘vacate the floor’ (Perrott, 1988) to allow the voices of those at the heart of the social or educational phenomenon to resonate. My student and parent data collection actively sets up structures whereby this goal is achieved.

Padilla and Lindholm (1995) articulate what they see as the key areas that require consideration when conducting research with diverse cultural or linguistic groups. Firstly, they see it as vital that the researcher properly identifies, describes, and selects a representative sample of participants for inclusion in the study. Like Heath (1995) and May (1999a), Padilla and Lindholm urge researchers to understand the heterogeneity within any ethnic group. Researchers are warned against ethnocentrism (Verhoeven, 2000) and are urged to avoid stereotyping (Pauwels, 1995). Padilla and Lindholm (1995) advise investigators to be attentive to the research methods they use to allow voices of divergence and convergence to emerge. Specifically, they pose three broad questions for researchers to consider.
• Are the selected instruments appropriate for use with the ethnic group in question? Is there equivalence across cultures of important concepts that are used in educational research? Have the instruments been accurately translated?
• Is it necessary to use specially designed instruments to assess such characteristics as acculturation, ethnic identity, English-language proficiency, or culturally specific learning strategies? How are such instruments identified for use with minority populations?
• Do minority subjects respond to questionnaires and other data collecting instruments in the same manner as majority group members? (Padilla & Lindholm, 1995: 104)

Issues of language barriers and different social meaning systems, or differing ways of interpreting and constructing reality have been raised as major challenges in conducting cross-cultural research (Beuselinck, 2000). Beuselinck also notes that researchers in cross-cultural contexts are, and should be, concerned with research respondents’ attitudes to the study, in that there can be a fear on the part of the outside researcher that the focus of the investigation or questions posed may be misconstrued.

While I readily acknowledge linguistic and cultural differences between myself and many of the potential participants in this research, the status of ‘outsider’ is not an accurate description of my position in the community in which the research is to be undertaken. As a teacher member, and educational and social participant of the research site school community since 1993, I feel I am afforded a tentative kind of ‘insider’ status in this research context. This did not preclude me from needing to be very attentive to cultural and linguistic sensitivities and protocols, and therefore I addressed these through:
• employing research assistants who were qualified interpreters, translators and bilingual facilitators to aid data collection, and to act as guides to culturally appropriate and acceptable research procedures –which minimised power differentials between researcher and research participants by allowing data to be collected in languages other than English;
• devising or drawing on data collection devices (such as student focus groups and parent bilingual group consultations) that maximised participant control;
• ensuring research aims and procedures (such as the tape recording of interviews and consultations) are clearly understood and are consented to by participants; and
• being highly aware of my appearance and demeanour during data collection: showing attentiveness to issues of cross-gender engagement, age difference, when to speak and not speak, and issues of procedure. My earlier Master of Education research undertaken in Vietnam, along with my years of working in non-English-speaking communities, makes me highly aware of these issues.

Corson (2001), cites Graeme Hingangaroa Smith’s (1990) four “models for doing culturally appropriate research”:

The Mentor Model, in which authoritative people from the community of practice itself guide and mediate the research.
The Adoption Model, in which researchers are “adopted” by the cultural community and entrusted to do the research with care and responsibility.
The Power-Sharing Model, in which researchers seek the help of the community and work together towards these research aims.
The Empowering Outcomes Model, where the research has emancipatory outcomes for the cultural community as its first objective.
(Corson, 2001: 193).

My research reflects different aspects of these models especially the “Empowering Outcomes” Model, which Corson (2001: 193) describes as the most complete approach, as it asks researchers to build the community’s hopes and aims into their research. Specifically, in my research design, I have drawn on these four models in the following ways.

• In terms of shaping my research and the appropriateness of my data collection tools, I drew on my own knowledge of the school community, and sought advice and input from linguistically and culturally informed insiders: the school’s multicultural education aides and LOTE/bilingual teachers (the Power-Sharing and Empowering Outcomes Models).
• I employed research assistants from the cultural and linguistic communities under investigation to assist, in particular, with issues of interpreting and translating. Their input helped determine culturally appropriate ways data were collected and, also, shape my initial interpretation of the data (Mentor Model).

• From the commencement of the research, I clearly stated to the school community - in informal conversations, at school assemblies, at parent functions such as School Council meetings, and at staff meetings - that I intended the research to be something that would both highlight program successes and inform ongoing teaching practice. As such, the quantitative involvement of the different stakeholder groups at the school site was very high, as was the qualitative richness of the information they shared (elements of the Adoption Model).

• The ongoing development of bilingual learning at the school is something I am committed to - both in the life of this research thesis, and after it. I see it as part of my ethical and social responsibility to use my study to improve teaching and learning at the school, and mechanisms for reporting back findings and organising professional development which are already in operation at the school level (Empowering Outcomes Model).

More about these dimensions of my research is described in the second part of this chapter.

Part Two: Methodological/Data Collection Steps in This Research
Having described the overarching methodological considerations I addressed in designing this research study, I now wish to explicate how this largely qualitative, critical ethnography was undertaken. I feel the clearest procedure for doing this is to describe how the data collection unfolded; which previous studies influenced or justified each method of data collection; and what my response to each step of the data collection process was. Specific information as to what the data revealed, and my subsequent data interpretation and discussion follow in later chapters.
At this point, I wish to make clear that neither classroom observation data nor analysis of classroom discourse data were employed in my study. While the collection of classroom (and non-classroom) interactional data may have yielded interesting insights, the decision to exclude this from the study’s research design was grounded in the following reasons and concerns. First, the research question was deliberately framed to ascertain the effectiveness of the bilingual program as perceived by stakeholders, offset by data in the form of records of student achievement in English. I believe that a data collection component whereby I would have been perceived to be evaluating teaching methods or critiquing individual teacher’s skills would have been counterproductive to maintaining trust between myself as researcher and the teachers as research participants. Nunan (1992) stresses that ethnographic research must aim to be non-obtrusive, and the presence of the researcher with video or audio equipment in classrooms would have, I strongly believe, militated against the levels of cooperation I received at the school.

Secondly, my years of teaching experience at the school enabled me to accurately describe the teaching and learning arrangements without the need to authenticate these through the collection of additional classroom data. While certainly acknowledging that school ethnographies often draw extensively on transcripts of classroom discourse and/or analysis of classroom practice (Freeman, 1998; Gebhard, 2005; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Trueba & Wright, 1992) many such studies are conducted by researchers less familiar with the school culture and classroom context that I was. For this reason, what is a logical, even necessary, data collection device in many studies was not required in mine.

Finally, given that ‘empowering outcomes’ (see Corson, 2001) were a desired result of this study, I believe that the power issues and sense of unease that were likely to arise in the context of classroom observations would not have
advanced this outcome. The research methods that were employed and the manner in which they were undertaken are now explicated.

Preparing for and Commencing the Research Study

Intense preparation went into planning and preparing for this study, both in terms of enlisting support and input at the research site, and in terms of devising the data collection tools. As already discussed, I wanted my investigation to be both supported by, and of benefit to, the school community in which it was to be conducted. Therefore, at the outset, I made clear my research intentions and sought input from all sections of the school community. I began by receiving support from the school principal to undertake a qualitative study of the school’s bilingual education program. His approval to conduct research at the school enabled me to plan my research design and to start developing my research tools, which I then took to the wider school community for input.

I attended a meeting of the School Council, the school’s governing body made up of staff, parent and community representatives. At this forum, I outlined my research focus, and explained in broad terms how I intended to gather data. The School Council offered advice in terms of framing my research, and gave approval to proceed, while stressing it was students’, parents’ and teachers’ individual choice as to whether they wished to be involved in the investigation.

I spoke to staff about the types of questions I intended asking, and in what form I intended to seek this information. The specificity of this information did a great deal to allay any fears that this research could, inadvertently or by design, undermine the professional integrity of school staff members or that of the program. In discussing my intended data collection methods, I received valuable advice from staff, particularly the school’s LOTE and bilingual program teachers, and multicultural education aides. Their ideas and assistance with designing appropriate tools to elicit detailed parent responses
were, I believe, factors that contributed to the high levels of involvement in the research from both parents and students.

Plain Language Statements, or letters of invitation to be involved in the research, were sent out to each family in the four main languages of the school: Chinese, Vietnamese, English and Turkish. An English copy of this letter is attached as Appendix 6. As I wanted to commence the investigation by gathering student data, I focussed on the goal of recruiting the maximum possible number of students as research participants. As the signed permission notes were returned, the number of students given permission to be involved rose to a very pleasing total of 143 of the entire enrolment of 180 students.

**Student Data Collection: Overall Plan**

The data I planned to gather from students covered the following main areas:

- languages used by the students in different in-school and out-of-school contexts;
- attitudes held by students regarding the knowledge and use of different languages;
- perceptions of proficiency levels in languages learned and used by the students; and
- perceptions of school programs, especially bilingual learning opportunities.

I gathered these data in stages, using a range of data collection devices. Following an inductive approach to gathering and analysing data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003), I began by collecting data across the whole student cohort, progressively narrowing my focus on students who could best illuminate issues at the heart of this thesis: those who were currently or had previously been enrolled in the school’s bilingual program. In order to ascertain the languages spoken by students in the school, a survey of the sociolinguistic composition of the students needed to be undertaken. In order to do this, I devised and administered a “Language Use Questionnaire” to all students from whom I had
received parental permission for involvement in the research. In addition, each student who used a language other than English was administered a “Language Attitudes Questionnaire” which I also formulated. This questionnaire investigated the comparative importance students placed on being able to speak, read and write in each of their two main languages. The results of these data revealed high levels of student support for bilingual learning. This led me to devise and pose additional questions of Years 3-6 ESL students that probed their perceptions of their levels of L1 and English proficiency, and investigated their perspectives on the benefits of being bilingual.

The final stage of student data collection involved the interviewing of students currently or formerly enrolled in the bilingual learning arrangements at the school. The purpose of these interviews was to explore more deeply issues arising from the earlier collected data. With the assistance of bilingual interpreters, these interviews were individually conducted in both English and the students’ L1 with 15 students in Years Prep to Two. Group interviews were conducted in English with 40 students in Years Three to Six.

In the following sections of this chapter, I describe each of these data collection tools in the order they were administered. Table 3.2 summarises them:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection Tool</th>
<th>Research Participants</th>
<th>Purpose of Data Collection Tool</th>
<th>Appendices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Use Questionnaire</td>
<td>All Years P-6 students (N = 143)</td>
<td>• to gather baseline data about patterns of students’ in- and out-of-school language use.</td>
<td>See Appendix 7.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Attitudes Questionnaire (Part One: Importance of different dimensions of language)</td>
<td>All Years P-6 students of LBOTE (N = 129)</td>
<td>• to understand levels of importance students place on knowing and using both their L1 and English.</td>
<td>See Appendices 8, 9 &amp; 10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Attitudes Questionnaire (Part Two: Comparative importance of two main languages)</td>
<td>All Years P-6 students of LBOTE (N = 129)</td>
<td>• to understand comparative importance students place on learning in their L1 and English.</td>
<td>See Appendices 8, 9 &amp; 10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up Student Questioning: Years 3-6 Statement Sort:</td>
<td>All Years 3-6 students of Chinese and Vietnamese-language backgrounds (N = 62)</td>
<td>• to understand student perceptions of L1/English abilities; • to understand student perceptions of bilingual benefits; and • to probe feelings about school programs, especially bilingual learning arrangements.</td>
<td>See Appendices 11 - 16.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Interviews: Years P-1</td>
<td>Years P-1 students in Vietnamese-English bilingual program (N = 7)</td>
<td>• to explore students’ perceptions of their learning needs and of bilingual learning; and • to allow students the opportunity to express perspectives bilingually.</td>
<td>See Appendices 17 &amp; 19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Interviews: Years P-2</td>
<td>Years P-2 students in Mandarin-English bilingual program (N = 9)</td>
<td>• to explore students’ perceptions of their learning needs and of bilingual learning; and • to allow students the opportunity to express perspectives bilingually.</td>
<td>See Appendices 18 &amp; 19.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student Interviews: Years 2-6
• conducted in English

Years 2-6 Vietnamese-background students (N = 17)

Years 3-6 Chinese-background students (N = 23)

• to explore students’ memories of their involvement in a bilingual program;
• to explore students’ perceptions of how bilingual learning met/meets their learning needs; and
• to probe trends and responses to earlier collected student data.

See Appendices 20.1 & 20.2.

Student Data Collection: Language Use Questionnaire

In designing the research methods for this investigation, I felt that the only way I could gain an accurate understanding of these students’ perceptions about learning bilingually would be to understand what place English and other languages held in students’ lives: when and with whom they used English, another language, or a combination of two or more languages.

As Gee (1994, 1996b) and Street (1994, 1995, 2000) have stated, it is crucial to contextualise the languages and language forms an individual uses in social practice in order to understand the complex issues surrounding literacy development amongst different groups in society. Likewise, Romaine (1995) stresses the importance of understanding the ‘domains’ or contexts of an individual’s or group’s language use when investigating bilingualism. Baker (2001) identifies a diversity of adult language domains: sites of language use such as shopping, work, and leisure activities; and, in addition, describes ‘targets’ of language use, ranging from immediate family, friends, neighbours, and teachers. I found these notions of language domains and targets useful as a framework for mapping students’ language use. Therefore, drawing on these domains and targets, as articulated by Baker (2001) and Romaine (1995); and as investigated in ethnographic studies of language use (Gregory & Williams, 2000a, 2000b; Martin-Jones & Bhatt, 1998; McGregor & Li, 1991; Saxena, 2000; Sneddon, 2000; Tse, 1996), I devised a Language Use Questionnaire (see
Appendix 7) which I felt would suit the circumstances of the primary school-aged students under investigation.

The Language Use Questionnaire I devised asked students to state what language or languages they used in the following domains or with the following people, or targets, in Baker’s (2001) terms:

- reading by yourself;
- working on a piece of your own writing;
- talking with your parents;
- talking with your brothers or sisters;
- talking with your friends;
- talking with teachers at school;
- doing Number/ Mathematics work;
- thinking about things;
- asking for something at a shop;
- watching videos or DVDs;
- listening to music; and
- listening to stories at home.

I devised two versions of the questionnaire: an illustrated and a written version. I trialled both versions with two students at three levels of the school: Year Prep, Year Two and Year Five. The illustrated version yielded better responses from students at all levels. Pictures proved more immediate for the students and focussed them more closely on what was being asked. Pictorial cues, particularly photographs, are referred to as ‘elicitation techniques’ that can assist research participants’ recall and foster extended verbal responses in both second language acquisition investigations (Nunan, 1992) and general social research (Johnson & Weller, 2002). Trialling the questionnaire also revealed the benefits of administering it one-to-one, in order that individual student responses could be probed, as required.
I administered the Language Use Questionnaire individually with each participating student in the study, including students who I understood were from English-speaking backgrounds. As mentioned earlier, this involved 143 out of the school’s total population of 180 students participating in this part of the research: 79.4 percent of the school’s enrolment. This high level of involvement by students in the research was additionally pleasing in that it reflected a representative spread of students from all language backgrounds and year levels at the school. As a result, I feel the subsequent picture of language use at both a whole school and individual level accurately reflects the reality at the school.

As intended, the Language Use Questionnaire produced a sociolinguistic profile of the school. The administration of the questionnaire was generally completed for each student in less than five minutes. As even the youngest students were not losing concentration at that point, I administered the Language Attitudes Questionnaire to those students who used a language other than English immediately afterwards.

**Student Data Collection: Language Attitudes Questionnaire**

I drew on bilingual education literature and previous studies’ collection of language attitudes data (Kalantzis et al., 1989; Oliver & Purdie, 1998; Romaine, 1995) to devise a two-part Language Attitudes Questionnaire (see Appendix 8). I felt that developing an understanding of the extent to which students valued languages in their repertoire would help contextualise later data designed to explore students’ attitudes to bilingual learning. I devised statements and pictorial devices for sorting, believing these would help elicit student responses (Johnson & Weller, 2002; Nunan, 1992), as such techniques had been successfully used in other investigations of language use and attitudes to language (Hodge & Jones, 2000; Martin & Stuart-Smith, 1998; Snow et al., 1996; Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002).
Romaine (1995), in particular, has addressed the issue of language attitudes questionnaires, which she asserts have advantages in that they are easy to distribute and collect, allow for a large number of people to be surveyed, and facilitate easier analysis and comparison of results across informants. Romaine (1995) points out significant advantages if these data collection devices are individually administered. She warns there potentially can be a loss of control if questionnaires are distributed rather than administered individually, noting that an opportunity to clarify responses exists when the researcher is present. She also warns that completing questionnaires is a complex, alien task for some, and that individual administration largely eliminates error. However, she warns that the presence of the researcher could bias results, in that respondents might give answers they think the researcher wants. In administering this questionnaire and in my other engagements with research participants, I emphasised that I was seeking honest responses and that there were no right or wrong answers to any task or question posed.

Part One of the Language Attitudes Questionnaire asked students to reflect on how important they felt it was to be able to speak, read, and write in English and their home language. Students were asked to place six statements (which were accompanied by an appropriate picture) onto a chart under one of three headings: “not important”, “important” or “very important.” To ensure students understood this procedure, two practice statements (with accompanying pictures) were introduced first. Virtually all students found these easy to categorise, and talk around these innocuous topics ensured students remained at ease with the data collection procedures.

Once I was satisfied students were cognitively able to perform the task, by satisfactorily responding and justifying their choices in the practice questions, the six language-oriented statements (accompanied by an appropriate picture) were posed. These appeared on laminated cards, a set having been made for each of the major language groups in the school, and a blank one being ready
for use with students from other language backgrounds. Using the cards to assist students to focus, I posed the following questions:

1. How important is it for you to be able to speak (your home language)?
2. How important is it for you to be able to speak English?
3. How important is it for you to be able to read in (your home language)?
4. How important is it for you to be able to read in English?
5. How important is it for you to be able to write in (your home language)?
6. How important is it for you to be able to write in English?

In administering every second questionnaire, I would reverse the order of each English question and each home language question. I did this to avoid any accusation of researcher bias in that I was consistently placing ordinal emphasis on English or a LOTE. See Appendix 9 for a photographic depiction of this task.

Administering this part of the Language Attitudes Questionnaire on a one-to-one basis with the students allowed me to probe responses or apparent discrepancies in ways Romaine (1995) highlights. For example, I could ask, “Why is it important for you to speak Vietnamese but not write it?” or “You said being able to read, write and speak English are very important. Why are they all so important for you?” Any additional responses students made to this probing were noted in the students’ words. For students who spoke more than one variety of Chinese (e.g. Hakka and Mandarin), “How important is it for you to be able to speak Chinese?” was intended as being a question about their L1. However, I was happy for students to interpret this as referring to any form of Chinese, and explained this when introducing this question.

Part Two of the Language Attitudes Questionnaire asked students to choose, from one of four statements, one which best reflected how they felt about the two main languages in their repertoire, and place it in a box under the heading “This is how I feel.” The four statements read:

1. Learning English is more important than learning (my first language).
2. Learning (my first language) is more important than learning English.
3. Both English and (my home language) are equally important to learn.
4. Neither English nor (my home language) are important to learn.

As with Part One of the Language Attitudes Questionnaire, I made sets of these four statements for each of the major language groups in the school, as well as a blank set for use with students from other language backgrounds. Key words in each statement were highlighted, and simple pictures of happy and frowning faces reinforced the written statement. (A photographic depiction of this task is appended as Appendix 10). Procedurally, as I had done in the first part of the questionnaire, I alternated the first two statements for each successive student in order not to potentially privilege one language above another. Again, administering this section of the questionnaire one-to-one allowed me to probe each student’s response. After each student chose a statement, I asked why they had chosen that particular one, and noted their response in their words.

Of the 143 students from whom I collected Language Use Questionnaire data, 129 were administered the Language Attitudes Questionnaire. All these 129 students had significant in- and out-of-school exposure and use for a non-English language. I did not administer the Language Attitudes Questionnaire to 16 students who revealed English to be their sole language of use in the domains listed on the Language Use Questionnaire.

While I wish to hold over detailing and analysing the results of these and other data until the next chapter, the fact that 83 percent of students chose the “Both English and (my home language) are equally important to learn” statement as being true for them motivated me to pursue issues surrounding this choice more deeply. In order to do this, I devised additional questions which I administered to all Years 3-6 students from Chinese- and Vietnamese-language backgrounds who were involved in the research (a total of 62 students).
Student Data Collection: Follow-Up Student Questioning: Years 3-6

On initial analysis of the Language Use and Language Attitudes Questionnaires, two important pieces of information stood out. First, over 90 percent of students involved in the research were not only from language backgrounds other than English (a detail which could have been learned from school enrolment details), but were functional bilinguals. This means that they used English and at least one other language across several language domains or with a variety of language targets on a daily basis (Baker, 2001). Second, a large majority of students (83 percent of those surveyed), saw it as equally important to learn English and their home language. This figure varied across year levels, as will be shown in Chapter Five: “Research Results”, but was at a significant majority at all levels from Years Prep to Six.

Three research needs emerged from my reflection and initial analysis of the Language Use and Language Attitudes Questionnaire data:

• to link students’ attitudes to speaking, reading and writing in English and their home language with their perceived levels of proficiency in these languages;

• to more clearly identify the benefits students saw in learning and developing both English and their home language; and

• to understand whether the school’s bilingual program was instrumental in meeting students’ bilingual learning needs.

A useful model for investigation of these issues was provided by Lindholm-Leary (2001) who reported on the attitudes of students in dual language programs to their learning as well as on their perceptions of their own language and academic proficiency. Lindholm-Leary also investigated students’ beliefs about the benefits of being bilingual. In terms of exploring very similar issues, I decided to focus on students from Chinese- and Vietnamese-language backgrounds only. I also decided to restrict my investigation of these topics to students in Years 3-6 because:
• I understood that these students had generally moved beyond the beginning and emergent stages of both L1 and English development, and would therefore be in a better position to reflect on their perceived levels of ability in both languages;
• I felt Years 3-6 students were at an age whereby they were more capable of this metacognitive analysis or deeper level of reflection; and
• I wanted to pursue these issues with students who had now transitioned from the bilingual program to a mainstream English classroom, as having experienced both these forms of educational arrangement should facilitate comparison.

Therefore, I arranged to individually interview Years 3-6 students from Chinese- and Vietnamese-language backgrounds to pursue these questions. I questioned 62 students in total, 39 from Chinese-language backgrounds; 23 from Vietnamese-language backgrounds.

Exploring Perceptions of Language Proficiency

In order to explore students’ perceptions of their abilities in the two languages of instruction at the school, I developed a task whereby they were asked to reflect on a series of statements. Separate sets of statements were made for use with students from Vietnamese- and Chinese-language backgrounds. The same statements were used for students from Years 3-6. The statements were as follows:

1. I am pleased with how well I can read in English.
2. I am pleased with how well I can read in Chinese (or Vietnamese).
3. I am pleased with how well I can write in English.
4. I am pleased with how well I can write in Chinese (or Vietnamese).
5. I am pleased with how well I can speak in English.
6. I am pleased with how well I can speak in Chinese (or Vietnamese).

The students were asked to place these statements on a three-point (for Years 3-4 students) or a five-point scale (for Years 5-6 students). Examples of this
research tool are appended to this thesis (See Appendices 11 and 12). The selection of a three-point scale was intended to cater for the younger students by narrowing the range of choices. This scale asked these Years 3-4 students to place each statement at a point from ‘disagree’ to ‘agree’:

- ____________________________ - ____________________________
  disagree            not sure             agree

The five-point scale asked Years 5-6 students to place each statement at a point from ‘disagree strongly’ to ‘agree strongly’:

- ____________________________ - ____________________________ - ____________________________ - ____________________________ - ____________________________
  disagree strongly  disagree            not sure             agree             agree strongly

I administered these statements individually with each student. As with previous data collection devices, I alternated which statement I asked first as each student was administered the task. For the students of Chinese-language background, the statement, “I am pleased with how well I can speak in Chinese” was explained to the students as referring to Mandarin as, despite this not being the fangyan of Chinese used at home by most students, it is the variety of Chinese taught at the school.

Exploring Perceptions of Bilingual Benefits
When asked, as part of the Language Attitudes Questionnaire, why students viewed bilingualism as desirable, examples of dual (or multiple) language use were given more often than reasons. By contrast, when students viewed learning one language as being more important than another, they were usually clearly able to express the reason(s) for that opinion.

Wishing to pursue the issue of perceived bilingual benefits more deeply, I decided to develop a research tool to assist me understand specifically what advantages students saw in learning bilingually. I revisited all 129 responses to
the Language Attitudes Questionnaire, and compiled all the qualitative comments made by students, grouping together statements under common themes. I noted that these themes corresponded to theories of integrative and instrumental motivation in the learning of a second or additional language (Gardner, 1985). As Gardner (1985) explains and others (Baker, 2001; Lindholm-Leary, 2001) have since re-iterated, integrative motivation refers to a desire to learn a second language in order to engage or integrate with people of another group; whereas in terms of instrumental motivation, the learner sees some academic, intellectual or career gain in becoming proficient in the second language.

In addition, I returned to Romaine’s (1995) discussion of language attitudes, and explored the device in a study she cited (Dorian, 1981) which investigated the attitudes to the Gaelic language held by Scottish Gaelic speakers and English monolinguals. Dorian asked respondents to identify how important or how true for them 13 different statements about Gaelic were. These statements were grouped into the following six categories to which I have added an example of a statement used in Dorian’s language attitudes questionnaire:

1. tradition (“It’s the language of my people before me.”)
2. local integration (“It makes me feel more a part of the community I live in.”)
3. abstract principle (“It’s broadening to have more than one language.”)
4. subjective aesthetic (“Gaelic is a beautiful language to hear and speak.”)
5. operational (“I can read in Gaelic, for example the Bible and the psalms or newspaper columns.”)
6. exclusionary (“It’s useful to have a ‘secret language’ that not everyone understands”).

Using Dorian’s methodology (1981) and Romaine’s (1995) critique of it as a model, I drew on student data I had collected to devise six categories of my own to explore students’ perceptions of the benefits of bilingualism. These categories reflect both integrative and instrumental factors that I felt might
reflect students’ feelings about the importance of developing bilingual abilities. For each category, I devised two statements, in language like that spoken by the students. Each statement begins with the stem “Knowing two languages is good because …”. As the aim was to explore bilingual benefits, these statements are positively worded. However, students had the opportunity to disagree with these statements as I explained on individually administering this data collection tool. The students were asked to place on the same three-point and five-point scales used in the earlier exploration of perceptions of language proficiency. The categories and statements are listed below in Table 3.3.

**TABLE 3.3 PERCEPTIONS OF BILINGUAL BENEFITS STATEMENT SORTING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family and social necessity</td>
<td>Knowing two languages is good because I need both to communicate with my family and friends. \Knowing two languages is good because I need both when I go to the shops, restaurants or other places.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic enjoyment in dual language knowledge and use</td>
<td>Knowing two languages is good because I enjoy being able to do things in more than one language. \Knowing two languages is good because I enjoy learning in both.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational advantages</td>
<td>Knowing two languages is good because it helps me succeed at school. \Knowing two languages is good because it helps me understand the things I learn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible future benefits</td>
<td>Knowing two languages is good because it might help me at secondary school. \Knowing two languages is good because it might help me get a good job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive advantages</td>
<td>Knowing two languages is good because it makes me more clever. \Knowing two languages is good because it helps me think better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem/identity enhancement</td>
<td>Knowing two languages is good because it helps me feel proud of my family background. \Knowing two languages is good because it helps me feel proud of being an Australian.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The statements under the category of ‘self-esteem and identity enhancement’ were, in some ways, the most difficult to construct. A possible statement like ‘Knowing two languages is good because it makes me feel good about myself’, while potentially useful as a notion of self-esteem, seemed, on reflection, too broad and too easy to agree with. Also, any notion of conflict in the construct of
students’ bi/multicultural identities would remain unexplored if such a statement were presented. Instead, issues of family background, and the admittedly nebulous notion of ‘being an Australian’ were presented as two aspects of students’ possible identity construction. While school curriculum programs strongly promote broad, multicultural definitions of what constitutes ‘an Australian’, I was keen to explore the extent to which students identified with this notion. While a deep investigation of students’ notions of cultural or ethnic identity was outside the context of this study, and other research has made this a key focus (Hamston, 2002; Short & Carrington, 1999), it was an area to which I wanted to make some reference in relation to students’ perceptions of their bilingual learning.

Another issue I wish to confront here is the construction and naming of the categories themselves. While the categories themselves are broad, and divisions between categories are open to dispute, grouping the statements into common themes or categories was seen as potentially assisting later data analysis and, for this reason, built into the research design. It is acknowledged that some statements could possibly be located in categories other than the ones in which they have been placed. For example, ‘it helps me understand the things I learn’ could be seen as a cognitive as much as an educational advantage. In terms of this research device, cognition is linked to specific intellectual processes such as thinking, learning, memory, perception and attention (Garton, 2003). Therefore, notions of intelligence and reasoning (‘feeling clever’ and ‘thinking better’ in children’s vernacular) are, in this context, defined as cognitive advantages. How these cognitive skills are used or applied, in relation to increased understanding leading to greater school success, have been linked, in light of this distinction, to educational advantages.

In terms of administering this data collection device, students individually were read each statement and were asked to place it on the three- or five-point scales they previously encountered. They were reminded that there were no right or
wrong answers, that the answers may be spread across the continuum or mainly located under one category. What was wanted from them was a true indication of how they felt. As they placed each statement on the appropriate scale, I entered these responses, along with any additional comments made by the student, on a recording sheet (see Appendices 13 and 14 for examples of this data collection device).

**Reflection on the School’s Bilingual Programs**

After administering the statements exploring students’ perceptions of the benefits of bilingual learning, three final statements were presented to each student. These sought to explore, across the Years 3-6 levels, students’ perceptions of how effectively the school’s programs, especially its bilingual education arrangements, addressed their learning needs; and whether they would have liked those bilingual learning opportunities to continue into the higher year levels. These statements read:

1. This school teaches me what I need to know.
2. Being in a bilingual program when I started school was good for my learning.
3. I wish I could do more of my learning in Chinese (or Vietnamese).

As in earlier tasks, the Years 3-4 students were asked to place each statement on a three-point scale at a point from ‘disagree’ to ‘agree’:

- • disscreeee     • not sure     • agree

Likewise, Years 5-6 students, as in previous tasks, were asked to place each statement at a point from ‘disagree strongly’ to ‘agree strongly’:

- • disscreeee     • disscreeee     • not sure     • agree     • agree strongly
Again, as each student placed a statement on either the three- or five-point scale, I entered these responses, along with any additional comments, on a recording sheet (see Appendices 15 and 16).

The information gained from each of the widely administered student data collection devices described so far:

- the Language Use Questionnaire;
- the Language Attitudes Questionnaire; and
- the follow-up student questioning

shaped the final form and selection of students from all year levels for interviewing.

**Student Data Collection: Bilingual Interviews (Years Prep - Two)**

In order to gain rich, descriptive insights into how students perceived their learning needs and the degree to which the school’s programs addressed these, my research design centred on the interviewing of students from all year levels at the school. At each year level, I planned to interview six students individually: three students from Chinese-language backgrounds, and three from Vietnamese-language backgrounds. I determined that approximately equal numbers of boys and girls would be my aim, and that these students would represent the range of academic abilities at each year level. Ultimately, the numbers of students interviewed at each year level varied to a small degree, as did the gender mix of students. This was due to circumstances beyond anyone’s control – student absences, in the main – on the days an interpreter was employed to assist with the administration of bilingual student interviews. However, I do not believe failure to meet the goals of student numbers and student types for these interviews compromises the usefulness of the data in any way. The insights these children provided would not have been significantly augmented, I believe, by additional or different students being interviewed. The participation of these students is presented in the following table (Table 3.4).
Bilingual interviewing procedures were instituted for students currently participating in the bilingual education program: Years Prep-One Vietnamese-background students, and Years Prep-Two Chinese-background students. Bilingual interviews conducted in each of the students’ main languages potentially have much to reveal about such issues as language preference, perceptions of schooling and constructions of identity (Miller, 2003). Two examples where bilingual interviewing has brought noteworthy insights (Martin & Stuart-Smith, 1998; Snow et al., 1996) highlight the potential benefits.

In my research, I devised a procedure to interview these younger students both in English and their first language, drawing particularly on British research undertaken by Martin and Stuart-Smith (1998). Their study of fifty Year Two (six/seven year olds) who were fluently bilingual in English and Panjabi explored these children’s contexts of language use, their feelings about bilingualism and biliteracy, and their perceptions of their own identity. Martin and Stuart-Smith interviewed students twice: once in English and once in Panjabi, in the hope that this might allow children to fully express their thoughts about the issues under investigation. In contrast to my study, none of the children involved in Martin and Stuart-Smith’s research “had difficulties
which were causing concern” (Martin & Stuart-Smith, 1998: 239). In my study, I ensured children were selected to represent a range of academic ability across languages.

Interviews in each of the languages in Martin and Stuart-Smith’s study were conducted on different days using a Panjabi interpreter to pose questions in that language. Both English and Panjabi interviews asked virtually identical questions. For my study, I employed two interpreters: one Hakka-speaking and one Vietnamese-speaking, to assist with the bilingual interviews. Like Martin and Stuart-Smith’s study, the questions asked in English and in Hakka or Vietnamese were similar, and were focused on perceptions of learning needs and language instruction. In contrast to Martin and Stuart-Smith’s procedures, the bilingual questioning in my study took place within the one interview.

As suggested by Eder and Fingerson (2002), a natural location for the interviews was selected: a classroom area in the school that was neither directly associated with English or LOTE learning, but was familiar enough to students to not inhibit their responses. Interviews were tape recorded using a small portable device. The order of the English and the Hakka/Vietnamese interviews were alternated on each occasion, so that question order did not affect or skew results in any way.

Each interview lasted about 15 minutes in total, and was structured in four parts: meeting the interpreter and a brief introduction to the purpose of the interview; an English interview, followed by a Chinese or Vietnamese interview (the order of which reverse at each alternate interview); and concluding questions in English. Interview formats for both the Hakka and Vietnamese interviews are appended to this thesis (See Appendix 17 and 18).

Elicitation devices (Johnson & Weller, 2002; Nunan, 1992) were again used to facilitate student recall and extend their utterances. These took the form of
photographs from Chinese-, Vietnamese-, and English-language classrooms, along with classroom artifacts from these programs: reading material in each of the languages, class library books, students’ notebooks and work samples. Photographs are recommended as effective elicitation devices (Hodge & Jones, 2000), and were useful in a recent Australian investigation of language maintenance (Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002). The use of photographs was incorporated into the interview and served as a focus for students as they responded to questions in each of their languages. Examples are reproduced in Appendix 19.

The interview began by the student looking at recent photographs of the school’s bilingual classrooms. These were used as a vehicle for encouraging students to describe their learning, and to reflect on why the school might offer bilingual learning opportunities. Then, either the English or LOTE interview would proceed. In both instances, the students were asked to talk about their learning as they looked through their notebooks and the books they had read in each of the languages of instruction. Talking about these very concrete artifacts of their learning was intended to ease them into reflecting on a deeper level about the advantages and disadvantages in learning in that language, and whether they thought instruction in that language was important. On completing this discussion, the interview in the other language would proceed along exactly the same lines. The only difference was that, in the Hakka interviews, an additional question was added, which inquired about how the students felt having Hakka as a home language, but learning in Mandarin.

Finally, each interview concluded in English with students being asked to comment on whether they think bilingual learning is a good or bad thing, and how they would feel if - like many schools - their school offered predominately English instruction only. Interviews were translated and transcribed for analysis. In summary, the outline for each of these interviews is presented in Table 3.5 below.
### TABLE 3.5 STUDENT BILINGUAL INTERVIEW PROCEDURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Procedure</th>
<th>Research Facilitator</th>
<th>Elicitation Devices Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction:</strong></td>
<td>Principal researcher</td>
<td>• Mounted and laminated photographs of English, Chinese (or Vietnamese, as appropriate) classrooms in the bilingual program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Meeting interpreter.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Orientation to the interview.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discussion of how student’s learning takes place.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview (English)</strong>:*</td>
<td>Principal researcher</td>
<td>• Learning artifacts: student work samples and notebooks, literature from classroom library or reading instructional texts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discussion of student’s learning, especially language learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exploration of perceived positive and negative features of learning in this language.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discussion of level of importance of learning in that language.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview (Hakka or Vietnamese)</strong>:*</td>
<td>Research assistant:</td>
<td>• Learning artifacts: student work samples and notebooks, literature from classroom library or reading instructional texts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hakka or Vietnamese interpreter.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discussion of student’s learning, especially language learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exploration of perceived positive and negative features of learning in this language.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discussion of level of importance of learning in that language.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concluding Questions:</strong></td>
<td>Principal researcher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Student opinions of bilingual learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Student consideration of what monolingual English instruction might be like.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Order of English/LOTE interviews alternated each successive interview.

**Student Data Collection: Group Interviews (Years 3-6)**

Older students who had previously been in the Years Prep to Two bilingual education classes were also sought for interview. These students had the unique advantage of being able to offer personal perspectives on both the bilingual program and English-medium classrooms, having experienced each of these learning arrangements in their time at the school. In addition to probing further some of the themes emerging from the previously collected student data, I was keen to investigate a number of issues with these students:

- their memories of beginning their schooling in a bilingual learning arrangement;
- how they now felt about this sort of learning;
• why they believed the school offers a bilingual education program;
• what they would feel if the school only offered monolingual English-language instruction; and
• whether they believed a longer period of bilingual learning would have been beneficial.

As all students in this category were proficient in conversational English, I decided not to undertake the bilingual interviews I had carried out with the younger students. Despite the fact that conducting interviews bilingually may have had symbolic value for these older students, I confidently believe that the expression of students’ opinions about language learning was not diminished by the fact that the interviews were conducted in English only.

Another change from the earlier bilingually-conducted interviews, was that group interviews were undertaken with the older students. Drawing on my knowledge of the students, I considered it more likely that Years 3-6 students would respond better to group interview structures, and that the presence of other students in a non-threatening environment might elicit more elaborated discussion. By contrast, with the younger children, I considered it a strong possibility that group interviews might easily become unfocussed, as Kvale (1996) warns. In addition, use of the elicitation devices I had developed would be better implemented, I believed, with individuals – as opposed to groups of students.

A number of advantages in conducting group interviews have been posited, notably that they present an opportunity for a deeper exploration and exchange of views; that they allow for participants to question and explore each other’s responses; and that they permit more voices to be heard within the often limited time available (Hartley & Maas, 1987; Lynch, 1996). In addition, interviewing children in groups has been advocated as a means to minimise or
overcome unequal power and status differentials that often characterise adult-child encounters (Eder & Fingerson, 2002).

Lynch (1996), however, cautions that group interviews can inhibit some participants, especially if the subject matter is controversial. Despite this, Eder and Fingerson (2002), note that group structures are a natural reflection of the ways in which children and adolescents socialise, and construct and negotiate meaning about themselves and the world around them. As such, Eder and Fingerson propose that, if group interviews are conducted in as close to the real-life friendship groups of the children as possible, their natural conversational styles should emerge, adding authenticity to the tone and content of the interview.

I was conscious that the composition of the interview groups I formed required careful consideration, and that I needed to be vigilant in case dominating students imposed their opinions on others, or silenced dissenting voices. With this in mind, I followed Eder and Fingerson’s (2002) advice and drew together groups of between two and four students who were socially compatible and of the same language background for each interview session. At Years 5 and 6 levels, I believed that, if the groups were single-sex, this might best replicate existing friendship groups and facilitate conversations “more indicative of those occurring in natural settings” (Eder & Fingerson, 2002: 183).

I aimed for three Chinese-background students at each grade level from Years 3-6; and three Vietnamese-background students at each grade level from Years 2-6 (these students ceasing their bilingual learning at the end of Year One). As it turned out, group interviews and high levels of student enthusiasm allowed, at most year levels, for more than this number of students to be interviewed. The details of the group interviews are recorded in Table 3.6 below.
As defined by Flick (2002) and Lynch (1996), a semi-structured interview format was employed these group interviews in that, while a set series of questions was covered, the wording and order of the questions were adapted to the specifics of each interview. Elsewhere, semi-structured interviews have been noted as recent additions to the methodologies employed in multilingual literacy research (Donohoue Clyne, 2000; Jones et al., 2000).

The format and semi-structured questions for each interview is appended to this thesis (see Appendices 20.1 and 20.2). In order to focus students on the issues of bilingual learning, and to assist student recall of their earlier involvement in these programs, the laminated photographs of the English-, Vietnamese- and Chinese-language classrooms used in the Years Prep-Two bilingual interviews were again employed as elicitation devices at the commencement of each group interview, and were on hand for students to refer to throughout the course of the interview (see Appendix 19). As mentioned earlier, the group interviews attempted to activate students’ memories of being in a bilingual program, investigating how they felt about bilingual learning when previously involved in the program and now, after discontinuing from it. Their views of the monolingual English alternative were also sought. The interviews also addressed issues that emerged from other stages of the data collection. For example, if a student in the group expressed a strong wish to do

---

**TABLE 3.6 STUDENT GROUP INTERVIEW PARTICIPATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th>Chinese-background students</th>
<th>Vietnamese-background students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year Two</td>
<td></td>
<td>Group V1: three girls, one boy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Three</td>
<td><strong>Group C1</strong>: two girls, two boys. &lt;br&gt;<strong>Group C2</strong>: one girl, two boys.</td>
<td>Group V2: two girls, one boy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Four</td>
<td><strong>Group C3</strong>: two girls, one boy.</td>
<td>Group V3: two girls, one boy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Five</td>
<td><strong>Group C4</strong>: four boys. &lt;br&gt;<strong>Group C5</strong>: three girls.</td>
<td>Group V4: two girls. &lt;br&gt;<strong>Group V5</strong>: three boys.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Six</td>
<td><strong>Group C6</strong>: two girls. &lt;br&gt;<strong>Group C7</strong>: two boys. &lt;br&gt;<strong>Group C8</strong>: two girls.</td>
<td><strong>Group V6</strong>: two girls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total number of students = 40</strong>&lt;br&gt;(23 girls; 17 boys)</td>
<td><strong>Total number of Chinese-background students = 23</strong>.&lt;br&gt;(12 girls; 11 boys)</td>
<td><strong>Total number of Vietnamese-background students = 17</strong>.&lt;br&gt;(11 girls; 6 boys)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
more of their learning in their L1, this could be raised in the group interview.

So, in summary, the group interviews were structured in the manner outlined in the following table (Table 3.7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Procedure</th>
<th>Elicitation Devices Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 3.7 STUDENT GROUP INTERVIEW PROCEDURE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction:</th>
<th>• Mounted and laminated photographs of English, Chinese (or Vietnamese, as appropriate) classrooms in the bilingual program.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Orientation to the interview: explanation of purpose of interview.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discussion of students’ memories of being in bilingual education program.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Exploration of perceived positive and negative features of learning bilingually.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discussion of why students believe the school has this form of education; what they feel the monolingual English alternative would be like.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Investigation of students’ feelings about learning another community language.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concluding Questions:</th>
<th>• Reference to earlier questionnaires, interview tasks and statement sorts.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Following up unresolved or under-explored issues from earlier data, such as:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- exploring bilingual benefits;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- discussing whether a bilingual program of longer duration would have been advantageous or not.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interview Analysis**

Each individual and group interview was audio-taped, and the content of the interviews transcribed for later analysis. Analysis of all interview transcripts drew on coding and interpretation considerations and procedures suggested by Coffey and Atkinson (1996), Flick (2002), Lynch (1996), Merriam (1998) and Miles and Huberman (1994).

Lynch (1996: 142) describes codes as being “simply abbreviated labels for the themes and patterns that the evaluator is beginning to identify.” He suggests that marking up the data, using brief, but meaningful codes, assists the collation and analysis. Manual coding of the student and parent interview transcripts was undertaken to both identify and order the data, allowing systematic analysis, which generated additional questions, further insights, and important
interpretations. Coffey and Atkinson (1996: 30) refer to this as a “mixture of data reduction and data complication.” Coding and analysis of data in this way helped group stakeholders’ perspectives according to themes, some of which were responded to the research question, some that were less relevant to the focus of the investigation.

Flick’s (2002) description of the stages of open, axial and selective coding provided a model whereby progressive refining and sorting of the data resulted in a situation whereby the point was reached where theoretical saturation has been reached, i.e. further coding, enrichment of categories etc. no longer provides or promises new knowledge (Flick, 2002: 183).

Strauss and Corbin (1998) note also the need for theoretical coding – the linking of the emerging data to pre-existing theories or hypotheses with the goal being to substantiate or disconfirm them. Cummins (1999, 2000a) also states the importance of explicit links being made between research and theory, before recommendations for practice can be confidently made.

These interviews concluded the student data collection for this research. On completion of the student data collection, parent and teacher data was sought, which I now describe.

**Parent Data Collection: Overall Plan**

The perspectives of parents whose children were currently or previously engaged in bilingual learning at the school were sought as part of this study. Two data collection methods were utilised to explore parents’ perceptions of their children’s learning needs, and the extent to which the school and its bilingual learning arrangements catered for these: a parent questionnaire (a data collection device often associated with quantitative research), and interviews in the form of bilingual group consultations, a device more qualitative in emphasis. While the use of mixed methods has already been discussed in terms of overall methodological advantages (Corson, 2001; Miles &
Huberman, 1994; Neuman, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003), additional benefits have been noted when mixed methods are used within a specific area of data collection, parents’ perspectives in this case.

Employing these two data collection methods allowed parents the opportunity to provide research input with total anonymity (in the form of the questionnaire); or share their viewpoints in a more public forum (through attending a bilingual group consultation). Offering parents written and spoken avenues of involvement recognised that some individuals may be unable or uncomfortable about communicating their ideas either in writing, while others may feel similarly uncomfortable sharing their thoughts in person. The parent data collection design aimed to draw in data from as wide a selection of parents as possible, a principal advantage of questionnaires (Johnson & Turner, 2003; Lynch, 1996; Romaine, 1995), and to add depth and richness to the written questionnaire data through interviews.

Using both methods in combination, this research set out to explore:
- which aspects of students’ overall school education parents most valued;
- the extent to which parents believe the school’s programs meet their children’s needs;
- the comparative importance parents place on the school providing students with English and L1 instruction;
- the extent to which parents believe the school’s bilingual program facilitates learning in students’ L1 and English; and
- whether parents believe the school’s bilingual program should extend beyond Year Two.

The following table (Table 3.8) summarises these two aspects of parent data collection:
TABLE 3.8 PARENT DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection Tool</th>
<th>Research Participants</th>
<th>Purpose of Data Collection Tool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Parents from Chinese- and Vietnamese-language backgrounds. (N = 54)</td>
<td>• to explore parents’ views about: valued areas of school curriculum; L1 and English instruction; current scope of the bilingual programs at the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual Group Consultations</td>
<td>Parents from Chinese- and Vietnamese-language backgrounds. (N = 20)</td>
<td>• to more deeply explore the issues contained within the questionnaire.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parent Data Collection: Questionnaire

A questionnaire was devised with input from, particularly, the school’s LOTE/bilingual teachers and multicultural education aides who possess significant knowledge of parents’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Their suggestions of appropriate questions and forms of questioning assisted the development of a meaningful, user-friendly questionnaire. With their assistance, I was able to create a concise, yet comprehensive, research instrument which covered all of the areas I wished to investigate, (refer to Appendix 21 for an English-language copy of the questionnaire).

Wishing to maximise parent participation, I produced a questionnaire that included a range of question types. In order to gather comparable and quantifiable data from the parents, some questions required them to choose items from an existing list, to rate statements on Likert scales, and to answer closed and open-ended questions. The more closed questions were augmented by opportunities to provide additional qualitative comments.

Aware that a large majority of the parent community were not literate in English, the questionnaire was translated into Chinese and Vietnamese. Each family from these two language backgrounds was sent a copy of the questionnaire in English and in either Chinese or Vietnamese, according to the family language background. In total, 108 questionnaires were sent to families:
65 to Chinese-speaking households, and 43 to families of Vietnamese-speaking background. Exactly half the questionnaires sent out were returned: 54 in total, with 30 returned from Chinese-speaking households, and 24 from Vietnamese-speaking households. The language breakdown of the replies within the two language groups helps illuminate the responses. These are displayed below in Table 3.9 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Group</th>
<th>Number of Questionnaires Distributed</th>
<th>Number of Questionnaires Returned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>L1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This response rate was very pleasing, in light of the fact that Lynch (1996: 134) has noted that “without a concerted follow-up effort, a 25% (or less) return rate is typical.”

**Parent Data Collection: Bilingual Group Consultations**

While parent questionnaires enabled data to be collected from parents without them needing to be identified or attending the school, the absence of the researcher from this process can result in the collection of incomplete data (Lynch, 1996). Without some sort of follow up, such questionnaires are limited by a lack of opportunity to clarify responses (Romaine, 1995). Therefore, in order to explore the views of parents in a more conversational setting, interviews in the form of bilingual group consultations were built into the research design.

Just as power and status differentials between children and adults can be diminished in group interviews (Eder & Fingerson, 2002), so too is it necessary to create a space that is more open and less hierarchical when parents from immigrant and refugee communities are interviewed (Fine & Weis, 1998; Fine et al., 2000). Bilingual group consultations offer such an opportunity.
Recent research exploring Muslim parents’ attitudes to Australian education in Melbourne (Donohoue Clyne, 2000) very successfully used a combination of questionnaires and bilingual group consultations. By resolutely attending to cross-cultural protocols, and through selection of data collection methods about which her research participants felt comfortable, Donohoue Clyne was able to obtain rich data from her informants. The group interviews she organised were facilitated by a bilingual interpreter, which lessened the focus on the researcher, allowing greater opportunity for the views of participants to emerge.

Kvale (1996) warns that group interviews can result in loss of control by the researcher, and this can only be an even more accurate observation when discussion is taking place in a language unfamiliar to the researcher. However, in terms of my research, I felt that gathering rich parent interview data would best be facilitated by allowing parents to interact with each other and share their thoughts and perspectives in their favoured language, without unnecessary interference from the researcher. In order to facilitate this kind of interaction, I employed Hakka and Vietnamese interpreters who were familiar with the school to assist with and facilitate the bilingual parent consultations.

These bilingual research assistants were fully informed about the broad aims of my research, as well as the immediate aims of the bilingual parent consultations. I explained that I had a number of questions or issues I would like explored by groups of parents in a relaxed, informal setting. (A list of the questions that were covered in each bilingual group consultation is attached as Appendix 22). I explained that, in order to maximise parent involvement and allow discussion to flow, I wished for the whole consultation to be conducted and audio-taped in Hakka or Vietnamese, as later translation and transcription would facilitate analysis.

Four bilingual group consultations with parents took place: two with Vietnamese-background parents; two with Hakka-speaking parents. For each
of the language groups, letters of invitation were extended to parents to attend on one of two days. Parents whose children were currently part of the bilingual program were invited to attend on one day; with a second group consultation planned the following day to cater for parents whose children had completed the bilingual program.

The interviews were scheduled at a time where many parents were at the school bringing lunch to their children. A relaxed meeting area within the school was used for these meetings with light refreshments provided. Each consultation began with a welcome and brief explanation of the purpose of the session from the researcher. Then, the bilingual research assistant/facilitator conducted the remainder of the session, referring to the list of questions I wished the group to explore over the session. The consultations then proceeded solely in Vietnamese or Hakka, only returning to English if the researcher’s input was required, for example, to clarify an aspect of the school’s program.

In total over the four sessions, 20 parents attended the bilingual group consultations. Almost all were mothers or grandmothers of students at the school, though three fathers of students attended two consultations (two attended a Hakka consultation, another a Vietnamese). Each consultation was taped recorded, and the tapes later translated by the bilingual facilitators for researcher analysis. A second translation of the tapes as suggested by Donohoue Clyne (2000) was undertaken to the cross-check bilingual facilitators’ interpretation of the discussion. This cross-check revealed no major discrepancies between first and second translation.

**Teacher Data Collection: Questionnaires**

As with the parent data collection, I initially intended to both survey and interview staff members in relation to their perceptions of students’ language and learning needs. A teacher questionnaire modelled closely on that designed for the parents was presented to each staff member, including the principal and
The response to this data collection device was exceptional both in qualitative and quantitative terms. Of the 15 questionnaires distributed to the school teaching staff, 13 were completed and returned. In addition to this outstanding return rate, the quality of responses was rich and descriptive. Because of the excellent quality of the questionnaire responses, I decided not to proceed with formal interviews of teachers. Instead, as most staff members identified themselves in completing the questionnaire, I decided I would follow up individually on specific comments, as needed. Ultimately, the clarity of teacher responses made even this unnecessary.

Data Related to Student Achievement
In order to link the school-specific, deeply contextualised responses of students, parents and teachers to something wider than the school, I decided to incorporate into the study, analysis of the students’ levels and stages of English language achievement, as measured by the mandated, statewide Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF) (2000a, 2000b). In Victoria, Australia, it is expected that, at the end of Years Prep, Two, Four and Six, students will have established themselves at respectively Levels One, Two, Three and Four in each of the eight key learning, or curriculum, areas covered by the CSF.

Consequently, I decided to investigate school CSF data related to bilingually-educated students’ English language achievement. The extent to which these students approached the expected CSF targets for English would provide an external indication of whether bilingual education could be argued to have a positive or negative effect on students’ English language acquisition. Therefore, for the school year 2002, I examined the levels of English language achieved by Years Prep, Two, Four and Six students who were either currently or previously enrolled in the school’s bilingual education programs.
As noted earlier, gathering and analysing such data is highly problematic (see Davison, 1999; Hammond, 1999; McKay, 2001). Assessment procedures and measures ostensibly designed for all children often discriminate against English-languages learners and schools with large ESL populations (Cummins, 1984, 2000a; May, 1994a; Stefanakis, 1998). State- or nation-wide measures of achievement also routinely fail to recognise how far English-language learners have progressed in educational terms, in relation to their monolingual, majority language background peers (May, 1994a). They also potentially overlook other possible factors that might influence students’ school learning, such as the school community’s socio-economic profile which has been closely linked to educational failure both in Australia and internationally (Baker, 2001; Hakuta et al., 2000; Krashen, 1996; Marjoribanks, 2002; Romaine, 1995; Teese & Polesel, 2003).

However, as mentioned earlier in this chapter (May, 1994a, 1994b, 1998) judicious use of such measures can silence critics of innovative programs. As such, I have cautiously incorporated analysis of government mandated English literacy benchmarks and standards in my own study. Unlike May, who undertook a study of a cohort of students’ reading results across the six years of their primary schooling (May, 1994a), I have chosen a one-year snapshot of students’ English reading, writing, and listening and speaking results. This decision was made in light of issues at both the school and state level.

Comparable longitudinal data for a group of students at the research school did not exist, as assessment practices and measures had evolved and changed markedly over the seven years of the students’ primary schooling. English assessment measures in Victorian schools have been in a state of change over the past decade with two forms of the CSF being used, an Early Years curriculum being widely implemented from the late 1990s, and ESL assessment measures (Board of Studies (Victoria), 2000b) and course advice emerging in stages over this time (Department of Education (Victoria), 1997, 1998c;
Department of Education and Training (Victoria), 2002a; Department of Education Employment and Training (Victoria), 2000, 2001). As a result, the standards themselves and the methods for arriving at decisions about students’ achievement have not been consistent over this period. Therefore, to incorporate longitudinal data into this study would be to lessen the trustworthiness of an already problematic aspect of this inquiry. It is with the issue of trustworthiness that I wish to conclude this chapter by addressing in relation to the research design of my study and the data collection procedures I put in place.

**Trustworthiness Issues**

Guba and Lincoln (1989) have argued that ensuring the authenticity of the data collection and analysis is more appropriate to qualitative, case study research than positivist notions of reliability and validity. They explore four key features of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. These trustworthiness features have been re-iterated in later methodological texts on qualitative research methods (Flick, 2002), mixed methods research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998), and language program evaluation (Bailey & Nunan, 1996; Lynch, 1996). I have attempted to build these features into my study.

In terms of credibility, there should be a match between “the constructed realities of respondents (or stakeholders) and those realities as represented by the evaluator and attributed to various stakeholders” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989: 237). They suggest the following procedures to ensure research credibility: prolonged engagement; persistent observation; peer debriefing; negative case analysis; progressive subjectivity; and member checks.

In my investigation, prolonged engagement at the research site, and ongoing access to research participants, allowed both formal and informal opportunities to clarify participants’ responses and viewpoints. In addition, it embedded my
data collection and findings in the context of day to day realities at the school. While persistent observation was less relevant to my study than those investigations where classroom instruction and interactions form a centerpiece to data collection, my own knowledge of the school and the ability to immerse myself in the data collection without limiting time constraints, in many ways, satisfies this criterion.

Regular meetings with my research supervisors enabled peer debriefing to take place in the most supportive and constructive manner. Additional peer debriefing has taken place with colleagues in department in which I now work, and with a trusted academic mentor with whom I have collaborated professionally over my teaching career. As part of my doctoral candidature, I also elected to present aspects of my research at postgraduate forums at the University. This became another valuable opportunity for peer debriefing, as colleagues inquired about my methods, and suggested possible refinements or interpretations to my emerging study.

Because, in most cases, participant data were collected in an individual context, I was able to member check or clarify responses as they were made. Member checking was a feature of data collection with all participants at all stages of the data collection process. Research participants were well aware of my research interests before engaging in the study and, when I collected data from them, I ensured initial discussion before the data collection put people at ease. Likewise, after specific data were collected, I ensured time was set aside for unexplored or unresolved issues to be addressed. A clear example of this is that – after parent bilingual discussions had concluded – I reiterated my hopes that the research would yield insights into ways their children’s learning could be better facilitated, and they off-loaded additional issues of general concern to them. Some were related to the foci of our earlier discussion (and others were not). Importantly, some of the richest, most passionately expressed perspectives were raised at this point, where discussion flowed more easily and
most informally. This enabled negative case analysis to be undertaken, in that atypical responses could be probed at the time. These are reported and discussed throughout the analysis chapters.

Progressive subjectivity, “the process of monitoring the evaluator’s) or inquirer’s own developing construction” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989: 238) was accomplished as part of my meetings with supervisors. As I reported back on data collection as it proceeded, supervisor input and questioning ensured I was made to explicate what I anticipated at each step of the data collection revealed, and what needed to be probed further. This enabled the data collection to move from the general to the specific, and to respond appropriately to emerging data trends. For example, the students’ positive views on bilingualism and biliteracy led to the increasingly focused attention on the benefits of being bilingual. These features of my engagement with the site under investigation increase the confirmability of the data and subsequent findings which, in Guba and Lincoln’s (1989) terms, is “concerned with assuring that data, interpretations, and outcomes of inquiries are rooted in contexts and persons apart from the evaluator and are not simply figments of the evaluator’s imagination.” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989: 243).

Guba and Lincoln (1989) advocate thick description as a means of safeguarding transferability though, given the specificity of my chosen research site, this is less of a concern. Nonetheless, thick description allows the reader to best understand the features of a site under investigation and make tentative comparisons and applications to their own circumstances. For dependability and confirmability, Guba and Lincoln (1989) recommend audit trails to fully explicate decisions made by the evaluator in relation to both methods for gathering and analysing data, and to trace the evaluation conclusions back to the original sources. In the writing up of my research investigation, I hope I have made clear the methodological and data collection decisions that were taken, thereby enhancing the study’s dependability and confirmability.
Triangulation, or the use of multiple sources of data from which to draw conclusions and generate theory, is widely posited as a means of ensuring the trustworthiness of one’s research (Bailey & Nunan, 1996; Burns, 1997; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Flick, 2002; Lynch, 1996; Merriam, 1998; Neuman, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Four different forms of triangulation are cited in methodological texts (Flick, 2002; Neuman, 2003; Patton, 1987; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998):

- data triangulation (use of multiple measures of the same phenomena, allowing for different aspects to emerge);
- investigator triangulation (use of different investigators to observe same phenomenon);
- theory triangulation (when a researcher uses multiple theoretical perspectives in the planning stages of research, or when interpreting the data); and
- methodological triangulation (whereby qualitative and quantitative data collection methods are utilised).

I have built triangulation into my study on a number of levels. Multiple methods of data collection have been incorporated into the study, with devices as dissimilar as questionnaires and interviews being used to explore participants’ views on the same issue in different ways. In this way, both data triangulation and methodological triangulation considerations have been addressed. Investigator triangulation is not a strong feature of my study, though the input of participants and research supervisors in the design of research tools, and aspects of research interpretation should be noted. In addition, the role played by bilingual assistants in the conduct of the parent group consultations added other perspectives to those formulated by the researcher.
Theory triangulation in part corresponds to what Cummins (Cummins, 1999, 2000a) urges when he calls for a ‘research - theory - policy’ paradigm or a “progressive refinement of theory to explain and predict phenomena” (Cummins, 2000a: 213). By this, Cummins means that if research data is analysed in relation to relevant hypotheses or theoretical frameworks, it fosters more academic rigour than if theoretical comparisons are not made. As such, my research data have been analysed in relation to theoretical positions posited around existing theories or hypotheses related to first language maintenance, linguistic interdependence, and educational empowerment for minority language speakers. This approach conforms closely to the notion of grounded theory within an emergent research design, whereby data lead to the supporting, modification or rejection of existing theory (Flick, 2002; Lynch, 1996; Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Neuman, 2003; Nunan, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998).

In conclusion, as I identify myself and my research as embracing critical ethnography, I wish to re-iterate and emphasise the ways that trustworthiness can be built into such studies and how I have incorporated these measures into mine. May (1998) argues at the core of a critical ethnography, issues of researcher bias and positioning are actively confronted, and I have fully explicated, in my thesis, the socio-political and educational beliefs which led me to undertake this research and with which I entered the field (See Chapter One). Researcher reflexivity (Fine & Weis, 1998; Flick, 2002; Smyth & Shacklock, 1998; Tripp, 1998) is also built into my thesis writing, as I explore how the data were, in many respects, produced and not found (Smyth & Shacklock, 1998); and how my analysis of these data altered and redefined my understandings of the phenomenon of bilingual education at the research site and in general.

To synthesise all these issues of trustworthiness in my mixed methods critical ethnography, the following Table 3.10 is provided.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trustworthiness Feature</th>
<th>Method of Inclusion in Research Design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>prolonged engagement</td>
<td>Continuous links to the school from 1993 onwards; trust long-established with research participants; data collection undertaken without time limits imposed by the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>persistent observation</td>
<td>Regular meetings with university supervisors and academic mentors provided perspective and guidance on data collection and analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peer debriefing</td>
<td>Analysis of unusual cases built into research design; unusual or inconsistent responses explored with participants; such cases reported in analysis chapters and reflected in research findings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negative case analysis</td>
<td>Ongoing meetings with research supervisors and progressive thesis writing tracked researcher’s changing perspectives and understandings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>progressive subjectivity</td>
<td>Opportunities for clarification of comments and responses built into most data collection procedures. Data translated into English double-checked by second interpreter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thick description</td>
<td>Key feature of ethnographic writing; key feature of my thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dependability audit</td>
<td>Full explication is made of decisions made over the course of the investigation concerning the methods for gathering and analysing data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confirmability audit</td>
<td>Full attempt is made to trace the research conclusions back to the original sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>data triangulation</td>
<td>Multiple data collection tools drawing on mixed methods were used to investigate research question from different perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigator triangulation</td>
<td>Input sought from participants at research site and from bilingual research assistants in order to plan investigation and interpret data. Input also sought and obtained from thesis supervisors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theory triangulation</td>
<td>Data collected and research findings analysed in relation to theoretical positions developed in the field of bilingual learning theory, second language acquisition, and minority language education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>methodological triangulation</td>
<td>Both qualitative and quantitative data collection devices incorporated into the study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>researcher bias and positioning</td>
<td>Researcher’s prior experience and pre-existing attitudes to bilingual learning, minority education and issues of diversity fully explicated in thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>researcher reflexivity</td>
<td>Researcher’s changing perspectives in light of emerging data are revealed, analysed and critiqued.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Minimising Research Limitations

As a single-site study of a very uncommon pedagogical arrangement (at least in Australia), this study makes no assertion of generalisability. The small size of the school of (at the time of the research, 180 students) might be seen by some as a limitation of the research. However, I believe this was overcome by the recruitment of large numbers of students and parents into the study. The large number of research participants also allowed for a more reliable reading of individual and group responses to be undertaken.

This study’s findings need to be understood in relation to the research site. However, when linked to other site-specific studies of bilingual education, studies like this add to and extend the body of research and ethnographic description related to the role they play in communities like the one at the centre of this study. Cummins (2000) argues that, when linked to other studies, and when analysed in relation to existing research-derived theoretical positions, case studies like this one advance understanding of the lived experience of emergent bilinguals and the schools in which they learn. He states that the credibility of such studies

> derives from the fact that their outcomes are consistent with predictions derived from theoretical positions … and together they demonstrate the robustness of the pattern of findings across a wide range of sociolinguistic and sociopolitical contexts.” (Cummins, 2000a: 216)

Children are at the centre of this research, and the challenges of interviewing children and engaging them in reflection of their learning are well documented (Eder & Fingerson, 2002; Meichenbaum et al., 1985). Apart from the logistics of group as opposed to individual interviews, as discussed earlier in this chapter, several limitations of research involving children have been raised. Key psychological studies (Ericsson & Simon, 1980; Nisbett & Wilson, 1977) cautioned that children’s verbal reporting, particularly of cognitive or meta-cognitive processes, can be incomplete and inaccurate. Ericsson and Simon (1980), for example, claimed that children might not remember, might
misremember, or might invent memories, particularly when attempting to describe cognitive processes.

Responding to such concerns, I devised data collection tools that asked students to describe their own lived experience as bilingual learners. The individual administration of data collection devices allowed me to question and check students’ responses, asking for examples of language use or reasons for expressed language attitudes. Specially developed child-friendly data collection devices were developed for this study. Nunan (1992) discusses how elicitation techniques designed to act as some sort of stimulus (such as a picture, diagram, cartoon image) are often used in research of second language acquisition. Techniques to foster student reflection and response were incorporated at every stage of the data collection. Field-tested prior to the data collection, they proved highly successful in both putting students at ease and in facilitating what I believe were considered student responses. A mixture of data collection methods (incorporating questionnaire with picture prompts, statement sorts, bilingual and group interviews) allowed for different perspectives to emerge in different contexts. It also allowed for data triangulation (Flick, 2002; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) in that conflicting or contradictory results can be questioned.

The methodological decision to conduct the Years 3-6 student interviews in English needs to be acknowledged as a potential limitation in that these students may have yielded additional insights— in particular in reference to their ongoing L1 use— were they given the chance to express their opinions in their first language. However, the opportunity to their probe responses in the language in which they normally conversed with the researcher – English – allowed for relaxed, yet considered dialogue to take place. With this in mind, I feel the advantages in this data collection arrangement outweighed the disadvantages.
Methodological rigour was built into the administration of each data collection device. For example, the order tasks were performed or questions were asked were systematically inverted to ensure no particular viewpoint was emphasised over others. Statement sorting was likewise done in a variety of combinations so that no statement or series of statements were consistently privileged over others.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has explicated the methodological issues faced when designing this research, and described the data collection devices used and developed with which the data were gathered. The results of these data are analysed and discussed in Chapters Five to Eight, which are devoted to understandings derived from the student, parent, teacher and school achievement data. However, in order to contextualise the data within the school environment most cogently, the following chapter provides a detailed description and analysis of the school’s bilingual program – its origins, development over time, and current practice.
CHAPTER FOUR: BILINGUAL EDUCATION AT THE RESEARCH SITE:
PHILOSOPHY, PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

All children should have the opportunity to develop their first language and to learn English in a non-threatening, positive environment where the first language and English co-exist harmoniously. Children should be able to develop an understanding of how language operates as a system, and through comparison, how other languages, including English are structured and how they function. (Philosophical preamble to the research school’s bilingual policy, n.d.).

Introduction

The research location at which this investigation was conducted has already been introduced in “Chapter One: Introduction”. The aim there was to foreground the school as a site of pedagogical practice that – in its commitment to quality education for its diverse learners – has increasingly enacted programs ‘against the grain’ of current practice. This has been particularly true since the early 1990s, since which time many state and federal government educational initiatives have arguably not been framed with students’ diverse learning needs and different cognitive pathways in mind. Emphasis on high-stakes testing, potentially constraining teaching methodology, and universally applied standards and frameworks have made adherence to progressive pedagogies like bilingual education appear far more adventurous and radical than they appeared when introduced in times more supportive of education for diverse learners’ needs.

The purpose in this chapter is specifically to detail the research school’s bilingual education arrangements. It begins by placing the program’s origins within the Australian (and Victorian) educational context of the 1970s and 1980s: a socio-political climate conducive to and supportive of progressive approaches to student learning that took account of both the resources students
brought to their learning as well as their particular needs. The specific philosophies and principles underlying the school’s bilingual education pedagogy are then explored, and changes in practice and emphasis over time are detailed. Its organisation as a transitional bilingual program, albeit one with strong additive principles, is then discussed. It is hoped that, by providing this contextual information in a stand-alone chapter such as this, the data presented and analysed in later chapters will resonate more vividly.

**Socio-political Background to the School’s Bilingual Program**

The bilingual education arrangements at the school under investigation originated within the context of educational and community-focused initiatives of the 1970s and 1980s. It was at this point in time that Australia’s linguistic and cultural diversity – and the challenges faced by newly arrived migrants – were first officially being recognised in key government reports and policy documents (see, for example Education Department (Victoria), 1985; Galbally, 1978; see, for example Interim Committee of the Australian Schools Commission, 1973; Lo Bianco, 1987 and see also Appendix 1 of this thesis). On a community and school level, this resulted in funding for programs that supported migrants’ transition to English-dominant Australia while also affirming and valuing linguistic and cultural diversity. In particular, the federally-funded *Disadvantaged Schools Program* financially supported schools’ efforts to make organisational and pedagogical arrangements that were linguistically and culturally inclusive, addressing forms of disadvantage often experienced by students from indigenous, immigrant, non-English speaking and low socio-economic backgrounds. Along with Victorian state government policies and funded programs in the 1980s, a window of opportunity was opened for schools to develop bilingual and multicultural education programs aimed at reflecting and responding to changed population demographics.

As such, many grass-roots community and school initiatives were established, including the bilingual learning arrangements at the school at which this
research was conducted. In addition, adult language classes, multilingual library materials, community health care facilities, and interpreter-translator services to facilitate cross-cultural communication are indicative of the local initiatives that supported newly arrived individuals and families at the time. Many of these migrants and refugees suffered from the physical and psychological consequences of war, and dislocation, making careful consideration of their needs all the more important (see Viviani, 1996 for a comprehensive account of numbers of Indo-Chinese arrivals and challenges faced during this period). Despite diminished levels of government support and funding for multicultural programs since then (particularly at a federal level from 1996 onwards), it is this local, community- and school-based commitment to successive waves of immigrants and refugees that have seen several initiatives from the 1970s and 80s maintained, albeit in different (often reduced) forms to their original incarnations.

Establishment of the School’s Bilingual Program
The bilingual education arrangements at the school under investigation originated within the local community context of health care and community education centres that were actively advocating for and supporting immigrants from the early to mid 1970s. The significant influx of Indo-Chinese migrants in the neighbourhood from 1976 onwards (Viviani, 1996) led to a 1983 proposal by three local primary schools (including that under investigation) and the area’s community education centre to establish a Community Language Teachers’ Program and Asian Languages program in the area. This proposal aimed for a strategic response to the range of language needs within the primary school-aged cohort of students newly arrived from countries such as Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and East Timor. It proposed that the first languages of students (varieties of Chinese are particularly emphasised) be supported by the different schools in the area providing instruction in different community languages. The rationale for this strategy was underpinned by an explicit belief
that family cohesion and parent involvement in their children’s education would be better facilitated through bilingual instruction.

An account published at the time of a similarly organised Greek bilingual project in the same locality (Moutsos, 1982) articulates the philosophical principles that underpinned such pedagogical initiatives. Moutsos identifies the following assumptions on which bilingual learning in local primary schools was based. These were that:

- Children from non-English-speaking homes learn more effectively when the learning of the second language is based on a firm foundation of the first.
- English is the national language of Australia and it is the responsibility of the education system to ensure that all children have a high degree of competence in English.
- The early years of primary school are best for language acquisition and the learning of a second language.
- Children entering school with a non-English-speaking language background benefit from uninterrupted cognitive development and successful integration into school life.
- The program will extend language experience from the home and preschool and provide continuity for the child.
- Learning in the mother-tongue within the State school system gives status to the home language and makes children feel proud of their heritage. (Moutsos, 1982: 6)

These principles coincided with state government policies of the time (later fully articulated in Education Department (Victoria), 1985) and are reflected in the school’s bilingual policy (see Appendix 2). Bilingual education at the school under investigation commenced as a result of an “ambitious program” (Clyne et al., 1995: 6) inaugurated in 1983 to introduce a range of languages other than English into primary schools through inviting the schools themselves to apply for the appointment of supernumerary teachers for this purpose.

As a result of this initiative, bilingual learning commenced at the research school site during this period with the aim of catering for students from the three main language backgrounds of the local and school community: Chinese, Vietnamese and Turkish. For each of these languages, there were sufficient numbers of enrolments in the 1980s for cohorts of students to be formed.
according to language background. For the first two years of their schooling, these groups of children learned in their home language for half the school day (usually the afternoons) and in English for the other half of the school day. They remained in the one group regardless of language of instruction, but the potentially ghettoising effects of this practice resulted in mixed language-background groups for English-language instruction from the early 1990s. By this time, decreasing enrolments of Turkish-background students resulted in the bilingual opportunities for the remaining students from this linguistic background being replaced by two to three hours of Turkish instruction in withdrawal LOTE classes.

**Bilingual Program Philosophy and Principles**

In its initial form, the school’s bilingual arrangements were instituted as a transitional arrangement to facilitate learning in all areas of the curriculum without students being disadvantaged by their lack of English. While the school’s bilingual program is not of the duration usually associated with strong bilingual education arrangements (Baker, 2001), its goal of additive bilingualism, whereby English augments but does not replace the L1, has been clearly explicated in school policy and enacted in school programming over the years. The school’s curriculum and timetabling emphasise linguistic and cultural diversity and stress the importance of L1 maintenance even after students cease the intense L1 exposure in the early years of their schooling. This is reflected in the integrated topics planned by teams of teachers across the year levels that aim to maximise connections between the linguistic and cultural resources specific to this community and the forms of more generic knowledge reflected in mainstream, mandated curriculum documents such as the Victorian Curriculum and Standards Framework (Board of Studies, 2000). Nonetheless, the cessation of the bilingual program after Year Two must be acknowledged as evidence of a prioritising of English as the students’ enter the middle to upper years of the primary school. The data that follow in the next chapters, particularly in relation to students’ language use, and stakeholders’
perspectives on English *vis à vis* a first language, need to be viewed with this organisational feature in mind.

Collaborative planning between teachers working in the different aspects of the program (English medium of instruction classrooms and classrooms teaching in a LOTE) has always been a strong feature of the program so that unnecessary repetition of content is minimised, key concepts appropriately reinforced in both languages of instruction, teaching methodologies and assessment practices aligned and scheduling or timetable issues resolved. A close examination of the school’s ‘Bilingual Policy’ (see Appendix 2) underlines the central tenets under which the program was established and has adapted. These include:

- the belief in an affirming, positive environment in which to learn their first language and English;
- the aim that bilingual learning will result in greater linguistic understanding, through greater understanding across and within different language systems;
- the importance of effective home-school transitions and communication, and the role that L1 instruction can play in this;
- that learning in two languages can result in enhanced literacy and conceptual development;
- that respect and engagement between peoples in a multicultural society and world is enhanced by one’s ability to communicate effectively across languages.

How these principles and beliefs have been and are implemented in practice is explored in the following section.

**Current Organisational Arrangements**

The school’s bilingual program presently operates in two strands: a Mandarin-English program, and a Vietnamese-English program. The duration of the two strands of the program (two years for the Vietnamese-English program; three years for the Mandarin-English one) is a result of internal staffing issues, school
enrolment and, most importantly, government funding. In 1997, additional funding through the Victorian Bilingual Schools Project enabled the Mandarin-English program to employ an additional staff member, allowing the program to continue into the students’ third year of school. Within each strand of the program, instruction in each of the target languages takes place over half the school week. In other words, students enrolled in the program undertake half their learning in English, and the other half in either Mandarin or Vietnamese. All areas of the curriculum are taught in both target languages.

The bilingual program is staffed by teams of teachers from English-, Chinese-, and Vietnamese-speaking backgrounds, and has operated in a number of ways over the years. A morning and afternoon program ran in its early days with different languages of instruction featured at different times of the day. Since 1993, the school has operated a ‘beginning of the week’ and ‘end of the week’ arrangement. This has meant that those Year Prep, Year One and Year Two children in the Mandarin-English bilingual program engage in English instruction from Monday morning until Wednesday lunchtime (half the school week) in a classroom with a group of students from a range of language backgrounds. In the second half of the school week (Wednesday lunchtime to Friday afternoon dismissal), they would learn in a Mandarin-medium classroom – with a different teacher, and with almost entirely students from Chinese-language backgrounds. A similar arrangement applies to the Years Prep and Year One students in the Vietnamese-English bilingual program. Currently, the bilingual program is arranged as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 4.1 SCHOOL BILINGUAL PROGRAM ORGANISATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning of the week (Mon – Wed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Prep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1/2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the time of this research, the Vietnamese-background learners in the bilingual program almost all came from homes where Vietnamese was the
principal language of communication. In the case of the Chinese-background students, the vast majority of these students spoke Hakka at home, though the Chinese instruction at the school was in Mandarin, as required by Victorian government LOTE education directives. This Hakka/Mandarin nexus was a feature of data collection and insights sought from both Chinese-background students and parents. One or two students learning bilingually at the time of the research were from English-language backgrounds. However, virtually all students from either English-language backgrounds or whose first language is not Vietnamese or a form of Chinese learn mainly in English, with two hours of LOTE (Vietnamese) each week.

Current Planning Arrangements
As already mentioned, and as emphasised in the school’s policy, the effectiveness of the bilingual program is predicated on the expectation that teachers involved in its implementation will collaboratively plan to ensure curriculum coverage and pedagogical consistency. This takes the form of a number of well-established, regularly scheduled forums in which teachers involved in the bilingual program meet for these purposes.

At the commencement of each term, teaching teams across the school are released by specialist staff for a full school day to plan curriculum for the term ahead. At this meeting, that term’s integrated unit or topic is fully planned with weekly focus areas identified, shared class experiences agreed upon, necessary resources located, and key writing genres to be taught decided upon. Curriculum content specific to the different classrooms within the bilingual program is designated, and this is fine-tuned formally and informally as the term progresses. For example, some areas to be focussed on may be covered in both L1 and the English classrooms, while others will be emphasised in one, but not the other. Text types or written genres tend to be taught in both so that students will see strong connections between social purposes for reading and writing, regardless of whether they are in English or a LOTE.
Alongside these full day planning sessions, the school teaching teams meet once a week after school to fine-tune organisational and pedagogical arrangements for the week ahead. These meetings are usually about one and a half hours in duration and may be followed up by less formal meetings and discussions between English and LOTE medium of instruction teachers who share the same students. An example of the deliberations undertaken at these meetings might be clarification of the Mathematics focus areas for English and LOTE classrooms that week, what aspects of the integrated unit need to be covered in ‘beginning of the week’ and ‘end of the week’ groups, and what assessment devices might be appropriate in each of the classrooms the students spend significant amounts of time. In addition, specific concerns about individual student learning are frequently raised. These weekly meetings are characterised by an affable, collegial spirit and are frequently the sites of highly professional discussions around issues of pedagogical practice, as the different perspectives of teachers from different backgrounds are aired. Importantly, the overriding emphasis of these weekly team meetings is to ensure that students do not find their learning fragmented because of their involvement with two teachers in two languages at different times of the week. Equally important is maintaining a focus on cognitively challenging curriculum content – in all languages of instruction.

**Current Pedagogical Approaches**

Despite obvious differences in the language systems of those within the bilingual program – Chinese (Mandarin), English and Vietnamese – many aspects of the teaching and learning in these classrooms is consistent. Language instruction in all classrooms is strongly linked to meaningful social and cognitive purposes. As such, the teaching of specific language skills is undertaken through the use of texts that are relevant and meaningful to the students (and often created by them). Attempts are made to build on students’ prior knowledge when generating new understandings.
Teaching and learning contexts or instructional approaches identified with Early Years pedagogies in recent Victorian government curriculum advice (for example, Department of Education (Victoria), 1998c) characterise the instruction in which students participate in both English and LOTE classrooms within the bilingual program. These instructional arrangements involve whole class instruction (e.g. shared reading, modelled writing, language experience); small group learning (e.g. guided reading, interactive writing); and individual or paired learning (e.g. independent reading and writing, literacy centre activities). Comparable physical configurations across the language classrooms – with similarly organised workspaces, meeting areas, classroom libraries and display areas facilitate these common approaches to teaching and learning.

Teaching that embraces sound ESL methodology has also been a strong feature of classroom learning within the bilingual program. In both English and LOTE classrooms, a strong emphasis on the importance of oral language as a bridge to reading and writing has been emphasised. This scaffolded movement from language that is conversational and contextualised, to forms that are more academic, and decontextualised, allows students to move from linguistic and conceptual knowledge that is known to that which is new and unfamiliar. Through explicit teaching, and an emphasis on inquiry-based, active learning that makes strong use of concrete materials and direct experiences, students’ linguistic and conceptual understandings are broadened and deepened.

It is through these instructional approaches – within a curriculum that firmly positions the students’ linguistic and cultural knowledge as important, respected starting points for instruction – that an educational arrangement like the school’s bilingual program has taken root and been maintained over the years. However, as a staff member at the school over an eight-year period, I would, on reflection, acknowledge that daily logistical arrangements (timetabling, teaching content, resource utilisation, assessment contexts, etc.) were the more common areas of focus at team planning meetings. Less
common were conversations about the theoretical underpinnings of bilingual education and the L1-L2 interface. My belief is that – over the years of the program’s operation – these founding philosophies and principles were subsumed my more immediate, operational concerns. Data collected from teachers, and discussed later in the thesis, highlights some level of disengagement from the founding philosophies of the bilingual program, along with lack of awareness of recent or relevant research that justifies bilingual education for students from minority language backgrounds. This is not to say that the philosophies and principles under which the program was founded (and which are stated in the school’s bilingual policy) have been abandoned. Rather, what once would have been regularly visited precepts and understandings became – over the years – less explicitly addressed by staff working within the bilingual program.

The program nonetheless remains as a rare opportunity for Australian students to learn for significant amounts of time in their L1 and in English. It is, of course, highly reliant on targeted government funding for its continued existence. Being prey to the potential vicissitudes of government policy and funding overlays the program with a sense of vulnerability that was a factor leading to this area being researched for this thesis.

The results of this research thesis are now laid out in chapters related to data revealing patterns of students’ language use and attitudes (Chapter Five), their viewpoints on their bilingual abilities and learning (Chapter Six), parents’ perspectives (Chapter Seven) and those of teachers at the school (Chapter Eight). This chapter also links these stakeholder perspectives to student achievement levels.
CHAPTER FIVE : RESEARCH RESULTS - PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF STUDENTS’ LANGUAGE USE AND ATTITUDES

If I didn’t learn English, I wouldn’t understand English very well. And if I didn’t learn Vietnamese I wouldn’t understand it very well. If I didn’t know both, I wouldn’t understand anything.

(Year 2 boy in this study, on the benefits of being bilingual).

Introduction to Research Results Chapters

This research study presents and discusses data collected from primary school-aged students, their parents, and their teachers. In addition, year level student achievement in English was also analysed. In order to present these data – and the subsequent analysis and discussion – with maximum clarity and impact, the next four chapters have been set aside for this purpose.

In this chapter, sociolinguistic data related to students’ use of, and attitudes towards, English and other languages – at home and school – are presented and discussed. Specifically, this chapter analyses:

• students’ self-reported **language use** across a range of in- and out-of-school contexts and purposes;

• incidence of students’ self-reported **language shift** as students move through the primary school;

• students’ self-reported **language attitudes**, in regards to the importance they attach to being able to speak, read and write in their L1 and English; and

• students’ self-reported language attitudes, in relation to the comparative importance they place on learning in their L1 and English.

Quantitative data are contextualised and augmented by students’ verbally-expressed perspectives, like that which begins this chapter. This chapter, as
such, serves as baseline data from which students’ views on bilingual learning can be more deeply understood.

In Chapter Six, “Research Results: Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Students’ Bilingual Abilities and Bilingual Learning”, data that specifically probe students’ perceptions of their levels of L1 and English proficiency, their opinions as to the potential short- and long-term benefits of bilingual learning, and their specific views on the bilingual education arrangements in which they have been taught, are presented and discussed. These student perspectives are drawn from individually administered statement sorting procedures, and from interviews undertaken with students at all year levels at the school – group and individual, and administered both bilingually and in English only. These data collection devices extend on the largely positive student attitudes to bilingualism by identifying what specific benefits bilingual ability is perceived to bring, and to what extent these students perceive the way they are taught and learn to be addressing their language and learning needs. These data reveal the development of students’ bilingual ability as being inextricably linked to their identity formation, and this connection is developed and explored.

Parents in minority language communities rarely get the opportunity to express their views in a school forum that they essentially control. Chapter Seven, “Research Results: Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Parents’ Perspectives” reports on the perspectives expressed by parents in the bilingual group consultations as well as those collected through a parent questionnaire. Passionate and powerful points of view emerge from these data sources. In essence, parents see the formation of bilingual, bicultural identities as essential for their children’s academic and social futures in Australia. However, across the two cohorts of Chinese-background and Vietnamese-background parents, a range of opinions about language instruction and educational priorities is evident, and these perspectives are likewise presented and discussed.
In Chapter Eight, “Research Results: Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Teachers’ Perspectives and Student Achievement”, the school-based data are presented and discussed. Teachers’ perspectives were collected through a questionnaire that closely mirrored that presented to the parents who took part in the study. Comparisons between teacher and parent perspectives are made. Teacher beneficence towards bilingualism and bicultural identity formation is offset by theoretical uncertainty about the most appropriate pedagogies that might facilitate these desired academic and social outcomes. This tension is revealed and discussed in relation to analysis of student achievement levels in English that essentially mirror the international research data (Collier, 1989, 1995; Hakuta et al., 2000; Thomas & Collier, 1997) which describe the length of time it usually takes English-language learners to develop levels of academic language proficiency that closely approximates the level of native English speakers.

Student Data Collection
A range of devices was used to collect data about students’ use of, attitudes towards, and perceived abilities in the languages within their personal repertoires. Of particular interest to this research was the interplay between English, Mandarin and Vietnamese – the three languages of instruction at the school – and how students make sense of this in relation to their personal understanding of their language and learning needs.

In brief, these student data collection devices were:

- a Language Use Questionnaire;
- a Language Attitudes Questionnaire;
- additional structured student questioning and statement sorting;
- individual student interviews (conducted bilingually); and
- group student interviews (conducted in English).
The findings that emerged from the first two of these data collection tools are detailed in this chapter.

**Language Use Questionnaire: Whole School Results**

The Language Use Questionnaire (see Appendix 7) was administered to all 143 students taking part in the research, regardless of their language background. This data collection device aimed to provide a sociolinguistic profile of the school, revealing which languages the students use in different domains and with different targets. For the cohort of students within the study, their first languages, arrived at by scrutiny of language/s spoken to parents, were reported as follows in Table 5.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main language of the home (L1)</th>
<th>Number and percentage of students in the study reporting this language as their L1</th>
<th>Number of girls in the study reporting this as their L1; and percentage of that language group</th>
<th>Number of boys in the study reporting this as their L1; and percentage of that language group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese (Hakka)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese (Mandarin/Other)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Languages</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bi/Multilingual Family</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backgrounds</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td>143</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Combining the totals for students of Chinese-language backgrounds reveals this group to be 45 percent of the students in the study. For a Year level breakdown of these figures, see Appendix 24.

Analysis of the Language Use Questionnaire clearly reveals multilingualism to be a distinct feature of the students’ in-school and out-of-school lives. Across the domains and targets of language use, students consistently reported and described use of English and at least one other language. Different domains or targets record different patterns of language use, but what needs to be
emphasised in relation to these students is that their in-school bilingual learning strongly reflects the patterns of language use in their daily lives. Appendix 25 provides whole school totals for students’ reports of specific language use across the twelve domains and targets chosen for the questionnaire. In percentage terms this information is also recorded in bar graph form (See Figure 5.1).

**FIGURE 5.1 LANGUAGE USE QUESTIONNAIRE: YEARS P-6 (N=143)**

These data reveal five domains and targets for which over 60 percent of students’ reported use of English and at least one other language. These are:

- independent writing, explained to students as “working on a piece of writing”;
- verbal communication with staff at the school, explained to students as “talking with teachers”;
- verbal communication with other children at the school, explained to students as “talking with friends”;
• independent reading, explained to the students as “reading a book by yourself”; and
• viewing televised or pre-recorded programs for entertainment or information, explained to the students as “watching television, including videos or DVDs”.

Table 5.2 presents patterns of language use across all year levels at the school. These are ordered in descending order of bi/multilingual use of English and one (or more) other languages.

**TABLE 5.2 LANGUAGE USE QUESTIONNAIRE: DATA ANALYSIS: ALL YEAR PREP TO SIX STUDENTS (N = 143) IN ORDER OF BILINGUAL ENGLISH AND LOTE USAGE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Domain</th>
<th>Years Prep to Six Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working on a piece of writing</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with teachers</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with your friends</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading a book by yourself</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching TV or videos</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing Number/ Maths work</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking for things at a shop</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with your brothers or sisters</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to music</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking about things</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with your parents</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to stories at home</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The five domains and targets for which between 64 and 80 percent of students report use of a combination of English and at least one LOTE are a reflection of both in- and out-of-school contexts for language use. The item, *working on a piece of writing* was explained to students as encompassing personal writing that could be done at school or home, and 80 percent of students responded that they undertake this form of literacy practice in more than one language. As expected, given the bilingual teaching staff at the school, almost the same number of students reported dual/multi-language use when *talking with teachers*.

Interestingly, talking with friends, personal reading, and watching television or videos recorded high levels of dual/multi-language use at around two-thirds of research respondents. These literacy practices, as much home-based as specific to school, highlight that – more than simply being from language backgrounds other than English (LBOTEs) – the students at this school actively lead bilingual and multilingual lives. As such, for the students of Chinese- and Vietnamese-speaking backgrounds, the opportunities to maintain and develop their home languages through the school’s bilingual education programs have real purpose in relation to the realities of their daily lives.

A noteworthy result emerging from the Language Use Questionnaire relates to the language(s) students report using for performing mathematical computations and problem solving using numbers or counting. Less than half (42 percent of students) reported using a combination of English and one or more other languages, while 50 percent of students report using English only. This is despite the fact that the teaching of Mathematics in Mandarin and Vietnamese is a key feature of the bilingual program. It is also significant in that Mathematics is an area of the curriculum in which many non-English-speaking parents in this school community assist their children at home. In light of this, the fact that half the students surveyed reported using only English for mathematical problem-solving is important to note. It raises the issue of the
degree to which English potentially overpowers other languages, even in a family, social and educational context supportive of linguistic diversity. This issue is returned to in more detail in the analysis of year level differences in language use in the following section, as well as in Chapter Nine, “Research Implications and Recommendations”.

Moderate levels of a combination of English and other LOTE(s) – at around one-third of the students – emerge from the Language Use Questionnaire in the areas of asking for things at a shop, talking with your brothers and sisters, listening to music, and thinking about things. However, generally higher levels of English only use were reported by students in these areas (refer to Appendix 26 for the aggregated list of domains and targets highlighting students reported use of English only). In the areas of music and shopping, high levels of monolingual English use might be reflective of issues related to students’ access to different types of shops (e.g. milk bars, games parlours, toy/amusement stores where English is the common language) and prevalence of music sung in English (e.g. music videos on television, CDs and tapes listened to by students, etc.). Yet, in the areas of thinking about things and talking with your brothers and sisters, the issue of the power of English to dominate even the internal process of thought and sibling communication within the family is again significant.

Of particular importance is the intergenerational language shift students report in their family language interactions. Appendix 27 reconfigures the data results from the Language Use Questionnaire, placing the domains and targets of language use in descending order according to use of a LOTE or combination of LOTEs only. Two-thirds of students report communicating with parents only in a language(s) other than English. This reflects the immigrant and refugee status of the community where the L1 has been maintained in the home, in terms of parent-child communication, at least. On the level of inter-sibling communication the reported pattern shifts markedly. Just under a quarter of students report exclusive use of a LOTE(s) when speaking with other siblings in
the family – less than both use of English only (at 31 percent of students) and combined use of a LOTE(s) and English (at 33 percent) for this intra-family communication. These findings resonate with the writings on language loss (Clyne, 2001; Fishman, 1991, 2001a; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000) and intergeneration language shift (Clyne & Kipp, 1999), issues which are taken up in the following section, as year level analysis of the data pertaining to students’ language use is undertaken.

Finally, an enlightening finding from the Language Use Questionnaire pertains to the small number of students (only 46 percent of those surveyed) who report being read to at home. While there is considerable fluctuation across grade levels, this figure highlights the potential disparity between home and school literacy practices at this school site. Engagement with books and familiarity with the language of books are valued by teachers and schools; and classroom discourse often reflects an implicit expectation that students have been enculturated into the world of reading and discussing books prior to commencing school (Heath, 1982, 1983). In this school community, parents’ lack of English, and the paucity of children’s books or other reading materials in languages other than English are possible explanations as to why students are often not read to at home. Nonetheless, it is important for schools (like the one under investigation) to be cognizant of the alternate literacy practices which take place in students’ homes, while exploring – with the parents and students – opportunities for students to more actively engage with books and reading in the home.

**Language Use Questionnaire: Year Level Analysis**

Closer scrutiny of the data emerging from the Language Use Questionnaire reveals that, while bi/multilingualism is strongly rooted in the lives of these students, their use of English increases across many of the domains and targets investigated as they progress through the school. Likewise, students’ use of a combination of English and a LOTE(s) or sole use of a LOTE decreases as they
get older. This is more marked in specific domains and targets than in others, but the trend is largely consistent across the areas of language use investigated. This shift to English mirrors the decreasing levels of L1 support after the cessation of the bilingual program.

Whether this shift towards sole use of English and away from LOTE or bi/multi language use is seen as unavoidable, desirable, necessary or alarming is a matter of considerable controversy. The debate over the degree to which minority languages can or should be maintained has been explored in the review of the research literature in Chapter Two, and it also emerges in data collected from other research participants, particularly parents. These views are presented and discussed in Chapter Seven, “Research Results: Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Parents’ Perspectives”. Notions of language maintenance, shift and loss also feature in discussion of the over-riding implications of the research in Chapter Nine, “Research Implications and Recommendations”.

The percentages of students at each of the seven primary school grade levels (Years Prep to Six) reporting use of English only; a LOTE only; or a combination of English and one or more LOTE s in response to questions posed in the Language Use Questionnaire are presented in the chart attached as Appendix 28. However, the differing numbers of students from English-speaking backgrounds at each Year level, few as they are, make comparisons across year levels problematic. To highlight this, the following table (Table 5.3) records the numbers of student participants at each Year level from language backgrounds other than English (LBOTE).
### TABLE 5.3 YEAR LEVEL STUDENT PARTICIPANTS: TOTAL NUMBER (N = 143) AND THOSE FROM A LANGUAGE BACKGROUND OTHER THAN ENGLISH (N = 127)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year level</th>
<th>Total number of participating students at each Year level</th>
<th>Number of these students from a LBOTE</th>
<th>Percentage of students at each Year level from a LBOTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year Prep</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year One</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Two</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Three</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Four</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Five</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Six</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To enable more useful language use comparisons across the year levels, the 16 students whose L1 was English (regardless of their ethnicity or level of bilingualism) were removed from the Year level Language Use data analysis. Patterns of language use amongst the remaining 127 LBOTE students are presented as both totals and percentages as Appendices 29 and 30. While there are fluctuations in the patterns of language use within some domains, these rather dense charts reveal the noticeable growth in monolingual English use at the expense of use of a LOTE or LOTE/English combinations. Clearer illustration of this pattern of language shift is now presented in a series of graphs. The first of these graphs (Figure 5.2) records students’ reported language use when reading.
What is revealed here, in percentage terms, is a steady rise in monolingual English reading over the students’ seven years of primary school. From totals of six percent in the students’ first years of school (representing a single child), figures of 56 and 64 percent are reached by their final two years of primary school. While this may be vindicated by some as a desirable, even necessary outcome of schooling in a country where knowledge of English is essential for educational success, more sobering conclusions can be drawn from students’ reporting of their dual or multi-language use.

As can be seen on the same graph (Figure 5.2), students’ early bi/multilingual behaviours in relation to reading decrease as they get older, more than halving from the Years Prep and One to Years Five and Six. The reasons for this were outside the context of this study, but the fact that students’ 50:50 bilingual learning ceases by Year Three can plausibly explain the lower levels of bilingual reading from Years Three to Six. This reduced pedagogical emphasis on students’ home languages could conceivably impact negatively on their interest in, or ability to, engage in reading in their L1. Other reasons present as
possibilities to explain this decline. Certainly the limited range of engaging reading materials in languages other than English that older students can readily access could significantly contribute to this trend. In addition, older students’ awareness that English is the main language of learning at secondary school could also be posited as a reason for this decline. In fact, as will be seen, students at interview remarked on the need to be academically prepared for secondary school – seeing English, more than bilingual proficiency, as facilitating this readiness.

Writing revealed less of a progression towards English only use (see Appendices 29 and 30), though, by Year 6, almost half the students surveyed reported writing only in English. Notably, however, even in Year 5, three-quarters of students reported writing in both English and at least one LOTE. In these areas of reading and writing, further investigation of specifically what it is that such students read and write in the languages within their repertoires would be highly worthwhile. To explore more deeply how much and what types of non-dominant language reading and writing take place outside the contexts of formal classes or set homework would potentially offer great insights into the complex and subtle dimensions of language maintenance and shift.

Students’ language use for mathematical computation across the years of their primary schooling supports the trend discussed in relation to reading and – to a lesser degree – writing. The following bar graph (Figure 5.3) depicts the percentages of students at each year level reporting use of English and a LOTE(s) for this purpose.
From reported levels of between 62 and 78 percent for bi/multilingual mathematical counting and computing in Years Prep to Two, no LBOTE students report use of English and a LOTE for this purpose in Year Six. As mentioned earlier, this somewhat surprises, given comparatively high parent input into their children’s mathematical learning. At the school under investigation, a likely reason for this decline could relate to the fact that within the bilingual program, Mathematics is taught and learned in both languages of instruction, whereas in later years, the responsibility for teaching Mathematics rests solely with the English-language teachers. While no hard data exist to support this claim, parent involvement in children’s learning at the school also tends to be stronger in the early years of schooling. The lessening of this support in the later primary years might also explain the shift towards English only use amongst students.

In the area of talking with parents, siblings and friends, a consistent – though uneven – trend towards exclusive use of English can be observed in relation to siblings and friends. High levels of LOTE only use with parents are maintained
over the seven years of students’ primary schooling. LOTE only use for these language targets is represented in the following bar graph (Figure 5.4).

**FIGURE 5.4 LANGUAGE USE QUESTIONNAIRE: USE OF LOTE(S) ONLY FOR TALKING: YEARS P-6 LBOTE STUDENTS (N = 127)**

Here, except for speaking with parents, an early trend towards LOTE only use when communicating with siblings erratically, but noticeably declines after the first two years of primary school. Of particular interest here are the 61 percent of LBOTE Year One students who report using only a LOTE to communicate with siblings. This figure reduces to zero by Year Six. The fact that Year One Chinese- and Vietnamese-background students are in their second year of bilingual learning is potentially very important here. The support offered by the school’s bilingual programs corresponds to high levels of LOTE use with brothers and sisters. By Year Two, at which time only the Chinese-background students are involved in significant amounts of bilingual instruction, a higher level of dual or multi-language communication with siblings is evident. This
bi/multilingual sibling communication drops to around one third of LBOTE students for the remainder of their primary schooling.

In terms of communication with friends, as students are organised across language groups in their English-language classrooms from Year Prep onwards, it is unsurprising that negligible numbers of students describe LOTE only use in this context. Bi/multilingual communication between friends is very high in each year level except Year Six, with figures of 80 percent and above of Years One to Five students reporting use of English and at least one other language for this purpose.

Thinking is an aspect of language use that – due to its internal nature – is arguably highly difficult to self-report on (see Ericsson & Simon, 1980; Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). For instance, of all items in the Language Use questionnaire, it is conceivably the one about which the students might be least conscious (although students did not demonstrate confusion when this notion was posed to them). In any case, data related to this language process need to be cautiously scrutinised. However, the reported growth in English only use, and the decline in LOTE only use are consistent with the data obtained in relation to other domains. Of note, though, is the slight increase across the seven years of students’ reported use of English and a LOTE for thinking. This actually increases, albeit erratically, over time, as the bar graph below (Figure 5.5) reveals.
While this rise in bilingual thinking seems somewhat modest, given the other reports of student language use, it needs to be seen in relation to the source of these gains. Use of a LOTE only for thinking declines from a high point of 50 percent of students surveyed in Year One to zero in Year Six (see Appendix 30). Therefore the increased reporting of thinking in a LOTE/English combination or in English only occurs at the expense of huge losses in LOTE only use. The same bar graph highlights rise of English only for thinking as well as drawing attention to another noteworthy phenomenon emerging from the Language Use Questionnaire data.

In addition to the growth in use of English as a sole language of internal or social communication, this graph reveals a rapid rise in English only use at Year Three level. This rise – significant in that it is inconsistent with the more gradual trend towards English only use across the other year levels – is repeated in the totals for English only use for doing Maths/Number work.

While small variations in student numbers within these year level cohorts can distort percentages, it should be noted that Year Three is the level at which all
students at the school under investigation discontinue bilingual learning and transition to predominantly English-language classrooms. This new emphasis on English as the main language of instruction in Year Three may affect the students’ use of language and/or the way they report this.

If, as stated in the research school’s Bilingual Policy, the aim for students undertaking this form of education is to “develop their first language and to learn English in a non-threatening, positive environment where the first language and English co-exist harmoniously” (see Appendix 2 for the full policy statement), then active use of both languages of instruction across a range of contexts should be seen as evidence of program success. In light of this, using the percentages of students reporting dual/multi-language use for each domain and target in the Language Use Questionnaire, a mean percentage for use of English and a LOTE for each Year level was calculated. Analysis of these percentages is highly revealing. What emerges is that, at Year One and Year Four levels, such dual or multi-language use is highest. When reducing these twelve domains and targets to eight universally appropriate contexts, these results do not change markedly. The following table (Table 5.4) records these results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year level</th>
<th>Mean percentage of use of English and a LOTE across the twelve domains/targets</th>
<th>Mean percentage of use of English and a LOTE across eight key domains/targets*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year Prep</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year One</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Two</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Three</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Four</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Five</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Six</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The four domains removed as they did not necessarily refer to all students were: ‘talking with your brothers or sisters’, ‘asking for things at a shop’, ‘listening to music’, and ‘listening to stories at home.’
Year One, as stated earlier, is the time when student involvement in bilingual learning at the school peaks. In light of this, students’ high levels of the use of two or more languages reflect the maximised bilingual education emphasis at this year level. The Year Four peak for dual/multi-language use is harder to explain. All students at this level discontinued from the bilingual program two or three school years previously. It would be expected that, without this support, their bilingualism might decrease.

Close examination of the year level language use data (see Appendix 30) reveals that, at Year Four, there are very high numbers of students (93 percent at this year level) who report dual/multi-language use for watching TV or videos. While having no reason to dispute any of these student accounts, aberrant totals like this help explain the uneven decline in bilingual use from Year One onwards. Also, small student numbers at Year Four (15 students) need to be taken into account. Of greater significance here are the Years Five and Six percentages which highlight clearly lower levels of bi/multilingualism at these year levels. These results for the final years of primary school support the assertion that decreased support for bilingual development (in terms of reduced instruction in the L1 in school) results in diminished dual/ multi-language use amongst students in the study.

In order to explore any correlation between gender and language use, the responses of all students were revisited and mean percentages were calculated across Year levels for all twelve and the eight key or common domains and targets. The following line graph (Figure 5.6) records the Years P-6 mean percentages for dual/multi-language use for boys and girls in the study.
Whether viewed from the perspective of all twelve or the reduced group of eight domains and targets, the trend is consistently in support of the earlier-mentioned decline in multiple language use after students’ transition to mainly English as the language of instruction. Year Four, notably Year Four girls are the exception to this trend. However, given that numbers of students when split by gender and year level are small, and that the percentages reporting dual/multi-language use at Year One are higher than Year Four in several areas, I feel this Year Four trend, while requiring comment, is not of great importance. For the complete gender breakdowns (totals and percentages), see Appendices 31 to 34.

Summary of Language Use Questionnaire Data

To sum up, the Language Use Questionnaire reveals an in-depth profile of the students’ language use across domains and across the school. Bilingualism, even multilingualism, is shown to be a feature of students’ language practices both at home and at school – more so in the early years of school than in later
years, particularly at Year Six level. It would appear that the intensive instruction in the students’ first languages supports and sustains bilingual use in the years in which it is offered, after which English increasingly becomes the single most important method of communicating in many of the domains and for many of the targets investigated.

These conclusions must be stated tentatively, as student numbers – particularly at the Year levels vary and are small. An alternate method of tracking students’ language use from Years Prep to Six would have been to undertake a longitudinal study of students enrolling in their Prep Year and track them annually to Year Six. Such an approach was beyond the time constraints of this particular research, and also may have encountered difficulty given the high mobility rate of families in this specific community which sees only small numbers of students undertake their full seven years of primary schooling in this one educational setting.

Language use, as measured by this questionnaire, does not equate with attitude to languages, or to language proficiency. Students’ perspectives on these and other areas of their language and learning needs were revealed by the ensuing data collection devices.

**Language Attitudes Questionnaire**

The Language Attitudes Questionnaire (see Appendix 8) was administered to 129 students from language backgrounds other than English or – in the case of two students – from backgrounds that were strongly bilingual, and who firmly identified with a linguistic and cultural background other than English or mainstream Anglo-Australian. The Language Attitudes Questionnaire was divided into two parts, (see Chapter Three, “Methodology”). Part One asked students to consider how importantly they saw the dimensions of reading, writing and speaking in their L1 and in English. Part Two asked them to
choose the statement that most accurately reflected their views on the comparative importance of their L1 and English.

Of the 129 students who undertook the Language Attitudes Questionnaire, six seemed unable to conceptually understand Part One. As such, only 123 responses were included in the data analysis. All 129 students were able to comprehend and respond to Part Two of the Language Attitudes Questionnaire.

**Language Attitudes Questionnaire: Part One**

The 123 students who responded to this part of the questionnaire were asked how important speaking, reading and writing in their L1 and in English were for them. Placing pictures depicting these modes of language use on a three-point continuum from ‘not important’ to ‘important’ to ‘very important’, the whole school results were as depicted in the table which follows.

**TABLE 5.5 LANGUAGE ATTITUDES QUESTIONNAIRE: PART ONE IMPORTANCE OF DIFFERENT MODES OF LANGUAGE IN L1 AND ENGLISH: TOTALS AND PERCENTAGES OF ALL YEARS PREP TO SIX STUDENTS (N=123)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area/Mode of Language</th>
<th>not important</th>
<th>important</th>
<th>very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking your home language</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking English</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading in your home language</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading in English</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing in your home language</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing in English</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures for the total of 123 students show that being able to speak, read and write in both their L1 and English is seen as important, with only small
numbers of students seeing any of these modes of language as ‘not important.’ Speaking, reading and writing in English were, however, consistently rated of higher importance than their home languages. This would indicate a belief on the part of students that English is the main language required for school success and interactions with wider society. Statements made by students when the Language Attitudes Questionnaire was individually administered to them attest to this.

One student commented on the need for a strong understanding of English in terms of primary school learning.

If I don’t know English, I won’t understand what G. [classroom teacher] is talking about. I don’t have to talk Chinese with teachers, so I don’t need it as much.

(Year 5 Chinese background boy).

A younger student understood and articulated the social consequences of an inability to speak or understand English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher:</th>
<th>Why is it important to learn English?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student:</td>
<td>Because we are born in Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher:</td>
<td>And if you didn’t know how to speak English…?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student:</td>
<td>Someone has to translate for us.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Year 3 Vietnamese background girl).

Students’ awareness of their parents’ lack of English also figured as a reason for their opinion that speaking, reading and writing English was ‘important’ or ‘very important.’

Maybe if my Mum has to go to hospital and she can’t speak English, I have to translate for her. ... I’d be lucky to be bilingual because most people only speak one language.

(Year 5 Vietnamese background girl).

As illustrated by this student’s statement, the importance of knowing and learning in English is, in addition, linked to skill or proficiency in the home language. In order for the child to translate for her parent at the hospital, or
any other place of importance, bilingual ability is essential. More on this subject is explored in subsequent sections of this chapter but, before undertaking this task, the higher incidence of students’ rating of the different modes of English as ‘very important’ needs to be analysed further.

Some students saw their home language as important to speak but less important to read and write. As such, bilingualism was valued by some over biliteracy.

Student: Reading and writing Chinese is not special for me. But speaking Chinese is.
Researcher: Why is speaking Chinese important?
Student: To talk with my parents.
(Year 3 Chinese background boy).

Such students attach much importance to verbally interacting with parents and family members in a LOTE, indeed interpreting for parents on a regular basis. While a feature of both their school lives and of the additional LOTE classes many students attend on weekends, reading and writing in the L1 do not fulfil the same type of function and have none of the social/transactional necessity that speaking in the home language has. However, anecdotal comments made by students consistently revealed that they perceived proficiency in reading and writing to be synonymous with meaningful school work, and demonstrable evidence of academic language proficiency. This accounts for the higher levels of importance ascribed by the students to reading and writing over the levels attributed to speaking (in both L1 and English).

As noted in relation to the Language Use Questionnaire, students’ use of English increases as they get older. Decreased use of the L1 is reflected in students’ responses to questions of the importance of speaking, reading and writing in the L1 and English.

For me, I don’t need to use Vietnamese so much. But for English, I need to read and write and I want to learn more.
(Year 6 girl).
Gender seems to play a role in the higher rating given to English, though girls generally rated developing ability in their home languages higher than boys. The following table illustrates this phenomenon.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area/Dimension of Language</th>
<th>not important</th>
<th>important</th>
<th>very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GIRLS</td>
<td>BOYS</td>
<td>GIRLS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking your home language</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking English</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading in your home language</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading in English</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing in your home language</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing in English</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages rounded off to nearest whole number.

Except for the area of speaking the home language (which a nine percent higher incidence of boys rather than girls rated as ‘very important’), the girls in the study more consistently saw as ‘very important’ all modes of English language, and the areas of reading and writing in their home languages. Of particular note is the gap between the boys’ attitudes to reading and those of the girls’. For reading in the home language, 21 percent more girls than boys rated this as ‘very important’, a figure that grows to 29 percent in relation to reading in English. Much research attention has recently focused on boys and reading, with areas of investigation including how perceptions of reading as a feminised socio-cultural practice often conflict with boys’ constructions of masculine identities which, in turn, discourages many boys from engaging with books and other reading materials (Hamston & Love, 2003; Love & Hamston, 2001;
Martino, 2001, 2003). In addition, government concern about boys and reading is reflected in current funding, which emphasises the need to improve literacy outcomes for boys⁴.

While boys in this study viewed reading and other aspects of L1 and English literacy with importance, the gender differentials are consistent with the concerns expressed in the literature. What this study reveals, is that this concern about boys and reading manifests itself in relation to both their home languages and English. Of course, no large-scale generalisations can be made from these data but they raise, as a potential area for targeted investigation, the attitudes of boys to literacy, especially reading, in their first and subsequent languages.

At each year level, there is a widening gap between the percentages of students who see speaking, reading and writing in their home language in comparison to English as ‘very important.’ The table which appears as Appendix 35 lays out the totals and percentages of students at each Year level as to how important they see speaking, reading and writing in the home languages and English. A consistent pattern across the three dimensions of language is evident.

At Year Prep level, students in greater numbers see as ‘very important’ speaking, reading and writing in their home languages as opposed to English. After Year Prep, higher numbers of students generally see speaking, reading and writing in English as more important. From Year Three onwards (when both the Mandarin-English and Vietnamese-English bilingual programs have ceased), the numbers of students viewing the dimensions of English as ‘very important’ remains consistently higher than those viewing the same dimensions in their home languages as ‘very important.’

⁴ An Australian government initiative, the Boys’ Education Lighthouse Schools (BELS) initiative is a $7 million project that is currently supporting around 350 schools to develop evidence bases that highlight effective teaching practices and strategies (particularly in the literacy area) for boys.
The following three line graphs (Figures 5.7, 5.8 and 5.9) clearly illustrate this trend.

**FIGURE 5.7 LANGUAGE ATTITUDES QUESTIONNAIRE: PERCENTAGES REPORTING SPEAKING AS 'VERY IMPORTANT' YEARS P-6 LBOTE STUDENTS (N = 123)**
FIGURE 5.8 LANGUAGE ATTITUDES QUESTIONNAIRE: PERCENTAGES REPORTING READING AS 'VERY IMPORTANT' YEARS P-6 LBOTE STUDENTS
(N = 123)

Reading in your L1
Reading in English
Despite the aberrant Year One response for writing in the home language, an irregularity difficult to explain, the Years Prep to Two levels reveal a very close proximity between L1 and English incidences of ‘very important’ across the dimensions of language. It is in these years, students are most actively engaged in bilingual education at the school. Both Chinese- and Vietnamese-background students having discontinued by Year Three, a gap with a mean of 23.6 and a median of 25.5 percentage points opens up in favour of English being seen as ‘very important.’ These data are consistent with those which emerge from the Language Use Questionnaire in regards to the way that, once the bilingual support and emphasis offered by the school’s Vietnamese-English and Mandarin-English programs ceases English is increasing used and seen by students as the lingua franca that they need for their future lives. This is in spite
of the school’s continuing emphasis on multicultural and multilingual curriculum perspectives.

In terms of the language backgrounds of the students, the following table (Table 5.7) outlines the responses to this section of the Language Attitudes Questionnaire. Students’ responses were grouped according to whether they came from a Chinese, Vietnamese or another LOTE background. These data are displayed below.

### TABLE 5.7 LANGUAGE ATTITUDES QUESTIONNAIRE: PART ONE

**IMPORTANCE OF DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS OF LANGUAGE IN L1 AND ENGLISH YEARS P-6 ANALYSIS ACCORDING TO LANGUAGE BACKGROUND (N = 123)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area/Dimension of Language</th>
<th>Chinese Speakers</th>
<th>Viet. Speakers</th>
<th>Other LOTE Speakers</th>
<th>Chinese Speakers</th>
<th>Viet. Speakers</th>
<th>Other LOTE Speakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N = 65)</td>
<td>(N = 42)</td>
<td>(N = 16)</td>
<td>(N = 65)</td>
<td>(N = 42)</td>
<td>(N = 16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking your home language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking English in your home language</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
<strike>|</strike> | 6% | 2 | 2 | 34 | 14 | 7 | 27 | 26 | 7 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing your home language</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing in your home language</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing in English in your home language</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 16 “Other LOTE” backgrounds were: Turkish (10 students); Ethiopian and Arabic, though dominant in English (1 student); Arabic (1 student); Khmer, though dominant in English (1 student); Indonesian (1 student); 1 dual language (Chinese and Vietnamese) family background (1 student); She responded about the importance of using and learning both her non-English home languages; 1 student with strong Vietnamese identity, but essentially an English monolingual.

Again, close scrutiny of the ‘very important’ figures reveal – in several categories – noteworthy differences between the responses from students of Chinese- and those of Vietnamese-language backgrounds. In general, Vietnamese-language background students placed higher levels of importance.
on their L1 than did Chinese-background students. This was most pronounced in the area of reading, though was evident also in relation to speaking and writing. By contrast, higher percentages of Chinese-speaking background students perceived speaking, reading and writing in English as ‘very important’ compared to students from Vietnamese-speaking backgrounds.

Two factors, in particular, can explain this difference between the two main language groups and the two recipient groups of bilingual learning opportunities in the school. First, the tension between many students speaking Hakka Chinese at home but learning Mandarin Chinese at school could be a major reason that English acquisition and competence is more valued by these students. This is despite the fact that other student data analysed later in the next chapter reveal high levels of satisfaction amongst both Chinese- and Vietnamese-background students with the bilingual program, and interview data with Hakka-speaking students revealing that Mandarin instruction provided only temporary confusion when introduced to these students for the first time.

A second reason for the different responses of Chinese- and Vietnamese-language background students could plausibly relate to the duration of the bilingual program for each cohort of students. As already mentioned, the Vietnamese-English bilingual program operates in Years Prep and One only, whereas the Mandarin-English program extends into Year Two. This raises an issue of equity that was brought up by Vietnamese background parents in my consultations with them, as is discussed in Chapter Seven. No student of any language background commented on the duration of the bilingual program. However, the possibility that the decreased opportunity for Vietnamese-background students to learn in their L1 may spur a nascent or heightened sense of L1 linguistic importance amongst the Vietnamese-background parents and their children is worthy of consideration. Certainly, several Vietnamese-background parents, when interviewed, remarked upon the inequity of the
duration of the Vietnamese-English, as opposed to the Mandarin-English bilingual program.

When member checking and probing, especially, tentatively expressed or unusual responses, students were generally able to give clear examples or reasons for their expressed attitudes towards their L1 and English. For example, one Year Prep student, when asked why he rated writing in Vietnamese as more important than writing in English, commented:

Because I know Vietnamese and I like it better. I can do story writing in Vietnamese.

A Year Four student, asked to explain the importance he attached to English, remarked that:

There’s lots of Australians in Australia and you need to know English to talk to them.

As well as highlighting the obvious need to speak English in a largely English-speaking country, the unintended irony and humour in this student’s comment is very revealing in terms of how he implicitly constructs Australian-ness. This possible conflating of “being Australian” with speaking English and being white would be highly worthwhile to investigate with these students further, particularly in light of later student data reported in the next chapter.

I believe this feature of the student data collection accurately represented students’ attitudes to their L1 and to English. These attitudes were overwhelmingly positive, with – in nearly all cases – in excess of 90 percent of students ascribing importance to both the languages in their home/school repertoires. I base my confidence in the trustworthiness of this data collection device in that other student data I collected, principally interview data and individually posed questions about perceived bilingual benefits (see Chapter Six), as well as the data device I now describe as Part Two of the Language Attitudes Questionnaire confirms the importance students strongly place on bilingual development.
**Language Attitudes Questionnaire: Part Two**

The final piece of information sought from students in the dual administration of the Language Use and Language Attitudes Questionnaire asked them to consider four statements about learning in their home language and English. After reflection on these, students were asked to select the one that most reflected their feelings about language and learning. The statements, as described in the previous chapter, were:

“Learning (home language inserted here) is more important than learning English.”

“Learning English is more important than learning (home language inserted here).”

“Both English and (home language inserted here) are equally important to learn.”

“Neither English nor (home language inserted here) are equally important to learn.”

These statements were on laminated card with key words highlighted (see Appendix 10). Each student was asked to physically pick up the card that most expressed their feelings and place it in a rectangle with the heading, “This is how I feel.”

While the first part of the Language Attitudes questionnaire investigated the levels of importance students attached to speaking, reading and writing in the L1 and in English, this second part emphasised the comparative importance students placed on **learning** in those languages. This final part of the Language Attitudes Questionnaire was administered to 129 LBOTE students from Years Prep to Six, all of whom were conceptually capable of comprehending both the instructions and the statements. Of the 129 students, 107 chose the statement that both languages were equally important to learn, 14 chose English as being more important, and eight chose their home language as being more important. No students responded that neither were important. Appendix 36 provides a table displaying these totals, and the gender and language background split.
The following pie graph (Figure 5.10) clearly illustrates these responses in percentage terms.

**FIGURE 5.10 LANGUAGE ATTITUDES QUESTIONNAIRE: STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TO THEIR L1 AND ENGLISH: YEARS P - 6 STUDENTS FROM LANGUAGE Backgrounds OTHER THAN ENGLISH (N=129)**

The vast majority of students (83 percent of those participating in the research) chose the statement ascribing equal importance to learning both their home language and English. This figure demonstrates that students see real purpose in maintenance and development of the home language, while building proficiency in English. It reveals that, despite differences in levels of importance students attributed to reading, writing and speaking in the L1 and English, the actual bilingual or multilingual reality of their lives renders as equally important the development of both English and their home languages.

Students articulated a range of reasons explaining their choice of statement. For those that saw equal importance in learning the two languages, these ranged from ideas of social/family necessity, academic benefit, intrinsic enjoyment in
language learning, and identity related notions. The following quotes illustrate this range of viewpoints.

**Researcher:** Why do you think it is important to learn both Chinese and English?
**Student:** It makes you happy.
**Researcher:** How does it make you happy?
**Student:** It’s fun to say the words in Chinese and English.
*(Year Prep girl)*

Learning two languages means learning more things.
*(Year 2 girl from Chinese [Hakka] speaking background)*

**Student:** I like to practise reading Chinese.
**Researcher:** Can you give me an example of when you read Chinese at home?
**Student:** I watch videos with Chinese subtitles. I need to read the subtitles because the sound isn’t clear.
*(Year 6 girl)*

English is my main language, even though I’m Vietnamese. So I’ve got to speak, read and write it. With Vietnamese, I have to speak to my parents because they don’t understand English. When I go to High School, I want to learn French.
*(Year 6 Australian-born girl from Vietnamese background family)*

Across language groups, the student responses were very similar. Of the students from Chinese-speaking backgrounds, 82 percent believed both languages were equally important to learn, with almost exactly the same proportion of Vietnamese-background students responding similarly. Appendix 37 lays out the students’ responses to this question according to language background in terms of totals and percentages. Interestingly, all Turkish-background students responded that both Turkish and English were equally important to learn, despite the fact that the school only offered them two hours per week instruction in that language from Years Prep to Six. As language and cultural preservation is strong amongst this group at the school, a phenomenon documented amongst the Turkish community in Victoria.
Little difference between boys and girls was evident when analysing the results, as Appendix 38 attests. However, when analysed according to year level (see Appendix 39), some noteworthy trends emerge. While at each year level, high proportions of students (from 71 to 89 percent) view both their home language and English equally important to learn, there are important differences at each end of the school. Small but highly noteworthy numbers of students in Years Prep and One saw their L1 as more important to learn than English. This is possibly a result of their level of dependence on the L1, particularly in interacting with parents, and their comparative unfamiliarity with English. It is also the time of their primary schooling where their bilingual development is most supported in terms of formal school programs. At the Year Six level, the reduced use of the students’ home languages is reflected in the fact that over a quarter of this small cohort of students see English as more important than their home language. Their increased confidence in English, the lessened instruction and use of their L1, and looking towards secondary school instruction in mainly English help account for this phenomenon at this point in their schooling. These trends are displayed in the following bar graph (Figure 5.11).
Despite students offering reasons for their choices in this final section of the Language Attitudes Questionnaire, I felt that this strong student support for bilingual learning required deeper, more systematic investigation. As such, a device to explore students’ perceptions of the benefits of being bilingual was developed for use in the next stage of data collection. This involved an individually administered statement sorting task, administered to 62 students. This was followed by individual and group interviews with a total of 56 students. This explicit investigation of students’ perspectives of bilingual benefits and bilingual learning is the central focus of the next chapter.
CHAPTER SIX : RESEARCH RESULTS - PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS
AND DISCUSSION OF STUDENTS’ BILINGUAL ABILITIES AND
BILINGUAL LEARNING

So when you learn English, and then in Chinese they ask you a question, then you can think back to when you went to English class, and that might give you ideas.

(Year 4 student on why learning bilingually when she started school was beneficial).

Additional Student Data Collection

This chapter reports on students’ perceptions of their emerging bilingualism, their opinions of the key benefits of being bilingual, and their understandings of, and attitudes towards, bilingual education as undertaken at the school. Students’ perspectives of these issues were collected through:

• questioning of Years Three to Six Chinese- and Vietnamese-language background students, as a follow-up to the Language Use and Language Attitudes Questionnaires;

• individual student interviews undertaken bilingually with children learning in the bilingual program at the time;

• group student interviews undertaken in English with children who were former students in the bilingual education programs at the school but had transitioned to mainstream English-medium classrooms.

These additional methods of data collection are now described, and the insights arising from them, analysed. As the comments of students at interview illuminate a number of the issues under investigation, these are interwoven through the data presented here. Nonetheless, I also focus specifically on the interviews themselves in the final section of the chapter.
Follow-Up Student Questioning (Years Three to Six)

To probe more deeply the students’ views on bilingual learning that emerged from the Language Attitudes Questionnaire, the next stage of student data collection sought to:

• explore students’ perceptions of their bilingual abilities;
• probe more methodically students’ opinions about the benefits of bilingualism; and
• investigate students’ views of the school’s bilingual education programs.

In pursuing these objectives, 62 Years Three to Six students from Chinese- and Vietnamese-language backgrounds met with me individually, answering a series of structured questions and engaging in statement sorting tasks related to these issues (See Appendices 11-16). The one-on-one administration of these questions again allowed for elaboration and discussion in order to clarify and contextualise students’ responses.

Student Perceptions of LOTE and English Abilities

Insights into the levels of student satisfaction with their abilities in the languages in which they had undertaken instruction at the school – English, and Mandarin or Vietnamese – were sought in order to understand their perceptions of the long-term effectiveness and impact of their bilingual learning at the school.

Therefore, only those students who had received a complete bilingual education program at the school – those who had attended the full two years of the Years Prep and One Vietnamese-English bilingual program, or the full three years of the Years Prep to Two Mandarin-English program – were involved at this stage. As a result, this reduced the number of student responses to 56, two Year Three and four Year Five students out of the 62 questioned having not been enrolled at the school for the full bilingual program. The breakdown of these 56 students is as follows:
As outlined in Chapter Three, “Methodology”, this questioning asked students to locate on a continuum how pleased they were with their abilities in English and Vietnamese or Mandarin. A less complex three-point scale was presented to the Years Three and Four students, while the Years Five and Six students were asked to place each of the statements on a five-point scale. Appendices 40 and 41 display the totals and percentages for these students.

Synthesising students’ responses into broad categories of agreement, disagreement or uncertainty highlights a consistent trend across the four year levels. This relates to the consistently higher level of student satisfaction with their levels of ability in English as compared to Mandarin or Vietnamese. These are displayed in the graphs below (See Figures 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3) that reveal the percentages of students at each year level that expressed satisfaction (or strong satisfaction) with their levels of ability in English and in Mandarin or Vietnamese. A more complete representation of these quantitative data are presented in the tables that form Appendix 42.

In the area of reading, 25 to 35 percentage points separates ability level perceptions in relation to L1 as opposed to English (see Figure 6.1).
For writing, students’ satisfaction rates in terms of their perceived ability in writing in English was between 17 and 33 percent higher than their satisfaction with their writing ability in Chinese or Vietnamese (see Figure 6.2).
The gap between L1 and English satisfaction levels narrows in relation to speaking, with English satisfaction levels only six to 16 percentage points higher than those reported for Chinese and Vietnamese (see Figure 6.3).

**FIGURE 6.3 STUDENT ABILITY PERCEPTIONS: LOTE AND ENGLISH SPEAKING: YEARS THREE TO SIX BILINGUALLY EDUCATED STUDENTS (N=56)**

Therefore, what emerges most strongly at all four year levels are higher levels of satisfaction with reading, writing and speaking in English than in the other languages of instruction. While levels of satisfaction with LOTE performance range from levels of 53 to 89 percent (with a median level of 67; and a mode of 68.5 percent), perceived proficiency across the dimensions of English is significantly higher, ranging from 71 to 100 percent (median level being 94; mode being 90.25 percent).

Examining the different levels of satisfaction with LOTE and English ability at each year level reveals some unexpected insights. The gap between satisfaction levels in LOTE as opposed to English remains consistently wide from Years Three to Six. This is particularly evident in the data related to reading and writing which surprises somewhat, given that students’ reported language use reveals increasing reliance on English as they get older.
I use less Chinese, but English I’ll need at High School and University.  
(Year 6 girl).

From this, it might be expected that satisfaction levels in the decreasingly used LOTE would lessen in relation to English over Years 3-6. This does not happen to any significant degree, as the following table highlights:

**TABLE 6.2 PERCENTAGE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ABILITY/SATISFACTION LEVELS IN THE LANGUAGES OF BILINGUAL INSTRUCTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year Three</th>
<th>Year Four</th>
<th>Year Five</th>
<th>Year Six</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So, while there are 35 percent more students at Year Three level expressing satisfaction with their ability in reading in English as compared to reading in Vietnamese or Chinese, this figure remains fairly stable throughout the rest of their primary schooling. In contrast, writing satisfaction levels in English/LOTE at Year Five reveal a widening difference from Years Three and Four, though this difference narrows in Year Six. Satisfaction levels in speaking Vietnamese or Mandarin as opposed to English remain closest throughout.

This is consistent in terms of students’ reported maintenance of home languages for verbal communication over all year levels. However, it is noteworthy in terms of the Hakka/Mandarin disjuncture wherein there is inconsistency between the language of instruction versus language of the home amongst the Chinese-background students. Students at interview explained this by commenting on the lack of confusion they experienced learning in Mandarin, while speaking Hakka amongst family and friends.
Researcher: So what I’m interested in is … speaking Hakka at home and then coming to school and learning Mandarin, was that a problem or …?

Filomena: Umm.. no it wasn’t much of a problem because Hakka sounds a little like Chinese as well. I can translate it easily.

Paul: OK, right, yeah. Sonia, was it the same for you?

Sonia: Yeah, it was the same thing for me because I really enjoyed learning Chinese.

(Year Six Hakka-background girls at group interview)

In isolation, these data would indicate that, even after two or three years of 50:50 bilingual instruction, English is perceived as more strongly developed. LOTE satisfaction levels of between 53 and 89 percent would also suggest that, despite cessation of students’ bilingual instruction, these languages are established and maintained, to the students’ overall satisfaction, into the later years of their primary schooling. This could mean that there is actually a deterioration in students’ Vietnamese or Mandarin ability, but it does not displease them unduly. Student interview data reveals that some feel they have, by Year Six, lost a certain amount of their previous skill in Vietnamese or Mandarin due to decreased bilingual/LOTE instruction.
Researcher: The other question I wanted to ask about was - this program, this bilingual program where you would learn half the week in Chinese and half the week in English, it finished for you girls at the end of probably Grade One, I think. Maybe you did it in Grade Two as well. But certainly it finished early on. Do you think it would have been a good thing to continue on in Grade 3/4 or maybe even right up into Grades 5/6? … Lisa, – you’re saying yes. Why?

Lisa: Because, like now the Preps are better than us in Chinese.

(Laughs)

Researcher: What, you think that since you stopped doing the bilingual program it’s slipped back a little bit …

Lisa: It’s got worse.

Researcher: Do you agree, Ellena?

Ellena: Yep.

(Year Six Hakka-background girls at group interview)

Even a student in her first Year after being in the bilingual program commented on language loss, as the following excerpt of interview dialogue illustrates.

Researcher: Nga, before we turned the tape on, you said to me that you used to be really good in Vietnamese, now you don’t feel so good in it anymore. Is that correct? Yeah? Why do you think you’re not so good in it anymore?

Nga: Because I’m not very good at spelling and I learned things a long time ago and I didn’t learn much so I forgot.

(Year Three Vietnamese-background girl at group interview)

Finally, looking at any ability/satisfaction differences between language groups, reveal similar trends for both Chinese- and Vietnamese-background students (see Appendix 43). Perceived levels of ability or satisfaction are higher in English than for Vietnamese or Mandarin, though higher percentages of Vietnamese-background students expressed satisfaction with their abilities in Vietnamese than did the Chinese-background students. Very small numbers of students amongst each language group at each year level means these data need to be tentatively interpreted. Nonetheless, the afore-mentioned home-school L1 consistency and the similarity in Vietnamese and English script may
offer explanations for these reports, despite the duration of the Vietnamese-English bilingual program being a year less than that of the Mandarin-English one.

In summary, this part of the data collection highlights students’ moderate to high levels of satisfaction with their LOTE abilities, and higher levels of satisfaction with abilities in English. Reflecting on bilingual learning theory in light of these data raises the issue of additive versus subtractive bilingual programs (Baker, 2001; Corson, 2001; Cummins, 1976, 1986, 2001b; Diaz & Klingler, 1991; Garcia, 1993; Lambert, 1990; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Minami & Ovando, 1995; Romaine, 1995). The bilingual learning arrangements at the research site are established as additive, despite their transitional nature. However – over the course of their primary school years – students’ increased use and higher levels of satisfaction with proficiency levels in English raise important issues for the school to address. How a more balanced bilingualism could be aimed for might be an apposite question for the school to consider. And, in light of this, the ways of maximising students’ bilingual potential, in terms of pedagogical and organisational re-adjustments, could be explored. Deeper discussion and recommendations in this area are posited in “Chapter Nine: Research Implications and Recommendations”.

The Benefits of Bilingualism: Student Perspectives
As over 80 percent of students participating in the Language Attitudes Questionnaire reflected that both their home language and English were equally important to learn, a data collection device exploring the perceived benefits in being bilingual was developed and implemented for the next stage of this research study. Drawing on theoretical input (Romaine, 1995) and a previously-implemented research model (Dorian, 1981), those aspects of being bilingual with which students most identified were investigated.
This involved the 62 students of Chinese- or Vietnamese-background in Years Three to Six being asked to reflect on twelve statements about the possible advantages of being bilingual. These statements covered six categories reflecting both integrative and instrumental factors which might motivate individuals to learn or see value in learning second or additional languages. The students were also asked if they could think of any additional bilingual benefits that applied to them. The categories and statements, as mentioned in Chapter Three, “Methodology” were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family and social necessity.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Knowing two languages is good because I need both to communicate with my family and friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Knowing two languages is good because I need both when I go to the shops, restaurants or other places.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intrinsic enjoyment in dual language knowledge and use.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Knowing two languages is good because I enjoy being able to do things in more than one language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Knowing two languages is good because I enjoy learning in both.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational advantages.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Knowing two languages is good because it helps me succeed at school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Knowing two languages is good because it helps me understand the things I learn.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible future benefits.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. Knowing two languages is good because it might help me at secondary school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Knowing two languages is good because it might help me get a good job.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive advantages.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. Knowing two languages is good because it makes me more clever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Knowing two languages is good because it helps me think better.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-esteem/identity formation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. Knowing two languages is good because it helps me feel proud of my family background.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Knowing two languages is good because it helps me feel proud of being an Australian.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As in the previous data collection procedure, students were asked to place each statement on a continuum, expressing the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement. Appendix 44 displays the results for Years Three and Four students, and Appendix 45 presents those for the Years Five and Six students. All Years Three to Six data, placed on a three-point scale ('disagree', 'not sure', 'agree') are presented as Appendix 46.

Analysing the data for the full complement of 62 Years Three to Six students reveals that the students saw multiple advantages in being bilingual. This is consistent with the range of anecdotal remarks made by students in response to the Language Attitudes Questionnaire. Most frequently agreed upon benefits of bilingualism centred around the factors that have been termed reasons of ‘family and social necessity’ and ‘educational advantages’.

Dual language knowledge for the facilitation of communication with family members and friends was seen by all but one student as a benefit – even a necessity – of being bilingual. This is consistent with earlier-collected student reports of their in- and out-of-school language use, as these remarks show.

It helps me translate things for my Mum and grandma.
(Year Five Chinese-background boy)

It means I can talk to my relatives and cousins in Taiwan.
(Year Four Chinese-background girl)

The other statement related to ‘family and social necessity’ – that of bilingual ability assisting students to perform transactions at shops, restaurants and other community sites – recorded high levels of agreement, with 90 percent of students seeing this as a distinct bilingual benefit.

The educational advantages of being bilingual (that it assists greater understanding of what is taught, and that it facilitates greater levels of school
success) also received significant support with 94 and 95 percent of Years Three to Six students in support of these respective statements.

It might help you learn better at school.
(Year Three Chinese-background girl)

It helps your school work. When you grow up, and people ask you what a word means, you can tell them.
(Year Four Vietnamese-background girl)

Analysing these responses according to year levels, the 31 Years Three and Four students, all of whom saw bilingual learning as enabling family and friendship interaction, with a slightly smaller number (90 percent of the students) stating that bilingualism assists them interact in community settings like shops and restaurants. These Years Three and Four respondents also saw distinct educational advantages in being bilingual with totals of 90 percent and above at each year level agreeing that this language ability helped them succeed at school, and understand the things they are taught.

Years Five and Six students, who were asked to place the statements on the conceptually more complex five-point scale (from ‘disagree strongly’ to ‘agree strongly’), reveal more nuanced responses, as would be expected with a more finely calibrated measuring device. While all 31 students agreed that knowing two languages facilitates better understanding of what they learn, only 55 percent of students strongly agreed with this statement. Interestingly, the statement that received the highest level of strong agreement was one related to possible future prospects: that bilingual ability might assist later employment prospects (81 percent of these students strongly agreeing with this statement). In contrast, the younger Years Three and Four students were less certain about these future prospects, with 19 percent of these students ‘not sure’ of this statement.

The other aspect of possible future benefits in being bilingual was also firmly supported in Years Five and Six responses with 65 percent of students strongly
agreeing that knowledge of two languages might assist them at secondary school. This sentiment sits awkwardly alongside, though does not contradict, the data collected in the Language Attitudes Questionnaire which revealed a consistent gap between levels of importance ascribed to L1 and English learning, especially after Year Three. What emerges seems to be an increasing awareness, as students get older, of the paramount importance of English proficiency, coupled with a developing understanding that bilingual ability assists school learning, and may assist secondary school achievement in the future. The following two student statements highlight this appreciation of the advantages of sound bilingual abilities.

We live in Australia. English is the most important language to learn. ... They [bilingual people] can talk to more people than people who only speak one language.

(Year 5 Chinese-speaking background girl).

I want to learn both to go to secondary school. I hope I can use Chinese at secondary school.

(Year 5 boy).

Highly revealing results from this data collection device can be seen in the area of students’ self-esteem and identity formation. At Years Three and Four level, all but one student agreed that being bilingual made them ‘feel proud of being an Australian’, while 87 percent of Years Five and Six students expressed various degrees of agreement (with 68 percent of these students strongly agreeing with the statement). These figures were higher than for the other identity/self-esteem related statement: ‘Knowing two languages is good because it helps me feel proud of my family background.’ Smaller, though notably high figures of 84 percent of Years Three and Four students and 80 percent of Years Five and Six students were in agreement with this statement (with 55 percent of the older students in strong agreement).

These results were somewhat surprising, as it might have been expected that maintenance of a minority language, albeit within the context of bilingual learning, would foster a stronger sense of family continuity and identification.
with the minority culture than that of ‘being Australian’, no matter how broadly envisioned that might be. The fact that students positively identify with “being an Australian” despite their families’ relatively recent arrival and – in many cases – uncertain refugee status, speaks volumes for the way the school’s policies and curricula affirm the students as forming part of a diverse, inclusive Australian community. While, in many respects, this valuing of diversity has not, in recent years, been evident in Australian government policy and in corporate media discourses, it would seem from these student responses that – on a school level – inclusion and diversity are still in the ascendant. The multicultural perspectives of the integrated curriculum and bilingual education arrangements at the school, along with the positive teacher-student relationships evidenced in classrooms, most probably contribute to these student perspectives, as they emerge here from the data.

Nonetheless, a strong sense of linguistic, cultural and ethnic identification with the country of family origin emerged in many aspects of what students said at various times during the data collection. The statement cited in Chapter Five from the Australian-born Year Six girl that “English is my main language, even though I’m Vietnamese” and the implicit assumption of a Vietnamese identity in the following student’s comments seemed to support this view.

You need to know English. And if you’re Vietnamese, you have to know your own language. So when anyone asks you something or talks to you, you know how to answer.

(Year 4 girl).

On the other hand, an emerging bicultural identity infused the responses of several students, like those which follow:

Learning both is good because I am (sic) a Chinese citizenship and an Australian citizenship.

(Year 3 Chinese-born girl).

When I go to Vietnam I can talk to my grandparents … I need to learn Vietnamese so I can understand them. … English is very important because I was born in Australia. I need to learn English so I can do things when I’m older.

(Year 3 boy).
This issue of identity, and how children draw on family, language, ethnic and other markers to define this, while not at the centre of this research, is fascinating. A potential study along the lines of that undertaken by Short and Carrington (1999) and Hamston (2002) might significantly illuminate teachers’ and researchers’ understandings of immigrant and refugee children’s constructions of themselves.

Another link between pride and bilingualism emerged in discussion as these data were collected. According to many students, being bilingual meant that others, particularly parents might feel pride in them. One student commented that knowing two languages was good:

So that I can make my Mum and Dad proud.
(Year Five Vietnamese-background boy)

Another student commented:

It could make your family proud by knowing more than one language.
(Year Six Chinese-background boy)

In addition, a form of self-pride, outside the context of pride linked to ethnicity or family, emerged in discussion with some students.

Many people only know one language. So it feels good to know two.
(Year Six Vietnamese-background girl)

This notion of an identity derived from feelings of being successful and special is pursued further in “Chapter Nine: Research Implications and Recommendations”. These data, however, highlight a potentially powerful construction of identity built on feelings of empowerment, pride and strength that emanate from a strong sense of the value they attach to their varied forms of cultural and linguistic knowledge.

Put another way, bilingual ability seems to confer on many of the students in this study a bicultural identity suffused with feelings of personal worth and pride. This is identity formation of a very positive kind: that linked to the possession of special talents, rare skills and uncommon insights. A number of students in this study appear aware that many Australians, especially those
from English-speaking backgrounds, are monolingual. These students view their own bilingualism (or multilingualism) as vastly more desirable, and an awareness of this linguistic advantage appears to shape a positive self-concept. Feeling a sense of an Australian identity, feeling linked to family and community, and feeling successful are firm foundations on which future learning and future prospects can be built.

Students less frequently agreed with statements linking bilingual benefits to issues of cognitive advantage or intrinsic enjoyment in dual language learning and use. At Years Three and Four, 19 percent of students were uncertain about whether dexterity in two languages led to improved intelligence (made them ‘more clever’). However, statements such as the following highlight a perception that thinking processes improve with the ability to think and work in and across two languages, as the ‘interdependence hypothesis’ (Cummins, 1979) asserts.

When I do my work, I can do it faster.
(Year Three Vietnamese-background girl)

Even higher levels of uncertainty (at 26 percent) were expressed by these Years Three and Four students when appraising suggestions that they enjoyed learning in both languages or that bilingual ability helped them develop stronger thinking skills. When asked to elaborate on their uncertainty about the intrinsic enjoyment in learning in two languages, some students commented on the challenges they faced, as the following statement illustrates.

You have two languages in your head and you’re trying to decide which one to use. … That gets a bit confusing.
(Year Four Chinese-speaking girl)

The Years Three and Four figures are matched by the Years Five and Six students, only 36 percent of whom expressed strong levels of enjoyment in learning or using both languages within their repertoires. Of those who expressed enjoyment, a strong connection to purposes for language learning in wider cultural contexts was evident.
It helps me read different kinds of things. Like if you go on a trip to China, there might be lots of different things to read. … Chinese movies – I love them!

(Year Five Chinese-background boy)

However, the data related to uncertainty about the intrinsic enjoyment in learning more than one language need to be viewed in relation to the numbers of students who agreed that dual language use and instruction was enjoyable (71 and 81 percent of Years Three and Four students responding positively to the two statements linked to this potential advantage). Likewise, the percentage of students at Years Five and Six levels who to some degree enjoy learning and using two languages was at levels of 84 and 78 percent for the two statements related to this potential benefit (see Appendices 44 and 45). These totals reveal high numbers of students gain intrinsic enjoyment in learning more than one language. Only in comparison to other possible bilingual benefits do these areas of intrinsic enjoyment seem somewhat low.

Finally, the data examining students’ perceptions of the benefits of bilingualism were analysed in relation to language background and gender. For this purpose, the statements of disagreement or uncertainty were scrutinised, and the number of male and female students from each language background tallied. No significant gender or language issues emerge from these data. For most categories, a mixture of boys and girls expressed disagreement or uncertainty with the statements and, while more Chinese-background students expressed uncertainty, especially at Year Five level, there were larger numbers of these students in the first place (39 Chinese-, as opposed to 23 Vietnamese-background students). Any slightly higher degree of uncertainty amongst the Chinese-background students could be a result of the Hakka/Mandarin dichotomy, but dwelling on this obscures the high levels of agreement with the statements posed that was evident amongst both language groups. Appendix 47 displays these results.
Summary

In summary, these 62 students – all but six of whom had undertaken a full bilingual program at the school – see multiple benefits in being bilingual. Most apparent to them are the benefits for facilitating or improving family and social communication, along with educational advantages related to understanding what is taught and achieving success at school. Given that family/social communication is a daily, transactional necessity, and that academic learning and teacher feedback form a large part of students’ school lives, these benefits are possibly the most tangible ones in their eyes.

Pride in being bilingual is strongly expressed in response to both these data and in student interviews. Notions of bilingual pride resonating with pride in an identity linked to their family’s cultural origins, and with their burgeoning notion of an “Australian” identity could be more deeply explored with these students. Nonetheless, these data indicate that students identify with family, cultural and national affiliations or constructs, and are building complex personal identities linked to languages spoken, cultural affinities, and place(s) of residence or citizenship.

Less tangible potential benefits of bilingualism presented more difficulty for the students to identify with. Cognitive benefits such as improved thinking skills and a heightened sense of intellectual functioning have been issues at the centre of bilingual education debate for decades. Little wonder, then, that students were unable to articulate these possible benefits in being bilingual or not.

Additional Student Questions: Years Three to Six

After investigating students’ perceptions of their bilingual abilities, and what they saw as the benefits of being bilingual, three final pieces of information from these students were solicited. These centred on:

- students’ overall satisfaction levels with the school’s curriculum;
their feelings about having been part of a bilingual education program; and

their thoughts on whether they wished they could pursue more of their learning in Mandarin or Vietnamese.

In order to elicit students’ views, three statements were presented to each student. These were:

1. “This school teaches me what I need to know.”
2. “Being in a bilingual program when I started school was good for my learning.”
3. “I wish I could do more of my learning in Chinese” or “I wish I could do more of my learning in Vietnamese” (according to the language background of the student).

As with the previous devices investigating their perceptions, the 62 students were asked to rank these statements on a continuum. Individual administration of the research tool by the researcher allowed for follow up questioning and probing of students’ responses.

From Years Three to Six, 60 of the 62 students agreed to some degree with the first statement, “This school teaches me what I need to know” (Appendix 48 displays the students’ responses to all three statements). This first statement proved less than useful for the purposes of engaging students in critical reflection. While the overwhelmingly positive response (all but two students agreeing to varying degrees with this statement) could be indicative of student appreciation of a caring school environment that affirms linguistic and cultural diversity, it is, on reflection, a broad statement that is very easy to agree with. In general, students were not able to elaborate much on their near universal responses of agreement.

More useful, for the purposes of engaging students in discussion, were the questions related specifically to language learning: “Being in a bilingual
program when I started school was good for my learning” and “I wish I could do more of my learning in Chinese/Vietnamese.” High numbers of students agreed with these statements, as the following graphs (Figures 6.4 and 6.5) illustrate. In the first, the perspectives of Years Three and Four students reveal that 90 percent of these students agreed with the statement that “Being in a bilingual program when I started school was good for my learning”, a number which lessened to nearly two-thirds of the students when asked whether they wished they could do more of their learning Chinese or Vietnamese.

FIGURE 6.4 ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS PRESENTED TO YEARS THREE AND FOUR BILINGUALLY EDUCATED STUDENTS (N=31)

Amongst Years Five and Six students who had also spent two or three years in the bilingual programs the school operates, similar responses were evident. All 31 of these students expressed agreement with the statement that learning bilingually was a valuable way to begin their primary school education. A lesser number, but still a very high 81 percent of students expressed some level of agreement with the statement that they would like more of their school instruction to be in Chinese or Vietnamese. The following graph (Figure 6.5) highlights these responses (for a full breakdown of these data see Appendices 48 and 49).
When asked to elaborate on their responses, many students explained that being in the bilingual program when they started school assisted them to learn both English and their home language well. This, they believed, benefited them because the languages of the Mandarin-English and Vietnamese-English bilingual programs were useful beyond the classroom. When asked why learning in the school’s bilingual program benefited him, one student responded:

So you can learn Chinese and English together. So you’ll learn more of both.

(Year 3 Chinese-language background boy)

Another student who had exited the bilingual program at the end of the previous year, when asked why he would have liked to continue to undertake more of his schooling in Chinese, remarked:

I want to improve on it. So I’d like it [Chinese classes like those of the Years Prep to Two bilingual program] again.

(Year Three Chinese-background boy).

A Year Four girl contrasted with this response by stating that she did not wish she could do more of her learning in Chinese. She elaborated by stating, not that she viewed that language as unimportant, but that she had alternate access
to Mandarin instruction through her mother. Some children spoke of their attendance at Mandarin and Vietnamese classes on weekends, which they saw as facilitating ongoing L1 development. These avenues of language maintenance were also raised by parents in the bilingual consultations when the question of extending the bilingual program beyond the early years of schooling was raised.

One Year Four boy who was from a multilingual English-, Portuguese- and Hakka-speaking background expressed uncertainty about whether being in the Mandarin-English bilingual program had benefited him. In particular, he reflected on the different ability levels of students within the group.

| Student: | Some things were good, but sometimes it was bad for me. |
| Researcher: | Tell me what was good about being in the bilingual program. |
| Student: | I got to learn a new language and you are special because you are the only one who knows it. |
| Researcher: | And what was not so good about learning in the bilingual program? |
| Student: | Everyone knew more Chinese than I did. |

This student’s remarks highlight a tension that can be felt amongst students learning bilingually: the nexus between feeling proud to learn in English and a LOTE (be it the language of the home or one of cultural significance), and the difficulties and travails one encounters in building bilingual ability, particularly when other students’ foundation or proficiency in the language is perceived to exceed your own. Catering for a diversity of student interests, needs and abilities is a challenge in any classroom. It takes on extra importance, however, in the language classroom context where many children may already speak that language (or a variation of it) at home, while a small minority may not. These groups of students who bring to mind the notion of “authentic beginners” (Gee, 2002) who, without adequate support, risk experiencing the same kind of ‘submersion’ that many minority language background students encounter in English-only classrooms.
This concern is echoed also in another student’s remarks, in terms of the perceived high expectations placed on her by LOTE teachers within the bilingual program.

It makes me dizzy when I think about it. If I learn Chinese, I feel like I’m not good enough at it, but I know I am. I came to this school to improve my English, not my Chinese.

(Year Three Chinese Mandarin-speaking background girl).

This statement reveals the need to be mindful of placing excessive pressure to reach academic targets. It is important to remember that while a transformative, progressive curriculum needs to be academically rigourous, it also needs to be culturally sensitive, hopeful, joyful, and kind (Bigelow et al., 1994). While these student sentiments were certainly a minority view in terms of these data, they raised important issues in terms of teachers’ expectations and planning for individual student differences.

In relation to the statement made by the above-cited Year Three Mandarin-speaking background girl, when interviewed some weeks later, she distanced herself from this statement somewhat. At interview, she maintained that learning Chinese at the school was valuable despite the challenges. This change in perspective possibly highlights how impulsive and shifting students’ responses can be, situated very much in the immediate present time, and possibly reflecting very recent classroom experiences: positive or negative. Fortunately, the large cohort of students involved in this study mediates this volatility somewhat.

Across language groups (see Appendix 49) it was the students of Chinese-speaking backgrounds who, in particular, were more ambivalent about whether they wished they could have additional bilingual instruction. In addition to the reasons cited above, this might reflect issues related to Hakka and Mandarin already discussed, or to the complexity of learning Chinese orthography. These notions were pursued more deeply in later student interviews.
In summary, what emerges from this final stage of widespread student data collection, are students pleased with the curriculum taught at the school and, in particular, positive in their recollections of having been in a bilingual program. In terms of continuing to learn bilingually or, at the very least, receive more than two or three hours a week LOTE instruction, students were largely positive, particularly students of Vietnamese-speaking background. Issues of pedagogy were raised that were probed further at interview. In fact, the data analysis in total to this point informed and guided the content and the conduct of the interviews which followed.

**Student Interviews**

In the original research design, the bilingual student interviews and student focus group interviews were conceived as a centrepiece to this investigation from which the quantitative data in the form of questionnaires and statement sorting would add broad context. As it eventuated, the individualised administration of each of these data collection devices allowed them to resemble structured interviews, guided by set questions or tasks that allowed opportunities for probing and elaboration. As such, they proved – in some ways – more illuminating than the later interviews. A number of factors, I believe, contributed to this.

First, the highly focussed nature of the questionnaires and statement sorting tools appeared very reassuring to the students. They enjoyed using picture prompts to discuss language use, took pleasure in deliberating about the placement of the laminated statements on trajectories of agreement or disagreement, and answered confidently. These features of these structured data collection devices seemed – for some students – more conducive to facilitating talk.

Second, the opportunity to probe students’ questionnaire and statement sorting responses as they were made yielded, I believe, more consistently considered
and reliable perspectives and positions than either the bilingual or group interviews. It was as if students, by nominating a language used, or ascribing a scaled value to a statement, felt compelled to justify or expand upon what they had told me. Third, in advance of each questionnaire or task, each student was informed that there were no right or wrong answers. This seemed to facilitate precisely the open and truthful accounts hoped for.

However, the younger students, especially, seemed more inhibited and tentative at interview. This was despite these students being very keen to be interviewed, being very familiar with myself as a recent staff member at the school, and being supported at interview by a bilingual facilitator and by books, photographs, work samples and other artefacts from their classrooms. The presence of two adults at the bilingual interviews might seem intimidating, and could, to some degree, account for student reticence. However, the demeanour of both my bilingual assistants and myself was relaxed, and the way the interviews proceeded was specifically designed to put students at ease and encourage talk.

More than the dynamics of the interview, the content might have been what made some students – especially those from the early years classrooms – less communicative than what was hoped for. As stated in Chapter Three, “Methodology” the bilingual interviews asked students to reflect and comment on their bilingual instruction, talk about its positive and negative features, and consider how it might be to learn only in English. These focus areas proved conceptually demanding and seemed to be issues not considered by many of the younger students before.

Group interviews with the older students resulted in more useful insights. These interviews asked students to recollect and reflect on their years of bilingual learning, and on how they felt during and after participating in this form of learning. Greater levels of input and ideas emerged from the group
interviews, and these forums for discussion, with their open-ended questions, were more revealing in terms of eliciting students’ perspectives. A different sense of student voice came through in these group interviews, as a selection of exchanges of dialogue reveals later in this chapter. Despite their shortcomings, several student interviews revealed a number of previously untapped perspectives, as well as revealing some unanticipated gaps in student knowledge. As such, I believe my imperative of foregrounding student voice was effectively achieved in relation to the data collection devices administered earlier in the study and through the interviews undertaken, especially with the groups of Years Three to Six students.

The bilingual interview formats for the Chinese- and Vietnamese-language background students are attached as Appendices 17 & 18 and the formats for the group interviews are also appended as Appendices 20.1 & 20.2. Insights from both the bilingual individual and English-language group interviews that have not previously been discussed are now presented.

**Years Prep to Two Bilingual Interviews**

One advantage of the bilingual interviews with these young students was that, like in Martin and Stuart-Smith’s (1998) study, they provided students with two ways to state their ideas. In some interviews, the students gave more extended, elaborated answers in their first language than in English. Students did not seem concerned that similar questions were asked twice – once in each language. Explanations prior to the interview seem to have forestalled confusion on this matter. The following two excerpts from one interview reveal how one Year One Vietnamese-language background student responded differently to similar questions and stimuli in the two languages in which the interviews were conducted. In the first excerpt, part of an interview undertaken in English, the student’s replies are brief and tentative. In the second excerpt, the student’s utterances are more extended and decisive, and require less probing.
Excerpt One:

**Researcher**: Hoa, I’d like you to have a think about your learning in English. And we’ve looked at examples of it here. For you, what’s something that’s good about learning in English?

**Hoa**: Um ...  

**Researcher**: What I’m saying is, is there something that you really like doing when you’re learning with Rita [class teacher]? Something that really helps you learn English.

**Hoa**: Yes.

**Researcher**: What are some of those things that you really like doing?

**Hoa**: I like to learn English and Vietnamese.

**Researcher**: Are there any activities that you do with Rita that really help you?

**Hoa**: Yes.

**Researcher**: What things? What activities?

**Hoa**: Um. Rita helps me to write the words.  

...  

**Researcher**: So do you think learning English is important?

**Hoa**: Yeah.

**Researcher**: That it’s important to learn at school?

**Hoa**: Yes.

**Researcher**: Why? Why is it important for you to learn English do you think?

**Hoa**: We have to talk English with the English people.  

(Section of English-language interview undertaken with Year One Vietnamese-language background girl)

Excerpt Two (translated from Vietnamese):

**Researcher Kim (bilingual assistant)**: Can you tell me something that is good about learning in Vietnamese?

**Hoa**: Good. Fun. I like to do work. I like to listen to my teacher when she tells stories. It helps me to write in Vietnamese.
Researcher Kim: Can you tell me something that is not good about learning in Vietnamese?

Hoa: No, I like everything.

Researcher Kim: Do you think learning in Vietnamese is important?

Hoa: Yes. I know Vietnamese and English.

Researcher Kim: Why is it important do you think?

Hoa: I use Vietnamese to talk to my friends, to play with friends in other places.
(Translated section of Vietnamese-language interview undertaken with Year One Vietnamese-language background girl)

In these bilingual interviews, children were able to give some details of the types of learning they undertake in the two languages of instruction. But these were discussed either in general terms or very specifically related to the classroom artefacts on hand to facilitate discussion. Attitudes to learning both languages were positive, in that all students stated that they saw purpose learning in two languages. Often, considerable prompting was required to assist students to describe the sorts of things they used the languages of instruction for. This highlighted the usefulness of a data collection device like the Language Use Questionnaire, which anticipated a number of language domains or targets that students could link to one or more languages in their repertoire. Few, if any, additional insights about students’ patterns of language use emerged from the bilingual interviews.

But, regardless of whether they were asked in English, Hakka or Vietnamese, children participating in these bilingual interviews had difficulty in coherently articulating or predicting why the school might implement bilingual learning.

While the question of why a school might teach in this way is, no doubt, highly complex and puzzling for many early years students, it seemed that many of these students had not, to any great extent, engaged in these types of discussions with teachers or parents. Another possibility is that these young
students might see this form of learning as being so taken-for-granted that they assume it takes place in all schools. Reflecting on my own teaching in light of the difficulty students had responding to this question in the bilingual interviews, I contemplated the opportunities I had overlooked in making the thinking behind these school organisational and teaching arrangements more explicit to the students I had taught.

Some students, however, interviewed in their third year of bilingual learning, were more able to articulate why they thought bilingual learning is preferable to monolingual English instruction. In another interview another student identifies greater knowledge and increased intelligence as positive features of bilingual learning.

**Researcher:** So would it be a good thing to learn just one language, or a bad thing?

**William:** Bad.

**Researcher:** Why is it better to learn two languages instead of just one?

**William:** So if you go to Chinese and you go to English class then you learn more. And get smarter.

*(Section of English-language interview undertaken with Year Two Hakka-speaking background boy)*

This student, as part of the same interview, was able to put forward some reasons why he felt learning Chinese (Mandarin) assists with learning in English. The opportunity for consolidation of ideas and skills potentially through bilingual instruction is borne out by his comments.
**Researcher:** So you think learning things in Chinese helps you learn things in English as well?

**William:** Yep.

**Researcher:** How do you think it helps?

**William:** Like when you’re doing something in English, like Maths and you don’t know how to do it and then you go back into Chinese and the Chinese teacher teaches you how to do it, so finally you know how to do it.

**Researcher:** So, by learning it in both languages, it helps you understand it better. Is that what you’re telling me?

**William:** Yeah.

*(Section of English-language interview undertaken with Year Two Hakka-speaking background boy)*

William states here that a deeper level of learning can occur when instruction takes place in two languages: that well-developed bilingual ability allows linguistic knowledge and conceptual understandings to be learned, clarified and transferred in two languages by the individual. Another Year Two student from a Hakka-speaking background revealed her understandings about what it might have meant to learn only in English. She states that she would still be learning and developing new knowledge (evidence of a strong sense of self-esteem) but would be lacking in something she now possesses: ability to speak Mandarin. This insight highlights this student’s awareness that her bilingual learning adds something to her linguistic repertoire and that – in some way – she would be diminished without it.

**Researcher:** In some schools – in most schools – they don’t have bilingual programs, so the kids – even if they’re Chinese or Hakka speakers at home – they come to school and they just learn in English. What do you think that would be like?

**Melissa:** I’d still be clever, but I won’t know how to speak Chinese.

*(Section of English-language interview undertaken with Year Two Hakka-speaking background girl)*

Later in the interview, however, Melissa muses over how much easier it would be to learn solely in English, before restating the importance of knowing Chinese for family reasons. This dilemma emphasises both the effort required
to learn bilingually, as well as – for this student – its functional necessity. It also demonstrates a possible difference between the need to learn to speak a language, compared to becoming literate in that language. While it could be argued that the following excerpt reveals confusion about her learning preferences, I believe it vividly expresses the tensions, choices and challenges inherent in learning two languages.
**Researcher:** So would you like to learn just in English? Or are you happy learning in two languages?

**Melissa:** Just in English.

**Researcher:** You would like to learn just in English? Yeah? Why do you think that would be better?

**Melissa:** Because Chinese is hard to write. And you can’t sound it out.

**Researcher:** OK – so they’re two different sorts of languages. OK – so if you had your wish, would it be to learn in one language or in two?

**Melissa:** One.

**Researcher:** Next year when you go into Year Three, you’ll only have a little bit of Chinese that you learn. Do you think that will be better – to have just a little bit of Chinese and mainly learn in English?

**Melissa:** No. Hmm … I’m not sure.

**Researcher:** You’re giving me two different kinds of messages here. You’re telling me the bilingual program is good and that it’s better to learn in two languages,

**Melissa:** Yes

**Researcher:** But then on the other hand you’re telling me – oh – I’d like to learn just in English. So I’m getting a bit confused. So which way do you feel about the two languages and about the bilingual program? What do you think is better – to learn in the bilingual program like now, or to learn just in English?

**Melissa:** Like now.

**Researcher:** In the bilingual program like now, OK. So when you learn two languages – Chinese and English – is there one that for you is more important?

**Melissa:** [Pause] Yep.

**Researcher:** Which one?

**Melissa:** Chinese.

**Researcher:** Chinese is more important. OK what makes Chinese more important than English?

**Melissa:** Because my family speaks Chinese, so I want to speak Chinese.

*(Section of English-language interview undertaken with Year Two Hakka-speaking background girl)*
This student recognises that monolingual learning would make school less complicated and challenging – an attractive proposition to her. Yet, on further reflection, she articulates the need to learn Chinese, even stating that – for family reasons – its importance exceeds that of English. This probing of this student’s language attitudes highlights how complex the interplay between language use and perceptions of language importance is for these students. In the earlier-administered Language Attitudes Questionnaire, the overwhelming response by students that both their home languages and English were equally important to learn needs to be contextualised within an understanding of the competing demands and uses of each language. These interviews allowed an opportunity for these inter-related issues to be raised. Similar paradoxes and dilemmas were evident in the group interview data collected from Years Three to Six students who had previously been enrolled in the school’s bilingual program.

**Years Three to Six Group Interviews**

A number of issues, not raised in other data collection devices, emerged through the group interviews. Despite not having been in bilingual classrooms for up to five years, many students recollected and recounted memories attached to those times. Students spoke of making new friends in bilingual classes, struggling to remember when classroom changes occurred, and dealing with the reality of two teachers and two languages. Whatever the memory, all students commented on how quickly they made the transition to beginning school and learning in this way. One student commented on the emotional support being in a bilingual program provided for her.

> I didn’t really know English a lot, so I’d go to Van [Vietnamese bilingual teacher] to learn Vietnamese. I could talk to her, sometimes I didn’t have friends … she’d help me.

*(Year Five Vietnamese-background girl)*
Making a connection for Hakka-background students to learning in Mandarin and English seemed no more difficult than the challenges faced by the children starting in the Vietnamese-English bilingual program. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Hakka-background students I interviewed spoke of what they perceived as the similarities between Hakka and Mandarin. Many of these students were exposed to Mandarin speakers already throughout their family and social networks, they reported. If they made mention of difficulties, it usually related to learning Chinese written characters – something they possibly would have found just as difficult if they had come from Mandarin-speaking backgrounds. The following piece of interview dialogue typifies students’ perspectives on the Hakka-Mandarin interface.

**Researcher:** But you were coming and speaking Hakka at home but learning Mandarin at school. Was that a big challenge; was that a big difficulty?

**Lily:** Yes.

**Researcher:** In what way was it hard, Lily?

**Lily:** Well, the writing is kind of hard.

**Researcher:** So you hadn’t seen the writing before.

**Lily:** But the speaking is kind of not that difficult. Because Hakka sounds like Mandarin.

*(Section of interview undertaken with Year Six Hakka-speaking background girl)*

What emerged as a consistent theme throughout the interviews was that the challenges of learning bilingually were accompanied by definite rewards. A Year Six student – a boy from a Hakka-speaking background – emphasised that beginning school learning bilingually was a **very** [his emphasis] good start to school. This was because:

it taught me Chinese when I was younger and so when I was getting older I knew it all along.

The issue of the potential to extend the bilingual learning arrangements into the upper year levels was canvassed at each group interview and a range of
opinions emerged. Reflecting on his transitioning to mainstream English-medium instruction that year, a Year Three Hakka-background boy commented that he was expecting his bilingual learning to continue as he had known it in the early year levels. When asked how he felt when he realised his new situation, he commented it was:

Kind of depressing and kind of like weird because you went to class like fully English, … and learn Chinese only at LOTE time.

Those students in favour of the bilingual program’s continuation beyond its current point of cessation saw possible advantages, such as assisting them to maintain early bilingual gains, and as being useful for their present and future lives and for ongoing learning.

The idea of extending the bilingual program past Year Two was controversial with a small number of students, however, with students raising the issue of whether greater amounts of English are necessary as they progress through primary school. One Year Three girl, having that year exited from the Mandarin-English bilingual program, expressed such a minority viewpoint. She was pleased to now focus more on English, as her comments reveal.

**Researcher:** So, can I ask you: what has it been like this year changing from a bilingual program to a mainly English classroom?

**Shelley:** It’s been a good thing.

**Researcher:** Why has it been good for you to make that change?

**Shelley:** Because learning English has improved my English and from this year on, I’m starting to talk English.

Shelley’s views were uncommon, in that other students did not as overtly state that more time-on-task learning English would result in them concentrating on using it more. Diana, a Year Four Hakka-background girl, while expressing much satisfaction in her bilingual abilities, thought it best that English now take precedence.
Researcher: Diana, what do you think? Would it have been a good thing to have just English or you’re happy to have learnt in a bilingual program?

Diana: I think it could be OK.

Researcher: To have just English?

Diana: Yeah.

Researcher: Why is that?

Diana: Because you could learn more English than what you’re speaking at home, and you could…you could understand it more.

Two Year Six students, Sonia and Filomena, commented that had they been educated solely in English, their English might be marginally better. However, like Melissa in the individual interviews, they are aware that this would come at a price.

Sonia: When you’re small it’s always hard [to learn in a language you don’t understand] but maybe like when you’re in Grade 6 you probably know more English because you actually had more time, you spent more time on English. Yes so you probably like English, but then you only know one language.

Researcher: OK, so do you think your English would be better now if you did not have the bilingual program?

Sonia: Probably, a little bit, but not so much better.

Filomena: Because the teachers did very good teaching.

Researcher: Yeah, OK, so do you feel like that there’s been a problem with your English learning in terms of having a bilingual education?

Both students: No.

(Section of interview undertaken with Year Six Chinese-speaking students; one Hakka-background, one Mandarin)

Students’ comments such as these illuminate, perhaps not surprisingly, perceptions that maximum exposure to English might have been beneficial, despite the importance they attach to L1 instruction. The unresolved tension arising from these perspectives reflects the often-asked question of how much English is necessary for students who are, as Lotherington (2003: 215) notes about another culturally diverse community in Melbourne, trying to negotiate a
socio-cultural identity as first generation Asian-Australians, while successfully acquiring an education.

Despite grappling with the unclear issue of the amount of English instruction necessary, a common response to questions about learning monolingually throughout primary school was that it would prove “boring”. This word was repeated in this context consistently when discussion turned to schools that do not provide bilingual education programs. The following interview excerpts highlight this.

Excerpt One:

Researcher: What do you think it would have been like starting as a little Year Prep back then and learning only in English all day?

Tinh: It would be boring.

(Section of interview undertaken with Year Four Vietnamese-speaking students; a boy making the final comments)

Excerpt Two:

Ngan: I’d say two languages are better because if you speak the same language, you’ll get bored.

(Year Three Vietnamese-background girl, as part of group interview).

Ultimately, students expressed an understanding that the effort they expended, the hard work involved, the occasional confusion that bilingual learning engendered was worth it. One group of Year Three students, previously having learned in the Mandarin-English bilingual program complained throughout the interview about the work levels, the difficulty in learning both English writing conventions and Chinese orthography, and other issues not specifically related to language of instruction still believed that learning in two languages was more beneficial than learning in one.
Researcher: If you had a little sister or brother that was starting at our school, would you like them to learn two languages like this or do you think it would be better to learn just in English?

Students: (adamantly) Two languages.

Researcher: Each of you said two languages? So even though it was pretty hard, some of you were saying: “Lots of work, Paul!” you still think that it was a good idea to learn in two languages?

Students: Yep.

Overall, feelings of pride in being bilingual suffused the student group interviews. Pride was expressed for intrinsic reasons – just being able to speak two languages, as an end in itself – and for instrumental reasons, such as:

You get proud of yourself when you do well in tests and stuff like that.

(Year Four Vietnamese-background girl).

One student even questioned the hegemony of English implied in the following question I posed to her group of Year Three Vietnamese-background students.

Researcher: What if somebody said: oh, but you need to learn English, English is the main language in Australia. What would you say to that?

San: It’s not quite the main one.

Researcher: You don’t think it’s really the main one, San?

San: I think Vietnamese is a main one too.

Researcher: Vietnamese is a main one for you especially, I think. Yeah? So, keep going, San.

San: Both of them are main ones.

San’s perspectives on the position of the Vietnamese language in Australia are obviously exaggerated, in regard to population demographics and in terms of status and power. However, in her life it occupies a central position, alongside English. Despite being in her second year of largely monolingual English instruction when she made this comment, she has learned to view both the languages in her repertoire as equally valid. I believe her statement here reveals
something of the seriousness with which the school’s bilingual program has taught and affirmed Vietnamese for San.

**Conclusion and Summary of Student Data Results**

The range of data collected from the students was immense, and their generosity in spending time with me sharing their practices and perspectives on language and learning was most gratifying. The strength of the student data collection was that it allowed for progressive refinement of issues, and the opportunity to gain a quantitative overview of the school as a whole, along with qualitative insights from individuals and small groups of students.

Students’ responses across the range of data sources, revealed them to be well disposed toward learning in the languages of the school’s bilingual program, largely because they viewed these as both necessary in their daily lives, and inherently reflecting their bicultural identities. Tse (2000) has noted that minority language background students at primary school level often display ambivalence or evasion towards the ethnic, linguistic or cultural backgrounds of their families, seeking to assimilate into the dominant group. Perhaps because of the size of the Chinese- and Vietnamese-speaking communities at this school, and perhaps because of the ways these students are affirmed by school programs, no such feelings of inferiority emerged from the student data.

While the students were most confident in talking about their own lives and language use, they were less clear on the role of bilingualism in terms of their learning. This raises the need for greater teacher emphasis on facilitating student reflection and metacognition, and the development of a more sophisticated metalanguage for discussing learning. These notions are returned to in Chapter Nine: “Research Implications and Recommendations”.
CHAPTER SEVEN: RESEARCH RESULTS - PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF PARENTS’ PERSPECTIVES

I’m worried that they don’t know their mother tongue, I’m not worried about their English because their education all the way from kindergarten to university is in English.

(Vietnamese-speaking background parent discussing importance of first language maintenance)

Australia is an English-speaking country. So when the children go in later years the subjects get harder. So they need more English.

(Translation of Chinese-background parents’ comments)

Introduction
Key tensions related to bilingual education provision were exposed in data collected from parents of children at the school. While both questionnaire and bilingual group consultation data revealed general agreement about the importance of children’s first languages and English, the extent to which instruction in the L1 needed to be pursued in school time was an issue of some dispute. The above two quotes expressed by parents during different group consultations demonstrate unresolved issues that exist, even in a school setting like this one that has a strong commitment to bilingual learning. One parent emphasises the importance of L1 maintenance and development, while the other parent’s concern centres more on the academic demands her child faces in English at school. In this chapter, such parent perspectives are presented, discussed and analysed.

Parent Data Collection
Two major data collection devices were used to elicit from parents of Chinese- and Vietnamese-speaking backgrounds their views in relation to their children’s language and learning needs. These devices were:

1. A questionnaire, comprising nine questions or areas for comment.
2. Bilingual parent consultations: two undertaken with Vietnamese-speaking parents; two with Hakka-speaking parents.

The Parent Questionnaire was translated into Chinese and Vietnamese, in addition to being available in English (see Appendix 18). A total of 54 questionnaires were completed and returned, which represented 50 percent of those sent out, a pleasing result. The questionnaire investigated parent views on:

- the comparative importance of the different areas of their children’s primary school learning;
- ways that the school is successful or unsuccessful in meeting students’ learning needs; and
- the bilingual program offered to students of essentially Chinese- or Vietnamese-speaking backgrounds.

In this chapter, each section of the questionnaire is scrutinised in terms of the quantitative responses of the entire parent cohort. These totals are then analysed according to language group, with consistencies and contrasts between the two main language groups of the school described and discussed. The more qualitative comments from the questionnaires are, in addition, explored with the aim of further explicating and understanding parents’ expressed views.

The bilingual consultations with groups of parents were coordinated and chaired by myself and conducted by a Vietnamese- or Hakka-speaking interpreter. These sessions probed further the issues emerging from the questionnaires, through facilitation of an open discussion in the home languages of the parents. Twenty parents in total attended these bilingual consultations. These consultations were translated and transcribed, after which the accuracy of each translation was double-checked by a second translator. The data were then coded in the manner suggested by Miles and Huberman.
(1994) and Bogdan and Biklen (2003) so that themes emerging across the consultations could be linked and discussed. The questions focussed on at the bilingual consultations are appended (see Appendix 19). The opinions and perspectives that emerged from these two parent-focussed data collection devices are now discussed.

**Analysis of Parent Questionnaire: Importance of Curriculum Areas**

While there were eight key learning areas within which curriculum planning and reporting in Victoria at the time the research was undertaken, the Parent Questionnaire presented respondents with a list of twelve areas on which their views were sought. This range was presented in order to explore parents’ perspectives on the importance they placed on both the curriculum and social dimensions of their children’s learning. The curriculum areas embraced the eight key learning areas: The Arts, English, Health and Physical Education, LOTE, Mathematics, Science, Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE), and Technology. The list’s additional areas related to social skills and dispositions to school and learning, such as cooperation and sharing, and “discipline and good behaviour”. Uncomfortable as I was with the traditional construct of pedagogy this term connotes, with its implied discourse of teacher power and control, it was selected as I believed it more comprehensible to parents than other possible alternatives. Of these twelve areas, parents were asked to indicate those that they believed were the most important for their child to learn at primary school. Across the 54 responses from both Chinese- and Vietnamese-background parents, the results were as follows in Table 7.1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of learning</th>
<th>Responses (N = 54)</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skills in English (reading, writing, listening and speaking)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills in Chinese or Vietnamese (reading, writing, listening and speaking)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understandings about Australia, its history and its multicultural society</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy / Mathematics skills</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technological / computer skills</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline and good behaviour</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport / physical education skills</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understandings about science and nature</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work and social skills of cooperation and sharing</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understandings about other countries and cultures in the world</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills in art and craft</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills in music and music appreciation</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of the above (these have been factored into the totals and percentages above)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

English and L1 language skills, therefore, emerged as the most important learning areas from the perspectives of the parents. The importance of proficiency in English was registered by 94 percent of the 54 parents who completed a questionnaire, clearly highlighting the fundamental importance parents place on their children learning the main language of Australia. Proficiency in the non-English languages taught in the school’s bilingual program were cited as important by over three-quarters of parent respondents to the questionnaire, with 77 percent of parents stating that learning Vietnamese or Chinese were among the most important aspects of their children’s school learning. This reveals that the school’s bilingual learning, which forms a centrepiece of the school’s curriculum, likewise occupies a position of central importance in the eyes of a vast majority of parents. While emphasising the paramount importance of English, these responses also seem to be indicative of
parents’ affirmation and endorsement of bilingualism as a major teaching and learning objective of the school.

Closely following the teaching of Chinese and Vietnamese language skills, parents highly rated the areas of Mathematics and what might be termed Social Education or Social Studies (the acronym SOSE is probably meaningless to many parents, and would not translate in any sense into Chinese or Vietnamese). Parents’ prioritising of a curriculum area that foregrounds notions of community and diversity is consistent with their earlier endorsement of language studies. Diversity issues at the school under investigation particularly centre on those of language and culture. These emphases – the multilingual and multicultural underpinnings of the school’s curriculum programs and organisational arrangements – are ratified, through this data collection device, by over three-quarters of the parents in the study. The issue of the quality of their implementation is not addressed here, but arises in relation to language instruction later in the questionnaire.

The fact that Mathematics or Numeracy skills were accorded high parent endorsement is not surprising in that competence in this curriculum area is a necessity for later studies in areas such as Science, Medicine, Commerce, and Engineering. As mentioned earlier, Mathematics is also a curriculum area in which parents feel they can meaningfully assist their children: another possible reason for the high level of importance they accord it.

Over 70 percent of parents highly value development of students’ technological and computer skills. Again, this is a predictable result given the prevalence of recently-developed information and communication technologies (ICTs) that not only facilitate and demonstrate student learning, but increasingly mediate interpersonal communication in this era of digital communication. An equal number of parents expressed the view that a school that fosters appropriate student behaviour is very important for their children’s learning and well-
being. Interestingly, skills of cooperation and sharing were rated as less important than a firm emphasis on behaviour management, possibly a reflection of parents’ own educational experiences and conceptualisations of what schools as institutions signify and should promote.

Less frequently cited areas of learning and student endeavour were curriculum areas related to sport and the Arts, again a result somewhat anticipated in light of the curriculum areas that are generally endowed with the most importance or status in relation to academic success, and as powerful mechanisms for enhancing students’ economic opportunities and employment status in the future.

Across the two language groups, there were noteworthy consistencies and variations. The results across language groups are displayed in the following table (Table 7.2).
TABLE 7.2 PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE: IMPORTANCE OF DIFFERENT AREAS OF LEARNING RANKED IN ORDER OF MOST-OFTEN TO LEAST-OFTEN CITED BY CHINESE-BACKGROUND PARENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of learning</th>
<th>Responses from Chinese-background parents (N = 30)</th>
<th>Responses from Vietnamese-background parents (N = 24)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills in English (reading, writing, listening and speaking)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy/ Mathematics skills</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills in Chinese (reading, writing, listening and speaking)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technological/ computer skills</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline and good behaviour</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understandings about Australia, its history and its multicultural society</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills in Vietnamese (reading, writing, listening and speaking)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport/ physical education skills</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understandings about science and nature</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work and social skills of cooperation and sharing</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understandings about other countries and cultures in the world</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills in art and craft</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills in music and music appreciation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of the above (these have been factored into the totals and percentages above)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What needs to be remarked upon first is the fact that 46 percent of Vietnamese-background parents (as opposed to only 13 percent of Chinese-background parents) indicated all areas were most important for their children to learn. This imbalance elevates the percentages in the Vietnamese column considerably and, while this may be taken as a true and accurate reflection of Vietnamese parents’ perspectives, it must be taken into consideration when making inter-group comparisons.

Common to both groups of parents is the emphasis on the teaching of English-language skills. All 30 Chinese-background parents and 88 percent of
Vietnamese-background parents indicated this as a learning area of major importance for their children. Interestingly, while this was the most frequently indicated area for both groups of parents, the same percentage of Vietnamese-background parents emphasised the importance of the development of “understandings about Australia, its history and its multicultural society.” This high figure may reflect a heightened awareness on the part of these parents of the need to educate for diversity and tolerance, a need made evident by the retreat or diminished emphasis on these values in the time of the Howard prime ministership.

The teaching of the languages of the schools’ bilingual education is ratified in both groups of parents’ responses, albeit in slightly greater numbers by the Chinese-background parents. The inter-group differences in relation to levels of importance ascribed to language instruction are revealed more overtly in relation to a later questionnaire item and are discussed at that point.

Areas of consistency across language groups appear in relation to behaviour management issues, and sport or physical education. However, Vietnamese-background parents indicated they value the curriculum areas of Science, The Arts and Social Studies more highly than Chinese-background parents who, in turn, attached higher levels of importance to Mathematics and Technology/computer skills. This would possibly indicate that the Chinese-background parents perceive these aspects of learning to embody more status and more directly lead to school success. It is a possibility consistent with data emerging from other sections of this questionnaire.

**Analysis of Parent Questionnaire: Meeting Students’ Needs**

A range of responses were made in relation to the questionnaire items “How is the school successful in meeting your child’s learning needs?” and “How is the school not successful in meeting your child’s learning needs?” These open-ended questions elicited a range of responses that, when collating the data,
were grouped according to broad areas of interest and concern. These areas related to:

- pedagogy, including quality of instruction;
- curriculum provision and delivery;
- policies developed and implemented at the school;
- student welfare and well-being, including work and social skills;
- language instruction, including bilingual learning;
- homework issues;
- intervention/provision of special assistance for students;
- staffing and teachers’ professionalism; and
- general comments about the quality of the school.

The following display (Table 7.3) depicts how often positive or negative comments were made in relation to these different aspects of the school’s operation.
TABLE 7.3 RESPONSES OF PARENTS TO SUCCESSFUL OR UNSUCCESSFUL FEATURES OF SCHOOL’S CATERING FOR THEIR CHILDREN RANKED IN ORDER OF NUMBER OF MENTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of schooling</th>
<th>Chinese-background Parents</th>
<th>Vietnamese-background Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>Unsuccessful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy, including quality of instruction</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student welfare and well-being, including work and social skills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language instruction, including bilingual learning</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework issues</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum provision and delivery</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General comments about quality of school</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention/provision of special assistance for students</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffing and teachers’ professionalism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies developed and implemented at the school</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Amongst both language groups, parents commented most often on the pedagogical arrangements at the school. These comments drew attention to the quality of instruction and the teaching approaches used to facilitate student learning.

At the moment we are happy with the school’s teaching methods and school programs.

*(Translation of comments made in Chinese)*

This school is successful in teaching the students to be good and [providing a] good education. Thank you.

*(Translation of comments made in Vietnamese)*
In largely positive terms, parents particularly mentioned the quality of the school’s bilingual learning arrangements.

Our school’s Chinese classes and the Mathematics program in K----’s class is best. Every parent agrees on this.

*(Translation of comments made in Chinese)*

Multilingual education (very good).

*(Translation of comments made in Vietnamese)*

So far so good because it teaches both languages.

*(Translation of comments made in Chinese)*

Teaching methods that showed flexibility and catered for student differences were likewise praised. Parents whose children had benefited from special intervention programs such as Reading Recovery commented favourably on these. Many parents, particularly those from Vietnamese-language backgrounds, commented about the caring, nurturing approach taken by teachers: that student motivation and enthusiasm is built through establishment of supportive teacher-student relationships.

In their education the students don’t need to be strictly supervised but teachers try to help them be happy and study with enthusiasm. This helps children to improve and understand what has been taught. This helps the students feel enthusiastic about school – it is not difficult to get them to go to school.

*(Translation of comments made in Vietnamese)*

The school is successful in teaching our child to become a good person and good level in studying.

*(Translation of comments made in Vietnamese)*

In addition, parents offered perspectives on how teaching and learning could be improved. More emphasis on the development of listening and speaking skills, more rigour in the area of Mathematics, and greater attention to modelling correct written and spoken English were raised in individual parent responses. Homework issues were mentioned, especially by Chinese-background parents,
both in terms of commending current school practices, and in terms of asking for additional and varied tasks to be set.

In the English classes, the children need more listening and speaking skills and practice. The content of the Maths classes needs to be harder. And there is not enough homework.

(Translation of comments made in Chinese)

In general, parents responded at greater length on the successful features of school programs, than those perceived as unsuccessful. The following translation of a comment written by a parent in Vietnamese seems consistent with the general feel of the responses to these questions on the survey.

The relationship/communication every day between teachers and students creates a cheerful and harmonious atmosphere which encourages the students to go to school to have good achievements in learning.

(Translation of comments made in Vietnamese)

The responses to these open-ended questions about successful and unsuccessful features of the ways the school caters for students’ learning raises some interesting, if unpalatable, insights into cultural differences between the parent community and the teaching emphases of the school. Traditional systems of student management seem prized by the comments many parents made and, while bilingualism and biliteracy seems a popular feature of the school programs, very traditional, transmission-model pedagogies seem to be valued. The school has placed great emphasis on introducing parents to the forms of literacy education and general learning that are common – or are mandated – in the Australian school system. However, an ongoing dialogue about teaching and learning practices needs to be maintained in order that, as Delpit (1988, 1995) laments, marginalised communities like this one are not – despite the best intentions of liberal educators – silenced.

Analysis of Parent Questionnaire: Importance of Languages of Instruction

Parents were asked to rate the importance of the school’s provision of learning opportunities in Chinese, Vietnamese and English, the three languages of the
bilingual program at the school. The choices provided were ‘not important’, ‘important’ and ‘very important.’ Of the 54 questionnaires returned, 49 had answered this section. The results are as follows.

**TABLE 7.4 PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE: IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGES OF INSTRUCTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important is it for the school to teach your child ...</th>
<th>Total response from parents surveyed. ( (N = 49) )</th>
<th>Response from Chinese background parents. ( (N = 29) )</th>
<th>Response from Vietnamese background parents. ( (N = 20) )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not imp.</td>
<td>imp.</td>
<td>very imp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23 or 47%</td>
<td>26 or 53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 or 8%</td>
<td>45 or 92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results highlight what has consistently been shown in both student and parent data analysed so far: that English is seen as the most important area of students’ learning. L1 or LOTE instruction is also viewed as important by all parents who responded to this question, but the issue of degree of importance is significant. Only 38 percent of Chinese-background respondents saw it as very important that the school teach Chinese, though a higher percentage of Vietnamese-background parents (75 percent) felt it very important that the school teach Vietnamese. The lower Chinese figure seems inconsistent with the 83 percent of these parents who responded in the first question on the survey that this was an important aspect of their child’s in-school learning. One conclusion that can be perhaps drawn from this is that, when posed the question as a stark contemplation on the importance of English as opposed to Chinese, and an opportunity to specify degree of importance is given, the difference in attitude to the two languages is more pronounced. The 75 percent Vietnamese-background parent response is more consistent with the total stressing this language’s importance in the first question. It also reflects earlier
research amongst Vietnamese-language background parents (Young & Tran, 1999) which revealed strong levels of parent support for L1 instruction.

Other factors might explain, at least in part, the difference between the views expressed by Chinese- as opposed to Vietnamese-background parents on this issue. First, the degree to which out-of-school LOTE or L1 instruction is accessed by students from the different language backgrounds may play a part in different response rates to this question. Data collected from 59 Years Three to Six students reveal that more Chinese- than Vietnamese-background students attend weekend language schools. The figures for this follow.

TABLE 7.5 ATTENDANCE AT WEEKEND LANGUAGE SCHOOLS YEAR THREE TO SIX CHINESE- AND VIETNAMESE BACKGROUND STUDENTS (N = 59)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th>Chinese-background students (N = 36)</th>
<th>Vietnamese-background students (N = 23)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Three</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Four</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Five</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Six</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, the necessity for the school to provide Mandarin classes may be seen as less urgent by Chinese-background parents given that nearly 64 percent of their children attend weekend Mandarin classes in their post-bilingual program years, as opposed to only just over 30 percent of similar aged Vietnamese-background students.

Second, the fact that the Vietnamese-English bilingual program operates for two years, whereas the duration of the Mandarin-English program is three years, might motivate Vietnamese-language background parents to stress the importance of learning Vietnamese more. As an equity issue, they conceivably have a point to make in relation to program duration, and this matter was taken
up in later questionnaire data, and in the bilingual group consultations with parents.

Third, as stated in Chapter Three “Methodology”, almost all of the questionnaires returned by Vietnamese-background families were completed in Vietnamese (23 out of 24 questionnaires), while only 17 out of the 30 questionnaires returned by Chinese-background families were completed in Chinese. This highlights greater levels of L1 reliance amongst the Vietnamese-background families who responded to the questionnaire than was evident amongst the Chinese-background families. It may be that the different levels of both L1 literacy or reliance amongst the families from the two language backgrounds impacts on their responses. If, as seems to be the case, Vietnamese-background families are either more literate and/or more reliant on the use of the Vietnamese language, this might form a stronger reason for them to prioritise its importance in terms of student learning at school.

The degree to which the school’s bilingual learning arrangements were perceived by parents to effectively develop each language of instruction was investigated in the next questions on the Parent Questionnaire.

**Analysis of Parent Questionnaire: Bilingual Program Effectiveness**

Two questions investigated the degree to which, in parents’ opinion, the bilingual arrangements at the school facilitated the children’s learning of English, and of the languages of Chinese or Vietnamese. Parents were asked to record their perceptions on a scale of zero (representing “not well”) to five (representing “very well”). Amongst the 54 questionnaires returned, the question about English was answered by 47 parents (26 from Chinese-speaking backgrounds; 21 from Vietnamese-background); and the question about the other languages by a total of 48 parents (26 from Chinese-speaking backgrounds; 22 from Vietnamese-background). In terms of English, the following table records parents’ opinions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Total parents (N = 47)</th>
<th>Chinese-background parents (N = 26)</th>
<th>Vietnamese-background parents (N = 21)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 not well</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 (6.3%)</td>
<td>2 (7.6%)</td>
<td>1 (4.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9 (19.1%)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>14 (29.7%)</td>
<td>10 (38.4%)</td>
<td>4 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 very well</td>
<td>21 (44.6%)</td>
<td>5 (19.2%)</td>
<td>16 (76.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While, overall, high levels of satisfaction are evident with the teaching of English within a bilingual pedagogical framework (with about three-quarters of all responses being at rating four or five), there are noticeable differences between the responses of the Chinese-background parents and those of Vietnamese-background parents. Over 76 percent of Vietnamese-background parents rate the teaching of English at the highest level, whereas the comparable percentage of Chinese-background parents is far lower at less than 20 percent. The following bar graph clearly displays these differences across language groups.
The range of opinion amongst parents of Chinese-speaking backgrounds is interesting, in that their children attend the same classroom programs for which English is the language of instruction as the Vietnamese-background students, whose parents are demonstrably more satisfied with the quality of instruction. What seems to be a crucial difference here are matters of expectation and aspiration, epitomised by the following written comment made by a Chinese-background parent in response to this question:

Non-English speaking background students need to strengthen their speaking and writing skills so that they can catch up other English speaking children.

(Comment made in English by parent from Chinese-language background)

So, notions of the need and the time it takes English-language learners to reach levels of academic language proficiency akin to those of native English-speakers is a priority in this context as well in the literature (Collier, 1989, 1995;
Cummins, 2001b; Hakuta et al., 2000; Thomas & Collier, 1997). This parent’s comment re-iterates Bialystok’s (2001: 230) earlier-cited observation that parents want their children to aspire and achieve the highest levels, not just “do well for an immigrant.”

Interestingly, the results for parents’ perceptions of the extent to which the school’s bilingual program assists their children learn Chinese or Vietnamese reveal similar trends to their perceptions about English. The following table displays these results.

TABLE 7.7 PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE: SATISFACTION WITH THE TEACHING OF CHINESE AND VIETNAMESE IN THE BILINGUAL PROGRAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Total parents (N = 48)</th>
<th>Chinese-background parents (N = 26)</th>
<th>Vietnamese-background parents (N = 22)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56.2%</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, high overall perceptions of the quality of teaching and learning in this part of the bilingual program are evident with over three-quarters of responses assigning scores of four and five to students’ LOTE learning within the bilingual program. Across language groups, similar differences that were observed in response to English are again in evidence. A very large percentage of nearly 82 percent of Vietnamese-background parents place students’ learning of that language at the highest level, while less than 35 percent of Chinese-background parents perceive the quality of Chinese instruction to be at this highest level. The higher numbers of Chinese-background parents locating quality of teaching and learning across moderate to high levels of satisfaction,
as compared to parents of Vietnamese-background, is illustrated in the following bar graph (Figure 7.2).

**FIGURE 7.2 PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE: CHINESE AND VIETNAMESE WITHIN THE BILINGUAL PROGRAM**

The precise reasons for the divergent views of Chinese- and Vietnamese-background parents in the area of L1 or LOTE instruction were inconclusive from the data provided by parents on the questionnaire. It could be speculated that the complexity involved in learning Chinese script, and making Hakka and Mandarin distinctions resulted in a range of opinion about the quality of teaching and learning in these classes. It was decided to pursue these areas in more depth in the bilingual parent consultations.

**Analysis of Parent Questionnaire: Duration of Bilingual Program**

While a rarity in the Victorian, and indeed Australian educational context, the bilingual education arrangements under investigation here are modest when international comparisons are made. Many additive bilingual education
programs in a range of countries offer more long-term instruction in the minority language and, as international research has indicated (August & Hakuta, 1998; Collier, 1992; Gándara, 1999; Greene, 1997; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Ramírez et al., 1991; Slavin & Cheung, 2003; Thomas & Collier, 1997; Willig, 1985), strong arguments can be made for the educational benefits of these programs. As such, investigating the views of local stakeholders about the duration of the school’s bilingual learning arrangements were built into student, parent and teacher data collection devices.

The final question on the Parent Questionnaire, therefore, asked whether the opportunities for bilingual learning, whereby students undertake instruction in two languages for equal amounts of school time, should be extended into the upper grades of the school. Of the 54 questionnaires returned, 50 parents had answered this question: 26 from Chinese-speaking backgrounds, 24 from Vietnamese-speaking backgrounds. Their responses to this question are displayed in Table 7.8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Total Parent Response (N = 50)</th>
<th>Chinese-background parent response (N = 26)</th>
<th>Vietnamese-background parent response (N = 24)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>35 or 70%</td>
<td>13 or 50%</td>
<td>22 or 92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>15 or 30%</td>
<td>13 or 50%</td>
<td>2 or 8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An overall majority of 70 percent of parents supported a bilingual program in which students exit at a later Year level into more mainstream classrooms where English is the principal language of instruction. However, there were significant differences across language groups with the Vietnamese-background parents in strong approval of this suggestion, whereas opinion was evenly divided amongst Chinese-background parents.
Many parents expressed in writing the reasons for their views on the extension of the program. Several Vietnamese-background parents’ comments centred on issues of cultural maintenance and family communication.

The kids have the opportunity to know more about the culture, the history of the subject they are doing.

*(Translation of Vietnamese-background parents’ comments)*

I want my children to be fluent in both Vietnamese and English so I can communicate with them easily in Vietnamese.

*(Translation of Vietnamese-background parents’ comments)*

These notions were less emphasised by Chinese-background parents in favour of extending the bilingual program beyond Year Two. They remarked more on the possible cognitive and educational benefits of bilingualism for their children, now and in the future. The link between language and identity is evident in the translation of the following response from a Chinese-background parent.

Because we are Chinese, the Chinese language is important. Maybe in the future, the children will benefit from learning Chinese when going for a job. So that’s why both languages are important for the children.

The vulnerability and need to preserve the minority language was also evident in the responses of parents supporting an extension of the bilingual program.

Because I want my child to be good in the mother tongue.

*(Translation of Vietnamese-background parents’ comments)*

So they won’t forget them easily, as they are very young.

*(Chinese-background parents’ comments)*

Good advantage for children to not forget the (sic) own language.

*(Chinese-background parents’ comments)*

Both groups of parents also articulated why they disagreed or had doubts about the benefits of prolonged bilingual instruction. Their reasons essentially centred on two issues. First, parents accurately understand Australia to be a country where English is the dominant language, and the language of power and educational success.
We live in an English-speaking country. We should place more emphasis on learning English because the children can learn Chinese at home through speaking with their families.  
(Translation of Chinese-background parents’ comments)

Although Australia is a multicultural country, English is the official language.  
(Translation of Chinese-background parents’ comments)

Because English is one main subject for exam and for development of children in Australia, but do not let them forget their mother tongue.  
(Translation of Vietnamese-background parents’ comments)

Second, parent concerns about students’ academic progress also marked responses which emphasised English as opposed to bilingual instruction. Many parents opined that, as the curriculum and academic demands intensify as a student moves through the Year levels, a greater emphasis on English instruction is necessary. This view corresponds to several students’ perspectives as they approached high school age. Again, notions of ‘coping’ and ‘catching up’ to the levels of native-speakers are raised as concerns, mostly by Chinese-background parents.

English is the main subject. So we worry that later on their English will be further behind compared to other children. ... Because in later years, the subjects get harder and the children need more time to learn English.  
(Translation of Chinese-background parents’ comments)

Just maintain the two hours a week for the Chinese class. In the later years the subjects are harder and harder. The children need more time to learn English.  
(Translation of Chinese-background parents’ comments)

Because as the grades go upper (sic), the children need to prepare for high school.  
(Chinese-background parents’ comments)

English will get harder in later years so the kids should be taught predominately in English or else they won’t be able to cope.  
(Chinese-background parents’ comments)
It all depends on the background of family, ours is Vietnamese but we speak only English. Have basic Vietnamese skills so would like child to develop further. Reduce at later grades e.g. from Grade 4,5,6 because need to concentrate on English for high school preparation.

(Vietnamese-background guardians’ comments)

The tension in wanting one’s children to maintain and develop the language of their family or country of origin while building proficiency in the majority language of the new society can be keenly felt in the following remark written as a final questionnaire comment by a Chinese-background parent at the school. It highlights the complexity of learning in two languages, and how tense it can be for parents observing and supporting that development.

My child is better than those who don’t do the bilingual program. But their English is not as good, because P/1/2 children spend half time of the week learning Chinese. So they don’t have much time to learn English. Their English spelling is not well developed. I have a child in Year Two but his standard is only comparable to Year One standard in other schools. I have another child in Year Seven. She has trouble with writing skill. I know her English is not strong. I am thinking of getting an English tutor. You can’t say the bilingual program is not good, it depends on the child’s ability. I also support my child to learn Chinese which is why I come to school twice a week to help out in the Chinese class.

(Translation of original comments from Chinese to English)

While these statements are quite understandable in terms of parents’ concern for their children’s school achievement and future well-being, they also reveal possibly inflated expectations of the academic level which their children should be achieving, along with possibly exaggerated views of the performance levels of other students. This parent’s comments also highlight a heightened awareness of English as the language of power and social advancement in Australia.

By essentially ascribing to the ‘time-on-task’ hypothesis (Porter, 1990) that less time in majority language instruction equates to diminished acquisition of that language, this final parent’s comments overlook the symbiotic nurturing of both languages that occurs in a properly implemented, additive bilingual program. It also disregards the potential benefits for bicultural identity formation and
enhancement of students’ self-esteem that the development of both majority and minority languages can foster.

More is said later about the need to firmly and explicitly embed the philosophical precepts behind bilingual learning arrangements in the school settings like that under investigation. Data reveal that an absence of theoretical certitude characterises both teachers’ and parents’ responses. As previously discussed, students were also often unable to offer a consistently clear perspective on why the school provides the bilingual education programs it does. This does not suggest a solid foundation on which to build and sustain an innovative and transformative pedagogy.

While the Parent Questionnaire revealed many important insights into parents’ views on curriculum provision, language teaching and learning and bilingual education programming, its structure did not allow for extended discussion of these issues. The parent bilingual consultations did, however, provide just that opportunity. Undertaken after the return and preliminary analysis of the Parent Questionnaires, these forums provided the opportunity to explore more deeply the issues raised by the questionnaire.

**Parent Bilingual Consultations**

The four bilingual consultations with parents proved a very powerful mechanism for eliciting parents’ perspectives on their children’s language and learning needs. Each of these forums fostered extended discussion of issues of bilingualism, educational priorities and aspirations, minority language maintenance, and the school’s bilingual education programs. The success of these consultations was made possible by the judicious use of bilingual interpreters who, using a set of possible questions developed by the researcher as a framework, led the discussions in the parents’ home languages of Hakka and Vietnamese. I observed that this enabled conversation to flow freely in the parents’ first languages, allowing the parents to own the conversation more
than might otherwise have been possible. The fact they had so much to say alerted me to the ways, despite teachers’ best intentions, it is often they who control and dominate interactions with parents in other contexts: when reporting student progress, on information or orientation evenings, for example.

The questions that shaped the consultations were discussed fully with the bilingual interpreter before each consultation, along with additional information each group might be able to offer. These questions were as follows:

**QUESTIONS FOR BILINGUAL CONSULTATIONS**

1. What do you see as being the main learning needs of children at this school?
2. Are there learning needs children at this school have that are different to the needs of English-speaking children?
3. Does the school’s organisation for bilingual learning address your child’s learning needs?
4. Do you feel the status of Hakka is increased or decreased by students learning Mandarin Chinese? (asked only at the Hakka consultations).
5. What are the successful features of our school’s Chinese/English or Vietnamese/English bilingual program?
6. What are the unsuccessful features of this program?
7. How could it be improved?
8. Should the bilingual program be extended into the upper grades at the school?
9. How do you feel the bilingual program impacts on overall student results?
10. When children learn bilingually is there one language that is more important than the other?

These questions were not necessarily posed in the order they appear here. Rather, they formed a framework for discussion about issues of students’ languages and learning. As such, they focussed the consultations without
restricting parents’ input to a prescribed set of issues. Key themes that emerged from these consultations are now discussed.

**Bilingual Consultation Analysis: Priorities and Needs**

At each of the four parent consultations, English and first language learning issues were the significant areas raised in relation to students’ learning needs. No parent was under any illusion that proficiency in English was anything but essential for their children’s learning. They remarked on the fact that it is vital both for social communication and for school success.

Their English must be good for their exams later on. They can’t do anything if their Vietnamese is very good while their English is bad.  
*(Vietnamese-background parent – translation of original comments)*

Of course, English is the priority because we live in Australia. If we go outside, we need to communicate with the community.  
*(Chinese-background parent – translation of original comments)*

However, especially amongst parents whose students were in the early stages of their primary education, there was a strong belief that children need to develop skills in the home languages of Chinese and Vietnamese. Building a foundation upon which a child’s first language can be sustained was seen to best be achieved in these early years of schooling. Parents saw it as inevitable that, as children get older, they will rely more and more on English (a view supported by student Language Use Questionnaire data in this study) and become increasingly resistant to pursuing study in other languages. In addition, the curriculum and academic demands of English-language classrooms were seen as working against bilingual learning in later primary and secondary school years. In addition, several parents saw it as important to support their children’s L1 while the children were very young, arguing that – as the children get older – their enthusiasm for formal maintenance of the L1 may wane.
They need it [Chinese-language instruction] from the time they are little. English they will easily learn as they grow up. Because when they grow up they’re not interested in learning Chinese anymore. They lose interest, so it’s important to start young.

(Chinese-background parent – translation of original comments)

The necessity for L1 language maintenance derived largely from parents’ conceptualisations of their family’s identity, and the need to preserve understandings related to these notions of ethnic or national identity and cultural heritage.

They learn how to write and how to speak Vietnamese because they are Vietnamese.

(Vietnamese-background parent – translation of original comments)

Because we are Chinese, we have to ask our kids to learn Chinese. So they don’t forget our language.

(Chinese-background parent – translation of original comments)

Of course, once you come to Australia, you have to learn English. But we are Chinese. We can’t forget our language. It comes from our ancestors.

(Chinese-background parent – translation of original comments)

In addition, the benefits for family cohesion were emphasised. An awareness that human relationships are nurtured, defined, and enriched through language underlies the following parent’s simply-expressed, but heartfelt comments:

They love their parents when they know Vietnamese.

(Vietnamese-background parent – translation of original comments)

Another Vietnamese-background parent passionately articulated how linguistic maintenance facilitates this cultural appreciation and preservation:

It’s better if they know their mother tongue. The more they know, the more they understand their background. The better they love their culture. However poor we Vietnamese are, our minds will always be rich with knowledge and great intellect that need to be maintained and be made a more important aspect. Our children need to know Vietnamese to understand that.

(Vietnamese-background parent – translation of original comments)

Notably, this parent’s commitment to the perpetuation of the language and culture of her country of origin for the benefit of her children was augmented
by an awareness of the importance of English, as her following comments testify:

If we compare these two languages, English is more important. However, it’s even better if our children can be good in their mother tongue. … I just say it would be perfect if they can be good in both languages.  

(Vietnamese-background parent – translation of original comments)

“Even better” was a phrase often used by parents during these consultations to describe the benefits of knowing more than one language. It reveals a sense of possibility: on the personal level, that children can – and are – developing bilingual and bicultural identities that offer success and a secure sense of self and place in contemporary society. Taken further, this sense of possibility imagines another Australia is possible: one more embracing of linguistic and cultural diversity; one less hegemonic about the place of English as the only language that matters; one in which multiculturalism and multilingualism are truly valued and affirmed.

**Bilingual Consultation Analysis: L1 and English Issues**

The belief that developing both the home language and English are equally important for their children – albeit for different reasons for each language – came through strongly in all the parent consultations. The need for what parents termed “foundations” or “the basics” in the first language was seen as hugely beneficial for students’ maintenance of this language, as well as for their English-language development. With this foundation, parents commented that, even if English will later be their stronger language, the home language will be still present and in use.

Many parents were critical of the idea that time spent learning Chinese or Vietnamese might potentially detract from their children’s acquisition of English – particularly during the time of the bilingual program. Some parents thought L1 instruction had no detrimental effects on the rate of English progress. And a number of parents felt it actually enhanced their children’s English-language acquisition. One parent specifically spoke of the notion of
language transfer, and another emphasised the conceptual transfer that bilingual learning affords.

It’s beneficial. A child who can learn his mother tongue certainly can be good in English. That’s what I think. … I think learning Vietnamese is a foundation for them to learn English.

*(Vietnamese-background parent – translation of original comments)*

Does the bilingual program harm their learning of English? I think learning Vietnamese helps them to learn English because their minds will become richer with knowledge.

*(Vietnamese-background parent – translation of original comments)*

Of the bilingual program itself, parents were overwhelmingly positive. Specific examples of academic rigour and individual student support were given as evidence of high quality teaching and learning. In some consultations, the issue of pedagogy was raised in terms of how reading and writing skills in Chinese and Vietnamese were taught. Comparisons were made between parents’ perceptions of teaching approaches in other schools or educational settings with which they were familiar. The issues of rote learning and memorisation many of them equated with school learning were discussed and compared with more active methods of engaging students in language learning. While many instructional approaches at their children’s school were in complete contrast to the ways the parents themselves had been educated at primary school, they were generally happy with the teaching strategies employed in Chinese and Vietnamese classrooms. Parents gave details of their discussions with the teachers implementing these programs and how this dialogue had clarified in their minds why specific teaching and learning arrangements were employed.

On the subject of language transfer or linguistic interdependence, the Hakka parents offered highly enlightening insights into the effects of Mandarin instruction on their children’s Hakka use. I was interested in exploring whether this Hakka-Mandarin dichotomy was perceived as in any way problematic by parents. Questions were posed as to whether parents perceived any language confusion occurring in their children, with Hakka, Mandarin and English
performing significant functions in their school and home lives? Another issue that was pursued was the issue of whether parents perceived any loss of status for Hakka, as Mandarin was taught as a standard form of Chinese.

One parent commented that students very successfully managed both forms of Chinese, speaking Hakka at home and Mandarin at school. No reported denigration in the position of Hakka was seen as a result of Mandarin instruction by any of the parents. Rather, parents commented on the positive effects learning Mandarin was having on their children’s spoken Hakka. Formal instruction in Mandarin was seen as extending students’ vocabulary, and as a means towards developing children’s awareness of Chinese grammar, both of which could be applied to Hakka.

What these data from both Chinese-background and Vietnamese-background parents reveal is consistent with Cummins’ ‘linguistic interdependence hypothesis’ (Cummins, 1979, 1991, 2000a) in operation in quite a sophisticated way. Amongst the Hakka-speaking parents, their children’s home language is seen to be nurtured and supported through the teaching of Mandarin, evidenced by parents’ observations of formal rules of Chinese and sophisticated vocabulary taught in Mandarin classes being transferred to children’s home Hakka usage. Amongst both language groups, transfer of both linguistic and conceptual understandings between English and the other languages of instruction and home use is seen as enriching all languages and facilitating their development. Successful ‘teaching for transfer’ (Cummins, 2004) is therefore evident in this description of the Hakka-Mandarin interface.

So, within these bilingual consultations, parents’ perspectives centred on the mutual benefits for their children’s first languages and English that bilingual learning fosters. These consultations did not illuminate why questionnaire responses from Chinese-background parents were less praiseworthy of the teaching and learning in the bilingual program than those of the Vietnamese-
background parents. Perhaps the strongest clue to this difference (remembering that both cohorts of parents were well disposed towards the English and L1 components of the bilingual program, with the Vietnamese-background parents being more effusive in their praise) lies in the discussion of the duration of the bilingual program which is analysed next. In this respect, the bilingual consultations revealed reticence and uncertainty amongst parents as to whether the benefits observed in younger bilingual learners justified continued bilingual instruction through a hypothetical extension of the program to the later years of primary school.

**Bilingual Consultation Analysis: Duration of Bilingual Program**

The Parent Questionnaire data revealed a range of opinions about the possibility of extending bilingual learning opportunities into the later years of the students’ primary schooling. Vietnamese-background parents’ questionnaire responses were overwhelmingly in favour of this suggestion; whereas Chinese-background parents’ views were evenly split. The bilingual consultations allowed for this issue to be probed more deeply.

What emerged from these consultations was, amongst the Vietnamese-background parents, an issue of equity in relation to the duration of their children’s bilingual learning opportunities as compared to the Chinese-background students. But amongst both language groups represented at the four consultations, there was parent anxiety about students’ workloads and the academic demands of later primary school curriculum, and the potential difficulties their children might face if they were to continue to learn their L1 in the same manner as when they were enrolled in the Years Prep to Two bilingual program.

Specifically, the Vietnamese-background parents felt that cessation of bilingual learning after Year One was too early for their children to have a firm foundation in the Vietnamese language. Continuation of the 50:50 arrangement
for another year had widespread support at the consultations. The fact that the Mandarin-English program successfully continued to the end of Year Two was also seen as a justification for a similar extension for the Vietnamese program. Before, the kids had Chinese for over two days a week in Years Prep and One. And now they have Chinese in Year Two also. And it’s very good for them to have more hours. For our children, I’d like their Vietnamese to be very good. I want more hours. Two hours is not enough for Year Two. (Vietnamese-background parent – translation of original comments)

Beyond Year Two, the feeling amongst parents of both language groups was that English needed to be the main teaching and learning focus. The academic demands faced by students after their first years of schooling were the main reasons stated by parents who held these views. Parents from both language groups stated that attendance at weekend schools was a means by which students’ first languages could be maintained, while valuable school hours could be devoted to instruction in English.

In higher grades they need to learn more English, it’s necessary. In younger grades they have more hours in Vietnamese, they don’t learn much maths. In higher grades, if they have more hours in Vietnamese, they don’t have enough time for other subjects. (Vietnamese-background parent – translation of original comments)

Because they already have the basics in Chinese from the bilingual program, so they can move on with English. At high school they have much homework. (Chinese-background parent – translation of original comments)

This notion of “moving on” with English was re-iterated by a number of parents and led into discussion of the degree to which students required proficiency in the L1 as compared to English. A number of parents stated that what has been termed ‘basic interpersonal communicative skills’ (BICS) (Cummins, 1984, 2000a; Cummins & Swain, 1986) were probably sufficient for students in their L1, whereas higher level language skills – or academic language proficiency – are required in English.
I enrolled my child at this school because I wanted him to learn Chinese from Year Prep. Then when he reaches Year Three, that will be enough as a foundation.

*(Chinese-background parent – translation of original comments)*

I don’t have high expectations for them in Vietnamese. All they need is to understand Vietnamese. That’s good enough.

*(Vietnamese-background parent – translation of original comments)*

These sentiments which overlook the fact that low level proficiency in the L1 may have cognitive and linguistic deficits for the L2, as outlined in the ‘threshold hypothesis’ (Cummins, 1976; Toukomaa & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1977), were by no means universally held. In fact, much discussion in both groups was taken up with issues of post-primary school avenues for linguistic maintenance. Possibilities for students to pursue formal school studies in Vietnamese and Chinese through to the completion of secondary school were emphasised by some parents. L1 maintenance throughout the students’ schooling was seen by these parents as a mechanism by which greater levels of success in the mainstream school system could be achieved.

We all want our kids to know Vietnamese. Their Vietnamese is very important. When they are in Year Twelve they could have good marks for this subject.

*(Vietnamese-background parent – translation of original comments)*

Again, what is revealed by these tensions over the degree to which students’ first language should be maintained and, therefore, the optimum duration of programs which foster both these languages and English, is a paucity of parent knowledge about the theoretical underpinnings of bilingual education programs. Of course, parents need not have the same pedagogical understandings as professionally trained teachers. However, increased awareness of second language learning issues could only alleviate some of the uncertainties and tensions immigrant parents express between their desire for their children to maintain the cultural and linguistic traditions of their families, communities and countries of origin, and their aspirations for them to succeed and be happy in their new country of residence.
Bilingual Consultation Analysis: Parents’ Aspirations

To conclude this discussion of the bilingual consultations, and of the overall parent data collected for this study, it seems apposite to consider their expressions of hope and concern for their children’s futures. Clearly, dual priorities are expressed by parents: that their children may continue to be enriched by the linguistic and cultural traditions of their families’ original homelands, and that they develop the necessary English-language skills to facilitate educational success in their new country. Many anti-bilingual education advocates (Imhoff, 1990; Porter, 1990; Rossell & Baker, 1996) would suggest that these two priorities are rarely compatible, as they view the former objective as working against achievement of the latter. These parents are under no such illusions and, as will be seen in the analysis of students’ achievement levels, parents’ belief that mainstream educational success need not be at the expense of linguistic and cultural maintenance is borne out by students’ learning outcomes.

At the consultations, parents often mentioned English-language proficiency as a means for achieving specific goals, such as successful examination results. Expertise in English was also remarked upon as a vehicle affording their children a fuller, more prosperous life than that experienced by their parents. These parents – most of whom have had direct experience with war, invasion, repression, or displacement and, as a result, have seen their personal opportunities for self-fulfillment dashed or diminished – view Australia as offering their children many of the opportunities they were denied. As such, parents’ aspirations for their children are deeply felt and form the ultimate objective in their lives. However, in order to make these aspirations a reality, the loss of one’s culture and language was not a price these parents were prepared, or felt they needed to pay. When mention was made of those individuals who chauvinistically stress the cultural and linguistic assimilation of migrants, one parent passionately argued:
But they forget that as human beings we have a background. We need to maintain our culture in order to develop. I don’t criticise them. It’s good for them to integrate to the mainstream Australia. We want to integrate as well as maintain our Vietnamese background. No one is wrong.

(Vietnamese-background parent – translation of original comments)

Drawing on these sentiments and returning to the central question at the heart of this research, the parents make it abundantly clear that the school’s bilingual program is the teaching and learning arrangement that is most important to their children’s educational and personal development. Several parents commented in the consultations that they had enrolled their children at the school specifically because of this program, some parents detailing how they transferred their children from other neighbouring – or distant – schools in order that they might participate in this learning opportunity. While opinions differed in relation to the degree to which the program succeeds in teaching Mandarin, Vietnamese and English, the optimum duration of the program, and the pedagogies used in teaching the languages, its very existence was a matter for parent celebration and gratitude.

The perspectives of teachers about the students’ language and learning needs were sought using a questionnaire almost identical to the parent one. Their opinions and reflections, which both correspond to and contradict those expressed by the parents, are now discussed and analysed.
CHAPTER EIGHT : RESEARCH RESULTS PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF TEACHERS’ PERSPECTIVES AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

I wish our week was ten days long instead of five! The Bilingual Program is a fabulous means of teaching home language, but I would love a whole week to teach English too!  
(Teacher’s response to how the school could better meet its students’ learning needs).

Introduction

This final chapter of reporting and analysis of research results concentrates on data specifically linked to the school. Teachers’ perspectives and data related to student assessment and achievement are explored. What is revealed in this “view from the school level” is a teacher population favourably disposed towards bilingual learning, despite feeling the pressure from externally imposed English literacy standards and benchmarks to concentrate on students’ English language acquisition and accelerate their pathway to proficiency in that language. The teacher’s statement that leads into this chapter encapsulates that tension.

In addition, data collected from teachers revealed them as needing reassurance that bilingual learning arrangements are pedagogically sound and supported by current research. A case is made for ongoing professional development at the school in the areas of second language acquisition, ESL teaching and learning, and bilingual education. Through this augmenting of their professional understandings, it is argued, teachers will more confidently implement instructional approaches in the knowledge that strong research exists linking these pedagogical arrangements to educational and personal advantages for students of minority language backgrounds.
Student achievement data collected at the end of the 2002 school year are also reported and analysed in this chapter. The English academic achievement of the school’s bilingually-educated students reveals that, by Year Six, the vast majority of these students are assessed at having reached the level of English-language proficiency aimed for in the government curriculum and standards documents (Board of Studies (Victoria), 2000a). While it cannot be claimed from these data that bilingual learning has facilitated these results, the results correspond closely to the international research data (Collier, 1989, 1995; Hakuta et al., 2000; Thomas & Collier, 1997) that details a five to seven year period before students from minority language backgrounds can be expected to approach the levels of academic language proficiency demonstrated by their majority language background peers. These results add strength to the refutations of the ‘time on task hypothesis’ (Cummins, 2001b; Ramírez et al., 1991), and a case is made for validation of bilingual education programs on the basis of student achievement.

Teacher Data Collection: Teacher Questionnaire
Teacher data were collected through a written questionnaire. Thirteen staff members out of fifteen completed and returned questionnaires, a very pleasing response which highlights the importance teachers placed on the issues this research addresses. It also possibly testifies to their willingness, on a personal level, to assist my research. (A copy of the Teacher Questionnaire is attached to this thesis as Appendix 23). Importantly, the responses were received from all sectors of the teaching staff: school administration, curriculum coordinators, general teaching staff, teachers working in both English and LOTE areas of the bilingual program, and specialist teachers such as the Reading Recovery teacher. Of the thirteen responses, six stated they had – at some point – worked in the bilingual program, six stated they had not, and one made no comment about the matter. Six staff members participating in the research had been teaching at the school for more than ten years. This made for a wide cross-section of different roles and experiences of
teachers from across the school and from which rich information could emerge.

**Analysis of Teacher Questionnaire: Importance of Curriculum Areas**

As with the Parent Questionnaire, teachers were first asked to select from a list of twelve curriculum and social/study skills areas and indicate which they felt were the most important areas for students to learn or develop at school. The results of this question are presented in Table 8.1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8.1 Teacher Questionnaire Areas of Teaching and Learning Priority (N=13)</th>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From these data, teachers’ priorities clearly lie in the areas of English literacy and Mathematics teaching, closely followed by the development of students’ learning skills in relation to cooperation and sharing. The equal top priority, that of the teaching and learning of English, correlates with that expressed in the questionnaire completed by the parents. The following table (Table 8.2) allows for a comparison of the levels of importance parents and teachers attributed to the twelve areas on the questionnaire.
TABLE 8.2 TEACHER AND PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES: COMPARISON OF AREAS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING PRIORITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of learning</th>
<th>Teacher Priorities (N = 13)</th>
<th>Parent Priorities (N = 54)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Responses</td>
<td>Percentage of Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills in English: reading, writing, listening and speaking</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy/ Mathematics skills</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work and social skills of cooperation and sharing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills in students’ home languages: reading, writing, listening and speaking</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline and good behaviour</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understandings about Australia, its history and its multicultural society</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understandings about science and nature</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport/ physical education skills</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technological/ computer skills</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Numeracy or Mathematics skills seem to be valued more highly by teachers than parents, judging by these results. Given the explicit focus on Literacy and Numeracy pedagogies in the early and middle years of schooling in recent years (Commonwealth Department of Education Science and Training, 2003; Commonwealth Department of Employment Education Training and Youth Affairs, 1998; Culican et al., 2001; Department of Education (Victoria), 1998c; Department of Education Employment and Training (Victoria), 2000), the emphasis on these areas of learning is not surprising. Equivalent levels of importance, in percentage terms, are attached to the teaching and learning of the home languages by teachers and parents.

Teachers commented, however, on how difficult it is to make such choices particularly when:

   A well rounded education is the ultimate aim.
   (Teacher comment on questionnaire)

Teachers also remarked on the need for curriculum to be seen, not as isolated subjects that can be neatly categorised, but as integrated areas of learning wherein skills and understandings learned in one context are linked, applied or transferred to others. This questionnaire item also offered teachers an opportunity to reflect on the essential aspects of teaching, with one
respondent decrying the obsession with economic rationalism, generic learning outcomes and accountability, calling for a return to “kindness, compassion and creativity” in curriculum planning and implementation.

Analysing these data strictly from the perspective of this research focus, the responses indicate that literacy education: both from a perspective of English and from that of the first language is highly valued by teachers. More insights into these views were revealed by teachers’ responses to later questions on this survey.

**Analysis of Teacher Questionnaire: Meeting Students’ Needs**

Teachers’ perspectives about the ways that the school was successful or less than successful in meeting the students’ learning needs were provided in the form of anecdotal responses to these two open-ended questions. As with the Parent Questionnaire, these responses were collated and sorted according to the same broad areas of interest and concern, these being:

- pedagogy, including quality of instruction;
- curriculum provision and delivery;
- policies developed and implemented at the school;
- student welfare and well-being, including work and social skills;
- language instruction, including bilingual learning;
- homework issues;
- intervention/provision of special assistance for students;
- staffing and teachers’ professionalism; and
- general comments about the quality of the school.

The following display (Table 8.3) depicts how often positive or negative comments were made in relation to these different aspects of the school’s operation.
TABLE 8.3 TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE: RESPONSES OF TEACHERS TO SUCCESSFUL OR UNSUCCESSFUL FEATURES OF SCHOOL’S CATERING FOR THEIR STUDENTS RANKED IN ORDER OF MOST-OFTEN TO LEAST-OFTEN CITED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of schooling</th>
<th>Teachers’ Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum provision and delivery</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links and communication between home and school</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student welfare and well-being, including work and social skills</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention/provision of special assistance for students</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language instruction, including bilingual learning</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy, including quality of instruction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development and training of staff</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffing and teachers’ professionalism</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues related to L1 and L2 acquisition and proficiency</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies developed and implemented at the school</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of school programs</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General comments about quality of school</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework issues</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The successful areas most frequently identified by teachers related, therefore, to areas of curriculum and student welfare. Specific curriculum and organisational initiatives were cited, with the school’s bilingual program strongly emphasised. The instruction provided in students’ home languages was seen as providing them with strong emotional and educational support. The bilingual education program was specifically mentioned in terms of the way it supports students’ conceptual development, by enabling them to make better linguistic links and cultural transitions between home and school. One teacher commented that:

*By having access to their home language upon entering school, learning is facilitated immediately. It must eliminate a certain degree of frustration in children as well as address self esteem issues. These factors all influence learning.*

*(Teacher comment on questionnaire)*
Another teacher commented that the school’s organisation:

   Helps children to learn English via having them understand concepts of all sorts in LOTE first.

   *(Teacher comment on questionnaire)*

Listing her perceptions of the ways the school met the needs of the students, another teacher commented on the:

   Strong language links between home and school. Flexible student groupings and curriculum to meet student needs. Extensive intervention; individual and group learning.

   *(Teacher comment on questionnaire)*

In addition, other teaching and learning arrangements were cited as examples of ways by which the school was successfully meeting its students’ needs. These included the Early Years literacy and numeracy programs, and the school’s method of integrated curriculum planning. Specific pedagogical arrangements employed across the curriculum, and across languages of instruction were provided by teachers as examples of ways the school was successful in meeting students’ needs. These included use of flexible student groupings, individual and group learning, and explicit, focused instruction tailored to the needs, interests and abilities of the students. The following comment refers to these strategies, stating that increasingly scaffolded and focused instruction in both English and other languages has enhanced student learning.

   We use all current strategies bent to our students’ needs quite effectively. Children no longer in danger of drowning while being “immersed.”

   *(Teacher comment on questionnaire)*

The fostering of a secure, friendly environment where children are well cared for, are academically and emotionally supported, and where risk-taking in their learning is valued, exemplify the tone of the responses linked to welfare and student well-being. For example, one staff member believed the school:

   makes students feel special and cared for. It has extremely talented and committed staff and provides many resources and experiences to facilitate/continue learning.

   *(Teacher comment on questionnaire)*
Interestingly, the most commonly cited area for improvement at the school was that of facilitating better home-school links. The need for parents to better understand how to support their children’s learning was mentioned, with tentative suggestions put forward that this needs to be a collaborative sharing of home-school knowledge.

We need to connect/communicate more effectively with the parent community, and support and extend their understandings of how best to support their children’s learning.

*(Teacher comment on questionnaire)*

While remarking favourably on the bilingual learning at the school in response to these survey questions, more detailed information about the perceived importance of student learning in English and languages other than English, and the perceived quality of these programs were investigated more deeply in the ensuing sections of the questionnaire.

**Analysis of Teacher Questionnaire: Importance of Languages of Instruction**

The next sections of the questionnaire asked for teachers’ opinions on the comparative importance of the students’ home languages and English. To a certain degree, this issue was addressed earlier in the questionnaire when the teachers’ identification of the most important areas of learning were elicited. However, as was seen in the Parent Questionnaire, perspectives can differ when the emphasis shifts from overall learning to issues solely related to language.

Specifically, teachers were asked to indicate on a continuum from ‘not important’ to ‘very important’ their views on the importance of the school offering instruction in the students’ home languages and English. They responded as follows (Table 8.4).
TABLE 8.4 TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE: IMPORTANCE PLACED ON LANGUAGES OF INSTRUCTION WITHIN THE BILINGUAL PROGRAM (N=13)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance of teaching students their home languages.</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>not important</td>
<td>important</td>
<td>very important</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance of teaching students English.</th>
<th>13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>not important</td>
<td>important</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results closely correspond with those collected in the first question of the Teacher Questionnaire. English is seen by all teachers as the absolute, incontrovertible curriculum necessity. The maintenance and development of the students’ home languages is viewed with considerable importance, with over half the staff respondents seeing it as ‘very important’, and all seeing it as at least ‘important.’ Comments made later in the questionnaire by several teachers link these views to awareness of students’ family, identity and self-esteem issues; as well as to their need to develop sound English-language skills to facilitate academic success and foster engagement and involvement in wider Australian society.

Again, these data are largely consistent with the views expressed by parents who, despite their immediate concerns with their children’s L1 maintenance, attached greater importance to English in response to this same question on the survey.

Analysis of Teacher Questionnaire: Bilingual Program Effectiveness

As with the Parent Questionnaire, the teachers were asked to rate how effectively the school’s bilingual program facilitated students’ learning in Chinese and Vietnamese, and English. They were provided with a scale ranging from zero to five. Interestingly, despite few teachers having skills in Chinese or Vietnamese, all responded to both questions. Given this fact, the perspectives of teachers about the students’ LOTE learning must be linked to impressions of the children’s L1 language use and abilities, rather than
empirical understanding of their level of proficiency. The following table (Table 8.5) displays teachers’ perspectives.

**TABLE 8.5 TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE: SATISFACTION WITH THE TEACHING OF CHINESE, VIETNAMESE AND ENGLISH IN THE BILINGUAL PROGRAM (N = 13)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>How well the bilingual program helps children learn English</th>
<th>How well the bilingual program helps children learn Chinese or Vietnamese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As with the parents’ responses to the same question, satisfaction levels were higher for the teaching of Chinese and Vietnamese than for English. Teachers’ questionnaire comments, and my own experience teaching at the school leads me to conclude that the difference between the ratings given to the teaching of English and the non-English languages stems from a number of teacher concerns. First, teachers feel under pressure to ensure their students reach government Year level learning targets – which are expected for all students. The marginalisation of the specific needs of English-language learners has been discussed in recent Australian literature (Lo Bianco, 2002b; McKay, 2001), and the result is pressure on teachers to accelerate students’ acquisition of English.

Second, despite data that reveal increasing student use of English as they grow older, I feel there exists a prevailing belief amongst teachers at the school that use of home languages by the students is all-pervasive. Students are seen to regularly speak a LOTE in conversations with peers, and their out-

*page 321*
of-school family and social lives are seen as relatively English-free zones. The
student Language Use Questionnaire data refute many of these assumptions.
Some of these data have already been reported back to the school in order to
correct erroneous perceptions.

Nonetheless, high levels of perceived or real L1 use by students were seen by
some teachers as reducing students’ opportunity to use, practise and perfect
their English across a range of contexts. Linked to this, there exists amongst
teaching staff a certain degree of uncertainty about the benefits of bilingual
instruction for English-language learners. There is strong evidence of this in
the teachers’ questionnaire responses, which corresponds to my own
knowledge of the teaching context of the school. The following questionnaire
comments made by teachers reveal incomplete or inaccurate understandings
of issues central to first language maintenance and second language
acquisition.

Less time is spent using/learning English which impacts on the speed
English – speaking/reading/writing is learnt. However, concepts and
understandings learnt in their home language can enrich their
understanding of English.
(Teacher comment on questionnaire)

Students often come to school more able in their mother tongue. It takes
some time and a concerted effort for them to catch up in English because
they live in a community that speaks their mother tongue. (Thus limited
opportunities to practise outside school).
(Teacher comment on questionnaire)

Implicit acceptance of the tenets of the ‘time-on-task’ hypothesis resonate in
these remarks. Less English instruction is equated with slower second
language acquisition. A family and community context in which students’
home languages proliferate is seen as counter-productive to the development
of English. While the first comment recognises notions of linguistic
interdependence, both comments fly in the face of bilingual research which
links home language maintenance and quality second language instruction to
linguistic and possibly cognitive benefits across and in both languages (Abu-
As discussed in relation to parent data, these comments highlight the need for greater levels of ongoing professional development and informed discussion about issues of second language acquisition and bilingual learning theory amongst teachers working in such settings. Teachers posed questions of their own in completing the questionnaire which underscores this need.

Many students … continue to learn their home language on weekends (via weekend schools). In junior classes students often prefer to speak in their home language in English classes too. How does this impact on the acquisition of English?

*(Teacher comment and question on questionnaire)*

However, to use these comments to characterise all teachers as lacking in sound educational theory would be to do them a real disservice. Many teachers’ questionnaire responses remarked on the significant learning gains students make – linguistically and conceptually – over very short periods of time. The fact that they achieve these gains despite families’ low socio-economic levels, and stress related to uncertain refugee status is acknowledged.

Considering students are simultaneously learning at least two languages the results are pretty good … Also considering the social backgrounds of the students, their language learning could be considered as dynamic.

*(Teacher comment on questionnaire)*

In addition, sound, professional and compassionate teaching and learning takes place at this school from Years Prep to Year Six every day of the school year. But what comments like those highlighted here reveal is a need for comprehensive reflection and discussion on the issues of bilingual learning to be more consciously built into the school’s organisational arrangements in order that – amongst staff changes and teachers’ struggling with the plethora of government imposed priorities and initiatives – the core values, understandings and beliefs of the school are not forgotten or diffused.
Analysis of Teacher Questionnaire: Duration of Bilingual Program

All thirteen teachers responded to the question of whether the bilingual program, whereby the students learn half time in English, half time in their home language should be extended to upper grades. The response to this question was:

3 YES
8 NO
2 UNSURE

Those few teachers in favour of the program’s extension into upper year levels at the school were tentative and cautious in their reasons. Two of these three respondents had worked in the English component of the bilingual program and thought it could well be extended by another year or two – to Year Three. One teacher commented on the importance of meaningfully continuing bilingual instruction rather than reducing or abandoning it after a few years. None of these three staff members referred to any philosophical or theoretical position to justify extending the program, again suggesting that a firmer grasp of bilingual learning theory is needed.

The responses of the eight teachers not in support of an extended bilingual program highlighted very interesting perceptions of the rationale for such programs. Despite the school’s policy position regarding the additive aims of the school’s bilingual program, several responses revealed views of the program that were limited and purely transitional. First language instruction was seen by some teachers as useful primarily – or solely – in terms of its role in assisting students acquire a second, majority language, not as an asset and benefit in its own right. The following two comments from separate questionnaires stress the perceived English language goals of the bilingual program.
The main aim of the Bilingual Program is to use children’s home language to support them in learning English (in the early stages). After that, children should have more time to focus in English.

(Teacher comment on questionnaire)

The purpose of learning Chinese/Vietnamese in P/1/2 is to help children to learn English in the early year (sic).

(Teacher comment on questionnaire)

Comments on another teacher questionnaire reveal a similar understanding of the program – that is reason for existence ceases once children are able to operate in English.

They should have developed enough English by Grade 3 to work in that language.

(Teacher comment on questionnaire)

These comments not only reveal an unfamiliarity with the literature in relation to bilingual learning or second language acquisition, they expose an ignorance of school policy itself. Again, this clearly indicates a need to maintain professional dialogue on such matters, and ensure that new staff especially are clear on the beliefs that underpin school policies and programs.

One teacher hypothesised that competent students working towards a kind of balanced bilingualism might cope well with an extended opportunity to learn bilingually, but that students struggling with English may not be best served by an extended bilingual program. Rather, she felt, additional time for these students to learn in English might assist their preparation for secondary school demands. Understandable as these concerns are, they may not have been made if the teacher were more aware that interdependence of first and subsequent languages is equally valid for students across the range of abilities. Again, this highlights need for the teachers at the school to develop a better theoretical conceptualisation of issues related to second language acquisition and bilingual learning.

Practical issues related to staffing, timetabling, breadth of the curriculum, availability of resources, and the need for professional development of LOTE teachers to successfully engage older students were raised by teachers not in

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favour of extending the bilingual program. While these issues, along with that of program funding, cannot be dismissed, they are to some extent outside the ambit of theoretical concerns that would render a change to the duration of the program defensible or indefensible. And, as issues, they cannot be seen as insurmountable – were there the will to embark on changes of the type under discussion.

Of the two staff members who were uncertain about extending bilingual learning opportunities at the school, there was an expression of the need to be guided by further information and research. However, one of those teachers still articulated a widely-expressed concern:

> My concern for some students is that they use English less than their home language. Surely more practice/opportunity to speak, relate and learn in English would be more beneficial in Grades 3, 4, 5 & 6.

*(Teacher comment on questionnaire)*

This concern lies very much at the centre of debate about the language and learning needs of minority language background students. It need not be problematic, as international research has shown time and again, the benefits of bilingual education programs for these students (Collier, 1992; Cummins, 1976, 1991, 2001b, 2003a; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Ramírez *et al.*, 1991; Thomas & Collier, 1997). However, given the international accountability and standards push by governments, the rhetoric of ‘literacy crisis’ (see Hammond, 1999; Luke *et al.*, 1999), concerted campaigns in the popular media and mainstream publishing denigrating programs that recognise and affirm diversity: bilingual education accused of both favouring minority language recipients and closing doors for them (Schlesinger, 1991), ongoing confusion and misunderstanding about bilingualism in education is not surprising. Lemberger (1997) found this reality when investigating the views and experiences of bilingual teachers in the United States.
Teachers’ Perspectives: A Summary

Teachers’ articulated perspectives on the language and learning needs of their mainly ESL students place a strong emphasis on the importance of English literacy and numeracy, which is consistent with the priority given these areas of learning by school systems (Curriculum Corporation, 2000), national governments placing great emphasis on international research comparative research (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2001), and within the educational community of teachers, principals, teacher trainers, and educational theorists (Hargreaves et al., 2001; Hill & Crevola, 1999; Luke & van Kraayenoord, 1998). The teachers in this study see literacy in English and, to a lesser degree, literacy in the students’ first languages, as embedded in all curriculum areas, and in the socio-cultural lives of the students. English is seen as the centerpiece of a curriculum that integrates key learning areas, facilitates in- and out-of-school learning and civic engagement, and maximises opportunities for life-long learning and future employment and study prospects.

The teachers surveyed expressed satisfaction that the curriculum programs and pedagogical arrangements they provide positively work towards these goals, and further these aims. In particular, they demonstrated awareness that the best curriculum is one that affirms the students’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds while building skills and understandings that matter in wider society. For the most part, they see the school’s bilingual program as facilitating these dual imperatives.

In general terms, they perceive – especially in the first years of primary schooling – the symbiotic and interdependent relationship between first languages and English, though these notions are not fully conceptualised or linked to theory. The benefits of bilingual learning, as it is currently implemented in the early years at the school, are seen to far outweigh its logistical challenges, as the following comment attests.
I think the bilingual program is fantastic even though it is an organisational nightmare. It is so important for young students to continue to learn and extend their mother tongue for self esteem and educational purposes.

(Teacher comment on questionnaire)

However, particularly as students get older and the academic challenges increase, teachers feel a tension between the maintenance and development of students’ home languages and English. While there is enormous goodwill towards the bilingual program, and considerable respect shown towards the languages and cultures of the local community, the question of how much L1 instruction is necessary or appropriate in a society which rewards proficiency in English remains problematic and unresolved in some teachers’ minds.

Others express guilt that:

Perhaps we don’t celebrate the children’s bilingual ability enough.

(Teacher comment on questionnaire)

I argue that these tensions and uncertainties can only be alleviated by working towards a better understanding, at the school level, of issues of professional practice. This, in turn, can best be achieved through collaborative investigation of research related to bilingual education, and collegial application of these findings to the specifics of the school site and its individual learners. It is hoped that the results of this research will positively inform ongoing practice at the school, and others like it. Of particular interest to teachers will conceivably be the presentation of this and other research data which investigates levels of student achievement in English in relation to the types of classroom arrangements under which they have learned (August & Hakuta, 1997; Collier, 1992; Cummins, 1999; Hakuta et al., 2000; Thomas & Collier, 1997).

**Student Achievement Data: Analysis of Results**

At the time of the data collection, all teachers in the Victorian government school system were required to assess their students’ achievement in each of the eight key learning areas against the levels and outcomes listed in the
Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF) (2000a; Board of Studies (Victoria), 2000b). This continues to be the case, though changes in terms of notions of Essential Learning (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2005a, 2005b) are in the throes of being implemented in the Victorian government school system. These changes will redraw the way curriculum knowledge and skills are taught, measured and reported in the very near future. However, in relation to the CSF, as mentioned in Chapter Three: “Methodology”, it is expected that, at the end of Years Prep, Two, Four and Six, students will have established themselves in each of the eight key learning areas at Levels One, Two, Three and Four respectively.

At the school at which this research was undertaken, teachers’ professional judgements in relation to the placement of students on CSF levels are guided and reinforced through reference to government-produced course advice and sample assessment materials illustrating different levels of achievement (for example, Department of Education, Victoria, (1998a, 1998b). In addition, teams engaged in teaching at the same or similar year levels moderate their assessments to ensure consistent interpretation and application of the outcomes and levels. The determination of students’ achievement in relation to CSF levels takes account of their learning over the school year, and draws on portfolios comprising a range of accumulated and annotated student work. Therefore, this form of assessment offers a more authentic reflection of students’ actual achievement than external or one-off measures, such as standardised tests which often play a role in justifying the subordination of minority students in their schools (Cummins, 1986; Edelsky, 1999). Therefore, the data most reflective of students’ English language abilities and achievement levels – that drawn from teachers’ ongoing assessment of their students – were used in this research to link government learning targets to bilingually educated students’ achievement.
As such, the English achievement levels of Years Prep, Two, Four and Six bilingually educated students in relation to the *English CSF* (Board of Studies (Victoria), 2000a) were collected and analysed. This information was obtained from whole school assessment data for the end of the 2002 school year. The English achievement levels for all Years Prep, Two, Four and Six students who were at that time, or had previously been enrolled in the school’s bilingual education programs were investigated. Student achievement data across the dimensions of English: ‘Speaking and Listening’, ‘Writing’ and ‘Reading’ were categorised as either below, beginning, consolidating or established at the appropriate CSF level.

For the sake of analysis, students whose English abilities were assessed against the stages and outcomes of the *ESL Companion to the English CSF* (Board of Studies (Victoria), 2000b) were categorised as ‘below CSF Level.’ This is despite the fact that this alternate document to the *English CSF* (Board of Studies (Victoria), 2000a) is an acknowledgement of the different, yet legitimate pathways second language learners traverse as they acquire a new language. It is not my intention to diminish ESL students’ achievements by labelling them as deficient or unsatisfactory. Yet, in terms of this research question, it is a useful construct for ascertaining the degree to which bilingually educated students achieve learning targets in English.

The following table (Table 8.6) presents the total numbers of bilingually-educated students at the research school at the end of their Years Prep, Two, Four and Six years in 2002, and where they were assessed in relation to the *ESL Companion to the English CSF* (Board of Studies (Victoria), 2000b) or the *English CSF* (Board of Studies (Victoria), 2000a).
TABLE 8.6 STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AGAINST THE ENGLISH CSF LEVELS: YEARS PREP, TWO, FOUR & SIX BILINGUALLY-EDUCATED STUDENTS (N=67)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year Prep (N = 19)</th>
<th>Year Two (N = 21)</th>
<th>Year Four (N = 17)</th>
<th>Year Six (N = 10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaking &amp; Listening</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below CSF Level</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>89.4%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning CSF Level</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidating CSF Level</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Established CSF Level</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond CSF Level</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below CSF Level</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>89.4%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning CSF Level</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidating CSF Level</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Established CSF Level</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond CSF Level</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below CSF Level</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>89.4%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning CSF Level</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidating CSF Level</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Established CSF Level</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond CSF Level</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results reveal almost 90 percent of Year Prep students as being measured on the *ESL Companion to the English CSF* (Board of Studies (Victoria), 2000b) across all the dimensions of English: speaking and listening, reading and writing. Only two students at the end of this first year of their schooling are measured on the mainstream *English CSF* (Board of Studies (Victoria), 2000a). This unsurprising result reflects the nature of the student community at the school, most of whom are exposed to very little English...
before their Year Prep, a phenomenon supported by the sociolinguistic data collected in the Language Use Questionnaire.

By the end of Year Two, when all students in the Mandarin-English bilingual program transition to mainstream English-language classrooms (the students in the Vietnamese-English bilingual program having made that shift a year earlier), an appreciable change can be observed. The number of bilingually-educated students whose reading achievement is measured by the ESL Companion to the English CSF (Board of Studies (Victoria), 2000b) amounts to less than 10 percent of the cohort of 21 students. Gains in writing and speaking and listening, while strong, are more modest. By Year Four, all 17 bilingually-educated students are assessed against the English CSF (Board of Studies (Victoria), 2000a) for all dimensions of English, with more than half the students (and almost two-thirds in the areas of reading and writing) determined to have established themselves at or moved beyond year level expectations. The Year Six cohort of students only had ten who had attended the school’s bilingual program in their Years Prep to Two. Of these, 80 percent had established themselves at Level Four for each of the dimensions of English, according to their teachers’ assessments of their abilities. In terms of the numbers of students established on or above the English CSF level appropriate to their year of schooling, the following table (Table 8.7) is illuminating.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th>Speaking &amp; Listening</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Prep</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N = 19)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Two</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N = 21)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Four</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N = 17)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>52.9%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Six</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N = 10)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 8.7 BILINGUALLY EDUCATED STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: PERCENTAGES OF YEARS PREP, TWO, FOUR & SIX STUDENTS ASSESSED AT OR ABOVE YEAR LEVEL CSF TARGETS (N=67)
The steady increase in the percentage of students at each year level reaching government targets is revealed even more dramatically in the following bar graph.

**FIGURE 8.1 STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH: PERCENTAGE OF BILINGUALLY-EDUCATED STUDENTS AT OR ABOVE CSF YEAR LEVEL EXPECTATIONS (N=67)**

What these data reveal is that bilingually educated students at the research school increasingly meet English learning targets as they get older. Even the most cautious interpretation of these results would reveal that, in terms of English-language acquisition and proficiency, these students, as a group, experience no academic disadvantage in being taught bilingually for two to three years in the early years of their primary schooling. As discussed, by the end of their primary school education, 80 percent of 2002 Year Six students who attended the school’s Mandarin-English or Vietnamese-English bilingual program were meeting the targets set by the government for English language achievement. In addition, these students have received the added benefit of maintenance and development of their home language, or a close relative of their home language - intensively in their early primary years. Participation in an additive bilingual program of this sort has been shown to be highly valued by the students themselves, in that a vast majority of them see both English and their home language as equally important to learn. In addition,
these students identified numerous benefits in being bilingual, and overwhelmingly agreed that being in the school’s bilingual program assisted their learning.

Of note within the student level achievement data are students’ results in reading. The rapid rise, from Years Prep to Two, in the numbers of students who are assessed as reading at, or beyond, year level expectations requires further comment. In Year Prep, only just over 10 percent of students were established at English CSF Level One, a percentage which grows to nearly 62 percent in Year Two. Given that the majority of children (54 percent of the 143 students in the study) reported not being read to at home, this is an important revelation.

These achievement levels in reading amongst students in my study echo earlier-discussed research findings by Thomas and Collier (1997) and, likewise, find support in a recent review of research into instruction for English-language learners undertaken by Slavin and Cheung (2003). Amongst the 17 studies they analysed, they found that bilingual education had strong positive effects on reading performance, especially when students in their early years of schooling were being taught to read in both their L1 and in English at different times of the school day. In none of these studies did Slavin and Cheung (2003) find that English-only instruction resulted in higher levels of reading achievement than the levels bilingually-educated children accomplished. As such, the bilingual learning arrangements at the school setting I investigated may be facilitating this rapid rise in reading ability over the years of the students’ bilingual learning, gains that are maintained and extended throughout the remainder of their primary schooling.

In addition, a number of factors linked to general literacy pedagogy in Victorian schools might explain this increase in reading proficiency from Year
Prep to Year Two, particularly in comparison to more modest, yet still noteworthy rises in the areas of speaking and listening, and writing. First, the Early Years pedagogy and accompanying professional development from the mid to late 1990s explicitly targeted reading in advance of other aspects or dimensions of language (see Department of Education (Victoria), 1998c; see Department Of Education Employment And Training (Victoria), 1999). Its key components of shared and guided reading, ongoing assessment through running records and student conferences, and opportunities for practice through independent reading and literacy centre activities, were widely and consistently implemented in all classrooms associated with the school’s bilingual learning arrangements. Having worked within these programs, it was common at team meetings for teachers to talk with confidence about student progress in reading and their ability to effectively monitor students and move them on to more complex texts.

However, teachers tended to express more concerns about student achievement in the communicative dimensions of language: writing, in particular, was an area in which students were seen as less confident and less willing to take risks. As a result, their development in this area of English was slower than those of reading or speaking and listening. The difficulties especially second-language learners experience, and the stages through which they progress in writing at word, sentence and discourse levels has been comprehensively documented (Christie, 1998; Emmitt et al., 2003; Gibbons, 1992a, 2002; McKay & Scarino, 1991; Perera, 1984). As such, the slower progress towards year level writing targets by students at the research site is more comprehensible.

The student achievement data were broken down into language groups, despite the numbers of students in these cohorts being very small. These data are presented in full in a table attached to this thesis as Appendix 50. They reveal the same trends as have been discussed for the entire cohort of
bilingually educated students. Increasing numbers of students reach or exceed year level targets in English the longer they are at school. The following table (Table 8.8) displays the percentage of students at each of the four year levels under analysis who meet the achievement targets in English for speaking and listening, writing and reading.

**TABLE 8.8 STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT DATA: PERCENTAGES OF YEARS PREP, TWO, FOUR & SIX BILINGUALLY EDUCATED STUDENTS ASSESSED AT OR ABOVE YEAR LEVEL CSF TARGETS (N=67)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th>Speaking &amp; Listening</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C N %</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>C N %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Prep</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N = 19: 12 Ch.; 7 Viet.)</td>
<td>0 - 2</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>0 - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Two</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N = 21: 15 Ch.; 6 Viet.)</td>
<td>6 40</td>
<td>4 66.6</td>
<td>5 33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Four</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N = 17: 11 Ch.; 6 Viet.)</td>
<td>5 45.4</td>
<td>4 66.6</td>
<td>7 63.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Six</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N = 10: 8 Ch.; 2 Viet.)</td>
<td>6 75</td>
<td>2 100</td>
<td>6 75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On initial examination, these data would indicate that students from the Vietnamese-English bilingual program reach year level English targets faster than students having undertaken Mandarin-English bilingual instruction. A hastily-drawn conclusion might be that, because they transition to English-dominant classrooms sooner, the students from the Vietnamese-English bilingual program attain levels of English proficiency sooner than their peers from the Mandarin-English bilingual program. One might also hypothesise that the Hakka-Mandarin interplay that characterises most Chinese-background students’ learning has some impact on the rate that they acquire English or, at least, the time it takes them to reach year level learning targets. Yet, at interview, parents commented on the positive effects of Mandarin instruction on their children’s Hakka. And the students themselves reported only initial confusion as they grappled with two varieties of Chinese, along
with English. In addition, the trends across the year levels and dimensions of language are uneven, and the number of Vietnamese students in any of the year level cohorts never exceeds seven in total. These small language cohorts make prolonged scrutiny of these language breakdowns somewhat unproductive.

Scrutinising once more the achievement data for all students, it could be argued that greater numbers of students meeting year level targets in English is a result of increased English-language instruction in later years, thereby giving support to the ‘time-on-task’ hypothesis. However, this position is ultimately indefensible for two reasons. First, the ‘time-on-task’ hypothesis has already been dismissed by large-scale evaluations of English-language learners’ educational arrangements (Ramírez et al., 1991; Thomas & Collier, 1997), as discussed in the literature review chapter of this thesis. Second, in relation to this research, there is no way of arguing that these students would have achieved better – or faster – rates of English-language acquisition if educated monolingually. In contrast, international research evidence indicates that, without the intellectual and emotional support provided by opportunities to learn in the L1, second language acquisition to levels of desired academic proficiency can actually be a longer and more painful process for students (Collier, 1989, 1995; Cummins, 2001b; Hakuta et al., 2000; Ovando & Collier, 1998).

**Conclusion**

Developing proficiency in a second language is a complex process that takes many pathways given the diversity of learners’ personal backgrounds and circumstances, the educational settings they attend, and the reasons or motivation they have for learning a new language (Bialystok, 2001; Romaine, 1995). What is consistently reported in the bilingual research literature is that, even in the most socio-culturally supportive of school settings, usually a period encompassing most of an English-language learner’s primary school
years is required to develop academic language proficiency in the second language (Collier, 1989, 1995; Cummins, 2001b; Hakuta et al., 2000; Ovando & Collier, 1998). The achievement data results in my study correspond to that research evidence.

What is disturbing is that little government recognition of the challenges faced by English-language learners is countenanced in the standards- and outcomes-driven schools of today. The pressure to speedily assist all students to achieve “one size fits all” English benchmarks places an unnecessary strain on, especially, ESL students (from the day they start school) and their teachers who are charged with achieving these learning goals. The data collected from teachers in this study are underpinned by these anxieties. What results is teacher uncertainty about pedagogical arrangements, like bilingual education, that can be construed as irrelevant to, not facilitating, or working against the attainment of mandated, imposed learning targets. This study confirms existing evidence that, for speakers of non-dominant languages, student achievement in English and bilingual education need not be portrayed as binary opposites, or mutually incompatible. Further research was not necessary to make that assertion, as earlier studies of additive bilingual education settings and bilingual learners have already clarified this perpetually propounded misconception.

However, what this study does yield new light on, are student constructions of what it means to be bilingual in Australia today; and how they see these issues of dual (or multiple) languages, cultures and identities in relation to their in-school learning and out-of-school lives. The views of their parents and teachers, while illuminating in their own right, contextualise these student responses in terms of highlighting the family, social and educational dimensions of the development of biliterate and bicultural identities.
All three groups of participants in this research – the students, their parents, and their teachers – express complementary perspectives. These articulate an understanding of the need for today’s students to be affirmed in their hybrid linguistic and cultural identities, through provision of a curriculum which valorises cultural diversity and engages students in explicit, contextualised instruction in both the L1 and English. However, it is the specific roles, backgrounds and beliefs that each set of stakeholders brings to this study that result in perspectives and viewpoints that point to subtle but key differences between and within these groups.

**Summary**

In the main, the students view bilingual learning as a natural corollary of their mixed linguistic and cultural identities. The school is seen to operate its bilingual programs because:

> the school has multicultural people. There’s Chinese, Turkish and Vietnamese. And they can choose to learn different languages.  
> *(comment made by a Chinese-language background Year Six student in a group interview)*

and

> in [this suburb] there are a lot of Asian people  
> *(comment made by a Chinese-language background Year Five student in a group interview)*

Bilingual learning is seen as reflecting diverse realities and needs within the students’ in- and out-of-school lives, most notably facilitating communication in family and social settings while also bringing educational benefits. While some students comment on the challenges of learning in two languages, and differences in opinion emerge around the importance of reading, writing and speaking in the L1, mastery of two (or more) languages is seen by the students as a transportable skill – one they can draw on now, and in the future, as their educational and social horizons broaden.
The parents involved in this research view bilingual learning as a means of maintaining vital intergenerational family links in a society they themselves are still coming to terms with. The notion that closer, more affectionate and respectful parent-child relationships will result from L1 maintenance and development featured strongly in their comments in conversation and in writing. The importance of developing a cultural, ethnic or national identification, albeit linked to past generations and an erstwhile country largely unknown to their children, also resonated from parents’ stated position on bilingual learning. Not all parents embraced the notion of biliteracy, though for the majority of parents all modes of learning in the L1 were seen as highly worthwhile. Proficiency in English was seen as the pre-requisite to academic success and a secure social future, a key theme within the perspectives expressed by teachers.

Teachers’ concerns centred on the essential need to develop students’ English-language proficiency and, while viewing bilingual ability as an undeniable asset, were – in general – lacking information about the theoretical links and research evidence linking L1 maintenance and L2 acquisition. Given this overall lack of pedagogical certainty, their support for bilingual learning hints at how powerful this form of learning could be at the school were teachers more cognisant of the appropriate theory to accompany their already existing good classroom teaching practice.

In the following chapter, these issues are pursued further as broader implications of this study are discussed. The personal, political and pedagogical dimensions of education for bilingualism and biliteracy as highlighted by this study are conceptualised in a form whereby attention to the students’ transportable literacies form a centrepiece to a notion of a ‘transformative pedagogy’ as envisaged by Cummins (2000a).
CHAPTER NINE: RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Students … go through a continual process of defining their identities in interaction with their teachers, peers and parents. … The collaborative generation of power in educator-student interactions is ‘small’ insofar as the lives of individual students rather than futures of societies are at stake; it is significant, however, for precisely the same reason. The future of societies depends on the intelligence and identities generated in teacher-student interactions in school. (Cummins, 2003c: x)

Introduction

In a truly democratic society, personal identities that are positively oriented to the forms of linguistic and cultural knowledge linked to the home, school and society can only be constructed when human diversity is seen as an asset for the individual and for the community. With this goal in mind, this chapter explores the range of implications emerging from this study, both in terms of repercussions for the school under investigation as well as for those, beyond the school, with an interest in bilingual development, second language acquisition, and education for diversity. Implications that relate specifically to students, parents, teachers, classrooms, and the school are detailed. Recommendations as to the fostering of improved bilingual outcomes and enhanced bicultural identities amongst English-language learners are made. Understanding how one school community facilitates student learning, while grappling with issues of language, culture and identity might, in turn, resonate in other school settings, inspire more on-site investigations or cross-school dialogue, and inform teaching and learning practice.

Major Implications of the Research

What this research reveals is that, for this specific group of primary school-aged English-language learners, the bilingual education programs in which they have been involved – to a very large degree – meet their language and learning needs. The school achieves this through – sometimes unconsciously, it would seem – attending to the personal, political and pedagogical
dimensions of their bilingual learners’ development. The successful features of bilingual learning at the school investigated are consistent with the research literature which highlights:

- the benefits of bilingualism for children’s linguistic, conceptual and – perhaps – cognitive development (Baker, 2001; Bialystok, 2001; Cummins, 2000a);
- the positive relationship between the development of L1 and L2 conversational and academic language proficiency (Cummins, 1984, 2000a);
- the time spent properly supporting and developing a minority language does not impede students’ academic development in the majority school language (Collier, 1995; Cummins, 1979, 1991, 2000a; Slavin & Cheung, 2003);
- the vulnerability of the child’s first language which can be easily lost in the early years of school (Barratt-Pugh & Rohl, 1994; Clyne, 2001; Fishman, 2001a; Wong Fillmore, 1991b, 2000); and
- how linguistically and culturally inclusive teaching and learning (such as additive bilingual education arrangements) potentially enhance minority language background students’ self-concept, sense of identity and feelings of agency and empowerment (Corson, 2001; Cummins, 1994, 2001b; May, 2001; Norton, 2000).

These perspectives and summations of general applied linguistic consensus underpin the implications that emerge from this study. Mirroring the construction of the Literature Review of this thesis, these implications are overlaid by frames focussing on the personal, political and pedagogical dimensions of bilingualism. Listed below first as separate statements, these implications are then individually explored in relation to data collected at the research site, and theorised positions in the field of second language acquisition and/or bilingual learning. In addition, each implication is discussed in terms of recommendations for teaching practice.
These research implications are presented as statements of the conditions under which bilingual education can most successfully meet the language and learning needs of the students in the study and, I assert, others like them. Therefore, this research finds that bilingual education most successfully meets the needs of this specific group of primary-aged English-language learners when the following factors related to the personal, the political, and the pedagogical dimensions of education for bilingualism and biliteracy are met.

**Personal Factors**

1. Students’ language learning links closely to their **social realities**, their **lived experience**, their existing **language requirements**, and their perceived **future needs**.

2. Students are able and encouraged to make strong **linguistic connections** between their L1 and L2, and strong **conceptual links** between their L1 and L2 learning.

3. Students understand what they are being taught, why they are engaged in that kind of learning, and can coherently articulate that understanding.

4. Students’ **self-esteem** and **self-worth** is enhanced through the construction of **positive identities** based on bilingual ability and bicultural understandings.

**Political Factors**

5. The often silenced or marginalised **voices of immigrant and refugee parents** and their children form a centrepiece to **meaningful home-school dialogue** which, in turn, informs school decision making.

6. Students’ **home languages and cultures are affirmed and valued**, and are accorded equal status to that of the majority language and culture.
7. The school takes on an **advocacy role** in relation to the students’ linguistic rights and welfare needs which often reflect concerns and issues experienced by the local school community.

**Pedagogical Factors**

8. English-language learners have the opportunity to learn in a **cognitively challenging, additive bilingual program** that sustains and develops the L1 while teaching and developing proficiency in the L2.

9. Students are empowered as **critical and reflective thinkers** who are able to recognise, critique and respond to power imbalances and social iniquities, particularly in relation to the symbolic capital accorded to different forms of cultural and linguistic knowledge.

10. Teachers are aware of the various **discourse needs** of young people in the 21st Century, and plan a curriculum that builds on home literacy practices, and teaches students the forms of literate communication required for success in school and access to a wide range of post-school or out-of-school options.

11. Teachers operate from a **well-informed theoretical and pedagogical base** that builds students’ academic bilingual proficiency through explicit, contextualised and scaffolded instruction.

I argue here that the formation of strong home-school partnerships that consciously attend to the personal, political and pedagogical dimensions of learning most effectively and comprehensively address the educational needs of students from minority language backgrounds. Recognition of the interplay and inter-relatedness of these dimensions provides the strongest position from which to build students’ bilingual abilities, enhance bicultural identities, and strengthen educational outcomes. I have devised the following visual representation (Figure 9.1), which is intended to illustrate the inter-relatedness of these areas.
This lotus-shaped diagram aims to highlight the internal components and interconnections between the personal, political and pedagogical dimensions of English-language learners becoming bilingual and biliterate. This thesis argues that a transformative pedagogical stance (Cummins, 2000a) is necessary in order to most effectively respond to hegemonic language policies and practices, as well as curriculum priorities that valorise certain forms of cultural knowledge while marginalising others. Such forms of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1991) cannot be fully countered within the confines of the mainstream school policies and practices that operate in most parts of the world. Testimonies of even those who have been led successful and fulfilled on leaving school, remind us as to the often coercive power relations fostered by schools (see, for example, Anzaldua, 1990; Christensen, 1999).
As such, a political awareness and orientation to the education of all learners – students from non-dominant language and cultural backgrounds in particular – needs to accompany an informed understanding of the personal and pedagogical dimensions of bilingualism and biliteracy. Teachers need to understand issues of L1-L2 transfer and interdependence, and the personal pathways students traverse in developing conversational and academic language proficiency. Identity enhancement on a personal level likewise grows out of the degree to which classroom pedagogies respect, validate and extend the linguistic and cultural resources that children bring to their learning.

The interconnectedness of the personal, political and pedagogical, and the adjoining boundaries between these dimensions, are acknowledged and reflected in the overlapping areas of this lotus design. When, for example, a school makes a decision to affirm and assist students to make critical connections between their spoken and written discourses (be they minority language or vernacular literacies) and those normally sanctioned and valued by schools and society, this is, in effect, a political decision with both personal and pedagogical implications. As such, I believe this diagrammatic representation, to a large degree, depicts the essence of multi-faceted approaches to complex educational issues.

The choice of the lotus shape was made for a number of reasons. While often identified as an Asian motif, and therefore appropriate to the school at the heart of this study, it embodies universal notions of wisdom and beauty. The flower itself grows from the muddy bed of a pond or lake, transcending those humble origins to bloom brilliantly when exposed to the sun. Under less favourable conditions, it submerges back to its murky origins. The parallels with transformative pedagogical stances built on attention to the multi-faceted personal, political and pedagogical dimensions of children’s learning are vivid. Transformative pedagogies potentially allow all students the
opportunity to thrive and develop: nurtured academically, emotionally and spiritually in a more free, fair and democratic classroom, school and – hopefully – societal context.

This study has shown that bilingual education, implemented in an additive arrangement, has enormous transformative potential. Implemented alone, or in isolated settings, its impact is diminished. But, in combination with a number of other factors, the change possibilities are enormous. This potential is taken up further at this point, as each of the implications of this research study are considered.

**Research Implications: The Personal Dimension**

Four implications related to what I have termed the personal dimension of bilingual development arose from this study. These are now analysed in turn under headings summarising the key theme of the implication under discussion.

**Socially Situated Language Learning**

Bilingual education most successfully meets the needs of this group of primary school-aged English-language learners when: *Students’ language learning links closely to their social reality, their lived experience, their existing language requirements, and their perceived future needs.*

The data collected in this research clearly identified that the students’ bilingual learning was rooted in their in- and out-of-school lives. Bilingualism and multilingualism were reported as the daily reality of the vast majority of students, as revealed by the Language Use Questionnaire. Certainly, almost all students enrolled in the school’s bilingual program at the time of the data collection actively drew on that language knowledge both at home and at school. This was also the case for the older students who had previously been members of the school’s bilingual education classrooms.
In both questionnaire and interview data, students strongly re-iterated the resonance and relevance bilingual learning had for their personal lives. I argue that the socially situated, personally relevant positioning of their bilingual instruction presents as a strong personal factor in terms of motivating these students to engage with their learning in both L1 and English medium classrooms. When asked to reflect on the advantages of being bilingual, students revealed that, for both integrative and instrumental reasons, the ultimate benefits of proficiency in two languages justified the often demanding aspects of learning in two languages. In other words, these students saw their bilingual ability as assisting them to access and identify with the wider English-speaking community; and as a means of fulfilling necessary engagement on the level of immediate family and local community. This perspective on bilingualism and biliteracy was also strongly echoed by data collected from parents.

This revelation highlights the need for this school’s curriculum (and that of all schools) to continue to diligently draw on students’ actual language use and cultural knowledge as valued starting points for the development of additional language discourses and wider forms of cultural and conceptual knowledge. The need for school programs to reflect an understanding of, and make connections to, the home literacies of students is a recommendation that emerges from diverse studies of home and school literacy practices both in Australia (Cairney, 1998, 2003; Cairney et al., 1995; Comber et al., 2001; Freebody, 2001; Freebody et al., 1995; Kalantzis et al., 1990) and internationally (Gregory & Williams, 2000a; Heath, 1983; Martin-Jones & Jones, 2000; Maybin, 1994). These studies’ findings, related to home-school links, resonate with both theoretical treatises on empowerment of linguistic and cultural minorities (Cummins, 2000a, 2001b; Delpit, 1995; Genesee, 1994; Nieto, 2004; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000) and research studies examining school effectiveness.
issues for English-language learners (August & Hakuta, 1997; Levine & Lezotte, 1995; Lucas et al., 1990; Thomas & Collier, 1997).

Ongoing and meaningful dialogue across school communities, along the lines taken in both the student and parent data collection of this thesis, is the best way for schools to plan for language teaching and learning that draws on and extends home literacy practices. In multilingual school communities, sociolinguistic surveying, in forms like that of the Language Use Questionnaire in this thesis, builds knowledge of the students’ and their families’ language use and home literacy practices. This knowledge allows for informed teaching that best enables coherent L1-L2, home-school connections to be made. Such valuing of students’ “funds of knowledge” (Moll et al., 1992) or affirming of their cultural and linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991) highlights that these students’ linguistic and cultural understandings have a meaningful place in the school curriculum. Classroom and personal accounts of how this practice maximises student engagement and teacher impact can be found across diverse languages, cultures and school settings (Blackledge, 1994; Delpit, 1988, 1995; Ikeda, 2001; Jimenez, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995b; Lippi-Green, 1997; Nieto, 1998). As such, the following recommendation is made in relation to the place of home literacies and cultural understandings as a foundation for further student learning.

**Recommendation 1:**

Up to date sociolinguistic understanding of students’ language use and attitudes needs to underpin classroom teaching. The notion of students’ and communities’ “funds of knowledge” (Moll et al., 1992) needs explicit recognition in all schools, especially those with linguistically and culturally diverse student populations.
Linguistic and Conceptual L1-L2 Links

Bilingual education most successfully meets the needs of this group of primary school-aged English-language learners when: *Students are able and encouraged to make strong linguistic connections between their L1 and L2, and strong conceptual links between their L1 and L2 learning.*

The second implication arising from this study relates to the well documented interdependence between the languages of instruction in additive bilingual programs: a position articulated by Cummins (1979, 1984, 1986, 1991) and supported in many studies (for example, (Abu-Rabia, 2001; Abu-Rabia & Siegel, 2002; Huguet et al., 2000; Verhoeven, 1994). While the research design of this thesis did not explicitly set out to test the ‘linguistic interdependence hypothesis’ (Cummins, 1979), students’, teachers’ and, to a lesser degree, parents’ perspectives about inter-language transfer were noteworthy by their comparative absence from discussion, or by the uncertainty and tentativeness expressed by participants when the issue was raised.

Students rarely referred to L1-L2 transfer, or only in specific contexts. For example, when specifically probed in interviews, students spoke about the connection between Hakka and Mandarin: how transfer between the two was generally unproblematic, and how knowledge of both forms of Chinese was beneficial in their academic and social lives. Across the data collected, few students spoke of transferring knowledge and understandings across languages or from one language classroom to another. In addition, when asked what they thought the main reason the school offered the bilingual program might be, a common student response was to remark on the multicultural and multilingual population of the school.

Q: Why do you think this school has that kind of program?
A: Because in [this suburb] there are a lot of Asian people, so, yeah, that’s what I think.

*Section of group interview transcript: comment from Year Five Hakka background girl.*

page 350
Q: This is one of the few schools that have a bilingual program. Have you ever thought about that? Why we have one here?
A: Is it because we have lots of Asians here?
Section of group interview transcript: comment from Year Four Hakka background girl.

As such, the key benefits of additive bilingual education programs in terms of nurturing, in a mutually supportive manner, linguistic abilities and conceptual knowledge in both languages of instruction seemed, not surprisingly, under-recognised in students’ reflections on their bilingual learning at the school.

Teacher data, while acknowledging the importance of first language maintenance as an important marker of cultural identity, and as a means to foster second language acquisition, revealed teachers sought greater professional, research-derived understanding about L1-L2 transfer. More will be said on this matter in relation to pedagogical implications of this study, but a need for greater understandings of bilingual learning theory certainly emerged from the data collected from teachers.

Parents, however, were slightly more confident that their children’s bilingual learning facilitated transfer of linguistic knowledge and conceptual understandings between both languages of instruction. This however, was expressed in general terms, with parents focussing more on the vulnerability of the students’ home languages and, in wishing to protect these, saw both socio-cultural and educational benefits. While some parents passionately articulated a belief in L1-L2 interdependence, in general, the overall data revealed a need for the linguistic and conceptual benefits of bilingual education to be made more explicit to the parents at the school, as well as the teachers and students. Cummins has recently (2004) remarked upon the need to “teach for transfer”, whereby learners are assisted to make clearer cross-linguistic connections between structures and features of the languages of
instruction, as well as content taught through those languages. More is said on this matter in relation to pedagogical implications of this study.

In terms of student achievement data, while not possible to link, in a causative way, bilingual learning to students’ progress towards English reading, writing, listening and speaking targets and benchmarks, the Year Six data, in particular, highlight that bilingual learning is not detrimental to English-language achievement. These data are supported by the extensive research which documents that it can take five to seven years for students to reach levels of academic language proficiency in English, even in settings that offer strong forms of socio-cultural support (Collier, 1989, 1995; Cummins, 2000a, 2001b; Hakuta, 2001; Hakuta et al., 2000; Ovando & Collier, 1998; Thomas & Collier, 1997). The school’s student achievement level data drawn on in this study also lend support to the thresholds hypothesis (Cummins, 1976; Toukomaa & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1977) in terms of the cross-linguistic, cognitive benefits of additive bilingual education that support the L1 beyond merely foundational levels.

Very much in the realm of the personal dimension of bilingual development comes the understanding that students from LBOTEs in Australian schools cannot and should not be narrowly defined as an ‘essentialised’ type of learner. So, while Romaine’s (1995) conceptualisation of six types of bilingual learner may provide a useful construct, attentiveness to specific learners in specific contexts will highlight issues of societal power, subordination of some minority groups, or socio-economics: factors that have been clearly linked to student learning outcomes (Teese & Polesel, 2003).

As such, common pathways to common goals cannot be assumed in English-language learners’ education. Students’ pathways to bilingualism and biliteracy must be seen as highly individual, despite commonalities in relation to rather rapid acquisition of conversational language proficiency and the
significantly longer period required to achieve native-speaker-like levels of academic language proficiency. Schools, teachers and parents would do well to support students’ development of bilingual skills by being attentive to the students’ individual situations, preferred learning styles and accompanying personal motivation, aptitude and attitudinal dispositions (see Lightbown & Spada, 1999).

The important implication for the school under investigation is that the L1-L2 interface needs to be addressed more coherently at all levels. Increased teacher awareness of bilingual learning theory and research support for this form of instruction would facilitate clearer explication of the L1 and L2 links to students and parents. In light of the need to enable students to make stronger conceptual and linguistic connections between their two languages of instruction at school, the following recommendations are posited.

**Recommendation 2:**
Teachers of bilingual learners need to become more knowledgeable about the nature and structure of the languages spoken by their students. This knowledge will assist teachers to help students make **linguistic connections** between the languages of instruction.

**Recommendation 3:**
Teachers of bilingual learners need to frequently share information about the teaching and learning that has taken place in their English/L1 classrooms. This shared knowledge will assist teachers to help students to make **conceptual connections** between their learning in each of their languages of instruction.
**Recommendation 4:**
Children’s individual differences as learners, and structural barriers to learning faced by certain individuals and groups of students, make it necessary for teachers to understand the personal situations of the bilingual learners in their classrooms, and plan accordingly.

**Metalinguistic Awareness**

Bilingual education most successfully meets the needs of this group of primary school-aged English-language learners when: *Students understand what they are being taught, why they are engaged in that kind of learning, and can articulate coherently that understanding.*

Teacher awareness of the structures and features of the students’ home languages and those taught at the school can highlight the challenges English-language learners face in the acquisition of a second language. In other words, development of a ‘teacher metalinguistic awareness’ (Andrews, 1999) is necessary in order to better support both the L1 and L2 development of students. In developing this knowledge, teachers develop a metalanguage for talking about languages and learning, which can then become a vehicle for engaging students in reflection and discussion about their own language learning.

For teachers at the school under investigation, a greater level of metalinguistic awareness, coupled with greater certitude about the theoretical precepts of bilingual education, emerge as school needs. Professional development around the structures and features of community languages could be facilitated by outside experts, or by staff members with bilingual skills. Staff, team and curriculum meetings that already operate at the school could be the forums for this sharing and development of additional linguistic knowledge.
These planning forums also offer possibilities for teachers to make more explicit teaching links to students’ learning in other language classrooms, enabling a stronger level of teacher metalinguistic awareness to develop.

Students, as already mentioned, need to develop a clearer understanding of why they learn in the ways they do, and to develop a metalanguage for talking about this learning. This can be facilitated through engaging students in regular reflection and discussion about what they are learning, how they are learning, and why it is taking place in the ways it is (Auerbach, 1999; August & Hakuta, 1997; Cummins, 2000a; O’Malley & Chamot, 1990). In relation to the students in my study, the types of discussions in which they were engaged during the data collection period were highly revealing, and regular opportunities for this type of student-teacher dialogue around and about language and learning need to find a place in the school’s classrooms. When students are unable to articulate coherently why they feel the school teaches them in the way it does, it highlights that they need to be involved – at an appropriate level – in deeper discussion and negotiation around classroom teaching and learning practices.

This concern brings to mind the calls for greater student voice in educational research (Bourdieu, 1999; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; May, 1998; Moran & Hakuta, 1995; Rampton, 1995), and the need for students to be more than the “silent recipients of schooling” (Nieto, 1999: 191). I argue that this need for audibility is especially important for bilingual learners like those in this study for two reasons. First, in the Australian context, bilingually educated learners from minority language backgrounds are involved in a very uncommon form of learning and, as shown by this study, may not be fully aware as to why they are learning in this manner. Second, as children from linguistic and cultural backgrounds that are all-too-often undervalued, increased input into their learning allows for increased opportunity to demonstrate the richness of their knowledge.
Development of a metalanguage by bilingual learners would enable them to express more lucidly this knowledge, as well as compare linguistic structures and features across languages (for example, noting spelling patterns or how plural nouns are constructed in English and Vietnamese). In addition, the building of stronger connections between what has been taught and learned in the different language classrooms is made possible. Several professional publications focus on the development of students’ powers of reflection, knowledge sharing and goal setting (see Cutting & Wilson, 2004; English & Dean, 2001; Murdoch & Wilson, 2004; Wilson & Wing Jan, 1993). When undertaken with bilingual learners in the context of individual reflection and group sharing, such structures and approaches offer powerful potential for explicit links between L1 and L2 language and content to be articulated in an appropriate student metalanguage.

The discussions that arise from such reflective practices also provide an avenue for student-teacher dialogue about learning challenges, and an opportunity is created for students to clarify and offer their thoughts on the forms of learning in which they are engaged. The possibilities for increasing parent understanding and input into school decision making also need to be noted here in that increased opportunities and mechanisms for talking about language and learning can only assist, affirm and augment their role as a vital partner in the school education of their children. As such, the following recommendations for practice are offered.

**Recommendation 5:**

Students need regular opportunities to reflect on their language use and learning. This provides them with a powerful metalanguage for expressing understandings of language and knowledge transfer practised by skilled bilingual learners.
**Recommendation 6:**
Teachers – through an increased metalinguistic awareness of their own – need to engage students in more explicit discussion about why they are taught in the way they are. This can result in students’ learning having a greater sense of meaning and relevance for them. Parents also need to be involved in this negotiation of classroom learning.

**Self-esteem, Self-worth and Identity Construction**

Bilingual education most successfully meets the needs of this group of primary school-aged English-language learners when: Students’ self-esteem and self-worth is enhanced through the construction of positive identities based on bilingual ability and bicultural understandings.

A personal sense of self is constructed around many interrelated, sometimes contradictory elements (see Hall, 1996; Luke et al., 1996; Miller, 2003; Norton, 2000). Personal identities can be defined by family connections; by feelings of belonging to a local, regional, or national community; by one’s religious beliefs or political affiliation; by identifying with other people due to a shared language, culture or history; or a feeling of being part of a community defined by one’s ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, or (dis)ability. One’s languages: those languages and forms of language used (or not used) in specific social settings, can be important markers of identity (Bell, 2004; May, 2003; Miller, 2003; Norton, 2000; Norton Peirce, 1995) and, as Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004b) argue:

languages may not only be ‘markers of identity’ but also sites of resistance, empowerment, solidarity or discrimination. (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004b: 4)
This study has revealed students to be constructing complex, largely positive, identities based around, it would seem, ethnic and national identification, as well as perceptions of themselves as endowed with enviable and highly useful bilingual skills. Students’ constructions or negotiations of identities that are positive and empowered form a centrepiece to Cummins’ notion of transformative pedagogy (Cummins, 2000a) as well as Miller’s (2003) conceptualisation of positive student self-representation. Both positions address the issue of true empowerment for language minority students and speakers of non-standard forms of the dominant language of a country (see also Auerbach, 1995; Delpit, 1988; Giroux, 2000; Macedo, 2000a).

Schools that affirm students’ home languages and cultures to the extent that they allow them to construct positive bilingual, bicultural identities are seen as offering the necessary socio-cultural support (Collier, 1995; Thomas & Collier, 1997) or identity affirmation (Cummins, 2000a) on which improved and empowered educational outcomes can be built. These notions link to what has been termed the ‘recognition factor’ (Comber et al., 2001) which relates to the “extent to which what children do counts, and they can see it counts” (Comber & Barnett, 2003: 6) (their emphasis). For often under-resourced schools with populations drawn largely from poor indigenous, immigrant or refugee communities, the need to foster linguistic and cultural pride and positive self-esteem as precursors to improved learning outcomes cannot be stressed strongly enough. As such, the following recommendation is made to emphasise this point.

**Recommendation 7:**

Schools, teachers and students need to recognise that hybrid and shifting identities are a feature of life and schooling in the 21st century. Students’ identities need to be enhanced through schools actively emphasising and promoting bilingual abilities and bicultural affinities as assets, not deficits.
This notion of empowered, positive identity construction links closely to political aspects of a transformative pedagogy, and highlights once again, the overlap in these dimensions of learning. In order to build students’ self-esteem and confidence through positive identity formation, societal messages that undermine the identities of students from non-mainstream linguistic and cultural backgrounds need to be countered. As such, the political dimension of catering for the language and learning needs of English-language learners becomes significant. That dimension is explored further in the following section.

**Research Implications: The Political Dimension**

The political dimension of bilingual learning, within the context of this study, relates to: issues of student and parent empowerment and involvement in the decision making processes of the school; the status within the school of the students’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds; and the degree to which the school adopts a pro-social justice stance that advocates for the rights of the community it serves. Within this frame, the research implications specifically linked to the political dimension of bilingualism and biliteracy of English-language learners are now explored.

**Student and Parent Empowerment**

Bilingual education most successfully meets the needs of this group of primary school-aged English-language learners when: *The often silenced or marginalised voices of immigrant and refugee parents and their children form a centrepiece to meaningful home-school dialogue which, in turn, informs school decision making.*

This study has revealed both students and parents at the school under investigation to be keen to discuss, and considered in their articulation of issues related to language and learning at the school. Participation at all stages of the research was very high, and both written and spoken data revealed careful contemplation of the issues raised. Students, individually
and in groups, were keen to reflect, and share their perspectives on their learning. Parents, when given the opportunity to engage in non-threatening conversation in their first languages, presented passionate and powerful opinions about their aspirations for their children, and the centrality of school education in the realisation of these hopes.

In other words, it is the notion of ‘agency’ that is at the heart of this issue. Drawing on Giroux (1992) and Norton and Toohey (2001), agency has been defined by Miller as the degree and ways in which:

people are able to take a standpoint, to show initiative even where there may be asymmetry of power relations, and to use discursive resources to represent themselves and to influence situations to their own advantage. (Miller, 2003: 115)

Miller warns of ‘institutional deafness’ that marginalises or excludes those whose lack of English, or variety of English conveys little ‘capital’ or status in settings which value certain spoken and written discourses above others. The high degree to which students and parents at the school I investigated were willing to voice their perspectives on language and learning issues highlights how important it is that they be audible in the provision of educational arrangements at the school.

Consequently, this research has revealed how essential it is that opportunities be created in schools for this kind of exchange of ideas and perspectives. In addition to the professional knowledge teachers bring to their work, the insights of parents and students should be seen as important ways to augment these professional understandings with the deeply contextualised perspectives of lived experiences, community beliefs, linguistic practices, and cultural conventions of which teachers are often unaware. Critical ethnographers stress the importance of this dialogue in sociological research (Anderson, 1989; Carspecken, 1996; Fine, 1994; Jordan & Yeomans, 1995; May, 1994a, 1997); and student and parent participation is emphasised in most studies on school effectiveness, whether those focussed specifically on the
often marginalised indigenous, immigrant or refugee communities (Auerbach, 1999; Delpit, 1999; Lucas et al., 1990; Samway & McKeown, 1999), or on studies less attentive to societal power relationships (Cuttance, 2001; Joyce et al., 1999; Levine & Lezotte, 1990; Mortimore et al., 1988; Reynolds & Cuttance, 1992).

In light of my own research experience within this investigation, augmented by the insights from the related literature, the following recommendation is proposed.

**Recommendation 8:**
Informed school decision making requires that the often marginalised voices of parents and students be heard and valued. This is particularly necessary in linguistically and culturally schools where teachers and school administrators may lack insider knowledge of that community.

**Status of Home Languages and Cultures**

Bilingual education most successfully meets the needs of this group of primary school-aged English-language learners when: *Students’ home languages and cultures are affirmed and valued, and are accorded equal status to that of the majority language and culture.*

Data collected within this research investigation revealed high levels of school-level support for bilingualism. Learning their home language was seen as equally important to learning English by 83 percent of students. These learners also articulated a range of perceived bilingual benefits: from reasons of family and social necessity to intrinsic enjoyment in dual language knowledge and use. While especially the Chinese-background parents saw their children’s English instruction as more vital than Chinese, overall parent data reflected the view that development of English-language and L1 proficiency were entirely compatible, and needed to be strongly emphasised.
in school curriculum planning and delivery. Teachers, while concerned about
the need for students to develop academic language proficiency in English
and seeking reassurance that bilingual education programs foster this,
likewise registered a clear view that bilingual ability was a definite asset for
the students they teach.

As such, the symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991) accorded to bilingualism and
bilingual learning at the school is high. I argue that this value attached to
bilingualism and biliteracy needs to be regularly and explicitly re-iterated to
the students for two reasons. First, the school’s curriculum emphasis on
English, from Years Three to Six, sends a clear message that this is what
matters above all other potential languages of instruction. Therefore, if the
status of languages other than English – particularly those home languages of
the students – is not to be implicitly undervalued, the importance of L1
maintenance and use needs to be made evident. The establishment of
classroom libraries with multilingual texts, instruction that draws explicit
linguistic connections between students’ L1 and English, and the
implementation of curriculum topics that draw strongly on multicultural/
anti-racist perspectives are examples of ways that minority language status
can be heightened, even when instruction in those languages has been
reduced or discontinued (see Carrasquillo & Rodríguez, 2002; Coelho, 1998;
Eckermann, 1994; Gibbons, 1991). At the school researched, these aspects of
supporting home languages and cultures are evident but could be
strengthened through a more explicit focus on teaching for and resourcing of
linguistic and cultural diversity.

Second, even younger students in this study realised that English is the
language of power in mainstream society. This is a reality about which
students need to be aware and, as is discussed later in relation to pedagogy,
about which they should be encouraged to critique and problematise.
However, when confronted by popular media reports often unsympathetic to
those from non-White, non-English-speaking, or non-Christian backgrounds (see, for examples, Bolt, 2004; Robinson, 2003) and for critique, (Lygo, 2004; Manne, 2002) the risk of students devaluing their linguistic and cultural resources becomes more likely, with subsequent detrimental effects for their motivation to learn and overall self-esteem.

While it is not disputed – either in the research literature (Clyne, 2002b; Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Lo Bianco & Freebody, 2001), or by participants in this study – that English is the lingua franca of educational attainment and community engagement in Australia, strong forms of bilingual education can contribute to these learning and societal goals (Baker, 2001; Barratt-Pugh & Rohl, 1994; Cummins, 2000a). Whether constructed as a means to:

- vigorously promote the rights of linguistic minorities (Honkala et al., 1988; Nieto, 2000; Paulston, 1994; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000);
- protect endangered languages or reduce language loss and shift (Clyne, 2001; Clyne & Kipp, 1999; Fishman, 2001a; Wong Fillmore, 2000);
- challenge hegemonic language policies and practices (Corson, 1999; Giroux, 1993; Macedo, 2000a; McLaren & Muñoz, 2000), or
- affirm bilingual/bicultural identities (Cummins, 2000a, 2001b; Lo Bianco, 2003; Miller, 2003),
additive bilingual education programs offer models of practice for improved educational provision for all students through the enhancement of the status of their home languages and cultures. In addition to the school under investigation, other case studies or ethnographies of schools that actively esteem a range of forms of cultural and linguistic knowledge provide examples of exemplary practice. These include examples from international settings (Calderón & Slavin, 2001; Freeman, 1996; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; May, 1994a; Wrigley, 2000) as well as Australia (Barratt-Pugh & Rohl, 2001; Clyne et al., 1995). The curriculum implications of teaching in these settings are discussed in relation to the pedagogical dimension of bilingualism and
bilingual later in this chapter. However, at this point, the idea that schools need to actively respond to discriminatory political, societal or educational discourses in order to affirm the backgrounds and knowledge of their students is posited. As such, the following recommendation is proposed.

**Recommendation 9:**
Schools whose programs embody exemplary bilingual practice and multicultural/anti-racist pedagogies need to be held up as models of educational provision that empower learners and their communities alike.

In reality, this kind of empowerment can threaten the status quo, which is a reason why such a recommendation is unlikely to be seriously taken up by many governments. As such, alternate networks need to be established whereby strategies for empowerment are shared and celebrated. These can be realised through professional associations, industrial organisations, local or regional networks, and on-line forums. Still, grass-roots activism requires, at some point, the imprimatur of governments or funding bodies for the political passion to be translated into policy and practice. In light of this, ongoing political pressure for government policy to affirm diverse linguistic and cultural knowledge needs to be maintained

**Advocacy for Social Justice and Community Rights**

Bilingual education most successfully meets the needs of this group of primary school-aged English-language learners when: *The school takes on an advocacy role in relation to the students’ linguistic rights and welfare needs which often reflect concerns and issues experienced by the local school community.*

The potential for stakeholders in these settings to be agents for change and self-improvement is emphasised. The role of the school as an advocate for these stakeholders is an aspect I wish to stress. My research needs to be understood in terms of the socio-cultural position of the school under investigation, and the ways that it has responded in terms of curriculum and social advocacy to community needs and concerns (see Chapters One and Four where this context is explicated).

Suffice to say, many immigrant, refugee, indigenous and low socio-economic communities around the world operate in similar – or worse – situations of hardship, stress and coercion. In many school communities, conflagrations of racism, neglect, under-resourcing and official coercion, form incendiary combinations which directly impact on student attendance, engagement and achievement. For researchers at such schools to concentrate only on personal or pedagogical dimensions of learning would be to overlook a vital component facilitating (or inhibiting) students’ educational progress.

The responses the school under investigation made to issues of refugee welfare and justice, and racism in the community revealed commitment on the part of the school to the welfare of the students and their families that extended far beyond the walls of the classrooms. I acknowledge that it is extremely difficult to make strong connections between this type of support and improved student learning outcomes. However, I contend that the deep levels of trust and empathy that develop through this kind of school-community engagement have the potential to foster stronger partnerships amongst and between students, teachers, parents and community members. Enhanced parent involvement in the school, and increased understanding by teachers and school administrators of the home lives of their students is a likely outcome. These salient home-school partnerships are an integral feature of academically successful schools (Cairney & Ruge, 1998; Cuttance, 2001; Delpit, 1999; Levine & Lezotte, 1995; Thomas & Collier, 1997) and
contribute to what Comber and Kamler (Comber & Kamler, 2005) define as ‘turn-around pedagogies’ whereby deficit assumptions about schools in low SES, high ESL/indigenous communities are countered.

Yet schools and teachers often remain ignorant of the full extent of the symbolic violence perpetrated on disempowered and disenfranchised communities. Delpit (1988) asserts that the good intentions of “progressive” educators are insufficient to empower students to adequately function within the culture of power. She observes that those with power are frequently least aware of its existence, while those with less power are often most aware of this deleterious reality of their lives (Delpit, 1995). Like Delpit, Cummins (1986, 2000a, 2001b, 2000) and others (Beykont, 2000; Calderón & Carreón, 2000; Giroux, 2000; Lippi-Green, 1997; Macedo, 1994; Nieto, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000) have long advocated schools’ engagement and identification with the social justice and human rights issues confronting students, their families and their communities. It is drawing on these positions, along with acknowledgement of the socio-political context of the school under investigation, that the following recommendation is made.

**Recommendation 10:**

Schools need to recognise that student learning is strongly linked to the social context of that learning. Schools that form active parent-community partnerships to advocate for social justice and confront discriminatory discourses are laying important foundations on which improved educational outcomes can be built.

Student and parent empowerment, developed through a school stance that strongly affirms and defends linguistic and cultural diversity, form the centrepiece to the political dimension of enhancing learning opportunities for students like those at the centre of this study. The school policy and classroom practice ramifications of this political awareness are explored next.
in relation to the pedagogical dimension of biliteracy and bilingualism for English-language learners.

**Research Implications: The Pedagogical Dimension**

The pedagogical dimension of bilingual learning, within the context of this study, relates to issues of curriculum provision, and the teaching and learning arrangements in which this is organised. Specifically, a focus on pedagogy necessitates examination of the place students’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds occupy within a school’s teaching and learning program, and the degree to which an inclusive (or exclusive) curriculum enhances (or diminishes) students’ opportunities for bilingual development, knowledge acquisition, and critical engagement with texts and ideas. Within this pedagogical dimension, the need to engage students in cognitively challenging content within a supportive socio-cultural framework is canvassed, along with specific curriculum interventions and instructional considerations, such as inquiry-based integrated curriculum, critical literacy/critical multiculturalism, and attentiveness to the multiple discourses or forms of literacy needed in today’s (and predicted in tomorrow’s) world. All are posited as vital components of a transformative pedagogy (Cummins, 2000a, 2001b) which, I argue, best meets the language and learning needs of bilingual learners. The specific implications and recommendations for transformative pedagogical practice – as arising from this research investigation – are now detailed.

**A Cognitively Challenging, Additive Bilingual Program**

| Bilingual education most successfully meets the needs of this group of primary school-aged English-language learners when: English-language learners have the opportunity to learn in a cognitively challenging, additive bilingual program that sustains and develops the L1 while teaching and developing proficiency in the L2. |
Outdated deficit notions of ESL learners or students from poor immigrant or refugee backgrounds inevitably result in a watered down, cognitively diminished curriculum that focuses on basic skills without the higher order, critical application of these skills. As such, students are often engaged in learning activities that are unchallenging and about which they feel little engagement or interest. Luke (2003), in defining “Productive Pedagogies”, argues that development of basic skills must take place within an intellectually demanding curriculum for all learners. He maintains that “basic skills are necessary but not sufficient to turn around the performance of your most at-risk kids” (Luke, 2003: 75).

Drawing on insights from studies in African-American communities, Delpit’s (1999) views concur. She urges for traditionally disenfranchised students to be taught the language conventions and strategies that are essential for school success, but within the context of a curriculum that teaches more, rich and stimulating content to these students. This point is re-iterated and extended by Cummins (2000a, 2004, 2005) in relation to bilingual learners, whereby he argues that maximum cognitive engagement, alongside maximum identity investment is essential in the development of academic expertise in the areas of literacy and biliteracy.

It is widely argued (Baker, 2001; Ballenger, 1999; Barratt-Pugh, 2000a; Brisk, 1998; Cummins, 2000a, 2001b, 2003b; Krashen, 1997; Wong Fillmore, 1991a) that additive bilingual learning arrangements offer the best means by which cognitively challenging, age appropriate instruction can be taught to second language learners. While the data collection in my research did not include classroom observation of teaching styles or an audit of curriculum content, the perspectives of students, parents and teachers in the study highlighted the instructional, learning benefits of the program.
In focus group interviews, students remarked that bilingual learning was certainly challenging and more work than learning monolingually, but a form of instruction in which they were pleased to have been engaged, as it made their learning more intelligible. This was particularly evident in interviews with Years Five and Six students who reflected that bilingual learning, while more intense in terms of workload, had helped them more quickly make sense of both school and their schooling at the beginning of their primary education.

Many parents in the study saw the bilingual program as a mechanism by which students’ conceptual knowledge could be augmented without the impediment of struggling with an English only instructional program. Teachers, in their questionnaire responses, consistently expressed satisfaction that the students were being challenged academically and cognitively. If anything, some teachers felt empathy and concern that the pressure of learning in two languages might be onerous for some, and that more opportunities for explorative play might need to be found. In my personal experience in teaching in the school’s bilingual program, I often heard it remarked upon by teachers that there was no time for “busy work”: rather all teaching time needed to be focussed and purposeful in order for cognitively challenging, age appropriate content to be taught.

Perhaps “teaching for transfer” (Cummins, 2004) between the languages of instruction could have been more explicitly emphasised at the school, notwithstanding the considerable amount of team planning of curriculum content amongst teachers working in the bilingual program. Nonetheless, I argue that the bilingual learning arrangements at the school advantage English-language learners through the introduction of age appropriate, challenging content in ways that are context-embedded (Cummins, 2000a), comprehensible and transferable.
Despite some evidence of language shift towards English as the students got older, the fact that their bilingualism was maintained across many domains and targets of language use highlights the additive nature of the program. Extending the duration of the program, while supported by research evidence that shows late-exit bilingual learning to be most effective for both L1 maintenance and L2 acquisition (Ramírez et al., 1991; Thomas & Collier, 1997), was less enthusiastically received by students, parents and teachers. However, it is noteworthy that, at interview, some students felt that their L1 skills had diminished after the cessation of their bilingual learning.

As such, the benefits of extending bilingual learning opportunities into the upper year levels at the school need serious consideration. Such a proposal has, admittedly, enormous consequences for resourcing, staffing and scheduling. Yet, the potential benefits in terms of higher level L1-L2 academic language interface, ongoing support for students’ vulnerable first languages, and enhanced biliterate abilities and bicultural identities, more than justify earnest consideration of the idea of late-exit bilingual learning.

I believe that the range of research participants’ perceptions about late-exit bilingual learning (in relation to whether they felt the bilingual program should be extended into the upper primary grades) links to both lack of accurate theoretical knowledge about bilingual education across the school community, and to pressures felt by teachers to move students towards year level English benchmarks that do not take into account the variety of learning paths of ESL students. This point is taken up in relation to discussion of well-informed teaching later in this chapter but, at this point, the following recommendation is apt.
**Recommendation 11:**
Despite increasing pressure to focus on English literacy basics and benchmarks, an additive bilingual program, reflecting an “English Plus” orientation which has proven educational and academic benefits, needs championing as a means of engaging English-language learners in age-appropriate curriculum content and cognitive processes. A possible extension of this form of learning beyond early years classrooms needs to be considered.

**Critical Orientations to Teaching and Learning**

Bilingual education most successfully meets the needs of this group of primary school-aged English-language learners when: *Students are empowered as critical and reflective thinkers who are able to recognise, critique and respond to power imbalances and social iniquities, particularly in relation to the symbolic capital accorded to different forms of cultural and linguistic knowledge.*

Nowhere are the boundaries of the political and the pedagogical more blurred than in discussion of critical approaches to teaching and learning. Shor (1999) remarks that critical literacy:

> connects the political and the personal, the public and the private, the global and the local, the economic and the pedagogical, for reinventing our lives and promoting justice in the place of inequity. (Shor, 1999: 1)

However, in order to pursue a discussion about the classroom applications of critical educational approaches, it has been placed within the pedagogical dimension of this discussion.

Critical literacy, as a key component of a transformative pedagogy, figures large in the literature. Lankshear and Knobel (1997) link critical literacy to improved levels of engagement in society and more active citizenship. Luke, Comber and O’Brien (1996) position it as an essential skill for negotiating meaning and becoming empowered in the 21st Century, a position also held by those articulating models of improved teaching in minority or marginalised communities (Auerbach, 1999; Cummins, 2003b; Delpit, 1995).
Freire and Macedo (1987) posit the idea of reading the word and the world, seeing this as a precondition for self-empowerment and social progress.

When applied to the teaching of English-language learners within a bilingual program, critical literacy should build on their foundational literacy knowledge. It should engage students in examination of taken-for-granted assumptions about language, enabling them to critique the comparative status or capital accorded to different languages or varieties of a language. Christensen (1999) argues that, in this way, critical literacy equips students to “read” power relationships at the same time as it imparts academic skills. In her classroom, students responded to the culturally narrow standardised assessment texts they were required to sit by developing one of their own – assessing the knowledge they considered important.

Critical literacy sits comfortably alongside ideas of critical multiculturalism (May, 1994a, 1998, 1999a; Nieto, 1999, 2004). Just as critical literacy empowers students to critique texts, critical multiculturalism – overtly anti-racist and pro-justice – facilitates students’ questioning and responding to restrictive representations and differential valuing of diverse forms of cultural knowledge. I argue that the data collected in my study reveals a greater need for more critical approaches to curriculum planning and delivery to be adopted.

In analysing the student data collected in this investigation, it was clear that students were acutely aware of the value and importance of their home languages in their own lives, as well as conscious that, ultimately, proficiency in English was essential in order to succeed academically. In almost all cases, they articulated this understanding quite unproblematically in discussion, reflecting an acceptance, on their part, of society’s privileging of English and undervaluing of multilingualism. Fortunately, the students’ own bilingual identities seem positively enhanced by the school’s position on linguistic and
cultural diversity. I argue that a more critical examination of languages within society would further enhance such students’ pride in their bilingual ability, and lead them to be more critical of discourses that aim to silence non-dominant forms of linguistic and cultural expression.

Amongst teachers’ questionnaire responses, there was little evidence of serious critique in relation to the hegemonic position of English in schools and society, and how this potentially diminishes and devalues the skills of bilingual learners. Critical approaches to language and literacy as articulated in the Australian context by Comber (1997a), Luke (2000) and O’Brien (2001) have not impacted on school policy and classroom practice at the school under investigation. Understandably, foundational understandings of texts, linguistic structures and features and strategies have been emphasised. Were more critical orientations to curriculum pursued at this already politically aware school, a more assertive stance championing bilingualism and biliteracy – more closely mirroring that of the parents – may result. This should not be read as a criticism of current school literacy pedagogy, given how innovative – even defiant – they currently are in terms of curriculum organisation. Rather, it is a suggestion as to how an already sound program could be augmented.

In light of this, the following recommendation that critical literacy approaches suffuse this school’s – and all – additive bilingual programs is made here.

**Recommendation 12:**

Critical literacy and critical multiculturalism, which allow students to ‘read the word and read the world’ need to underpin bilingual education programs, so that students are able to understand, critique and respond to the unequal status accorded to diverse linguistic and cultural knowledge in society.
Students’ Discourse Needs

Bilingual education most successfully meets the needs of this group of primary school-aged English-language learners when: *Teachers are aware of the various discourse needs of young people in the 21st Century, and plan a curriculum that builds on home literacy practices, and teaches students the forms of literate communication required for success in school and access to a wide range of post-school or out-of-school options.*

Throughout this exploration of the personal, political and pedagogical dimensions of bilingualism and biliteracy, the notion of reading, writing, listening and speaking as being embedded in social and cultural practices has been emphasised. This situated view of the range of literacy practices, events and contexts in which students of today are engaged is central to the position adopted by the New Literacy Studies school of thought (Gee, 1996b, 2002; Maybin, 1994; Street, 1995, 2000) as well as those articulating a ‘Multiliteracies’ pedagogy (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000a; Kalantzis *et al.*, 2002; Lo Bianco, 2000a; New London Group, 1996).

In Gee’s terms, all of us operate within a number of specific socially-situated contexts in which we understand the linguistic and non-verbal systems for appropriate engagement in those ‘Discourses’ (Gee, 1996b, 2000, 2002). Likewise, Multiliteracies pedagogy, as first articulated by the New London Group (1996) reflects the understanding that enhanced social futures for today’s school students require them to successfully operate within and negotiate between the diverse linguistic and cultural discourses* of the 21st Century world, especially those linked to new technologies and the multiple modes of communicating meaning. This need is reflected in the latest Victorian *Essential Learning* curriculum documents (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2005a, 2005b), in which the Victorian government

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5 Gee (2002) articulates small “d” discourses as being “language in use” whereas he defines “big D” Discourses as “ways of ‘being and doing’ that allow people to enact and/or recognise a specific and distinctive socially-situated identity.” (p. 160).
stresses the necessity for students to develop understandings of the range of texts and contexts in which language is used.

In the case of English-language learners, L1 maintenance with L2 instruction enculturates them into new forms of linguistic and cultural expression (those traditionally valued in schools) while supporting and extending literacies valued in the home. Within my study, a strong emphasis on the anticipated or hoped-for educational and social futures of the students was evident in data collected from the students themselves, their parents and their teachers. Students saw their school instruction, particularly the issue of languages of instruction, as irrevocably linked to their future prospects. When considering bilingual benefits, dual language proficiency was strongly linked by students to perceptions that it would assist later school learning and enhance employment opportunities. Students linked their bilingual ability to the achievement of happiness and fulfilment on a family and social level.

Parents also saw the dual foundations for future happiness that their children’s bilingualism would bring. First language maintenance was seen as building a strengthened sense of family identity and cohesion, particularly on an inter-generational level. English language proficiency was seen as providing the best opportunities for their children’s lives to be “better than ours”, in the words of one Vietnamese-background parent.

Teachers’ data responses reflected a focus on language proficiency (particularly in English) as a vehicle for student empowerment in the future. No explicit mention of the need to empower students in different discourses within their L1 or English emerged from this questionnaire, which is not surprising given that there was no explicit question which asked teachers to articulate the language skills in which they felt students specifically needed to be particularly proficient. Given my understanding of school programs, I
know emphasis is placed on teaching different written and spoken genres within the framework of contextualised integrated curriculum planning.

However, as with critical literacy curriculum perspectives, I feel awareness of the discourse needs of students could be better understood by teachers and parents, both in terms of linking home and school literacies, and in relation to planning instruction in the knowledge of the forms of literacy students require in today’s increasingly technology-driven, multimodal world. The classroom implications of this are explored in the next section of this chapter but, in light of this necessary awareness of students’ discourse needs, the following pedagogical recommendation is made.

**Recommendation 13:**

Bilingual students need to be able to use both their languages to communicate effectively in a range of social and educational settings. Teachers’ awareness of these discourse needs will assist them to teach students the communication skills necessary for full access and engagement in the world of the 21st Century.

**Theoretically and Pedagogically Sound Teaching**

Bilingual education most successfully meets the needs of this group of primary school-aged English-language learners when: *Teachers operate from a well-informed theoretical and pedagogical base that builds students’ academic bilingual proficiency through explicit, contextualised and scaffolded instruction.*

Innovative language programs, like those documented and investigated in this research, require considerable passion, vision, and commitment on the part of the teachers, students and parents who enact, participate in and support their daily implementation. The need for a sound theoretical underpinning to these programs is axiomatic, but the strongest of foundations
can easily be neglected or lost sight of, particularly when a program takes root and becomes part of established school practice.

As such, schools and teachers need to maintain a focus on established teaching principles, be able to state clearly why they teach in the way that they do, and to articulate this confidently and comprehensibly to the wider community. Teaching and learning practices should draw on theoretically sound and research-supported pedagogies that address the language and learning needs of the school community in which they are implemented.

Recently, Wilkinson (2005) has noted that robust theoretical frameworks can be developed through examination of existing research, through on-site investigations carried out by external researchers, or via collaborative studies undertaken by teachers and academics. NcNaughton (2002) has remarked that teachers’ experiential knowledge about successful pedagogies in specific settings should not be overlooked, as these understandings embody a necessary dialogic relationship between theory and practice.

Additive bilingual education has been shown to effectively meet the language and learning needs of both majority and minority language background students in a number of vastly differing international educational contexts (Baker, 2001; Cummins, 2000a). A deeper awareness and understanding of this body of research evidence needs to permeate the daily practices of teachers at the school researched here. Many of these teachers, despite the deep understanding of students’ needs and of their own successful practice, expressed a need for greater certainty about the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of bilingual approaches to teaching.

Failure to be able to justify the pedagogical approaches in which one engages is highly problematic for two reasons. First, it opens teachers and schools to possible accusations that they implement programs insufficiently
conceptualised, inadequately justified, and unsupported by research. Progressive language policies are often targets of ill-informed or deliberately misleading attacks as Dudley-Marling and Edelsky (2001b) document in a number of case studies of innovative practice. Second, inability to justify and account for one’s teaching potentially undermines staff morale, as the implementation of a specific program, in such circumstances, relies on good faith, not good judgement. I find that – in the case of the school under investigation – the amount of program goodwill is high, but theory- or research-driven certitude about implementing bilingual education with English-language learners is low.

I argue, therefore, that it is essential that schools enacting innovative pedagogies maintain an ongoing, professional dialogue about how and why they teach the ways they do, and revisiting and updating their knowledge of the research-based and theoretical positions that underpin school-level pedagogical decisions. This again brings to mind Andrews’ (1999) call for a greater ‘teacher metalinguistic awareness’, which – in the context of this school – I argue needs to embrace both the development by teachers of a deep understanding about the language(s) they teach, and an ability to articulate to themselves, and to the students, ideas and issues central to the development of bilingualism and biliteracy. This ability would facilitate a more confident implementation of bilingual learning, would more effectively link home and school languages, and would enable student learning to be positioned in such a way that linguistic connections are made by the students between the known and the unknown; the familiar and the unfamiliar.

Scaffolded instruction (Gibbons, 2002; Hammond, 2001b; Wood et al., 1976) where existing student knowledge is reaffirmed and built upon, allows for students to learn new linguistic and cultural forms of knowledge in an additive way. This form of pedagogical framework, already a strong feature of the school’s programs, is contextualised and supported and allows
additional discourses to be added to students’ spoken and written repertoires without supplanting or undermining those they already possess. This form of learning is consistent with notions of apprenticeship (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) whereby learning takes place through social interaction within a supportive community of practice, as already discussed in the literature review in Chapter Two.

In addition, the planning and implementation of inquiry-based integrated curriculum topics is an established feature of pedagogy at the school, central to the way classroom teaching is organised. This contextualised, interdisciplinary form of curriculum provision makes explicit links between curriculum content and the linguistic and non-linguistic (artwork, mathematical representations, physical) ways or processes for displaying this knowledge.

Teachers at the school possess a stronger ability to discuss and justify the beliefs and benefits of teaching and learning through scaffolded instruction and integrated curriculum planning than they do in respect to bilingual instruction. In essence then, teachers of bilingual learners require a deeper understanding and a stronger metalanguage for talking about their bilingual classroom practice. This can only be achieved through an improved understanding that this form of teaching is pedagogically sound, and once this is achieved, an ability to articulate this better to those critical or questioning would develop.

Many studies of school effectiveness for second language learners, children living in poverty, and young people from indigenous or marginalised communities indicate that pedagogical approaches that emphasise explicit instruction that moves from context-embedded to context-reduced, scaffolds students’ linguistic and conceptual development, and supports first and subsequent languages (or varieties of language) best serve these students.
These studies and models, explored comprehensively in Chapter Two’s literature review (see, for example, Brisk, 2000; Coelho, 1998; Cummins, 2001b; Delpit, 1995, 1999; Gregory & Williams, 2000a; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995b; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Lucas et al., 1990; May, 1994a; Nieto, 2004; Ovando & Collier, 1998; Thomas & Collier, 1997) all offer support and strategies to schools struggling with issues of educational access, equity, engagement and opportunity. They provide the basis for exemplary practice that schools like that under investigation should draw upon for inspiration and reassurance. As such, the final pedagogical recommendation for moving towards a transformative pedagogy is posited.

**Recommendation 14:**
Classroom teaching needs to draw on research-supported and theoretically-sound pedagogical principles and practices. Opportunities for teachers to keep up to date with current research in the field of bilingual education, as well as share classroom insights and successes would enhance their sense of professional certitude and support them in the challenge of implementing such an innovative pedagogical arrangement.

**Conclusion**
It is undeniable that parents all over the world want the best for their children. They want them to be able to access the educational and material benefits that society has to offer. Arguably, this position is even more true for immigrant and refugee families who have relocated to a new country to explore a life they hope will present more opportunities, and less fear and violence. They understand – as this research reveals – that proficiency in the language of power (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993) in their new homeland is inextricably linked to their and their children’s future opportunities and options. But it need not mean that this entails (or should entail) the loss of language and culture of their former country.
One’s home languages and cultures represent a large part of one’s identity, one’s personal biography, one’s life experiences, and how one frames and views the world. As stated by a Brazilian writer, speaking of a setting socially and geographically very different to that of Australia:

In Brazil, when our children get married, we say we gain a new son or a new daughter and the family keeps on growing. When we immigrate, we should gain a new homeland, a larger family, and a new language and culture. But we should not have to lose the language and culture we already have. (Souza, 2000: 19)

Yet, despite the distant origin of this statement, it resonates closely to the voices of those parents in this study. When asked to comment on those politicians or media identities who aggressively promote an assimilationist agenda in relation to linguistic and cultural minorities in Australia, several parents commented that maintaining a dual sense of ethnic and cultural identity might be what best serves their children’s – and society’s – needs.

This view exemplifies what much of a transformative pedagogy for bilingualism and biliteracy, as I define it, embodies. Through teaching that emphasises additive bilingualism, students’ develop language skills that are critical and questioning, as well as transferable and transportable.

Programs that aim to enhance the life chances of racial, linguistic and cultural minorities or those living in poverty often face vilification from those who see the inherent challenges posed by these initiatives. Yet bilingual education programs for minority language speakers need not be seen as divisive initiatives that diminish possibilities for communication between people. Rather, they should be seen as an additive mechanism by which a community’s myriad linguistic and cultural resources can be maximised to everyone’s benefit, and from which everyone’s individual and group identities can be affirmed. Attending to the personal, political and pedagogical dimensions of English-language learners’ transition to
bilingualism and biliteracy is a framework within which this goal is more possible.

More research into areas of bilingual learning is needed in order to both improve the quality of programs currently in existence, and to act as models for ongoing innovative practice. These possibilities are discussed in the next, final chapter of this thesis. Enacting progressive language policies is an ongoing challenge but, as Dudley-Marling and Edelsky (2001a) argue, the goal is too important to fail.
CHAPTER TEN : FINAL RESEARCH REFLECTIONS

If they could be good in both languages, English would be their stepping stone in this society and Vietnamese would help them to maintain their culture. If they could be good in both languages, their lives would be better than ours.

(Vietnamese-background parent – translation of original comments)

Stepping Stones to a Better Life

Earlier in this thesis, I cited Nieto’s (2004) proposal of what should underpin an education that might make a difference to the lives of all children, especially those from immigrant, indigenous or refugee backgrounds. It is fitting, at this concluding point in the thesis, to be reminded of these fundamentals: that, in order to be worthwhile, any educational philosophy or program must attend to issues of:

- raising the achievement of all students and thus providing them with an equal and equitable education; and
- giving students the opportunity to become critical and productive members of a democratic society. (Nieto, 2004: 2)

Against significant odds in terms of the marginalised status of LOTE compared to English-language literacy in Victorian schools, and contrary to the prevailing socio-political climate that so often views diversity with dread, the pedagogies and practices of the school community at the heart of this thesis need to be recognised, affirmed and celebrated. This research has revealed how the school’s continuing commitment to bilingual learning for its English-language learners offers students real opportunities to develop language skills that are transportable and adaptable to a range of situations. This maximised language knowledge, and the message it conveys about what counts as capital in the eyes of the school, has the potential to greatly assist these students to construct personal identities that are positive, bilingual and bicultural.
This study is significant in that it highlights the little-heard perspectives of emergent bilingual learners, their parents, and their teachers. It reveals the potentially positive impact that additive bilingual learning might have, were it implemented more widely in other linguistically and culturally diverse school settings and, possibly, for more than two to three years at the school. This investigation also draws attention to some of the tensions that are experienced in implementing this uncommon pedagogical arrangement. Uncovering and posing solutions to these tensions, as this thesis has done, offers insights as how these anxieties might be forestalled or pre-empted at other school settings as they embark on this potentially transformative form of learning.

The study illustrates the high levels of importance students attach to the languages taught by the school, and the range of benefits they perceive this linguistic knowledge brings. For these students, the long-term benefits of learning bilingually will hopefully match those that their parents expressed hope for – that a connection to family and ancestral linguistic and cultural traditions be maintained; and that empowered learning, and successful, active contribution to the wider community be achieved.

I hope that – over time – these students’ identities can shift and adapt with ease according to context, as their sense of self becomes more complex, hybrid and multi-layered, and as they respond to new demands that cannot, as yet, be foreseen. Nettle and Romaine (2000) note that:

> In today’s global village, no one is only one thing. We all have overlapping and intersecting identities. ... We need to divest ourselves of the traditional equation between language, nation, and state because ... it never actually corresponded to reality anyway. (Nettle & Romaine, 2000: 196-7)

I interpret this statement as advocating that one’s worth or value in today’s world should not be limited by narrow, restricted definitions, but should be expansive and inclusive – as befits and reflects the societies in which we live.
Nettle and Romaine’s statement suggests that children should feel able to construct their identities around an array of positive possibilities. I assert that bilingual education, like that implemented at the school investigated, provides opportunities for such positive constructs to develop.

A central theme of this dissertation is that our schools need to find new, transformative ways to provide students with the knowledge, skills and strong sense of identity that can transport them successfully into adult life. As I type this, in early July 2005, news is emerging that four young men in Britain felt so alienated, angry, and aggrieved that they obliterated themselves and scores of unknown others in the trains and buses of the London rush hour. While the Columbines and Kings Crosses of the current era are at the extreme end of the alienation spectrum, they alert us – in the most painful and confronting of ways – of the need to stop, and reflect on the ways our schools are enhancing or diminishing young peoples’ senses of self, feelings of connection, and reserves of hope.

Transformative pedagogy was envisioned by Paolo Freire as a pedagogy of love, hope and empowerment (Freire, 1970b, 1998; Freire & Macedo, 1987). Cummins’ interpretation of Freire’s transformative goals into emergent bilinguals’ school contexts (Cummins, 1986, 2000a, 2001b) offers genuine possibilities for majority and minority language background students to appreciate the cultural and linguistic similarities and differences that exist between and within different groups of learners. The three-dimensional model posed in this thesis for achieving bilingualism and biliteracy emphasises the personal, political and pedagogical dimensions of learning – considerations I argue schools need to address in order for students to become fulfilled and functioning individuals who care about themselves, their families and friends, and the local and global community.
Australia has become a society where worrying has replaced caring on both a personal and societal level, Hage (2003) and Manne and Corlett (2004) have argued. While bilingual education like that implemented by the school in this study, cannot be a panacea for systemic failings and institutionalised inequities (Cummins, 2001b), it may just be a valid and meaningful stepping stone enabling today’s students to be the self-confident and engaged citizens of tomorrow. Certainly, the parent’s comments that open this chapter passionately express this hope.

The Thesis Journey: Aiming for Impact at the School Level
I began this study, a little over four years ago, with a strong interest in empowering pedagogies for often marginalised students. I brought many years experience teaching in linguistically and culturally diverse school settings, and several unanswered questions and unresolved tensions to which I required solutions. My research question, which sought to understand the ways the bilingual learning opportunities at the school under investigation were perceived, allowed me the privilege of spending many hours gaining the insights of students, parents and teachers. While a degree of uncertainty, anxiety and misgiving about bilingual education as an arrangement for these students’ learning was uncovered at the school level, it stemmed – in all cases – from a need for clarity, or differences in emphasis, on what might assist students be successful and feel secure in and out of school.

I believe this study’s findings – once comprehensively reported back – will have benefits both at and beyond the school. First, by better understanding patterns of student language use across the seven years of their schooling, teachers might better appreciate the fragility of minority languages, even those perceived to be widely used and actively supported at school, in the home, and in the local community. Possibly surprising findings about the students’ L1-L2 use across the school might focus attention on the need to augment current sociolinguistic data with up-to-date knowledge of students’
language use and literacy practices across the range of learning, familial and social contexts in which they operate. This information could then serve to assist planning for increased support of students’ first languages, and towards English-language instruction tailored to students’ social and academic needs.

Second, the emphatically positive attitudes students have towards learning bilingually, and the benefits they see as being derived from this form of instruction, should serve to intensify the school’s resolve in terms of the bilingual arrangements they carefully plan and meticulously timetable. Parents’ often-heartfelt perspectives, in the main, stressed the benefits of bilingualism and biculturalism. These passionately expressed views should redouble the school’s determination, and highlight the insights that can be derived from meaningful interactions with parents that allow them to voice their ideas and concerns.

Third, this study, along with the other investigations into bilingualism and bilingual learning I have reported on as part of my research, more than validate additive bilingual education for English-language learners. Sharing a synthesis of these research findings should be welcomed by teachers and parents alike, and ought to enable both groups of school stakeholders to better articulate the rationale and the benefits of bilingual education to the children in the program. This, in turn, would enable students to be more certain about why they are engaged in bilingual learning – beyond the personal benefits they are already able to articulate. It might also fuel an awareness for further curriculum change at the school, in order to strengthen the bilingual learning already in place.

Importantly, dissemination and discussion of these results might instigate something that goes beyond a one-off or small series of reporting back sessions – possibly an examination of ways that the school can maintain links
to the wider world of bilingual research. This might take place through a number of avenues, such as the forming of stronger links with other comparable schools in the Victorian Bilingual Schools Project. It might also be achieved through more active affiliation and involvement in professional associations whose interests often reflect issues and tensions faced at the school: the Victorian Association of TESOL and Multicultural Education (VATME), the Australian Literacy Educators’ Association (ALEA), and the Primary English Teaching Association (PETA) being local possibilities. The establishment of contacts beyond the school might also be facilitated through the worldwide web, with its numerous opportunities for insights ranging from international professional organisations (www.tesol.org) to sites of exemplary practice such as Thornwood Public School (thornwood.peelschools.org/dual/index.htm), whose ‘Dual Language Showcase’ has been described by Chow and Cummins (2003).

Finally, immodest as this may seem, I hope that my lotus-shaped conceptualisation and model for bilingualism and biliteracy for English-language learners might provide a useful tool by which teachers could monitor their language teaching, and by which the school could revisit its policy emphases and charter priorities. Viewing the current teaching and learning at the school level in terms of personal, political and pedagogical dimensions offers a mechanism by which transformative approaches to student learning might be strengthened.

Aspects of this research have been reported back to the school as they were collected, but I am committed to this being an ongoing process. I aim also to initiate a process whereby I could – directly or indirectly – feed back relevant aspects of the research data to students and parents at the school. While a number of those students who participated in this study have now graduated to secondary school, their perspectives should be of great value and interest to staff, parent and students at the school.
The Thesis Journey: Aiming for Impact with the Research Community

As very few people access and read research theses like this, I have commenced a process whereby potentially relevant aspects of this research are being disseminated at conferences, and through academic publications. To date, I have reported on different dimensions of this study at a number of local and international conferences. In each year of my doctoral candidature, I have reported on the progress of the study at the University of Melbourne Faculty of Education postgraduate research conferences. This has provided me with an opportunity to both communicate my ongoing research decisions, challenges and findings, as well as receive valuable feedback from my peers. I have also conducted workshops that draw heavily on my research, as part of a postgraduate subject, “Bilingual Education” at the University of Melbourne.

I have presented papers at national and international conferences, including:

- the annual Australian Literacy Educators’ Association (ALEA) conference, in Sydney, July 2004;
- the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) conference in Melbourne, December, 2004; and
- the 18th International Language in Education Conference (ILEC), in Hong Kong, December 2004.

Again, this has been beneficial in terms of reporting on my research, and gaining valuable insights from academic peers, many of whom are leaders in this field.

In terms of academic publication, a refereed journal article has resulted from my thesis so far (Molyneux, 2004). This outlined methodological aspects of my student data collection, and discussed research findings related to students’ perspectives on their bilingual learning. These findings have been refined further since then, and more dissemination of my results is planned.
The benefits this study might have for the research community interested in the areas of bilingualism and second language acquisition centre on three main areas. First, as a case study and critical ethnography of a site of bilingual learning, its findings can augment and complement other studies undertaken in settings mainly in- and outside Australia (Barratt-Pugh & Rohl, 2001; Freeman, 1996; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; May, 1994a). While this in itself has immense value, as Cummins (2000a) asserts, my study offers new insights into a unique school setting operating an educational arrangement for its English-language learners rarely implemented in Australian schools. The range of perspectives that emerge from the data collected from students, parents and teachers are illuminating in terms of the tensions and choices faced by an Australian school setting implementing a pedagogy that is, in many ways, out of step with the current conservative political and educational climate. It has been argued that selection of uncommon cases for study can help “illustrate matters we overlook in typical cases” (Stake, 1995: 4), and I believe the revelatory nature of this study also fulfils Yin’s (2003) rationale for single case studies.

Finally, the range of data collection devices specifically developed for this study and implemented amongst the research participants might lead to replication and/or refinement of these tools in subsequent research. The degree to which these devices achieved their intended aims has been discussed earlier in the relevant research results chapters. Despite, for example, the individual bilingual student interviews being less illuminating than the group interviews with older students, in their totality I believe the data collected reveal a richly contextualised, qualitative and quantitative insights into bilingual learning at the school under investigation. I look forward to refining these methods of data collection in later, related research.
The Thesis Journey: My Changed Perspectives

The metaphor of the journey, when related to a doctoral thesis, is highly apposite. Principally, I see the process of learning in which I have been engaged over this research investigation and thesis writing as a beginning, rather than an ending. While there is a sense of arrival as I approach the stage where this thesis nears being ready to submit, the intellectual journey that it records is, hopefully, only commencing.

The research process in which I have been engaged has – in many ways – allowed me to take stock of my professional life to this point. Stepping back from the incessant demands of full-time primary school teaching, and engaging with a different world of research and ideas, has enabled me to read, research and reflect both on the study reported here, and on my own ideas and beliefs forged over many years of teaching practice and life experience. I feel very privileged – and am humbled, in many ways – by the opportunity to learn in this way. Yet, this sense of appreciation strengthens my commitment to use the knowledge, insights, and skills developed while embarking on this research to empower others: be they future researchers or school communities struggling to implement classroom pedagogies to transform the lives of the children they teach.

Corson (2001) emphasised the model of research that has, as a principal objective, ‘empowering outcomes’ for the community under investigation, a position consistent with Fine and Weis’ (1998) articulation of the need for researchers to be mindful of their ethical and social responsibilities when working with marginalised communities. My understanding of research methodology, therefore, has been supplemented by increased understanding of the micro elements of data design and administration, within a macro context of one’s moral responsibility to those in whose name and in whose interests we claim to research.
I feel satisfied that many of the tensions and concerns with which I commenced this research have been answered and allayed – though they still exist in the world of educational policy development and debates over schooling. My understandings of bilingualism, biliteracy, bilingual education, second language acquisition and transformative pedagogies have been greatly augmented by this research. I have arrived at a clearer understanding of how language, culture and identity are pivotal to the ways students negotiate the school system and their classroom learning. I feel more confident that I can authoritatively respond in the negative to questions such as “Must fluency in English be achieved at the expense of home languages?” (Barratt-Pugh & Rohl, 1994). The students, parent and teachers in my study have helped me re-conceptualise and build on the inspiring and illuminating writings, insights and theorisations within the research literature I have accessed. Of course, new questions have arisen from this study.

Future Research Recommendations
I view this thesis as the beginning of my further research work in the field of students’ dual language learning and identity development. The reasons for this view stem largely from the new questions or areas of interest that arose while this investigation was being undertaken. These were beyond the scope of this study, but are areas of inquiry I would like to pursue in post-doctoral research. Alternately, they may be areas of possible research that others would also choose to take up. As such, I outline a number of them here.

Deeper Understandings of Language Use and Literacy Practices
The mapping of students’ language use undertaken at the commencement of this study provided base-line data from which to further investigate students’ attitudes to languages and language learning. The Language Use and Language Attitudes Questionnaires yielded highly illuminating qualitative and quantitative data across the seven year levels of primary school learning.
What these devices did not reveal (nor were they intended to) were the amounts of first and subsequent language use in which the students reported being engaged. For example, 75 percent of Year Five students reported that they write in English and one (or more) other language. Insights into the kinds and amount of writing that students undertake in each of their languages, outside the contexts of formal classes or set homework, would result in a deeper understanding of the socio-cultural purposes to which students might apply their L1 and English learning.

In the collection of language use data, students were given the opportunity to explain any other areas in which they used English or another language, and several interesting insights emerged. Some students mentioned letter writing to relatives overseas or playing video games, for example. However, more fine-grained investigation of students’ multilingual home literacy practices would, in all likelihood, reveal other uses of language and literacy that remained unreported. This inquiry might involve students and parents keeping diaries of home literacy practices, documenting them with digital photographs, and describing them to a researcher based at the school. Such studies would augment understandings of the types of reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing that students are engaged outside of school. This information might then strengthen home-school connections, leading to enhanced affirmation of students’ existing knowledge and increased assistance with their development of new L1 and English linguistic understandings.

Boys’ engagement with reading, as revealed by this study, mirrors concerns raised in the literacy research, especially those linked to the diminished interest many boys’ experience in the middle years of schooling (Cortis & Newmarch, 2000; Cresswell et al., 2002; Hamston & Love, 2003; Love & Hamston, 2001; Martino, 2001, 2003). Re-conceptualising what counts as reading to embrace a range of texts – from print based sources (e.g. books,
magazines, fiction/non-fiction genres) to newer forms of texts (internet sites, multimedia/electronic texts, CD-ROMs, video games) – has been suggested as a way that schools might better recognise and value the range of interests and skills that many boys have (Alloway & Gilbert, 1998; Culican et al., 2001; Gee, 2003; Luke et al., 2003).

However, if bilingualism and biliteracy is the goal, this expanded notion of texts that hold value needs to extend to multilingual texts (or texts in LOTEs), and accessing such texts might prove highly problematic. While internet-based texts might be one realistic opportunity for emergent bilinguals to continue to read age-appropriate, interesting texts in the L1, the degree to which this is being pursued is unclear. Certainly, the range of print based materials in LOTEs in Australia is very narrow. Therefore, insights into ways that schools are providing for bilingual students’ reading to be encouraged beyond the early years of schooling would make highly informative case study research.

**Longitudinal Studies and Post-Primary Students’ Perspectives**

The investigation reported here was conducted using data collected at a specific point in time. A longer-term longitudinal study, perhaps tracking a cohort of students from Years Prep to Six – from their bilingual to mainly English-medium instruction could be mounted. This would be beneficial in terms of noting changes in language use and attitudes, as well as variations in L1 and English proficiency, over those seven years of primary schooling. While a transient school population and fluctuating enrolments make it potentially difficult to implement at the school setting reported here, it is nonetheless a research possibility worth pursuing.

Another opportunity to build on this research would be to revisit bilingually educated students throughout their secondary school education. Tracking them through high school, monitoring changes in language use and language
attitudes would reveal additional insights into how older students’ bilingual abilities and bicultural identities play out into adolescence.

**Minorities Within Minorities**
Small numbers of students at the school under investigation were neither native English speakers, nor of a Chinese- or Vietnamese-language background. This study revealed these students’ patterns of language use, as well as their language attitudes. While they described the contexts in which they use their first and subsequent languages, and articulated largely positive attitudes towards bilingualism, the degree to which their bilingual, bicultural identities are nurtured at a school actively catering for the larger minority language groups remains an unexplored question in my mind.

It would be highly enlightening to probe more deeply the perspectives of those children like S____, who was attempting to learn in Mandarin, not feeling like his efforts were rewarded, and who had three additional languages: Portuguese, Hakka and English (developed to varying levels, naturally) within his repertoire. Or the case of A________, who at the time of the study was the only student of African background at the school and who spoke some Amharic and Arabic, in addition to English. Schools do not usually have the resources to instruct such students in their L1, but it is feasible that these students might feel devalued when they observe other students’ linguistic and cultural knowledge so overtly valued, maintained and developed. Borland (2005) recently reported on a context of attempts at second and third generation language maintenance, where the language in question was not high in visibility and status in the local community. Therefore, a greater understanding of these potentially overlooked students’ insights, and of effective ways to affirm their mixed linguistic and cultural identities is recommended.
Identity Construction: The Place of Language and Other Markers

From the commencement of this thesis, the issue of identity negotiation was an area in which I was strongly interested. As a classroom teacher, I observed children’s various constructions of identity, but never explored them in any systematic way. Sometimes these identity constructs seemed derived from national markers (e.g. “my family are from Vietnam, therefore I am Vietnamese”). At other times a mixture of national (diasporic) and religious markers (e.g. Turkish/Muslim and Turkish/secular identities, both strongly nationalistic) seemed to strongly influence students’ notions of identity. Amongst other students, an interplay of ethnic, linguistic, or cultural factors as shapers of identity seemed evident (e.g. identifying as Chinese, despite having family origins in East Timor and having lived in Australia since birth).

My interest in these ideas of identity and identification was built into a small component of the data collection, but the students’ responses to notions of Australian and family identity only raised the need for this matter to be researched more deeply and understood more clearly. I was particularly intrigued by a British study investigating students’ notions of national identity (Short & Carrington, 1999) and its implications for pedagogy in a diverse, multicultural society. A similarly conceived investigation of Australian students’ identity constructs would be fascinating and could strongly be justified in the current socio-political climate where issues of minority populations’ feelings of belonging and investment are so scrutinised. It has been observed that, in today’s globalised and interconnected world, many people are likely to develop “multiple layers of loyalty and affinity” (Lankshear & Knobel, 1997: 106) which, they argue, the state must be able to recognise and accommodate. In a post 9/11 (and now, 7/7) world, the potential conflict in this stance seems highly unpalatable and troubling to governments and populations in many countries. This makes the investigation of these interconnected, perhaps contradictory, notions of identity and affinity all the more interesting – and important – to investigate.
The Way Forward

A diminished government emphasis on linguistic and cultural diversity in schools means that questions of what is realistic to aim for, might have to be considered alongside questions of what might be ideal for English-language learners’ education. Bilingual education programs require action in terms of teacher training and school funding: matters beyond the control of individual schools. Working within current government emphases towards more linguistically and culturally inclusive curricula is a potentially strategic way schools might facilitate their educational aims in these areas.

In Victoria, the government’s recent blueprint for schools (Department of Education and Training (Victoria), 2003) emphasises the notion of “leading schools” that might become models of exemplary practice. The school under investigation – and others like it – may find additional support for their bilingual programs could be facilitated by becoming models of multilingual instruction from which other schools could learn. Not only might this further consolidate and celebrate bilingual learning at these sites, but such identification and affiliation might support other schools take steps towards adopting such transformative pedagogies.

Conclusion

Teachers and schools in immigrant, refugee and indigenous communities are placed in the challenging and important position of being required to prepare their students for the adult world they will soon inhabit, while attempting to affirm or preserve cultural and linguistic traditions that may appear out of place in this world. Speaking from the American context, but with equal relevancy here in Australia, Dicker (2000) observes that:
As ESL professionals, we stand at a symbolic gateway for newcomers to this country; we try to ease their way into their new home. Most of us have a vision of this home as an open, democratic society, one that will accept our students as they are. ... We have an obligation to see that ... linguistic and cultural diversity continues to enrich our present and future identity as a nation. (Dicker, 2000: 65)

My thesis offers valuable insights into how this obligation might be realised. This thick description (Geertz, 1973, 1995, 2000) of understandings of and responses to a particular instructional approach in a single setting allows me to elevate the voices of the key stakeholders: students and parents, in particular. It illuminates the meanings they bring to this context, resulting in a detailed understanding of the significance they place on these bilingual arrangements, and what they feel is distinctive about them. It therefore invites others to detail similar cases so that the wider research community can build up an authentic basis for analysis and comparison.

The articulation of a model for bilingualism and biliteracy, whereby the personal, political and pedagogical dimensions of learning are actively confronted, provides a frame around which transformative pedagogies can be implemented. This model recognises and details the tensions and choices school communities encounter when making educational decisions for English-language learners, and offers a mechanism by which these dilemmas can be explicated and resolved. Ultimately, this thesis highlights the individual and collective potential of powerful, progressive pedagogies that aim to construct positive student identities equipped with the transportable literacies and forms of knowledge on which they can draw to enrich their own lives and augment the fabric of the communities in which they live.
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APPENDICES

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Appendix 50: Student Achievement Data: Years P, 2, 4 & 6 bilingually educated students as measured against the CSF (Vietnamese-English and Mandarin-English breakdown) (N = 67).
## APPENDIX 1:

**TIMELINE OF AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL EVENTS AS RELATES TO NATIONAL AND VICTORIAN STATE LANGUAGE POLICY AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Historical Events</th>
<th>Implications for Languages, Language Policy and Language Education on a National and State (Victorian) Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before 1788</td>
<td>Pre-colonial period. Over 40,000 years of indigenous occupation and ownership of the Australian continent.</td>
<td>Hundreds of Aboriginal languages spoken by clans and communities across the continent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1788 – 1901</td>
<td>Colonisation and settlement of the Australian continent by Great Britain. Administration of the separate colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, etc., uniformly dispossess Indigenous occupant from choice land.</td>
<td>The English language increasingly dominant, despite immigration of settlers from other language groups. Isolated pockets of L1 maintenance: German Lutheran communities in South Australia, for example.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Federation of the six colonies into the Australian nation.</td>
<td>Enactment of the <em>Immigration Restriction Act (1901)</em> which instituted the ‘White Australia policy’: enshrining English as the paramount language of power in the country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Outbreak of World War One and accompanying anti-German, anti-immigrant xenophobia.</td>
<td>‘Rejectionist phase’ (Clyne, 1991; Djité, 1994). Aggressive promotion of monolingual, assimilationist policy stances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Large-scale immigration after Second World War: mainly from the United Kingdom and Europe.</td>
<td>Maintenance of hegemonic policies in relation to school education and the English language. Non-English immigrant languages seen as a problem that should be subsumed by English at the earliest opportunity (Di Biase et al., 1994; Eltis, 1991). Victorinan Teachers’ Union claims in 1954 that migrant children jeopardise the work of teachers and cause the education of native English-speakers to suffer (Singh, 2001).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967 – 1972</td>
<td>Gradual official recognition of Australia’s linguistic and cultural diversity. Aboriginal Australians counted in national census for first time after 1967 referendum.</td>
<td>Establishment in 1970 of the Child Migrant Education Programme (CMEP) and the Immigration (Education) Act in 1971. These result in increased federal financial support for ESL provisions for migrants, although the latter act puts more emphasis on adults than children. The notion of linguistic diversity still linked to a deficit mentality (Jupp, 2002) or a “discourse of disadvantage” (Lo Bianco, 1988) for which ESL instruction is seen as the repair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972 - 1975</td>
<td>Election of first Australian Labour Party government at national level in 23 years. Under Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, an overtly progressive and reformist agenda is pursued.</td>
<td>Introduction of a non-discriminatory immigration policy, opening up Australia as a place of potential residence to immigrants from Asia, in particular. The hugely influential Karmel Report (Interim Committee of the Australian Schools Commission, 1973) leads to the establishment of the federally-funded Disadvantaged Schools Program (DSP) that provides</td>
</tr>
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</table>
additional funding and resources for schools affected by poverty, high numbers of ESL or indigenous students, or those schools that are geographically or culturally isolated. For the first time, this allows large numbers of schools to develop and resource school-based curriculum tailored to the linguistic and cultural needs of their students. The DSP continues operating into the 1990s.

<p>|  | The Australian Ethnic Affairs Council (AEAC) is formed in January 1977. Its blueprint enshrines three principles: “cultural identity” which ethnic groups are encouraged to maintain, “equality” in terms of equal access to social resources, and “social cohesion” which ethnic groups are expected to play a part in fostering. The Galbally Report (Galbally, 1978) proposes key language reforms including bilingual and community language education, support for ethnic (“Saturday morning”) schools, and the importance of maintenance of heritage languages and histories. Its acceptance by both the Liberal government and Labor opposition amounts to an official proclamation of Australia as a multicultural society (Bullivant, 1995: 170). The Galbally Report’s recommendations are immediately taken up by the Commonwealth Schools Commission, in the form of the Multicultural Education Program (MEP). For the first time, the dual notion of strengthening both English-language acquisition and embarking on the cultural enterprise of learning one’s own language or the language with which one’s family identified is |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1983 – 1996</th>
<th>National power held by the Hawke and Keating Labour Party governments. Uneven commitment to linguistic diversity throughout this period.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>By 1984, the Victorian government claims to have 102 teachers of community languages employed in its schools (State Board of Education and Ministerial Advisory Committee on Multicultural and Migrant Education, Victoria, 1984). The <em>Cahill Review</em> of the MEP (Cahill &amp; Review Team of the Language and Literacy Centre: Phillip Institute of Technology, 1984) reports on the lack of take-up of multicultural education in schools and lack of potential value in many programs in existence. Teachers’ lack of enthusiasm for compulsory LOTE or bilingual instruction is noted, and many schools are condemned for often running little more than language sensitisation courses, sometimes of just one hour or less a week. The apogee of a multilingual national policy emphasis is reached in 1987 with the publication of <em>The National Policy on Languages</em> (NPL) (Lo Bianco, 1987). The NPL provides strong incentives for the promotion of LOTE instruction in Australian schools, through the encouragement of language policy construction in each of the Australian states and territories (Scarino &amp; Papademetre, 2001). Federal adoption of the recommendations contained within <em>Australia’s Language: The Australian Language and Literacy Policy</em> (ALLP) (Commonwealth Department of Employment Education and Training, 1991). As can be</td>
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</table>
deduced from the singular emphasis on ‘language’ in the title, this document strongly emphasises English-language literacy, though recommended the teaching of 14 economically or internationally significant (therefore, high-status) languages other than English for which schools are financially rewarded for each student successfully completing Year 12 study of that LOTE. It is condemned for being a top-down document, for its monocentric direction, and for its emphasis on user-pays ESL provision (Clyne, 1998; Singh, 2001).

The *Council of Australian Governments* (COAG) reports on Asian languages in Australia (Council of Australian Governments, 1994) which directly leads to the launch of the *National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools Strategy* (NALSAS). As Lo Bianco (2001) comments, the ALLP and NALSAS initiatives remove the issue of LOTEs further from Australia’s immigrant communities and squarely link their teaching to the discourse of economics.

1992 – 1999

| 1992 – 1999 | An aggressively economic rationalist Victorian state government led by Premier Jeff Kennett decentralises school administration while instituting mandatory curriculum and testing regimes for primary schools. | By the mid-late 1990s, government emphasis on literacy and numeracy standards and benchmarks (Curriculum Corporation, 1998), accompanied by a highly-structured Early Years English literacy pedagogy (Department of Education, Victoria, 1998), marginalises many of the other key learning areas: notably LOTE. Nonetheless, in 1997, the Victorian government inaugurates the Victorian Bilingual Schools Project, which establishes funding and accountability measures |
for schools currently providing, or wishing to provide, bilingual learning opportunities for their students. In 2000, it publishes guidelines as to how LOTE and early years pedagogy can co-exist (Department of Education Employment and Training, Victoria, 2000).

| 1996 - | Election of the John Howard Liberal-National Party Government. A changed political landscape sees government-sanctioned, and often government-led, attacks on Australia’s multiculturalism (and those perceived to be part of a ‘multicultural industry’), linguistic and cultural diversity, indigenous rights and reconciliation, and other humanitarian and social justice issues. | The 1998 Commonwealth Literacy Policies, as disseminated in the *Literacy for All* publication (Commonwealth Department of Employment Education Training and Youth Affairs, 1998) re-iterates dominance of English-language literacy, marginalises community literacies, and foregrounds the testing of basic literacy and numeracy skills (Lo Bianco, 2001). |
| 1999 - | Change of government in Victoria. The Australian Labour Party government under Premier Steve Bracks ameliorates some of the harsher edges to the previous government’s policies, but maintains English-language literacy emphasis as well as state-wide literacy and numeracy testing. | In 2002, Victorian government official statistics revealed widespread, though often problematic, LOTE provision, with a total of 91.3 per cent of primary schools and 96.4 per cent of secondary colleges teaching languages to 86 per cent of primary and 50.5 per cent of secondary students (Department of Education and Training, Victoria, 2002b). A government-initiated review of LOTE provision in its Victorian schools is completed in October, 2002 (Department of Education and Training, Victoria, 2002a) It re-iterates the value of learning and teaching languages, in terms of the advantages such knowledge |
can yield in a diverse, increasingly connected world.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Election of Howard Liberal-National Party to a third term in power with on the back of its strident campaigning on issues of ‘border protection’: thinly disguised xenophobia around fears of asylum seekers and post 9/11 terrorism.</td>
<td>2002: Federal Government announces the cessation of federal funding for a key Asian languages education initiative: the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools Strategy (NALSAS) (Lo Bianco, 2002). New national statement on languages education emerges at a Federal level (Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), 2005). While it makes encouraging statements about the benefits of community linguistic diversity, these seem linked to notions of “strategic, economic and international development” (p.2).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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APPENDIX 2

BILINGUAL POLICY

Philosophy:

All children should have the opportunity to develop their first language and to learn English in a non-threatening, positive environment where the first language and English co-exist harmoniously. Children should be able to develop an understanding of how language operates as a system, and through comparison, how other languages, including English, are structured and how they function.

Aims:

• To support the transition of Chinese or Vietnamese speaking background children from the home environment to the school environment.
• To develop an awareness of language as a tool for communication and an understanding of how language works.
• To reinforce literacy development in one language by learning another language simultaneously.
• To contribute to the learners’ conceptual development.
• To assist in the development of learning strategies and problem solving skills.
• To provide learners with access to the power of communication in a multicultural society and multicultural world.

Guidelines:

• Children shall be organised in multi-age learning groupings in their home language, and in multi-age and mixed cultural groupings in the English classes.
• Teachers in the bilingual programs shall plan integrated curriculum units of work, mathematics topics and the language focus as a team.

• Content-based teachings shall be provided across all the KLAs in both languages, following CSF II Guidelines.

Implementation:

• The bilingual programs will be implemented from Prep to 1 in Vietnamese and Prep to 2 in Chinese.

• Children in the bilingual programs will have instructions in the target language for approximately half of the time fraction.

• Term based curriculum planning and weekly team meetings will be conducted regularly to ensure the smooth running of the programs.

• Teaching strategies of the Early Years Literacy and Numeracy Programs will be adopted in both languages.

• Daily take home books and homework tasks will be provided, consistent with school Homework Guidelines.

• Learning in each of the eight KLA’s will occur in both languages.

• Assessment tasks, observation methods and work samples shall be agreed upon among LOTE language teachers and English teachers to ensure data collection is standardized.

• The Year 2 Chinese/English bilingual project will be externally evaluated each year.
Almost 1500 Melbourne-based East Timorese face being sent back to a country which holds little promise for them.

JOHN HAMILTON

makes their case for calling Australia home.

HAMILTON Lays is a nine-year-old boy with a cheeky grin and one prominent feature in his left eye.

Little known to his family in East Timor, and that's the big problem.

The last he knew of Australia was when he was 6 months old and was placed in a creche in Port Moresby in 1992. His family, who are among thousands of refugees, were about to leave.

Within days of his birth, the family was on a plane to Australia. He arrived on the same day as his father.

Since then, they've been in Australia. But their lives are in limbo as they wait for a decision on their refugee status.

At East Timor this week the government of Indonesia celebrated the 50th anniversary of its independence. East Timorese who fled to Australia in the early 1990s to escape the violence that raged on the island had little to celebrate.

In the early 1990s, refugees fleeing from a war-torn East Timor arrived in Australia. They were welcomed with open arms, but their stay was not meant to be permanent.

The Australian government had pledged to resettle all East Timorese refugees in Australia, but the policy changed when the islands gained independence from Indonesia in 1999.

While the policy was rescinded, the government has continued to refuse to resettle the refugees in Australia. Instead, they've been given temporary protection visas, which can be renewed for up to three years.

The refugees are now facing a difficult decision: should they stay in Australia or return to East Timor?

The Australian government has demanded that the refugees return to East Timor, but many refuse to go back. They fear for their safety and the safety of their families.

The refugees have been living in detention centers in Australia for years, but they're forced to leave their homes and families behind.

The government has promised to help them find a new country, but for now, they're stuck in a limbo of uncertainty.

Meanwhile, the refugees are fighting to stay in Australia. They've formed a support group and are holding rallies to raise awareness of their cause.

The refugees are not alone. There are many others in similar situations around the world. They're all fighting to stay where they are, to keep their families together, and to have a future.
APPENDIX 4

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR VALUES EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS
**APPENDIX 5**

**Procedure for Planning and Seeking Research Approval**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Initiative</th>
<th>Date Undertaken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal consent from principal to undertake research at the school.</td>
<td>April 2001.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at School Council Meeting for discussion, input and approval of research aims.</td>
<td>September, 2001.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at Staff Meeting for discussion, input and approval of research aims.</td>
<td>September, 2001.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at staff team meetings for discussion, input and approval of research aims.</td>
<td>October, 2001.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation of Ph.D. candidature procedure at University of Melbourne successfully completed.</td>
<td>February, 2002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research approval received from the University of Melbourne Human Research Ethics Committee.</td>
<td>May, 2002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research approval received from the Department of Education and Training.</td>
<td>May, 2002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plain Language Statements/ Invitations to participate in the research distributed to families of all students enrolled at the school.</td>
<td>July, 2002.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 6

Dr Jeni Wilson (supervisor)
Department of Learning and Educational Development
Ph: 8344 8208

Mr Paul Molyneux (PhD student)
Ph: 8344 8782

Bilingual Learning Research Project

Dear Parents,

We are seeking your help for a research project on bilingual education. Mr Paul Molyneux, a PhD student, who is well known to this school community, will be carrying out the research, supervised by Dr Jeni Wilson from The University of Melbourne. The research has the support of the principal, staff and School Council of [ ], and it has been approved by the Department of Education and Training, as well as by the University's ethics committee.

**What is the focus of the research?**
We would like to talk to the students and parents about school learning, especially about learning in two languages at primary school.

**What is involved in the research?**
Students will be asked to complete two short questionnaires about the languages they speak and use. Some students will be interviewed to further explore their feelings about using and learning two languages.

Parents will be asked to complete a questionnaire and/or attend a small group or individual discussion about the education of their children. These discussions will take place at the school with Paul Molyneux and an interpreter, if necessary.

In order to translate and transcribe the interviews, they will be audio-taped. Any opinions expressed by children or parents will remain private and confidential. If specific viewpoints are cited within the research itself, there will be no identification of participants. Yours or your child's involvement in the research may be withdrawn at any time at your request. In addition, any unprocessed data may be withdrawn at any time at your request. The results of the research will be available subject to legal limitations.
How can you be involved in this research?
If you are happy for your child or children to be involved in this research, please sign the attached form and return it to school.

A parent questionnaire will be sent to you soon. By completing this, it will indicate your willingness to be involved in the research.

Please feel free to contact Dr Jeni Wilson or Paul Molyneux if you have questions about this project. Additional inquiries could be addressed to the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, University of Melbourne, ph: 8344 7507; fax: 9347 6739.

We hope you agree to participate in this important study about bilingual learning. It is something we feel will benefit the school greatly.

DR JENI WILSON          PAUL MOLYNEUX
Jeni Wilson             Paul Molyneux
Dr Jeni Wilson (supervisor)
Ph: 8344 8208

Mr Paul Molyneux (PhD student)
Ph: 8344 8782

Bilingual Learning Research Project

CHILD PARTICIPATION APPROVAL

I give permission for my child or children to be interviewed or surveyed for this research.

Parent’s name (BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE):

Name of child: __________________________ Grade: ________

Name of child: __________________________ Grade: ________

Name of child: __________________________ Grade: ________

I understand that this project is for educational research and that my involvement is voluntary. I understand that I may withdraw at any time and that I may withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied. I understand that interviews will be audio-taped for the sole use of the researchers. I understand that the views of participants will be private and confidential, subject to legal limitations. I understand that I can contact the researchers, Dr Jeni Wilson, Mr Paul Molyneux, or the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, University of Melbourne, ph: 8344 7507; fax: 9347 6739 if I have further concerns or questions.

Signature of parent: __________________________ Date: ________
APPENDIX 7

LANGUAGE USE SURVEY (Years P-2)
What language/s do you use for ...

E = English  C = Chinese  N = Not Sure or None
T = Turkish  V = Vietnamese

Age: ___  Year Level: ___  Country of birth: ___  Boy/Girl
APPENDIX 8  LANGUAGE ATTITUDES SURVEY

Age:  
Year Level:  
Country of birth:  
Boy/Girl

Practice Questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>not important</th>
<th>important</th>
<th>very important</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How important is it for you to eat food every day?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How important is it for you to go to the dentist every day?</td>
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</table>

Language Attitudes Questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>not important</th>
<th>important</th>
<th>very important</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How important is it for you to be able to speak your home language?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How important is it for you to be able to speak English?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How important is it for you to be able to read in your home language?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How important is it for you to be able to read in English?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How important is it for you to be able to write in your home language?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important is it for you to be able to write in English?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Paul Molynieux  
Ph.D. Research  
Language Attitudes Survey
Tick which statement is most true for you:

Learning my home language is more important than learning English.
Learning English is more important than learning my home language.
Both English and my home language are equally important to learn.
Neither English nor my home language are important to learn.
APPENDIX 9
Student Language Attitudes Questionnaire:
Photograph of student statement sort
(Importance placed on reading, writing and speaking the L1 and English).
APPENDIX 10
Student Language Attitudes Questionnaire:
Photograph of student statement sort
(Comparative importance of learning in the L1 and English).
APPENDIX 11

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR ABILITIES IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE?

Age: 10 Year Level: 4 Country of birth: NZ Boy/Girl

Here since Prep.

Read each statement and place a mark on the line that shows how you feel.

Practice Statement:
I think children should go to school seven days a week, not five.

* disagree not sure agree

Research Statements:
I am pleased with how well I can read in English.

* disagree not sure agree

I am pleased with how well I can read in Vietnamese.

* disagree not sure agree

I am pleased with how well I can write in English.

* disagree not sure agree

I am pleased with how well I can write in Vietnamese.

* disagree not sure agree

I am pleased with how well I can speak in English.

* disagree not sure agree

I am pleased with how well I can speak in Vietnamese.

* disagree not sure agree

Paul Molyneux Ph.D. Research (3-4 Questions) Eng/Viet #1
APPENDIX 12

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR ABILITIES IN ENGLISH AND CHINESE?


Read each statement and place a mark on the line that shows how you feel.

Practice Statement:
I think children should go to school seven days a week, not five.

Research Statements:
I am pleased with how well I can read in English.

I am pleased with how well I can read in Chinese.

I am pleased with how well I can write in English.

I am pleased with how well I can write in Chinese.

I am pleased with how well I can speak in English.

I am pleased with how well I can speak in Chinese.

Paul Molyneux  Ph.D. Research (5-6 Questions)  Eng/Ch #2
APPENDIX 13

WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT KNOWING TWO LANGUAGES?

Age: ____ Year Level: ____ Country of birth: _____ Boy/Girl

Read each statement and place a mark on the line that shows how you feel.

Knowing two languages is good because I need both to communicate with my family and friends.
- Disagree
- Not sure
- Agree

Knowing two languages is good because I need both when I go to the shops, restaurants or other places.
- Disagree
- Not sure
- Agree

Knowing two languages is good because I enjoy being able to do things in more than one language.
- Disagree
- Not sure
- Agree

Knowing two languages is good because I enjoy learning in both.
- Disagree
- Not sure
- Agree

Knowing two languages is good because it helps me succeed at school.
- Disagree
- Not sure
- Agree

Knowing two languages is good because it helps me understand the things I learn.
- Disagree
- Not sure
- Agree
Knowing two languages is good because it might help me get a good job.

- disagree

- not sure

- agree

Knowing two languages is good because it might help me at secondary school.

- disagree

- not sure

- agree

Knowing two languages is good because it makes me more clever.

- disagree

- not sure

- agree

Knowing two languages is good because it helps me think better.

- disagree

- not sure

- agree

Knowing two languages is good because it helps me feel proud of my family background.

- disagree

- not sure

- agree

Knowing two languages is good because it helps me feel proud of being Australian.

- disagree

- not sure

- agree

Knowing two languages is good because it's easier to count in Vietnamese.
APPENDIX 14

WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT KNOWING TWO LANGUAGES?

Age: _____ Year Level: _____ Country of birth: _______ Boy/Girl

Read each statement and place a mark on the line that shows how you feel.

Knowing two languages is good because I need both to communicate with my family and friends.

- disagree
- disagree
- not sure
- agree
- agree

Knowing two languages is good because I need both when I go to the shops, restaurants or other places.

- disagree
- disagree
- not sure
- agree
- agree

Knowing two languages is good because I enjoy being able to do things in more than one language.

- disagree
- disagree
- not sure
- agree
- agree

Knowing two languages is good because I enjoy learning in both.

- disagree
- disagree
- not sure
- agree
- agree

Knowing two languages is good because it helps me succeed at school.

- disagree
- disagree
- not sure
- agree
- agree

Knowing two languages is good because it helps me understand the things I learn.

- disagree
- disagree
- not sure
- agree
- agree

Paul Molyneux

Ph.D. Research

5-6 Two Languages Questions
Knowing two languages is good because it might help me get a good job.

Knowing two languages is good because it might help me at secondary school.

Knowing two languages is good because it makes me more clever.

Knowing two languages is good because it helps me think better.

Knowing two languages is good because it helps me feel proud of my family background.

Knowing two languages is good because it helps me feel proud of being Australian.

Knowing two languages is good because

Paul Malyneux
Ph.D. Research
5-6 Two Languages Questions
APPENDIX 15

YEARS 3-4 ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

Age: ___ Year Level: ___ Country of birth: _______ Boy/Girl

This school teaches me what I need to know.

- [ ] disagree  - [ ] not sure  - [X] agree

Being in a bilingual program when I started school was good for my learning.

- [ ] disagree  - [ ] not sure  - [X] agree

I wish I could do more of my learning in [my L1].

- [ ] disagree  - [ ] not sure  - [X] agree
APPENDIX 16

3-6 INTERVIEW: ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

This school teaches me what I need to know.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>not sure</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>agree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>strongly</td>
<td>strongly</td>
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Being in a bilingual program when I started school was good for my learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>disagree</th>
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<th>not sure</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>strongly</td>
<td>strongly</td>
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</table>

Because I could understand things in Chinese.

I wish could do more of my learning in [my L1].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>not sure</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>strongly</td>
<td>strongly</td>
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APPENDIX 17:

BILINGUAL STUDENT INTERVIEWS: VIETNAMESE (Years Prep to One)

Administered to: Years Prep to 1 students currently engaged in bilingual learning (3 Vietnamese students at each grade level).

Administered by: Paul and Kim.

Aim: to explore more deeply the students’ perspectives of bilingual learning, its relevance to them, and how it addresses their perceived learning needs.

Preparation: tape recorder; photographs of bilingual program - students at work in variety of learning contexts (in both languages).

Introduction: to be administered by the researcher in English.

1. We want to talk to children at this school about their learning. Take a look at the photographs I’ve taken in your classrooms. ... I know at this school some children learn in two languages: Vietnamese and English. Tell me about how that works.

2. Why do you think this school teaches you both languages? [Prompt, if necessary: Maybe to help you? Help you do what ?]

Part One: to be administered by the researcher in English.

Let’s talk about some of your learning in English. I’ve got some books in English that your class has read. And I’ve got your workbook here too. Can you show me what you have learned?

1. Can you tell me what is good about learning in English? [Prompt, if necessary: Maybe there is something you do that is easy or fun when you are learning in English. Maybe there is something it helps you to do.]

2. Can you tell me what is not so good about learning in English? [Prompt, if necessary: Maybe there is something you do that is difficult or not much fun when you are learning in English. Maybe there is something you don’t find useful.]
3. Do you think learning in English is important? Why is it important, do you think? [Prompt if necessary: What are the things you do during the day where knowing English helps you?]

Part Two: to be administered by Kim in the Vietnamese.
1. Let’s look at those photographs again. Tell me about your learning in Vietnamese.
2. Let’s talk about some of your learning in Vietnamese. I’ve got some books in Vietnamese that your class has read. And I’ve got your workbook here too. Can you show me what you have learned?
3. Can you tell me about something that is good about learning in Vietnamese? [Prompt, if necessary: Maybe there is something you do that is easy or fun when you are learning in Vietnamese. Maybe there is something it helps you to do.]
4. Can you tell me about something that is not so good about learning in Vietnamese? [Prompt, if necessary: Maybe there is something you do that is difficult or not much fun when you are learning in Vietnamese. Maybe there is something you don’t find useful.]
5. Do you think learning in Vietnamese is important? Why is it important, do you think? [Prompt if necessary: What are the things you do during the day where knowing Vietnamese helps you?]

Part Three: Drawing the threads together (in English again, though allow opportunity to express ideas in Vietnamese)
1. So would you say that learning in two languages is a good or a bad thing? Why?
2. In some schools, the children learn in just one language - English. What do you think that would be like? Why? [Prompt, if necessary: If you could choose just one language to learn, what would it be?]
APPENDIX 18

BILINGUAL STUDENT INTERVIEWS: HAKKA (Years Prep to Two)

Administered to: Years Prep to Two students currently engaged in bilingual learning (3 Chinese students at each grade level).

Administered by: Paul and Juliana.

Aim: to explore more deeply the students’ perspectives of bilingual learning, its relevance to them, and how it addresses their perceived learning needs.

Preparation: tape recorder; photographs of bilingual program - students at work in variety of learning contexts (in both languages).

Introduction: to be administered by the researcher in English.

4. We want to talk to children at this school about their learning. Take a look at the photographs I’ve taken in your classrooms. ... I know at this school some children learn in two languages: Chinese and English. Tell me about how that works.

5. Why do you think this school teaches you both languages? [Prompt, if necessary: Maybe to help you? Help you do what?]

Part One: to be administered by the researcher in English.

Let’s talk about some of your learning in English. I’ve got some books in English that your class has read. And I’ve got your workbook here too. Can you show me what you have learned?

3. Can you tell me what is good about learning in English? [Prompt, if necessary: Maybe there is something you do that is easy or fun when you are learning in English. Maybe there is something it helps you to do.]

4. Can you tell me what is not so good about learning in English? [Prompt, if necessary: Maybe there is something you do that is difficult or not much fun when you are learning in English. Maybe there is something you don’t find useful.]
6. Do you think learning in English is important? Why is it important for you, do you think? [Prompt if necessary: What are the things you do during the day where knowing English helps you?]

Part Two: to be administered by Juliana in Hakka.
7. Let’s talk about some of your learning in Chinese. I’ve got some books in Chinese that your class has read. And I’ve got your workbook here too. Can you show me what you have learned?
8. Can you tell me about something that is good about learning in Chinese? [Prompt, if necessary: Maybe there is something you do that is easy or fun when you are learning in Chinese. Maybe there is something it helps you to do.]
9. Can you tell me about something that is not so good about learning in Chinese? [Prompt, if necessary: Maybe there is something you do that is difficult or not much fun when you are learning in Chinese. Maybe there is something you don’t find useful.]
10. What is it like speaking Chinese (Hakka) at home or with friends but learning Chinese (Mandarin) at school? [Prompt if necessary: Do you get confused? Does knowing Hakka help you with Mandarin?]
11. Do you think learning in Chinese is important? Why is it important for you, do you think? [Prompt if necessary: What are the things you do during the day where knowing Chinese helps you?]

Part Three: Drawing the threads together (in English again, though allow opportunity to express ideas in Chinese)
3. So would you say that learning in two languages is a good or a bad thing? Why?
4. In some schools, the children learn in just one language - English. What do you think that would be like? Why? [Prompt, if necessary: If you could choose just one language to learn, what would it be?]
APPENDIX 19
Student Interviews:
Examples of photographs from bilingual classrooms used as elicitation devices.
APPENDIX 20.1

STUDENT GROUP INTERVIEW FORMAT YEARS 3-6

Administered to: Years 2 or 3 students recently engaged in bilingual learning (3 Chinese; 3 Vietnamese at each grade level).

Administered by: Researcher.

Aim: to explore more deeply the students’ recollections and perspectives of bilingual learning, and the challenges/rewards of the transition to nearly-all-English instruction this year.

Preparation: tape recorder; photographs of bilingual program - students at work in variety of learning contexts (in both languages).

Part One: interview with photograph prompts.

1. I’m talking to children at this school about their learning, especially about learning in two languages. I want to find out about what they think about learning in this way. These photographs were taken in the P-2 classrooms like the one you were in last year. Take a look at them and they might remind you about when you were learning in this way. [Allow time for students to look and maybe talk about the photographs].

2. Up until last year, you were in a bilingual program like these in the photos - learning half the time in ####### and half the time in English.
   - Tell me what you remember about learning in that way.

3. This year you are learning mainly in English. How do you feel about that change? Prompt, if necessary: What has been good about learning mainly in English? What has been difficult or not so good?
4. Why do you think this school has a program like this?

5. In some schools, children learn in just one language - English. What do you think that would have been like? Why?

6. Refer to student’s response to last round of surveys. Ask questions related to earlier comments made or ways statements have been sorted.

For example:

This school teaches me what I need to know.

Possible additional probes: What do you think you need to learn more of/ less of? What would you like to change about how you are taught?

Being in a bilingual program when I started school was good for my learning.

Possible additional probe: In what ways was being in a bilingual program good/not good for your learning?

I wish I could do more of my learning in L1.

Possible additional probe: Can you tell me why that would/ would not be helpful to you? What would you say to someone who said that it is more important to learn English than your home language?
APPENDIX 20.2

STUDENT GROUP INTERVIEW FORMAT YEARS 3-6

Administered to: Years 3 to 6 students previously engaged in bilingual learning (approx. 3 Chinese; 3 Vietnamese at each grade level).

Administered by: Researcher.

Aim: to explore more deeply the students’ recollections and perspectives of bilingual learning, its relevance to them now and in the past, and how it addresses their perceived learning needs now and in the future.

Preparation: tape recorder; photographs of bilingual program - students at work in variety of learning contexts (in both languages).

Part One: interview with photograph prompts.

1. I’m talking to children at this school about their learning, especially about learning in two languages. I want to find out about what they think about learning in this way. These photographs were taken in the P-2 classrooms and they might remind you about when you were learning in this way. [Allow time for students to look and maybe talk about the photographs].

2. When you began your schooling here you were in a bilingual program like these in the photos - learning half the time in ####### and half the time in English.
   - Tell me what you remember about learning in that way.
   - What are your feelings now about learning in that way?

3. Why do you think this school has a program like this?
4. In some schools, children learn in just one language - English. What do you think that would have been like? Why?

5. Lots of children at this school speak Chinese/Vietnamese. Would you like to learn some of that language?

6. Refer to students’ responses to last round of surveys. Ask questions related to earlier comments made or ways statements have been sorted.

For example:

This school teaches me what I need to know.

Possible additional probes: What do you think you need to learn more of/ less of? What would you like to change about how you are taught?

Being in a bilingual program when I started school was good for my learning.

Possible additional probe: In what ways was being in a bilingual program good/not good for your learning?

I wish I could do more of my learning in L1.

Possible additional probe: Can you tell me why that would/ would not be helpful to you? What would you say to someone who said that it is more important to learn English than your home language?
APPENDIX 21
PARENT SURVEY

Dear ____________________________

As part of my research into student learning at [blank], I would be very pleased if you could spend a few minutes completing the following survey. Your opinions will be kept private and confidential. They will help understand how to improve teaching and learning for bilingual students at this school. The survey can be returned to Lim Lim at the school, or to Paul. Thankyou very much.

Paul Molyneux
Ph.D Student

Jeni Wilson
University Supervisor

Home Language/s of family: Hakkka (Chinese)

Year that your family first arrived in Australia: Father 92/Mother 75

Number of children at the school: __

Year that your first child was enrolled at the school: 2002

1. What do you believe are the most important things for your child to learn at primary school? [Please tick those you feel are most important].

☐ understandings about Australia, its history and its multicultural society
☐ understandings about other countries and cultures in the world
☐ understandings about science and nature
☐ skills in English (reading, writing, listening and speaking)
☐ skills in Chinese (reading, writing, listening and speaking)
☐ numeracy/mathematics skills
☐ sport/physical education skills
☐ skills in art and craft
☐ skills in music and music appreciation
☐ technological/computer skills
☐ work and social skills of cooperation and sharing
☐ discipline and good behaviour

Any other areas not mentioned or other comments you would like to make?:

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________
2. How is the school **successful** in meeting your child’s learning needs?

   

3. How is the school **not successful** in meeting your child’s learning needs?

   

4. How important is it for the school to teach your child **Chinese**?
   (Place a mark on the line at the appropriate place).

   

5. How important is it for the school to teach your child **English**?
   (Place a mark on the line at the appropriate place).

   

6. Please rate how well you believe the school’s bilingual program helps children learn **English**.

   

   

7. Please rate how well you believe the school’s bilingual program helps children learn **Chinese**.

   

   

Any other comments?:

   

---

**The school’s bilingual program in Years Prep, One and Two aims to develop the students’ abilities in **both Chinese and English.**

6. Please rate how well you believe the school’s bilingual program helps children learn **English**.

   

   

7. Please rate how well you believe the school’s bilingual program helps children learn **Chinese**.

   

   

Any other comments?:

   

---
7. Do you feel the Prep/One/Two bilingual program, whereby the students learn half time in English, half time in Chinese should be extended to upper grades?

☐ YES

☐ NO

Why? Good advantage for children to not forget the own language.

8. Any other comments on the bilingual program or your child's learning at the school.

9. Would you be willing to participate in a short group discussion or individual interview at the school about these issues?

☐ YES

☐ NO

No time. Working

Thank you very much for your participation in this research.
APPENDIX 22
QUESTIONS FOR BILINGUAL CONSULTATIONS

1. What do you see as being the main learning needs of children at this school?

2. Are there learning needs children at this school have that are different to the needs of English-speaking children?

3. Does the school’s organisation for bilingual learning address your child’s learning needs?

4. Do you feel the status of Hakka is increased or decreased by students learning Mandarin Chinese?

5. What are the successful features of our school’s Chinese/English bilingual program?

6. What are the unsuccessful features of this program?

7. How could it be improved?

8. Should the bilingual program be extended into the upper grades at the school?

9. How do you feel the bilingual program impacts on overall student results?

10. When children learn bilingually is there one language that is more important than the other?
Dear Colleague,
As part of my research into student learning at [redacted], I would be very pleased if you could spend a few minutes completing the following survey. Surveys, when returned to me, will be kept completely private and confidential. Analysis of surveys will be undertaken in a manner that does not reveal the identities of research participants. Your involvement in this research is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. You may also withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied. I intend this research to be something that provides focus for all of us as we continually strive to make our teaching more effective. Thank you very much for your support.

Paul Molyneux
Ph.D Student

Dr. Jeni Wilson
University Supervisor

Teaching Experience at the school:

☐ 0 - 5 years  ☐ 5 - 10 years  ☐ more than 10 years

Have you at any stage taught in the school’s bilingual program?: [No]

1. What do you believe are most important things for students to learn at primary school? [Please tick those you feel are most important].

☐ understandings about Australia, its history and its multicultural society
☐ understandings about other countries and cultures in the world
☐ understandings about science and nature
☐ skills in English (reading, writing, listening and speaking)
☒ skills in students’ home language (reading, writing, listening and speaking)
☐ numeracy/mathematics skills
☐ sport/physical education skills
☐ skills in art and craft
☐ skills in music and music appreciation
☐ technological/computer skills
☐ work and social skills of cooperation and sharing
☐ discipline and good behaviour

Any other areas not mentioned or other comments you would like to make?:

I value all of the aspects of learning listed here, I believe in a broad curriculum, I have nominated 9 things here – Work and social skills are essential for successful learning, it lead to positive discipline, skills in English, students’ home language can be developed via an integrated curriculum which incorporates, sise, science the arts etc.

Department of Learning and Educational Development
Faculty of Education
The University of Melbourne Victoria 3010 Australia
Telephone: +61 3 8344 0955 (Queensberry St) +61 3 8344 8334 (Alice Hoy Bld)
Fax: +61 3 8344 0995 (Queensberry St) +61 3 9347 2468 (Alice Hoy Bld)
2. In what ways does the school successfully meet its students' learning needs?

3. In what ways could the school better meet its students' learning needs?

4. How important is it for the school to teach students their home languages, as currently takes place?

(Place a mark on the line at the appropriate place).

not important important very important

5. How important is it for the school to teach students English?

(Place a mark on the line at the appropriate place).

not important important very important

The school's bilingual program in Years Prep, One and Two aims to develop the students' abilities in both their home language (of either Chinese and Vietnamese) and English.

6. Please rate how well you believe the school's bilingual program helps children learn English.

0 1 2 3 4 5

not well very well

7. Please rate how well you believe the school's bilingual program helps children learn their home languages.

0 1 2 3 4 5

not well very well

Any other comments?:

Many students from RWBS continue to learn their home language on weekends (via weekend schools). In junior classes, students often prefer to speak in their home language in English classes too.

How does this impact on the acquisition of English?
7. Do you feel the bilingual program, whereby the students learn half time in English, half time in their home language should be extended to upper grades?

☐ YES  I'm really unsure about this. I would be guided by further info/research.

☐ NO  My concern for some students is that they use English far less that their home language.

Why ?  Surely more practice opportunity to speak and learn English would then be more beneficial in grades 3, 4, 5 & 6.

8. Any other comments on the bilingual program or student learning at the school?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Thankyou very much for your participation in this research.
## APPENDIX 24: LANGUAGE BACKGROUNDS OF STUDENT RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS (N = 143)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Chinese (Hakka)</th>
<th>Chinese (Mandarin/Other)</th>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
<th>Turkish</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Bi/Multilingual Family Backgrounds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year Prep</td>
<td>G 3  B 5</td>
<td>G 0  B 0</td>
<td>G 3  B 4</td>
<td>G 0  B 0</td>
<td>G 0  B 1</td>
<td>G 1  B 0</td>
<td>G 0  B 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N = 17)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year One</td>
<td>G 4  B 1</td>
<td>G 0  B 2</td>
<td>G 4  B 5</td>
<td>G 1  B 0</td>
<td>G 1  B 1</td>
<td>G 0  B 0</td>
<td>G 0  B 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N = 20)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Two</td>
<td>G 4  B 4</td>
<td>G 0  B 2</td>
<td>G 5  B 2</td>
<td>G 1  B 0</td>
<td>G 1  B 1</td>
<td>G 0  B 1</td>
<td>G 1  B 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>(N = 22)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Three</td>
<td>G 2  B 5</td>
<td>G 2  B 1</td>
<td>G 6  B 2</td>
<td>G 0  B 2</td>
<td>G 5  B 0</td>
<td>G 1  B 1</td>
<td>G 0  B 0</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Four</td>
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<td>G 0  B 0</td>
<td>G 2  B 3</td>
<td>G 1  B 1</td>
<td>G 1  B 1</td>
<td>G 0  B 0</td>
<td>G 0  B 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>(N = 17)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Five</td>
<td>G 8  B 5</td>
<td>G 2  B 0</td>
<td>G 4  B 4</td>
<td>G 2  B 0</td>
<td>G 1  B 2</td>
<td>G 0  B 0</td>
<td>G 0  B 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N = 28)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Six</td>
<td>G 5  B 2</td>
<td>G 0  B 0</td>
<td>G 2  B 0</td>
<td>G 1  B 1</td>
<td>G 0  B 0</td>
<td>G 0  B 0</td>
<td>G 0  B 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N = 12)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G 55  B 9</td>
<td>G 46  B 10</td>
<td>G 16  B 4</td>
<td>G 4  B 3</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 24 continued: FURTHER BREAKDOWN OF THESE FIGURES:

Number of girls in the study: 79  Percentage of participants who are girls: 55%
Number of boys in the study: 64  Percentage of participants who are boys: 45%

Language Backgrounds in study in percentages:
Chinese*: 45%  (* includes all varieties/ fangyan of Chinese)
Vietnamese: 32%
English: 11%
Turkish: 7%
Other: 3%
Bi/Multilingual: 2%

TOTAL: 100%

Year Level: Percentage of students from LBOTEs:
Year Prep: 94%
Year One: 90%
Year Two: 91%
Year Three: 81%
Year Four: 88%
Year Five: 89%
Year Six: 92%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Eng Only</th>
<th>Ch(M) Only</th>
<th>Ch (H) Only</th>
<th>Viet. Only</th>
<th>Turkish Only</th>
<th>Other Single Lang.</th>
<th>Eng/ Ch(M)</th>
<th>Eng/ Ch(H)</th>
<th>Eng/ VIet.</th>
<th>Eng/ Turkish</th>
<th>Eng/ Other</th>
<th>Mult. Lang. Combinations</th>
<th>Don’t Do or Know</th>
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</thead>
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<td>46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1 - E/Mac.</td>
<td>1 - E/C/V</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working on a piece of writing</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>57</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 - E/C/V</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with your parents</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1 - Cant.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 - E/Arab.</td>
<td>1 - E/Mac. 1 - E/Mac. 1 - E/Eth. 1 - E/Camb 1 - E/Indon 1 - E/C/V</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with your brothers or sisters</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 - E/Arab.</td>
<td>1 - E/C/V</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with your friends</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1 - E/Arab.</td>
<td>1 - Ch/H 1 - E/C/V 5 - E/C/H</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with teachers</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 - E/C/V</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing Number/ Maths work</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 - E/Mac.</td>
<td>3 - E/C/H 1 - E/C/V</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thinking about things</td>
<td>63</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 - Eth.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 - E/C/H</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking for things at a shop</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 - E/Camb</td>
<td>1 - E/C/V 4 - E/C/H 1 - E/C/H/E 1 - E/C/H/Cant.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching TV or videos</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1 - E/Mac.</td>
<td>1 - E/Arab. 1 - E/Cant. 1 - E/C 1 - E/C/Germ.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to music</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 - Arabic</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 - E/C/V 1 - Ch/H 1 - E/C/Port. 1 Port/H/E 1 - E/C/Kor 1 - E/C/Tetum/Eng /Ch</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to stories at home</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 - ?? 1 - Indon.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>77</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 26:
### LANGUAGE USE QUESTIONNAIRE:
### DATA ANALYSIS: ALL YEAR PREP TO SIX STUDENTS (N = 143)
### IN ORDER OF ENGLISH ONLY USAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Domain</th>
<th>Years Prep to Six Totals</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>E</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>E/L</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking for things at a shop</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing Number/ Maths work</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to music</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking about things</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching TV or videos</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading a book by yourself</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with your brothers or sisters</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with your friends</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to stories at home</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with teachers</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>79%</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working on a piece of writing</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>80%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with your parents</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E = English Only  
L = A Language Other Than English only  
E/L = A combination of English and a Language Other Than English  
N = No Response/Not Applicable
## APPENDIX 27:
LANGUAGE USE QUESTIONNAIRE:
DATA ANALYSIS: ALL YEAR PREP TO SIX STUDENTS (N = 143)
IN ORDER OF LOTE ONLY USAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Domain</th>
<th>Years Prep to Six Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with your parents</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with your brothers or sisters</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking about things</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to stories at home</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to music</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing Number/ Maths work</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with your friends</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking for things at a shop</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching TV or videos</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading a book by yourself</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with teachers</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working on a piece of writing</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E = English Only
L = A Language Other Than English only
E/L = A combination of English and a Language Other Than English
N = No Response/Not Applicable
## APPENDIX 28:

**LANGUAGE USE QUESTIONNAIRE: YEAR LEVEL ANALYSIS (N = 143)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Domain</th>
<th>Year Prep (N = 17)</th>
<th>Year One (N = 20)</th>
<th>Year Two (N = 22)</th>
<th>Year Three (N = 27)</th>
<th>Year Four (N = 17)</th>
<th>Year Five (N = 28)</th>
<th>Year Six (N = 12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>E/L</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>E/L</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading a book by yourself</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working on a piece of writing</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with your parents</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with your brothers or sisters</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with friends</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with teachers</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing Number/ Maths work</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking about things</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking for things at a shop</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching TV or videos</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to music</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to stories at home</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*E = English Only  L = A Language Other Than English only  E/L = A combination of English and one or more Languages Other Than English*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Domain</th>
<th>Year Prep (N = 16)</th>
<th>Year One (N = 18)</th>
<th>Year Two (N = 20)</th>
<th>Year Three (N = 22)</th>
<th>Year Four (N = 15)</th>
<th>Year Five (N = 25)</th>
<th>Year Six (N = 11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talking with your brothers or sisters</td>
<td>2, L: 7, E/L: 3</td>
<td>1, L: 11, E/L: 4</td>
<td>4, L: 11, E/L: 7</td>
<td>5, L: 7, E/L: 5</td>
<td>5, L: 5, E/L: 5</td>
<td>4, L: 14, E/L: 6</td>
<td>6, L: 4, E/L: 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with teachers</td>
<td>1, L: 15, E/L: 18</td>
<td>1, L: 19, E/L: 1</td>
<td>1, L: 21, E/L: 2</td>
<td>2, L: 13, E/L: 10</td>
<td>15, L: 3, E/L: 11</td>
<td>15, L: 7, E/L: 11</td>
<td>4, L: 7, E/L: 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing Number/ Maths work</td>
<td>3, L: 10, E/L: 2</td>
<td>2, L: 14, E/L: 7</td>
<td>12, L: 2, E/L: 8</td>
<td>6, L: 2, E/L: 15</td>
<td>3, L: 7, E/L: 3</td>
<td>- 7, L: 1, E/L: 1</td>
<td>- 3, L: 1, E/L: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking for things at a shop</td>
<td>5, L: 1, E/L: 6</td>
<td>1, L: 11, E/L: 8</td>
<td>10, L: 12, E/L: 6</td>
<td>9, L: 16, E/L: 6</td>
<td>1, L: 14, E/L: 8</td>
<td>16, L: 1, E/L: 8</td>
<td>3, L: 1, E/L: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching TV or videos</td>
<td>6, L: 1, E/L: 9</td>
<td>6, L: 11, E/L: 5</td>
<td>6, L: 15, E/L: 16</td>
<td>1, L: 14, E/L: 1</td>
<td>1, L: 16, E/L: 6</td>
<td>6, L: 5, E/L: 6</td>
<td>3, L: 1, E/L: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to music</td>
<td>6, L: 4, E/L: 3</td>
<td>3, L: 4, E/L: 9</td>
<td>9, L: 5, E/L: 11</td>
<td>1, L: 9, E/L: 6</td>
<td>14, L: 3, E/L: 7</td>
<td>8, L: 3, E/L: 8</td>
<td>- 3, L: 1, E/L: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to stories at home</td>
<td>1, L: 4, E/L: 5</td>
<td>5, L: 4, E/L: 3</td>
<td>1, L: 7, E/L: 2</td>
<td>4, L: 14, E/L: 3</td>
<td>2, L: 4, E/L: 3</td>
<td>- 1, E/L: 1</td>
<td>- 1, E/L: 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E = English Only   L = A Language Other Than English only   E/L = A combination of English and a Language Other Than English
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Domain</th>
<th>Year Prep (N = 16)</th>
<th>Year One (N = 18)</th>
<th>Year Two (N = 20)</th>
<th>Year Three (N = 22)</th>
<th>Year Four (N = 15)</th>
<th>Year Five (N = 25)</th>
<th>Year Six (N = 11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading a book by yourself</strong></td>
<td>E: 6% L: 94% E/L: 94%</td>
<td>E: 6% L: 94% E/L: 94%</td>
<td>E: 15% L: 85% E/L: 85%</td>
<td>E: 23% L: 77% E/L: 77%</td>
<td>E: 20% L: 80% E/L: 80%</td>
<td>E: 56% L: 44% E/L: 44%</td>
<td>E: 64% L: 36% E/L: 36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Working on a piece of writing</strong></td>
<td>E: 6% L: 94% E/L: 94%</td>
<td>E: 6% L: 94% E/L: 94%</td>
<td>E: 10% L: 90% E/L: 90%</td>
<td>E: 5% L: 95% E/L: 95%</td>
<td>E: 7% L: 93% E/L: 93%</td>
<td>E: 24% L: 76% E/L: 76%</td>
<td>E: 45% L: 55% E/L: 55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Talking with your parents</strong></td>
<td>E: - L: 56% E/L: 44%</td>
<td>E: - L: 83% E/L: 17%</td>
<td>E: - L: 75% E/L: 25%</td>
<td>E: - L: 68% E/L: 32%</td>
<td>E: - L: 60% E/L: 40%</td>
<td>E: 4% L: 80% E/L: 16%</td>
<td>E: - L: 64% E/L: 36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Talking with your brothers or sisters</strong></td>
<td>E: 12% L: 44% E/L: 19%</td>
<td>E: 6% L: 61% E/L: 17%</td>
<td>E: 20% L: 25% E/L: 55%</td>
<td>E: 32% L: 14% E/L: 32%</td>
<td>E: 33% L: 33% E/L: 33%</td>
<td>E: 20% L: 16% E/L: 56%</td>
<td>E: 55% L: 36% E/L: 36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Talking with friends</strong></td>
<td>E: 12% L: 19% E/L: 69%</td>
<td>E: 11% L: 6% E/L: 83%</td>
<td>E: 15% L: 5% E/L: 80%</td>
<td>E: 18% L: 82% E/L: 82%</td>
<td>E: 13% L: 87% E/L: 87%</td>
<td>E: 16% L: 4% E/L: 80%</td>
<td>E: 64% L: 36% E/L: 36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Talking with teachers</strong></td>
<td>E: 6% L: 94% E/L: -</td>
<td>E: - L: 100% E/L: -</td>
<td>E: 5% L: 95% E/L: -</td>
<td>E: 5% L: 95% E/L: -</td>
<td>E: 13% L: 87% E/L: -</td>
<td>E: 40% L: 60% E/L: 36%</td>
<td>E: 36% L: 64% E/L: 36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Doing Number/ Maths work</strong></td>
<td>E: 19% L: 19% E/L: 62%</td>
<td>E: 11% L: 11% E/L: 78%</td>
<td>E: 35% L: - E/L: 65%</td>
<td>E: 55% L: 9% E/L: 36%</td>
<td>E: 40% L: 13% E/L: 47%</td>
<td>E: 60% L: 12% E/L: 28%</td>
<td>E: 100% L: - E/L: -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thinking about things</strong></td>
<td>E: 19% L: 31% E/L: 31%</td>
<td>E: 11% L: 50% E/L: 39%</td>
<td>E: 35% L: 40% E/L: 20%</td>
<td>E: 59% L: 9% E/L: 32%</td>
<td>E: 33% L: 20% E/L: 47%</td>
<td>E: 44% L: 16% E/L: 40%</td>
<td>E: 55% L: 45% E/L: 45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asking for things at a shop</strong></td>
<td>E: 31% L: 6% E/L: 31%</td>
<td>E: 33% L: 6% E/L: 61%</td>
<td>E: 40% L: 5% E/L: 40%</td>
<td>E: 45% L: - E/L: 55%</td>
<td>E: 40% L: - E/L: 60%</td>
<td>E: 64% L: 4% E/L: 32%</td>
<td>E: 73% L: - E/L: 27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Watching TV or videos</strong></td>
<td>E: 38% L: 6% E/L: 56%</td>
<td>E: 33% L: 6% E/L: 61%</td>
<td>E: 25% L: - E/L: 75%</td>
<td>E: 27% L: - E/L: 73%</td>
<td>E: 7% L: - E/L: 93%</td>
<td>E: 32% L: 4% E/L: 64%</td>
<td>E: 55% L: - E/L: 45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening to music</strong></td>
<td>E: 38% L: 25% E/L: 19%</td>
<td>E: 17% L: 22% E/L: 50%</td>
<td>E: 45% L: - E/L: 25%</td>
<td>E: 50% L: 5% E/L: 41%</td>
<td>E: 40% L: 7% E/L: 47%</td>
<td>E: 56% L: 12% E/L: 28%</td>
<td>E: 73% L: - E/L: 27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening to stories at home</strong></td>
<td>E: 6% L: 25% E/L: 12%</td>
<td>E: 28% L: 28% E/L: 22%</td>
<td>E: 15% L: 5% E/L: -</td>
<td>E: 18% L: 32% E/L: 5%</td>
<td>E: 13% L: 7% E/L: 27%</td>
<td>E: 12% L: 16% E/L: -</td>
<td>E: - L: 9% E/L: -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E = English Only  
L = A Language Other Than English only  
E/L = A combination of English and a Language Other Than English
## APPENDIX 31:
### LANGUAGE USE QUESTIONNAIRE: GENDER TOTALS (GIRLS) (N = 77)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Domain</th>
<th>Year Prep (N = 7)</th>
<th>Year One (N = 11)</th>
<th>Year Two (N = 10)</th>
<th>Year Three (N = 16)</th>
<th>Year Four (N = 9)</th>
<th>Year Five (N = 16)</th>
<th>Year Six (N = 8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>E</strong></td>
<td><strong>L</strong></td>
<td><strong>E/L</strong></td>
<td><strong>E</strong></td>
<td><strong>L</strong></td>
<td><strong>E/L</strong></td>
<td><strong>E</strong></td>
<td><strong>L</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading a book by yourself</td>
<td>1 - 6</td>
<td>2 - 9</td>
<td>2 - 8</td>
<td>5 - 11</td>
<td>3 - 6</td>
<td>7 - 9</td>
<td>5 - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working on a piece of writing</td>
<td>1 - 6</td>
<td>2 - 9</td>
<td>1 - 9</td>
<td>2 - 14</td>
<td>1 - 8</td>
<td>3 - 13</td>
<td>2 - 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with your parents</td>
<td>- 4 - 3</td>
<td>1 - 8</td>
<td>2 - 6</td>
<td>5 - 8</td>
<td>3 - 6</td>
<td>1 - 14</td>
<td>1 - 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with your brothers or sisters</td>
<td>1 - 2 2</td>
<td>1 - 7</td>
<td>1 - 3</td>
<td>3 - 4</td>
<td>8 - 2</td>
<td>2 - 1 6</td>
<td>4 - 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with friends</td>
<td>2 - 2 3</td>
<td>1 - 10</td>
<td>1 - 8</td>
<td>5 - 11</td>
<td>2 - 7</td>
<td>3 - 13</td>
<td>6 - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with teachers</td>
<td>1 - 6</td>
<td>1 - 10</td>
<td>1 - 9</td>
<td>2 - 14</td>
<td>2 - 7</td>
<td>5 - 11</td>
<td>2 - 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing Number/ Maths work</td>
<td>2 - 1 4</td>
<td>3 - 2 6</td>
<td>5 - 5</td>
<td>11 - 1 4</td>
<td>5 - 4</td>
<td>10 - 2 4</td>
<td>8 - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking about things</td>
<td>3 - 2 1</td>
<td>2 - 6 3</td>
<td>3 - 5 1</td>
<td>11 - 2 3</td>
<td>4 - 5</td>
<td>9 - 2 5</td>
<td>5 - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking for things at a shop</td>
<td>1 - 3</td>
<td>6 - 1 4</td>
<td>4 - 1 5</td>
<td>9 - 7</td>
<td>4 - 5</td>
<td>9 - 1 6</td>
<td>6 - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching TV or videos</td>
<td>4 - - 3</td>
<td>6 - 1 4</td>
<td>4 - 6</td>
<td>7 - 9</td>
<td>9 - - 9</td>
<td>6 - - 10</td>
<td>5 - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to music</td>
<td>3 - 2 1</td>
<td>2 - 2 5</td>
<td>4 - 1 4</td>
<td>7 - 1 7</td>
<td>4 - 4</td>
<td>8 - 2 6</td>
<td>5 - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to stories at home</td>
<td>1 - 2 1</td>
<td>5 - 2 2</td>
<td>4 - -</td>
<td>5 - 5 1</td>
<td>2 - - 3</td>
<td>3 - 2 -</td>
<td>- 1 -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E = English Only  
L = A Language Other Than English only  
E/L = A combination of English and a Language Other Than English
## APPENDIX 32:
### LANGUAGE USE QUESTIONNAIRE: GENDER PERCENTAGES (GIRLS) (N = 77)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Domain</th>
<th>Year Prep (N = 7)</th>
<th>Year One (N = 11)</th>
<th>Year Two (N = 10)</th>
<th>Year Three (N = 16)</th>
<th>Year Four (N = 9)</th>
<th>Year Five (N = 16)</th>
<th>Year Six (N = 8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading a book by yourself</td>
<td>E=14% L=18% E/L=86%</td>
<td>E=20% L=10% E/L=80%</td>
<td>E=31% L=69% E/L=67%</td>
<td>E=44% L=56% E/L=63%</td>
<td>E=19% L=81% E/L=25%</td>
<td>E=33% L=66% E/L=38%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working on a piece of writing</td>
<td>E=14% L=18% E/L=86%</td>
<td>E=10% L=90% E/L=82%</td>
<td>E=13% L=87% E/L=89%</td>
<td>E=19% L=81% E/L=25%</td>
<td>E=11% L=81% E/L=25%</td>
<td>E=13% L=86% E/L=25%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with your parents</td>
<td>E=9% L=73% E/L=18%</td>
<td>E=60% L=40% E/L=31%</td>
<td>E=50% L=19% E/L=33%</td>
<td>E=6% L=88% E/L=6%</td>
<td>E=6% L=62% E/L=38%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with your brothers or sisters</td>
<td>E=14% L=29% E/L=29%</td>
<td>E=9% L=45% E/L=18%</td>
<td>E=30% L=13% E/L=13%</td>
<td>E=22% L=25% E/L=44%</td>
<td>E=25% L=25% E/L=44%</td>
<td>E=32% L=25% E/L=25%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with friends</td>
<td>E=29% L=29% E/L=29%</td>
<td>E=9% L=91% E/L=10%</td>
<td>E=10% L=80% E/L=31%</td>
<td>E=22% L=78% E/L=19%</td>
<td>E=19% L=81% E/L=75%</td>
<td>E=29% L=25% E/L=25%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with teachers</td>
<td>E=14% L=86% E/L=9%</td>
<td>E=9% L=91% E/L=10%</td>
<td>E=10% L=90% E/L=31%</td>
<td>E=22% L=78% E/L=19%</td>
<td>E=31% L=69% E/L=25%</td>
<td>E=67% L=62% E/L=25%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing Number/ Maths work</td>
<td>E=29% L=14% E/L=57%</td>
<td>E=27% L=18% E/L=55%</td>
<td>E=50% L=69% E/L=56%</td>
<td>E=63% L=12% E/L=25%</td>
<td>E=56% L=56% E/L=38%</td>
<td>E=56% L=6% E/L=38%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking about things</td>
<td>E=43% L=29% E/L=14%</td>
<td>E=18% L=55% E/L=27%</td>
<td>E=30% L=10% E/L=69%</td>
<td>E=56% L=56% E/L=38%</td>
<td>E=56% L=6% E/L=38%</td>
<td>E=75% L=25% E/L=25%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking for things at a shop</td>
<td>E=14% L=43% E/L=55%</td>
<td>E=9% L=36% E/L=10%</td>
<td>E=40% L=50% E/L=56%</td>
<td>E=44% L=56% E/L=56%</td>
<td>E=56% L=56% E/L=38%</td>
<td>E=75% L=25% E/L=25%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching TV or videos</td>
<td>E=57% L=43% E/L=55%</td>
<td>E=9% L=36% E/L=10%</td>
<td>E=40% L=50% E/L=56%</td>
<td>E=44% L=56% E/L=56%</td>
<td>E=56% L=56% E/L=38%</td>
<td>E=75% L=25% E/L=25%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to music</td>
<td>E=43% L=29% E/L=14%</td>
<td>E=18% L=45% E/L=10%</td>
<td>E=40% L=44% E/L=6%</td>
<td>E=44% L=44% E/L=56%</td>
<td>E=50% L=38% E/L=38%</td>
<td>E=62% L=38% E/L=38%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to stories at home</td>
<td>E=14% L=29% E/L=29%</td>
<td>E=18% L=18% E/L=18%</td>
<td>E=40% L=44% E/L=6%</td>
<td>E=22% L=33% E/L=19%</td>
<td>E=19% L=13% E/L=13%</td>
<td>E=62% L=13% E/L=13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E = English Only  L = A Language Other Than English only  E/L = A combination of English and a Language Other Than English
# APPENDIX 33:
LANGUAGE USE QUESTIONNAIRE: GENDER TOTALS (BOYS) (N = 66)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Domain</th>
<th>Year Prep (N = 10)</th>
<th>Year One (N = 9)</th>
<th>Year Two (N = 12)</th>
<th>Year Three (N = 11)</th>
<th>Year Four (N = 8)</th>
<th>Year Five (N = 12)</th>
<th>Year Six (N = 4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>E/L</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>E/L</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading a book by yourself</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working on a piece of writing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with your parents</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with your brothers or sisters</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with friends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with teachers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing Number/ Maths work</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking about things</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking for things at a shop</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching TV or videos</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to music</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to stories at home</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E = English Only  
L = A Language Other Than English only  
E/L = A combination of English and a Language Other Than English
## APPENDIX 34:
LANGUAGE USE QUESTIONNAIRE: GENDER LEVEL PERCENTAGES (BOYS) (N = 66)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Domain</th>
<th>Year Prep (N = 10)</th>
<th>Year One (N = 9)</th>
<th>Year Two (N = 12)</th>
<th>Year Three (N = 11)</th>
<th>Year Four (N = 8)</th>
<th>Year Five (N = 12)</th>
<th>Year Six (N = 4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>E/L</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>E/L</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading a book by yourself</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working on a piece of writing</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with your parents</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with your brothers or sisters</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with friends</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with teachers</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing Number/Maths work</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking about things</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking for things at a shop</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching TV or videos</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to music</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to stories at home</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E = English Only
L = A Language Other Than English only
E/L = A combination of English and a Language Other Than English
APPENDIX 35:
LANGUAGE ATTITUDES QUESTIONNAIRE:
PART ONE - IMPORTANCE OF DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS OF LANGUAGE IN L1 AND ENGLISH
DATA ANALYSIS: TOTALS AND PERCENTAGES OF ALL YEARS PREP TO SIX STUDENTS (N = 123)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area/Mode of Language</th>
<th>not important</th>
<th>important</th>
<th>very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P 1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>P 1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>P 1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking your home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language</td>
<td>N 14 19 25 15 25 11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>- - 11 8 7 4 18</td>
<td>36 50 42 52 40 48 45</td>
<td>64 50 47 40 53 48 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>- - 16 - - - -</td>
<td>9 43 43 42 40 33 24 27</td>
<td>57 57 42 60 67 76 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading in your home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language</td>
<td>N 14 19 25 15 25 11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>- - 7 11 4 8 9</td>
<td>43 50 26 48 53 56 27</td>
<td>57 43 63 48 40 36 76 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading in English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>- - 7 5 - - - -</td>
<td>57 43 26 28 47 28 18</td>
<td>43 50 68 72 53 72 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing in your home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language</td>
<td>N 14 19 25 15 25 11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>- - 5 8 7 4 9</td>
<td>29 64 21 40 40 44 45</td>
<td>71 36 74 52 53 52 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing in English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>- - 7 5 - - - -</td>
<td>43 29 26 20 20 28 27</td>
<td>57 64 68 80 80 72 73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals appear first; under which percentages are placed. Percentages have been rounded out to nearest whole number.
* = One student wished to register importance as between this and the next category.
APPENDIX 36:
LANGUAGE ATTITUDES QUESTIONNAIRE:
PART TWO - CHOICE OF STATEMENT REFLECTING STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF L1 AND ENGLISH
DATA ANALYSIS: YEAR PREP TO SIX LBOTE STUDENTS (N = 129)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Total (N = 129)</th>
<th>Total Girls (N = 71)</th>
<th>Total Boys (N = 58)</th>
<th>Total Chinese-speaking students (N = 67)</th>
<th>Total Vietnamese-speaking students (N = 46)</th>
<th>Total Turkish-speaking students (N = 10)</th>
<th>Total Other Language background students (N = 6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning my <strong>home language</strong> is more important than learning English.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning <strong>English</strong> is more important than learning my home language.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Both</strong> English and my home language are equally important to learn.</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neither</strong> English nor my home language are important to learn.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Total (N = 129)</td>
<td>Total Chinese-speaking students (N = 67)</td>
<td>Total Vietnamese-speaking students (N = 46)</td>
<td>Total Turkish-speaking students (N = 10)</td>
<td>Total Other Language background students (N = 6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning my <strong>home language is more important</strong> than learning English.</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 students</td>
<td>3 students</td>
<td>5 students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning <strong>English is more important</strong> than learning my home language.</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14 students</td>
<td>9 students</td>
<td>3 students</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Both</strong> English and my home language are equally important to learn.</td>
<td>82.9%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>82.6%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>107 students</td>
<td>55 students</td>
<td>38 students</td>
<td>10 students</td>
<td>4 students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neither</strong> English nor my home language are important to learn.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX 38:
LANGUAGE ATTITUDES QUESTIONNAIRE:
PART TWO - CHOICE OF STATEMENT REFLECTING STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF L1 AND ENGLISH
DATA ANALYSIS: STUDENT RESPONSES IN PERCENTAGES & TOTALS: YEARS P-6 LBOTE STUDENTS
(YEAR LEVEL AND GENDER BREAKDOWN) (N = 129)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Total P-6 (N = 129)</th>
<th>Year Prep (N = 14)</th>
<th>Year 1 (N = 18)</th>
<th>Year 2 (N = 20)</th>
<th>Year 3 (N = 26)</th>
<th>Year 4 (N = 15)</th>
<th>Year 5 (N = 25)</th>
<th>Year 6 (N = 11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning my <strong>home language</strong> is more important than learning English.</td>
<td>5.6% 6.8%</td>
<td>14.2% 28.5%</td>
<td>11.1% 11.1%</td>
<td>10% -</td>
<td>6.6% -</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9% -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 4</td>
<td>1 2</td>
<td>1 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning <strong>English</strong> is more important than my home language.</td>
<td>12.6% 8.6%</td>
<td>14.2% -</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10% 20%</td>
<td>6.6% 9%</td>
<td>25% 14.2%</td>
<td>7.1% 9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2</td>
<td>1 1</td>
<td>2 1</td>
<td>1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Both</strong> English and my home language are equally important to learn.</td>
<td>81.6% 84.4%</td>
<td>71.4% 71.4%</td>
<td>88.8% 88.8%</td>
<td>80% 80%</td>
<td>86.6% 90.9%</td>
<td>75% 85.7%</td>
<td>92.8% 81.8%</td>
<td>62.5% 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>58 49</td>
<td>5 5</td>
<td>8 8</td>
<td>8 8</td>
<td>13 10</td>
<td>6 6</td>
<td>13 9</td>
<td>5 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neither</strong> English nor my home language are important to learn.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**APPENDIX 39: LANGUAGE ATTITUDES QUESTIONNAIRE:**
**PART TWO - CHOICE OF STATEMENT REFLECTING STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF L1 AND ENGLISH**
**DATA ANALYSIS: STUDENT RESPONSES IN PERCENTAGES AND TOTALS: YEARS P-6 LBOTE STUDENTS (YEAR LEVEL BREAKDOWN) (N = 129)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Total P-6 (N = 129)</th>
<th>Year Prep (N = 14)</th>
<th>Year 1 (N = 18)</th>
<th>Year 2 (N = 20)</th>
<th>Year 3 (N = 26)</th>
<th>Year 4 (N = 15)</th>
<th>Year 5 (N = 25)</th>
<th>Year 6 (N = 11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning my home language is more important than learning English.</td>
<td>6.2% 8 students</td>
<td>21.4% 3 students</td>
<td>11.1% 2 students</td>
<td>5% 1 student</td>
<td>3.8% 1 student</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4% 1 student</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning English is more important than learning my home language.</td>
<td>10.8% 14 students</td>
<td>7.1% 1 student</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15% 3 students</td>
<td>7.6% 2 students</td>
<td>20% 3 students</td>
<td>8% 2 students</td>
<td>27.2% 3 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both English and my home language are equally important to learn.</td>
<td>82.9% 107 students</td>
<td>71.4% 10 students</td>
<td>88.8% 16 students</td>
<td>80% 16 students</td>
<td>88.4% 23 students</td>
<td>80% 12 students</td>
<td>88% 22 students</td>
<td>72.7% 8 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither English nor my home language are important to learn.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am pleased how well I can ...</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>not sure</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>read in Chinese/ Vietnamese</td>
<td>3 (10%)</td>
<td>7 (24%)</td>
<td>19 (66%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>read in English</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28 (97%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>write in Chinese/ Vietnamese</td>
<td>6 (21%)</td>
<td>7 (24%)</td>
<td>16 (55%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>write in English</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>7 (24%)</td>
<td>21 (73%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speak in Chinese/ Vietnamese</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6 (21%)</td>
<td>23 (79%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speak in English</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (10%)</td>
<td>26 (90%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages rounded off to nearest whole number.
## APPENDIX 41:
**STUDENT ABILITY PERCEPTIONS IN ENGLISH AND HOME LANGUAGE:**
YEARS FIVE & SIX BILINGUALLY-EDUCATED STUDENTS (N = 27)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>disagree strongly</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>not sure</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>agree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>read in Chinese/Vietnamese</strong></td>
<td>2 (7%)</td>
<td>4 (15%)</td>
<td>5 (19%)</td>
<td>12 (44%)</td>
<td>4 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>read in English</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>14 (52%)</td>
<td>11 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>write in Chinese/Vietnamese</strong></td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>3 (11%)</td>
<td>5 (18%)</td>
<td>14 (52%)</td>
<td>4 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>write in English</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>15 (56%)</td>
<td>11 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>speak in Chinese/Vietnamese</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 (7%)</td>
<td>2 (7%)</td>
<td>14 (52%)</td>
<td>9 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>speak in English</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>10 (37%)</td>
<td>16 (59%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages rounded off to nearest whole number.
### APPENDIX 42:
STUDENT ABILITY PERCEPTIONS IN L1 AND ENGLISH (TOTALS AND PERCENTAGES):
YEARS THREE TO SIX BILINGUALLY EDUCATED STUDENTS (N = 56)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I am pleased how well I can</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yr. 3 (N=17)</td>
<td>Yr. 4 (N=12)</td>
<td>Yr. 5 (N=18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read in Chinese/Vietnamese</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read in English</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write in Chinese/Vietnamese</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write in English</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak in Chinese/Vietnamese</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak in English</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I am pleased how well I can</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yr. 3 (N=17)</td>
<td>Yr. 4 (N=12)</td>
<td>Yr. 5 (N=18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read in Chinese/Vietnamese</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read in English</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write in Chinese/Vietnamese</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write in English</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak in Chinese/Vietnamese</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak in English</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 43:
STUDENT ABILITY PERCEPTIONS IN ENGLISH AND CHINESE:
YEARS 3-6 BILINGUALLY-EDUCATED STUDENTS (N = 36)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I am pleased how well I can ...</th>
<th>Year 3 (N = 9)</th>
<th>Year 4 (N = 7)</th>
<th>Year 5 (N = 13)</th>
<th>Year 6 (N = 7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>read in Chinese</strong></td>
<td>5 (56%)</td>
<td>5 (71%)</td>
<td>7 (54%)</td>
<td>4 (57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>read in English</strong></td>
<td>8 (89%)</td>
<td>7 (100%)</td>
<td>12 (92%)</td>
<td>6 (86%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>write in Chinese</strong></td>
<td>4 (44%)</td>
<td>3 (43%)</td>
<td>8 (62%)</td>
<td>5 (71%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>write in English</strong></td>
<td>5 (56%)</td>
<td>5 (71%)</td>
<td>13 (100%)</td>
<td>6 (86%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>speak in Chinese</strong></td>
<td>8 (89%)</td>
<td>4 (57%)</td>
<td>10 (77%)</td>
<td>7 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>speak in English</strong></td>
<td>8 (100%)</td>
<td>7 (92%)</td>
<td>12 (100%)</td>
<td>7 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STUDENT ABILITY PERCEPTIONS IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE:
YEARS 3-6 BILINGUALLY-EDUCATED STUDENTS (N = 20)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I am pleased how well I can ...</th>
<th>Year 3 (N = 8)</th>
<th>Year 4 (N = 5)</th>
<th>Year 5 (N = 5)</th>
<th>Year 6 (N = 2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>read in Vietnamese</strong></td>
<td>5 (63%)</td>
<td>4 (80%)</td>
<td>4 (80%)</td>
<td>1 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>read in English</strong></td>
<td>8 (100%)</td>
<td>5 (100%)</td>
<td>5 (100%)</td>
<td>2 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>write in Vietnamese</strong></td>
<td>5 (63%)</td>
<td>4 (80%)</td>
<td>4 (80%)</td>
<td>1 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>write in English</strong></td>
<td>7 (88%)</td>
<td>4 (80%)</td>
<td>5 (100%)</td>
<td>2 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>speak in Vietnamese</strong></td>
<td>7 (88%)</td>
<td>4 (80%)</td>
<td>5 (100%)</td>
<td>1 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>speak in English</strong></td>
<td>8 (100%)</td>
<td>3 (60%)</td>
<td>5 (100%)</td>
<td>2 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 44:
STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF BILINGUAL BENEFITS:
YEARS THREE & FOUR CHINESE AND VIETNAMESE BACKGROUND STUDENTS (N = 31)
RANKED IN ORDER OF STUDENT AGREEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowing two languages is good because ...</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>not sure</th>
<th>agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>... I need both to communicate with family and friends.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it helps me feel proud of being Australian.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it helps me succeed at school.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... I need both when I go to the shops, restaurants or other places.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it helps me understand the things I learn.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it helps me feel proud of my family background.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it might help me at secondary school.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... I enjoy being able to do things in more than one language.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it might help me get a good job.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it makes me more clever.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... I enjoy learning in both.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it helps me think better.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX 45:
**STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF BILINGUAL BENEFITS:**
**YEARS FIVE AND SIX CHINESE AND VIETNAMESE BACKGROUND STUDENTS (N = 31)**
RANKED IN ORDER OF STUDENT AGREEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowing two languages is good because ...</th>
<th>disagree strongly</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>not sure</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>agree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>... it might help me get a good job.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... I need both to communicate with family and friends.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it helps me feel proud of being Australian.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it helps me succeed at school.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it might help me at secondary school.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it helps me understand the things I learn.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it helps me feel proud of my family background.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it makes me more clever.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... I need both when I go to the shops, restaurants or other places.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... I enjoy being able to do things in more than one language.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... I enjoy learning in both.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it helps me think better.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages rounded off to nearest whole number.
APPENDIX 46:
STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF BILINGUAL BENEFITS:
YEARS THREE TO SIX CHINESE AND VIETNAMESE BACKGROUND STUDENTS (N = 62)
RANKED IN ORDER OF STUDENT AGREEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowing two languages is good because ...</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>not sure</th>
<th>agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>... I need both to communicate with family and friends.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it helps me understand the things I learn.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it helps me succeed at school.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it helps me feel proud of being Australian.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... I need both when I go to the shops, restaurants or other places.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it might help me get a good job.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it might help me at secondary school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it makes me more clever.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it helps me feel proud of my family background.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... I enjoy being able to do things in more than one language.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... I enjoy learning in both.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it helps me think better.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages rounded off to nearest whole number.
APPENDIX 47: STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF BILINGUAL BENEFITS:
YEARS THREE TO SIX CHINESE- AND VIETNAMESE-BACKGROUND STUDENTS
UNCERTAIN OR IN DISAGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS OF BILINGUAL BENEFITS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowing two languages is good because ...</th>
<th>Yr. 3</th>
<th>Yr. 4</th>
<th>Yr. 5</th>
<th>Yr. 6</th>
<th>Yr. 3</th>
<th>Yr. 4</th>
<th>Yr. 5</th>
<th>Yr. 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>... it helps me think better.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>V</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>V</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... I enjoy learning in both.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 boy</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 girl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 boy</td>
<td>boy</td>
<td>1 girl</td>
<td>2 boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it makes me more clever.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 boy</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 girl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 girl</td>
<td>girl</td>
<td>1 boy</td>
<td>2 girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it helps me feel proud of my family background.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 boy</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 girl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 girl</td>
<td>girl</td>
<td>1 boy</td>
<td>2 girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... I enjoy being able to do things in more than one language.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 boy</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 girl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 girl</td>
<td>girl</td>
<td>1 boy</td>
<td>2 girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it might help me at secondary school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 boy</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 girl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 boy</td>
<td>1 girl</td>
<td>2 boy</td>
<td>1 girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it might help me get a good job.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 boy</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 girl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 boy</td>
<td>1 girl</td>
<td>2 boy</td>
<td>1 girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... I need both when I go to the shops, restaurants or other places.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 boy</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 girl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 girl</td>
<td>girl</td>
<td>1 girl</td>
<td>2 girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it helps me feel proud of being Australian.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 boy</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 girl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 girl</td>
<td>girl</td>
<td>1 girl</td>
<td>2 girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it helps me succeed at school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 boy</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 girl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 boy</td>
<td>1 girl</td>
<td>2 boy</td>
<td>1 girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it helps me understand the things I learn.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 boy</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 girl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 boy</td>
<td>1 girl</td>
<td>2 boy</td>
<td>1 girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... I need both to communicate with family and friends.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 boy</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 girl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 boy</td>
<td>1 girl</td>
<td>2 boy</td>
<td>1 girl</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

disagree

not sure
### APPENDIX 48:
### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS:
#### YEARS THREE & FOUR CHINESE AND VIETNAMESE BACKGROUND STUDENTS (N = 31)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>not sure/ not able to respond</th>
<th>agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This school teaches me what I need to know.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being in a bilingual program when I started school was good for my learning.</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>2*</td>
<td>26*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wish I could do more of my learning in Chinese or Vietnamese.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Two of the 31 students could not respond to the second statement as they did not attend the school’s bilingual program.

### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS:
#### YEARS FIVE & SIX CHINESE AND VIETNAMESE BACKGROUND STUDENTS (N = 31)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>disagree strongly</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>not sure/ not able to respond</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>agree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This school teaches me what I need to know.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>39%</td>
<td></td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being in a bilingual program when I started school was good for my learning.</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td>4*</td>
<td>23*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wish I could do more of my learning in Chinese or Vietnamese.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4 16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Four of the 31 students could not respond to the second statement as they did not attend the school’s bilingual program.
### APPENDIX 49:
#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS: YEARS THREE & FOUR CHINESE AND VIETNAMESE BACKGROUND STUDENTS
(N = 31: 17 CHINESE; 14 VIETNAMESE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>not sure/not able to respond</th>
<th>agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This school teaches me what I need to know.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being in a bilingual program when I started school was good for my learning.</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wish I could do more of my learning in Chinese or Vietnamese.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One student from each of the Chinese & Vietnamese cohorts could not respond to this statement as they did not attend the bilingual program.

### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS: YEARS FIVE & SIX CHINESE AND VIETNAMESE BACKGROUND STUDENTS
(N = 31: 22 CHINESE; 9 VIETNAMESE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>disagree strongly</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>not sure/not able to respond</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>agree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This school teaches me what I need to know.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being in a bilingual program when I started school was good for my learning.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wish I could do more of my learning in Chinese or Vietnamese.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Two students from the Chinese & Vietnamese cohorts could not respond to this statement as they did not attend the bilingual program.
## APPENDIX 50:
### STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AGAINST THE ENGLISH CSF LEVELS AND OUTCOMES:
**YEARS PREP, TWO, FOUR & SIX BILINGUALLY EDUCATED STUDENTS:**
**BREAKDOWN INTO STUDENTS FROM MANDARIN-ENGLISH & VIETNAMESE-ENGLISH BILINGUAL PROGRAMS**
*(N = 67)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Speaking and Listening</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Below CSF Level</td>
<td>Beginning CSF Level</td>
<td>Consolidating CSF Level</td>
<td>Established CSF Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year Prep</strong> (N = 19)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year Two</strong> (N = 21)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year Four</strong> (N = 17)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year Six</strong> (N = 10)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The table represents the breakdown of student achievement in speaking, listening, writing, and reading across different levels (Beginning, Consolidating, Established, Beyond) for Years Prep, Two, Four, and Six.*
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Title:
Transportable literacies and transformative pedagogies: an investigation of the tensions and choices in the provision of education for bilingualism and biliteracy

Date:
2005-08

Citation:

Publication Status:
Unpublished

Persistent Link:
http://hdl.handle.net/11343/39151

File Description:
Transportable literacies and transformative pedagogies: an investigation of the tensions and choices in the provision of education for bilingualism and biliteracy

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