Learning to Read a New Culture

How Immigrant and Asylum Seeking Children Experience Scottish Identity through Classroom Books
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Jim McGonigal and Evelyn Arizpe

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Executive Summary

1. Introduction

Our project seeks to answer two questions: What do children from ethnic minority families make of Scotland and Scottish culture and identity, as reflected in the texts they encounter inside and outside school? And further: How do they make sense of these texts and relate them (if they do) to their own experiences, to their countries of origin and to their home culture?

The Scottish context of ethnic immigration is complicated by Scotland’s own cultural, linguistic and political differences from England. Immigrant pupils must learn to read and write Standard English in the classroom, but also have to learn to understand a different accent and lexis in the playground, on the street and in the media. Often ‘dispersed’ to Glasgow (where this study is based) from the South, they encounter a significantly different urban accent and dialect, as well as media views of more traditional Scottish culture beyond the city. Books will be part of their first encounters with language, and these will contain textual and visual images of life in Britain and, in some books, of life in Scotland.

In this context, our research aims were as follows:

- To analyse the reactions and responses of children from ethnic minority and indigenous Scottish communities to a range of Scottish texts.
- To explore how these children deal with the multiple literacies that are part of their transition between cultures.
- To find out how children’s identities can be developed or reinforced by books set in the culture in which they now live.

This led us to ask further questions:

- Are there particular issues of Scots language and usage in Scottish texts that impact upon new learners?
- To what extent do children interpret their new culture in either a positive or a negative light?
- Do particular characters and incidents in texts, or humour and moral themes, relate in any way to their own cultures and if so, how?
- How do children who consider themselves as ‘Scottish’ respond to the portrayal of their own culture in such texts?
- What barriers do the language and pictures raise or break down?
- What does it mean to be bi-cultural in a country like Scotland where national identity is itself in a process of change and self-definition?
We read a sample of children’s texts featuring Scottish settings, characters, language or themes with groups of primary school pupils from different backgrounds: recent immigrant and asylum-seeking children, settled children from originally migrant families who had been in Scotland for more than a year, and ‘native Scots’. We chose pupils at the Primary 6 stage because they would have the maturity to reflect with us on textual issues of language, culture and identity at home and at school. Three schools were involved in the study.

Different methods of approaching the texts were used: whole class reading and discussion sessions, small group discussions, and interviews with same-sex pairs. We also interviewed teachers of bilingual children within the school setting. Data analysis then allowed us to track the most important issues affecting ethnic minority pupils’ responses to texts and provide a new and detailed picture of the educational processes which these children go through in terms of language, literacy and identity formation.

2. The Scottish context for ethnic minority communities

The city of Glasgow has been a particular site for immigrants in Scotland for at least 150 years. Different waves of migration have formed the city: Irish, Highland Gaelic, Jewish, Polish, Lithuanian, Italian, South and East Asian among others. New groups continue to arrive, population decline is now slowing down and the ethnic minority population has been increasing. Data on immigration shows that 34% more foreign born people were living in Scotland in 2001 compared to 1991, making it one of the fastest growing rates in the UK.

Glasgow has a higher black and minority ethnic population than Scotland as a whole, although still predominantly ‘white’ (nearly 95%). According to the Scottish 2001 census, 3.44% of Glasgow’s population were born outside Europe (the average for England and Wales is 6.6%), and 13% of the population was aged between 5 and 15, with 10.5% of the pupil population from ethnic minority groups (about 2500 in total, including asylum seekers). Since Devolution there has been a growing debate and awareness about race and ethnic minority communities in Scotland, with concerns expressed that a proper infrastructure has not been created for the reception of asylum-seekers.

However, a recent study reported more positive public attitudes towards asylum seekers in Scotland than in England (Lewis 2006), suggesting that this may be due to the positive discourse of the Scottish Executive and a more positive image of asylum seekers in the Scottish media. On the other hand, the report also found that people in Glasgow were generally hostile to asylum seekers and made little distinction between them and settled ethnic minority communities.

A report commissioned by Glasgow City Council, Effective Teaching and Learning in a Multi-Ethnic Education System (Cassells 2006) re-emphasised bilingualism’s intellectual benefits, with children who manage to maintain two languages tending to do better educationally and be better integrated into both worlds. However, the report’s finding of poor language role models (for both English and the heritage language) in the homes of ethnic minority families aroused community criticism, and it also recognised weaknesses in the language role models experienced in schools, due to a lack of ethnic minority teachers and of professional awareness of bilingual learning.
among Scottish teachers. In 2005, the document *Learning in 2 (+) Languages* (produced by LTS and SEALCC and funded by SEED) identified good practice in supporting children who are accessing the curriculum through English as an additional language (EAL), and encouraged schools to be more proactive in addressing the needs and raising the achievement of bilingual pupils through taking account of their cultural and linguistic background.

Although there is a growing body of research on minority communities in Scotland, there is still much work to be done on understanding the attitudes, roles and relationships between new pupils, their families and educational establishments, and much that is unknown about home literacy practices, changing patterns in immigrants’ language use, and their use of electronic technologies for communication, learning and entertainment.

3. Literacy, culture and identity: literature review

3.1 Literacy and bilinguality

Recent changes in our understanding of literacy have led to new research on the ways in which multiple literacies operate in specific cultural contexts, some of it focussed on the relationship between literacy, identity, bilinguality and culture, including the impact of ICT. It is also now recognized that there is a transfer of cognitive strategies from reading in the first language to reading in the second, with bilinguals being often more aware of linguistic operations than their monolingual peers. However, these competencies cannot develop fully unless a context is provided in which they are recognized and encouraged. ‘Affective variables’ are a powerful factor influencing bilingual children’s educational achievement. In literacy, they often benefit from developing a process of ‘imagination and image forming’ (as opposed to a solely word-centred focus) as a strategy to develop literary language awareness by situatuting themselves imaginatively in the mood, mode and significance of texts (Datta 2000). This research informs the present study’s focus on interpretation skills and textual illustration.

3.2 Home/school literacy practices

New research, both national and international, attempts to explain how children make sense of school literacy experiences in relation to home literacy experiences. Shirley Bryce Heath’s pioneering studies (1983, 1986) included an analysis of the way in which narrative and books are viewed in different communities, impacting on children once they start school, where certain literacy approaches are considered more important than others for further learning. Recent research on home and school literacy links shows that although there is still much to do in some schools, there is an increasing understanding about the importance of bringing pupils’ heritage cultures and languages into the classroom. However, research also makes clear that the relationship between these two contexts is not always straightforward.

3.3 Multiculturalism, identity and texts

Bruner’s influential work on culture and the language of education reveals how ‘culture making’ is linked to narrative and the construction of self. Through texts and
narrative, we revise our own history but we also look to the future. This dialogue begins before school and continues into young adulthood when it becomes more conscious and also provides a space to reflect on identity. This emerges as a significant issue for ethnic minority children in the present project, realised through careful choice of texts and classroom strategies.

3.4 **Bilinguality, popular culture and digital media texts**

Recent studies take account of the ways in which bilingual children interact with the texts of popular and digital culture, which are frequently their first encounter with their new community and often deeply embedded in the literacy lives of families. Parents tend to view these texts in a positive light, because of their learning potential in terms of language and the social links provided with other children. In many immigrant homes, children often draw upon media and digital texts in other languages to help them make meaning in their new contexts, both at home and at school.

3.5 **Research implications for the Scottish context**

Findings and strategies from such recent research provided the platform for developing our approach, undertaken for the first time in the Scottish context, and setting out to explore:

- the intersections of home and school literacies through discussion and shared experience
- the mediated literacies of picture books through the analysis of text and illustration
- the experience of asylum/ethnic minority bilingualism as it meets the ‘bilingualism’ of the Scottish school context [Scots in the playground and Standard Scottish English in classroom pedagogy]
- the provision of spaces where ‘language and life histories’ can be heard, and ‘self-authorship’ can begin in a new country
- the use of Scots language as a ‘neutral venue’ or third frame of reference where the language of power and the language of relative powerlessness or poverty can encourage equality [since everyone is a relative stranger to its use in the classroom context]
- the use of whole-class sessions that may offer a ‘metalinguistic’ but also community-based focus
- the focus on ‘ephemera’ of comics, videos, drawings, speech-bubbles, both in the texts chosen and in the writing/drawing activities
- the use of accents and oral features of story-telling, such as voice, first-person narrative or poetry, or moral issues arising from characters’ decisions, to make an impact in terms of shared human experience.

4. **Identity, language and text**

4.1 **Scottish identity: Scottish children’s literature and language in education**

Scottish children’s language and literature is a growing field of literary and academic interest, yet it has not been the subject of research similar to that on ethnic minority children reading English books. A specifically Scottish focus is particularly important,
within the changing demographic patterns of language and culture in contemporary Scotland, increasingly open to economic migration and educational change within a global perspective. Globalisation has paradoxically been a spur to recovery of local and historical identities, through the realisation that tourism and other ‘cultural industries’ would benefit from a greater focus on the distinctiveness of Scottish culture, including its languages, literature and arts.

Curriculum guidance on Scottish culture included in *English Language 5-14 National Guidelines* suggests that Scottish writing and writing about Scotland should permeate the curriculum (SOED 1991: 68). That this aim remains debateable or unfulfilled arises from a complex series of causes, both cultural and educational. A key difference between Scots and other minority languages is recognised to be a historical neglect, misrepresentation or hostility towards it in school contexts, where developing children’s competence in Standard English has understandably been a key concern for teachers and parents. There is a resulting absence of statistical and pedagogical information about the use and teaching of Scots, which this project begins to address.

Issues of social inclusion are involved, with the Scottish Executive’s focus on developing social capital through the networks and norms that build the trust and reciprocity to create local communities and wider civil society. If children of present-day immigrant communities are to become the Scots of the future, then the development of confident literacy and linguistic awareness is vital for individual and socio-economic development. Thus one of the key aims of the Executive’s Cultural Strategy is ‘Promoting Scotland’s languages as cultural expressions and as means of accessing Scotland’s culture’ (Scottish Executive 2000c: 23).

Such concerns also inform the new *Curriculum for Excellence* that is being developed to help Scottish schools meet the needs of pupils in a changing world, recognising that Scotland’s rich diversity of languages offers rich opportunities for learning and global interconnections. Website guidance for schools includes much that is relevant to this research, with regard to the development of successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. Schools and teachers wishing to develop topics in Scottish literature in line with such guidance can now draw on a range of new publications and resources in Scots language publishing for children, some of it funded by a Scottish Executive that recognizes its importance as part of the linguistic and cultural heritage of young people.

### 4.2 Ethnic minority children reading children’s books: interpreting/making sense of text and pictures

There is now a growing body of research on the subject of how minority ethnic readers make sense of children’s literature in English (Bromley 1996; Laycock 1998; Colledge 2005; Walsh 2000, 2003; Mines 2000; Coulthard in Arizpe and Styles 2003; Arizpe 2006). These studies have involved pupils from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds and different genres of texts, such as picture books or adolescent novels. Most studies focus on emergent readers, but there are also case studies of older readers, beyond primary school. There have been no comparable studies in the Scottish context.
Children’s literature can provide an enjoyable space for those new to a language and culture in which to explore unfamiliar elements through words and images (whether visual or textual). If there is a supportive environment, it can become a ‘third space’ (Homi Bhabha 1994) in which emergent bi-culturate children can negotiate and construct identities without fear of ‘getting it wrong’. The interaction of teachers and pupils around a text can lead to a better understanding, for everyone involved, about how texts work within a particular cultural context and also about what readers bring from their own cultural backgrounds to the meaning-making process.

5. Research design and methodology

5.1 The schools

Three primary schools with a significant intake of immigrant and refugee children from different areas of Glasgow were involved: two were non-denominational, housed in large Victorian buildings, and the third school dating from 1930s expansion of denominational education in Glasgow was a large building in the middle of a council estate.

5.2 The pupils

Within the total group of 14 pupils (7 girls and 7 boys) with whom we worked most closely, all were first generation immigrants with the exception of one Pakistani boy who had been born in Scotland. The countries of origin of these bilingual pupils and/or their parents were: Pakistan (4 boys – this represents the higher population of Pakistanis compared to other ethnic minorities in Glasgow), Latvia, Hungary, Iran, Iraq, Turkey (2 girls), Rwanda, Congo, Algeria and Somalia. Their heritage languages included Urdu, Panjabi, Farsi, Latvian, Hungarian, French, English, Dutch, Turkish, Rwandan, Kurdish, Congolese, Arabic and Somali, among others.

These pupils were selected by their teachers either as being particularly able to help us in our research or because they felt it would increase the pupil’s confidence to participate in a project with the University. Although the cohort did not fully represent our original intention of sampling the experiences of children from recently arrived and more settled migrant families, we were content to be guided by the teachers’ knowledge of their pupils. It was also important to the researchers to develop a model of whole-class and small group engagement that was inclusive of the comments and experiences of children from Scottish and immigrant backgrounds.

5.3 The selected texts

The following texts were chosen from the corpus of available Scottish children’s books. They allowed us to make creative use of a range of genres and narrative structures such as folktales, myths, humorous poems, science fiction, cartoons, and two first person narratives by a child narrator (both using dialect). Except for these two narratives, the texts all contain illustrations: Janet Reachfar and the Kelpie by Jane Duncan; ‘Hauntit Park’ by Hamish McDonald; The Mean Team from Mars by Scoular Anderson; ‘Blethertoun Rovers’ by Matthew Fitt; ‘My Mum’s a Punk’ by Brian Johnstone; ‘Wee Grantic’ by Iain Mills; ‘Tigger’ by Anne Donovan; Oor Wullie and The Broons.
5.4 The sessions

Whole class sessions and group discussions were the main sites for observation and for gathering data. We used each text at least twice. The whole class sessions were held in the P6/P7 classrooms with the teacher usually present. On three occasions the class did further work on the text by drawing in response to two of the stories. The group sessions were held in different rooms, according to what space was available. These group sessions usually followed the whole class sessions and began with a brief discussion or comments on the text read in class. A new text was distributed, read aloud and discussed. Additional questions about literacy were included in these group sessions. For one session, the boys and the girls were taken separately. All the sessions were taped and later transcribed.

5.5 The teacher interviews

Semi-structured interviews were also held with two bilingual support teachers from one of the schools. These interviews served to raise issues about bilingual pupils, to confirm the researchers’ observations and therefore to triangulate the data.

5.6 Strategies for engaging with text and culture

A variety of creative approaches helped the ethnic minority pupils think about their experience in a new culture as well as inviting them to interact with the text through images and language. All proved successful and could be applied to other texts. They also served as a starting point for discussing various issues linked to Scottish and migrant identity, to literacy at home and at school and to personal experiences.

5.7 Data analysis and framework

The data from observations and memos, transcriptions, drawings and other documents were then analysed using qualitative methods based on a descriptive framework and codes that emerged from the data itself. These framework categories allowed the researchers to form a better picture of the interaction between literacy practices at home and at school and their relationship to pupils’ experiences and sense of identity.

6. Findings

The findings offer a full exploration of key issues of literacy, language and identity, considering the children’s experience at home and school, perceptions of Scotland and Scottish people, home literacy practices, their responses to the chosen texts and frequently skilful strategies for making sense of them. Their discussions of Scots language and Scottish texts offer further insights, particularly as these reveal conflicting aspects of identity between countries of origin and current residence. The role of the school in supporting them through this transition also emerged, with points for further research or development.
6.1 Personal experience

The children’s experiences often included a caring role for younger siblings or parents whose English was less confident than theirs. Relatively recent arrival had sharpened their perceptions of Scotland’s language, geography and culture, with some negative impact of rough language and violence around the flats where they were housed. This was balanced to some extent by a more mature awareness that behaviour varied with age, and that older people were often kind and helpful, much depending upon family customs. Scottish parents were perceived as being over-indulgent and inconsistent in discipline, unlike stricter ethnic minority parents. There was awareness of the need to evade sectarian tensions centred on football. Positive aspects of Scottish life included scenery, parks and museums, free medicine, helpful council services, and an open policy towards migrants.

6.2 Home literacy practices

Heritage languages were encouraged and practised, in after-school lessons if these were available. They struggled to maintain facility in the home language, as English became their frequent daily mode of expression and study, but were helped by communication with family members overseas and the presence of home language books or comics. Favourite texts included many library books in English, often classic children’s literature or information texts. Literacy practices included reading sacred books, but also writing letters or stories in their spare time, and there was extensive use of electronic technology to keep in contact with family members and news events in their native land. Learning English was a commitment of many parents, who sometimes enjoyed language games and puzzles in English. The use of multilingual dictionaries was mentioned. These pupils’ support for younger siblings often showed effective assimilation of teaching strategies derived from their school experience.

6.3 Making sense of text

Previous knowledge and experience of texts in other languages was clearly brought to bear in their interpretation of Scottish stories, and intertextual connections were made. As readers, they were capable (in the discursive group context) of making responses to texts that were more mature than their level of English proficiency might suggest. Setting and landscape were responded to, characters were discussed with empathy, and meanings were negotiated with attention to textual evidence and the opinions of others. They could question the text, make inferences and show awareness of humour and comedy, using illustrations appropriately. Awareness of the roles of authors and illustrators was less mature, but audience awareness and critical judgement were both evident. These skills, in some cases, did not seem to have been recognised in the whole-class context and group setting.

6.4 Scots language

Teacher and parental disapproval of informal Scots language, including swearing, had affected the children’s view of its appropriateness for school. However, they showed some keenness to explore Scots language, record local speech (often with a keen ear for the different sounds of Scottish words) and to mimic it appropriately in some of our activities. The opportunity to discuss different languages was welcomed by them.
6.5 Scottish stories

Themes of the supernatural and of Scottish family life were the focus of interested discussion by both native Scottish and migrant pupils, who all agreed that reading stories about a culture in its own local language helped them to understand it better. Stories in English had the advantage of teaching the migrant children more about the language, however. Teachers remarked upon the engagement of ‘reluctant’ boys in these reading and discussion sessions around their own culture.

6.6 Stories of origin: making sense of identity

The migrant children made many cross-references to ‘my country’ in discussion. None yet felt particularly Scottish. Those who had been considerably longer in Scotland could express a measure of confusion or accommodation to twin identities. They were interested in discussing religious differences (in a very tolerant way) and looking forward to continuing their education in secondary school. Current anxieties about forced repatriation were not raised, but may have created a sense of caution about discussing certain issues of identity and reasons for their presence in Scotland.

6.7 The role of the school

School heads and staff were positive in their support of migrant pupils, stressing the key aim of providing a ‘safe’ environment in which the qualities of intelligence and commitment that these children brought to the school community could flourish. Many points emerged for staff consideration from our analysis of the children’s performance and the role of Scottish texts and language in enabling this.

7. Conclusions and implications for pedagogy and research

Conclusions are set out in subsections covering research, teacher development and policy issues. The scope for detailed research across a range of emergent issues is outlined. This is a new area of enquiry in Scottish educational studies, with implications beyond the literacy experience of migrant pupils. Staff development implications for teacher education and continuing formation are indicated, together with relevant policy considerations for school heads and education authorities.
1. Introduction

Our project was born of the question: *What do children from ethnic minority families make of Scotland and Scottish culture and identity, as reflected in the texts they encounter inside and outside school?* A second question followed from that: *How do they make sense of these texts and relate them (if they do) to their own experiences, to their countries of origin and to their home culture?*

These children have to deal with a nation within a nation. They not only need to understand what it means to be British, but also to comprehend the subtle and sometimes not so subtle differences between being Scottish and being English or being British. In addition, they must understand how their own culture is placed within this multi-faceted situation. Immigrants must learn to read and write Standard English in the classroom, but they also have to learn to understand a different accent and lexis in the playground, on the street and in the media. They may also need to learn to read different spellings at different times of the year, for example in school celebrations of such cultural texts as the Scots language poetry of the national poet, Robert Burns, where ‘moose’ or ‘tak’, for instance, replace ‘mouse’ and ‘take’.

Throughout the educational process, alternative identities that result from alternative literacies may be marginalized or even attacked. In Scotland, for instance, there is already perceptible differences between the Standard English of most school text books and the Standard Scottish English used by many of their teachers, which varies in accent but also in aspects of grammar and lexis (cf. the varying forms of Australian, American or South Asian Englishes), and both of these varieties differ again from the more strongly dialectal Scots language (variously termed Broad Scots, Lallans [Lowlands] or Doric) that is spoken in informal contexts by most of the pupils born to ordinary Scottish parents. This informality, and its use by school children as a badge of group identity, to some extent ‘against’ the adults who would control and mould them through formal education, explains why it is so easily characterised as ‘slang’, which has always been used as a mark of group cohesion (cf. Cockney slang or forces slang), compared with the mainly geographical parameters of dialect. For historical reasons connected with the Union of the Crowns and Parliaments of Scotland and England in the 17th and 18th centuries, Scots language has become associated with working class life and values, and to that extent it is not particularly valued within the Standard English norms of literacy in schools. Yet immigrant children will encounter it and begin to understand and to some extent use it in games, group work and social conversations.

This complex linguistic-cultural Scottish scene must also include the presence of a different language, Gaelic, possessing great cultural significance but a limited number of actual speakers, with about 58000 of these recorded in the 2001 census. Also relevant are the diverse ways in which aspects of accent or expression have become intrinsic to the identity of particular social groups, whether through politics, religion, regional location or culture. In the case of Scotland, then, language and identity are interconnected, with words and sounds often carrying political, economic and social resonances for Scottish citizens. ‘New Scots’ therefore have to learn language codes beyond the basics if they are to begin to belong in their new country.
Books and stories will be part of immigrant pupils’ first encounters with language, and these will contain textual and visual images of life in Britain and, in some of the books, of life in Scotland. It is worth remembering that many children from migrant or asylum-seeking families have been ‘dispersed’ to Scotland from the South-East of England to council housing schemes and high-rise flats in Glasgow. Having learned perhaps a very basic language competence in the South, they now encounter the significantly different Glaswegian accent and dialect, itself a migrant mixture of Lowland Scots, Scottish and Irish Gaelic, and Irish-English. They will probably also encounter views of a different Scottish culture beyond the city boundaries, such as rural or island life, images of Highland cattle, kilts, bagpipes, thistles, and so forth.

In this context, our research aims were as follows:

- To analyse the reactions and responses of children from ethnic minority and indigenous Scottish communities to a range of Scottish texts.
- To explore how these children deal with the multiple literacies that are part of their transition between cultures.
- To find out how children’s identities can be developed or reinforced by books set in the culture in which they now live.

This led us to ask further questions:

- Are there particular issues of Scots language and usage in Scottish texts that impact upon new learners?
- To what extent do children interpret their new culture in either a positive or a negative light?
- Do particular characters and incidents in texts, or humour and morals, relate in any way to their own cultures and if so, how?
- How do children who consider themselves as ‘Scottish’ respond to the portrayal of their own culture in such texts?
- What barriers do the language and pictures raise or break down?
- What does it mean to be bi-cultural in a country like Scotland where national identity is itself in a process of change and self-definition?

We decided to read a sample of Scottish children’s texts (featuring Scottish settings, characters, language or themes) with groups of primary school pupils from several different backgrounds: recent immigrant and asylum-seeking children, settled children from originally migrant families who had been in Scotland for more than a year, and ‘native Scots’. We chose pupils at the Primary 6 stage because they would have the maturity to reflect with us on issues of language, culture and identity at home and at school, through the texts. The pupils were asked to help us in pointing out Scottish ‘clues’, to become ‘detectives’ and to find these clues in the texts, in the images they contained, and, in general, in their environment, including playground language.

Given the exploratory nature of the project, we tried different methods of approaching the texts, investigating the children’s understanding of Scottish culture through whole class reading and discussion sessions, small mixed-group discussions, and interviews with same-sex pairs. We also interviewed teachers who have worked with bilingual children within the school setting where the study was being carried out. The data
analysis allowed us to track the most important topics and issues affecting ethnic minority pupils’ responses to texts.

Through a description of these topics, we provide a new and detailed picture of the educational processes which these children go through in terms of language and literacy (Sections 2–4). We have also been able to develop some practical classroom strategies for helping such pupils not merely to cope with but also to enjoy their new texts and their encounters with Scottish culture (Sections 5–6). Based on this pilot experience, which is limited to two schools and 14 children in focus groups (and some 50 P6 children in total), we identify significant issues for continuing professional development and for further research (Section 7). We are also able to signal the positive attainments of pupils and the supportive work of teachers and school leaders in helping them to achieve their true potential, as they learn to read not only a different language but also a new and sometimes challenging culture.
2. The Scottish Context for Ethnic Minority Communities

2.1 Ethnic minority communities in Glasgow

The city of Glasgow has been a particular site of immigrant life in Scotland for at least 150 years. Different waves of migration have formed the city: Irish, Highland Gaelic, Jewish, Polish, Lithuanian, Italian, South and East Asian among others. New groups continue to arrive. Some of these early groups have become integrated into the ‘white’ population of the city but there are still strong community ties, mainly along religious and cultural lines, among some groups such as the Scots-Irish.

At the beginning of the 21st century, Glasgow had a residential population of over 600,000, making it the largest city in Scotland. Natural change and out-migration has meant that the city’s population has been declining for several years. However, this decline is now slowing down and the ethnic minority population has been increasing. Data on immigration shows that 34% more foreign born people were living in Scotland in 2001 compared to 1991, making it one of the fastest growing rates in the UK. The city has a higher black and minority ethnic population than Scotland as a whole, although still predominantly ‘white’ (nearly 95%).

According to the Scottish 2001 census, 3.44% of Glasgow’s population were born outside Europe (the average for England and Wales is 6.6%). The percentage for those born in Europe but outside the UK was 1.07%. In this census, 94.5% of the population described themselves as ‘white’; 0.72% as ‘Indian’; 3.04% as ‘Pakistani and other South Asian’; 0.67% as ‘Chinese’; and 1.02% as ‘other’. Also according to this census, in 2001, 13% of the population was aged between 5 and 15 and 10.5% of the pupil population was from ethnic minority groups (about 2500 in total, including asylum seekers). Most of these pupils’ parents or grandparents were the original immigrants to this country.

Recent figures (National Statistics Online, asylumscotland.org.uk and Home Office Asylum Statistics) show that despite the fact that 30,000 people left the country in 2005, there were 38,000 new arrivals, including expatriate Scots and new immigrants. About half of these are Polish, coming as new members of the European Community. In the past two years, more than 32000 Eastern Europeans have settled in Scotland (mostly to work in catering and hospitality or agriculture) keeping the population above 5 million (The Herald 23 August 2006). These figures have sparked a mixed reaction, as on the one hand it is recognised that Scotland needs help in maintaining a growing population, and yet on the other, there are the fears associated with admitting ‘too many’ foreigners, in terms of employment, benefits and cultural losses. These issues are frequently evident in Scottish newspapers, such as the front page headline ‘Door closing on new Europeans who are helping Scotland grow’ (The Herald 23 August 2006), or the editorial for the same date on the ‘benefits of immigration’ to the country.

Although there are no exact statistics for asylum-seekers and refugees, 5640 were receiving accommodation and subsistence in 2005 from the National Asylum Support Service under its dispersal scheme which began in 2000. They come from 54 countries, with Turkish, Pakistani, Iraqi, Iranian and Somali refugees being the largest
national groups. The vast majority of asylum-seekers are concentrated in a three areas of Glasgow: North (in Cowlairs 16%; Balornock 14%; Garnagad 8%), South (in Pollokshaws 12%) and West (in Scotstoun 8%). They compose just under 1% of the total city population (Lewis 2006).

As Menter, Cunningham and Sheibani (2000) remind us, it is important to distinguish between the needs of children who are asylum seekers or refugees and the different needs of children who are second or third generation members of a more established ethnic minority community. The former will probably have come to the host country with experiences arising from the particular conflicts in their countries of origin. These conflicts may have included the loss of parents, carers or other family members and a disruption to their education. Once they arrive, there are issues about accommodation and relationships to other communities, including other refugee or established communities. Other differences in experience (many of which emerged in the course of our interviews with the children in this study) include parent/child relationships and educational systems in their culture of origin. Parents’ or carers’ views about education and schooling, about the new culture and its language, will also influence children’s attitudes. Finally, there is the issue of having to learn a new language which is determined by factors such as age and the proximity of the mother tongue to English.

Since Devolution there has been a growing debate and awareness about race and ethnic minority communities in Scotland. Kelly has written several critical articles on where Scotland stands on matters of racism and the reception of asylum seekers. She contends that even though Scottish issues are beginning to be considered alongside British issues, they are still being sidelined. These main issues in Scotland, according to Kelly, are ‘ruralism and urbanism’, ‘poverty and inequality’ and ‘ethnic enclaves’. She also points out that a proper infrastructure has not been created for the reception of asylum-seekers and concludes that ‘For Scotland, there is considerable danger that the disorderly dispersal programme will harden polarities in opinion and behaviour, precisely the conditions in which racism and xenophobia thrive’ (Kelly 2000: 20).

In 2001, the journal Multicultural Teaching published a themed issue on “Race” and the New Scotland’ (vol 20, no. 1) in order to ‘begin to plug the gap in the literature’ on race and equality issues in Scotland after devolution. The various articles highlight how these issues have been neglected and minority communities have been ignored, based on the ‘facts’ that statistics are still not very high and that the problems of ‘native’ Scots should be addressed first (Gessesse 2001: 12). An article by John Landon focuses on Scotland’s particular linguistic history (which is different from other parts of the UK) and therefore on the challenges that sustaining and developing community languages, including Gaelic and Scots, pose for schools and educational policy. Landon urges ‘the government of a newly devolved Scotland to consider the benefits of defining itself as a multilingual nation, in which linguistic, cultural and ethnic pluralism is treated as the norm and not as a problem’ (Landon 2001: 34).

Despite these criticisms, in the last few years there has been an increase in the support services for asylum seekers and refugees as well as several government campaigns and projects for integrating immigrants, particularly in Glasgow, such as the Scottish Executive’s One Scotland campaign. The Scottish Refugee Council holds events in the city during Refugee Week. The Glasgow Anti-Racist Alliance and the Glasgow
Asylums Seekers Support Programme also participate in these events. There is a bilingual support unit for each of Glasgow’s New Learning Communities, although recent research has highlighted the discrepancy between numbers of bilingual pupils and bilingual support staff (Cassells 2006). Some initiatives have included asylum-seeking children reflecting on their experiences and that of others, such as the Refugee Week Schools Project for Scotland 2005 (Save the Children) and an Oxfam project in which refugee pupils interviewed their native Scottish peers about their views on immigrants.1

Since 2000, legislation related to race, ethnic minorities and bilingualism has continued to appear, such as the Standards in Scotland’s Schools Act 2000, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004. These have not only raised the profile of bilingual learners but have also raised issues about racism within educational institutions. Research has also continued. A report on public attitudes towards asylum seekers in Scotland (Lewis 2006) suggests that a more positive attitude in this country (compared to that of England) may be due to the positive discourse of the Scottish Executive and of the Scottish media, who have promoted a more welcoming attitude and a more positive image of asylum seekers. Lewis also suggests that ‘a strong sense of national identity and pride may also increase tolerance, as people do not fear their culture may be damaged’ (Lewis 2006: 9). However, the study found people in Glasgow were generally hostile to asylum seekers and made little distinction between them and settled ethnic minority communities.

Although this report focused on asylum seekers it discovered similar contradictions to those found in the Scottish attitude towards migration, more tolerant in some ways, but less so in others. There were significant differences of opinion between those living next to asylum seekers and those having no contact with them; the latter were ‘overwhelmingly’ more positive, especially those who knew a family or asylum seeker well. Age had an impact in that those who had been to schools with a larger ethnic mix tended to be more positive, yet there was an increase in hostility among young people in tertiary education, perhaps because they felt less confident about their own futures, particularly among those who would be competing for lower-skilled jobs.

Black and minority ethnic background respondents found that the city was more welcoming because it was more multicultural but were as hostile as their white counterparts to the asylum seekers. They resented being identified as or with refugees, and they were anxious about increased racism and fewer employment prospects. Like other Glasgow ethnic groups, few were aware that asylum seekers are not allowed to work. The report concluded that this and other misinformation led to refugees becoming general scapegoats for problems with Glasgow city, such as poor health services, lack of jobs and housing. There was also confusion about labels: ‘refugees’ were accepted (perhaps because this suggested helping those fleeing from troubles) but not ‘asylum seekers’. Other anxieties were related to a concern about the lack of integration, including the issue of immigrants not speaking English. They were associated with crime (trafficking women and drugs) and the presence of Muslims was of particular concern, as they were perceived to live by other rules and to have

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1 This documentary was made in one of the schools involved in the project: see Section 6.7 below.
potential links to terrorism. However, many parents felt it was beneficial for their children to mix with others and had come to know immigrant families through them. This suggests the importance of creating opportunities for meaningful contact between groups; and one of the key spaces where this might take place is the local school.

2.2 Ethnic minority education and bilingualism in Scotland: official documents and policies

Although there has been less research in Scotland on ethnic minority education than in England, academic research and government documents and policies on this issue have increased over the last few years. These have explored the complex situation in which pupils find themselves in terms of their education and the contradictions that emerged as pupils went through the process of integration into their new schools.

Powney et al. (1998) carried out a review for the Scottish Executive on research into ethnic minority education in Scotland. They found that there was a lack of research in most areas and that research in England was not always applicable to the Scottish context. In the first place, they found a lack of accessible statistical information on the education of people from minority groups, such as statistics on the ethnicity of primary and secondary school pupils. Although there had been some development of policies to support education for ethnic-minority groups, there was little monitoring or evaluation for these projects. There was also little or no research into areas such as racism, the effects of bilingualism in learning, school attainment and issues related to teacher education and ethnic minority groups.

However, the reviewers did find some small scale Scottish research into various areas which helped create a picture of the education of minority ethnic pupils. For example, although little research had been carried out on school attainment of these groups, existing findings showed that ‘factors that correlate with low attainment, such as unemployment, poverty, and poor housing, are more likely to affect minority ethnic populations in Scotland than their white counterparts’ (Powney et al.: xi). Parents were also found to have high educational aspirations for their families, but were often unable to access the information which would allow the children to continue their studies into higher education. This can be linked to the mismatch between parents’ and teachers’ understanding of philosophies and practices and the suggestion that in some cases the interaction between teachers and pupils could disadvantage those from ethnic minority backgrounds. This occurred when teachers had stereotypical expectations or when they carried out assessment without taking specific needs into account.

2 The most recent DfesA bibliography of recent publications on the education of asylum-seekers and refugees, including those by Ofsted and the DfES, can be found in a recent report developed for the Research Consortium on the Education of Asylum-Seeker and Refugee Children by Madeleine Arnot and Halleli Pinson (2005). This report looked at the role of local LEAs and the models they applied in supporting the inclusion of these groups. They found that good practice included involving parents, making community links and having a multi-agency approach. Some of the positive characteristics of the LEA case studies which used a holistic approach to the education of asylum-seekers and refugee children were the following: ‘promoting positive images’ of these pupils, ‘establishing clear indicators of successful integration’, ‘an ethos of inclusion and the celebration of diversity’ and ‘a caring ethos and the giving of hope’ (Arnot and Pinson 2005: 6-7).
In terms of language issues and bilingualism, findings showed that more resources were invested in teaching English as a second language than in providing greater opportunities for developing community languages. The reviewers referred to American research which has shown that in order for bilingualism to be positive, both languages must be developed. Reviewers recommended more research in the area of language and teaching on the following: ethos, the curriculum, home and school links, and language issues.

It would seem that this research review sparked off a number of projects because since its publication many of the key topics have been further investigated and, because of legislative changes which have focussed on equal opportunities, some have led to new policy documents as well. One update of the work of Powney et al. is the chapter on ‘Race and Education’ in the comprehensive *Audit of Research on Minority Ethnic Issues in Scotland from a ‘Race’ Perspective* (Netto et al. 2001). Within language issues in teaching and learning, they found that language learning and bilingualism have been an area of increasing research activity, although some of this involves small samples of particular ethnic groups.

Stead, Closs and Arshad conducted research between 1997 and 1999 on the situation of refugee pupils in Scotland by talking to education authorities, school staff and refugee parents and pupils themselves. They found that whatever their background, and even if they had little knowledge of the Scottish education system, parents placed a great importance on education and getting their children into school was among their first concerns. However, parents were also aware of the consequences of entering education in a new country:

> Parents recognized with a mixture of emotions that school, knowingly or unknowingly, can be a means both of transmitting the majority culture to refugee and other minority ethnic children, and, simultaneously, of depriving them of their original culture and language. They expressed pride that their children spoke English so well and understood life here apparently so easily in comparison with themselves. However, they felt deep regret when this brought loss of the home language and history. (Stead, Closs and Arshad 1999: 3)

Another contradiction found by the researchers was that although pupils also placed high value on education and wanted to ‘catch up’, they did not want attention drawn to them as ‘different’ (Stead, Closs and Arshad 1999: 5). This issue is not just a Scottish one, as it is one of the key issues identified in the literature on the education of refugee children:

> […] the very process of identification and labelling [of refugee students] may adversely affect the process of adaptation and acculturation these students face under already trying circumstances […] some refugee populations may be ‘marginalized’, not because they are struggling, but because they are exceeding the levels of performance of the native students. (Hamilton and Moore 2004: 7)
Arshad et al. (2005) describes the experiences of minority ethnic pupils in a range of school settings in Scotland (including three primary schools). Their data focussed on inclusion and on teachers’, parents’ and pupils’ perceptions of education and achievement. Some of their findings are significant for constructing a picture of the interaction between home and school literacies, such as the high value pupils placed on a school’s efforts to recognise diversity (by understanding the importance of other languages, faiths and traditions). Parents, teachers and pupils also valued the work of the EAL or Bilingual Support Services. However, there were concerns that bilingual learners were still seen as ‘problems’ within the education system and some pupils still felt they were perceived as ‘outsiders’ even if they had been born in Scotland.

*I didn’t come here for fun*… is the title of a publication from Save the Children (2000) on the views of young refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland. Their views on education reflected this desire to learn and to do well at school. An Ofsted report from 2003 on the education of asylum-seekers in London found that ‘Many asylum-seeker pupils made good progress in relatively short periods of time and almost all made at least satisfactory progress. The combination of their determination to succeed and the strong support of their parents provided a potent recipe for success’ (Ofsted 2003: 6). However, it is important not to talk about ‘all’ ethnic minorities having the same views and attitudes. A DfES publication from 2005, *Ethnicity and Education in England*, found marked differences in achievement between different groups of students: Indian, Chinese, White/Asian and Irish pupils who were more likely to gain five or more A*-C grades at GCSE than other ethnic groups, particularly Gypsy/Roma, Travellers of Irish Heritage, Black Caribbean and White/Black Caribbean (DfES 2005: 2). This coincides with findings in Scotland on higher educational qualifications where 46.3% of Indians, 26.8% of Pakistani or other South Asian people and 49.3% of Chinese residents gained a university degree or professional qualification, compared to 30% of ‘white’ Glasgow residents aged 25–34.

In 2004, Glasgow City Council commissioned a report to improve school education of minority pupils. The result was *Effective Teaching and Learning in a Multi-Ethnic Education System* by J. Cassells (March 2006). One of the key points of the report was that ‘Bilingualism is a strength’, meaning that children who maintain two languages do better educationally and are better integrated into both worlds. However, some of the concerns about this point raised by the report became the subject of controversy. In an article in *The Herald* (15 March 2006), various spokespersons for ethnic minority and racial equality groups described the findings as stereotypical and narrow. These comments were directed at the report’s finding of poor language role models (for both English and the family language) in the homes of ethnic minority families: ‘The view was expressed that some British-born bilinguals are becoming British-born semi-linguals talking “Scotch Broth”’ (Cassells 2006: 16). To be fair, the report also signalled the poor language role models experienced in schools, due to a lack of ethnic minority teachers and to the fact that for native Scottish teachers courses on bilingual learners are ‘optional’.

Among other controversial remarks related to family life, the report stated that some parents ‘have no understanding of school’ (Cassells 2006: 16) and of their own role within the education system. It also suggested that work and routine often did not allow for enough family time, and that there was as shortage of experiences which Scottish
children would be familiar with, such as visits to the pet shop or the seashore, which would have an influence on pupils’ understanding of their new culture. The report suggested that ‘the teaching approaches experienced in mainstream schools should be shared with Saturday/community/Mosque schools’; however, it is unclear why or how this should be carried out. It also advised commissioning more work on the language of British born bilinguals. However, there was no mention of finding out more about learning practices at home, about different literacies and how these are linked to cultural practices.

In 2005, the document *Learning in 2 (+) Languages* (produced by LTS and SEALCC and funded by SEED) identified good practice in supporting children who are accessing the curriculum through English as an additional language (EAL). It provides a general introduction to bilingualism and its advantages in terms of a greater linguistic and critical awareness. It also encourages schools to be more proactive in addressing needs and raising achievement of bilingual pupils through taking account of the cultural and linguistic background of pupils, being aware of the problems with assessment and helping them achieve their potential. Among other things, this is done by creating a welcoming ethos, developing good relationships with parents and carers and creating a more multicultural, multilingual classroom through books, language assistants, and collaborative work.

*Ambitious Excellent Schools 2004* and *A Curriculum for Excellence* propose that all Scottish learners, including bilingual learners, should become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. These issues are returned to in Section 3. From the research mentioned above, it seems likely that most ethnic minority pupils are keen to learn and to do well in school. They see it as a way forward and most of them enjoy school. Research and policies have progressed in the area of home/school links and there is better statistical data available on minority languages. However, there is still very much that is unknown about the literacy practices that go on in the home, about changing practices in language use in the family and the community, and about practices related to reading and to the use of new technologies for communication, learning and entertainment. In order to address this gap in knowledge, more research needs to be done on ethnic minority attitudes to bilingualism and family or cultural languages, and on looking at texts and literacy practices generally in the home contexts of ethnic minority and bilingual children.

**Summary**

Although there is a growing body of data and research on minority communities in Scotland, there is still much work to be done on understanding the attitudes, roles and relationships between new pupils, their families and educational establishments. Given Glasgow’s history of receiving immigrant communities into its schools, it provides a relevant context for one of the main areas for our research: children’s language and literacy development, both at home and at school.
3. Literacy, Culture and Identity: Literature Review

Our understanding of the concept of literacy and its implications for education has undergone a major shift in the last twenty five years, mainly as a result of new approaches which consider literacy not as a set of neutral skills but as historically and socially constructed. One of the most influential approaches is ‘New Literacy Studies’ (NLS) which views literacy practices in the contexts of schooling, knowledge, and power. It also considers different ‘literacies’, involving various semiotic systems such as the visual and the digital. Street’s ‘ideological’ model of literacy (1984, 2003 and Street & Street 1991) provides the basis for this view, as it considers the expectations and pedagogies used for the teaching of reading and writing not just as a product of educational institutions but of dominant political and cultural movements. Hamilton, Barton and Ivanic, among others, have extended these ideas to take account of the multiple literacies embedded in specific cultural contexts. For example, the ‘Local Literacies’ project (Barton and Hamilton 1998) gathered ethnographic data on literacy, and people’s reflections on literacy, in a neighbourhood in Lancaster in order to better understand and value the role of literacy, both the ‘vernacular’ and the ‘institutional’, in this particular community.

The idea of differences between ‘vernacular’ and ‘institutional’ literacies is another tenet of the NLS approach, stemming from the seminal study by Heath (1983) on the relationships between home and community literacies and schooling (discussed below). Other scholars who have influenced these new understandings of literacy are Bakhtin (particularly his concepts of ‘dialogism’ and ‘hybridity’) and Bourdieu (particularly his ideas about ‘cultural capital’). Some of the ideas of de Certeau, Foucault and Derrida on literature, identity and power relations in social life have also been influential (for a detailed discussion of their impact on literacy studies, see Collins and Blott 2003).

Other groups of researchers have also engaged with these new views on literacy. The New London Group explored the teaching of new forms of literacy (especially visual and digital) which allow students to participate more fully in their learning. Among the members of this group are Kress, Gee, Cazden, Cope, Luke and Luke, all of whom have taken the study of multiliteracies forward in different ways. Their collective ‘manifesto’ (‘A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures’ 1996) suggests directions that literacy pedagogy might take in order to help children meet the changes in communications technology that are reshaping the contexts and forms of reading and writing.

Syncretic Literacy Studies is another approach that builds on New Literacy Studies. Here the focus has been mainly on children and their educational contexts within different communities, including bilingual and ethnic minority groups. Gregory, Williams, Volk and Long have all done extensive research in this area. They understand ‘syncretism’ as ‘a creative transformation of a culture’ as people negotiate and draw on familiar and new cultural forms. This transformation, or ‘re-invention’, can have significant consequences for both teachers and learners:

The activities that result can disrupt established power relationships and have the potential to create more equitable practices and possibilities for learning.
because they provide ‘Third Spaces or zones of development’ […] where teachers can value and build on what children know and where children can help shape learning. (Gregory, Long & Volk 2004: 4)

Some of the key notions shared by Syncretic Literacy Studies are the following:

- Young children are active members of different cultural and linguistic groups and engaging in membership of a group is not a static or linear process.
- Children do not remain in separate worlds but acquire membership of different groups *simultaneously*, i.e. they live in ‘simultaneous worlds’ (Kenner 2003).
- Simultaneous membership means that children *syncretize* the languages, literacies, narrative styles and role relationships appropriate to each group and then go on to transform the languages and cultures they use to create new forms relevant to the purpose needed.
- Young children who participate in cross-linguistic and cross-cultural practices call upon a greater wealth of metacognitive and metalinguistic strategies.
- The mediators, often bicultural and/or bilingual, play an essential role in early language and literacy learning.

All the above approaches believe that the kinds and levels of literacy that children obtain, and the values they ascribe to this process as they go through school, will have a powerful influence on how they will engage with the society in which they live, and the roles they will assume in that society as they grow. As Luke and Carrington write:

> Literacy – and by association literacy education – are both historically constructed and historically constructive, normative enterprises. In current conditions, they are about the shaping of patterns and practices of participation in text-based societies and semiotic economies. (Luke and Carrington 2004: 53)

For ethnic minority groups, participation in a specific society, particularly through the community and the school, means interacting with cultural and linguistic issues that transform the identities of both the ‘locals’ and the ‘newcomers’. Language plays a decisive role in this interaction and is, in turn, also transformed. This may be of particular importance in the present Scottish context, where nuances of power and appropriateness are already sensitive issues in the interaction of Scots, English and Gaelic language choice within public, political and personal discourse – now altered by the addition of minority and community languages, and by new Scottish writers and thinkers emerging from such bilingual backgrounds.

Identity and literacy are thus intrinsically linked and, as they develop in the early stages of school, can be central in determining educational achievement. Another influential scholar in the area of literacy and culture is Cummins, who has argued for empowering students through reinforcing their cultural identity by incorporating students’ language and culture in (American) school programmes. In other words, adding a second language but all the while maintaining the primary language and culture. His research on bilingual students in subordinated groups has confirmed that ‘negotiating identities’ is ‘fundamental to the academic success of culturally diverse students’ (Cummins 1996: 2). He concludes that
Bilingual students who feel a sense of belonging in their classroom learning community are more likely to feel ‘at home’ in their society upon graduation and to contribute actively to building that society. Schools that have brought issues related to cultural and linguistic diversity from the periphery to the center of their mission are more likely to prepare students to thrive in the interdependent global society in which they will live. (Cummins 1996: 236)

Story and poetry are central to early literacy experience, and are a focus of the present project. In 2001, Galda and Beach looked at the development of research on response to literature. They found that ‘literary response researchers in the 1990s have focused increasingly on response not simply as a transaction between texts and readers but as a construction of text meaning and readers’ stances and identities within larger sociocultural contexts’ (Galda & Beach 2001: 66). The studies confirmed that response was learned not only in schools but also through the social practices of the particular cultural worlds in which readers lived.

In what follows we will review other research on literacy, bilinguality and identity which is relevant for understanding the context of bilingual ethnic minority pupils in primary schools in Scotland.

3.1 Literacy and bilinguality

The need for a new educational focus on literacy and bilinguality has been the consequence of two major factors: increasing global migration and the awareness that 70% of the world population is bilingual – making it the norm rather than the exception. Bilingualism has become an important point on the educational agenda of highly developed countries due to the numbers of first, second and even third generation immigrants who go through the school system. In most of these countries, such as the UK, knowledge of other languages is increasingly seen as something positive, which should be nurtured and which has the potential not only to increase bilingual children’s cognitive abilities and develop their understanding of new languages but to enrich the host culture as well. In Britain, educational policies are now inclusive and promote a respect for the language and culture that immigrants bring to school and to the community. Some of the main changes in our thinking about bilinguality or ‘biliteracy’ have been due to the recognition that bilinguality means not just speaking but living in two different languages, so that literacy practices in the context of the ‘home’ language and of the other school or locality languages are just as important.

It is also now recognized that there is a transfer of cognitive strategies from reading in the first language to reading in the second. This transfer, which also involves cultural and linguistic knowledge, means that bilinguals are more aware of linguistic patterns and operations than their monolingual peers (Vygotsky 1962, Cummins 1978). Gregory and Kelly (1992) summarize some of the early research on the competencies of bilingual children, such as that undertaken by Ianco-Worrall, Ben-Zeev and Skutnabb-Kangas among others, which shows, for example, that bilingual children have a greater sensitivity to social and linguistic situations because they are more

3 In the United States, 4 million students speak a language other than English at home, a 100% increase between 1989 and 2000; yet fewer than 3% of teachers have knowledge of another language (Xu 2003).
concerned with ‘getting it right’. Gregory and Kelly’s own research confirmed other
cognitive and social skills of bilinguals, such as the fact that ‘through their developing
bilingualism, the children are learning a double set of rules. These comprise not just
the lexis and structure of a language but the boundaries of concepts and culture’
(Gregory and Kelly 1992: 150). The idea of competencies and achievements of
bilingual pupils is also now being incorporated into official government documents on
education.4

However, these competencies and benefits cannot develop fully unless a context is
provided in which they are recognized and encouraged. Xu (2003) provides a clear
picture of this in research that describes the different interactions in a kindergarten
classroom between two teachers and two children with limited English, one Chinese
and one Mexican. The Chinese boy, Qing, was encouraged by his teacher to
contribute his knowledge and experience of his native language and to bring Chinese
print into the classroom. The Mexican girl, Maria, was put in a situation of
decontextualized learning, without any opportunities to involve or discuss or her
native language. As a result, while Qing was able to connect functions and forms of
Chinese and English, two very different languages, Maria, even after a year, had not
made any personal connections between Spanish and English, which are much more
similar, and was still struggling to understand basic classroom instructions in English.

Some of the most significant notions about bilingual literacy learning are now
commonly accepted in educational contexts but it is worth mentioning those that are
most relevant to our study, based on the summary provided by Datta (2000):

- instead of ‘subtractive’ bilinguality (which involved replacing the first
  language for the development of the second), ‘additive’ bilinguality involves
  valuing and including different languages and literacy practices;
- a second or further language is best learned interactively (through talk with
  ‘native’ speakers) and in context;
- children’s existing linguistic competence should be recognized;
- children take different meanings from texts, and bring different expectations
  of meaning to texts, based on their personal experiences, cultural and literacy
  practices;
- ‘affective variables’ are a powerful factor influencing bilingual children’s
  educational achievement;
- a focus on the process of ‘imagination and image forming’ (as opposed to a
  solely word-centred focus) is a strategy which enables bilinguals to develop
  literary language awareness and ‘situate themselves imaginatively in the mood
  and mode of text to appreciate the significance of literary meanings’ (Datta
  2000: 146).

4 For example, the DfES publication, ‘Aiming High: Raising the achievement of ethnic minority
pupils’ includes the following point: ‘There is some evidence that bilingual pupils, having achieved
fluency in English can achieve the highest levels and outperform monolingual English speakers’.
(DfES 2003: 3.6)
3.2 Home/school literacy practices

In looking at children’s out-of-school literacies, Knobel and Lankshear emphasize the idea that researchers and educationalists need to look into what people do with language and texts as well as where, how and with whom literacy understandings take place:

A concern with literacy practice always takes into account knowing and doing, and calls into play the notion of literacies as a way of describing how people negotiate and construct patterned and socially recognizable ways of knowing and doing and using language to achieve different social and cultural purposes within different social and cultural contexts. (Knobel and Lankshear 2003: 55)

The main contexts in which children interact with language and text are firstly the home and secondly the school. New research, both national and international, attempts to explain how children make sense of school literacy experiences in relation to home literacy experiences.

Shirley Bryce Heath’s pioneering study (1983) on the links between these two contexts included an analysis of the way in which narrative and books are used and viewed in different communities. She looks in detail at the consequences of these community literacy practices once children have started school, where certain literacy practices are considered more important than others for further literacy learning (1986). She found that each community had particular ‘rules for socially interacting and sharing knowledge in literacy events’ and that children were expected to learn and follow these rules. While teachers assumed that all children were learning the same rules, Heath shows that although ‘mainstream’ (white middle-class) children were learning to take meaning from texts in school-acceptable ways, other communities had different ‘ways with books’. Although books were provided in the white, working-class community of Roadville, children were not encouraged to go beyond the prescribed stories, either to create their own or to apply book knowledge to the world around them: ‘their community’s view of narrative discourse style is very narrow and demands a passive role in both creation of and response to the account of events’ (Heath 1986). In Trackton, the working-class black community, there were few occasions for reading with children (no bedtime stories) and the meaning of texts was mainly negotiated orally and in groups. Children from both these communities were unsuccessful at school: either they were unable to take an active role in reading and link the books to their environment (Roadville) or they could not understand the ‘social-interactional’ rules for literacy events at school (Trackton).

In Britain, Gregory noted the difficulties experienced by children from ‘non-mainstream’ backgrounds when there was a conflict between literacy practices at home and at school (Gregory 1996). However, she argues that literacy practices in homes and schools are not entirely separate: rather, there is a ‘synergistic relationship’ which leads to school literacies having a place in the home, through homework, for example, or in playing school. This in turn leads to a transformation of both of these literacies. Dyson’s (2003) work confirms this relationship and shows how older siblings have a determining role as literacy mediators between families and schools.
Also in Britain, Leena Robertson looked at story-reading practices within community minority language classes and in school. She concluded that in the community classes ‘reading’ and ‘understanding stories’ were not inevitably linked, as they would be at school. Also, different kinds of reading have different cultural and educational values: ‘In our culture, and therefore, in our pedagogical reading hierarchy, individual reading for meaning is valued highly, and hence rated higher than reciting collectively for religious purposes’ (Robertson 1997: 172). In a later study Robertson attempted to find out ‘what kinds of additional strengths bilingual children bring from home and community practices into their English lessons’ (Robertson 2000). Although some of the bilingual pupils lacked the ‘story knowledge’ which was assumed by the English literacy curriculum, they demonstrated metalinguistic knowledge and understanding of values and functions of each of the languages they engaged with.

In her research, Kenner (2000 and 2003) describes several case studies of young bilingual children at the threshold of reading and writing. Based on Cummin’s ideas that self-esteem depends on strong cultural identity in the classroom (which means being able to use home language within it) and also that concepts developed in one language can interact with those developed in another (through metalinguistic awareness) she underlines the importance of finding out what kinds of knowledge and capabilities bilingual students possess. She talked to the children not only about the written text but also about the visuals, about the ideas being illustrated by pictures and about layout. Her findings showed that while their home lives were multilingual and multicultural environments, ‘their primary school lives could be characterized as largely monolingual and monocultural, and therefore as having only a limited connection with children’s home experience’ (Kenner 2003: 95). She goes on to suggest steps towards developing an ‘interactive pedagogy for bilingual children’ in which home and community knowledge is integrated into the classroom.

In research which looked at bilingual children in a Scottish primary context, Geri Smyth reported on the way in which teachers responded to these children in the classroom. She found that the overall expectation in a monolingual classroom was that ‘any bilingual learners who did not fit “the master model” were problematic and required learning support’ (Smyth 2002: 34). Through case studies, she showed that there was no understanding of the cognitive and creative potential of bilinguals, and that, in fact, their efforts were sometimes viewed as the complete opposite because these did not produce the teachers’ expected outcomes. Smyth stresses that we need to observe in more depth the creative ways in which bilingual students approach the monolingual curriculum.

Research on home and school literacy links shows that although there is still much to do in some schools, there is an increasing understanding about the importance of bringing pupils’ heritage cultures and languages into the classroom. However, research also makes clear that the relationship between these two contexts is not always straightforward, for as Galda and Beach point out, ‘the cultural tools that students bring to the classroom remain varied, sometimes closely aligned to those sanctioned by the teachers, sometimes in opposition’ (Galda & Beach 2001: 71). In a recent study that extends research on bilingual children being reluctant to use their home language at school, for example, Pagett found that children tried to distance themselves from their home language, even using ‘parallel speech’ in the home, because they realize that ‘English is valued and rewarded institutionally and socially.
in school contexts’ (Pagett 2006: 143). She concludes that understanding and incorporating multiculturalism into schools must go beyond simply ‘celebrating diversity’ and that teachers and parents (and, we would add, researchers) should also be aware of the children’s agenda and ‘value children in relation to their own preferred identity and not a teacherly agenda’ (Pagett 2006: 144).

### 3.3 Multiculturalism, identity and texts

Considering Jerome Bruner’s influential work on culture and the language of education in the light of research on ethnic minority pupils helps us to understand how ‘culture making’ is linked to narrative and the construction of self:

> Insofar as we account for own actions and for the human events that occur around us principally in terms of narrative, story, drama, it is conceivable that our sensitivity to narrative provides the major link between our own self and our sense of others in the social world around us. (Bruner 1996: 69)

Bruner later expands on this idea, taking ideas from social anthropology:

> Like Clifford Geertz and Michelle Rosaldo, I think of Self as a text about how one is situated with respect to others and toward the world – a canonical text about powers and skills and dispositions that change as one’s situation changes from young to old, from one kind of setting to another. The interpretation of this text *in situ* by an individual is his [sic] sense of self in that situation. It is composed of expectations, feelings of esteem and power, and so on. (Bruner 1996: 130)

Margaret Spencer Meek also describes culture, imagination and identity as all coming together in ‘the Big Narrative’, the ‘story we are all part of’. Through texts and narrative, we revise our history but we also look to the future. As Meek suggests, ‘For children, reading is a dialogue with their future: their anticipations of “what will happen next?” and “shall I be able to cope with it?” (Spencer Meek 2002: 4).

This dialogue begins before school and continues into young adulthood when it becomes more conscious and also provides a space to reflect on identity. This was evident in a thought-provoking study by the French anthropologist, Michèle Petit (2001), on libraries and ethnic minority users in deprived urban neighbourhoods. She found that reading provided a private space for young adult readers in contexts where they had very little personal space (particularly young Muslim women). Through their words, she shows the potential that reading has to create an identity that is not based solely on ethnicity, or on antagonism between ‘them’ and ‘us’, but a more plural, more flexible one, that is open to change (Petit 2001: 57). Like Bruner, she also concluded that young people were able through reading to take ‘authorship’ of their own selves and lives ‘supported by fragments of stories, images, phrases written by others, and from them obtain the strength to go to a different place from which they seemed to be destined by everything else’ (Petit 2001: 47). Her findings show young people becoming reflective and critical through their reading. They confirm Cummins’ argument that the affirmation of identity is a critical process which occurs

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5 Our translation.
through reflection on both their heritage background and the culture of their new country (Cummins 1996).

There are also studies which have been based on multicultural literature: for example, Enciso (1997) looked at constructions of difference in a book by Jerry Spinelli, *Maniac Magee*, by 4th and 5th grade American students. She wanted to find out how they related their own understandings and experiences of ‘difference’ to the way in which it was represented in the story. She shows how these readers negotiated ‘the meaning of difference’ by asking questions such as ‘Who is like me?’ ‘Is his/her story my story?’ ‘Are these experiences I’ve had or would like to have?’. This and other studies try to explore how what Thomson calls children’s ‘virtual school bags’ (full of different experiences, knowledges, narratives, interests and understandings) can be opened in the classroom (quoted in Nixon and Comber 2006: 129). However, it is important to note that cultural and personal experiences may not always have the positive outcomes expected by the teacher. Galda and Beach cite examples of research, for example, which showed that readers may reject a character’s action when these did not correspond to their own experiences or did not reflect their cultural expectations (Galda & Beach 2001: 65). Petit also points out that instead of providing an opportunity for readers to express themselves, some texts can be too close for comfort and have the opposite effect (Petit 2001: 50).

Minns (1990) looked at much younger readers: preschool children who were already part of reading and writing networks in the home. She traced the way in which they found their own pathway to reading in the context of their family’s views on learning which were in turn based on social or cultural beliefs and traditions. In an in-depth case study of 4 year old Gurdeep, she shows how he has to learn different lessons from different forms of narrative: in this case, the moral tales told by his Sikh mother and the Western texts he finds in school. The cultural assumptions involved in the text do not only have to do with the themes and morals, but also with a particular view of the child reader:

Authors are writing books like these within a specific cultural framework and with a particular audience in mind – notably the hypothetical child reader who is socialised into responding to a story by making conversation out of it. Their books are presented in ways which encourage the child to ask questions about the story, to predict what will happen next and to match what does happen against experiences in their own lives; the books require them to investigate and use their imagination, to stop and discuss and to interpret the words of the author. This presupposes a way of reading which is not shared by everyone and tensions can be set up between child, teacher and parent if there is a cultural mismatch about the way in which a book is to be read and understood by a child […] (Minns 1990: 112)

3.4 Bilinguality, popular culture and digital media texts

Many new studies are taking into account the way in which bilingual children interact with both popular culture and digital culture. In 2003 Marsh reviewed studies of children’s literacy practices in the home which were linked to popular culture. She found that popular culture and media texts were often the first encounter bilingual
children had with their new culture and that they were deeply embedded in the literacy lives of families. Parents tended to view these texts in a positive light, because of their learning potential in terms of language and the social links provided with other children. In many homes, there were often media and digital texts in other languages as well and children drew from this store of texts to help them make meaning in their new contexts, both at home and at school. However, two years later Marsh (2005) found that

Despite the growing attention paid to the place of popular culture and media in children’s lives, there is still relatively little analysis of the way in which young bilingual children draw on different elements of their popular cultural worlds to create hybrid text spaces in which various threads of their identities collide and merge. (Marsh 2005: 6)

Gregory and Kenner (2003) discuss the extent to which media and technology were used in bilingual households to maintain their heritage culture and language(s), for example, through keeping in touch with relatives abroad, with the community in the UK, or for religious purposes. Multilingual media offers possibilities of learning new languages but also of maintaining the heritage languages in ways that were not possible before the new technology of computers, videos and digital cameras. Kenner (2000 and 2005) has looked further into the role of popular and media texts in bilingual children’s literacy worlds. She discusses ways in which traditional texts have been transformed due to new media forms, so that the multimedia texts which children encounter, although dominated by English, also offer children hybridity and a multiplicity of identities. She provides evidence that children were familiar with a wide range of these texts and were able to incorporate them into their own creative literacy skills. Kenner stresses the importance that popular cultural texts have for the children and that

as well as knowing ‘what counts’ in terms of Anglo-American culture, they also have many other experiences in their home and community lives which are not visible in mainstream magazines, TV programmes or computer games […] given the opportunity they will share their hybrid cultural knowledge with their peers at mainstream school and produce texts which take this hybridity even further. (Kenner 2005: 86)

Pahl (2004 and 2005) has also done innovative ethnographic research on children and popular media texts in the multilingual homes, observing children’s play with console games and the artifacts and ephemera that result from them, such as drawings and other creative expressions of response. In some cases, the narratives that children constructed were related to family histories and cultural identities and eventually themselves became part of wider family narratives. Like Kenner, Pahl argues that these hybrid experiences should be recognized and built on in educational settings. Pahl, Kenner and Marsh, among others, show that there is still much to find out about the relationship between the literacy of ethnic minority children and their use of both popular culture and digital media texts.
3.5 Research implications for a Scottish context

Findings and strategies from previous research provided the platform for developing our approach in the Scottish context described in Section 2. Little research has been done in this context, however, and our study therefore set out to explore:

- the intersections of home and school literacies through discussion and shared experience
- the mediated literacies of picture books through the analysis of text and illustration
- the experience of asylum/ethnic minority bilingualism as it meets the ‘bilingualism’ of the Scottish school context [Scots in the playground and Standard Scottish English in classroom pedagogy]
- the provision of spaces where ‘language and life histories’ can be heard, and ‘self-authorship’ can begin in a new country
- the use of Scots language as a ‘neutral venue’ or third frame of reference where the language of power and the language of relative powerlessness or poverty can encourage equality [since everyone is a relative stranger to its use in the classroom context]
- the use of whole-class sessions that may offer a ‘metalinguistic’ but also community-based focus
- the focus on ‘ephemera’ of comics, videos, drawings, speech-bubbles, both in the texts chosen and in the writing/drawing activities
- the use of accents and oral features of story-telling, such as voice, first-person narrative or poetry, or moral issues arising from wrong decisions, to make an impact in terms of shared human experience.

In the following section we will begin by looking at the ways in which Scottish literature and language influence the construction of identity and then focus on studies which have involved ethnic minority pupils responding to texts.

Summary

Recent changes in our understanding of literacy have led to new research on the ways in which multiple literacies operate in specific cultural contexts. Because of the new educational issues raised by immigration in a global world, some of this research has focussed on the relationship between literacy, identity, bilinguality and culture, including the impact of ICT. The implications of this research are also relevant to the changing Scottish context and formed the basis for the present project.
4. Making sense of Scottish texts

The much debated notion of ‘Scottish identity’ has particular implications for the teaching of language and literature in Scottish schools, especially where school populations reflect the growing diversity of Scotland’s culture.

4.1 Scottish identity: Scottish children’s literature and language in education

Guidance on the teaching of Scottish culture is included as one of the Specific Issues in English Language Teaching in the English Language 5-14 National Guidelines, and suggests that Scottish writing and writing about Scotland should permeate the curriculum:

It should be a central aim of Scottish schools to help their pupils understand that the common experiences, activities, history and artefacts of the people of Scotland constitute an identifiable and distinctive culture, worthy of transmission and of study. (SOED 1991: 68)

That this aim remains debateable or in some felt sense unfulfilled arises from a complex series of causes, both cultural and educational. These have been usefully analysed within the broad context of national and European language and cultural planning by Joseph Lo Bianco in his Language and Literacy Policy in Scotland (2001). Here Scots language, by the criteria of its range of social and regional uses, and ‘its elaboration, literature and comprehension between it and southern British English ... lays claim to recognition and warrants acceptance as a Scots language’ (Lo Bianco 2001: 6).

He therefore treats it within the policy context of educational provision for modern European languages, Gaelic, minority and community languages and British Sign Language, all of which are taught in Scottish schools. A key difference between Scots and other minority languages, however, is recognised to be the historical neglect and misrepresentation of the language, and even hostility towards it in school contexts, where developing children’s competence in Standard English has understandably been a key concern for teachers and parents. The resulting absence of statistical information about the use and teaching of Scots means that:

positive moves in policy are continually challenged, delayed and frustrated. Many educational measures that could be sustained from a better information base are made difficult because they cannot legitimately be based on secure information. (Lo Bianco 2001: 9)

Our project contributes to that need for an information base in respect of language and culture, particularly as these are broadly defined within multicultural and bilingual Scottish educational contexts. It can provide answers to some of the questions that Lo Bianco raises about how Scots is represented in schooling, what pedagogy is to be used and what attitudes are exhibited towards it. The research activity in itself might contribute in a small way to the necessary language planning process of ‘prestige-
allocation’ that is necessary for Scots (in a way that is very different from the language planning needs of the other heritage language, Gaelic).

Languages and their literatures from this perspective are strongly linked to preparing the ground for the kinds of citizenship necessary within a national context that is not single or homogenous. Lo Bianco argues for dynamic notions of culture that prepare young people for

    substantive participation in the political community. As a combination of knowledge and skill, bilingualism and multiple-literacy must be counted as powerful additions to human capital (Lo Bianco 2001: 25)

Within this wider vision, Scotland’s formal and juridical connection with Europe within the UK context has meant that the Council for Europe Charter for Regional or Minority Languages has been accepted, although the most visible sign of this to date has been provision for the use of Scottish Gaelic in some civil proceedings in the Gaelic-speaking areas of Scotland.

So far as Scots language is concerned, there is growing awareness that globalisation has somewhat paradoxically been a spur to recovery of local and historical identities, and that tourism and other ‘cultural industries’ would benefit from a greater focus on the distinctiveness of Scottish culture, including its languages, literature and arts. There is awareness too of the ways in which technological changes in society have brought increasing need for a multi-modal approach to literacy in which ‘previously separate channels of literacy, visual, audio, gestural, iconic combine with the textual format to produce a hybrid and very complex kind of literate practice’ (Lo Bianco 2001: 40). This becomes particularly apparent among the children in our study, as their understandings of a new culture emerge from a complex and sometimes contradictory series of messages and interpretations through home or community languages, sacred languages, playground and classroom languages, and electronic or media literacies.

A more traditional educational perspective on this complex cultural issue can be found in the Curriculum and Classroom Applications perspective of McGillivray (ed. 1997: 57–107), and in the national assessment issues raised by Corbett et al. (2003: 265–70). Nicolson (2003) extends that secondary school focus in her examination of Scottish higher education student perspectives on bilingualism, from students on a range of courses including teacher education. She notes the persistence of a deficit model of bilingualism, and argues for priority status to be given to sharing

    another outlook on the world through other forms of thought, literature and lexis [...] which can only enhance tolerant relationships between different cultural groups and impact positively on the whole area of language learning. Nicolson 2003: 134)

Issues of social inclusion are part of the picture here, with the Scottish Executive’s focus on the social capital (Coleman 1988) that accrues through the networks and norms that build the trust and reciprocity that create not only local communities but also wider civil society. If children of present-day immigrant communities are to become the Scots of the future, as Irish, Lithuanian, Polish and Italian children have
done in the past, then the development of confident literacy and linguistic awareness is vital for individual and economic development. Thus one of the key aims of the Executive’s Cultural Strategy is ‘Promoting Scotland’s languages as cultural expressions and as means of accessing Scotland’s culture’ (Scottish Executive 2000: 23).

Such concerns inform the new *Curriculum for Excellence* that is being developed to help Scottish schools meet the needs of pupils in a changing world. The most current information available for teachers on this developing curriculum includes the following guidance ([www.acurriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk](http://www.acurriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk); last accessed 15 November 2006):

*Language is at the core of thinking. We reflect, communicate and develop our ideas through language. Literacy offers an essential passport to learning, helping children and young people to achieve to the full and be ready for active involvement in society and work. Literature opens up new horizons, and a love of reading can be an important starting point for lifelong learning. As we communicate increasingly through digital technologies, we need to be able to interpret and convey information in new ways and to apply discernment.*

*Scotland has a rich diversity of language, including the different languages of Scotland and the growing number of community languages such as Urdu, Punjabi and Polish. This diversity offers rich opportunities for learning. Learning other languages enables children and young people to make connections with different people and their cultures and to play a fuller part as global citizens.*

These (and other) broad aims for language are focused through ‘the four capacities’ that are intended to provide coherence for curriculum change across a range of subjects in primary and secondary schools. A selection of the website guidance includes the following commentary relevant to the present project:

**Developing successful learners**

*Language facilitates more complex thinking and learning processes. Through their reading of literature, children and young people can be challenged in their thinking, encouraging openness to new and alternative approaches and ideas. Applying literacy skills successfully through technologies allows children and young people to engage with and express themselves using different media. Learning other languages enables children and young people to communicate with those from other cultures and backgrounds. Successful learning of another language can give them the capabilities and confidence to pick up further languages later in life.*

**Developing confident individuals**

*Language is an important expression of identity. [...] Through their reading, children and young people are able to explore other people’s experiences, emotions and relationships in the safe contexts of literature. Within this range of reading, studying Scottish literature allows children and young people to develop their own sense of one of the creative forces within Scottish culture. Being able to communicate in an
additional language boosts children and young people’s confidence and helps them to cope in new situations.

Developing responsible citizens

Through varied reading in their own language and, progressively, in other languages, children and young people can extend their perspectives on the world, helping them to develop their views and come to difficult decisions. Learning additional languages is an important component of active international citizenship. Through their learning of additional languages, children and young people can develop their understanding of other cultures and be challenged to reconsider preconceptions and stereotypes.

Developing effective contributors

Through expressing their creativity individually or as part of a group, children and young people can contribute to the life of their school and community through, for example, writing and sharing their stories and poems. [...] Effective language and literacy skills enable children and young people to contribute to developing creative and enterprising ideas and communities. [...] Through their learning of other languages, children and young people can contribute to the wider international community and Scotland’s diverse society.

Advice on curriculum content, admittedly general at this stage of the development programme for a new national system, includes the following remarks that relate directly to the context and strategies of our project:

Children and young people should experience an environment which is rich in language. From the early years, they can extend their skills in listening and talking and develop early reading and writing skills through appropriate play-based contexts. They need to spend time with stories, literature and texts which will enrich their learning, develop their language skills and enable them to find enjoyment.

Scotland has a rich diversity of languages and dialects and teachers should value and build upon the languages that children bring to school. The languages and literature of Scotland provide a valuable source for learning about culture, identity and language.

[...] When they begin to learn another language, children and young people need to make connections with the skills and knowledge they have already developed in their own language. To help this, teachers can make use of the diversity of languages which children may bring to school, making connections and comparisons between different aspects of language.

[...] The guidance on learning other languages will take account of developments to define language competence across Europe.

Very strong connections between learning in languages and learning in other areas of the curriculum are essential – each supporting the other. There will be close links, for example, between the expressive arts and creative writing, and modern languages and social studies. Interdisciplinary projects are likely to involve both research and a
strong element of presentation and will provide valuable opportunities to extend language skills.

Schools and individual teachers wishing to develop topics in Scottish literature in line with such national guidance can now draw on a range of new publications and resources. Since just before Devolution, there has been a slow but steady growth in Scots language publishing for children, some of it funded by a Scottish Executive that recognizes its importance as part of the linguistic and cultural heritage of young people. Funding often combines support from several sources, such as the Scottish Arts Council, National Lottery, or Learning and Teaching Scotland. As well as the *Itchy Coo* series of children’s books in a range of genres from interactive picture books to rhymes, ghost stories, translation (of Roald Dahl’s *The Twits* as *The Eejits*) and political history, all written in a lively demotic Scots, other collections of stories and poems are also available, including *The Kist* (2001), *A Braw Brew* (1997, repr. 2000), *The Jewel Box* (2000), *My Mum’s a Punk* (2002), and *The Thing that Mattered Most* (2006). Scottish writers for children such as Matthew Fitt visit schools and higher education institutions, promoting the language and literature of Scotland. Several educational websites provide resources, information and games. Scottish National Dictionaries, publishers of *The Scots School Dictionary*, for example, has The Schuil Wab (website), which includes classroom activities and guidance on Scots word-building, grammar, language and community. The issue of Scots and Gaelic in schools has also been the subject of frequent articles in the national press.

While these efforts in children’s literature are to some extent replacing earlier traditional educational practice which concentrated mainly on Burns, Scott and Stevenson – described by educationalist Margaret Spencer Meek as ‘the encircling Protestantism’ of her childhood schooling (Meek 2001: viii) – it often appears that in most primary classrooms today Scottish literature is limited to the celebration of Burns Night and the occasional choral use of Scottish songs. Thus pupils leave primary school with very little knowledge of their nation’s authors and texts. Scots is still considered by most pupils and teachers as ‘slang’, to be spoken only in the playground or outside school, a legacy of the past when it was banned in the classroom, as was Gaelic, and often for the same causes: a fear that it would make the learning of Standard English, so vital for achieving academic or economic success beyond the boundaries of locality and country, much more difficult for the next generation. Although it is currently used by over 1.5 million people in various dialects, there is no clear perception of Scots as a ‘proper’ language in itself. Rather, it is seen as an ‘inferior’ version of English, which both parents and teachers have concerns about devoting too much time to.

All this linguistic and cultural uncertainty has consequences for children’s sense of their Scottish identity. As Meek writes:

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6 Niven and Jackson (1998: 1) note that although the Scottish Office in trialling questions for the 2001 census found 1.5 million people claiming to speak Scots, a more recent survey by Aberdeen University ‘estimated that there were 3.5 million Scots speakers.’
National identity, commonly regarded, is a stylistic way of identifying differences between ‘us’ and ‘others’, chiefly in terms of origins, optings and associations. Strong identifications are difficult to change, especially if they have territorial attachments […]. Part of our individuality resides in the way we fill up words with our experiences and feelings, as when we respond to ‘exile’, ‘refugee’, ‘immigrant’, ‘travel’ and ‘homeless’. (Meek 2001: ix)

Given Scotland’s history of emigration and immigration, it would seem that the Scots would find it easier to empathize with others whose language and culture are different. The results of the Scottish Election Survey in 1997 portrayed the country as having ‘a conception of citizenship among the most liberal in Europe’, as 52% of people considered it enough to be living in Scotland (rather than being born there) to be Scottish, and only 34% supporting citizenship on the basis of having a Scottish parent (cited in McCrone 2003).

Such generosity in terms of definition corresponds to that accepted by the Scottish Qualification Authority for ‘a Scottish text’ used in national examinations: one written by a writer born in Scotland, or living there, or containing recognisably Scottish settings or themes.

However, a more recent report (Lewis 2006) that looked at the attitude of Scots towards immigrants found that they were less welcoming. This is perhaps due to greater numbers of immigrants arriving in Scotland since 1997.

4.2 Ethnic minority children reading children’s books: interpreting and making sense of text and pictures

Margaret Meek reminds us about the importance of children’s books in constructing identities:

If we agree that literature offers and encourages a continuing scrutiny of ‘who we think we are’, we have to emphasise the part that children’s literature plays in the development of children’s understanding of both belonging (being one of us) and differentiation (being other). In the outside world, children adopt adults’ attitudes that their books either confirm or challenge. (Meek 2001: x)

But what about readers who are having to explore where they ‘belong’ because they have either recently arrived in a new country or because their families have a different national and cultural heritage? How does literature influence the transformation of these children’s identities? How do they make sense of the language, the cultural references, values and beliefs? How do their own socio-cultural background, life-experience and understanding of narrative affect their meaning-making?

There is now a growing body of research on the subject of how minority ethnic readers make sense of children’s literature in English. A brief summary of the studies that have most relevance for our research is given below (Bromley 1996; Laycock 1998; Colledge 2005; Walsh 2000, 2003; Mines 2000; Coulthard in Arizpe and Styles
These studies have involved pupils from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds and different genres of texts, such as picture books or adolescent novels. Most studies focus on emergent readers, but there are also case studies of older readers, beyond primary school.

Bromley followed the progress of a six-year Pakistani child, Momahl, adapting to reading literature in a foreign classroom. Picture books played a crucial role in her development as a reader and allowed her to become part of the community of readers in the classroom. Bromley shows how this child ‘read’ emotions in a picture book and how important her responses became to the rest of her class:

Momahl was by no means fluent in English [...] it was in the art of discourse she was not so skilled. However, picture books were to help her go some way towards overcoming this problem and give her powers of negotiation where she had previously had none. (Bromley 1996: 138)

Colledge also followed the development of emergent bilingual 5 and 6 year old children in their first year of schooling. Over one year she looked at their response to a selection of classic picture books used in English schools, such as Jill Murphy’s Peace at Last and Trish Cooke and Helen Oxenbury’s So Much. She found that there were cultural gaps where these children did not grasp inter-textual allusions as well as their British or European peers did. However, ‘the books formed a bridge between the known and the culturally unfamiliar, giving children access to an understanding of scenes from types of homes other than their own’ (Colledge 2005: 24). This was similar to the findings by Liz Laycock who briefly reports on the responses to a wordless picture book, John Prater’s The Gift, by two children who are new to English. She finds their experience served ‘to reinforce the pleasures of reading, as well as allowing them to draw on existing skills of storytelling in their community language’ (Laycock 1998: 82).

In a study conducted in Australia, Walsh read two picture books (I Went Walking by Sue Machin and Julie Vivas, and Felix and Alexander by Terry Denton) with primary children in the first two years of school (Walsh 2000 and 2003). Some of these pupils were second language learners, others were from English-speaking backgrounds. The research involved reading sessions with individual children after books had been studied in their classrooms. Walsh found the books activated emergent reading behaviour through a range of cognitive and affective processes as well as cultural understandings. There were few differences between the range of comments made by the two groups. She also noticed that most pupils were able to label, observe detail and create links to their own experience.

In 2000 Mines completed her doctoral study on research with Anthony Browne’s The Tunnel and three groups of 5 and 6 year olds with distinct cultural backgrounds: Bangladeshi newcomers, second generation Bangladeshi immigrants, and English children from rural Sussex. Mines studied the transcripts with codes based mainly on Barthes’ semiotic theory which links the text to the real world and builds on readers’ social and inter-textual knowledge. This is particularly relevant to a text like The Tunnel where the limits of the ‘real world’ are blurred and knowledge of other texts is

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A version of this section appears in Arizpe, E. and Styles, M. (forthcoming 2008 )
required to make sense of the story. Mines contends that readers approach the text as cultural beings, bringing to the transaction with the text their own experiences of life and the world in order to make the new culture less strange. Thus, for example, the recent immigrants to Britain saw snakes and dragons in the forest, while the Sussex children recognized the references to familiar fairy stories. Mines found cultural differences in each group’s reading, particularly with respect to their response to the everyday objects in the book; intertextual references; the ideology of the text; and the secondary world within the text.

Within the study conducted by Arizpe and Styles (2003) on how primary school children make sense of picture books, Coulthard focused on bilingual children’s response. She built on Gregory’s (1996) work by analyzing the interpretive steps and emotional engagement of bilingual pupils from a variety of nationalities. She found that Anthony Browne’s picture books stimulated them to profound meaning-making, despite alternative cultural traditions. She shows how bilingual children rose to the intellectual challenge and were able to overcome their hesitation in using a new language in order to communicate this meaning to others. Based on the study’s questioning techniques, Coulthard went on to design a series of lessons (mainly for use with the curriculum for England and Wales, but which can be adapted to any classroom) which incorporate activities around the visual and the dramatic to further the literacy skills of any child.

Building on Coulthard’s work, Arizpe looked further into using picture books with ESL learners, together with academics and practitioners from all over Europe (Enever and Schmid-Schönbein 2006). The findings of this collection of articles show the positive effects of using picture books with bi-cultural children as they have the potential to interest most children. However, findings also stressed the importance of having constructive dialogue around the texts, with both teachers and peers, in order to enhance emotional and aesthetic engagement and to connect knowledge and cultures (Arizpe 2006 and Arizpe and Styles 2008, forthcoming).

In a study involving older children, Leung looked at Asian-American readers’ responses to a cross-cultural text, Jean Fritz’s Homesick. She found a wide difference of responses influenced by knowledge of Chinese culture, stages of ethnic identity development, personality and genre experience. The relationship between ethnicity and reader response was further complicated because even within one ethnic group young people experience their culture in different ways. Like other research on adolescent response to texts (see Arizpe 1994), this study showed that readers prefer, and become more involved with, stories that are related to their personal experience. Ethnicity is just one dimension of this experience, which also includes gender, economic status and geographical location.

Children’s literature can provide an enjoyable space for those new to a language and culture in which to explore unfamiliar elements through words and images (whether visual or textual). If there is a supportive environment, it can become a ‘third space’, in the words of Homi Bhabha (1994)8, in which emergent bi-culturate children can

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8 Bhabha uses the notion of the ‘third space’ to describe the space ‘in-between’ cultures and nationalities which conforms the ‘hybridity’ that results from the coming together, negotiation and transformation of different identities. It is positive and inclusive site because it ‘initiates new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation’ (Bhabha 1994:1).
negotiate and construct identities without fear of ‘getting it wrong’. The interaction of teachers and pupils around a text can lead to a better understanding, for everyone involved, about how texts work within a particular cultural context and also about what readers bring from their own cultural backgrounds to the meaning-making process.

Summary

Scottish children’s language and literature is a growing field of literary and academic interest that can provide bilingual pupils with a space in which to explore Scottish and other identities, yet it has not been the subject of research similar to that on ethnic minority children reading English books. The lack of a specifically Scottish focus in earlier research underlines the need for research such as the present project, particularly within the changing demographic patterns of language and culture within contemporary Scotland, a society that is increasingly open to economic migration and educational change within a global perspective.
5. Research Design and Methodology

5.1 The schools

Three primary schools with a significant intake of immigrant and refugee children from different areas of Glasgow were involved: Highmont Primary (HP), Sir James Kelvin Primary (SJK) and St. Margaret’s Roman Catholic Primary (STM)\(^9\). The first two are housed in similarly large, rather run-down Victorian buildings; both are set to merge with other schools from the area in new buildings within the next couple of years. The third school dates from the 1920s and 1930s expansion of denominational education in Glasgow and is a large building in the middle of a large estate.

5.1.1 Highmont Primary (HP)

Highmont Primary is one of four primary schools for children in the West End of Glasgow. This is a prosperous area which includes Glasgow University, and this means that many parents are linked to the University in some way, including some who are research scholars or students from other countries. The school has approximately 350 pupils (although the school roll, in common with other Glasgow schools, is falling), with the number of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) being significantly above the national average. There are about 120 bilingual pupils in the school and 23 community languages are spoken. The HMIE report in 2003, just after the appointment of a new Headteacher, found that despite problems with the poor state of the accommodation, the school had created a welcoming environment for pupils and parents and most parents were satisfied with the work of the school. There were also good links with the wider community, although specific links with ethnic minority groups was not mentioned. A follow-through inspection report from 2005 found continuous improvement in all areas, with some increase in attainment in reading, writing and maths.

Welcome signs in various languages can be found in the entrance hall and pupil work decorates the walls. In 2004, the school organised a sponsored run to support the Asian Tsunami Appeal and at the time of this research project held a successful ‘International Evening’ which included food, music, books and storytelling from different countries and aimed to involve parents from different cultural backgrounds.

5.1.2 Sir James Kelvin Primary (SJK)

Sir James Kelvin Primary is on the South side of Glasgow, some two miles beyond the River Clyde that divides the city. It is an imposing red sandstone building, overshadowed by three decrepit-looking high-rise buildings. An old factory across the street is now a library and exercise centre. Nearby shops offer a mixture of traditional Scottish, Chinese and Indian names and food. Some newer council houses and flats also surround the school. This has always been a predominantly working-class area of the city, the ‘Shawlands’ where immigrants have been settling for at least 100 years.

\(^9\) These school names, as well as those of all the pupils and teachers involved in the research, are pseudonyms.
‘The queer folk o’ the Shaws’ was a nickname for the inhabitants in the mid-19th century and it has been suggested that the name originated from Flemish weavers who came to live in Pollokshaws: they were called queer because no one could understand them. (www.theglasgowstory.com)

The school has a falling roll and indeed it is only the presence of asylum-seeking families that keeps Sir James Kelvin viable. The school roll is 190, more than half of whom are from refugee or asylum-seeking families. Nineteen languages are spoken and 85.1% of the pupils are on free school meals (the average for Glasgow primaries is 41.4%). The multicultural character of the school is reflected in the environment: the main hall is hung with large flags from different countries, there are wall displays on world religions and in a corner there is a prize-winning sculpture of a kind of palm surrounded by masks of different colours, named ‘Family Tree’.

The HMIE Report from 2005 stressed that the school ‘was not a stimulating learning environment’ with major problems in the fabric, structure and layout of the building and that ‘the quality of books in class libraries was not of a sufficiently high standard’. However, it identified key strengths in support for bilingual pupils and good links with community groups. Events to increase the understanding of racial equality and discrimination were frequent. Teachers were found to provide ‘high quality support’ for bilingual pupils, using strategies and resources to ensure they understood the new language. The bilingual pupils themselves were found to be motivated and were ‘used to taking responsibility for aspects of their own learning’ even though they ‘did not always have sufficient opportunities to work together with pupils in mainstream classrooms’. EAL pupils were also found to be making good progress with the development of reading and writing. In general, parents were satisfied with the work of the school.

5.1.3 St. Margaret’s RC Primary (STM)

St Margaret’s RC Primary is in another working class area, with a reputation for social problems, also dominated by high rise flats which were quickly given a face lift to house dispersed asylum-seekers coming from London. This led to initial tension, widely reported in the media, between refugee families and existing Scottish residents whose flats and furniture had not been similarly upgraded – an unfortunate introduction to Scottish society. St Margaret’s has a school role of 325, and approximately 20% of pupils are from refugee or asylum-seeking families. At least fifteen languages are spoken and 58.7% of pupils are on free school meals. The school has not had an inspection for the last seven years, but since the arrival of the new Headteacher attainment has been raised in the areas of English (20%) and Maths (18%).

This school also offers support and builds upon the skills of bilingual pupils as well as developing links with the community. The new Headteacher is aware of the socio-economic problems of the area and is therefore very concerned to create a positive and welcoming ethos within the school, so that it is felt to be a ‘safe’ and enjoyable place for all the children, no matter what their background. This is evident in the many posters that adorn the school, created by the pupils and representing multicultural images, many of them in several languages. During the period of our research, the upper school had just completed an Asylum Positive Images Project with
Oxfam, in which asylum-seeking children filmed their peers answering the question ‘What do you think of asylum seekers and refugees?’ They found that children from 7 to 12 see them mainly as friends and playmates.

### 5.2 The pupils

Because our project ran from November to November, the pupils, originally in P6, had moved on to P7 during the second half of the research. Some of the sessions were carried out with the whole class, others with smaller groups of between 3 to 6 pupils from ethnic minorities. Within the total group of 14 pupils (7 girls and 7 boys) with whom we worked most closely, all were first generation immigrants with the exception of one Pakistani boy who had been born in Scotland. The countries of origin of these bilingual pupils and/or their parents were as follows: Pakistan (4 boys – this represents the higher population of Pakistanis compared to other ethnic minorities in Glasgow), Latvia, Hungary, Iran, Iraq, Turkey (2 girls), Rwanda, Congo, Algeria and Somalia. Their heritage languages included Urdu, Panjabi, Farsi, Latvian, Hungarian, French, English, Dutch, Turkish, Rwandan, Kurdish, Congolese, Arabic and Somali, among others.

These pupils were selected by the teachers either because they felt the pupils would be particularly able to help us in our research or because they felt it would increase the pupil’s confidence to be selected to participate in a project with the University. In the event, with only one exception,\(^\text{10}\) all pupils seemed happy to participate and to enjoy reading the texts, answering our questions and generally discussing their reading, their home languages, their language lessons and other issues related to literacy. Although the cohort did not fully represent our original intention of sampling the experiences of children from recently arrived and more settled migrant families, we were content to be guided by the teachers’ knowledge of their pupils. It was also important to the researchers to develop a model of whole-class and small group engagement that was inclusive of the comments and experiences of children from Scottish and immigrant backgrounds. It may have also helped that the researchers introduced themselves as also being from different cultures: in this case, Scots-Irish and Mexican.

The following list gives a brief description of the origin and languages of each of the pupils involved in our study. Their ages were all between 10 and 11 years.

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\(^\text{10}\) This was a Muslim girl from Iraq who refused to speak during the group discussions and who generally had difficulties in school because she was much older than the other pupils. One of the teachers mentioned that parents from ethnic minorities often say children are younger than they really are in order to benefit from longer time at primary.
1. **Jamal**  Pakistani origin. His family was in Scotland for a year while his mother did a university degree. His first language was Urdu.

2. **Rafiq**  Pakistani origin. His family had been in Scotland for eight years. He spoke some Urdu and was learning Arabic. At school he was also beginning to learn French.

3. **Tomaj**  Hungarian origin. His family arrived in Scotland nine months before the project. He had been in a bilingual unit for about six months of this time during which he had made very good progress with English. He spoke Hungarian at home and ‘a bit’ of Polish.

4. **Hashid**  Second generation Pakistani/Glaswegian. He spoke English and Urdu confidently but couldn’t read much Urdu. He was learning Arabic and to read the Qur’an at the madrasa. His parents wanted him to become an imam.

5. **Usman**  Pakistani origin. He spoke Urdu but couldn’t read it. He enjoyed reading and often went to the library.

6. **Gabriel**  Congolese origin. His family arrived about four years ago. His first language was French but he also spoke a bit of Lingala.

7. **Abdul**  Algerian origin. He had been in Glasgow for about five years. He spoke Arabic and some French.

8. **Rasha**  Iranian origin. She had been in Scotland for less than a year before the project began. She was fluent in Farsi, and could write and read in Arabic.

9. **Datse**  Latvian/Romany origin. She had lived in many different countries before coming to Scotland a year ago. She spoke Latvian, French, Dutch and a bit of Russian.

10. **Precious**  Rwandan origin. She has been in Glasgow three years. She spoke some French.

11. **Maisha**  Somalian origin. She had been in Glasgow for three years. She spoke Somali and some Arabic.

12. **Neylan**  Turkish origin. She had been in Glasgow about 4 years. She spoke some Turkish, some Kurdish and was learning French.

13. **Umay**  Turkish origin. She had been in Glasgow about 5 years. She spoke some Turkish, some Kurdish and was learning French.

14. **Sirwa**  Iraqi origin. She had been in Glasgow about two years. She spoke Surani, ‘a wee bit’ of Farsi and was learning French.
5.3 The selected texts

Because the aim of this research was to find out how ethnic minority pupils (and recent immigrants in particular) made sense of their new culture, we selected Scottish texts to read and discuss with them. Finding Scottish texts (either written by Scots, set in Scotland or using Scots language) which would appeal to 10 year olds but which would also offer relatively few difficulties to those new to English was not easy. We wanted to use a variety of different literary forms such as picture books, stories, poems and comics. We also wanted to select texts written in a range of the varieties of Scottish language that migrant children will encounter, from Standard English to several kinds of Scottish-inflected English, including Gaelic English, Standard Scots and its Glaswegian and Central Lowland dialectal forms.

The following texts were chosen after considering the corpus of available Scottish children’s books. They allowed us to make creative use of a range of genres and narrative structures such as folktales, myths, humorous poems, science fiction, cartoons, and two first person narratives by a child narrator (both using dialect). All except two of the texts contain illustrations.

Each of the selected texts is briefly described below (see Appendix for images).

5.3.1 Janet Reachfar and the Kelpie by Jane Duncan (2002)

This is a picture book originally published in 1976. Jane Duncan was the pseudonym of the novelist Elizabeth Jane Cameron (1910-1976). Its setting on Reachfar farm is based on her grandparents’ croft on the Black Isle, Easter Ross, so the context is Highland Scotland. The illustrations to the new edition are by Mairi Hedderwick and are similar to those of her well-known Katie Morag series (which we did not use because we felt these might be too familiar to some pupils), in that they depict a rural Scottish island scene.

The story is about Janet, a young girl who lives on Reachfar farm and is often told stories by two farmhands about fantastical creatures that live around the area, especially ‘Black Rory’, the monster in the old quarry; the Whigmaleerie in the bog; and the Kelpie in the well (a well which she has been forbidden to approach). This kelpie or water spirit has ‘long wobbly arms and wobbly fingers all slippery like seaweed, and queer spiky horns on his head, and if you go near that fence he will reach out and pull you into the Well and drown you’ (Duncan 1976/2002).

Janet, who cannot believe there really is a Kelpie in the well, disobeys her mother and grandmother and creeps under the barbed wire fence to look over the edge. There she sees the horrible face of the monster staring up at her. That night, after having a nightmare she tells the whole family the story. Her stern grandmother makes them all go out to the well in the light summer evening and forces Janet to look again. What she sees is ‘her own face with the pigtails sticking out like horns on either side and the bows of ribbon looking like spikes’, and, as her mother says, ‘the ugly face of a girl who has done something that all her family asked her not to do’ (Duncan 1976/2002).
The book was originally published thirty years ago and although its didactic intent comes through quite strongly we felt it provided opportunities for discussion about Scottish legends and storytelling as well as about moral issues such as obedience and lying, and about relationships and duty across different generations.

5.3.2. ‘Hauntit Park’ by Hamish MacDonald (2004)

To continue the theme of myths and monsters, we chose a poem from *Blethertoun Braes* (edited by Fitt and Robertson, 2004), an anthology of Scots poems about an imaginary Scottish town. ‘Hauntit Park’ describes the mythical creatures that come out after dark, such as ‘ghaists’, ‘banshees’ and ‘carlins’ and who play on the swings and roundabouts in the public park. It is written in a broad and energetic Scots, and the rhyme depends on pronouncing the words in Scots. The illustration shows two dancing ‘bogles’ come back from the grave, with red worms coming out of their bodies, but the tone is playful throughout.

5.3.3 The Mean Team from Mars by Scoular Anderson (2003)

This book is one of a series of ‘easy readers’. Although it is divided into chapters, most of it is illustrated in comic book form and includes speech bubbles. The story is about young Rory, a fan of Arden United and a football player himself, although he often gets red cards. When he unwittingly buys a magic duvet that takes him forward in time, he makes friends with Skrekie, an alien, and plays and scores in a match against Mars North School Under-eights. When Rory goes back to his own time, Skrekie comes with him, and takes his place in the Arden Under-eights match, Rory having been slightly injured in the match with the aliens. Rory wants to continue his friendship but after Skrekie goes back, his mother washes the duvet, causing the colours to run and ending its magical powers.

We felt this book would be of particular interest for the boys and that the illustrations would be an aid for those with limited English. Another reason for selecting it was that the story could lead to discussions about football and sectarianism, friendship and being an ‘alien’.

5.3.4 ‘Blethertoun Rovers’ by Matthew Fitt (2004)

We followed this with a poem that continues the football theme, ‘Blethertoun Rovers’ (also from the *Blethertoun Braes* anthology), which describes each member of the town’s hopeless football team in amusing detail. We felt the football theme would sustain their interest and the illustration would help them grasp the unfamiliar Scots language. There is a humorous illustration (by Bob Dewar) showing the decidedly unsporting looking team members and the coach with his head in his hands.

5.3.5 ‘My Mum’s a Punk’ by Brian Johnstone (2002)

Three further texts were selected from an anthology of Scottish writing which contains both stories and poems (multiple copies of the anthology were donated to the classroom library): *My Mum’s a Punk* (edited by Breslin, McGonigal and Whyte, 2002). In the poem, ‘My Mum’s a Punk’ by Brian Johnstone, we see the ‘punk’ mum from the
perspective of her son who, despite pointing out the differences from other mums (pins through her nose, skull tattoos and black lipstick, among other things) concludes that ‘She’s something special and she’s all the mum I want’. This poem was used as a starting point to talk about issues of difference and identity. The book cover illustration, which clearly relates to this poem, shows a female doll-like figure dressed as a punk with the word ‘Mother’ on her T-shirt. She is set against a brick wall with the book’s title written as graffiti on it.

5.3.6 ‘Wee Grantie’ by Iain Mills (2002)

The story, ‘Wee Grantie’, was also chosen for reading with the whole class. A young boy narrates an episode involving ‘Wee Grantie’, a rather annoying classmate who is always tagging along and talking ‘rubbish’. When Wee Grantie follows a group of friends to a swing tree over a pool, the boys trick him into swimming while they hide his clothes. A group of girls turns up and he is forced to stay in the cold water until they leave. The author subtly point out that the reason for Grantie’s attention-seeking behaviour may well be that his little sister who has spina bifida thus demands their parents’ full attention. The young narrator is sympathetic up to a point, but still cannot resist teasing him.

This story raises the issues of friendship, teasing and bullying. Because it is written mainly in Glaswegian dialect and incorporates children’s language, it also provides opportunities for discussing language and ‘slang’.

5.3.7 ‘Tigger’ by Anne Donovan (2002)

The other story we selected from this anthology was ‘Tigger’ by Anne Donovan. It is a story that poses a moral dilemma to a boy who is being asked by his parents to give up his ‘best pal’, his cat Tigger, because of his younger brother’s severe allergies. This story led to discussions about pets and making difficult choices, as well as about parenting.

5.3.8 Oor Wullie and The Broons

The last texts were various episodes from two Scottish comics, Oor Wullie and The Broons, published around the 1950s. They were chosen because it was felt that they provided a space for asking questions about Scots language and culture, in the past as well as in the present. Despite the very marked cultural setting, the visual and sequential features as well as the humour made the texts easier to understand. Some of the topics raised by the texts were food, schooling (including punishments) and reading choices (the reading of comic books themselves).
5.4 The sessions

Whole class sessions and group discussions were the main sites for observation and for gathering data. We tried to use the same texts in all three schools but this was not always feasible given tight school schedules. However, we did use each text at least twice.

The whole class sessions were held in the P6/P7 classrooms with the teacher usually present. Pupils were seated in rows in the large rooms. These were decorated with pupil’s work and with teaching posters for maths, geography, English and French. The classrooms had a small library with mainly fiction books on display. The Catholic nature of STM was present through prayers and a statue of the Virgin. The sessions with the smaller group were held in different rooms, according to what space was available. This provided these sessions with a special atmosphere, which became more relaxed as the pupils got used to the researchers and felt they could answer our questions.

The texts used with the whole class were taken from the anthology *My Mum’s a Punk* as there were enough individual books for the pupils to follow the reading. The Scottish researcher gave a brief introduction to the text, then read the text aloud to the whole class, stopping only to explain difficult words or concepts. Pupils either followed in their books or listened to the reading. After the reading, the researcher asked questions related to the text to the whole class. Although Scottish children tended to dominate the discussion, some of the ethnic minority children who participated in our project also intervened in the discussion, particularly those with a higher level of English, such as Hashid, Datse, Neylan and Abdul. Clearly they were following the discussion and felt confident enough to voice their opinions.

On three occasions the class did further work on the text by drawing in response to two of the stories: *Wee Grantie* and *Tigger*. For the first story they were asked to draw a picture and write a short description of the main character, ‘as if he had just moved school and walked into their classroom’. For the second, they were to draw a picture of their parents’ or carers’ reaction if they were asked about getting a new pet. Pupils were encouraged to add speech bubbles to their drawings.

The group sessions usually followed the whole class sessions and began with a brief discussion or comments on the text read in class. A new text was distributed and read by the Scottish researcher who also clarified unfamiliar vocabulary and then the other researcher led the discussion. Additional questions about literacy, such as favourite books, home languages and reading and writing were included in these group sessions. For one session, the male researcher took the boys and the female researcher took the girls. This was because it was felt that the children might feel more comfortable talking to a researcher of the same sex and it also allowed the researchers to get to know the individual pupils better.  

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11 Both researchers were impressed by the open and trusting nature of the children, and by their willingness to talk about the vulnerability of their current lives in a stoical manner. Many sensitive issues were raised naturally in the small groups that do not arise in normal classroom contexts, such as personal accounts of racism or intercultural conflict, and it was difficult to know how to deal with these apart from through empathetic listening.
The following table shows the texts which were used in different sessions in each school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>Janet Reachfar</th>
<th>Hauntit Park</th>
<th>Mean Team</th>
<th>Blether-toun Rovers</th>
<th>My Mum’s Punk</th>
<th>Wee Grannie</th>
<th>Tigger &amp; Broons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highmont (HP)</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir James Kelvin (SJK)</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Whole Class</td>
<td>Whole Class</td>
<td>Whole Class</td>
<td>Whole Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Margaret (STM)</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Whole Class</td>
<td>Whole Class</td>
<td>Whole Class</td>
<td>Whole Class</td>
<td>Group and Class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The semi-structured interview schedules for the small group sessions were based on questions that related to the text but also to personal experience. Open-ended questions were formulated using question structures from previous research on reader response such as Arizpe and Styles (2003).

**5.5 The teacher interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were also held with the bilingual support teachers from one of the schools. Two teachers were interviewed in SJK: one worked in the bilingual base, the other had worked there previously and was now Principal Teacher of English. These interviews were very helpful as they served to raise issues about bilingual pupils, to confirm the researchers’ observations and therefore to triangulate the data. Unfortunately we were unable to interview any of the teachers in STM or HP.

**5.6 Strategies for engaging with text and culture**

The groups were told that we were carrying out research about Scottish books for children, and looking for ‘Scottish clues’ that make these particular books Scottish, and we asked them to help us ‘be detectives’ in this search (a similar strategy was successfully carried out in Canada by Pantaleo 2000). We used a variety of creative approaches to help the ethnic minority pupils to begin to think about their understanding of their new culture:

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12 One of the girls in the study referred to this method: ‘Like you said, “look for clues about Scotland” and we were being detectives, [Janet Reachfar…] tells you about the places in the Highlands of Scotland and it tells you why her second name was Reachfar’. (Precious)
1. A card game with a series of cards with words written on them such as ‘places’, ‘food’, ‘weather’, ‘parents’, ‘games’, to which pupils were to respond instantaneously with a Scottish impression.
2. A ‘contrast’ list of things they liked and disliked about living in Scotland in order to create a ‘poster’ which would encourage others to come to Scotland (tourists as well as immigrants).
3. A ‘detective’ notebook for them to write down any Scottish ‘clues’, i.e. thoughts, words, comments related to Scotland and being Scottish that they observed in the school or neighbourhood.
4. Discussion about visual images and pictures and the Scottish ‘clues’ within them.
5. Drawing and writing in response to the two stories (as mentioned above).
6. Filling in a speech bubble in an ‘Oor Wullie’ cartoon sequence.

All of these strategies proved successful and could be applied to other texts. They helped the pupils think of their experience in their new culture as well as inviting them to interact with the text through images and language. They also served as a starting point for discussing various issues linked to Scottishness, to literacy at home and at school and to personal experiences.

5.7 Data analysis and framework

The data from observations and memos, interview transcriptions, drawings and other documents were recorded and then analysed using qualitative methods based on a descriptive framework and codes that arose from the data itself. The framework can be seen overleaf.

This framework contains most of the categories that were indicated by the data and allowed the researchers to form a better picture of the interaction between literacy practices at home and at school and their relationship to pupils’ experiences and their sense of identity.

As the data was coded, links began to emerge not only between pupils in the different schools participating in the project but also to the teachers’ perspectives. The data also revealed similar patterns and findings to those found in previous research on literacy and ethnic minority pupils mentioned in the literature review section of this report. These links provided the data analysis with a solid base and a coherence which resulted in the findings that will be discussed in the next section.
LITERACY PRACTICES

ENGLISH SCOTS

Listening
Talking
Reading
Writing

OTHERS

LANGUAGES

Cultural Texts
pedagogic
religious
children's literature

Lessons
'out-of-school'

LANGUAGE

Making sense of text
themes
symbols
humour
irony
narrative
genre
setting
language (Scots)

idea of story
moral
illustrations
fantasy/reality
setting
characters
audience awareness
critical judgements

Making sense of identity
empathy
PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

SCHOOL

library

School Texts
pedagogic
children's literature
Scottish texts

home

family
community
gender
relationship to country
of origin
'interpreter' role

city: Glasgow
neighbourhood

playground

lessons

language
religion

HOME

peers
teachers
gender
relationship to new country:
Scotland
'ambassador' role

street language
street culture
media, ICT

unofficial lessons

Official lessons
6. Findings

There was a great deal of data arising from the research which we have attempted to cluster within the main aspects of our framework: personal experience and literacy practices at home and at school. We then consider some issues of Scots language teaching which emerged in the reactions of both immigrant and native Scottish pupils to the texts that we had chosen. Scottish stories, themes and images are then examined, particularly as these intersect with the ethnic minority children’s own ‘stories of origin’. Finally, we consider the role of the school in creating and also sustaining a positive educational experience for these children in their new country. Except when we make explicit reference to Scottish pupils within the project, who were involved in the whole-class sessions, the findings below refer mainly to the ethnic minority children in our study (listed in the Methodology section).

6.1 Personal Experience

The way in which children from any culture make sense of text is rooted in their personal experiences which, during the primary stage of their life, broadly occur within the two main spaces of their life: home and school. These are usually located within local communities which, in the case of this research, are part of the city of Glasgow. While Scottish children in general probably would not find that the concepts of ‘country’ or ‘nation’ have much impact on their daily lives, they are made aware of them through particular cultural events, the mass media and education. These concepts are more present in the case of immigrant children, however, through the contrast between their ‘old’ and ‘new’ countries, particularly through the new language and customs they and their families must learn. The national culture provides the contextual background for their personal experiences both at home and at school, and during the research we tried to find out what impact this background had actually had, through questions, activities and discussion about Scotland, Scottish people and Scots language.

6.1.1 Understanding the Experience of Home and School

To begin with, we tried to form some idea about the general home life and local community of the ethnic minority pupils in our study as well as about their experiences at school. Because these were not meant to be case studies, the same information was not methodically obtained for each pupil, nor were we interested in probing deeply into family structures. Our data, obtained from observation, the comments of teachers and the children’s own responses, was enough to provide a better understanding of what sort of roles immigrant children played, or were expected to play, in their family and community.

Most of the fourteen children we interviewed lived with their families within the catchment area served by the school. Several of them seemed to live only with their mothers. Precious sometimes lived with a Scottish carer when her mother was unwell. This carer had clearly had an influence on her views about her new country:
I had to stay with a carer and she was Scottish but she told me that not all Scottish are really bad, some are really kind.

None of them mentioned having grandparents in Scotland or elsewhere in the UK, although aunts, uncles and cousins living in the UK did come up in the conversations. Some of their parents worked, though not in the same jobs they had had in their countries of origin. Rasha’s father, for example, had been a bookseller in Iran and now worked in a corner shop. Several parents, particularly mothers, struggled with English. The children often acted as interpreters in the community or whenever their parents came to talk with school staff. Most of their families included siblings, particularly younger ones.

The eldest children were expected to help younger ones with homework and in the case of some of the girls, the housework:

My Mum like sometimes she goes to bed, she comes from work she’s tired and we have to clean and my Mum says to my brother he has to help not only me to do all the work, but she goes to sleep and my brother will just sit there and watch TV like this and I have to do everything, I don’t like to do housecleaning! Datse

With the exception of Hashid, who was born in Scotland, most families had arrived in the UK between one and eight years ago. This meant that some of the children had been only a few years old at the time, had not yet been to school and perhaps did not remember much about their country or why they left. We did not ask about their family’s reasons for leaving and none of them volunteered this information; however, none of the children in the study showed signs of not wanting to talk about their countries. If their experiences there had been negative, there was no reference to this except perhaps in one rather unclear (and possibly imaginary) anecdote told by Precious to do with running from one house to another in Rwanda because of being chased by some sort of monsters or wolves.

Some ethnic minority communities are more established in Glasgow than others, such as the Pakistani, Somali or Turkish communities. Other pupils’ families seemed to find a community through shared religion (Pentecostal Gabriel, in the case of Datse and Precious) as there were fewer families from their countries. As we shall see below, many families kept in touch with their families in their country of origin or in other countries by phone, letters, email and MSN.

Although none of the children mentioned this fact, most of their families were waiting for permission to stay in the UK. Their futures were uncertain, not only because they might forcefully be deported without warning (as were the cases of a few families, reported in the news during the time of our study) but because if they did receive their

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13 For this and all the other quotes from the pupils, we have tried to make the meaning clear by editing and correcting small details of spelling and syntax but at the same time maintaining a flavour of the language and structure of the original response.

14 It is interesting to note that in Glasgow there is also a Spanish-speaking community which is linked together through language rather than through specific countries; members are from Spain and from different Latin American countries.
papers, their families might decide to move to England where there were other family members or larger minority ethnic communities. Although we did not gather any evidence for this, this uncertainty must have had an impact on the pupils’ lives; however, being children, they fortunately also seemed to have the ability to absorb themselves in the present, particularly in their school activities.

All the pupils seemed to show understanding and sympathy for the others in the group, especially when referring to personal experience of difficulties in language learning, fear, violence and/or racism, or difficulties with parents. However, it was mainly the girls who were more likely to mention feelings and emotions as well as to talk about their home situation. This was made evident when the pupils were interviewed in separate gender groups. The fact that in these interviews the researcher was of the same gender as the pupils probably also contributed to this.

### 6.1.2 A new country: perceptions of Scotland and the UK

One of the aims of our research was to discover how our cohort of ethnic minority pupils perceived their new country, Scotland, and what they had learnt about its culture and language in the time they had lived here. This included knowledge of Scots and English as well as accents and other languages. It also included knowledge about geography, flora, fauna, food, customs, festivals and sports, among other things. Some of their views came as direct responses to our questions about these aspects, others were revealed through their responses to the texts we read and discussed.

**Perceptions and knowledge of Scots language** will be discussed below in more detail, but it was clear that the pupils were aware, if not of Scots as a distinct language, of the differences between words used by their Scottish peers in the playground and words used by the teachers in the classrooms. They were also aware of the differences in accents, not only in these two spaces but also in different cities like London, or countries like the United States. When Neylan wrote a list of ‘Scottish’ words, she prefaced it by writing ‘You need Scottish accent to talk like that’. They were also aware of the multitude of different languages spoken by other ethnic minority pupils in school.

**Knowledge of Scottish geography and culture** came as a result of their trips around the country, mainly to Edinburgh, to Loch Lomond, to Skye and to see some historical landmarks such as the Wallace Monument. However, knowledge about culture seemed very much based on stereotypes, probably garnered from the popular media and from school (Highmont, for example, had had a ‘Scottish Concert’ where pupils dressed in Highland costume, sang popular Scottish songs and dramatized an episode of *Oor Wullie*). Below are some of their immediate answers to our prompts about what these various aspects of Scotland were like. Although most of them are fairly stereotypical, some are also rather surprising:

- **buildings and houses**: Edinburgh castle, high flats, old buildings, old folks home, ‘all stuck together’, many have chimneys
- **scenery or countryside**: Highlands, Skye, animals, beach, sea
- **customs or festivals**: Easter, Burn’s Night, Carnival, Christmas, New Year, Good Friday, Irn Bru Festival, Hogmanay
• **food**: fish and chips, tatties, hot dog, potatoes, black pudding, cabbage, haggis, sweets, crisps, curry (Datse pointed out that there is food from many other countries as well, like Italian spaghetti)
• **manners and habits**: swearing, helping people, such as a blind man to cross the road, murders, drinking, pubs, stay out late, parties, dressing up like punks
• **weather**: always horrible, windy, stormy, always raining, gales, 'mixed up', 'you never know what kind of day it's going to be'
• **clothes**: kilt
• **games**: football

**Perceptions of Scottish people** were quite clearly divided according to their age. ‘Older’ people were regarded as very kind and helpful:

> Mostly the Scottish people when they talk they always swear [and] tell bad words. But I am not trying to say all of the peoples are like that. There are some families and old people that is very helpful [and] kind. (Neylan)

Younger people, however, came across as threatening and aggressive, from the way they dressed and the way they acted. Teenagers were variously described as having ‘weird clothes, hoodies, black, rings on your lip, chains, long trouser bottoms, loose T-shirts’.

They were also described as smoking, swearing, spitting and spray painting. They were associated with the general violence which was very evident in the not so good things about living in Scotland: ‘swearing, shouting, drunkenness, fights, killings, murders, abuse’. Much of this was probably a result of media reporting which tends to dwell on the negative stories. Some of the violence was felt to be directed at the immigrants: ‘when you are in bus they [are] smoking and shouting they [are?] kicking you’ (Rasha) and ‘some of the people are bad because we are from a different country’ (Umay). Gabriel recounted an experience in which he had walked past a group of men drinking beer and when he glanced at them they tried to pick a fight by saying ‘Who are you looking at, wee man?’

However, Neylan made the following important point, distinguishing between a national stereotype and family customs:

> See the way people act it depends on the family because you know, most of the Scottish people use bad words when they talk [and] if they have a child they do that [but] some people like James’ family they are very polite, very kind and all that, they never use bad words at all, but it depends on the family.

It is worth mentioning that Scottish pupils also considered the ‘punk’ mum from the poem (and the image on the front cover) as someone ‘different’; not aggressive or threatening, but ‘weird’ from their point of view: ‘they dress in black, they like rock and roll’, ‘they tend to be different from other people, they hang out in groups’, ‘they wear black lipstick’. However, one of the Scottish girls pointed out that there was

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15 Examples of some of the pupils’ lists referred to here can be seen in Appendix 8.5.

16 They may have been thinking of ‘Goths’ rather than ‘punx’ in this case.
'nothing wrong with the Mum inside, she’s only different on the outside’. They were more concerned with the embarrassment her son might feel than with judging her on her appearance.

**Media influences** from current stories covering some of those issues also seemed to be at the back of the children’s minds. One *not so good* thing about living in Scotland mentioned by several was litter, a topic often mentioned in the news and probably at school as well. One of the Scottish girls who drew a ‘Scottish monster’ gave it ‘a rubbish tail’ [i.e. a tail made of cans, bottles etc]. Underneath, she wrote:

> I made my monster by thinking of all the things that represent Scotland and what it’s famous for, [he] has a Loch Ness head and neck, Porridge body, Thistle legs and a Rubbish tail.

The story of Scotland’s addiction to ‘fat food’ and the healthy eating campaign which were headlines during the period of the research may have led to several comments on how Scots eat ‘lots, lots of fat things’. Precious was concerned that one of the football players in the Blethertoun Braes illustration was eating ‘too much fat food’. Gabriel remarked that Scottish people don’t look at the labels, ‘they just look at the pictures [and say] “Mmm that looks nice” and just take it’ whereas his mother ‘could take like 5 hours inside a shop just taking vegetables’. It was also noted that Scottish children ate a lot of sweets and chocolate and these were often given to them by their parents.

**Child-parent relationships** and stories concerning these are a frequent media focus and opinions about how parents treat children revealed the contradictions that our group of pupils had observed. On one hand, Scottish parents were perceived as being ‘kind’, ‘spoiling their children rotten’ by giving them ‘everything they want’, including expensive play stations. However, they also thought parents let them get away with bad behaviour. Umay said:

> See in my country if children don’t listen, Turkish people they put them into trouble but I think here, Scottish people, they don’t really shout at their children or put them into trouble.

However, Neylan again argued that it had to do with the family and not the country:

> I think in Scotland and in other countries it doesn’t really depend on the country it depends on the person and the people who have been born in there, like if my mum taught me how to do, and her mum taught her how to do and her mum taught her it goes like that [...] it depends on your family actually, not the country.

On the other hand, Scots were seen to not pay them enough attention to their children and even slap them and treat them ‘badly’:

Precious: *Sometimes [...] they kick them, like I watched that this wee baby got kicked out of the house*

Others: *Oh!*

Precious: *because their parents were smoking and fights*
Datse: *Oh that’s bad to have parents like that is very bad, you feel sorry…*

The discussion about ‘Tigger’ also led to comments about discipline and the relationship between parents and children. Rafiq thought that the way Joe talks to his parents (and maybe also to the readers) about his feelings was very ‘Scottish’:

*like he lets out what he wants to say, he doesn’t keep it inside bottled up.*

He then seemed to suggest that in some other cultures (he didn’t specify which), children tend to agree with their parents because, unlike in Scotland, parents are allowed to hit their children. Although Neylan and Umay thought it was good that Turkish parents were stricter and that they ‘take loads of care over their children’, Umay complained that her parents didn’t allow her to go out because she was a girl, while her brother was allowed out even at night. Both girls agreed that Scottish girls had more freedom.

**Sport and sectarianism** arose when football provided the setting for one of the texts we read. This led to some discussion about the sectarianism that usually accompanies the sport in the case of ‘The Old Firm’, Rangers versus Celtic. In the separate interviews, two boys were asked what this meant to them:

Hashid: *Like they try to brainwash you, especially when it’s football, they are always like fighting [?] if somebody’s got a football top on like a Ranger’s man a Celtic guy sees him he beats the hell out of him.*

Usman: *I like Celtic, I don’t like Rangers but I don’t say anything I just keep it in my thoughts.*

In their class, one boy’s family were members of the Orange Lodge, but the teacher noted that he was quite happy to be friends with a boy who wore a Celtic top. She said that staff had recently done quite a lot of work on sectarianism in the school and that the children were well aware of the issues, including the ethnic minority pupils:

*I think [to them] it’s just another danger and sadly straight away they know about the Celtic-Rangers thing in the city, they learn that very quickly.*

**Good things about living in Scotland** listed by the ethnic minority children were associated either with things to see and do or to consume: hills and mountains, wildlife, parks, swimming pools, museums, funfairs, cinemas, riding bikes in the street, and shops. They thought it was good that there was ‘free medicine for kids’ and that ‘the city council is very good, they fix things that are broken’. In terms of welcoming immigrants, Precious said the council had been very helpful:

*they put me in a flat and every Saturday I got a carer and me and my brother went out for the whole day to parks and shopping malls.*

One of the Scottish pupils mentioned that one of the good things about Scotland was that ‘they let people in from different countries’. He may well have been thinking of the recent Oxfam video made in their school and this comment reveals how important it is for schools to emphasize the message that Scotland is a welcoming country.
Comparisons with their country of origin emerged in several ways. Several characteristics of Scotland and of the Scots were mentioned because they did not exist or were difficult to do in their home countries. Some of these reveal the immigrant children as keen observers of their surroundings, such as Rafiq’s comment that Oor Wullie was being very Scottish in that he wanted to feed the animals ‘because here a lot of people do that’. The pupils made some comparisons with their countries of origin, and given that not all of them had been back, some were probably based on information they had heard from their relatives. In general, their view of their home country was positive and they took on what we have described as an ‘ambassador role’ with pride, even when talking about the weather,

- Precious: There is no rain or wind in my country.
- Datse: It’s all upside down weather here, when winter it’s so hot, there is no snow like in Latvia.
- Hashid: In my country, Pakistan, [it’s] always hot there, its not rainy.
- Rasha: In my country every single day when I wake up it’s so hot!

or about customs and architecture:

- Usman: In my country, people keep tigers and lions as pets […]
- Hashid: Because, you see, in our country you get massive big houses [with courtyards].

They also made comparisons between schooling in Scotland and in their heritage country which will be described below in section 6.7. When speaking of Scottish people and customs, most pupils referred to a collective ‘they’ and it was clear the pupils did not see themselves as part of this group. Their comments revealed a distance from ‘being Scottish’, such as the boys not identifying themselves as supporters of either Rangers or Celtic football teams or from wanting to dress or act as Scottish teenagers. This will be discussed further, in section 6.6 on identity.

Popular culture provides most of the images and information immigrants receive about Scotland. More research on the different expressions of popular culture would be needed in order to see how they shape perceptions and influence decisions to stay and integrate or to try to keep a distance and/or leave.

6.2 Home Literacy Practices

The area of home literacy practices provided an important context for our investigation, although it was not possible to explore this context in any great depth, partly because of time and partly because we relied upon the pupils themselves to describe the situation at home. While the ethnic minority pupils tried to tell us what they and their families read at home, what languages they used and when etc., their description was often hampered by language difficulties. In order to form an accurate picture of what is happening there, it would be necessary to extend our research into the home and to document in detail the textual and visual material as well as the literacy events there, as some researchers such as Gregory and Williams (2000), Kenner (2000) and Pahl (2004, 2005) have already done in England. However, we
were still able to obtain some information about the sorts of textual and visual materials each family interacted with, and thus allow ourselves to better understand how the children in our sample viewed and made sense of text.

### 6.2.1 Home languages

All of the children spoke with pride about the languages they were fluent in or could understand apart from English. This was perhaps due to the fact that now schools and teachers are more positive about bilingualism and pupils are told that they are ‘clever’ to have more than one language. Datse even spoke of the economic benefits of being bilingual:

*Actually it’s best when you learn different kinds of language [...] you can work as an interpreter [...] and they do pay you loads!*

At the same time, they were also keen to show their increasing command of English, even though at times they struggled to express themselves.

In class they enjoyed showing letters, the alphabet and examples of writing in their language to teachers and to their peers. They were able to make comparisons between languages, talking about their particularities and difficulties. Usman, for example, commented on the difficulty of reading Urdu because you start reading on the other side and ‘it’s very hard to see what it says because it’s all joined up’. He described an occasion in which some of his friends were reading a translation into Urdu of *The Enormous Turnip*, and they had started the wrong way round. Rasha commented that you had to be careful writing in Arabic, making sure all the dots were in place or it wouldn’t make sense. Umay said that Turkish was easy because ‘if you know the alphabet you’ll learn to read very quickly [as] there’s only a few letters that’s different that you don’t have in English.’

They were keen to talk about their family’s language(s) and how they interacted with family members over these languages. Some of the pupils in the sample spoke more than one foreign language at home. One of the most impressive cases was that of Datse, whose Latvian Romany family had picked up the languages of the various countries they had lived in. According to Datse, the family spoke different languages on different days: Latvian, French, Dutch and Russian. However, she added (not surprisingly!) that this was very hard and sometimes they got them all mixed up. Gabriel told us that his mother, a Francophone from Congo, stressed he had to learn English at school but had to speak French at home. Like Datse and Gabriel’s parents, Rasha’s mother seems to be anxious for her children to maintain their heritage language, by making them speak it at home and teaching them themselves:

Rasha: [...] *in house we have to speak in Farsi because my Mum wants to.*  
Researcher: *You have to speak it so you don’t forget it, and you read books in Farsi...*  
Rasha: *Yeah. Sometimes my Mum she reads me some homework of my country, my language, so I have to write it.*  
Researcher: *Does she have textbooks in Farsi?*  
Rasha: *Yeah.*
Hashid’s father gave his sons words to copy out in order to improve their handwriting and Usman’s father ‘always made him work’ doing writing to get his spelling right, but it was not clear whether this was in Urdu or English. According to the teachers in SJK, parents usually struggled to teach their children to read and write in their heritage language and were not always successful. As we shall see below, this also evidently has to do with parental levels of education.

**Their role as teachers and interpreters of English** for their families was something that the children also spoke about. Teachers in SJK confirmed that many children had to take time off to accompany their parents to doctors or meetings with government officials in order to act as interpreters. Datsie was aware of her mother’s needs in terms of both writing and speaking in English for her work in a coffee shop, probably taking orders and interacting with customers:

> ... sometimes we have English lessons and I teach my Mum sometimes how to spell things cause she has a job and not, you know, not just cleaning things, [but] where she has to talk. She works in a coffee shop and she has to talk so that is more harder.

Precious was ‘forgetting’ the language her mother speaks and as her mother, a Francophone Rwandan, didn’t speak English fluently, communication was difficult:

> My mother doesn’t understand English properly so if I say something like I told her ‘Where are you going?’ she says ‘What, what what did you say?’ So I have to explain. Anyway I’ve forgotten my language so I have to tell her [slowly, word by word] ‘where/are/you/going?’ [and what] it means. She speaks in my country [sic], when I speak to her she speaks back, she doesn’t speak back in English, she speaks back in my country, I always go, ‘What are you saying?’ My brother a little bit understands her, he says, ‘She says this and that.’

Precious’s mother was keen to promote French through getting satellite television channels and by having visiting friends speak to Precious in this language.

Like Precious’s mother, Gabriel’s mother spoke little English on arrival and her son acted as interpreter. At school he has also acted as an interpreter for other younger Francophone immigrants, and mentioned this in his Powerpoint presentation about his experience at STM as one of the things he enjoyed most: ‘I was picked to watch the new primary ones because I could speak French’ (pairing same-language pupils so they can help each other was common practice in the schools). The interpreter role can also work the other way around, as the children become teachers of their native language to younger family members, as Rasha said:

Rasha: My cousin he don’t know what the word [is in] Farsi even [though] he know[s] so much English; when I’m telling a story about my country he don’t know what it means, he just says, ‘What it means that?!’ And I have to learn him it means that.

Researcher: So when you tell him the story in Farsi you have to explain some of the words?

Rasha: Yeah.
Most parents, however, seemed to be making an effort to learn English. Neylan told us,

*I talk with my big brother in English and my Mum and Dad used to not understand when we’re talking but not now cos my mum and dad’s goes to College proper to learn English*.

Umay’s mother was also attending English lessons in her Church.

**Modern European languages** begin to be taught generally in Primary 6 and Primary 7, so in addition to their home languages and English some of the pupils were beginning to learn French. Umay complained that she found this hard because it was her fourth language, ‘It’s hard because […] I can’t talk my language that good as well’. As her comment shows, not only was she finding this frustrating, but sometimes ethnic minority children end up without knowing any language properly. French was in a sense also ‘imposed’ on Abdul (‘you see, France had a war with my country…’) and he admitted that his family used a mixture of words in different languages in the home.

**Maintaining and developing heritage languages** can sometimes take place through out-of-school language lessons, although most pupils in the sample did not attend them, either because they did not exist or they were too far from home. One of the bilingual teachers had heard of French classes which were always full and on the other side of the city, and also of an attempt to set up an Albanian weekend school. It was the Muslim boys in our sample who attended the ‘madrasah’ where their studies of Arabic and Urdu were closely linked to religion. Maisha, the only Muslim girl, attended classes in her native Somali every day for two hours in the evening with other children. She also communicated in Somali with relatives through MSN. Neylan wished she could go to a Turkish school but unlike London where her cousin went to one, she said there weren’t any in Glasgow.

With the exception of the Muslim pupils, most children seemed to pick up or maintain their home language through their parents, electronic communications with family in other countries and various media rather than through organized community lessons.

### 6.2.2 Home texts

One of the questions we asked was what texts they read at home and in what language. Most of the answers were rather vague and in general there were not many books or texts they could name. Most of them seemed to prefer watching television or playing on the computer. However, throughout the sessions, some information emerged about their reading preferences and habits as well as about what sorts of reading material could also be found in the home. The list below reveals a variety of texts (fiction, non-fiction, religious and popular), mostly in English, which are not dissimilar to what other children their age would be reading (see for example Hall and Coles’ report on reading habits, 1999):

- Jamal: ‘*Lots of books*’ in English like the Famous Five. He read more books in English than in Urdu because he only lived for three years in Pakistan.
- Rafiq: Books and the jokes in Urdu newspapers.
- Tomaj: Harry Potter in Hungarian.
- Datse: Had a few books in Latvian but read mostly in English.
- Rasha: Had children’s books in Farsi and from her description, some of them seemed to be bilingual. Her favourite book was Cinderella but she also mentioned ‘Scooby Doo’ and ‘Caspar the Ghost’ which she could also watch on television.
- Hashid: Read the Holy Book at the mosque in Arabic. He liked pirate books and ‘Scottish books’ as well (though this last may have been an attempt to please the researchers) and comics like Spiderman.
- Usman: Liked mainly non-fiction books, about cars, ‘instructions’, guns and soldiers rather than stories. He also liked a book that taught how to draw cartoons, an activity he enjoyed. His mother read him and his brother books in Urdu from the library. When we asked if it made any difference to him whether the book was in English or Urdu. Usman replied, ‘I just take any book. I heard on tv you shouldn’t judge a book by its cover’!
- Umay: She remembered she had read Tom Sawyer ‘I liked it because it’s a boy about 11 or 12 who likes adventures and it’s nice’.
- Neylan: She couldn’t remember the title of her favourite book but she had made a book cover for it and won a prize; it was a funny story about aliens coming to earth. Although she said she didn’t like to read very much, she was interested in reading about ‘war things’ and she had asked her mother to buy her The Diary of Anne Frank (her mother said she would if Neylan promised to read it).
- Gabriel: He mentioned the most titles and clearly enjoyed books, especially ‘histories’ (he may have been using the French word histoires). He mentioned he had liked Oliver Twist, Robin Hood and ‘Mowgli’ (The Jungle Book). He read comics, usually several times, before throwing them away. His favourite magazine was Jackie Chan.
- Abdul: He liked comedy and history books as well as non-fiction like ‘world records’. His favourite book was Horrid Henry: ‘that was the best book ever’. He mentioned he sometimes got books ‘for free’ from a cousin who loves books and ‘buys like a lot of books that are like that thick and she couldn’t read them, so she gives me them’.
- Sirwa: Her favourite book was from the library but she liked it so much she bought it, was a non-fiction book about inventions ‘and you know everything in the world’.
- Maisha: Liked books that ‘gave you like education or information’ but couldn’t mention any specific title.

Humour, adventure and non-fiction were some of the main reasons they liked books. History was also a popular genre. Most of the girls did not read comics, either in their language or in English, although both Umay and Neylan mentioned a Turkish graphic novel which they had both enjoyed although it was rather sad (rather than ‘funny’ like a comic) because it was about a girl nobody liked. The boys read The Simpsons and Gabriel and Abdul were familiar with the Asterix and Tintin books.

Most of the books they did not own were either borrowed from friends or from the library. All pupils seemed to enjoy visiting the library, although Hashid commented
that most Saturdays he just watches television and ‘can’t be bothered to go’. Gabriel went to the library whenever he went swimming: ‘First I go to the library to read because when you read your brain’s working and so after when I finished I just go to the swimming pool to relax’. One of their main objectives in going, however, seemed to be to use the computers.

A few did mention they had bought books in bookshops, but these seemed rather exceptional occasions. Neylan, for example won £5 in a competition to design her favourite book cover; she spent it on ‘a French dictionary’ and ‘a wee cat book’ for her brother. Maisha remembered that once her mother had bought her a book in Tesco. As for bookshops in their heritage countries, Umay mentioned a shop in Turkey that sold books and stationery and Rasha eagerly described the bookshop her father used to own in Iran:

Rasha:  My Dad used to have a shop with MANY books so I don’t [have to] pay money for it [...] it was bookshop so everyday I used to go there/
Datse:  I wish I could get there and get everything!
Researcher:  What kind of books?
Rasha:  Like drama, excited, so nice, books and dvds and pencils and sharpeners.
Researcher:  And did lots of people come to buy books?
Rasha:  Yeah but my Dad when I’m going to his shop I’m just telling him, ‘Dad I want this book, bye!’

When we asked what sort of books they chose at the library, both Rasha and Precious said they liked ‘exciting’ books. Rasha also mentioned ‘scary’ ones and Precious summed it up very nicely:

Precious:  I don’t know, some exciting books, funny books, drama and I like books with pictures and a lot of words and good adjectives and verbs and a great story.
Researcher:  Do you mind if it’s fiction or non fiction?
Precious:  Not at all.

However, Datse clearly preferred non-fiction and remarked on several occasions that she only liked ‘true’ stories:

Datse:  I would better like the stories are true cause I like to read stories like about the earth and universe, about the human body, and science, technology, all this stuff I like, I don’t like the stories like just made up like with the cartoon stuff.
Researcher:  Why? Most children like fantasy, like Harry Potter...
Datse:  Yeah, but it’s just story, it’s not really true.

The teacher said Datse carried an encyclopaedia around with her and read from it whenever she had the opportunity. Perhaps her insistence on reading ‘true’ stories (which came up several times during the sessions) was based not only on increasing her knowledge but also in finding some ‘answers’ in the uncertainties of immigrant situation:
Datse: *My favourite story – I’ve got the book – it’s called Question and Answers and there is the universe, the air, technology, science and the human body all of that in one and it has questions and answers.*

**Parental literacy** could sometimes be glimpsed through the children’s responses about books and other reading material at home. Most parents were too busy with housekeeping or work to read or do homework with the children and some lacked the language skills in English to do so. Datse said that when her mother finally has time to read, she’ll read the Bible in Latvian and Usman commented that although his Mum was *‘always cooking and working in the house, try and keep it clean’*, in her spare time she read the Qur’an.

However, even some busy parents were able to do some reading or enjoy language games in their spare time. Hashid’s comment gives an idea of the multimodal literacy events going on in his home:

Researcher: *What do other people in the house read?*

Hashid: *My brother practises his [reading book], my wee small brother watches dvds, my Mum brings magazines and she reads them whenever she’s got spare time […] I don’t think [my Dad] likes reading, but he loves doing wordsearches, whenever I’ve got wordsearches or my Mum in a magazine she’s got a wordsearch […] I’ll say, ‘Dad I can’t do this can you do it?’ and he loves it […]*

Another finding, which will be discussed further in 6.2.3 below, was that there seemed to be a regular exchange of books and other reading material, as well as photographs and videos, between families and friends in different countries.

### 6.2.3 Literacy practices

**Literacy events in the heritage language** at home, mainly included story-telling, reading texts, both religious and secular, writing letters to relatives and/or ‘chatting’ to them online (which also involved writing). The stories were both traditional stories from the parent’s or grandparent’s culture but also ‘family’ stories, about life and relatives ‘back home’. Following from the ‘stories’ told by George and Tom in Janet Reachfor, we asked the pupils if anyone told stories at home and what kind. Most of them described *‘scary’* stories, like those in this picture book. Sirwa’s grandfather told her stories in Kurdish from Iraq; Maisha’s big sister told her the stories in Somali of the scary films she watched at night; Hashid’s grandfather told him stories about his life in Pakistan and so on. When we asked about poetry in their home language, Hashid and Rasha said they knew some, or had known some. However, Datse (sadly) mentioned that her mother never had time to tell her any stories or poems and Precious said her mother never told her stories from Rwanda, so it is important to be aware that difficult circumstances may also affect an activity which one easily assumes takes place in all families.

**The purposes of reading in the heritage language** were usually either religious or pedagogic, although a few pupils mentioned receiving and reading ‘comics’ in their first language. Biblical stories were read in Datse’s and Precious’s Sunday Schools. Hashid read the Qur’an at home: *‘I learn five six lines by heart. I read it for my Dad,*
Gran and Grandpa and have to read it properly and go over it.’ He also had a translation of the Qur’an in English, Urdu and French. The purposes of writing were mainly to communicate with relatives or friends. Rasha said she wrote a letter for a friend in Arabic and sometimes wrote (with her Mum’s help) and received letters in Farsi. However, several pupils commented they enjoyed writing stories during their leisure time. Datse bought stationery and jotters to write stories; Precious liked to write stories on the computer, then print and photocopy them and Usman mentioned that he loved reading and writing stories. Neylan told us her Dad didn’t approve of her using the computer to play as ‘it’s no good for your brain’ and urged her instead to read a book, do her homework or write a story.

New media and technology in the homes of immigrant families, as Gregory and Kenner (2003) have observed, have made a difference in both maintaining their heritage languages and culture and also continuing communication with their country of origin (or with family who have emigrated to other countries). There seems to be a continuous traffic of books, photographs, videos, magazines and educational material between families and friends helped by better forms of transportation and by digital communication systems. Depending on the political and economic situation of families, cheaper travel has also made it possible for some families to travel back to their original country or to visit other family and during some of these extended visits children may attend school.

This use of modern technology to learn and keep up with heritage languages was something that was also mentioned by Datse:

You see I told you that some of my Dad’s sisters [...] they have Sky and you can see different countries’ programmes, that’s why always we go there and watch like Russian programmes and stuff.

As well as helping each other learn Turkish, Umay and Neylan, referred to the satellite Turkish channel which they watched for both pleasure and language learning, as Neylan said: ‘I don’t go [to lessons in Turkish]. I learned to write and read in the Turkish channel, so I don’t need to.’ Several of them watched DVDs or played computer games (some online) in their language. Umay added that she used MSN and video to chat to her friends in Turkey and her French-speaking cousins in Canada (in Turkish), while Abdul used MSN in English to communicate with cousins in Spain, but used Arabic to speak to them on the phone. Hashid and Rafiq ‘chat’ to cousins in Pakistan and Sirwa’s mother used the computer and the video to communicate with her parents in Iraq. Their comments illustrate the importance of global communications in a time of global migration.

All pupils had access to computers either at home or through the library. They were used for playing, homework and writing and communicating with friends and relatives. For some families, these new technologies mean that there are more possibilities of maintaining the heritage language, of keeping up to date on news and political events. However, it is often difficult to get hold of those in other languages and the dominant language of these technologies and of the media in general is still English and it is even more important to learn English if one is to be able to master the technology and understand and enjoy films, music and computer games. As Rafiq said, when he played online computer games ‘where there are lots of people playing,
[you] do lots of stuff with people, talk to them, communicate […] all you do is just write in English’. There is still very little research in this area, into how these new forms of communication and technology affect immigrant family literacy.

6.2.4 English as a second language at home

The teachers at SJK commented that immigrant parents were usually anxious for their children to learn English even to the extent that some were prepared to neglect their own language and even cultural values:

W: […] The parents don’t seem to realize that they can learn to speak the two languages in tandem […] and we often say to them please keep speaking Turkish at home and they say no, no, English, English, English is important!
D: […] Children who decide they don’t want to speak their first language and do just speak English at home they are going to fall behind and they are not going to be fluent in either language.
 […]
W: They don’t understand how the language structure in another language structure works, they don’t, and we do try to say it to parents a lot but it’s difficult, culturally the educational ideals are just so different, a lot of them say ’No, they have to learn English’ and trying to explain to them they need to be solid in their own language first and then their English would be better, they just seem to think ’No, now we’re here, this is what we have to do’.

The impact on children’s learning of their parents’ English language competence was also discussed. Given that some parents had limited English, we asked the children what happened with English homework at home, if anyone helped them when they had difficulties. They immediately described different strategies for dealing with unknown words:

Datse: You look in a dictionary!
Precious: Also in an A-Z in eight different languages.
Hashid: You take it back to your teacher and then she can tell you, then you can tell your mum […]
Rasha: My mum […] she know a little bit English and when I don’t know something in English I say, ’Mum what does mean that?’ She tell me, ’I don’t know, I will see the dictionary’.
Researcher: Is she able to do that and then explain to you?
Rasha: Yeah.

As the case of Rasha’s mother – who was attending college – makes clear, parental levels of education have an impact on the amount of help children receive at home. Teachers at SJK explained that the Turkish parents in their school, for example, came from peasant backgrounds and had had very little formal education. Datse described her particular situation:

You see sometimes when I get like maths work I can do it but sometimes if I’m just stuck a wee bit my mum wants to help me but she can’t cause you see my mum never passed her own school when she was small cause she had a bad
Datse’s family’s cultural perceptions of education and gender were having an impact on her education. On one hand, the ambition to become a lawyer and her eagerness to learn may have been a result of her mother’s desire to have a different future for her daughter. Datse said she wanted to grow up in the UK because, like her mother, she thought it was a ‘nice’ place and ‘my Mum says that English and French are the most important languages cause nearly all the countries can speak some […] and English is the most important language to know.’ On the other hand, the teachers in her school mentioned that the Romany families ‘don’t seem to value education’ and have a high absence rate. They said Datse often missed school because when her younger brother did not want to come to school she had to stay and look after him. Interestingly, however, the teachers said her brother was often taken out of school to go with his Dad and ‘the men’ while Datse was ‘given the freedom to choose to go to school’. This brief glimpse into one particular case shows how gender, culture and education issues can be very complex and need to be looked at carefully in each ethnic minority family situation.

**Sibling assistance with language learning** was also an issue. Approximately half of the immigrant children in the study were the eldest children in the family and helped their younger siblings. The others, if they had older siblings, sometimes received help from them. This was not only due to their parent’s knowledge of English but because they were too busy doing housework or working to help. However, Precious pointed out that although her younger brother had forgotten his heritage language, his English was very good because he spoke it all the time. This was also the case with some of the other younger siblings who, having come to the UK at an earlier age, not only spoke English better than their older brothers and sisters but had stronger Scottish accents.

When they did help their younger siblings, their comments suggested that they used similar ‘scaffolding’ and syncretic practices to those used by siblings in the research by Gregory et al. (Gregory, Long and Volk, 2004):

Researcher: Do you help [your younger brothers] with their school work?
Hashid: Yeah, like when he’s got a division or something, like [when] he says, ‘What’s this?’ I don’t tell him the answer or anything. I give him a clue or a different sum […] like with apples or something […]
Researcher: So you help them with maths, do you help them with language at all?
Hashid: Yeah, like for example, making sentences, I give him a different sentence with the same word so he gets a kind of a clue from it.
Researcher: And then he can make up his own […] Do you want to be a teacher when you grow up?
Hashid: I’m going to be a Muslim teacher.

Hashid comments illustrate how, consciously or unconsciously, he was applying the school’s pedagogical methods at home, giving him clues and similar examples.
6.3 Making Sense of School Texts

The previous section on home literacies and language, including English language at home, provides a context for the ways in which ethnic minority children interpret texts. However, school literacies also have an impact on this process of interpretation, particularly on those pupils who have been in British education longest. In school they have encountered particular texts (mainly in reading schemes), approaches and attitudes to reading and, in the case of Scotland, language which is distinct from English and occasionally some literature which reflects Scottish culture.

6.3.1 Previous knowledge and experience

When immigrant pupils arrive in the three schools in our study, they are provided with language support teachers and easy texts. When pupils are considered to be able to join their assigned class, they are expected to deal with the same texts as their peers, although they may get some additional help as well. The texts the ethnic minority children in our sample encountered in the classroom were similar in all three schools: as well as the textbooks and workbooks, there were many posters and signs on the classroom walls with information about language (sometimes in French), geography, mathematics or prayers in the case of STM. There was also a small classroom library, with books displayed or kept on shelves. These books were mainly children’s literature: fiction, non-fiction and some poetry. There was little evidence of Scottish texts in the classroom, although there must have been some poems by Robert Burns which emerge shortly before Burns’ Night. The teachers at SJK and STM said the pupils had had very little contact with texts in Scots; the texts we brought for our project were, in most cases, the first time pupils had seen Scots written down.

Pupils were therefore using their understanding of texts and reading both from home and from school to approach the texts in the project. However, as shown in other research (Arizpe 1994), among the first responses to the texts were those based on previous personal experience. Empathy is one of the first ways in which children make contact with a text. They refer to similar situations, experiences and knowledge to begin to make sense of what is happening in the text. This occurred in the whole class sessions, particularly during the discussion of ‘Tigger’ when several children said they knew of some child who also had bad allergies or who had had to get rid of their pets for some reason. When talking about Janet Reachfar, several pupils talked about wells and other dangerous places similar to those in the story:

Neylan: Like when I went to the farm, my aunts and my gran she was in a farm and there was a well and she sometimes closed just in case somebody falls in it but she opened it when she needed water from it.
Umay: This once happened to me, I was in a picnic for my birthday, all of my family was there and there was a place to get water, but it was covered with stones [...]

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6.3.2 Intertextuality

Stories from their families and heritage countries were also frequently brought by pupils to the discussion. They were very keen to tell these stories, even if it meant struggling to find the right words in English. The discussion around Janet Reachfar and the Scottish monsters in general led to pupils telling ‘scary’ stories heard from members of their family. All the pupils had had experiences of stories used by their parents to illustrate a moral or, as in Janet Reachfar, to warn children about particular dangers or about the consequences of misbehaving.

Abdul: When I was in my country I had to sleep with my sisters […] and when my sisters’ friends all came over she says ‘Did you know that if you listen to our stories you’ll have ears like a donkey’ [laughter from the others] and you will be so ugly that nobody will marry you and then I would just go out of the room, but I still listened through the door.

Precious: A long time ago when I was five and my brother was little this girl […] told this because my brother likes sucking his thumb and she said Tomaj [cutthroat?] will come and cut your thumb off […]

The comment from Precious sounds similar to one of the stories in the German author Heinrich Hoffmann’s Shock-headed Peter. It may be an instance of her ‘fusing’ African and European stories, as she sometimes seemed to do. In general, it was clear the children enjoyed sharing their own stories and reacted to others’ stories with laughter and expressions of empathy.

Pupils’ previous experience of texts and narrative were often drawn upon in order to understand the texts. Neylan, for example, when looking at the picture of the farm, said it was probably about a big family because ‘there are always more than six people in the family’ in the books she had read about farms. We tried to find out more about what texts they were reminded of as they read but most of them found it hard to find any specific reference. Datse thought of Red Riding Hood when reading Janet Reachfar, probably because it is about a little girl who disobeys her mother and there is also a grandmother in the story. Based on the illustrations, Umay made the surprising but accurate comment that Janet reminded her of Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz because of her dress, her pigtails, ‘her wee dog and she lives on a farm as well’. The monsters in Janet Reachfar reminded some of the children of the legend of the Loch Ness Monster which they had heard of, seen in a film or a read about in a book.

Neylan also referred to a cartoon from the Turkish channel and a book in her class (whose title she couldn’t remember) about children who tell lies and are punished in some way. Talking about stories about children who misbehave, Rafiq and Jamal commented that they liked the Horrid Henry series and Rafiq described one of the stories in detail. Unlike Janet, however, Henry tends to get away with his mischief, at least to some extent, and never seems to learn his ‘lesson’. Precious did mention a book similar to Janet Reachfar which seemed to be one of the Katie Morag series, however, none of the other children were familiar with the Katie Morag books. Datse mentioned Hans Gabriel Andersen when we asked if anyone had read books by Scoular Anderson. Although it was not relevant to the interpretation of the story in this particular case, the pupil’s knowledge about books as objects was also revealed.
For example, as we looked at *Janet Reachfar*, Sirwa pointed out that this book could be bought in another country because it had a price in dollars on the back cover.

### 6.3.3 Setting and landscape

*All the texts used in the project were set in Scotland* (with the possible exception of the ‘neutral’ settings of *The Mean Team*, although even here the Earth team name is that of a Glasgow amateur league football team). But it was *Janet Reachfar*, in particular, which led to discussion of Scottish landscape because of its illustrations. Pupils in the small groups identified the landscape as Scottish because of the mountains, hills, cottages and the sheep dog, loch or sea. They referred to Loch Lomond and the hills around it where they had seen horses and sheep. They liked the landscape, with its ‘nice flowers’ and ‘high hills’, aware that it was in the countryside and they were clear that this could not have happened in the city because the monsters could only be found in the country. The ‘Blethertoun Rovers’ poem was part of an anthology of poems set in an imaginary Scottish town, however, the poem and the illustration did not refer to this setting so there were no comments about this aspect. Several of the pupils in the whole class drew pictures of the particular well-described scene in ‘Wee Grantie’ where he is swimming and the boys hide his clothes, but there were no ‘Scottish’ elements involved in these pictures apart from the language.

There were no comments about the setting in ‘Tigger’ but *Oor Wullie* and *The Broons* led to some discussion about the time in which the comics had first been written, ‘the olden days’ as one boy put it. Pupils pointed out that people wore old-fashioned clothes (and noted that children don’t pass on outgrown clothes to their cousins now), used certain words (‘no one says puggled’ or ‘chinwag’), played certain games and, in the case of the Broons family going haggis hunting, ‘men don’t wear kilts and you need a licence for guns’. Another boy said that, in those days, ‘they were poorer, didn’t have tv, they would sit and talk and be friends on the street’.

### 6.3.4 Characters, identity and empathy

*Pupils’ understanding and interpretation of characters* and their actions and roles were clearly brought out in discussion. Abdul described Janet’s mum as ‘always nice’ and Gabriel added that ‘she never shout too much at Janet, she always speak gently’ while ‘the gran always shout’. Abdul then pointed out that Janet went to the well ‘because she thought her Mum was going to be gentle’ whereas she wouldn’t have gone if her stricter Gran had told her not too. Precious also described Janet’s mum as gentle and Datse seemed to be thinking of her own experiences when she added, ‘mothers are always like that, sometimes you done something bad and they hit you but it’s not because they hate you forever, it’s not that…’

Gabriel also picked up on George and Tom’s teasing relationship with Janet: ‘*maybe Tom and George are just joking so they can scare her*’. He was also able to judge the role of the characters in the story as shown by his answer to our question about why the Dad and the Grandad in the story never say anything:

Gabriel: *I think the grandfather and the dad are not very important in the story because the grandfather is just married the grandmother [...] the*
grandma she’s more important because the grandmother shouts, she’s very strict with the kid and they don’t show really the dad because maybe, because in the story they said the dad was working too much.

Researcher: In the fields or something/

Gabriel: That’s why, because maybe the Dad work too much he don’t have time to speak in the story.

Usman also tried to express that these two characters ‘don’t really need a part’ because the story is more about the characters of the mother, the grandmother and Janet, thus showing an understanding of the roles of major and minor characters.

Abdul made the following accurate comment about the relationship between ‘Wee Grantie’ and his peers during the whole class discussion: ‘he talks rubbish all the time, they accept him as a pal even though they don’t always like him or let him come’. Neylan then articulated what motivated Grantie to act the way he did, ‘I think he was like that because his sister was ill, he acts like that so that some people might listen to him.’ Understanding motivations shows that they had picked up clues to each character and his or her particular personality and situation.

Pupils identified and empathized with characters to different extents. Clearly, they were more drawn to boys and girls of their own ages (Janet, Rory, Joe, Wee Grantie) than to the Blethertoun Rover players, for example. Rafiq mentioned that it would be ‘cool’ if he had the same time travel experience as Rory, the protagonist of The Mean Team and Jamal said that if it had happened to him, he would write a diary about the future and call it ‘The Diary of Jamal’. Usman thought it would be ‘quite weird’ playing with aliens. Hashid thought it would be fun, experiencing ‘the magic’ but Datse was, as usual, more realistic: ‘If I was Rory I would be a wee bit scared because how could you go inside a duvet, you will be scared the first time but not the second because you know what will happen.’

One of our reasons for using The Mean Team was the theme of ‘aliens’, of being in a ‘different’ place. However, apart from Usman’s comment, none of the children either noticed or chose to discuss this issue. Another reason was that we thought it might lead to comments about the Ranger/Celtic situation in Glasgow, football colours and loyalites, but again, the pupils themselves didn’t raise this issue until specifically asked.

During the discussion about the story ‘Tigger’, it was clear that both the indigenous Scots and the ethnic minority children empathised with the boy who had to get rid of his cat. Many of them had some experience with pets (some had had to leave them behind when they moved to Scotland) and came up with a range of alternatives for not getting rid of the cat. They agreed that it was a difficult choice, as pets ‘make you happy’. Tomaj remarked that the boy ‘really needs’ his pet and Precious perceptively added that ‘[pets] want someone to love them and you want someone to love you back’.
The role of the fictional parents in ‘Tigger’ reveals much about their relationship to their son, Joe. While discussing this role with the researchers, Tomaj and Rafiq speculated on why it was the mother who broke the bad news to Joe. Rafiq thought it was because Joe ‘would listen more to her’ as the dad was always away at work. Tomaj, however, suggested it was because recently the boy and the dad had begun to do more things together and ‘[dad] wants to make him happy, so he tells the mother to do it [because] if he says it then it’s going to break Joe’s heart’. This exchange also involved the boys talking about who made decisions in their own families. It shows how their home experiences are brought into their understanding of the character’s actions and also an awareness of the story characters relationships.17

The only human character in the texts that was not ‘white’ was Mr Mint (there were a few varicoloured aliens). When we asked where they thought he was from, there seemed to be a general vagueness or a reluctance to identify him as black:

Datse: Africa?
Precious: From a hot place.
Several: Yes.
Hashid: Maybe from Australia or somewhere or Canada because he’s got curly hair and his skin colour.
Usman: [in a whisper] Pakistan
EResearcher: His name could be from anywhere, couldn’t it?
Hashid: Mr Mint, like a bar of chocolate [general laughter].

The ‘Scots’ group who also read this book suggested he was from Jamaica, Mexico or Africa. When asked if he was Scottish, opinions were divided.

One character that did not seem to create the same sort of empathy as Rory, Joe or Wee Grantie (even if they did laugh at him, they could understand and sympathise with his situation) was Oor Wullie. This may have had to do with his being seen as a simply a ‘comic’ character, as the stereotype that he is meant to be, and also with the ‘old-fashioned’ setting. His ‘problems’ were to be laughed at, not really to be taken to heart. To the ethnic minority pupils he seemed to come across as even more remote. They did laugh but did not relate emotionally in any way. His character was the subject of one of the most insightful comments in the research on differences between child-rearing and education in the Scottish culture and the Muslim culture. This will be discussed in the last section of these findings.

6.3.5 Interpretation and negotiation

Pupils were able to make inferences from the texts, based on previous knowledge and experiences – both of text and of life – but also from their attention to the texts themselves. For example, although the author does tell us that Janet didn’t believe there was a kelpie in the well because the horse didn’t mind drinking the water that came from it, Gabriel went a bit further: ‘If there was a monster the horse will never

17 Examples of some of the pupils’ drawings relating to this aspect of Tigger can be seen in Appendix 8.7.1.
drink and will die’. Maisha had more trouble following the various texts, but when allowed to take her time, and probably aided by the others’ discussion and the questions, she was able to understand the narrative and the consequences of the character’s actions. For example, at the end of the interview she suddenly made her first comment on the text: ‘Her mother told her to not go there and she just looked [...?] anyway to see that face, so if she [hadn’t gone] there she wouldn’t have that dream.’

Their interpretation of particular events in some cases reflected knowledge of certain common narrative strategies, such as dreams as a device for explaining a fantastic occurrence. For example, when asked what happened to the stall that sold Rory the magic duvet and then disappeared in The Mean Team, Rafiq suggested: ‘maybe it was just a dream, the story might have been a dream’. His response also shows an ability to use tentative language to express a possible interpretation. In their research on response to visual texts, Arizpe and Styles (2003) found that children responding to visual texts began to use more and more tentative language (such as, ‘they might be’ or ‘perhaps’ as they undertook their explorations rather than expressing inflexible opinions (this also reflects findings specifically related to ethnic minority groups from Mines 2000). This opens the text not only for the reader but for the other participants in the group.

They also engaged with each other and often negotiated meanings with others in the group. As pupils struggled to make sense of the texts during the small group sessions, they also expressed their opinions and doubts. What follows is an example of the way in which the group interacted, exchanging ideas and opinions and referring to the text and others for evidence:

Hashid: I don’t think there really is a kelpie.
Usman: It’s her face.
Rasha: She’s scared.
Hashid: Yes, she’s scared of her own reflection.
Datse: But she went and saw him with her eyes, a ghost!
[they all go back to first picture of kelpie]
Datse: Oh yes, it’s her, maybe she’s never seen herself in the mirror.
Researcher: But a mirror is clear, you know it’s yourself, but this is a dark pool and the men had said there was a ghost.
Precious: Yes, if someone says something you think it’s going to happen.
Datse: Oh!
[Researcher continues reading to the end of the story]
[laughter]
Datse: Yeah.
Hashid: That’s a nice story.
Rasha: She no want to listen to her mum.
Datse: This is what happens if you don’t listen to your mum, you get bad things.
Precious: You get something bad coming to you.

The researcher’s input was minimal, to clarify what the text had said. It led the children to express their own conclusions by the end of the story, adding to what the others had said to arrive at a satisfying explanation and, in this case, a moral.
It is interesting to note that the children seemed to be looking for ‘morals’ when interpreting what the texts were about. For example, during the discussion about *The Mean Team*, we asked what they thought the author was trying to tell us. Rather than referring to the friendship with an ‘alien’, they referred to Rory’s bad habits of committing fouls ‘*don’t play so rough*’. However, Precious was also able to make a joke of it: ‘*never buy magic duvets*’.

### 6.3.6 Questioning the text

Pupils freely asked questions when they did not understand a word or when they found that something did not make sense, either in the text or the illustrations. This is significant not only because it means that they were not afraid to reveal they hadn’t understood but also because they did not hesitate to challenge the text if they felt there was something wrong with it. For example, Gabriel revealed a concern with what seems to be a small detail but is actually a detail which determines the reader’s believing or not that the kelpie was really Janet. He wondered why, if Janet’s skin was not white, it looked white in the reflection in the well. His comments also revealed an understanding of how to use English language for asking questions and speculating about answers, using terms such as ‘*I wonder why*’, ‘*I think I know why*’ and ‘*maybe*’.

The pupils also questioned the text when characters did not act according to their expectations. For example, speaking about the grandmother taking Janet back to the well, Abdul asks, reflects and then finds an answer to his doubts:

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Abdul: *I found this kind of strange because like her family tells her not to go there and like when she goes she saw her ugly face, but they told her not to go there and then they took her there.*
Researcher: *Why do you think they took her there again?*
Abdul: *I think they took her there again to prove her wrong.*
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Later, he puts these words into Janet’s mouth, thus showing an understanding of the way the character would speak and contributing to the dialogue: when Neylan wonders why she went back to the well on her own, Abdul answered, ‘*She went there to say “I proved you wrong, there you are!”*’.

Questions about the texts led to discussion and in many cases it was the other pupils in the group who helped answer them, rather than waiting for the researchers to do so. For example, Jamal asked why *The Mean Team for Mars* had been given this title rather than “*The Duvet Cover that Takes You into the Future*” and Rafiq replied that it was because ‘*they don’t want to tell you so much... you’d know everything... there’d be no point*’. This shows his understanding of the way titles work, giving a hint but not giving away the whole story. Datse also wondered whether the man who sold Rory the duvet knew it was magic. Usman said he did because he foretold that Rory would score three goals. Datse then made the practical point that in that case, the duvet would have cost more than £9!
6.3.7 Humour and comedy

Loud laughter accompanied the reading of the story of ‘Wee Grantie’ and the comic texts in class, both from the Scottish and the ethnic minority pupils (with the exception of Maisha who found the language too difficult to follow). In the other texts as well, the pupils were able to understand the comic elements, particularly in The Mean Team, ‘Blethertoun Rovers’, ‘Wee Grantie’ and, of course, in the Oor Wullie and The Broons episodes. They mentioned they enjoyed ‘funny’ texts, such as the Simpsons, Asterix and other comics and cartoons. Precious, for example, described The Mean Team as a ‘good’ book ‘because it was funny’ and there was general laughter during the reading, such as when the author mentions Rory’s ‘Arden United’ underpants and when he dives into the duvet.

Perhaps following the cue from one of the researchers that ‘Blethertoun Rovers’ was meant to be a ‘funny’ poem, the groups of ethnic minority children laughed as the poem was read even though they did not understand many of the Scots words. The researcher’s explanations helped, but it was mainly the illustration that aided their understanding. They pointed out the comic elements in the illustration of each player, debating which was ‘the funniest’ and wondering how such an ill-assorted lot could play football at all. However, when the researcher asked ‘But do you think maybe some Scottish people would find it funny?’ opinions were divided and some said they thought they’d be annoyed, sad or upset. Precious said they might ‘go to the author and say ‘how dare you say this about Scottish football, it’s not true!”’. None of them mentioned the word ‘stereotype’ but Precious then continued, trying to express her thoughts about this when she said:

when somebody read this poem about something like about other, like about say if you read a poem about someone who’s fat, they might say like every Scottish person is too thin or too fat or something, that wouldn’t be true because we all have different personalities and different kinds of weight.

6.3.8 Illustrations

The illustrations were crucial to the readers who found English and Scots difficult to understand. Through them they were able to enter the text and talk about it. Most of their inferences and deductions were made through the illustrations, when these were present. The Scottish pupils also used the illustrations when making their comments: for example, when discussing why the ‘punk’ mum dresses like that, one Scottish girls said, ‘When you look at the front cover, Mum looks young; young people like different styles’.

The images for the texts in Blethertoun Braes were also carefully observed by the small group participants. Without being asked, they began to point out the different football players to each other and comment on their appearance:

Datse: [This is] very bad, look at this yellow guy.
Rasha: Look at him!
Datse: They look unhealthy!
[…]

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Rasha: *How can he run for football?*
Hashid: *I think it’s him who can’t hit the door.*
[...]
Usman: *He’s the funniest, see.*
Rasha: *He’s got the chicken pox.*
[...]
Hashid: *This guy’s face is like a ghost.*

The texts in the *My Mum’s a Punk* anthology did not have illustrations, yet some of the images were so vibrant that, with some help, most ethnic minority pupils were able to understand them. In the case of ‘Wee Grantie’, the researcher asked the whole class which picture they could see most clearly in their minds, some of the replies were the following: ‘Jaz in the bushes laughing’, ‘Grantie skidding on the bike’, ‘getting dropped head first’. Some of their drawings revealed just how clearly they had seen these images in their heads.

Once we had drawn the pupils’ attention to Mairi Hedderwick as the illustrator of *Janet Reachfar*, there was a discussion about the pictures:

Researcher: *Yes. She does both the words and the pictures. What do you think of the pictures in this one, did you like them?*
Datse: *They’re good.*
Several: *Yeah [all speaking at once about what they liked]*
Datse: *This picture where is it, see the people from the farm they look like real things, like the grass made of shapes/*
Precious: *[...?] like shiny water/*
Datse: *When some people draw in books they look like real persons, sometimes, they look like real.*
[...]
Researcher: *What was your favourite picture?*
Datse: *I like this one, I like to draw things that are outside, make up things you know sky and woods/*
[...]
Researcher: *How does this one make you feel?*
Hashid: *This one is scary and spooky* [referring to Black Rory].

In general, the pictures generated many excited comments. They enjoyed the fact that some of the books had illustrations and they appreciated that the ‘comic book’ style in *The Mean Team* made it easier for them. The discussion led to comments about their own creative attempts at drawing and they began to notice how the illustrator had helped create the atmosphere through the pictures.

#### 6.3.9 Awareness of the author/illustrator

*The pupils made very few comments about the authors and illustrators of the texts.*

We introduced each book with a short comment on the author, particularly about the fact that they were Scottish and from a certain part of Scotland. In general, pupils tended to find the idea of authors and illustrators rather vague. There had been no
comments or questions about authors or illustrators until we mentioned the fact that Mairi Hedderwick had also illustrated the Katie Morag series:

Researcher: [...] and the person who illustrated this book, Mairi Hedderwick, she wrote the Katie Morag stories so she paints in this style so although she didn’t write this story she did do the pictures.
Datse: Who is illustrator? Who is the illustrator? [looking at cover]
Researcher: The illustrator is the person who draws the pictures, the author writes the story and the illustrator draws the pictures.
Precious: Can you be an illustrator and [an] author?
Researcher: Yes you can and Mairi Hedderwick does that for the Katie Morag stories.
Precious: That’s a hard job to do.

This finding signals a need for more work to be done with authors and illustrators to make them more ‘real’ for their audience and to point out to children that they are people who work hard to produce their books but that it is also possible for them to write or draw creatively.

6.3.10 Audience awareness and critical judgements

Judgements were expressed by both Scottish and ethnic minority children, who were quick to demonstrate their enjoyment of the texts. When we asked what they thought of ‘Wee Grantie’, for example, a dozen hands went up and responses included ‘brilliant’, ‘excellent’, ‘funny’ and ‘exciting’. The pupils told us which bits they had liked the best, most of them being the comic situations such as when Grantie was desperately trying to keep up with the others on his bike or kicking up the mud in the water. Surprisingly, not only did Maisha also volunteer to answer but her favourite bit was not one we expected to hear: ‘I liked the bit when he talks about girls wanted to see his body’. This made us realize that she was following and understanding the text more than we had thought she could and that she was able to appreciate the humour as much as her classmates. When the researcher asked what made ‘Wee Grantie’ a good story, there were also a lot of hands and the following answers reveal the criteria that are important for these young readers:

Boy: It was dead funny.
Abdul: Just like a true story.
Boy: It was written in the first person.
Girl: It was a good story because of the way he talked.

Although there were fewer more critical observations about the texts among the ethnic minority pupils, they demonstrated their enjoyment and some of them vocalized it. Speaking of The Mean Team, we asked the small groups what they had noticed about the way the story is written. The responses showed they appreciated the way Anderson had made the story more accessible for child readers:

Hashid: His language... like he writes in kid’s language, you know, like he doesn’t speak like adults.
Researcher: Does it help that it had the speech bubbles?
Hashid: *That made it clearer.*

[Precious?]: *Children can read it better, when adults are reading it to children you have to make sure [...] that kids understand and [...] not use long words.*

Datse: *I like the speech bubbles the most [when] you read all the story.*

[Usman?]: *It’s like a comic.*

Precious was able to think about the text in terms of other readers: *‘It’s really good that it’s got aliens in it, kids will like it but some kids would like, I don’t know [...] like more people and make it funnier’.* She also used both the terms *fiction* and *non-fiction* in an attempt to describe the story’s move from the ‘real’ world to the ‘alien’ world. The ability to make judgements that are sustained by the text and to be aware of possible audience responses is a skill that develops with reading extensively and through work with texts in school. It is an essential skill for children if they are to become critical readers of the multiple texts and images that surround them.

### 6.4 Scots Language Issues

The texts using Scots language were a novelty in all the schools, both in the whole class and in the groups. In the first place, both the indigenous Scots and the ethnic minority pupils thought the language of the stories was ‘slang’. Like Tomaj, talking about ‘Tigger’, the pupils thought the authors writing in Scots had *‘caught the language well’*, but to them, it reflected the ‘slang’ that most people used outside the classroom. This perception of Scots as ‘slang’ is not surprising, given the complex cultural and political history of Scotland. It has also been noted by Matthew Fitt, editor of the Itchy Coo series of Scottish texts for children, on his many in-service visits to primary and secondary schools. This is currently being explored by him in the context of raising the literacy performance and motivation of disaffected P7 boys (in particular) in a current Scots language project at Letham Primary, Livingston (see [www.literatureinlearning.org](http://www.literatureinlearning.org) for an outline of this work). Recent academic studies of the issue include the Scottish CILT survey *Language and Literacy Policy in Scotland* by J. Lo Bianco (2001), and J. Corbett’s chapter on ‘Language Planning and Modern Scots’ in *The Edinburgh Companion to Scots* (2003), both of whom emphasise status building as a key focus in maintenance of minority languages such as Scots.

The teachers in STJ commented that although they had occasionally read nursery rhymes and fairy tales in Scots, Robert Burn’s poems, and songs by a Glaswegian folksinger, Matt McGinn, it was the first time most of the children had encountered written ‘Scots’. When talking to the teachers about children’s perceptions of Scots they said that

D: *[...] even in conversation they notice right away what is Scottish and what is not Scottish. Yes they are very clear on Scottish accents, the way people in Scotland speak and the words we use and how different it is from the rest of the country.*

W: *They are very aware as well, a lot of the children, of the difference between how we speak Scottish and how the people here in Pollokshaws speak Scottish because it’s [...] broader and peppered with lots of interesting expletives all the time!*
Teacher and pupil attitudes to Scots language were also explored. When we asked what they thought the children made of the texts with Scots words, one of the teachers said that ‘they would enjoy it, it would make sense to them to see the words written on the page and connect the words with what they hear, it would make sense to them’. She thought the children had responded positively to the materials the researcher’s had brought in and thought ‘it would be good to use it more with them’. However, both she and the other teacher were cautious:

D: I think we need to give them a grounding in English first and then Scots so maybe it’s something for P7s who are maybe stage 3 or stage 4 learners of English but not for children who are like Rasha. She’s only been here for under a year, she’s still very much getting to grips with English so maybe it’s better to get a good grasp of English then they’ll be interested in similarities and differences as well and they’ll get more into it.

W: I think if you’ve been here long enough to have a grasp of spoken English and you’ve been around to hear Scots spoken then to see this stuff written down like when they’ve got more word attack skills that would make more sense to them, but for even say kids in English who have a fairly good grasp of spoken English to come up here and be confronted with a text like that without having something to connect it to I don’t think it would [be a good thing].

The pupils also had something to say about this, particularly Rasha who reflected her mother’s attitude to Scots, one perhaps shared by other immigrant parents who want their children to learn ‘proper English’:

Researcher: […] What about Scottish?
Rasha: Scottish no, it’s not good […] because the language, when somebody tell and the Scottish is different word, I tell ‘WHAT?’, then I can’t/
Researcher: You get confused.
Rasha Yes.
[…]
Rasha: See my Mum she don’t want to I learn from Scottish you know why because is so bad you want to say ‘silly’ you have to say in Scottish ‘daft’ […].

One of the teachers also thought the parents might wonder what point there was in learning Scots.

The pupils, however, showed some keenness to explore Scots language. When we gave them notebooks to write down anything ‘Scottish’ they observed or heard or read in the time between our visits, Rasha, with the help of a Scottish classmate, made a list of Scottish words (and some not so Scottish slang) and their English equivalent. Overleaf is part of her list:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scottish</th>
<th>England</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dafty</td>
<td>silly</td>
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<tr>
<td>waat</td>
<td>what</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>yes</td>
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<td>wee</td>
<td>little</td>
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<td>ball</td>
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<td>hoose</td>
<td>house</td>
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<tr>
<td>lassie</td>
<td>girl</td>
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<tr>
<td>gize</td>
<td>gave</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Neylan, who herself had a strong Scottish accent, also put together a long list of words, ‘translating’ them and commenting how often Scots used these terms, for example:

- **Iy** = yes – they use it a lot
- **Na** = no – they use it a lot too
- **chears** = thanks – they use it a lot too
- **diday** = today – they use that too–
- **didny** = didn’t
- **shaup** = shutup – not much
- **chears we man [sic]** = too, often – they usually say it to their friends
- **ooo no** = […] it’s a bit like the one in English but they say it in a different accent
- **make me** = when people fight
- **I cany** = too, often – in school it means I can’t

*This list reveals not only a keen ear for the different sounds of Scottish words* and what they mean but also careful observation of when and how often they are used. She mentioned that she liked watching videos, including Scottish films. She said that even if she didn’t understand some of the words, she’d ask what they meant or try to imagine what they meant (she couldn’t name any film in particular). Several pupils mentioned they watched the television soap *River City*, and the teachers suggested some may have picked up their accents from this programme.

The boys in Highmont also discussed and tried to imitate Scottish sounds. Tomaj pointed out that some words sounded German and that Scottish speakers miss out the ‘g’ in ‘ing’ endings. Rafiq was able to identify ‘kelpie’ (a word he had never come across before) as a Scottish word because ‘it sounds like one’, which suggests that immigrant children develop and ear for the sounds used in Scots. Umay had a few on her list, phonetically written, like Rasha above. She also included a translation in brackets: ‘wid’ (would), ‘ryt’ (ok), ‘yiz’ (youz) and ‘jist’ (just). The children enjoyed discussing the way Scottish people spoke and offered many oral examples such as ‘cannae dae it’, ‘no a wisnae’ and ‘wan’.

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18 Examples of some of the pupils’ notebooks referred to here can be seen in Appendix 8.6.
Immigrant children need to learn to distinguish between ‘Scots’ language, popular ‘slang’ and ‘bad words’, something many Scottish children themselves find difficult to do. For example, referring to Rory’s accident in *The Mean Team*, we asked what Scottish people would say when something went wrong. Instead of the expected ‘och’, Rafiq suggested ‘oh man!’ Several of the immigrant children remarked that Scottish people swear a lot. As Neylan wrote in her notebook: ‘Mostly the Scottish people when they talk they always swear tell bad words.’

The teacher at SJK thought that although the spelling was unfamiliar, most of the pupils, both Scots and ethnic minority, had enjoyed ‘Wee Grantie’

> W: […] because of the language the boys used, especially the boys, in the Pollock region, I think they identified […] the phrases that were used, they picked up on them really quickly and identified them as something that they would use.

After reading this story we asked the class to either describe what would happen if ‘Wee Grantie’ came in through the door of their classroom or to draw a picture of him. In their texts and pictures the ethnic minority children incorporated Scottish words and spelling as well as showing and understanding of the plot and sympathy for the boy, for example:

> If wee Grantie was joining us in our school he will be a wee bit silly and anoying to other children But I will not treat him like the children in the book. Datse

> Hello I’m Grantie. See yesterday when I came to school I saw a lovely girl called Karen Aitchison. The people always think Im a pain in the neck when I talk two much. I’ve got lots of Pals. Some times ma Pals wind me up. One day I was swimming in the pool and ma Pals took ma claes a way. Hashid

Scots was also included in many of the other drawings the pupils in all three schools made for us.19

**Classroom activities can help to clarify language usage in Scots and English.** The researchers asked the ethnic minority pupils to fill in one of the final (blanked out) speech bubbles in an *Oor Wullie* episode where Wullie, having been given extra homework as a punishment for reading the Beano in school instead of his textbook, is caught by his pals reading his history book in the gang hut instead of the Beano. The pupils had to imagine, in Scots, what his pals were saying to him as they kicked him out of their shed. At first, Rafiq and Gabriel used English ‘How dare you read a history book!’ and ‘Get out of here, you are banned forever’. After thinking about it, though, Rafiq came up with ‘Go away, you wee lassie!’, explaining that this was because ‘girls always work’ (an interesting gender comment which we did not at the time pursue). After hearing the others, Gabriel also changed his suggestion to ‘Get oot o’ here you wee TP [teacher’s pet]!’ Neylan’s suggestion was expressed in a perfect

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19 Examples of some of the pupils’ drawings referred to here can be seen in Appendix 8.7.2.
Scottish accent: ‘Och you get out of here, you’ve brought shame to the Fat Boab’s shed. Get oot o’ here, yi bring shame tae us!’

It was clear that indigenous Scottish pupils were very much aware of the difference between their usual language and how they were expected to talk at school. As one girl said: ‘It’s different at school, you’re not supposed to talk like this but we do in the interval.’ Therefore, reading a text in Scots was both enjoyable and a recognition of ‘their language’ in print – in other words, if it was in a book, it was not just ‘slang’. However, they did mention that they sometimes found it difficult to understand the words because of the way they were ‘spelled’ because it made them look different from the way they sounded. This seemed to happen even if the dialect words used were not exactly the same ones they used themselves or they heard from their families.

During one session, the researcher tried to ‘translate’ a bit of a poem from the *Blethertoun Braes* anthology into English and asked what difference it would make if these poems were written in English. Most pupils thought it did make a difference; the reasons they gave for it was better in Scottish were that ‘it’s more entertaining’, ‘it’s funny’, ‘it rhymes better’, ‘it sounds better’, ‘more special’, ‘more individual’, ‘it makes a challenge to read’ and tellingly, ‘it makes it more exciting cause it’s in our language’. Referring to the language in ‘Wee Grantie’, one boy said it made the story ‘funnier’ and more ‘believable’. Echoing the teacher at SJK, the teacher at STM said she thought the boys in particular ‘identified’ with the language and context of the texts, and she was surprised that we had kept the attention of even the more disruptive Scottish boys during the whole class sessions with the texts. Again, this links with Matthew Fitt’s research referred to at the start of this section.

Despite the difficulties of sounds and spelling, we found that even the ethnic minority pupils were interested in understanding the Scots words and were happy to have a go at working out meanings and at pronouncing some of the words they encountered. They were also able to identify some words as ‘Scottish’, as opposed to English, even though they did not always know what they meant.
6.5 Scottish Stories, Themes and Images

Living in Scotland means coming into contact with Scots language, but also hearing, interpreting and assimilating both English and Scottish ‘stories’, from oral, written and media sources. Even pupils who had been here for less than a year were already making references to these stories, some of which were coming from school. Rasha, for example, told us she had told her brother a bedtime story about Biff and Chip, the characters in her school reading book.

Our data points to the significant consequences of reading and discussing Scottish children’s literature with children in Scottish schools. It is not because these texts are better written than any other British children’s literature or because they contain Scots language rather than English, but because they provide a very specific site for pupils to explore issues of identity and culture: an enjoyable path into the stories of the country in which they now live and a ‘safe’ space to talk about their own stories. For example, these Scottish texts we chose did provoke discussion about how and when we use particular local language forms, about codes of behaviour and relationships, about the values inherent in arguments or the consequences that follow from the decisions we make.

Although we have said that there is nothing essentially ‘better’ about the use of Scottish texts, of course there is a sense in which only Scottish texts will do. For this is the non-Standard English of the playground and the street – subversive, quick-witted, rough and ready – that immigrant children have to learn in order to ‘belong’, and that native-born Scottish children of whatever ethnic origin also speak or understand.

If we imagine a Venn diagram with the child at the centre of interlocking circles of Standard English (the language of power and learning), Home language (the language of roots and ethnic identity), and Scots language (the language of new or potential identity and local culture), then it is plain that Scots texts and language can achieve effects that other texts cannot, since they touch the complex actualities and tensions of the refugee’s present linguistic world, and, in the way of all creative texts, gather them into a temporary and pleasurable unity. It may be worth noting that both researchers were themselves working out of a migrant consciousness and sense of cultural difference, as well as an enjoyment and appreciation of Glasgow and its people. This was, we hoped, clear to all the children in the project.

As for the stories we read with the children, their responses show how they were able to both empathize and identify with the characters, but also to transpose the events and other elements to other cultures. For example, talking about Janet Reachfar, the children were asked:

Researcher: […] If this story took place in another country what else would be different about it, maybe words?
Preious: If it was in Asia or Pakistan it would be like hot, maybe they say it’s a ‘sun monster’ or a ‘hot monster’, a ‘fire monster’ or something.
The supernatural or ‘monster’ theme was continued with two poems from Blethertoun Braes, ‘Hauntit Park’ and ‘The Werewolf’. In STM, these poems were used with the whole class near Halloween which meant that they were easily set in context. A kelpie appears in the poem and in the discussion Neylan referred to the kelpie that appeared in Janet Reachfar. After reading and discussing the poems, we asked the pupils to draw their own ‘Scottish monster’, giving them the example of a ‘porridge monster’. The responses were very creative and revealing of what some children felt were salient aspects of Scottish culture, such as the creature with the ‘rubbish’ tail mentioned above. One Scottish pupil drew ‘Chipzilla’ and ‘Mr Tea’. The chip monster wears a tartan kilt, has ‘super fried’ eggs for ears, a sausage tongue, chip arms and legs, an Irn Bru bottle for a tail and wields a Kebab Club with which he ‘wants to destroy all chipeys’. He is saying ‘I’ll batter yay!’ Mr Tea has three spoonfuls of sugar inside and Nambarie tea boxes for feet. He has vicious eyes and teeth and says ‘one lump ur twa’. There was also a ‘Celtic porridge monster’ wearing the green and white team colours and Neylan created a comic but rather aggressive ‘Irn Bru Bottle’ monster with a very ‘big mouth’ and long nails. 20

Several monsters were thistles, interestingly, or included thistles. The symbolism of this plant had been discussed during the reading because it appears in one of the poems. It had also been discussed with some of the ethnic minority pupils when reading Janet Reachfar. Most pupils were aware there were many in Scotland, and Rafiq and Jamal described it a spiky dandelion or a cactus. When we asked why it was a ‘Scottish clue’ Rafiq said it was because many grew in Scotland and the country was quite famous for it.

The researcher suggested that the thistle might represent Scotland: ‘maybe it just grows well here or Scottish people are prickly and lose their temper easily’. One fierce monster had a thistle for a head, wore a kilt and carried a ‘peashooter bagpipe’. Sirwa drew a large, carefully detailed thistle with what she called ‘creasy eyes’ on the head of the thistle. The most impressive and skilfully drawn thistle monster, however, was drawn by a Scottish boy. The plant spreads over a whole page and seems to jump out from it, waving its spiky, leafy arms. The spikes are matched by a deep purple crown. On the stripy thistle head, yellow eyes with pointed red pupils glare above an open red mouth showing sharp white teeth. This aggressive portrait may be the result of the discussion which concluded that the thistle may be the national flower of Scotland because it is ‘jaggy’, ‘hard’ and ‘tough’ and has the potential to cause harm.

On the subject of monsters, an interesting response came from Datse who was so keen to learn and to assimilate into her new culture. As we mentioned above, from the beginning she was very concerned about the stories being true or not. She could not see ‘the point of having Scotland monsters’ like the Loch Ness Monster, if they were not true. In might be that in her attempts to assimilate she felt there was no point learning things that are not true about the country she was now living in. When I asked whether it helps to read stories about other countries, she insisted:

Datse: [...] but things that are not true, like people read these stories, it’s good when you read true stories but not about monsters, maybe people that

20 Examples of some the pupils’ drawings referred to here can be seen in Appendix 8.7.3.
Datse may also be influenced by her mother’s views on what was suitable reading at school. When she told her mother she had read the poem ‘My Mum’s a Punk’, her mother wondered why she was reading about ‘punks and people like this’. When Datse told her there were people coming to her school ‘and teaching us about Scottish’ her mother seemed happy with the explanation, or at least Datse did not report on any negative response to her learning ‘about Scottish’.

*How Scottish pupils regard their own Scottish identity* was also revealed, perhaps, in some of the drawings we asked them to make in order to ‘update’ the Broon family. As mentioned above, first we discussed why The Broons and Oor Wullie were ‘old-fashioned’. Then they drew and described what a Scottish family would look like today. Although some merely created a family and gave them names and ages, a few went a bit further such as one Scottish boy who drew the ‘Nesbit family’ (presumably linked to the Glaswegian television comedy series and its eponymous anti-hero, which was actually filmed partly in the neighbourhood of the school). There is no mother (maybe he ran out of time) but there is a father, Joe, with thick arms who is saying ‘*Ma sons are perfect*’. The sons, ‘*Bobe Burne*’ and ‘*Alexandre*’ also have thick arms. Bobe is wearing what seems to be a Burberry cap and a shell suit with ‘Lacoste’ written in very large letters and the alligator logo. He’s got a scar (a Glasgow smile?) and is saying ‘*Whit you lookin it*’.

Another drawing shows a more cartoon style (similar to South Park figures) family ‘The Macaroons’. Nine members sit above the name, just like the Broon family. In the centre of the page is Muncher who asks ‘*Have you got any cream cake?*’ Below are Coronel with a wide moustache and wearing military gear saying ‘*Ten hut!*’ and next to him is Coolick, a smaller boy, with a pronounced cow lick, who remarks ‘*Dude*’. These and other drawings of the families reveal a remarkable mixture of stereotypes (all except one have two parents), fashion, popular culture, coming from both old (the Broons) and new texts (South Park, Simpsons), and language (‘Coo lick’). Some of the ‘perfect’ families described also suggest some stereotypical American television families: modern, happy and beautiful. For example, one Scottish girl described ‘*The MacLeods*’ as follows:

* Mum:  Kirsty. 33, dyed blonde hair, light tan, blue eyes, designer glasses, pregnant. Works in an office as a manageress.  
  Dad:  Dave, 34, dark, thick hair, really tanned, green eyes, contact lenses. Works as a swimming coach.  
  Daughter:  Lindsay, blonde hair, blue eyes, light tan, 13 years old, braces […]

If this family lives in Glasgow, either they have enough money to take frequent holidays to sunny places or they spend quite a lot of time in tanning parlours!21

When we read *The Mean Team* we asked the children how they would make this text ‘more Scottish’. They suggested having ‘more Scottish words’, using a real football

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21 Examples of the pupils’ drawings referred to here can be seen in Appendix 8.7.4.
team’s name, like Dundee or Aberdeen United, or adding ‘things you can get most in Scotland, like mountains and rivers and stuff’. Rafiq gave an example of using Scots: ‘Mr Mint could have said to him “Rory, don’t dae that”’. When asked why the author had not made it more Scottish their replies reflected an awareness of the difficulties for different audiences:

Rafiq: Maybe it’s for small children and they wouldn’t understand the Scottish words
Datse: To make it more interesting for maybe other people who came [from] other countries.
Usman: To make it more understanding, for some people it would be harder to understand.

All of these children agreed that reading a story about another culture helped them to understand that culture better, mainly through the language and ‘the scene’ of that particular country. However, Datse was concerned that the stories had to be ‘true’, otherwise the reader would get the wrong idea about a country (like there being monsters in Scotland). Her concern about the ‘truth’ also came up when the researcher explained that we were going to read a poem set in a town called ‘Blethertoun Braes’: she asked, ‘Is that true? Is there really a town called this?’

Mostly, however, they said that reading a story in English was useful because it helps them learn English. According to Rasha, however, the same did not apply to Scottish stories because the language was just confusing, yet she did agree that reading a Scottish book would help the reader learn about Scotland. They could have added that through shared reading and discussion it can also introduce the readers to all kinds of ‘stories’ from other cultures, as the mixed group works together to make sense of the new story in the light of past reading or life experience.
6.6 Making Sense of Identity: Stories of Origin

We found that ethnic minority pupils’ response to Scottish literature involves the story of their own identities and the interpretative practices they have acquired as well as their perceptions of their host culture. Books, through words and pictures, help construct bridges across cultural gaps but it is in the discussions with others about texts, particularly when there is a sense of empathy and support, that new levels of understanding can be reached.

Among the stories we are told and that we tell ourselves is the story of our own identity. When we have left our native country or community behind and have migrated to new ones, new twists and turns and new layers of meaning are added to these stories. Listening to the stories of others helps us understand our own better, and to make connections with those other storytellers. As Margaret Spencer Meek writes:

[...], we know that, whatever language we speak, any person with whom we can communicate is not an alien. Culture and history are part of our imagination; they constitute the Big Narrative, the story we are all part of.
(Spencer Meek 2002: 1)

Experiences at home and school, in both the heritage country and new country, affected the way in which these ethnic minority pupils imagined their identity. The children seemed to understand that all of them were affected by issues of ‘belonging’ even though they did not often voice them directly. This was clear in the way they not only offered linguistic support when someone in the group was talking about their experiences and backgrounds, but also contributed with encouraging nods and sympathetic interventions as they perhaps recognized bits of their own stories in those of others. They were aware of the presence of other ethnic minorities and that many refugees had come ‘because there’s lots of wars in their countries’, as Precious bluntly put it. She also made a comment which suggests some of these pupils were also aware of the international political tensions and of their parent’s views: ‘See, my Mum says that the Americans, the president of America, he’s the one that’s causing all the wars, that’s what she says’. On the other hand, Rasha remarked that she would like to go and live in America because her grandfather had told her ‘many things are good in America’.

Many interventions began with the phrase: ‘in my country...’ regardless of how long the ethnic minority children had been in Scotland. These comments were usually about daily activities such as obtaining water or going to school and comparisons were made between ‘here’ and ‘there’. However, we often sensed an underlying sadness and fear which were not made explicit. Datse spoke of having lived in Latvia, Belgium and England before coming to Scotland and of how she did not want to move anymore: ‘I just want to grow up here’. At no point in the interviews did she volunteer any information about her family being Romany, perhaps due to fear of prejudice. Precious’s story about her mother’s life in Rwanda, for example, is not very clear and seems to have somehow become confusingly intertwined with stories she has heard in this country, pasting bits of British stories encountered in the classroom on to her own:
Precious: See, my Mum was a Victorian
Researcher: What?
Precious: Well not so long ago, she was alive in 1980 something [...?]
Datse: She couldn’t be/
Precious: Well she was three and you know that chimney sweep thing [...] my mum’s mum died as well and then my mum didn’t have a mum so she had her cousins’ mum and she had 5 children and she died as well.
Datse: Oh! [in sympathy]
Precious: So my mum had to look after the five children, her cousins, like that.

The fact that many of their families will actually be leaving Scotland as soon as they get their permission to stay in Britain was another factor which contributes to the complexity and instability of identity construction among these immigrant children, according to their teachers. Most of the asylum-seeking families were sent to Scotland as part of the dispersal programme. Most have neither family nor extended community networks here. As soon as they are allowed to stay, they go back to England, to London and other cities with large communities such as Manchester or Birmingham. In the meantime their time in Scotland is clouded by the possibility of deportation, of being forcefully removed from their houses and sent back to countries where they feel their lives are in danger.

If Scotland may be the country that sends them back, it is not surprising that they do not begin to feel ‘Scottish’ no matter how long they’ve been here; on the contrary, this may make them cling to their original identities and avoid integrating. Fear of racist attacks and violence is, of course, another motive, given that they are usually housed in socially problematic areas.

We asked the children whether they felt Scottish in any way and, if not, if they thought they ever would. The girls in particular said their mothers did not want them to become ‘Scottish’, citing the ‘bad’ behaviour of many Scottish young people – swearing, fighting, drinking, or taking drugs – as a reason. After writing that Scottish people often swear, Neylan continued:

But I am not trying to say all of the peoples are like that. There are some families and old people that is very helpful kind like the old people in my flat. The things I like about Glasgow is: I can be friends very easily, some people are very helpful kind too.

However, there was also a general feeling of resignation in the children. They seemed to be aware that they had little control over where they were going to live, that this was up to their families or even to circumstances beyond them. They seemed to know they had to adapt and make the best of their situation, learning the new language and the new culture.

In answer to the researcher’s question about whether and when they thought the immigrant children began to see themselves as ‘Scottish’, the teachers at SJK were doubtful:
D: No I don’t think they do.
W: I’m trying to think. Last week I was talking to X, ‘Do you think you’re African or do you think you’re Scottish?’ […] he actually had to think about it, I don’t think he quite knew what to say, actually, I think he thought he’d been asked a right and wrong answer question, to be honest, he thought I’ve got to say the right answer here, he didn’t think he’d been asked an opinion.

As for the Pakistani boys, Rafiq, who has been in Scotland for 8 of his 11 years, said that when people asked him where he was from, he usually answered ‘Pakistan’. When we asked if he thought this might change as he lived here longer, he did not have an answer. It seemed it was the first time he had thought about it. His view of Pakistan was contradictory, he had left very young but had gone back about two years ago:

It’s safe there. I remember when I was three I used to climb high walls with no fear, there’s no fear of anyone kidnapping you cos […] the population was small so everyone knew everyone […] It was safe, there was no problem, but now the population’s growing […]

He was also aware that while there was new technology, there were still many problems such as poverty. He pointed out that people still worked long hours and earned very little compared to Britain.

In our first interview with Hashid we asked him where he was from:
Hashid: My mum’s from Pakistan but I’m not.
Researcher: So where are you from? When people ask you where you’re from?
Hashid: [pause] I say Pakistan.
Researcher: Do you feel you are Scottish as well?
Hashid: I don’t know.

During the second interview, Hashid said he preferred Pakistan to Scotland, but by the third interview he seemed to have had more time to think about his national identity:

Researcher: Both of you go back [to Pakistan for holidays], but if you stay here will you feel more Scottish and you’ll say: this is my country?
Hashid: This is my country anyway!
Usman: That’s where he was born.
Hashid: Like my Mum and my Dad were born there, my uncle, my grandpa […] I said to my Mum, ‘I’m confused here, which country am I born in Pakistan or here?’ and she says, ‘Here you stupid fool’! [general laughter]
Researcher: So how Scottish do you feel? Equally Scottish and Pakistani or more Pakistani than Scottish?
Usman: You feel confused.
Hashid: I’m both.
Usman: I think half of my life I’ll spend it here and half of my life I’ll spend it there, so both.
Hashid’s mixed feelings may be a result of clashes or discrepancies between parental expectations for him and the mainstream culture of the country he was born in. Not only was he training to be an imam, but he was not allowed to mix with his peers during lunch break. His mother would bring him and his siblings their food and they would all eat in the car outside the school. The teachers confirmed that other Muslim children were told by their parents not to play with non-Muslim classmates; however, they claimed that they did play with them anyhow.

An interesting moment was when the researcher, Hashid and Usman were talking about some of the stories in the Qur’ān. The boys commented that some of these stories were the same ‘the world over’, such as the story of Joseph and his coat of many colours. Usman said ‘they’ also believed in Jesus, although as a prophet, not as the son of God. This tolerant attitude coincides with remarks made by their teachers that the children loved to talk about the differences in religions. Hopefully this suggests that some of these children may become more tolerant and understanding of other beliefs than their parents might be.

6.7 The Role of the School

Positive experiences in primary schools were mentioned by all the minority children we spoke to. As the headmaster of STM said, school provided a ‘safe’ place for them, away from the worries and problems of the home and the future (in fact, he also said it provided a safe and reliable place for some Scottish pupils whose family life at the weekends could be very disorderly). The fact that none of the pupils mentioned their status as refugees or asylum-seekers may have been because these were issues to be confronted out of school and they did not feel like bringing them into the classroom.

From their comments, the immigrant children seemed to find their schools welcoming, both in terms of teachers and peers. Precious remarked that ‘at school, it’s very good when you come from a different country, they give you extra classes, extra time to learn some English’. Neylan made a Powerpoint presentation with the help of one of her Scottish classmates:

*When I came to St Margaret’s at first I felt scared because I didn’t know how to speak English. It was good that I had one friend called Umay […] My friend Umay and other children in my class helped me. Miss Rivers, Miss Yilmaz and Miss Barley helped me to settle in so I was not lonely. […] We had some parties in the language unit. I was chosen to be a buddy! There are three Turkish children that I help and three Scottish children. […] The teachers are very helpful. There is no racism. There are people I can trust.*

Language support had been received initially or in an ongoing way from teachers in the bilingual units attached to the schools, and during language tasks we observed the support they also had from their Scottish and other minority classmates. In the schools there were welcome posters and antiracist posters in several languages. Publicly displayed photographs and the Oxfam video made in STM stressed integration and the positive feelings of the Scots children towards immigrants.
The teachers in SJK described the process in which children arriving from other countries are supported until they can be integrated into the classroom with their peers. With the younger children, this was done through stories and books. Pupils were now encouraged to ‘bring’ their languages into the classroom and, as we said above, being bilingual was seen in a very positive light. However, they did mention that pupils still required support during their normal lessons and that most of them struggled to keep up even if it appeared they were doing well:

... they might be able to read [a class text] if they’ve got good word attack skills but they won’t be able to comprehend it because they don’t know the vocabulary [...] we often find ourselves teaching in the margins because you start off reading something and then someone will ask you a question and you end up putting the book aside and doing a big chat about whatever they’ve said which is very valuable but you get completely off what you’re supposed to be doing.

Differences between schooling in their country of origin and in Scotland were also discussed with the children. Although not all of them had been in school before coming to the United Kingdom (or had been there very few years), they all seemed to enjoy comparing the education systems. It was the three Muslim boys who were most vocal about the differences between education in ‘their’ country and in Scotland. From the point of view of most pupils, school in their heritage country, especially Pakistan, was much ‘harder’: there were longer hours and fewer and shorter breaks; the curriculum was more advanced and it began when children were in their first years at school; learning was by rote; there was tougher discipline, physical punishment and there was more homework. A few also mentioned that if you didn’t do enough work you did not move up at the end of the year. Neylan explained that children who come to Scotland from other countries work harder because ‘in other countries the schools were much different. We were scared [off] the teachers’. Maisha added that when she came here at the age of 8 or 9, all the teachers were so nice to her that ‘I just have to learn something [...] and respect them’.

Rafiq’s comments about his time in nursery in Pakistan make the difference in pedagogical approaches clear, even from the start of schooling:

Rafiq: But they don’t let you play [in nursery]. You don’t learn by playing there. They teach you by telling you [...] cos sometimes you don’t learn when you are playing, your mind is full on playing.
Researcher: Is that a better way?
Rafiq: It wasn’t that hard.
Researcher: When you say that they told you things, how did they do that?
Rafiq: Just like school but in miniature [...] like they tell you words [...] and you have to repeat them.

Later, Rafiq commented that his mother told him that children in school in Pakistan learn more difficult subjects, such as Algebra and Chemistry earlier. He thought this was a good thing ‘cos young age helps you develop more, it gives you more confidence’. Rafiq also referred to the punishment methods which were worse in Pakistan but was rather dismissive about the use of metal sticks: ‘Well, no-one has ever died from that. Everyone gets used to it. Some people don’t even cry, they just don’t think about the pain.’
A particularly revealing comment on education was made by Rafiq in the session about Oor Wullie:

Researcher: What else is Scottish about [Wullie]?
Rafiq: The way he’s not that educated because he’s in the outdoor life. His life is the outdoor life, not the educated inside life [...] You’re inside working all day.

This distinction between the outdoors/indoors and uneducated/educated, together with the comments on ‘playing to learn’ rather than ‘being taught’, is relevant to the ways that literacy is perceived in the home or community culture and in school.

Learning styles and transition issues were also raised by the texts we chose. The Oor Wullie episode brought up the subject of ‘swats’, ‘nerds’ or ‘TPs’ (teacher’s pets). The last two terms were used by the ethnic minority children. When the researcher asked if there was a difference between being a ‘TP’ and working hard, Abdul said that the best way to avoid being called a TP was to ‘just do your work, do it very hard and then like hang about with the cool guys so you won’t be called a TP and you’ll be popular.’ In contrast, Abdul said that in Algeria ‘children will actually make fun of you if you’re dumb [...] like if you are a TP you’d be the cool guy [...] it’s just the opposite!’

Rafiq described ‘nerds’ as wearing glasses because they ‘have stress in their eyes from working all the time’ and ‘always putting their head into a book’. Rafiq’s comments throw up interesting contradictions, given his comments above on ‘the educated life’, especially as he went on to say that in Scotland children don’t play outside because of the weather but in Pakistan no one stays inside playing on the computer because ‘they’re always outside playing cricket or football’. There are clearly many issues related to literacy and education to explore further, such as gender, which was the subject of another of Rafiq’s comments, about girls working all the time as opposed to boys.

Issues about education and schooling are clearly very important to the ethnic minority children and require more exploration, as outlined in 6.8 below. The role of the school as a safe, welcoming place is also one that needs constant highlighting. In the case of the children in our project, they were soon about to go into secondary. From their comments, this was regarded as a rather scary step. Rafiq commented that that there would be ‘neds’ in the high school, who might cause trouble. He added that ‘if any ned hits you then the Head Teacher can throw them out of school’ but he was clearly worried that they could also cause trouble ‘outside it’. Research that follows children like these into secondary could throw light on what happens after this transition and why particular groups emerge, how they interact and how stories of identity continue to be shaped.
6.8 Points Emerging for Consideration

Several issues have already been identified as worthy of further investigation. Here we list some of the salient issues that emerged relating to policy and practice in schools, and will return to some of these in the Conclusion section of the report.

1. Immigrant and even Scottish children tend to react to negative stereotypes of Scottish behaviour, sometimes influenced by media images as well as by personal experience. There should be a continuing emphasis on elements of kindness, welcome, and support towards non-native Scots and ‘new Scots’, with involvement from the pupils themselves in articulating this for others, where possible through the use of electronic technologies and the expressive arts.

2. Internet and other electronic literacies clearly figure in the home language development and language maintenance of these pupils. Skills and opportunities for using electronic resources for primary English learning should be further explored within schools.

3. Immigrant children’s use of home texts, across several languages, is an under-researched area of literacy that is worth investigation. The role of libraries within this, with a particular focus on information texts and genres in literacy development, should also be explored.

4. Home and heritage stories should be encouraged in the classroom, and teaching opportunities devised through topics and themes to make this possible. Fables and folk tales, and illustrations of these, provide a useful starting point.

5. The children’s roles as interpreters for their siblings and parents in home and school contexts should be recognised, praised and supported.

6. Teachers should be made aware of the quite subtle interpretation of narrative that is possible in children whose English is still quite limited, and of the role of interactive, teacher-led small-group discussion within that process, with a focus on character, consequence, motivation, moral/theme, textual illustration and overall impact or enjoyment of the chosen text.

7. Teachers should also continue to be aware of the possibly radically different parental or pupil views (deriving from earlier schooling experience) concerning teacher-pupil relationships, pedagogy and discipline/punishment in schools.

8. The study of carefully selected and confidently read and enacted Scots language texts appears to benefit both native Scottish and immigrant pupils, because of the contexts these provide for quite wide-ranging discussions of language, culture and heritage. Knowledge about language is enhanced, and issues of identity and social change in Scotland can be sensitively discussed. This appears to have a positive impact on many youngsters (not only immigrants) who experience disjuncture between the language codes of home/playground and classroom/literacy.

9. Consideration should be given to on-going and supportive small-group work on narrative fiction with immigrant pupils, in a separate room or open space, for fairly
brief periods of 20-30 minutes, even after they have attained enough ‘survival English’ to benefit from mainstream class lessons. Group work may alternate ‘all migrant’ groups with ‘all Scots’ and ‘mixed’ groups, to allow emotional connections to be made with past experience, within the shared experience of story and character.

10. Staff development on the confident classroom use of Scottish resources, including Scots language texts, and in sustaining exploratory dialogue around fiction and poetry, should be encouraged.
7. Conclusions and Implications

Suggestions for further consideration or research have already been signalled at several points of this study. Here we gather them into three main areas: further research, teacher development and pedagogy, and policy issues at local or national level.

7.1 Original Research Aims

In this study, our original research aims were:

- To analyse the reactions and responses of children from ethnic minority and indigenous Scottish communities to a range of Scottish texts. 
  
  *This has been achieved through the methodology outlined in Section 5 and the findings analysed in Section 6 above.*

- To explore how these children deal with the multiple literacies that are part of their transition between cultures.

  *Our focus on popular and children’s genres, on the pupils’ library choices and home texts in 6.2.2, and on their home use of electronic communication and learning in 6.2.3 provided data for reflection here*.

- To find out how children’s identities can be developed or reinforced by books set in the culture in which they now live.

  *Our focus on intertextual reading skills [6.3.2], questioning the text [6.3.6], the focus on Scots language issues [6.4], Scottish themes [6.5] and especially the revisiting of ‘stories of origin’ within the ‘third space’ of the Scottish text [6.6] allowed the children to discuss and develop their changing identities in a structured and supportive framework.*

This led us to ask further questions:

- Are there particular issues of Scots language and usage in Scottish texts that impact upon new learners?

  *Some issues are addressed in 6.4, within the largely positive experience of engagement with Scots language through classroom texts.*

- To what extent do children interpret their new culture in either a positive or a negative light?

  *Perceptions of Scotland and its people are mixed [6.1.2], but school is experienced as a positive, safe and supportive environment.*

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• Do particular characters and incidents in texts, or humour and morals, relate in any way to their own cultures and if so, how?

There was an enthusiastic, sometimes subtle and always sensible engagement with the chosen texts [6.3.4, 6.3.6, 6.3.7] and frequent cross-reference to their earlier experience in other cultures.

• How do children who consider themselves as ‘Scottish’ respond to the portrayal of their own culture in such texts?

Again there was an engaged and sometimes thoughtful response to these texts and the language used in them [6.4].

• What barriers do the language and pictures raise or break down?

Illustration proved crucial in ‘reading’ unfamiliar texts and discussing them [6.3.8], but more research needs to be done on how different cultural groups make sense of pictures.

• What does it mean to be bi-cultural in a country like Scotland where national identity is itself in a process of change and self-definition?

Making sense of identity is complex [6.6] and we found that the children were forthcoming on some of the tensions that their family and social contexts created.

7.2 Research Recommendations

Findings and strategies from previous research provided the platform for developing our approach in the Scottish context described in Section 2. Although some of the research methodology follows earlier studies on literacy and reader-response, the nature of the subjects and the context of the research made it necessary to create a new methodological approach. This approach involved using Scottish texts but also questions and activities that were aimed at pupils with a particular level of knowledge of English language and English/Scottish culture in general. In addition, some of them were also designed to be used within a whole class context that included indigenous Scottish pupils. We believe that these methods provided good results, not only for the pupils but also for research data.

Because little research has been done previously in this context, our study has merely begun what should be a deeper exploration of:

• domestic and community language learning including home texts in different languages and children’s self-education in these languages as well as English
• the intersections of home and school literacies, including the role of older siblings as mediators and parental perceptions of education and literacy and of English/Scots language and culture
• early learners (children in the first stage of primary) from ethnic minority families and emergent literacy including their response to learning to read in a language different from their home language
• the influence of popular culture and media, both Scottish and in the heritage language(s), on family literacies
the mediated literacies of picture books through the analysis of text and illustration with children of different ages and stages
the role of books by national and international authors which deal with issues of identity, migration and change
the experience of asylum/ethnic minority bilingualism as it meets the ‘bilingualism’ of the Scottish school context, with Scots used in the playground and Standard Scottish English in classroom pedagogy
the provision of spaces where ‘language and life histories’ can be heard, and ‘self-authorship’ can begin in a new country
the ways in which native peers interact with ethnic minority pupils in providing support in language learning and also cultural guidance
the use of Scots language as a ‘neutral venue’ or third frame of reference where the language of power and the language of relative powerlessness or poverty can encourage equality (since everyone is a relative stranger to its use in the classroom context)
the use of whole-class sessions that may offer a ‘metalinguistic’ but also community-based focus on language use and language variety
the focus on ‘ephemera’ of comics, videos, drawings, speech-bubbles, both in the texts chosen and in the writing/drawing activities, developing literacy awareness from the texts that migrant children see as accessible within their new culture, and as having social currency with classmates
the role libraries play in providing a space and access to books and computers for ethnic minority children and their families, with a particular focus on information texts and genres
the use of accents and oral features of story-telling, such as voice, first-person narrative or poetry, or moral issues arising from wrong decisions, to make an impact in terms of shared human experience are issues that relate not only to communication and understanding but also to the oral cultural heritages of migrant children.

There is also the possibility of putting the Scottish findings within wider frameworks following previous research studies. For example:

examining continuities in response to Scottish language and culture by ethnic minority pupils in secondary schools (as in Dickson 2006), including the transitional aspects and tensions around language and identity (as in Singh Ghuman 1994, Saeed, Bland and Forbes 1999, Caulfield, Hill and Shelton 2005)
case study and longitudinal approaches to particular children and their families (as in Pahl 2004);
looking at visual literacy through the response of both native Scots and ethnic minority pupils to British picturebooks (as in Arizpe and Styles 2003, Arizpe 2006 and Arizpe and Styles 2008 forthcoming);
exploring digital literacies including computer games and knowledge and use of communication technologies (as in Mackey 2007)
focussing on the role of siblings and other ‘guiding lights’ in the teaching and learning of ethnic minority pupils and their families (as in Padmore 1994, Dyson 2003)
examining class and group interactions in school where dialogue and discussion allowed pupils to share issues of identity and understanding of texts (as in Coulthard, Arizpe and Styles 2003)

exploring Glasgow literacies through local communities and their links to ethnicity, immigration and school literacy history (as in Gregory and Williams 2000) as well as public library spaces for literacy (as in Petit 2001).

Several of these points have staff development implications for teachers, as outlined below.

7.3 Staff Development and Pedagogy

Galda and Beach (2001) argue that everything that teachers do in the classroom, the texts they choose and the tasks they assign, affects the transaction of students between cultures. They suggest that specific tools can be developed which help students reflect on the responses and connections they make. However, they also warn that while some of the ‘cultural tools’ which pupils bring to the classroom may be aligned to those of the teacher, others may be in opposition (Galda and Beach 2001: 71).

Our study had clear implications for staff development and pedagogy which relate to the issues raised by Galda and Beach. The educational issue which we highlighted was the use of Scottish children’s texts. The texts we chose, the tasks we asked the pupils to carry out, and the discussions around these, helped all of the children to reflect on the world of each text but also on their own worlds. Sometimes their perceptions of aspects of these worlds were unexpected (for example, the interest and engagement in discussion of Scots and English language usage in the classroom). Reading and discussing such texts and the language they were written in was clearly a new experience for both teachers and pupils.

Despite apparent surface difficulties with orthography and dialect, both urban and rural, this approach allowed ethnic-minority pupils to:

- increase their knowledge of both English and Scots
- increase their knowledge of Scottish culture
- access and enjoy new texts which may have reflected their new context
- participate in a space where metalinguistic and cultural aspects could be freely discussed
- increase their confidence and self-esteem by being asked their opinions and being able to bring in aspects of their heritage culture to the school context.

Some of these benefits clearly also apply for the Scottish pupils who participated in the whole classroom sessions.

In part the neglect of Scottish texts relates to the history and status of Scots language, as outlined in the Introduction and Section 4. There is therefore a lack of confidence as well as a lack of professional knowledge about classroom texts and effective strategies among teachers. This has staff development implications for pre-service and in-service training, as do the other issues below:
As internet and other electronic literacies figure in the home language development and language maintenance of many migrant pupils, the skills and opportunities for allowing them to use such resources for primary English learning should be further explored within schools.

Home and heritage stories should be encouraged in the classroom, and teaching opportunities devised through topics and themes to make this possible. (Fables and folk tales, and illustrations of these, provide a useful starting point.) This may involve both in-service and resource provision or subsidy.

Surprisingly subtle interpretation of narrative is possible in children whose English is still quite limited, but the role of interactive, teacher-led whole-class and small-group discussion seems crucial within that process. Teachers’ skills in such direct interactive discussion of character, consequence, motivation, moral/theme, textual illustration and overall impact of texts should continue to be developed. (This relates to HMIE findings about the effective teaching of reading for all children.)

Consideration should be given, where staffing allows, to ongoing, supportive small-group work on narrative fiction with immigrant pupils, in a separate room or open space, for fairly brief periods of 20-30 minutes, even after they have attained enough ‘survival English’ to benefit from mainstream class lessons. Group work may alternate ‘all immigrant’ groups with ‘all Scots’ and ‘mixed’ groups, to allow emotional connections to be made with past and new experience, within the shared context of story and character.

Staff development on the classroom use of Scottish resources, including Scots language texts, and on sustaining dialogue around fiction and poetry, should be encouraged, perhaps through links with local universities. This will also involve the development of a confident use of regional dialects in reading such texts aloud to children (and developing an informed, knowledgeable outlook on language variation in relation to social context in Scotland).

Pre-service and in-service courses in bilingual learning should become a more recognised aspect of teacher development, as ethnic diversity increasingly becomes a feature of Scotland’s communities and schools.
7.4 Policy Issues

Immigrant and also Scottish children are influenced by negative stereotypes of Scottish behaviour, affected by media images as well as by personal experience. This relates to current concerns to develop and foster ‘confident individuals’, ‘responsible citizens’ and ‘effective contributors’ through the emerging Curriculum for Excellence.

- There should be a continuing school emphasis on elements of kindness, welcome, and support towards ‘new Scots’, with involvement from the pupils themselves in articulating this for others, where possible through the use of electronic technologies and the expressive arts.

This project’s activities appear to have had a positive impact on many youngsters (not only migrants) who experience some disjuncture between the language codes of home, playground and classroom literacy expectations. Carefully selected and confidently read and enacted Scottish texts can benefit both native Scottish and immigrant pupils, because of the contexts these provide for quite wide-ranging discussions of language, culture and heritage. This again relates to the ACfE aims above, and also to the current developments and consultation towards A Strategy for Scotland’s Languages.

- Knowledge about language should be enhanced through classroom provision of suitable texts, so that issues of identity and social change in Scotland can be imaginatively experienced and sensitively discussed by teachers and pupils.

Teachers, through school leaders, should also continue to be made aware of some possibly radically different parental or pupil views about education among migrant families. Again, this issue engages with ACfE aims and also the Executive’s concerns to engage the intellectual and creative potential of ‘new Scots’.

- Deriving from earlier school experience of parents and/or children, there will be issues concerning teacher-pupil relationships, pedagogy and discipline or punishment in schools which might impact on home-school communication.

The children in our study often had roles as interpreters of language and culture for their siblings and parents.

- This role should be recognised, praised and supported in home and school contexts.

Recognition, praise and support should also be given to the school staff who are doing so much on a daily basis to ensure a positive and safe environment in which these pupils can grow. This is an aspect of their new Scottish culture which immigrant and asylum-seeking children have no difficulty at all in reading and truly appreciating at a human level.
8. Appendices

8.1 Information letter for parents
8.2 Parent consent form
8.3 Sample interview schedule for ‘Wee Grantie’
8.4 Sample of pupils’ responses to good and bad things about living in Scotland
8.5 Sample of pupils’ notebooks
8.6 Sample of pupils’ drawings in response to
   8.6.1 ‘Tigger’ (asking parents if they could have a pet)
   8.6.2 ‘Wee Grantie’
   8.6.3 Scottish monsters
   8.6.4 Scottish cartoon families
Dear Parent or Carer

“How Children Experience Scottish Identity through Classroom Books”

We are conducting a research project on how children from different cultures experience Scottish identity through the classroom books they read. This research is sponsored by the Education Department of the Scottish Executive. Your school has kindly agreed to take part in our project and your child’s classroom has been selected to participate. From the classroom we may wish to interview your child about his or her responses to a chosen children’s book that everyone is reading with the teacher. This would involve audio-taped discussions or interviews with a teacher-researcher for up to half an hour on three occasions (your child’s teacher will be consulted as to the best time for this, so that schoolwork will not be affected).

We can assure you that involvement in the project is voluntary and that you are free to withdraw consent at any time and to withdraw any data previously supplied. In other words, if you decide at any time during this project that you do not want your child to continue participating, you may do so and we will not use any parts of the interviews we’ve had with your child.

We will take all the necessary steps to protect the confidentiality of children and families. Eventually, parts of the interview may be included in a research report or in a scholarly article for an academic journal. Your child’s identity will be protected as we will use different names that have no connection with the children’s real names or the school name.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research project, you can contact Dr -- Ethics Officer, Faculty of Education, University of Glasgow, G3 6NH.

We do hope that you will give your permission for your child to take part in the research. It will help us understand how books can help children develop within the culture in which they live. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us or with your child’s class teacher if you have any queries.

Kind regards

Dr Evelyn Arizpe, Associate Researcher in Children’s Literature

Prof Jim McGonigal, Professor of English in Education
CONSENT FORM

I give permission for ____________________________________________
to participate in the research project “How Children Experience Scottish Identity through Classroom Books”, led by Prof. Jim McGonigal and Dr. Evelyn Arizpe.

I am aware that my child may be selected to participate in discussions and interviews which will be audio-taped.

I understand that the confidentiality of the data will be protected and that if parts of the interviews are published this will be done under a pseudonym, so that my child cannot be identified.

I understand that involvement in the project is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time and to withdraw any data previously supplied.

Signed                                                                                             Date

*Please return this slip to your child’s class teacher.*
Sample questions for the whole class session

“Wee Grantie”

1) What did you think of the story?

2) Do you think that this is how children treat each other in Scotland? Boys? Girls?
   Could this happen to boys in another country? Girls?
   If it did happen to someone in another country, would there be anything different
   about the story?

3) What did you think about how the boys treated Grantie? How could they feel sorry
   for him at the same time as they teased him?

4) I wonder why Grantie acted the way that he did?

5) What were the girls thinking when they saw Grantie?

6) Is this the way Scottish children speak at school? Do they speak differently when
   they come out of school? Do you?

7) What do you think about writing down the words the way they sound? Does it
   make the story more real?

8) In what other ways is the story ‘Scottish’?

9) Can you describe the pictures you saw in your head when you heard the story?

10) Is there anything else you would like to tell me about this story? Does it remind
    you of any other stories you have heard or read?
Sample questions for the small group session

1) Do you speak any other languages apart from English?
   Where do you speak these languages?
   Who do you speak them with?
   Do you read or write in any of these languages?
   Do you go to any language lessons after school?
   Who helps with homework, siblings, parents etc?

2) What sort of books do you read in your language?
   Where are they usually set?
   Could you tell me about them.
   How are they different from the books you read in English –what they are about, language, are they funny, do they have pictures?

3) Do you watch videos or play computer games in your language?
   Who buys these for you?

4) Do you think books and pictures help people understand more about other countries?
   Could you tell me in what ways they can help them?
Interview questions for English language teacher and bilingual support teacher

1. The aim of our research is to find out more about how children from immigrant ethnic minorities understand British and Scottish culture as it appears in children’s books. What do you expect we will find?

2. Briefly talk us through the general process by which recently arrived pupils are introduced to English – what sort of materials/texts are they given to learn to read?

3. How much information is gathered about home situation- language, previous level of education- and how is this done?

4. How much do teachers know about literacy practices in the home, ie community lessons – how do they find out?

5. How much do pupils talk about these and/or are encouraged to bring in texts, to reflect about language use at home, community and at school?

6. Have you had an experience with any particular Scottish text/book used with bilingual pupils or in general in class that has raised interesting issues about culture and identity?

7. Do you agree with the Cassels report findings that:
   -‘The view was expressed that some British born bilinguals are becoming British born semi-linguals talking ‘Scotch Broth’. (p16)

8. How do the pupils, both 'Scots' and 'ethnic minority' respond to using/ hearing 'Scots' in classroom: sense of it being 'inferior', parental expectations. How do children who consider themselves as ‘Scottish’ respond to the portrayal of their own culture in such texts?

9. One of the issues we want to explore is what it means to be bi-cultural in a country like Scotland where national identity is itself in a process of change and self-definition. To what extent do you think pupils from minority ethnic families feel ‘Scottish’ – when do they begin to feel ‘Scottish’ if they do?
Living in Scotland...

is good because: is good
because there are good
people.

There are kind people you
can trust.

is not so good because: Some parents
are not good. Some people are
not right.

Some people are want
to fight.
living in Scotland

It's good because .......... It's bad because ..
• there is lots of fantastic shop, cinemas and more
• There is lots of town and Citys
• There is more things to see.

living in Scotland -

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<th>Good because:</th>
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Mostly the Scottish people when they talk they always say "law" bad words. But I am not going to say all of the people are like that. There are some families and old people that is very helpful kind like the old people in my flat. The things that I like about Glasgow is I can be friends very easily some people are very helpful kind too.

You need Scottish accent to talk like that:
(Next page)→→→

Too oftens= they use it a lot not much they don’t use it a lot

Yes= yes they use it a lot

No= no they use it a lot too

Cheers = thanks they use it a lot too. To thanks to and cheers means the same thing.

Di-din’t = too day they use that too. Did-n’t= didn’t too often.

Can’t= too often.

Mum can I have a giraffe? 

No!!

Because we work too many hours.

NAE Chance Wee barf a
Hello I'm granbrie, see yesterday when I came to school I saw a lovely girl called Karen. Atchison, the people always think I'm a pain in the neck when I talk too much. I've got lots of pals, some times my pals wind me up. One day I was swimming in the pool and my pals took my classes away.
A think that wee Grantie wis
Awesome. He really like him he wis
up for everyone I liked how he
said that they wanted me body.
But the bad thing wis that
the other boys disliked him
him and if a wis one of the
boys he would be safawise
but all he wanted was attention
and he wasn’t getting it
because his wee sis had
a problem and his maw
wis puttin her attention on his sis.
I think he is funny but I would not like him as a brother.
I would like him as a friend.
I would like him as a friend because he is an accident prone like me.
My Scotch Monster

By

Loch Ness Head and Neck

Porridge body

Thistle legs

Rubbish tail

I made my monster by thinking of all the things that represent Scotland and what it's famous for. In this monster, he has Loch Ness Head and neck, porridge body, thistle legs and a rubbish tail.
Have you got any cream cake?

Muncher

Colonel

Dun hewt

Dude

Cick
9. Bibliography

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