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Intentions versus Enactment:

Making sense of policy and practice for teaching English as an additional language

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This article examines the relationship between policy and practice for the teaching of children with English as an additional language (EAL) in English schools. It contributes original insights into how teachers are supported or restricted in developing the nuances of pedagogy needed for children new to English. The reported research took place against a backdrop of rising numbers of migrant children with EAL in English schools, partnered with a significant reduction in educational funding for these children and a limited focus on EAL in educational policy. Policy documents for EAL from two contrasting but contiguous periods of government were compared through an intertextual lens, and this was set alongside responses to a survey of teachers about their sense-making of policies and practices for EAL. Findings contribute to much-needed practical understanding of how policy enactment in practice may be divorced from policy makers' intentions. Outcomes provide a timely evidence-base which enhances our grasp of the complexity of teachers' professional lives in relation to children from different linguistic backgrounds. Moreover, analysis uncovers where policymakers' discourse reflects how children with EAL are perceived and received in their host countries during a period of hitherto unseen high levels of migration.

Introduction

In England, as in many other parts of Europe, the number of migrant children has risen considerably in recent years as a result of both planned migration from the EU and forced migration from areas of conflict. In UK schools, there are more than a million school pupils between five and eighteen years old, who between them speak more than 360 languages in addition to English; 20% of primary

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school and 16% of secondary school children are learning English as an additional language (EAL) (DfE 2017).

Despite the increasing number of migrant children in schools, and the challenges faced by their teachers, the resourcing of and policy references to children with EAL have been reduced year on year since 2010 (Strand, Malmberg, and Hall 2015). This is reflected in both the amount of text devoted to language policy for EAL pupils and in the explicit guidance for teachers and schools with regard to assessment and curriculum planning. Thus, without clear curriculum policies and prescriptions for EAL, teachers and schools may struggle to make informed decisions when responding to their pupils' specific pedagogical and linguistic needs (Anderson, Foley, Sangster, Edwards and Rassool 2016). While research into teacher education in the past decades has stressed the importance of sense-making of educational policies as a crucial process in improving pupil learning (Palmer and Rangel 2011; Chase 2016), few studies have examined how teachers in the UK perceive and interpret policy in their EAL classroom practice.

This study fills that gap by 1) examining how the policy for EAL pupils has shifted in its intentions as governments have changed in the UK in the past two decades; and 2) through a survey exploring how teachers make sense of past and current policies in relation to EAL practice. The study sheds light on the reality of policy enactment as filtered through teachers' practices and contributes to our understanding of how and whether policy is enacted in practice for EAL pupils in England. It addresses important issues related to multilingualism and schooling at a time when attitudes to migration in England are particularly politically charged (Jaworska and Themistocleous 2018).

Making sense of educational policies for EAL learners

A plethora of educational policies are implemented in schools around the world every year, yet little is known about how they are interpreted, negotiated, adapted and enacted by teachers within school contexts. Internationally, studies into policies regarding EAL learners or English Language Learners (ELLs) have steadily increased over the past decades (Foley, Sangster and Anderson 2013; Jonson 2009; Johnson and Freeman 2010; Leung and Creese 2010). Some researchers have paid attention to implementation processes by looking at how teachers translate policies into practices and how they make sense of policies (Bridwell-Michell and Sherer 2017; Chase 2016; Coburn 2001; 2005; Palmer and Rangel 2011).

Sense-making is a process whereby policies are theoretically and practically internalised (Coburn 2001; Chase 2016). Central to the notion of sense-making is how teachers select information from their environment, interpret that information, and then act on those interpretations, developing practices, making social norms, and forming communities. Coburn (2001), for example, conducted a case study of an elementary school in California where she examined the ways teachers collectively interpreted and reconstructed policy messages. In the process of interpretation, teachers 'adapted, adopted, combined, or ignored messages' (Coburn 2001, 147) to determine how they could improve reading instruction. She also found that the formal institutional networks and informal alliances among teachers shape the process of interpretation and classroom practices. Similarly, Chase (2016) in her study of policy implementation in higher education also found that macro-level formative context and informal institutional collegial connection play a major role in policy interpretation.

Making sense of policies is a complex process involving both macro-level policy concerns and micro-level classroom cultures, such as pupils' learning conditions and linguistic profiles. Johnson (2013, 111) points out that policy texts are 'invested with language ideologies and they tend to normalise and naturalise particular ways of speaking, behaving, and educating' . In order to

understand how policy discourse reflects the dominant ideology and how language is used to position language minority pupils, Johnson (2011) used discourse elements such as lexicon-choices to present the political debate of 'flexibility and accountability' that led to the creation of NCLB policy in the U.S. Also examining policy documents, Curdt-Christiansen and Sun (2016) situated their study in the context of pre-school bilingual education in Singapore. Through intertextual analysis, they examined two official documents related to mother tongue languages education and found inconsistent ideological orientations in the documents regarding the purposes and goals in Mother Tongue Education as well as the instructional guiding principles. While the above review illuminates that textual and discourse analysis can be a powerful analytical tool to illustrate the ideological intentions of policy makers, little is known about how practitioners interpret policy text, and make sense of particular features of policy texts in the English context.

Johnson (2013) refers to the sense-making process as policy engagement in which policy actors appropriate, interpret, negotiate and [re]construct a language policy in the process of enactment. In recent years, Johnson and colleagues (Johnson 2009; Johnson and Freeman 2010; Johnson and Johnson 2015) have examined language policies at federal, state and district level in the United States to understand the challenges teachers face in promoting bilingual education. In one of the studies, situated in the state of Washington, Johnson and Johnson (2015) developed a language policy arbiter model to understand how dual language bilingual education policy was interpreted by different levels of arbiters. They found that, in the process of policy decision making, the same language policy was interpreted differently by arbiters/implementers based on their beliefs about language, language education and understanding of educational research. As a result, two identical school district-level programmes, governed by the same state-level language policy, resulted in different practices. The authors concluded that 'language policy arbiters as individuals have a disproportionate amount of impact on language policy and educational programmes (Johnson and Johnson 2015, 223), which can open or close spaces for additive bilingual education.

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While much of Johnson and colleagues' work emphasises language policy as a multi-layered process taking place across multiple levels of educational contexts, sociolinguistic and sociocultural features, such as language beliefs and ideologies, public media and institutional documents about bi/multilingual speakers, have also been shown to influence policy decisions (Jaworska and Themistocleous 2018; Johnson and Freeman 2010). Johnson and Freeman (2010) employed ethnography of language policy to make connections between macro and micro policy, illustrating how educators infuse their beliefs about pupils' needs in their interpretations of evolving federal, state, and local language policies. Such consideration of pupils' needs, however, do not always align with the goals of policy makers. Bridewell-Michell and Sherer (2017), thus, argue that while practitioners may be fully committed to policy reforms, their efforts often do not match policymakers' intentions.

Within the UK context, studies of teachers' sense-making of EAL related policies hav received little attention. Most of the studies in the field of EAL have focused on institutional policy provisions (Costley 2014; Leung 2016; Safford and Drury 2013), preservice teaching programmes (Cajkler and Hall 2009; Foley, Sangster and Anderson 2013) and educational achievement of EAL learners (Hutchinson 2018; Strand, Malmberg and Hall, 2015). A few studies have looked at classroom strategies and interactions in relation to subject teaching, and power relationships between subject teachers and EAL teachers (Creese 2005; Leung 2014).

To understand the historical and current development of EAL related educational policy in England, several reviews have been carried out with specific focus on EAL pupils with regard to mainstream school support, policy guidance, and assessment (Costley 2014; Leung 2016; Safford and Drury 2013). Costley (2014) conducted an overview of EAL policy provision in state-funded education in England over the last 60 years. She contended that social policy and social concerns have a strong influence on shaping the provision for EAL pupils. She also asserted that 'what is stated at the level of policy is not always what happens at "the core face"' (p. 277).

More recently, Leung (2016) carried out a comprehensive review of the changing EAL policy by focusing on provisions and conceptualisations of EAL in the past 30 years. In this review, he critically highlighted the notion of 'equality in education' as the underpinning ideology that influences the 'mainstreaming EAL' approach to teaching of EAL pupils. While the broader ideological argument for equality might seem persuasive, the pedagogical approaches to teaching in the UK have not taken into consideration the fine-grained linguistic needs of English language learners. Furthermore, Safford and Drury (2013) identified that teacher training programmes may prepare teachers poorly for responding to children's language needs. This is problematic because any lack of clarity about the distinctions between language needs and other cognitive or physical needs further inhibits the potential for language policy to influence practice.

Foley, Sangster and Anderson (2013) examined how government policies and prescriptions for EAL students were actually implemented in classroom practices. The most striking finding in this study was that many practising teachers lacked adequate subject knowledge for teaching EAL learners, and this is mirrored in other studies (Cajkler and Hall 2009; Leung and Creese 2010). For example, in their study of newly qualified teachers, Cajkler and Hall (2009) found that practitioners lacked confidence in assessment of EAL and in integrating newly arrived bilinguals into standard classroom practice.

While the above review of literature in the UK has identified the need to increase both targeted provision for EAL pupils and EAL-oriented teacher professional development, these studies have not explicitly examined teachers' perceptions of past and current policy and practices for EAL. Neither have existing studies provided any fine-grained analysis of the most recent policy documentation for EAL. To date there is a paucity of research illuminating teachers' own position in relation to policy for EAL and therefore limited evidence pertaining to the discourse of policy and the social process of enacting policy (Fairclough, 2010). Our study addresses these issues by asking the following questions:

- What are the intentions of national policy makers for the teaching of EAL pupils as expressed through policy documentation?

- How do teachers make sense of EAL related policies for the teaching of EAL pupils?

- What are the differences between the intentions of the policy makers and the practical realities of teachers enacting language policy?

Context of the study

There is a perception that educational policy and provision for EAL students in England has been closely related to the political agenda of the various governing parties. With regard to this study, there has been a widespread concern that the current government's 'hostile migration policy', which conflates minority languages with negative views of migration (Jaworska and Themistocleous 2018), has influenced the introduction of the current language policy in schools, that explicitly requires schools to collect   data relating to EAL pupils' nationality and country of birth (DfE 2017).

A further complexity is that school provision in England has seen an increase in centrally-managed schools, identified as either 'Academies' or 'Free Schools', since 2002. These schools are state-funded schools, but not affiliated to Local Authorities, and not subject to any localised policy for, for example, the teaching of EAL. While Free Schools, which make up only 2% of schools in England and which are set up by religious and community groups, have greater numbers of EAL pupils (39.4%) than Local Authority schools (20%) (Andrews and Johnes 2017), the same cannot be said for Academies which tend towards selective entry and which make up approximately 24% of schools. There is, therefore, in England, a potentially toxic mix of: reduction in funding and resourcing for EAL; reduction in the number of schools that are subject to local policy which might support EAL; and a comparatively isolationist political agenda which is actively seeking to reduce migration to the UK.

To illustrate how political sensitivities may be played out in language policy in England, we focused our analysis on two recent periods: pre- 2010 (1999 – 2009) and post-2010 (2011 – 2016). During the first period, educational policy was generated by the education department of a Labour (centre-left) government, whereas in the second period the same department was led by a coalition government (liberal and centre-right) between 2010 and 2015, followed by a centre-right government after May 2015.

The curriculum in England is orchestrated centrally, and most state schools – with the exception of Academies and Free Schools - are required to teach a nationally prescribed programme across all levels for all subjects. Differences between the *National Curriculum* pre-2010 (DfES 1989) and the *National Curriculum* post-2010 (DfE 2013) regarding the teaching of English are apparent in several ways: 1) the post-2010 model has little in the way of prescription and purports to contain only 'what' teachers should teach rather than 'how' they should teach it; in contrast, the pre-2010 curriculum was perceived as overly prescriptive; 2) the pre-2010 curriculum included many appended documents for the teaching of pupils with EAL, while the post-2010 curriculum includes very limited guidance for EAL teaching.

The reduction in guidance for teaching EAL was criticised by researchers and scholars in the field (Leung 2014, 2016; Safford and Drury 2013) as they drew attention to the assumptions in the current *National Curriculum* that pupils learn English simply through engagement with the curriculum rather than through any additional support or adaptation of pedagogy. Such assumptions have subsequently given EAL a low priority on school development plans, and this has limited the opportunities for teacher professional development for EAL (Anderson et al.2016), which had already been restricted by reductions in funding at Local Authority level (Strand et al. 2015).

In terms of funding, provision for EAL teaching and learning support in England is decided at a local rather than a national level, which, of itself exacerbates potential for an uneven playing field. Local authorities are given the option to include, or not to include, an element for EAL support in

their local funding formula, and they may also choose whether EAL pupils remain funded for one, two or three years after their arrival in the country (NALDIC 2016).

At the time of writing, the status of language policy for EAL learners in the UK appears a limited one that is conflated with a negative discourse around migration and complicated by regional variations in funding. Something of an anomaly, therefore, was the recent introduction of a nationwide policy for the assessment of EAL pupils' language proficiency. The *Department for Education English Proficiency Scales* (hereafter DfEPS), were introduced in 2016 and required that schools annually report data on EAL pupils' proficiency in English. On a five-point scale, each child is assessed and placed in one of the following categories: A. *New to English*, B. *Early Acquisition*, C. *Developing Competence*, D. *Competent*, or E. *Fluent*. Alongside its introduction was a requirement that schools also report information about their pupils' countries of birth and nationalities. As a policy, it was perceived as part of a negative political discourse about migration (Hutchinson 2018). This perception was compounded by the fact that the scales were published with no guidance as to their use nor any clarity as to how the reported data would be used. In the first year of reporting, more than 20% of pupils did not provide data on their country of birth and nearly 9% were not allocated a level of English proficiency (DfE, 2107). Significantly, throughout 2017 and 2018, considerable tensions around Britain's exit from the EU have been very much to the forefront of politicians' combative, migration-related discourse.

Thus our study is situated against a backdrop of hostile migration commentary and post-Brexit uncertainty. Attitudes towards the teaching of EAL are confused in that policy references are very limited but a demand for national assessment of EAL pupils has been a significant move forwards in highlighting the linguistic challenges they might face. In what follows, we illustrate how we examine these tensions between policy and practice.

Research methodology

This study is divided in two parts. The first part involves an analysis of EAL policy documentation on the two time periods of pre- and post-2010, produced at national level in order to uncover policy makers' intentions for the teaching of EAL pupils. Based on this analysis, the second part of the study involves a survey designed to capture EAL teachers' understanding and sense-making of policy for EAL.

Policy documentation analysis

National level policy for the periods 1999 – 2009 and 2011 – 2016 were collated for comparison, as shown in Table 1. Given the considerable imbalance in the amount of documentation, a small corpus of documents of like-content from either side of 2010 were analysed. Three matched document types were chosen (underlined in the table), including the *National Curriculum* relevant for each time period (DfE 2013; QCA/DfES 1999), guidance related to classroom practice for EAL (DfE 2011; DfES 2006) and guidance/policy for the assessment of EAL pupils (DfE 2016; DfES 2005). Although only one of these documents, *the National Curriculum*, is statutory policy for EAL, the other documents, as related guidance, are manifestations of policymakers' intentions for the enactment of policy in practice (Johnson 2013).

Table 1: Documents from each time period and those selected for comparison

Pre 2010	Post 2010
QCA/DfES (1999) *The National Curriculum for Primary Schools in England and Wales (8 pages on inclusion)*	DfE (2011) *Developing Quality Tuition: Effective practice in schools: English as an additional language (4 pages).*
DfES, (2004). *Aiming High: Guidance on Supporting the Education of Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children (27 pages)*	DfE (2013) *The National Curriculum for England* (2 paragraphs for EAL)
DfES, (2004). *Aiming High: Understanding the Educational Needs of Minority Ethnic Pupils in Mainly White Schools (32 pages)*	DfE (2016) *School census 2016 to 2017, pp 61 – 64 introduction of proficiency scales* (three pages)
DfES, (2005). *Aiming High: Guidance on the assessment of pupils learning English as an additional language (25 pages)*	
DfES, (2005). *Aiming High: Meeting the needs of newly arrived learners of English as an additional language (14 pages)*	
DfES, (2006). *Excellence and Enjoyment: Learning and teaching for bilingual children in the primary years: Unit 1 planning and assessment (of 17 units covering curriculum and families – 369 pages)*	
DCSF. (2007). *New Arrivals Excellence Programme (68 pages)*	
DCSF, (2008). *Rationale for planning for children learning English as an additional language (15 pages)*	
DCSF, (2009). *Ensuring the attainment of more advanced (secondary) learners of English as an additional language (76 pages)*	
TDA, (2009). *Strategy for the development of the English as an additional language (EAL) workforce in schools (17 pages)*	

The data sources show not only differences between the weight of guidance with regard to the amount of text dedicated to EAL teaching, but also in discourse choice. For example, the early policy documentation came under the umbrella titles of *'aiming higher'* and *'excellence and enjoyment'*, terms filled with aspiration and a sense of focus on the individual. In contrast, terms such as 'tuition' and 'proficiency' in the later document potentially suggest an old-school pedagogy that tutors EAL learners in mastery of the English language. However, it is important to examine the strength of the assumption that the discourse from either time-period is more or less inclusive in its intentions, and to this end data analysis starts with examining the occurrence and collocates of a range of terms related to EAL teaching and learning.

Firstly, *Documentary analysis* was performed by using the corpus linguistics programme AntConc (Anthony 2017). The search terms used, and their occurrences in each time period, are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Search terms used to examine language policy discourse

Search term	Instances Pre 2010	Instances Post 2010
EAL	103	29
English as an additional language	44	5
bilingual	133	1
multilingual	0	0
diversity	9	1
inclusion	19	3
ethnicity	4	7
language	527	167
fluency	20	28
proficiency	16	27
children	527	14
learners	65	9

There were differences in both the number of occurrences and in the positioning of particular terms, and these were in some cases significant. Arguably the fact that there was a greater word count in the pre-2010 documentation, because guidance was more detailed, meant that comparison was not always meaningful. Furthermore, in some cases differences in the use of terms were not readily identifiable from the discourse, and this may indicate some unexpected sharing of outlook, between the two time-periods. Nevertheless, some lexico-grammatical features in one or both sets of documents were identified by inter-textual analysis (Johnson 2015) and distinct differences in the intentions of policymakers were identified through consideration of how terms were positioned syntactically and within the wider text organisation.

Survey

The second part of the study is based on a survey distributed to teachers in England. The survey was adapted to the British context from its US version by Milbourn, Viesca and Leech (2017). It included items related to EAL practice for practitioners and policy comprehension for EAL teaching, especially

regarding the new DfEPS. When drafting the survey, we consulted and piloted the survey with a

focus group of eight EAL teachers and local authority EAL specialists. Following this, changes were

made to the questions and statements to make them more meaningful and comprehensible for

practitioners.

The survey consisted of 62 items and covered five components: 1) 13 items on demographic

information, including length in service and educational qualification; 2) ten items on teachers'

awareness and understanding of policy; 3) 17 items on teachers' subject knowledge for and

attitudes to L2 acquisition; 4) 11 items on classroom practice; and 5) six items on assessment of EAL

pupils. For this paper we have analysed the demographic data (1) in relation to the items related to

policy (2) in order to address our research questions.

The survey was conducted online in the spring/summer of 2017, and participants (Table 3)

were sought through a number of avenues: email contact with regional and national EAL specialists;

social media; and awareness raising at teacher-oriented events attended by the researchers.

Table 3: Survey Respondents' backgrounds

Variable		Numbers/Percentage
Age range taught	Primary (5-11 yrs)	42%
	Secondary (11-18 yrs)	58%
Gender	Female	79%
	Male	21%
Years in the profession	First year	5%
	2-5	19%
	5-10	20%
	10-20	27%
	More than 20	29%
Ethnicity	White British	86%
	White Eastern European	8%
	Others (Indian, African)	4%
First Language	English	76%
	Other than English	19%
	English and other	3%
Proficient in other languages	No	41%
	Somewhat	26%
	Yes	32%
Geographic region	South East	52%
	South West	8%
	Midlands	8%
	North East	10%
	North West	20%

Out of 136 respondents, 95 completed all the survey questions. The number of respondents seems small given the national reach of the survey, but the fact that EAL is not treated as a specialism in the teaching workforce, or as a curriculum subject in England, limits its perceived relevance for teachers (Leung 2016). Furthermore, as we mentioned earlier, in many schools in England the teaching of EAL is not identified as a priority because of pressure from ministers to focus on broader notions of 'disadvantage', and this too may have affected teachers' motivation to take part (Anderson et al. 2016). Reasons for some failure to complete all of the questions may also have been related to teachers' lack of confidence in their EAL teaching, or to the length of the survey.

Findings

In this section, we outline the major findings of the study, drawing on outcomes from both data sets, and in doing so attend to our research questions.

Policy makers' intentions for the teaching of pupils with EAL

The National Curriculum for England

Comparing the text of the two versions of *The National Curriculum* (DfE 2013; DfES/QCA 1999), we found several differences, including the amount of text devoted to the teaching of EAL children, and the use of terms relating to EAL children and to inclusive practice. In the pre-2010 document, eight pages were devoted to instruction for teachers on how to make their classroom inclusive and specifically EAL-oriented (DfES/QCA 1999, 37). In the post-2010 document, only one page is used for all aspects of education for children with additional needs, and just seven lines are related to the teaching of EAL children (DfE 2013, 8).

Table 4: Guidance for the teaching of EAL in National Curriculum Documentation

DfES (1999) *The National Curriculum for Primary Schools in England and Wales* (extract, p.37) (emphasis added by authors)	DfE (2013) *The National curriculum in England: primary curriculum* (full text, page 8) (emphasis added by authors)
Teachers develop pupils' spoken and written English through: • ensuring that there are effective <u>opportunities for talk</u> and that talk is used to <u>support</u> writing in all subjects • where appropriate, encouraging pupils to transfer <u>their knowledge, skills and understanding</u> of one language to another, pointing out similarities and differences between languages • building on <u>pupils' experiences of language at home and in the wider community</u>, so that their developing uses of English and other languages <u>support</u> one another.	• 4.5 Teachers <u>must</u> …take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Monitoring of progress <u>should</u> take account of the pupil's age, length of time in this country, previous educational experience and ability in other languages. • 4.6 The ability of pupils for whom English is an additional language to take part in the national curriculum may be in advance of their communication skills in English. Teachers <u>should</u> plan teaching opportunities to help pupils develop their English and should aim to provide the support pupils need to take part in all subjects.

The extracts in Table 4 indicate where some of the discourse differences lie. *The National Curriculum* pre-2010 detailed the ways in which teachers might 'support' their EAL pupils and, as an example, drew on home languages and community experiences. Conversely, the discourse of post-2010 is more inclined to use imperative verbs in asserting that teachers 'must' and 'should' account for their EAL pupils, but this is not accompanied by any guidance as to 'how' (Leung 2016).

Looking at the search terms, we found that the words '*diversity*' and '*language*' were particularly significant in further illustrating discourse differences between each version of the National Curriculum. Of the nine occurrences of *'diversity'* in the pre-2010 *National Curriculum*, all were related to a broader vision of education for a diverse society and to the relevance of a socially inclusive view of society in different subject areas. The single occurrence of this word in the post-2010 version is related only to the history curriculum. Of the many references to '*language*' in the pre-2010 documentation, 16 were related to an inclusive view of pupils' languages in the *National Curriculum*. In the post-2010 *National Curriculum,* all references to '*language*' are within a monolingual, subject-related context that does not acknowledge a multilingual classroom (Safford and Drury 2013)

Thus, a vision of education for a diverse and multilingual society was lost between the two versions, and this may to some extent explain why the post-2010 *National Curriculum* has such limited reference to linguistic differences.

Policy on planning teaching for EAL pupils

Comparing documentation related to planning for English language learners (DfE 2011; DfES 2006), we found that similar differences between the amount of guidance and discourse style emerged. The pre-2010 document was part of a set of four teaching units, each consisting of ca. 50 pages, whereas the post-2010 document has only four pages and is presented as a sole piece of guidance. Table 5 shows some illustrative texts from the pre- and post-2010 periods.

Table 5: Discourse differences in pre- and post-2010 documentation related to planning for EAL

DfES (2006). *Excellence and Enjoyment: Learning and teaching for bilingual children in the primary years*, Unit 1, Planning and assessment for language and learning (p. 25)	DfE (2011). *Developing Quality Tuition: Effective practice in schools: English as an additional language.* (p.1)
EAL children have to learn a new language while learning through the medium of that new language. To ensure they reach their <u>potential</u>, learning and teaching approaches must be deployed that ensure both access to the curriculum at a <u>cognitively appropriate level</u> and <u>maximum</u> language development.	Pupils learning English as an additional language (EAL) share many common characteristics with pupils whose first language is English. However, their learning <u>experience differs</u> because they are learning in and through another language, and because they may come from cultural backgrounds and communities that have <u>different understandings</u> and <u>expectations</u> of education, language and learning.

In the preamble of pre-2010 policy, there were references to the work of Cummins, which made a clear distinction between conversational language (BICS) and the academically demanding language of the curriculum (CALP) (Cummins 1980). Conversely, the discourse of post-2010 shapes a vision of the child as having common learning characteristics with monolingual English pupils while at the same time suggesting that they are 'different' and that this difference may impact on their

experience of school and language learning. The pre-2010 policy took the stance that the teacher must be research-informed and should plan appropriately to maximise pupil outcomes, while the post-document puts forward unsupported generalisations that do neither enhance teacher subject-knowledge for EAL nor support inclusive practice (Leung 2016).

While there was a recognition of the role of L1 in L2 acquisition in the pre-2010 policy, there is a deficit undertone of home language associated with 'barriers' in the post-2010 document, such as in the text, 'identifying misconceptions arising from language barriers' (p.2). The pre-2010 policy used 'potential' to describe pupils as capable individuals for whom teachers have the responsibility to ensure 'maximum language development'. The post-2010 document uses 'differs' and 'different understandings and expectations of education, language and learning' (p.2) to depict them, which implicitly makes them 'others' in the English educational context.

Another interesting pattern that emerged in the documents was the word choice used for EAL speakers. In the pre-2010 document (DfES 2005), the word 'children' appeared in 200 instances, but in its post-2010 counterpart (DfE 2011) 'children' does not appear at all and, instead, children with EAL are referred to as 'learners'. The term EAL-learners was used many times in the pre-2010 documentation, but its reduction to just 'learners' in the post-2010 documentation suggests a picture of children as somehow lacking something while they learn English. In removing the notion of English language learning from the description, the post-2010 documentation appears to subscribe to a very generalised view of the learner, rather than one that explicitly takes account of language learning for a child who already speaks other languages. This further emphasises the loss of a vision for a multilingual society that emerged in comparing the two National Curricula.

Policy on assessment of children with EAL

Comparing the documentation related to assessment of EAL (DfE 2016; DfES 2005), we found that the discourse differences remained. It should be noted, however, that there was a major dissimilarity: as noted in setting the context for this research, in 2016 the Department for Education made it a statutory requirement that teachers in England collect and return data recording the level of English proficiency of their EAL pupils. Thus post-2010 intentions in relation to assessment have been expressed by more than policy documentation: they include expectation of actions.

While the pre-2010 guidance was characterised by inclusive language, in keeping with other documents from that era, the practical guidance for assessment was comparatively broad-brush and less fine-grained with regard to the support for assessment. Discourse was nested within the notion of assessment **for** learning rather than assessment **of** learning; this suggested that a summative assessment of additional language development was not required. Furthermore, it encouraged teachers to use *National Curriculum* measures for language assessment (DfES 2005, 6). Although practical for teachers, the guidance was inappropriate because it required teachers to use a measure of monolingual progress for bilingual children, thus reflecting a problem commonly recognised in England that policy assumes a monolingual model for both teaching and assessment (Safford and Drury 2013).

With respect to the post-2010 document, the introduction of the term 'English proficiency', which appeared in the pre-2010 documentation only in relation to the work of Cummins, indicates that this policy initiative requires a more nuanced subject-knowledge from teachers. Furthermore, the introduction of the DfEPS suggests that there is an intention for this mandatory assessment to inform further policy decisions for EAL pupils (DfE 2016, 2018). However, recent studies have reported that the assessments have neither been moderated nor introduced with clear guidance as to their application or their intention (Hutchinson 2018).

In summary, the analysis of documentation, related to the teaching of EAL in England, presented a mixed picture. While there were differences in discursive style between the two periods, suggesting significant differences in the ways in which children with EAL have been perceived and described, and a move towards a negative discourse in the later time period that reflected a wider negative commentary around migration at the time, the introduction of statutory assessment scales presented teachers with something of a directive to take account of their EAL pupils' progress. How teachers made sense of this and other policy initiatives from the two time-periods was explored through responses to the survey.

Intentions of policy-makers and teachers' sense-making

In this section, we report the findings of the survey. Ten items, concerning teachers' understanding of the DfEPS policy, were formulated as statements. Responses were given on a five-point Likert-scale, ranging from 'strongly agree with' to 'unaware of the policy.' In what follows, we provide the descriptive statistics of the findings shown in table 5. The findings are divided into two parts: making sense of policy, and policy enactment.

Table 6: Teachers' understanding and awareness of the new proficiency scale policy

	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Unaware of policy /not available	
1	I draw on current national policy documents, such as the National Curriculum (2014), to support my teaching of EAL pupils.	0%	22%	47%	10%	14%	
2	I draw on EAL-related guidance, produced by the National Strategies (2003 – 2009), to support my teaching of EAL pupils. E.g., Excellence and Enjoyment; Teaching and Learning for Bilingual Children in the Primary Years (2007); New Arrivals Excellence Programme (2008) etc.	4%	22%	43%	20%	9%	
3	I understand how to apply the new DfE English language proficiency scales.	14%	30%	23%	4%	29% (no answer)	
4	The new DfE proficiency scale for EAL is beneficial for me in planning teaching strategies for my EAL pupils.	8%	36%	28%	10%	18%	
5	I am able to use the DfE proficiency scales as an assessment tool to determine the areas of grammar that are challenging for my EAL learners.	20%	38%	9%	4%	29%	
6	I am able to use the DfE proficiency scales to determine the writing difficulties, encountered by my EAL learners.	21%	37%	12%	3%	28%	
7	The new DfE proficiency scale supports me in measuring children's development and progress in four language areas – speaking, listening, reading and writing.	8%	21%	25%	18%	28%	
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not available/or don't know	other
8	I draw on the support of my Local Authority EAL team to support my teaching of EAL pupils.	10%	18%	23%	16%	10%	22%
9	I draw on guidance I received during my teacher training to support my teaching of EAL pupils.	16%	20%	16 %	33%	15%	
10	I draw on the support of experienced colleagues in my school to support my teaching of EAL pupils.	9%	18%	38%	35%	0	

Making sense of policy

As shown in Table 6, the responses were not always consistent. While most teachers agreed that

they drew on both current and pre-2010 policy to support their teaching of EAL students, the

number of teachers who were unaware of the policies is not negligible (14% for post-2010 – statement 1; 9% for pre-2010 – statement 2). Teachers who showed either 'strongly agree' or 'agree' with the first two statements (57% in statement 1 and 63% in statement 2) demonstrated that they drew on a wide range of centrally published EAL guidance documents and did not necessarily pay attention to which government might have produced them. The negative response to the statements (22% - statement 1; 26% - statement 2) indicated some mismatch between what policy makers might intend and what actually happens in classrooms.

Interestingly, our analysis showed no correlation ($p > 0.05$) between years of teaching experience and responses to these two statements. This was surprising because we had anticipated that teachers trained and practising in the years before 2010 might be more likely to draw on older guidance than teachers trained post 2010. Instead there appeared to be no pattern in what teachers were drawing on. This finding indicates that policy-makers should not assume enactment of their intentions; clearly teachers made sense of policy regardless of the political leanings of the policy-makers who constructed it and regardless of the time period to which it belonged.

We paid particular attention to statements 1 (I draw on current national policy documents, such as the National Curriculum) and 3 (I understand how to apply the new DfE English language proficiency scales) to explore whether teachers, who indicated they drew on post-2010 policy, also understood how to apply the DfEPS; in other words, how teachers made sense of the current policy. It was interesting to note that responses showed contradictory distribution patterns: 44% of the respondents (14% strongly disagree and 30% disagree) indicated that they did not know how to apply the new DfEPS. This mismatch between the two responses was puzzling, given that the survey was distributed to teachers within months of a new policy initiative in schools. Cross-tabular comparison showed a weak but positive relationship ($r = 0.154$, $p<0.05$), indicating weak sense-making of the new DfEPS (Table 7).

Table 7: Correlations among variables (statement 1-3)

Statement	Statement 2	Statement 3
I draw on current national policy documents, such as the National Curriculum. (S1)	.616**	.154
I draw on EAL-related guidance, produced by the National Strategies (2003 – 2009), to support my teaching of EAL pupils. (S2)		.391**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

This confusing relationship was further compounded by a high number of respondents (29%) indicating that they did not know about the DfEPS. A possible explanation might be that teachers did not associate the practical DfEPS with 'language policy'. This gives further weight to the notion that language policy enactment is likely to be at odds with the intentions of its authors (Johnson 2013, among others). Most interestingly, there was a positive and moderate relationship (r = 0.391, p < 0.05) between respondents who used pre-2010 policy and those who agreed that they could apply the DfE proficiency scales.

Participants' responses to statement 4 (the new DfEPS for EAL is beneficial in planning teaching strategies), showed further evidence of confusion about EAL policy: while 38% of respondents gave positive responses, 44% responded negatively and 18% were unaware of the DfEPS. This low engagement might have multiple causes: 1) teachers did not equate assessment directives with 'policy'; 2) reporting of pupils' proficiency was allocated to specific staff in schools and thus many teachers were unaware of new policy implementation. Whatever the possible causes, the findings reflected the generally low level of priority given to EAL as part of schools' development agenda (Anderson et al. 2016).

Despite the teachers' low engagement with the new policy, we found a strong correlation between the 38% who were positive about the 'beneficial' aspect of the proficiency scales (statement 4) and those who agreed with statements 5 – 7 which focussed on the finer details of

how teachers might use the scales to inform their planning for pupils' English language acquisition and literacy development, as shown in table 8.

Table 8: Correlations among variable (statement 5-7)

Statement	Statement 5 for measuring pupils' development and progress in literacy	Statement 6 as a diagnostic tool to determine areas of difficulty in grammar among the pupils	Statement 7 for determining writing difficulties among the EAL learners
The DfE proficiency scale for EAL is beneficial for me in planning teaching strategies for my EAL pupils (S4)	.768*	.429*	.501*

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Perceived usefulness of the DfEPS significantly correlated with teachers' understanding that it could be used for measuring pupils' development and progress in literacy (r = 0.768, p<0.05); as a diagnostic tool to determine areas of difficulty in grammar among the pupils (r = 0.429, p<0.05); and for determining writing difficulties among the EAL learners (r = 0.501, p<0.05). The finding shows that some teachers were able to make sense of the policy, in that they could use it both for planning learning and for assessment. It may also indicate that these teachers had superior EAL-oriented subject knowledge that supported their embracing this initiative as more than a reporting instrument.

Enactment of policy

Alongside the statements which sought to examine teachers' sense-making of policy for EAL, we also asked participants to respond to statements concerning what policy had been implemented or enacted and from where/whom teachers sought support for their EAL teaching.

With regard to statement 8 (I draw on the support of my Local Authority EAL team to support my teaching of EAL pupils), only 39% of the teachers agreed that they would do so, 28% of the teachers gave a negative response, and 10% of them reported that a Local Authority team did not exist. These findings add further evidence to what has been already reported about the very

mixed picture of provision for EAL support throughout authorities in England (Strand et al. 2015). Such variation in local provision for EAL means that the opportunities for enactment of any national policy for EAL are immediately compromised at local level.

Of interest was that no consensus was observed when it came to the teachers' confidence in their teacher training programmes (statement 9): about 49 % indicated that they drew on the training received, while 36% showed disagreement and 15% were not aware that they had had a programme on EAL during their training. This finding is consistent with what Cajkler and Hall (2009) have reported in their study, that initial teacher training programmes have significant variability with regard to the amount of training student-teachers receive and the effectiveness of such programmes.

With respect to teachers' view on seeking support from colleagues for teaching EAL pupils (statement 10), a different distribution of responses was observed: about 73% of teachers acknowledged that they sought help from experienced colleagues to support their teaching. This high percentage of positive responses contrasted with responses to the statements relating to extra-school support from Local Authorities. Perhaps this, more than any other finding, is significant in truly identifying where disconnect between intentions and enactment is most likely to occur.

Discussion

This research set out to examine the ways in which policy and practice for teaching EAL in England interacted. In doing so, it examined what policymakers' intentions were; how teachers made sense of and enact policy at local level; and to what degree policy makers' intentions and teachers' enactment of policy differed.

The comparison of policy documentation from the pre- and post-2010 periods suggested a shift from a positive construction of bilingualism as an asset to one that is more concerned with bilingualism as a barrier. It appeared that there was a loss of vision for a multilingual society in the

change-over of political administration from 2010. This was to some extent mitigated by the introduction of the DfEPS, but the lack of guidance surrounding this initiative, and its association with the collection of migration-related pupil data (Hutchinson 2018), suggests that the negative construction of bilingualism persisted despite appearances to the contrary.

That said, in essence, we might conclude from these contradictory messages that the policymakers' intentions for EAL were not necessarily readily discernible from the narrative of policy (Johnson, 2013). It is perhaps also the case that language policy narratives for EAL were invested with a terminology that did not lend itself to conclusive analysis; it was not always possible to draw conclusions from the analysis because there were not always clear associations of ideological intent across the sets of documentation. This mirrors Curdt-Christiansen and Sun's (2016) observation of ideological inconsistencies in language policy in Singapore.

Given this opacity in EAL policy, and the limited availability of funding to support EAL teaching, it is perhaps unsurprising that the teachers responding to our survey were likely to make sense of policy, and thus shape their practice for EAL teaching, in collaboration with colleagues in their schools (Coburn 2001; Chase 2016). This, in turn, is likely to have led to variations in interpretation of EAL policy because such a local appropriation of any guidance would have meant adaptation to suit local concerns. Different interpretations give rise to different practices and thus different enactment of the same policy initiatives (Johnson and Johnson 2015).

Of considerable interest in the outcomes was the fact that teachers with varying numbers of years' experience were as likely to draw on pre-2010 as on post-2010 documentation. This supports a picture of teachers as arbiters of policy and further underscores the notion of local enactment of policy in ways that policymakers are unlikely to be aware of (Johnson and Johnson 2015). While the DfEPS might likely to be used actively in school because of the mandatory reporting associated with them, it is possible that they are interpreted by teachers whose mind-set for EAL is in line with pre-2010 guidance. In this way our study reflects the findings of others who have noted that while

practitioners may be committed to policy, their actions are not necessarily in-line with policymakers' intentions (Bridwell-Michell and Sherer 2017; Costley 2014).

Outcomes in relation to adoption or understanding of the DfEPS were mixed, and, at such an early stage in their introduction, we might remain cautious about drawing conclusions from the survey responses. However, the indication from our data that some teachers had not heard of the scales or were unsure as to their purpose and implementation, is supported by the detailed analysis of their introduction by Hutchinson (2018). She criticises the lack of moderation and quality assessment for the scales and the lack of any obvious intention to use the potentially valuable information generated from them to provide meaningful statistical data on EAL pupil progress. Whether her concerns are shared by the teaching profession and have contributed to the outcomes in our survey is difficult to say, but lack of clarity would most certainly have been a contributing factor to the patchy uptake of this initiative.

Finally, the data showed that teachers who were favourably disposed towards the DfEPS were more likely to use them in nuanced ways that supported their pupils' language and literacy development. In this instance, the small sample size in our study makes any generalisation inappropriate, but this avenue is a crucial one to explore in future research. If there was a relationship between confident subject-knowledge and policy engagement for EAL, a case could be made for the upskilling of the workforce for EAL teaching and for greater resourcing of language learning for migrant children, findings echoed by Hutchinson (2018).

Conclusion

Despite discourse differences in policies between the two periods we have examined, issues relating to a disconnect between intentions and enactment, already identified by other researchers, persist in England (Foley et al. 2013; Leung 2016). Our study contributes very timely insights that support an understanding of why this may be the case and what the barriers to progress are in implementing policy for EAL in England. Arguably, the DfE proficiency scales represent a positive turn for policy

related to EAL teaching and learning, but unless policymakers can clarify their purpose, and

disambiguate their use from migration data monitoring, their future value is questionable.

Furthermore, while they sit as part of such very limited and opaque policy for EAL in the current

context, teachers are unlikely to commit to their success. This has significant ramifications for the

futures of migrant children in England and we strongly suggest that more research is needed into

how language policy is perceived and enacted, and, crucially, into how this on-going division can be

evaded as Britain moves further into its post-Brexit future.

Word count 7578

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