

**Preschool literacy and home-school links
in Pakistani origin bilingual families
in the United Kingdom**

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Thesis submitted for a PhD

**University of Sheffield, School of Education
September 2001**

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Notes and Acknowledgements

Notes

In this thesis, the term ‘Pakistani origin’, is used about families and children. By this is meant families living in the UK whose cultural and linguistic origins can be traced back to Pakistan where the parents or grandparents were born. All family members in this study were bilingual but were much more proficient in one language than another. Many other key terms are used in the literature to refer to such families (Pakistani, Asian, ‘Urdu speaking’, ‘Punjabi speaking’, ‘Mirpuri-Punjabi speaking’, EAL (English as an Additional language), immigrant, ethnic minority and ethnic origin). I have used a term that I believe to be accurate and respectful. Therefore, in describing my own research, refer to ‘Pakistani origin’ bilingual families.

Most of the names of individuals mentioned in this thesis are pseudonyms. The exceptions (where permission was given by parents) are seven out of eight children who were in a programme described in Chapter 7. In these cases, the children’s names appeared in some form in their writing.

Shaheen Khan, the bilingual nursery nurse, who acted as interpreter and collaborator, specifically requested that her name should be used throughout the thesis.

Acknowledgements

My grateful thanks to my supervisor Peter Hannon for his support and advice; to Cathy Nutbrown, my friend and colleague for her support, and commenting on an earlier draft of the thesis; to Shaheen Khan (who worked with the families and acted as interpreter) for her collaboration over a number of years; to the children and the families; to the study school; and finally, to my family for their continual support and patience.

This study was partially funded by a studentship from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

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Summary

Preschool literacy and home-school links in Pakistani origin bilingual families in the United Kingdom

Although much is now known about preschool literacy development as a part of family literacy and how it can be linked to school literacy, there has been virtually no research into these issues in relation to bilingual families. The study reported in this thesis aimed to explore the nature of family literacy and how school can collaborate with families to enhance the literacy development of preschool children in the case of Pakistani origin bilingual families in an inner city community in the north of England. Findings from a family literacy survey of 30 bilingual children with preschool children showed that all parents were interested, and most were actively involved, in children's preschool literacy. Most said they were ready to collaborate with school to enhance their child's literacy development. Observations of Qu'ranic classes showed how older siblings' literacy learning for religious practices might impact on family literacy. Based on the survey, a 12-month preschool literacy programme was designed and offered to a random selection of eight families with three-year-old children. The aim of the programme was to enhance children's literacy at school entry. All families agreed to take part. The thesis describes the programme rationale, how it was implemented in the families' homes and evaluated through qualitative and quantitative methods. Programme parents reported benefits for their children and themselves. Programme children clearly gained, in comparison to a randomly selected control group, in terms of a measure of early literacy development. The implications of findings from the programme evaluation and the earlier family literacy survey are discussed in relation to practice, policy and theory.

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

THE ORIGINS OF THE STUDY

The research reported in this thesis originated from my interest in early literacy development and my work as Head of Nursery in a multicultural school. In earlier work (Hirst, 1987; Hirst & Hannon, 1990) I evaluated a preschool home-teaching project which involved home-based work in a socially deprived area with monolingual parents and their preschool child. Early literacy was a key part of that project. Books were shared with each child on every visit. Families renewed or exchanged books when visited the following week. Some parents were surprised to see books for very young children and others found new ways of sharing books with their child. One of the benefits most commented upon by parents was their child's interest in books as a result of the home visits. A mutual trust developed between parent and teacher and an acknowledgement of each other's skills that could enhance their child's literacy development.

I later worked in a multicultural nursery in an inner city school, (the study school in this thesis) where 80% of the pupils were bilinguals or emerging bilinguals of Pakistani origin. Literacy results in the school were poor. (In 1996, for example, the Key Stage 2 National Standard Assessment Tasks results in English (at age 11) showed that 43% achieved the required standard compared with the national average of 56.3%). There was a need to do something to support early literacy development of children in the school.

It became apparent from my interaction with parents (and that of the bilingual nursery nurse) that parents had wide-ranging literacy backgrounds. I became curious about the literacy environment in the homes of the Pakistani origin children and how parents enhanced their children's literacy development in a multiliteracy environment that could involve as many as four languages. This raised the following questions for me about young children's literacy development at home and in the early years at school. What influence did religion have upon the literacy environment? How did parents involve their children with as many as three scripts (Urdu, Arabic and English) as well as a language (Mirpuri Punjabi) which does not have a written form? Did girls have the same educational opportunities as boys? What aspirations did

parents have for their children's education? How did parents with limited literacy skills themselves develop their children's literacy?

In 1991, I was invited to conduct independent interviews of parents on the Sheffield Early Literacy Development project (Hannon, Weinberger and Nutbrown, 1991). The commitment of parents on that project to enhancing the literacy development of their preschool children left me wondering whether a similar programme would be feasible with Pakistani origin bilingual families.

At the school where I worked, home visits were made before a child started nursery to enable families and nursery staff to build up relationships and to exchange information. However, no attempt had been made (until I carried out a survey to be reported later in Chapter 6), to establish the home literacy environment or to work with parents to enhance their young child's early literacy development.

I have outlined the personal professional experiences which led me to discover that early literacy with inner city Pakistani origin families whose mother tongue is Punjabi or Urdu is an under-researched area. One aim of this study therefore, is to add to current knowledge of children's early literacy development in these families, and of the role of the family in young children's literacy development. Without this, it is difficult for educators to build confidently on children's earlier literacy experiences.

Much good practice takes place in schools but it is often not documented or research-based. In this study I hoped to combine my experience and knowledge as a teacher and Head of Nursery specialising in Under Fives and in working with monolingual and bilingual parents, with my research-based knowledge of early literacy development and bilingualism. Although I did not remain a practitioner throughout my research, my teaching experience informed and influenced my work with families.

OVERVIEW OF THESIS

This thesis includes three main studies: a survey of family literacy, observations of Qu'ranic classes, and evaluation of a programme of work with families to enhance children's early literacy development before entry into school.

Chapter 1 has so far presented the origins of this study. It provides an overview of the thesis and gives an account of my opening theoretical position concerning literacy in the home and my early work in the community which led to a survey of family literacy. The advantages and disadvantages of research in the workplace setting are also discussed.

Chapter 2 presents a review of a comprehensive literature search of studies concerning home factors in early literacy development, covering such issues: as the influence on young children's literacy development of environmental print; stories; picture books; reading to young children; early writing and the influence of rhyme and role play. The importance of home background and parents as role models will also be discussed paying some attention to the ORIM (*opportunities, recognition, interaction and model*) framework (Hannon, 1995), and children's acquisition of oracy skills. These studies of home-school links related to the development of early literacy include a review of surveys, longitudinal studies, case studies, ethnographic studies, and intervention studies.

Chapter 3 provides a review of research studies on early literacy development with bilingual families. Attention is paid to the multiliteracy environment in families and to the influence of home practices, culture and religion on the children's literacy awareness.

Chapter 4 outlines my research questions and explains the organisation of the thesis in relation to the research questions. The rationale for both the qualitative and quantitative methods used is discussed as are the methods, which included survey, interview, observation and experimental design. The design of the programme evaluation is also outlined with sections on assessment, the rationale for the language of assessment and for the assessments used. Issues concerning evaluation, ethics and the role of the researcher are discussed.

Chapter 5 describes the school and community setting in which the research was based and outlines the lifestyles of the Pakistani origin families in this community..

Chapter 6 reports a survey of family literacy and observations of Qu'ranic classes. The survey of family literacy involved thirty interviews of families with children aged between two and four years. Observations and discussions with the teachers and the children in the Qu'ranic classes concerning literacy learning in children's religious practices in the community are also reported.

Chapter 7 describes the development of a programme to enhance children's literacy development. Eight families were invited to collaborate with school over a 12-month period to enhance children's literacy development. Most of the work took place in the home with some group visits and meetings.

Chapters 8 and 9 evaluate the programme and include comparisons of programme and control group families. Chapter 8 reports and evaluates the implementation and processes, while Chapter 9 reports and evaluates the programme outcomes.

Three chapters (7, 8 and 9) are allocated to the programme compared with one for the survey (6). The findings from the survey about the multiliteracy practices in the home and community were essential to inform the nature and content of the remainder of the study. The level of detail about the programme, which sought to change and enhance children's literacy development through work with families, reflects the intensity of the work involved.

Chapter 10 discusses the main findings from the survey, observations of Qu'ranic classes and from the evaluation of the programme. The survey of family literacy indicated that parents were interested in home-school links. Observations of Qu'ranic classes showed how older siblings or more able children acted as mediators of Qu'ranic learning. Some children reported that parents supported their Qu'ranic learning at home and teachers said where parents were involved the children's learning was enhanced. Programme families said both they and their child had benefited. Assessments prior to school entry showed that children in the programme group had made significant gains in their literacy development compared to the control group. Implications for practice, policy and theory are discussed.

Appendices provide details of the ORIM framework, the Sheffield Early Literacy Development Profile (SELDP) (Nutbrown, 1997), interview schedules for programme and control group parents), a checklist for the survey of family literacy, and a planning sheet for a home visit (Appendices 1-6). Further appendices (Appendices 7-21) provide examples of programme children's early literacy development and some examples of contributions from programme parents to their preschool child's literacy development.

This thesis has not specifically focused on the contribution of theorists to the *acquisition of additional languages*. Reports in Chapters 5 and 10 (from those who

are learning additional languages or teaching their children several languages), show that the acquisition of additional languages seems to be a far greater problem to theorists than to those who are in the process of naturally becoming bilingual or multilingual. The multilingual and multiliterate environment, however, has been 'worked with', acknowledged, valued and addressed throughout the study.

MY THEORETICAL POSITION

This section discusses my own opening theoretical perspective. Literacy is a key to education around the world. The importance of literacy acquisition crosses cultural boundaries and is seen by many (Auerbach, 1989; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, 1996; Gregory, 1994, 1996a; Gregory and Williams, 2000) as a means by which people can be full participants in the literate society of the twenty-first century. These issues will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

In the past there was great emphasis on what was described as 'pre-reading' and 'pre-writing' skills. Walker (1975) claimed 'in order to overcome the unique difficulties inherent in beginning reading, it is necessary for the child to have first developed a minimum set of skills and capacities' (p.7) and the child should acquire such skills 'before the reading process can begin' (p.5). These 'subskills' included hand-eye coordination, left to right eye movements, shape and letter discrimination, letter recognition, visual memory, knowledge of letter names and sounds and auditory memory. Walker also suggested that 'success in the skills of reading depends on successful acquisition of the related subskills of pre-reading' (p.7). Literacy learning was seen to have its roots in formal literacy skills teaching as a child started school. Little attention was given to a child's literacy experiences before school or to the importance of home as an influential factor in a child's literacy development.

Since then in the UK, much practice is based upon the perspectives of literacy outlined by Yetta Goodman (1980) who referred to the 'roots of literacy', Teale and Sulzby (1986) and Hall (1987) who used the term 'emergent literacy'. Both these perspectives acknowledge and build upon previous informal literacy experiences of the child in the home and community and link this learning to the acquisition of key skills. In the late 80's and early 90's the teaching of reading was in change and there was great excitement by teachers about nurturing literacy in the nursery environment.

The National Literacy Strategy (DfEE, 1998) re-introduced more formal literacy learning for young children with emphasis on phonics and letter recognition which are taught during the daily Literacy Hour, a recommended practice for all children of compulsory school age. Many of the more formal recommended practices were actually highlighted as good practice for nursery education in the National Literacy Strategy (DfEE, 1998) document.

All aspects of Literacy Hour work are appropriate to Reception children. The daily programme should include shared reading and writing, focused word-level teaching, guided reading, independent work and a class plenary.... Staff working in nursery and pre-school settings may, therefore wish to adopt and adapt sensitively, the Reception year literacy objectives and some of the strategies, particularly for older 4 year olds. (DfEE 1998, p.104)

It was likely therefore, that educators of nursery children influenced by such guidance would adopt the more formal skills teaching. It took the publication of the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (DfEE/QCA, 2000) to reaffirm the place of play and some informality, alongside other officially prescribed pedagogy.

The influence of the home is important for all children but for children who have multilingual experiences at home, there is an even greater need for educators to be aware of home and community literacy experiences and the culture of families as recommended by researchers such as Auerbach, 1989; Blackledge, 2000; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; 1996, Gregory, 1993, 1994, 1996a, 1996b, 1998; Gregory and Williams, 2000; Huss, 1991; Huss-Keeler, 1997; Kenner, 2000.

The National Curriculum, introduced and developed throughout the 1990's in the UK, places great emphasis on literacy. However, in most government documents there is little mention or guidance for children with English as an Additional language (EAL). 'The Desirable Outcomes of Nursery Education' (DfEE/SCAA, 1996) makes some reference to bilingual children and includes specific reference to certain literacy skills such as alphabetic knowledge, book handling and writing 'form'. The National Literacy Strategy (DfEE, 1998) offers guidance on the teaching of literacy with some minimal guidance for EAL children. The more recent document 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage' (DfEE/QCA, 2000) allocates two specific paragraphs to children with English as an additional language that place emphasis on children's home language and their experiences of language at home but pays little attention to the diversity of cultures.

As previously mentioned, the changing view of literacy development of young children over the past three decades acknowledges that literacy can be promoted from birth to five years (Goodman, 1980; Ferrerio and Teberosky, 1982; Teale and Sulzby, 1986), that children try to make sense of print in their world (Hall, 1987; Nutbrown and Hannon, 1997) and the importance of family members in acknowledging and promoting this awareness in their everyday lives (Hannon, 1995; Weinberger, 1996; Wolfendale, 1996; Nutbrown, 1997).

A fuller account of studies informing my theoretical position will be given in Chapters 2 and 3 but my starting point was the emergent literacy perspective, a term used by Teale and Sulzby (1986). According to this view, literacy develops from birth through the involvement of adults in everyday activities. Early literacy development in the preschool years, referred to by Yetta Goodman (1980) as the 'roots' of literacy, includes an awareness of print in context, metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness in written language and functions and form in written language. Ken Goodman (1986) refers to the function of literacy being more important than form for young children and that they need to see the whole before they can break it down into constituent parts. Through informal activities children learn about reading and writing. They share books with adults, early writing develops into conventional writing, and they use their knowledge about literacy in their play.

The theories of 'emergent' literacy (Teale and Sulzby, 1986) and 'roots' of literacy (Goodman, 1980) influenced the Sheffield Early Literacy Development Project (Hannon, Weinberger and Nutbrown, 1991), a study that involved working with parents to promote early literacy development, and which influenced my research. The methods developed by Hannon, Weinberger and Nutbrown, (1991) for working with parents were the provision of literacy materials, home visiting and meetings. All the children had English as a first language. Reflecting on that experience and my work as a teacher of bilingual children, I was interested to find out whether similar methods could work with families for whom English was an additional language.

LITERACY IN THE HOME

It cannot be assumed that all literacy and literacy skills are learnt in school. In the home, many young children are exposed to written language and its uses from birth, although there may be varying degrees to which parents become involved in their child's early literacy development (Weinberger, 1996). However, on the basis of my

professional experience I have come to believe that most parents have high aspirations for their children's education. There is also research evidence to support this view (Siraj-Blatchford, 1994; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, 1996).

Hannon (1995) suggests that "Despite its importance researchers have been slow to study home learning before school entry" (p.37). He suggests this is partly due to methodological difficulties - it is easier to observe children in a school setting or in artificial experimental settings, and there is the question of gaining access in order to study home learning. Many of the studies of children's home literacy development have been studies of the researcher's own children or grandchildren (Butler, 1979; Bissex, 1980; Baghban, 1984; Schickedanz, 1990).

Hannon (1995) asks whether preschool literacy intervention involving families could increase access to school literacy. He sees at least two difficulties with previous initiatives which sought to increase children's opportunities for early reading experiences - firstly, the problematic relation between school literacy and home literacy and secondly, the limited scope of the interventions. Hannon also suggests that *school literacy* is different from *family literacy*. It may be, depending on the home and the view of literacy in the school. Is there insufficient knowledge of, or attention paid to, home literacy in school? Without knowledge of a child's home literacy experiences it is impossible to build appropriately upon such experiences in school. As Gregory (1996b) points out:

How can teachers build upon home literacy experiences when they have little idea of the literacy history of parents or the current home and community practices families participate in and the differences which might exist between these and the English school? (Gregory, 1996b, p.91)

From the survey I hoped to find out about some of the community and home literacy practices. This would then place me in a more informed position to work with families to enhance their young children's literacy development. Wolfendale (1996) recognised the importance of family literacy and the need to work closely with families. She provided the following definition of family literacy:

... family literacy is about enabling children and their families to participate in and benefit from and shape the future of their cultural heritage, by equipping them with the appropriate tools and techniques derived from and applicable to formal schooling and the 'natural' resources of their home and community environment. (Wolfendale, 1996, p.169)

Weinberger (1993, 1996,) has explored the gap between home and school literacy learning and states that schools should be

taking more of the initiative in communication with parents about literacy, and finding ways to allow the literacy learning that takes place at home to become more visible. (Weinberger, 1993, p.91)

A further concern expressed by Hannon (1995) is the limited scope of intervention studies so far. His wider framework for intervention (the ORIM framework) of providing opportunities, recognition by parents of the child's literacy achievements, interaction by parents and staff and models of literacy, is one that has also influenced my research and will be discussed further in Chapter 2.

Other studies (Heath, 1983; Goelman *et al.*, 1984; and Harste *et al.*, 1984; Taylor & Dorsey Gaines, 1988; Minns, 1990) stress the importance of home literacy. Most of these studies are with monolingual children, with the exception of Minns, (1990), whose study includes two children from multilingual families and Heath's (1983) study where Creole or Patua may have been spoken in the Trackton families. I could not find however, any documented research on studies with Pakistani origin preschool children.

Huss (1991), in her study of five-and six-year-old children, made a significant contribution to understanding bilingualism and early literacy, and I have pursued several issues in her implications for policy, practice. Her results called into question two common misconceptions held by teachers and the schools, firstly, that the Pakistani origin children and families were 'culturally deficient' and secondly, that children must learn to speak English well before they can become competent literacy learners. One of my main purposes was to document the literacy environment in the homes of the Pakistani origin families, how the culture in this community influences home literacy, and whether it would be possible for home and school to work together. I have pursued the need identified by Huss to address the attitudes of Pakistani origin parents toward their children's literacy learning. Huss (1991) was one of the catalysts for my research into early literacy development and home-school links in a Pakistani origin community. This study links with and builds upon such research studies.

COMMUNITY WORK LEADING TO A SURVEY OF FAMILY LITERACY

When I was in school, my headteacher was keen for school staff to build relationships within the local community. As part of this initiative a bilingual nursery nurse and I were given one day a week over a period of two terms, from October 1993 - March 1994, to make several visits to families during the term before the child's admission to nursery. In addition to creating or strengthening relationships within the community, our emphasis was to build upon the literacy environment in the homes. This short project, (Hirst, 1996), provided a springboard for a later survey of family literacy.

The family literacy survey to be reported in Chapter 6 was designed to find out about the home literacy environment from a sample of local families and involved 30 families each with two, three or four year old children. I was interested to know whether parents offered equal opportunities for girls and boys, parents aspirations for their children, the influence of culture, traditions and religious practices on young children's early literacy development and whether parents would be interested in working with school to develop their child's early literacy development. I anticipated that home visits, school meetings or both would subsequently be offered to enable work with parents and children. This, however, would depend on the findings from the survey.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF RESEARCH IN THE WORKPLACE SETTING

There were many advantages in conducting research in my own workplace setting. Many aspects of the situation were familiar - the ethos of the school, the internal politics of the school, the staff, the children and the nuclear and extended families. There were everyday opportunities to meet parents at nursery or to meet them in the neighbourhood when making preliminary visits before a child started nursery. As my research was also with children who had not yet attended nursery some of the families were new to us. However, being known and welcomed by many nuclear and extended families alongside involvement with the close community network in the neighbourhood made access to the homes unproblematic.

The community work, supported by the headteacher, was also an advantage. As a monolingual teacher with only some words or phrases of Urdu and Punjabi, the opportunity to work with a member of staff of Pakistani origin from the nursery who could speak Urdu, Punjabi and English was a great asset. Parents could see our positive and relaxed relationship in the nursery and as we approached the families with non-judgemental attitudes, a position of mutual trust was quickly established or reinforced. From their comments it was clear that parents realised we approached them with the best interests of their children in mind.

Confidentiality was stressed at all stages of the research and parents were given the choice of whether they wished to take part. As I conducted the survey, knowing some of the families helped to create a mutual feeling of warmth and security that enabled parents to answer questions in a very open manner. A multi-dimensional picture was created, especially when members of the extended family gathered in the homes and made their additional contribution, either about their own learning in Pakistan or about how they were involved in their young relative's early literacy development. On occasions when I interviewed on my own, the extended family would sometimes help with translation if the mother had limited English. In some families both the mother and the father contributed to the survey.

Although I started my research as Head of Nursery in the study school, I left before the research was completed. Nevertheless, I retained the advantage of being known by many of the families in the neighbourhood. My continued collaboration with the bilingual nursery nurse was an invaluable component of my research. A new Headteacher was also in post and although not essential to the study, I felt it was important to consult and negotiate with both him and the new Head of Nursery to establish and maintain good relationships with the school. These consultations are reported in Chapter 7.

There were some disadvantages in conducting research in the workplace setting (although the advantages far outweighed the disadvantages). I perceived a degree of resentment from some staff in school to the bilingual nursery nurse and I being out of the classroom during school time even though we obviously had the full support of the Headteacher. One of the bilingual teachers was scheduled into nursery to cover my absence but because she was withdrawn from work in school to do this, I perceived some unease, especially as some staff did not support the philosophy of working in the community. Burgess (1989) reported on such problems relating to

research in one's own workplace, and also of returning to the same place to conduct a further study. Wellington (2000) also pointed out potential problems of 'Practitioner/Insider research' such as 'prejudices', 'time' and 'familiarity' (p15). These issues are discussed further in Chapters 6 and 7. When I returned to the school to work on the programme, the new Head of Nursery was supportive. She collaborated by allowing me to contact parents in the nursery and by arranging cover (paid for out of my ESRC funding) so that Shaheen Khan, the bilingual nursery nurse, could occasionally work with me in the community during school time. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

This chapter has discussed the origins of this study, an overview of the thesis, my theoretical position, literacy in the home, community work leading to a survey of family literacy, concluding with advantages and disadvantages of research in the workplace setting.

Chapter 2 will address home factors in early literacy development. It will discuss 'What is literacy and why is it important?', young children's emergent literacy development, and research studies that focus on the influence of the home on young children's literacy learning.

CHAPTER 2

HOME FACTORS IN EARLY LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will discuss definitions of literacy and why literacy is important, the term 'emergent literacy', and the influence of the home on young children's literacy learning. Research studies into home factors in children's early literacy development, their later literacy achievements and other influences on this study will be reviewed. The study by Cairney (1995) is of particular interest and worth describing in some detail because it focuses on many of the issues that I will wish to address.

The role of interested parents, significant adults or siblings as crucial factors in children's emergent and later literacy development is a central issue in this study. My study concerns Pakistani origin bilingual or multilingual families but there is little research on preschool literacy development in this area, so it is important, first, to review the literature on monolingual families which feature issues relevant to my study. Research involving bilingual families will be reviewed in Chapter 3.

WHAT IS LITERACY AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Hannon (1995) defines literacy as 'the ability to use written language to derive and convey meaning' (p.2). He also claims that literacy is essential to education because that ability to use written language is fundamental to contemporary culture and thinking (Hannon, 2000).

Written language enables members of a culture to communicate without meeting; to express and explore their experience; to store information, ideas and knowledge; to extend their memory and thinking; and increasingly nowadays, to control computer-based processes. (Hannon, 2000, p.8)

Written language may be used for many purposes and transactions, either to people we know, to strangers or to ourselves. Literacy 'is fundamentally a matter of

understanding others' meanings or communicating meaningfully with them rather than exercising specific perceptual and motor skills' (Hannon, 2000, p.9)

Nutbrown (1997) offers a similar definition by pointing out that 'literacy is a social construct which enables human beings to communicate' and that it 'could be defined as the ability to engage with written language' (p.2). Barton (1994) illustrates that literacy means different things for different people and is dependent upon the social context.

All sorts of people talk about literacy and make assumptions about it, both within education and beyond it. The business manager bemoans the lack of literacy skills in the workforce. The politician wants to eradicate the scourge of illiteracy. The radical educator attempts to empower and liberate people. The literacy critic sorts the good writers from the bad writers. The teacher diagnoses reading difficulties and prescribes a programme to solve them. The preschool teacher watches literacy emerge. These people all have powerful definitions of what literacy is. They have different ideas of 'the problem', and what should be done about it. (Barton, 1994, p.2)

Weinberger (1996) supports this view of 'contextual literacy' and suggests that literacy is not a product made up of autonomous skills which we learn to become fully literate. It is rather a succession of on-going literacy practices and events that vary according to different situations.

EMERGENT LITERACY AND YOUNG CHILDREN'S LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

'Emergent literacy' is a term used by several researchers (Teale and Sulzby, 1986; Hall, 1987) who claim that literacy *emerges* over time and children can be responsible for their own learning. Most children in the Western world are exposed to written language from birth and this informal perspective can illuminate children's early literacy development. This theory values what children can do rather than emphasising what they have yet to achieve and shows how literacy develops from birth through the interaction of significant others with the child in informal literacy activities. These 'significant others' may be seen as models of literacy. Many preschool children know about print from their environment and they see other people in their lives interacting with print. This may involve reading newspapers, magazines,

books, writing letters or greeting cards, reading advertising mail, packaging, and reading from the television or computer screen. As Clay (1991) pointed out:

This leads them to form primitive hypotheses about letters, words or messages in books, or in handwritten messages...it is a... widely held view that learning to read and write in school will be easier for the child with rich preschool literacy experiences than it is for the child with almost no literacy experience. (Clay, 1991, p.28)

Children too, act as models of literacy and may be seen in similar literacy activities or reading comics, doing homework, reading logos on clothes or any of a whole range of every day literacy activities inside or outside the home.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE HOME ON YOUNG CHILDREN'S LITERACY LEARNING

This section will discuss research studies that focus on the influence of the home on young children's literacy learning. Teachers in the past (for whatever reason), have excluded parents from children's early literacy learning (Hannon, 1995) and yet studies show that parents from all social classes wish to be involved (Hannon and James, 1990; Hannon, Weinberger and Nutbrown, 1991; Weinberger, 1996). Some parents through their own education or home experiences are more confident than others, but it is unwise to assume that there are any parents who cannot contribute to, or have no interest in, their children's literacy achievements.

I will be looking at three ways that the relation between early literacy development and home factors has been investigated - (1) surveys and longitudinal studies, (2) case studies and ethnography, and (3) intervention studies - as these are the three most used methods. The ages of children in these studies range mainly from birth to seven years with emphasis on preschool children, although older children have been included where there is relevance to my own study. This may be in terms of earlier intervention or experiences having a significant effect on later achievements, the mother's language behaviour or method of interaction, or the attitudes and beliefs of parents on literacy learning affecting their children's literacy achievements. The issues raised in the following studies form the basis for my research with bilingual preschool children and their families and home-school links.

Surveys and Longitudinal studies

This section discusses relevant large and small-scale surveys and longitudinal studies that researched the influence of the home on young children's literacy development. Both large and small-scale surveys will be discussed and connections made with the focus of my study.

I was interested to learn how children spend their waking hours and whether time is spent on literacy or literacy related activities. I did not envisage undertaking a strict documentation of the percentage of a child's waking day which is spent on such activities, but the following findings from a British study (Davie, Hutt, Vincent and Mason, 1984) highlight this issue. The study involved observing 165 preschool children aged 3 to 4 years in their homes. This took place over a period of several days during which six one-hourly observations were made. Some activities were literacy related. Findings showed that 94% of the children looked at books some of the time (for approximately twenty minutes per day), and often with an adult.

Many parents hold meaningful conversations with their preschool children as the following study reported by Tizard and Hughes (1984) shows. As language is a vehicle for learning, I was interested in finding out whether the parents I hoped to study held meaningful conversations with their children and if so, in which languages. Tizard and Hughes (1984) attached radio transmitter microphones to 30 four-year-old girls so that conversations with parents could be recorded. The girls were from working class and middle class homes and their language experiences at home were compared with their experiences in nursery. Tizard and Hughes emphasised the importance of the home environment as a significant factor in children's learning. Meaningful conversations were held by all the children, covering a wide range of topics. Many of the conversations took place during play or whilst looking at books, but others took place during daily activities - over lunch, feeding the baby and so on. Tizard and Hughes described conversations where the children were eager for detailed explanation. The tape recordings obtained accurate accounts that could be analysed without missing much of the conversation. The study demonstrated that the home is a powerful learning environment for the preschool child. Teachers must be aware that their contribution may well be limited compared to that of parents.

Although family income may play a part in children's literacy experiences in terms of access to a variety of literacy materials in the home and opportunities to use literacy as part of family experiences, (for instance visits to places of interest or shopping expeditions), research indicates that parental attitudes, beliefs and interaction may be more positive indicators of children's literacy achievements. I shall discuss this next.

Hannon and James (1990) reported a preschool study that compared teachers' and parents' perspectives on early literacy development. Forty parents representing a random sample from 10 nursery classes were interviewed at home, and their children's teachers were interviewed at school. Parents interviewed were asked about their literacy activities with their children, what they and their children felt about them and whether they felt they needed advice. The study revealed that all parents were taking a very active role in their children's literacy development. Activities covered a wide range, reading shop signs, reading and writing greeting cards, watching television programmes, looking at newspapers, magazines and adult books, drawing, writing and book sharing. Most children enjoyed these literacy activities and there was no pressure from parents to participate.

There was a general lack of communication from nursery teachers to parents on the purpose of all nursery activities and none of the parents, when asked, mentioned reading or writing as a nursery activity. More than three quarters of parents expressed uncertainty about the way in which they helped their children with literacy activities but only one had asked a teacher. However, considering the teachers' responses it is likely that if more had asked for advice, they would have been told not to get involved at all. The general conclusion from this study is that parents were actively involved and would have welcomed advice but believed that teachers were unhappy about involving them in their children's literacy development.

If children reading aloud to parents makes a significant contribution to children's reading scores, preschool children who get into the habit of 'reading' to parents and other family members are more likely to want to share books and to read aloud at home when they are competent readers. My study will be investigating the interest parents have in sharing books with children and the extent to which children are encouraged to 'read' the story to parents.

Research by Hewison and Tizard (1980) on parental involvement with 7-year-old children from working class families showed that some working class children can become good readers. Hewison and Tizard looked at various factors in the children's

home backgrounds, not just social class, including such factors as parents' attitudes to discipline and play, the amount of conversation with the child, whether stories were read to them, how leisure time was spent, parents attitudes to school and so on. They also considered children's IQ scores and the mother's language behaviour. Many of these factors had some impact but the single most significant factor was not whether mothers read to their children but whether children read to their mothers. Ninety per cent were reported as reading aloud to an adult at home but it was those who were heard to read regularly at age 7 who appeared to have benefited most. Reading test standardised scores showed that those children who were heard to read regularly (about half) had a score some 14 points higher than those who were not heard to read on a regular basis. Hewison and Tizard claimed that this difference could not be accounted for in terms of children's IQ or parents' attitudes.

William Teale (1986) reported a longitudinal study on the relationship between home background and young children's literacy development in San Diego. Twenty-four preschool children were systematically observed over a period of 3-18 months. The children were from low income families of various ethnic backgrounds. Eight Anglo, eight Black and eight Mexican American children and families were studied. The sample included equal numbers of boys and girls between the ages of two and a half and three and a half. Fourteen hundred hours of home observations were recorded by either field notes or audiotapes.

The children were observed during their waking hours, seven days a week. The main method of data collection was field notes, supplemented by audiotapes, interviews and conversations with families. This enabled documentation of what was actually happening in the home without disrupting family life. Both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the children's literacy interactions were undertaken. Like Teale, I hoped to explore the links between home practices and the effects on the child's early reading and writing skills and to investigate some of the areas he identified, such as: reading material available; literacy in daily living routines; religion and interpersonal communication. Quantitative analysis of the average frequency per hour of a child's literacy events and the number of minutes per hour spent on literacy activities showed a range of 0.34 to 4.06 events per hour and 3.09 to 34.72 minutes per hour. These results showed that every child in the sample was involved in literacy during the course of everyday activities. Teale found that reading materials were available in all the homes. However, in all but three homes there was a problem locating writing materials and paper. By the time the materials were found

the children had often lost interest in using them. In the three homes where there was a special place for paper, pens and pencils the children did the most writing.

Teale (1986) provided additional evidence to that of Heath (1983), Taylor (1983), Harste, Woodward and Burke (1984) and Goodman (1986) that virtually all children in a literate society have numerous experiences with written language before they go to school. It also contested the traditional view that children from low-income families have few literacy experiences before school. As White (1982) commented:

It may be *how* parents rear their children ... and not the parents' occupation, income, or education that really makes the difference.
(White, 1982, p.471)

My study will highlight the literacy environment in which the Pakistani origin parents rear their children and the ways in which the tradition and culture of their close-knit community influences these practices.

Teale, unlike Heath, found no differences due to ethnicity. In Heath's research the respective communities were held together by history, tradition and cultural practices. Teale's subjects were from various neighbourhoods around San Diego, did not know each other, and were not part of a close-knit community with traditions, history and cultural practices. A similarity in the studies by Teale and Heath was the lack of literacy activities associated with parents' work. This stands in contrast to the study by Taylor (1983) who found that literacy activities were a significant part of the working routine for each of the parents employed outside the home in the six families studied. In Teale's study there was little evidence of reading (as in the Trackton homes in Heath's study), except for three children who were read to approximately five times a week. These three children proved to have the most highly developed emergent literacy skills of all the 24 children, confirming the view that storybook reading experiences further children's literacy development (Taylor, 1983; Baghban, 1984; Wells, 1982, 1987). Findings from a longitudinal study (Wells, 1987) showed that storybook reading is more than likely the best way of helping young children to read as it provides opportunities for decontextualised language.

The following two studies show that mothers from different socio-economic classes were involved in sharing books and picture labelling with their preschool children but there were differences in style and language use.

In a survey of 40 Hebrew speaking mother-child subjects, Anat Ninio (1980) studied picture book reading activities. The Israeli children were 19 months old and were observed looking at three picture books that were brought into the homes. The aims of the study were to investigate the effect of maternal education and socio-economic status on book-reading behaviour. Half the mothers were from low-income families of Asian and North American origin and half were from high-income families and English origin. All the mothers were Israeli Jews.

The similarities in the findings in the two groups were more marked than the differences despite the cultural differences between the two families. This study replicates the findings in the study by Ninio and Bruner (1978), (to be discussed under Case Studies) insofar as all the mothers established a routinised dialogue when picture labelling. There were, however, differences in style. The low-income mothers were reported as not being future oriented or sensitive to the child's needs and therefore did not enable rapid progression to more complex language use. As Ninio pointed out, an important aspect of picture book reading which was given little attention, is that it is 'a source of enchantment and wonder' (p.121) - perhaps a significant contribution in respect of picture book reading to the early acquisition of literacy skills.

A 5 year longitudinal study by Wagner and Spratt (1988) was set up to investigate the specific role of parental literacy and attitudes on children's literacy acquisition. It involved 350 six-to seven-year-old Moroccan children and their parents. A socio-democratic and attitudinal survey was administered. Parents' beliefs on reading habits, development and self-perception were ascertained within the context of their children's academic and literacy development. Tests were given to children to assess their reading abilities and metacognitive beliefs about reading behaviour and attitudes. The results showed that although in some cases parental educational levels seemed important, a full third of the highest scoring readers had parents who had never attended school. Certain beliefs and attitudes of parents strongly predicted their child's beliefs about reading achievement and were not directly related to parental educational levels or socio-economic status. Teachers and researchers should concentrate on creating or maintaining, positive parental attitudes towards literacy irrespective of the parents' educational or socio-economic status. This study is significant to my research, for although the children in my study were younger, many of the parents, especially the mothers in my survey of family literacy, were unlikely to have attended school while others may have received several years' education.

In a four-year longitudinal study Weinberger (1996), investigated 60 children's literacy experiences and achievements from preschool to age seven. Information about children's literacy was collected when children were aged three, five and seven. At age three, information was obtained by interviewing parents at home to ascertain family background and family literacy activities at home. At age five, assessments were made of children's vocabulary, writing, letter knowledge, access to stories at home and use of books. At age seven, updated information on families and family literacy activities were obtained by interviewing both children and parents.

Weinberger found that literacy experiences at age three that impacted on children's later reading attainment were children's knowledge of nursery rhymes, whether children were library members, whether children were read to from storybooks, and one of the greatest predictors was whether children had a favourite storybook.

Children reading well at seven were those who were involved in literacy activities at home, saw their parents as models of literacy through their own engagement with reading and had parents who had some idea of literacy teaching in school.

Weinberger concluded

It is how parents interact with their children on literacy, and the literacy climate of the home, that is shown in this study to have an influence on children's literacy performance. (Weinberger, 1996, p.152).

Case studies and Ethnography

The following case studies range from those that provide in-depth information on the early literacy activities of one preschool child to those that study 24 children. Some have studied children over an aggregated week while others have studied children over many months. One of the research strategies used in both case studies and ethnography may be that of participant observer. Although no research can be value free, researchers such as Shirley Brice Heath (whose main study involved participant observation over a period of ten years), may have some impact on furthering educational policy.

A study by Taylor (1983) looked at six families with varied socio-economic and educational levels representing diverse social and ethnic backgrounds. Taylor

claimed that if literacy is significant in the parents' lives it is significant in the lives of the children.

Taylor set out to develop systematic ways of looking at reading and writing as activities that have consequences in and are affected by family life. Within the six families chosen, a total of 15 children between the ages of 2 and 17 were studied for sixteen months. Interviews, field notes and audio tapes were used. The influence on their families of parents' own literacy experiences was studied as well as the children's awareness of written language at home, school and in various social situations. Taylor argued that literacy needs to be meaningful in a child's life.

In a later study, Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) examined four African-American children's literacy events in the context of their homes and families. All the children lived in the same neighbourhood, were in the first grade and were successfully learning to read and write. Both field studies and ethnographic methods were used. Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines found that socio-economic status and educational attainment of the parents were not necessarily predictors of children's literacy attainment. The results supported the evidence of earlier studies by Teale (1986) and Wagner and Spratt (1986).

Studies by Purcell-Gates (1994) and Heath (1983) illustrated the different levels of literacy in homes. Purcell-Gates (1994) took up the issue of the relationship between what young children learn about written language in the home and their parents' literacy levels and everyday uses of print. Twenty-four children between 4 and 6 years of age in 20 low socio-economic families were observed during their waking hours in their homes and communities for an aggregated week. The researchers were participant observers noting all the instances of uses of print within the homes and families. They also asked the children to perform certain tasks designed to measure critical language concepts that influence the degree of success young children experience in early literacy instruction.

The results showed that relatively little print use was found in all homes, although there were variations. Print was used mostly for daily living routines and entertainment purposes. Text was used mostly in the homes for reading such items as food coupons and container print. The next most used category of text was that found in books, magazines and documents. (Pointing out print in the environment has been a positive influence on children's awareness of print and early reading (Yetta Goodman, 1986), but this does not appear to have been acknowledged here.)

According to Purcell-Gates, children who begin formal literacy instruction knowing more about written language concepts, come from homes where parents read and write on their own at more complex text levels and who involve their children with reading and writing. Parents who have lower literacy levels involve themselves less in higher literacy skills and, reported Purcell-Gates, are unable to help their children acquire the concepts at home that they will need at school. I would question this view as there would seem to be many ways in which parents with limited literacy skills themselves could influence their young children's literacy learning (see Chapter 7). However, adult education programmes that focus on family literacy can positively influence both the frequency of literacy events and of mother-child interaction in literacy events (see Brooks, Gorman, Harman, Hutchison and Wilkin, (1996) to be discussed later).

Heath (1983) reported an American ethnographic study. She showed how the local culture and traditions influenced the home literacy activities. I am interested in finding out how the culture and traditions of the Pakistani origin community in my research influence the children's literacy achievements. Heath aimed to pull apart the linguistic features characterising the activities provided in each kind of home to find out how children learn the skills and habits that make them good or poor readers and writers, which in turn contribute to overall success in school. Three communities were studied; Trackton - an African-American working class community, Roadville - a white working-class community, and a Mainstream Piedmont Carolinas community made up of both whites and African-Americans. Her ethnographic study was spread over 10 years. Her evidence was in the form of her own spontaneous observations of parent-child interactions, field notes, tape recordings and the tape recordings of the mothers in the Mainstream homes.

Results showed that children's engagement in frequent verbal interaction with parents was a predictor of success in school. Trackton parents did not engage in frequent conversations with their children; Roadville parents talked more with their preschoolers than Trackton parents did; Mainstream parents, however, held more sustained conversations than either the Trackton or Roadville parents and were the only ones who tended to prepare their children for school and reinforce learning at home. Neither Trackton nor Roadville parents maintained a pattern of success in school but the Mainstream children, with few exceptions, did. Educators need to communicate the importance of verbal interaction to parents of young children and to be aware that children enter school with varying degrees of home literacy learning.

However it is possible to influence parent's verbal and literacy interaction with their children by providing literacy materials and guidance as the following study shows. I have included the next report under 'Case studies' as there is minimal intervention, although it could have been considered as an intervention study.

Heath and Thomas (1984) reported a study designed to discover what associated behaviour and adjustments of verbal and non-verbal behaviour accompanied book reading with a preschooler. In this case study they introduced literacy artefacts (with minimal guidance) to a 16-year-old American mother and her two-year-old son from the Trackton community. They observed and noted the verbal interaction and literacy activities that took place and used the mother's written notes and audiotapes also in their analysis. Results showed that book-reading provided new opportunities for the adults in the home to talk with the child and changed their views on the traditional roles of caregivers and children. An increased awareness of the child's language development and new patterns of talking about language were created. This study provides further evidence that educators can work effectively alongside parents, and that parents need not be excluded due to deficit views of their limited education.

The next two studies, Ninio and Bruner (1978) and Baghban (1994), illustrate the importance of book-sharing activities with very young children. The study by Baghban, also highlights the importance of sibling interaction. Parents, caregivers or siblings may be involved in children's everyday literacy activities but may not fully recognise the importance of the child's achievements. The importance of recognition (Hannon, Weinberger and Nutbrown, 1991) is discussed in more detail later in this chapter in the section covering 'Intervention studies'.

Ninio and Bruner (1978) reported a case study of a very young child, tracking his development over a span of eleven months, from the age of 8 months to 18 months. They observed mother and child interaction with picture books over this period remarking on the simple steps in a routinised cycle. These consisted of; one participant getting the other to focus on a picture; attempting to get the other participant to label the picture, and, if this is done; providing positive or negative feedback on the performance; if this is not done, the first participant provides a label for the picture. The researchers were impressed by the stability of the routine over the 11-month period. The child progressed from trying to eat the book to entering into a dialogue about the book. The mother was the stability, and the participation in the ritualised dialogue, rather than imitation, was found to be the key feature through which labelling was achieved.

A later project by Baghban (1994) investigated sisters and brothers reading together, and whether the reading interaction between two siblings, an older sister and a younger brother, paralleled parent-child reading. Observations of the researcher's own two children started when her 8-year-old daughter showed pictures in a book to her 3-day-old brother and ended one year after the younger brother read two books consecutively to his older sister. Diaries, tape recordings, photographs and interviews were used for data collection. As can be expected all reading sessions between siblings did not go smoothly, but when they did the younger sibling paid attention and learned fast, better than in reading interactions with adults.

Intervention studies

Intervention studies involving parents could be the subject of much controversy, especially home intervention studies. One argument is that 'home is home' and 'school is school'. Teachers working in homes can be seen as an invasion of privacy. This can be overcome however, if parents are given the choice of participating in a home-based intervention project. It was my intention to involve intervention in the home and that my intended survey of home literacy should find out whether parents were interested in working with teachers to enhance their children's literacy skills. As shown in the study discussed earlier (Hannon and James, 1990), many parents were not sure whether they were doing the right thing or were unsure what to do. The following intervention studies all show that planned literacy activities and home-school links can benefit the child.

Much of this evidence comes from intervention programmes in the United States. Bronfenbrenner (1974) in his review of some of the high quality substantial programmes noted that where intervention was focused on children in group settings, there were substantial gains in IQ in the first year but these were not increased by starting programmes earlier or by continuing them longer than one year. (These programmes were not purely literacy development programmes but Bronfenbrenner's findings on involvement of parents are relevant to my study). He also noted the gains faded quickly when programmes finished, especially for children from the most deprived social and economic backgrounds. When, however, the intervention was also focused on parents, substantial gains in IQ in the first year could be further improved by continuing the programme. There were benefits for parents and siblings too. The more successful forms of parental involvement deliberately offered support to parents in their role as educators and avoided visitors to the home being seen in the

role of 'experts'. In addition to home visits, some programmes held meetings in school to enable further support and contact between workers and parents. Both home and school based meetings were in my initial plan for a programme of work with a random selection of parents, if indeed, that should prove to be an option after consultation with parents.

A follow-up study by the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies reported by Lazar, Darlington, Murray, Royce and Snipper (1982) investigated eleven well-designed preschool intervention experiments in the United States. The benefits found years later, included reduced likelihood of special education placement or being held back a grade at school, high school graduation, employment, take-up of post-school education and other social outcomes. The study also found, the more parental involvement, the more positive outcomes. The implication here is, if preschool intervention works for overall development, it should also work for preschool literacy.

Recent Family Literacy Demonstration Programmes in the UK established by the Basic Skills Agency and funded by the (then) Department for Education and the Welsh Office have been evaluated by Brooks, Gorman, Harman, Hutchinson and Wilkin (1996). The four programmes were based in areas of multiple deprivation in Cardiff, Liverpool, Norfolk and North Tyneside. The overall aims of the programmes were:

- to raise standards of literacy among adults with difficulties and their children and,
- to extend awareness of the importance of literacy and the role of family literacy. (Brooks et al., 1996, p.3)

Courses lasted 96 hours over 12 weeks and were provided for children aged three to six and their parents. 96% of participating parents were mothers. On entry, parents' literacy levels were low and children were severely disadvantaged by low levels of development in vocabulary and emergent reading and writing. Parents learned how to extend involvement in their child's literacy development and worked on their own literacy. Children were given extensive teaching in reading, writing and talk and in joint sessions parents learned how to develop their skills so that they could also help their child.

The main findings showed that the overall aims to boost children's literacy, parents' ability to help their children and parents' literacy were fulfilled. Children benefited

by greater-than-expected average improvements in vocabulary and reading, not only over the duration of the course, but in the 12 weeks after. In writing, the results showed not only substantial average improvements during the courses and in the 12 weeks after but also in the next six months. Children therefore benefited in all three aspects of language and the majority of children were better equipped for school learning.

Parents' newly learned literacy activities became firmly embedded in family practice and parents had more confidence in their ability to help their children. The barrier between school practice and home had been crossed and parents were beginning to enjoy their success as they saw their children achieving.

There were benefits for parents too. 91% of parents completed the courses and attendances were consistently high. Parents improved their own reading and writing ability and 95% achieved accreditation. 52% of parents reported increased confidence and at the end of the course 80% of parents planned to take up further study. Twelve weeks after the course 70% of parents had done so.

All gains made by parents and children were sustained for at least nine months and in many cases there were further improvements. Communication between parent and child and parents and teachers improved markedly. The agency's model was shown to be transferable to different settings.

The most common form of parental involvement is school-focused as it is easier to justify in terms of teacher time, and easier to organise. However, the disadvantages of school-located or school-focused parental involvement are that not all parents find it easy to come into school. This could be due to work commitments, or as previously mentioned, family commitments (young children, dependent family members or domestic commitments, ill health of the mother or lack of confidence. Some parents, therefore, would be excluded and this exclusion would not be a reflection on their lack of interest in their children. For parents who have not attended school themselves or who have unhappy memories, school may not be the best place to encourage their involvement. The home is their territory and, for many parents, the place where they feel the most comfortable. This is an issue to be considered in my research and I will take parents' views into account when contemplating school-based meetings.

Some studies of home-focused preschool parental involvement programmes address such issues as how teachers can influence parent-child interactions at home, whether parents welcome such attempts, whether this would change the nature of home literacy and most of all whether children's literacy development would be affected.

Swinson (1985) reported on a British study where parents of 3- and 4-year-old children were encouraged to read to their children from books available from a school. The level of home-reading rose from 15% to almost 100% in the school year. At the end of the project the children who participated showed gains in oral vocabulary and verbal comprehension. A follow-up study after school entry showed gains in word matching and letter identification compared with a control group. In the Calderdale Preschool Book Project, (Griffiths and Edmonds, 1986) reported how parents were encouraged to borrow books from the project schools, the focus being home learning experiences of children. Meetings were also held in school. Take up was high over an eight-month period, parents and teachers' views were positive and there were some gains in children's literacy development.

McCormick and Mason (1986) reported on a small intervention project in the States where there was minimal parent-teacher interaction. Results proved that the mailing of 'little books' to preschoolers before entry into kindergarten had some impact on their literacy attainment at the end of the kindergarten year. Green (1987) described a programme that enabled parents to help with their children's early writing. Parents of kindergarten children were shown three ways they could help their child (by writing to children, by acting as scribe and by encouraging children to write themselves). When compared with a control group there were measurable literacy gains for the children and positive responses from parents.

Many of the intervention programmes focused on opportunities for reading and book-sharing and fewer on writing or environmental print. A project in Sheffield, England (Hannon, Weinberger and Nutbrown, 1991), aimed to promote practical ways of working with parents involving all of those aspects of literacy development using the ORIM framework (Hannon, 1995). As well as providing *opportunities* for early literacy development, it attempted to change parents' *interaction* with their children, increase parents' *recognition* of their children's preschool literacy achievements and increase awareness of how parents can act as *models*. No direct attempt was made to measure children's increased literacy development. The project was designed as a feasibility study with a qualitative evaluation.

The overall findings were based on a range of data including field notes, examples of children's work, records of book-borrowing, observations, and pre-programme and post-programme interviews. Results showed that participation levels were high with no drop-outs. Parents welcomed the intervention and both they and the project team found it meaningful. Some strands of literacy (environmental print, early writing and book-sharing) were changed due to parents providing a model, providing opportunities and recognising their child's literacy achievements. Home based methods were more effective than school-based ones especially in booksharing.

The next section discusses in some detail an intervention project in Sydney, Australia, initiated by Trevor Cairney (University of Western Australia).

A review of research by Trevor Cairney

Trevor Cairney's work has been reviewed here in some detail as certain aspects of it are similar to the issues in the study I hoped to undertake, albeit that my study would be with bilingual families. These include such issues as the research concerns culture and recognises how certain groups in society can be disempowered; parents may have received limited education themselves, be unsure of how they can help their child's literacy development and have a fear of the school setting. Cairney also aimed to break down barriers between home and school to enable teachers and parents to be aware of how each uses literacy in their cultural practices.

The next section will discuss Trevor Cairney's research with the 'Talk to a Literacy Learner' (TTALL) programme in Sydney, Australia. Trevor Cairney's research has some similarities with the work of Delgado-Gaitan (to be discussed in Chapter 3). Although his research was not with bilingual families, it was culture specific. He recognised how certain groups in society are disempowered and how some parents through their own life experiences lack self-esteem and confidence. They may have received limited education themselves and therefore feel they have no role to play in their children's education and in particular in their literacy learning. In one of his research projects he took up the issue of empowerment and literacy learning with parents in an urban community in Sydney, Australia.

Cairney and Munsie (1995) reported on the 'Talk to a Literacy Learner' Programme (TTALL), a parent training programme which was designed to focus on parents' interactions with their children as they learn to read and write.

Cairney and Munsie suggested that some programmes do not attract parents due to parents' lack of self-confidence with schoolwork. Some have a general fear of taking part in their children's learning and a fear of the school setting, possibly based on their own experiences of school. Teachers' negative attitudes towards parents and parental participation can be another cause of failing programmes. Parents respond to feelings of warmth and trust and will not feel comfortable if these are not present. Furthermore, a middle class culture is found in most schools which influences views on what literacy is and how it should be defined, but seldom takes account of the diverse cultures in our society.

As Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) have pointed out, schools inconsistently tap the social and cultural resources in society, privileging specific groups by emphasising particular linguistic styles, curricula and authority patterns. Thus, it should not surprise us that specific cultural groups experience difficulties coping with literacy in such a context. (Cairney and Munsie, 1995, p.393).

The way to break down barriers between home and school is to enable parents and teachers to understand the way each uses literacy as part of their cultural practices. Cairney and Munsie are clear that schools can then be in a better position to meet the needs of families while parents can be aware of school literacy.

Unfortunately, parent participation has all too frequently been seen as how parents can help teachers rather than how teachers can help families. The 'Talk to a Literacy Learner' programme initiated by Cairney and Munsie outlines one way of closely involving parents in their children's literacy development while at the same time developing closer links between home and school.

The TTALL programme aimed 'to achieve a lasting effect on the nature of parent/child interactions in order to offer long term potential for literacy growth' (Cairney and Munsie, 1995, p.394).

The main site for the project was in an urban community in the western suburbs of Sydney. The problems there were the same as those in many urban communities; isolation, no family support, low participation in education, high unemployment, drugs related problems, vandalism, crime and high instances of family breakdown. The project was based in the local elementary school and nearby preschool. The main purposes of the project were to:

- increase parental participation in the literacy activities of their children;
- change the nature of the interactions adults have with children as they read and write;
- introduce parents (and their children) to a range of literacy practices which are related to success in schooling;
- train community resource people who could be redeployed in a wide range of community literacy activities;
- raise community expectations concerning literacy and education; and
- serve as a catalyst for a variety of community-based literacy initiatives. (Cairney and Munsie, 1995, p. 394)

The project had three clear stages designed to be implemented over a period of eighteen months. *Stage 1* aimed to identify and train 25 parents to be more closely involved with their own children (aged 1-12 years) as they engaged in literacy activities, using a range of literacy strategies and literacy practices related to success in school and making use of literacy resources in the community. Parents were expected to attend sixteen 2-hour workshops and to be involved in between-class work with their children over a period of 8 weeks. A Community Literacy Training Certificate was presented to all parents on completing the programme. *Stage 2* involved training 15 of the initial group of parents to be more advanced literacy tutors. Such parents would work in school with other children. *Stage 3* aimed to train selected parents from Stage 2 to act as community tutors. Fourteen parents were trained to use a specially prepared pack consisting of six 1-hour sessions designed to enable another parent and child to use some of the TTALL strategies in their own home.

All stages of the programme involved training by the programme co-ordinator (Lynne Munsie) and selected people from the university, school, preschool and the community.

On the implementation of *Stage 1*, fifty parents attended the first meeting, out of which 25 expressed an interest to be involved in the eight-week programme. Only one parent dropped out as she obtained a new job, which meant that she could not attend the workshops.

Parents decided the days and times of the twice-weekly morning meetings. Most of the parents had left high school early and none had taken up any post-secondary education. Some had limited literacy. Only one man attended the sessions, but no reasons are given why men chose not to participate. The sessions in Stage 1 aimed to develop parents' self-esteem, offered basic child development and covered issues concerning reading and writing and ways in which they could help their children with their reading and writing. Parents were also shown how to use the library for research. At the end of each session, parents were encouraged to take part in a home task, which would enable them to interact with their children in a range of literacy tasks. Observation checklists were provided for parents to note their children's achievements and progress. Although the content of the workshops varied, they kept the same interactive style with opportunities for parents to talk with each other and share their experiences.

The 25 parents and their 34 children (aged 1-12 years) were the main subjects of the evaluation of Stage 1. A control group for comparison purposes was created by randomly selecting 75 students from all classes in the primary school. Both qualitative and quantitative measures were used. Pre-tests and post-tests were held 8 months apart for all experimental and control students. These consisted of commercial comprehension, vocabulary and spelling tests and a specially designed test of reading attitudes.

All parents were interviewed both before and after the programme. These were conducted as small group structured interviews, large group unstructured interviews and individual interviews. Group interviews were also conducted with students and staff and a written survey was sent to all parents at the end of the programme.

Observation techniques were used. Class, group and home interactions were recorded in a variety of ways including video-taping, detailed field notes and the keeping of a reflective journal by both the assistant principal and the programme co-ordinator.

Nine major themes emerged:

The programme had an impact on the way parents interacted with their children. Many parents (79%) felt strongly that the course had changed the way they talk to children about schoolwork. Others (21%) felt less strongly but agreed it had affected them.

The programme gave parents new strategies when interacting with their children's literacy and at the end of the programme 92% said they listened more regularly to their children reading.

The programme helped parents to choose resource material and enabled them to help their children choose books and use libraries more effectively.

Parents gained new knowledge. All the parents said they knew more about learning, reading and spelling while 96% said they knew more about writing.

The parents' families were affected. Not only parents and children but families generally were affected by the programme. Many (79%) said they organised their homes differently so that they could help their children with their learning.

Parents shared their newfound knowledge outside the family. The impact on extended family and friends was an unexpected outcome of the project.

Parents became more informed about schools. Most parents (88%) said they understood better how schools worked.

Parents' self-esteem and confidence grew. All parents showed increased confidence and self-esteem. Evidence of this was shown in their willingness to share their knowledge of the programme with others. Nearly all parents (96%) said they felt more confident working with their own children and 92% felt more confident when working as a parent in school. Most (92%) said they wished to take up further education.

Children's literacy performances, attitudes and interests were affected. The qualitative data collected confirmed that children of parents involved in the project had a more positive attitude to learning, were more confident in their reading and writing, read more difficult texts on a more regular basis, read more widely and had less difficulty with school work. The performance gains found for children were particularly rewarding, as the children were not the main focus of the study. The change in children's attitudes proved that parents did apply the strategies at home.

The school and preschool were also affected by the programme. Parents taking part in the programme became more involved in the classroom, with school activities and in decision-making. Their fear of school had disappeared.

There was a change in teacher attitudes also. Teachers who had previously made comments such as 'You'll never get these parents interested - no one will ever turn up.' (Cairney and Munsie, 1995, p.402), showed some interest as the programme progressed and finally held positive views about parental involvement in their children's literacy learning. They began to discuss educational issues and concerns with parents on a more regular basis.

TTALL also had some impact on community development, with parents forming a cohesive group willing to become involved in school matters.

Cairney and Munsie (1995) claimed the TTALL programme clearly had an impact on the parents and children. Parents found the programme to be extremely useful, while the staff of the school and preschool gained new insights into the value of parental involvement, especially with families whom they had dismissed as disinterested and incapable of helping their children.

Over 100 schools across Australia took up the project, which suggests others believe the programme achieved what it set out to achieve.

Discussion of Cairney's work (Cairney and Munsie, 1995; Cairney, 1995)

There were certain gaps in, and issues that arose from, the TTALL (Talk to a literacy learner) programme discussed earlier. It seems that little, if any account was taken of social and family home literacy in the programme. The emphasis was on a school-based literacy culture that appeared to be interpreted as separate from and unconnected with, family literacy. A vital strand was missing which could have connected home and school literacy.

Although preschool was mentioned as being part of the programme and children aged 1-12 years were involved, emphasis appeared to be on research projects with older children. This is confirmed in the post-programme surveys which showed that parents new strategies included the use of personal spelling dictionaries (71%), paired reading (54%) and editing their children's work (50%). These percentages do not tell us much unless they are related to the percentage of children in the project for whom

such strategies were appropriate. Although 92% listened regularly to their children reading there is no indication of the percentage of parents who *read aloud* to their children, an important indicator of later reading achievement.

The programme produced positive outcomes but it appears to be restrictive and within a didactic framework - a framework which does not seem to take account of emergent literacy or of strategies for working with preschool children. Although discussion and interaction were evident, this was within the programme content which did not appear to ascertain, or take account of, literacy activities which parents might already have been doing with their children, neither did it take account of the wider literacy strands of oracy and environmental print. The programme also excluded parents who, for whatever reason, were not available during the day.

Teachers changed their views of parents' ability to help their children but were no closer to understanding the literacy learning which was a natural part of the children's and families' world outside school.

There is no doubt, however, that the parents became empowered to be part of their children's school literacy development. They gained self-esteem and confidence, which enabled them to pass on positive attitudes to their children and become involved more in the school and its decision-making.

In contrast to the prescriptive approach of the 1990 TTALL programme, Cairney addressed a range of issues concerning literacy in his book 'Pathways to Literacy' (Cairney, 1995). Throughout the book he argues that literacy is a 'complex cultural practice' which 'offers humans potential to make sense of their world and to share understandings of others' (p.179). He pointed out, however, that such daily activities as literacy could regulate and exploit, as well as being potential modes of resistance and solidarity. However, while acknowledging that literacy can disempower as well as empower, Cairney still argued that access to literacy is a basic human right and the title of his book suggests that there are multiple 'pathways to literacy' which can take each literacy user somewhere.

Nevertheless there were certain questions that he needed to ask:

Why is it that school literacy disempowers some and empowers others?
How must schools change in order to ensure that literacy is empowering for all? What types of classroom environments permit all children to gain access to the literacy practices which they need to take their place in the world? ...

Why is it that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians still struggle to succeed in our education system? Why do they leave school earlier? Why do they have higher rates of unemployment? What role does education play in addressing some of these issues, or perhaps even acting to inadvertently sustain such inequalities? How is literacy implicated in all this. (Cairney, 1995, p.181).

Such questions as these must surely challenge all researchers of literacy. There is a challenge to teachers to cope with a changing world and meet its needs, but does the school also have a role as preserver of a culture, and if so, which cultures?

Cairney suggested there is a challenge to develop partnerships with our communities, but such partnerships are so often 'tokenistic', merely offering information about schooling. He acknowledged that influences outside school affect children's achievements. Some explanations, he recalled, reflect the deficit model, and are based on the misconception that some children receive 'good' or 'appropriate' preparation for school, while others receive 'poor' or 'inappropriate' preparation. Literacy learners arrive in school with unique social and literacy experiences that should be recognised in the teaching methods and policy of the school.

OTHER INFLUENCES ON THIS STUDY

Hannon and Nutbrown (1997) evaluated teachers' use of a conceptual framework for early literacy education involving parents (the ORIM framework). They pointed out that although most parents attempt to help their children's preschool literacy, they do not all do it 'in the same way, to the same extent, with the same concept of literacy or with the same resources' (p.406). They argued that the variation in children's literacy achievements must be due to what parents do at home in the preschool years and that part of the problem is that teachers are trained to work in the classroom. They are not necessarily equipped conceptually to appreciate the children's home school literacy learning. As there has been little research into how teachers might influence children's literacy learning through parents they engaged in a project to introduce the ORIM conceptual framework as a model for working with parents (see Appendix 1).

As can be seen the grid consists of strands of literacy and the concepts of parental involvement. For the purposes reported here, the main strands of literacy are environmental print, book sharing, early writing and oral language. Strands can always be broken down further to create substrands and in the case of oral language these could be broken down into storytelling, decontextualised talk, vocabulary and

talk about written language. Hannon and Nutbrown (1997) reported that the ‘metaphor of strands is helpful in suggesting that these things are at the same time separable and intertwined.’ (Hannon and Nutbrown, 1997, p.407). Some of the concepts parents can provide for children’s literacy development are outlined in Figure 2.1

Fig 2:1
The ORIM framework

STRANDS OF EARLY LITERACY EXPERIENCE

		Environ mental Print	Books	Writing	Oral language
FAMILIES CAN PROVIDE	Opportunities				
	Recognition				
	Interaction				
	Model				

(From Hannon and Nutbrown, 1997, p.408, Figure 1)

Parents can provide *opportunities* by offering resources; encouraging children’s literacy through play; drawing attention to environmental print; by encouraging their knowledge of nursery rhymes; sharing books and stories, magazines, comics and so on; by encouraging their use of libraries and taking them on visits. Also, parents, by *recognising* their children’s achievements offer encouragement. By *interacting* with their children they encourage them to take the next steps. This could be through informal or structured activities and could be in the form of pointing, discussion, direct instruction or through play. Furthermore, parents also act as *models* of literacy when children see them engaging in their own literacy activities.

Hannon and Nutbrown (1997) evaluated the conceptual framework as part of a joint University-City project in the UK. This project, Raising Early Achievement in Literacy (REAL) aimed to find ways of raising early achievement in literacy before

children entered formal schooling at age five. Twenty-four schools participated and six seminars were held. The average attendance was 31 teachers at each session. The ORIM framework was used to find possible ways of working with parents. Participants produced a range of ideas for all strands and in each element of involvement.

Teachers were also invited to develop their own practice using the framework and were invited to evaluate the sessions. The majority of schools went on to develop some new work with parents eighteen out of 23 schools (only one dropped out) indicated they would do something. All teachers felt the framework and the idea of different strands made sense and for the majority of teachers the framework was adequate. Teachers were also asked how useful it was as a model for working with parents. Few negative comments were found and teachers at all schools except one said they would use it in future work. It also changed practice as 18 out of 23 schools had implemented and written up new work with parents by the time this phase of the project had ended. The findings were sufficiently positive for professional development with teachers to continue. Hannon and Nutbrown reported the ORIM framework had developed into a practical model that informed teachers thinking and practice and appeared to have enabled change. The framework was subsequently used in the design and evaluation of an 18-month early literacy project in an experimental study. It was also used as the basis for planning and evaluation of the study reported here.

This chapter has discussed; definitions of literacy and why literacy is important; the term 'emergent literacy' and the influence of the home on young children's literacy learning. Research studies into home factors in children's early literacy development and later achievements have been reviewed. The main points to emerge of relevance to my study areas follows.

1. The home is a powerful learning environment for the preschool child and teachers must be aware that their contribution may well be limited compared with that of parents (Tizard and Hughes, 1984)
2. Parents may be actively involved in their children's literacy learning and would welcome advice but may believe that teachers are unhappy about

involving them in their children's literacy development (Hannon and James, 1990)

3. Many children from low-income families (in the Western world) do have literacy experiences before school (Heath, 1983; Teale, 1986) and parents beliefs and attitudes can predict reading achievement that was not related to socio-economic status (Wagner and Spratt, 1988) or parents' educational achievements (Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines, 1988)
4. Older siblings can enhance a child's literacy development (Baghban, 1994)
5. Early literacy programmes designed to work with families can benefit both parents and children (Hannon, Weinberger and Nutbrown, 1991; Cairney and Munsie, 1995; Brooks et al. 1996; Weinberger, 1996).

The issue of cultural practices of the home, which may be different from the cultural practice of school, has been taken up in this chapter in the review of Heath (1983). This issue will be discussed in the work of Hazareesingh (1994), Delgado-Gaitan (1990, 1996), Gregory (1993, 1994, 1998), Huss-Keeler (1997), Blackledge (2000) and Kenner (2000) in the next chapter.

Chapter 3 addresses the influence of the home on bilingual children's preschool literacy development.

CHAPTER 3

HOME FACTORS IN BILINGUAL EARLY LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on home factors in early literacy development. It outlines my theoretical stance on working with bilingual families and reviews the work of some key researchers, in particular, Gregory (1993, 1994, 1998) who studied the influence of the home on the early literacy development of Chinese and Bangladeshi origin primary-age children; Delgado-Gaitan, (1990, 1991, 1993, 1996) who researched issues of empowerment and literacy development with Spanish-Mexican children; Huss-Keeler (1997) who investigated teachers' attitudes, home literacy and the school literacy learning of Pakistani origin primary-age children; Blackledge (2000) who addressed issues of empowerment and social justice in Bagladeshi families and how it is possible to involve Bangladeshi origin parents in their children's literacy learning in school, and Kenner (2000) whose study concerns how parents with various home languages can contribute to their children's school literacy learning.

Many researchers have looked at home factors in early literacy development (see Chapter 2) but few, if any, have yet studied the influence of the home on the early literacy development of emerging bilingual preschool children who are of Pakistani origin and the impact of collaborative work with families in the home. In this study, I want to focus particularly on collaborative work in the home with Punjabi or Urdu speaking preschool children and their families who are of Pakistani origin but are living in Britain. I have not found any other such studies. Because there are even relatively few studies that focus on emerging bilingual primary-age children and their literacy development, this chapter will be reviewing the work of some of the above key researchers in some detail.

My theoretical stance on working with bilingual families.

Empowerment, cultural identity, the impact of the Muslim religion on children's literacy experiences, the need to challenge the 'deficit hypothesis' and the development of early literacy in Pakistani origin families are issues that I wish to

address in this bilingual study. Effective liaison with linguistic minority families requires recognition of their expertise in their home languages and families should be enabled to support their children's learning. Street (1997) addressed the issue of treating language and literacy as social practices and suggested that they should be studied 'as they occur naturally in social life, taking account of the context and their different meanings for different cultural groups' (p.47).

Siraj-Blatchford (1994) pointed out that working with parents demands a sensitive approach and outlines specific issues surrounding black parental involvement. While Klein (1993) suggested that black and ethnic minority families are becoming involved in their children's formal education, Siraj-Blatchford argued that there are still many ethnic families who are having difficulty coping with their everyday lives let alone entering an institutional setting to be 'involved' in their children's education. As she stated, if families are also experiencing racism and discrimination, it is even more difficult for black working-class families to become involved. If parents feel disempowered and have little confidence, and in addition have received limited schooling themselves, their poor self-esteem may make them feel they have little to offer their children as educators. The role of educators and parenting is quite different in some cultures and educators need to spend time explaining how parents can help their children and how the child can benefit from this experience. Parents need to be able to trust educators before they can offer their active support. Siraj-Blatchford also pointed out that some families do not understand the philosophy of preschool education. Parents tend to base their understanding on their own early experiences. If this meant being involved in formal literacy and numeracy activities the informal learning through play of most early years' settings will need to be carefully explained. Similarly concepts of child rearing are socially constructed and differ between cultures. It is useful for educators to talk to parents to gain an understanding of what childhood means to the different cultures. Educators working with ethnic minority parents have a great deal to learn from parents, children and the community about the similarities and differences in cultures which can only enhance the children's education and literacy experience.

In view of Siraj-Blatchford's interpretation of the situation in many families, there is surely a case here for educators to be reaching out to the community to build on and enhance children's literacy development.

Martin (1999) pointed out that the deficit hypothesis proposes that 'emerging bilinguals bring little or nothing' to learning about literacy and that parents are seen as

'being 'illiterate' and not providing or being able to provide, literacy experiences for their children' (p68). In line with other researchers (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, Siraj-Blatchford, 1994, Gregory, 1997, Martin, 1999) my study aims to challenge the 'deficit hypothesis' theory associated with becoming or being bilingual.

Street's studies of Qu'ranic literacies in an Iranian village (Street, 1984), argued that 'maktab' literacy (literacy learned in the traditional religious schools or 'maktab', where Mullahs delivered Qu'ranic learning) imparted certain skills. He suggested that the skills learned during Qu'ranic teaching at the Mosque, (maktab literacy) enabled understanding of the specific links between speech and print and the significance of format, layout and conventions of presentation for meaning. This study aims to research the experiences of children in their Qu'ranic classes and to find out about the family literacy experiences in the home.

A REVIEW OF SOME RELEVANT STUDIES

As little research has been undertaken on the home factors influencing the literacy development of Pakistani origin preschool children I will also review studies of other bilingual children where there are factors relevant to this study. Factors to be discussed include bilingualism or multilingualism in the family and the effect on children's literacy and language development, the perceived importance by the family of the languages spoken at home, cultural practices which influence literacy in the home and empowerment through home-school links.

This section will review studies, articles and readings that are relevant to certain aspects of my research. Some are as early as the 1980's but nevertheless are worthy of discussion. Some issues raised with other ethnic groups are pertinent to my research. The work of Delgado-Gaitan, Gregory and Huss-Keeler are of such relevance to my study that I will be providing detailed reviews and discussions later in this chapter.

Titone (1985)

Early bilingual reading

Titone (1985) paid attention to early bilingual reading and asked the question "What kind of relationship can there be between pre-school reading and the bilingual child?" (Titone, 1985 p.70) He referred to work by Andersson (1981), who comments:

If a monolingual child can get a headstart by learning to read before going to school, why can't a bilingual child get a double headstart by learning to read two languages before entering school? No one could deny the educational importance of skill in reading: nor would many deny the advantage of a knowledge of two spoken languages. The theoretical advantage of knowing how to read and write in two languages would seem to be self-evident, and yet rarely emphasised as an objective in our school. (Andersson cited in Titone, 1985, p.70).

It must be remembered that this report was written two decades ago, but Delgado-Gaitan's work in the 1990's (to be discussed later), reports that it is still the practice to teach Mexican-American children to read in Spanish, (their first language), before they learn to read in English.

Andersson (1981), cited in Titone, (1985), attempting to study more clearly the educational outcomes of early bilingual reading, presented three cases of preschool biliteracy. He reported how one child learned to read in both English and Spanish, starting to read at the age of 1 year 5 months. At the age of 3 years 8 months her level of reading in both English and Spanish was at the level of the average first grader in the second half of the term.

The results of two other English/Spanish speaking children in the same family were reported. Both learned to speak Spanish and English early. At 18 months one child was asking her parents the names of the letters in a Spanish alphabet book provided by them. The other, however, took no interest in the alphabet until much later, but absorbed words by association. Neither child read books of any length until they were five but reading Spanish at home led to reading English when they entered school. The progress in school was excellent for both children.

The early reading development of a Korean/English bilingual and biliterate child was also reported. Because her development in Korean was in advance of her development in English, her father decided to introduce her to reading in English to prepare her for kindergarten. Through 'Sesame Street' on television she learned all the letters of the English alphabet. Her parents taught her to read first in English, while the language of instruction was Korean. Just before she became a first grader she also learned to read in Korean.

Andersson (1981) remarked that far from being a double burden, learning to read in two languages was a double joy for the children in these three bilingual families. Similarities existed in the approaches of the parents in all three families: no pressure

was placed on the child, the child's interests were followed, children were included in conversation and activities and above all reading appeared to be related to a sense of personal and social values.

Hazareesingh (1994)

Home culture in the classroom

A UK project described by Hazareesingh (1994) highlighted the importance of drawing on children's own cultural experiences in school. A historical project was described which drew on the family experiences of 5 and 6-year-old children from Pakistani origin families and how the children's literacy activities were enhanced. As Hazareesingh pointed out:

In the context of their family experiences, children's lives are full of significant events, occasions, people, places, names, images, stories, narratives, objects. (Hazareesingh, 1994, p.6).

The majority of the children spoke either Urdu or Punjabi. Parents were informed of the project and were invited to share their knowledge, information and expertise. They were invited to translate stories and provide information about the places and countries the children came from, their journeys, travels and visits since settling in Woking and the places and languages with which they were familiar.

An essential feature with Reception/Year 1 children was the use of stories told or read in both English and Urdu at the beginning of the day. Children were encouraged to listen, speak, remember, imagine and create. Stories were chosen which reflected the cultural experiences of the children and which were available in their first languages, enabling first language and bilingual storytelling. All the activities in the project were conducted in both Urdu/Punjabi and English, enabling children to relate their experiences in their first language. This project sought to avoid the deficit theory which suggests that speaking another language other than English (especially a non-European language) is a source of problems and difficulties in educational life. It highlighted what can be achieved with an informed sensitive approach which takes into account the cultural background of the children and their families.

Gregory (1993, 1994, 1998), Gregory and Williams (2000)

Studies of Chinese and Bangladeshi children including cultural assumptions and early years' pedagogy

Gregory has conducted several interesting and revealing studies with minority groups, some of which are reported here. In these she highlights the varying traditions of educational practices in different cultures and outlines implications for practice in schools.

A study of a Chinese family's perspective on early literacy

In her study of a Chinese child, Tony, Gregory (1993) showed how his family was confused by the different reading practices in the British and the Chinese school. In the Chinese tradition a child must learn to read and write individual words and prove his competency in reading before he is given a book to read. Being presented with a book to read is a reward for having gone through the process of learning to read. To have earlier access to books would, in the Chinese tradition, devalue both the book and the principles of hard work. A love of books comes after learning to read and is not a prerequisite. In Tony's family books were placed well out of children's reach and have a talismanic value.

Tony's teacher in the British school followed the British culture and practice of providing good books to encourage the child to read influenced by psycholinguistic theories. She followed the philosophy that we learn to read by reading, and encouraged children to experiment, take risks and to 'try out' whole sentences. Similarly, her approach to writing followed a developmental emergent literacy approach, where children are seen as writers as they enter school and are encouraged to experiment rather than be dependent on accuracy.

The difference between the Chinese school and the British school, reported Gregory, was that the Chinese school is *explicit* about its teaching and learning practices so parents understand their methods. It is not surprising then, in the absence of any information that would suggest an alternative method of teaching and learning that the family expected the same methods to be used by the British school. Tony's teacher in the British school, however, *implicitly* expected the parents to understand and share her view of learning to read. No clear messages were shared with families and children. It is clear then, if children are to overcome this diversity in teaching

methods that certain strategies need to be adopted by the teacher. Gregory (1993) outlined these as follows.

1. A recognition that her interpretation of reading is only one amongst many and is by no means 'natural' but a result of her own literacy practices and those legitimised by the school.
2. An awareness of literacy practices of the families of the children in her class and the recognition that these practices are of equal value to her own (in the case of children of Chinese origin, this will mean a realisation of the importance of the values of Confucianism which stress a respect for parents and achievement in education).
3. An appreciation of the need to make children entering school with different literacy practices explicitly aware of the features of the practice she is initiating them into in school. Ultimately her task will be a joint one of recognising and building upon children's literacy practices from home and clarifying to them what 'counts' as reading in school. (Gregory, 1993, p.58).

If such practices could be adopted whilst working with preschool children and their families, parents would be well prepared for the literacy practices children would encounter in nursery and school. It would be beneficial if such a programme were continued in school for those parents who were not able to attend the programme in nursery.

Cultural assumptions and early years' pedagogy: the effect of the home culture on minority children's interpretation of reading in school (Gregory, 1994)

Gregory (1994), considered the interpretation of reading brought by young Bangladeshi origin children as they started school and contrasted this with that of their teachers. She questioned the "universal relevance of western school-oriented paradigms on how reading is learned and the role of the caregiver as mediator and opposes those with a model of literacy drawn from non-western and non-school oriented families" (Gregory, 1994, p.111). She pointed out how the reading experiences of these children outside school contrasted strongly at every level with their reading experiences in a British school.

An in-depth study of 32 families by Wells (1987) found that the most successful predictor of reading success was the extent to which children listened to written stories at home. However, as Gregory pointed out, attitudes to reading are not the same in all ethnic groups. The religious significance given to reading in many Asian

cultures contrasts strongly with the mainly secular view of literacy in Western society. Similarly the methods of learning and teaching reading vary greatly between the cultural groups. Unfortunately this 'difference' has been interpreted as a 'deficit view' of 'no reading' if the home does not reflect reading for pleasure. According to Gregory, if appropriate children's books are not available, then an interpretation is made of 'no reading material at all' being available and that interactive patterns which do not fit the Western view, indicate to many educators that the child is not introduced to reading outside school.

Gregory claimed that the emphasis on storybook reading in the United Kingdom has limited the interest here in the literacy practices of other ethnic groups. Gregory reports that detailed longitudinal studies have, however, been conducted elsewhere on reading practices in developing countries (Scribner and Cole, 1981 on the Vai people in Liberia; Street, 1984 in Iran; Wagner et al., 1986 in Morocco; Lewis, 1993 in Somalia and Probst, 1993 in Western Nigeria). There has also been considerable research in the States on the reading practices of various ethnic and social groups living alongside each other; Anderson and Stokes, 1984 on Hispanic and Black Americans; Schiefflan and Cochran-Smith, 1984 on Vietnamese Americans).

Gregory pointed out that all these studies of various ethnic groups presented very different interpretations of the purpose of reading from the western view of home storyreading, where enjoyment is important. In all these studies the main purpose of reading was 'utilitarian' - a means to 'get things done', such as the reading of letters and lists, reading official documents and transactions in the market place. In some groups reading to fulfil religious commitments was of paramount importance.

It could be argued, however, that at least one UK study, while still including the Western view of home story-reading, has also considered a wider framework of literacy encompassing such 'utilitarian' purposes for reading. Furthermore, it has encouraged parents to involve their children in such activities (Hannon, Weinberger and Nutbrown, 1991).

Gregory claimed that what is missing is a picture of the reading activities which take place outside school in the lives of young children who are from ethnic minority groups.

A study of Bangladeshi origin children (Gregory, 1994)

The following study reported by Gregory (1994) was concerned with Bangladeshi origin children and concentrated on data collected from six families living in Spitalfields, East London. Data collection covered two years from the time children entered Infant school at age five to age seven, the time when their Infant schooling was complete. Equal numbers of boys and girls were chosen and two children did not have older siblings, a significant factor when studying young children's early literacy achievements. The aims of the study were as follows.

1. To collect comprehensive information on reading practices of both child and caregivers outside the English school and to analyse these in terms of purpose, materials and participation structures.
2. To compare these with the practices the child is being initiated into in the British Infant school.
3. Using this information to ascertain how far a child is able to draw on existing organised knowledge to make sense of new tasks.
4. To organise In-service teacher education which takes these findings as a springboard for the design of culturally responsive approaches to initial literacy in school. (Gregory, 1994, p.115).

Ethnographic and ethnomethodological approaches were used including a minute-by-minute analysis of the interaction taking place, longitudinal participant observation and interviews. Both the project director and the research officer were well known to both the families and the teachers.

Gregory reported that although only six families were studied, the unique nature of the close-knit community provided some confidence that the findings could be generalised to a larger group.

Almost all the families in the community in Gregory's study came from the Sylheti region in Bangladesh. Their spoken language was Sylheti, a dialect of Bengali with no written form. Many of the men had been in England for 20 years, but most of the women joined their husbands about ten years later. The families had retained their Bangladeshi culture, remaining isolated from the English language and culture. Unemployment was high and those who were in employment worked together locally as tailors or in the local restaurants.

Life was mostly contained within the local community, revolving around the family, the Mosque, neighbours and the shops. The neighbourhood reflected their strong commitment to the Muslim religion and culture. Even British television had not impinged on their lives, with many families preferring to watch Hindi videos. Consequently the young children understood more Hindi than English on entering school at age five. The children were expected to attend evening classes to learn to read and write standard Bengali. They also learned Arabic at Mosque classes so that they could read the Qu'ran. These out-of-school activities tended to isolate them from the Western world and its culture.

All the children in the project were of Bangladeshi origin. About a third of the teachers came from Bangladesh but were not from the same social class, did not share the same religion and did not speak the Sylheti dialect. All teaching was in English and lessons took place as if the children were English speakers. 86% of the EAL children in the district were not fluent in English, but they would be subjected to the National Curriculum Tests in English at age seven. Not surprisingly the children's test results were poor as they had limited English after only two years in school and most Bangladeshi children were still achieving well below the national average at GCSE level.

Gregory found that books were not in evidence in the children's homes and dual language calendars were the only apparent reading material. Parents did not feel they had sufficient literacy skills to help their children learn to read and hoped that their children would ultimately teach them to read. Four of the six children in the study attended lessons in both Arabic and Bengali. Between six to nine hours per week were spent on learning to read in the Community school, compared with two to five hours in the English school.

In her study, Gregory (1994) compared the reading practices of the children in terms of purpose, materials, participation and pedagogy. She found that the families' purpose in their children learning to read English was to achieve success, a good job and to avoid unemployment. Alternatively the English teachers saw reading as a pleasurable activity, encouraged reading for pleasure and classed children as 'readers' as soon as they were interested in books. In the children's community literacy classes, literacy learning was seen as part of belonging to a culture. To be a good Muslim it was important to be able to read the Qu'ran. Children were very conscious of their progress and were rewarded for their achievements.

Gregory also found, as could be expected, that the materials used in the teaching of reading were very different in the children's different 'literacy worlds'. The English teachers in the project used the 'real book' approach of learning to read. Reading schemes were rejected as 'boring' compared with other quality books. In contrast, Gregory found that books used in the Bengali and Qu'ranic classes were primers on poor quality paper that had been received from Bangladesh. Children were expected to describe the black and white illustrations in the Bengali book and, before progressing to the Qu'ran, they had to learn all the different sound combinations shown in the primers in Arabic.

Gregory's observations revealed an informal and relaxed atmosphere in the English classroom that contrasted greatly with the formal, more structured approach in the Bengali and Mosque classes. In the English classroom, children's experiences of reading consisted of storytelling, experimentation and 'pretend reading'. Children were encouraged to take risks and accuracy was not important in the early stages. In contrast, in both the Bengali and Mosque classes, the lessons consisted of a test on the previous lesson, then 'demonstration, practice, test'. Children were not encouraged to take risks, experimentation was not allowed and emphasis was on a step by step pattern of sounding out letters, combining letters into syllables, syllables into words and words into phrases. If mistakes were made, children were given the correct answer.

Children's perception of reading in the English school was that they play or 'play with a book' but in the Bengali classes or Mosque school they 'work, read and write'. The teachers' attitudes to learning and achievement were also different. In the Bengali and Mosque classes the teachers were sure the children would learn and master the tasks, whereas in the English school, teachers expressed concern over the children's achievements and the difficulties they experience.

What was the problem in the Bengali children's achievements in the English school? Could there have been a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' here as observed in the study reported by Huss-Keeler (1997) to be discussed later. Were teaching methods inappropriate for these children, or the methods of testing and assessment? Could it be that emphasis was on underachievement rather than what the children could do? Was any value placed on the children's out of school learning, either in the home or the community? It is interesting to note that the children said they preferred the English school, so opportunities for motivation and success were there.

Gregory (1994) claimed that 'difficulties arise where there is a mismatch in interpretations and a discontinuity between the language, discourse participation styles and culture of the child and the teacher' (p.119). She suggested that educators could build on difference and home-school learning programmes could be based on what carers were familiar with, rather than what the school felt they should understand. She argued that instruction leads to development when young children learn in a formal situation. Gregory claimed that children are seldom taught how to 'switch into' specific knowledge, consequently they are more concerned with providing the right answer than understanding the task in hand. She suggested that the Bengali children would need tuition in how to 'switch into' such knowledge. If they did not receive such tuition it was possible they would take their understanding of 'work', 'reading' and 'play' from their Community classes.

Other possible alternatives were offered; building on existing strengths by using the children's metalinguistic awareness; joint planning between the Community classes and school; observation of the other's practice and teaching methods which could result in the joint provision of teaching materials; home/school links with programmes and materials where parents could learn with their children.

Gregory suggested that those who share the same reading practices and discourse of literacy (for example, 'school-oriented groups') were in danger of seeing their interpretation as a 'natural' one which did not need explaining. Other cultures, however, (and in Britain two generations ago), very different interpretations were made of what counted as 'reading'. Gregory concluded that our cultural assumptions about what reading is and how it should be taught in school should be questioned and that knowledge of children's literacy learning outside school is essential.

Siblings as mediators of literacy in linguistic minority communities (Gregory, 1998)

In a later paper Gregory (1998), addressed further issues pertinent to the British-Bangladeshi community in Spitalfields, East London. However, before reporting on a study on siblings as mediators of literacy, she discussed the current paradigm on family and parental involvement in children's reading development, some of which is reported here.

Gregory argued that models of parental involvement in reading in the UK are generally based on four assumptions.

Assumption 1: Parents need to perform school-devised activities using school materials and teaching methods. Successful parental involvement means that school reading and learning practices should be transmitted from school to home. Existing home and community practices are consequently unimportant for involvement. (Gregory, 1998) p.34).

Gregory outlined several studies that she claims have taken this transmissionist model in the UK (Newson and Newson, 1977; Tizard et al, 1982; Hannon and Weinberger 1994 to name a few). She also claims that the transmissionist model is adopted by many 'family literacy' programmes in the UK. Gregory pointed out, however, that these models have been challenged by evidence from longitudinal studies detailing the different but extensive practices found in non-school-oriented families (Heath, 1983; Anderson and Stokes, 1984).

Auerbach's socio-contextual model (Auerbach, 1989), presents a method where educators consider the existing strengths in a family and how these can be built upon. Gregory (1998) referred to at least two studies that have attempted this approach (Moll et al, 1992; Gallimore and Goldberg, 1993). Similar studies, although unusual, are emerging in the UK (Edwards, 1995; Gregory 1996b), showing that even young children are engaging in formal literacy classes in the community. Taking up these issues, Gregory challenges the assumption that only school practices are valid for home reading programmes.

Assumption 2: The same home reading programmes are suitable whether all the school is from an indigenous or first generation linguistic minority background. Parents should be capable of helping children to complete work whether or not they read English. (Gregory, 1998, p.350).

Gregory claimed that researchers in the UK have generally been reluctant to recognise cultural differences in learning activities in ethnic minority families and considered a number of factors that might be responsible for this.

Since the deficit debate researchers have emphasised similarities rather than differences in language used at home in different social classes (Wells, 1981) and there has been emphasis on a child-centred approach, where the child is seen as an individual rather than as belonging to a specific group. Gregory pointed out that such a narrow definition of culture ignores the multiple literacies to be found in many minority groups.

However, as outlined in Gregory (1996a) and Hirst (1998), the many rich literacy practices of minority groups are being revealed.

Assumption 3: Home reading programmes are for parental not sibling participation. (Gregory, 1998, p.36)

Gregory argued that most reading programmes are aimed at parent rather than sibling involvement. Gregory's study to be reported here and a later study (Gregory, 2000) show how siblings are involved in the younger child's literacy development.

Assumption 4: The story-reading practice between parent and young child as it takes place in western school-orientated homes is the most valuable preparation for children's early literacy development. Although children may participate in other practices at home and in the community, these do not initiate children into crucial patterns for school success. (Gregory, 1998, p.36).

Gregory pointed out how a number of longitudinal studies have found that a child's involvement with written narrative and story-reading promotes cognitive and linguistic achievement as well as preparation for school literacy. A study by Wells (1987) showed that children experience difficulties through lack of narrative experience while Heath (1983) found that children's inability to offer explanations impeded their later reading achievement. Tizard et al (1988) claimed that a child's knowledge of the alphabet at school entry was indicative of later reading achievement, while Gregory (1993) argued that early success depended on a child's adaptation to the cultural norms in reading lessons.

Gregory concluded her discussion on the current paradigm by suggesting that due to the emphasis on parental involvement in literacy, the role of siblings has been overlooked.

Studies of Bangladeshi children (Gregory, 1998; Gregory and Williams, 2000))

Gregory (1998) reported a study that took place in Spitalfields, East London with British Bangladeshi children. Although the British-Bangladeshi men in the community had lived there many years, the women had only joined them in the last ten years. Families remained a close-knit community isolated from the English language and culture. The three out of seven fathers were employed in the community so there was no urgency to learn English. None of the mothers was employed outside

the home. Mothers were literate in Bengali but only one was able to read English. The older siblings were more familiar with schoolbooks and were according to Gregory more suitable 'teachers' of the younger children.

All seven children in the study were six during the school year and in the same class at school (Year 1). All the children attended Bengali or Qu'ranic classes on at least six days a week and some on seven days. Parents had different preferences for classes for their children.

The research team consisted of two members of staff from the local University and two part-time research assistants, one of whom was Bengali/Sylheti speaking. A combination of research methods were used including participant observation, interviews and life histories. Data analysis involved comparing the nature of 'scaffolding' at home with reading sessions between the teacher and individual children at school.

The research questions were:

- 1 What might teachers learn from siblings for classroom practice?
- 2 Are the siblings really very different 'teachers' from 'school-oriented' parents? (Gregory, 1998, p.40).

The nature of scaffolding by older siblings

Gregory (1998) and Gregory and Williams (2000) outlined strategies of scaffolding used by older siblings when reading with six-year-olds.

1. *Listen and repeat*: the child repeats word by word after the older sibling.
2. *Tandem reading*: the child echoes the sibling's reading, Sometimes managing telegraphic speech.
3. *Chained reading*: the sibling begins to read and the child continues reading the next few words until he/she needs help again.
4. *Almost alone*: the child initiates reading and reads until a word is unknown; the sibling corrects the error or supplies the word; the child repeats the word correctly and continues.
5. *The recital*: the child recites the complete piece.

(Gregory and Williams, 2000, p.176)

It was only after these five stages that the move was made from the child reading to the sibling asking questions.

Gregory suggested that the children were combining strategies learnt in their English mainstream school and those learnt in their Bengali and Arabic classes. She was then interested to what extent these children could transfer their strategies to school and how the teacher might build upon them.

Reading at school

The teacher in school also listened to the child read but there was no evidence of the scaffolding and security provided by siblings. Children were expected 'to put on a performance without a rehearsal' (p.47). Gregory suggests that in view of the solid 'scaffolding' provided at home it was not surprising that children took some time to understand and obey the reading rules of school. She argued that teachers and researchers could learn from the 'sibling' reading sessions. She compared the reading strategies of mainstream caregivers and young infants and found very similar interaction patterns to those provided by the siblings in her study.

Gregory concluded that the young children in her study owed much to their older siblings and that educators can learn from them.

A discussion of Gregory's work

Gregory has highlighted many issues concerning the literacy development and learning of children from minority groups. Her research studies, involving researchers, teachers and mostly young primary children have implications for schools. She has emphasised the need for teachers to learn from ethnic minority practices of teaching literacy so that teachers are aware of and can build upon the home literacy practices of these children. She argued that teachers should recognise that their method of teaching is one of many and is by no means a 'natural' but a result of their own literacy practices and training that has been legitimised by the school.

In the case of Tony, the Chinese boy and his family the teacher needed to be aware of the values of Confucianism that stress a respect for parents and achievement in education. As with the teachers of Bangladeshi children she also needed to make

children and parents explicitly aware of the literacy practices in school, of the classroom conventions and what counts as reading in school. Similarly teachers of Bangladeshi children needed to be aware of the importance of Qu'ranic reading for these children and their families and how they are constantly moving between the two worlds of school and community practices.

Gregory referred to the social-contextual and transmission models of family involvement in children's education (Auerbach, 1989) and advocated the social-contextual model where teachers take on board the literacy practices of the home rather than the transmission model where school practices are transmitted to the home. The findings from Gregory's studies with Bangladeshi families showed that reading books were not in evidence in the children's homes and mothers felt they had insufficient literacy skills to help their children. The children's literacy learning in school involved storytelling experimentation and 'pretend reading'. Accuracy was not important and children were encouraged to take risks. In contrast in the Bengali and Mosque classes, accuracy was important, children were not encouraged to take risks and emphasis was on a routine of sounding out letters, combining letters into syllables, syllables into words and words into phrases. When Gregory researched the manner in which children experienced home literacy learning from their school books, it was not surprising, considering the parents limited literacy and language skills in English, that it was the older siblings who offered instruction.

The methods used by the older children involved a process of listen and repeat, tandem reading, chained reading, almost alone, the 'recital' and talk about text. Gregory found that this was not so different from the interaction of 'school oriented' mothers with their young children but the interaction of teachers in school reading activities lacked the support and 'scaffolding' offered by the siblings.

Gregory has shown us then, through her research that a two-way communication between home and school is essential if minority group children are to get the most benefit from their home and school reading practices. A child's home culture and early experiences should be acknowledged, but at the same time children and families should be introduced to the new world of school.

Two way links in preschool could enable families and children to benefit from shared literacy practices which may enable children to more easily enter school with both they and their families more informed. The work of Delgado-Gaitan to be discussed next, clearly shows the educational advantages of children whose parents have been

part of a preschool training programme for their children and how as a result of such programmes, parents can feel empowered.

Delgado-Gaitan (1990, 1991, 1993, 1996)

Research with Spanish-speaking Mexican-American families

Over the last decade Delgado-Gaitan has undertaken research with Spanish-speaking Mexican-American families in Carpinteria, a small residential community with a population of about 12,000 approximately 20 miles south of Santa Barbara, California. She examined various aspects in her research including bilingualism in the family and the effect on children's literacy development, the perceived importance by the family of the languages spoken at home, cultural practices which influence literacy development, parent mentorship and involving parents in their children's education both at home and at school through a process of empowerment.

Carpinteria - the setting.

Of the 12,000 residents in Carpinteria, whites represented 67%, Mexican-Americans 31%, Asians 1%, blacks 0.5% and others including American Indians 0.5% (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Fifty per cent of the Mexican-Americans were limited English-speaking. The families emigrated to Carpinteria from major cities and small rural areas in different parts of Mexico. Most of the parents had lived more than 10 years in Carpinteria and their children were born there. Most of the Mexican-Americans were from working class families with an average family size of six, including parents and children. The average age of the parents was 25.5 years.

Most of the men worked either in one of the few small industries or nurseries in Carpinteria or on the many ranches outlining the area. The Mexican-American women also worked, mainly in the plant nurseries or in domestic jobs in the motels and ranches. Census data revealed that the Mexican-Americans in Carpinteria were over-represented in farming, fishing and the resort industry compared with their Anglo counterparts.

There was an assumption that the families were poor and indeed, high rents had caused a financial burden to many of the Mexican-Americans. Some families had been forced to live with the extended family in small apartments. A few lived in small

houses or on their own ranches on the outskirts of the town while others had purchased mobile homes to avoid exorbitant rents (Delgado-Gaitan and Ruiz, 1992).

Less than 25% of the immigrants had a high school diploma and less than 3.5% had a bachelor's degree contrasting with 77% of US born adults who had at least a high school diploma. The children usually became bilingual preferring English to their native Spanish. By the second generation children spoke mostly English. In recent years the families were from the poorer rural areas of Mexico and the children had no experience of school, did not wish to learn English and were not as motivated as the children of the immigrant families of 20 years ago.

Four elementary schools, one junior high school and one high school made up the Carpinteria School District which had just over 2,000 students, approximately 35% of which were Hispanic and of that percentage, 40% were limited English speaking. The Central District administration was exclusively Anglo with the exception of one Mexican-American male who co-ordinated the Migrant Program and one Mexican American Principal.

Families, schools and the role of the researcher

Delgado-Gaitan's research took place with families and in various schools in the district. In her earlier work she used the pseudonym of Portillo for Carpinteria but was later given permission by the school district to use Carpinteria. Pseudonyms were kept to maintain anonymity for the schools. As a Mexican immigrant from a working class background herself she explained how her cultural identity was a key motivation for her studying family-school relationships in the Mexican-American Spanish-speaking community of Carpinteria. Although her research appears to have started with a study of home-school relations and family literacy in the mid-1980's, she recorded how her evolving role as an ethnographic researcher included being an observer and active participant in family, school and community life. Her role changed to that of facilitator "in a conscious, reflective process undertaken by community members and between the researcher and the community" Delgado-Gaitan, (1993) p.391. Her role as facilitator led her into a process of empowerment with Mexican-American families through the emergence of COPLA, an organisation led by parents which communicated with the families in the community, the schools and the School District.

She undertook various research initiatives in different schools in the district. It would have been helpful, however, if she had provided more evidence on home literacy in the Mexican families. Her view of literacy appears to be very school-oriented but she does broaden her views to some extent by acknowledging that home-based literacy such as letters and shopping lists can be meaningful especially to culturally different pupils:

These activities (e.g. shopping lists, letters etc.) are excellent supporters of literacy development. It is also hoped that the teacher included such authentic literacy activities in her classroom, not only because they occurred naturally and frequently outside of school, but also because bilingual children show greater "investment" and manifest the upper range of their abilities in such literacy activities. (Delgado-Gaitan and Ruiz, 1992, p.60).

It can be argued that such literacy based activities as shopping lists and letters are not merely 'supporters' of literacy development but are part of literacy development.

In her ethnographic study of twenty Mexican American families living in Portillo (pseudonym later abandoned for Carpinteria), Delgado-Gaitan described ways in which the Mexican Spanish-speaking parents took part in their children's home literacy development and how they participated in school (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990). She challenged the stereotype so often attributed to Mexican families in the United States that can also be seen as a universal issue pertinent to many other ethnic minority groups:

Mexicans (both students and their families) have been criticized for being passive, inactive and uncaring about education and unwilling to participate in the educational system in the United States. Language has been regarded as the one obstacle for limited-English-speaking parents and held as a major source of student academic failure and the inability of parents to assist their children at home. The Portillo study allows us to see how some families, schools and one community defy the stereotypic constraints and become empowered by their collective work toward building educational opportunities for Mexican children in the home and the school. (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, p.1).

The twenty families in the study all had four things in common; a working-class economic status, Spanish language, immigrant status from Mexico and all the children started school in Portillo. Some of the children were born in Portillo whilst others and all the parents were born in different parts of Mexico, living in isolated rural ranches

on the outskirts of the larger cities. The families had lived in Portillo between five and thirteen years, some with extended family close-by.

Delgado-Gaitan's links with the Portillo District Special Projects' Director revealed particular concern about the lack of Mexican parental involvement in schools and the little knowledge held about family home culture. Parental involvement with literacy appeared to be an appropriate area of research due to the concern for children's reading achievement expressed by both school and families. Delgado-Gaitan strongly believed that children could succeed academically regardless of family socio-economic and socio-cultural background.

Theoretical assumptions and research design

Before becoming involved in the fieldwork, Delgado-Gaitan made certain theoretical assumptions based on previous research, which set a baseline for data collection. Issues concerning family activities and stereotyping of Mexican families were taken into account. Family activities were established as all being legitimate because of their culturally based nature. Parents based their child-rearing strategies on the need for competence within their own group, such strategies being dependent on material and human resource. The stereotyping of Mexican families in the US made it essential that the study considered the cultural heterogeneity of the families, including any socialisation characteristics which identified the group.

These theoretical assumptions were reviewed as the research progressed. The following additional questions focused on school and home literacy.

1. How do teachers organise classroom literacy activities for low and high achievers?
2. What are the different literacy activities in the home and what is the parental role in these practices?
3. How do parents of children in the high and low reading groups compare in their involvement with their children's school?
4. How do Spanish-speaking parents learn to participate in schools?
(Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, p.30).

An ethnographic design was chosen as the research method for two main reasons: processes of social and cultural change were basic to the questions and, such topics

demanded an ethnographic approach so that actual practices could be revealed. Observation and interview techniques were the most used methods for data collection. Video and audio recordings were made with written field notes. Census information formed the main basis for demographic data collection although interviews were also conducted with Anglo and Latino elders who had been born and still lived in Portillo to supplement census figures.

Selection of children

The 20 second and third grade Spanish speaking students were selected from advanced and novice reading achievement groups as determined by teachers and the Californian Achievement Test standardised scores. Novice readers were at least one grade below their respective grade in school and advanced readers were either at or above their grade level in school. Eleven novice readers and nine advanced readers and their families took part in the study.

Advantages and disadvantages of the researcher

Being a Spanish-speaking Mexican herself and having grown up in a family similar to those in the research, Delgado-Gaitan was in a position to build up trust and make relationships with the families. However, being a Spanish-speaking Mexican woman was both an asset and a liability in her research because of the cultural understanding she brought to the research. Extensive triangulation was needed to ensure she had not been biased or assumptions had not been made in her interpretation of the data. She acknowledged her potential biases and subjectivity and therefore shared as much of the data as possible with participants to enable joint analysis and ensure accuracy.

The parents

Many of the parents had not been educated in Mexico and that contributed to their feelings of vulnerability both at work and in their daily lives. However, they all expressed the desire for their children to be well educated and to succeed in life. Many parents attended English classes, as they believed a clearer understanding of English would put them in a better position to help their children with their schooling.

They also learned when they met collectively that there were advocates who could enable them to help their children.

Parental participation models

Delgado-Gaitan outlined three levels of parental participation. Firstly, the Family Influence model that is influenced by teachers who are seen as the experts, (this model may be seen as a deficit model): secondly, the School Reform model that is influenced by parents who learn to deal with the school and educators become more in tune with families and the culture of the home: thirdly, the Co-operative Systems model where the influence goes to and from the home, school and the wider community, (this has similarities to the 'wealth' model referred to by Wolfendale, 1996). Some inconsistencies can be found in Delgado-Gaitan's work. Here we see the models of parent participation referred to as the Influence model and the School Reform model, (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990), but when discussing these in greater detail (Delgado-Gaitan ad Ruiz, 1992) they are referred to as the Family Impact model and the School Impact model. However, despite this, an interesting outline and critique of the various models is provided.

Delgado-Gatain and Ruiz (1992) described how evaluations of the Family Impact model of parental participation generally showed evidence of increased school achievement by children but these programmes implied that families were deficient in some way and that school could teach the "best family practices" (p.46) which reflected the language and learning structures of the school. What they missed were the unique learning environments of the families. By engaging in parent observation these unique practices could be revealed. Delgado-Gaitan (1990) pointed out that such studies tell us little of the parents' role outside the home and the effect on children's academic achievements.

With the School Impact model she noted that while "parents were the basic ingredient in a strong academic program of all students and particularly in the case of children and families from the working class" (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, p.53) and children in these programmes showed academic gains, it was not revealed how parents changed, how they became involved and how this translated into the children's increased performance in test scores.

The third model of parental involvement discussed was the Co-operative Systems model where interaction is two-way and it was expected that school and home would influence each other. Both accepted accountability for the common goals of students' social and academic success through collaboration and mutual support. This model, however, was not without its problems. While it claimed a model of equal partnership, there was little evidence to support the notion that home influences school. This model was close to the empowerment model adopted by Delgado-Gaitan as there was an assumption that the home, school and community are inter-related and there is opportunity for two-way empowerment. However, Trueba (1987) claimed that the school has a particular culture that caters for the mainstream Anglo population. This implied that parents of ethnic minority children needed to learn the culture in order to access the system. Delgado-Gaitan and Ruiz (1992) therefore, argued that Home-School Empowerment programmes fit best into a new category that acknowledges the unequal status relationships and proposed to change them.

Problems to be overcome

One of the problems that had to be overcome in working towards home-school empowerment was the different perspectives of the teachers and the parents as outlined in Delgado-Gaitan (1990). Teachers felt that parents were not interested in their children's education and that language was a problem. On the other hand, parents felt aggrieved that communication was not in their language and it was not part of the immigrant culture to approach school. The researcher observed family literacies in the home and literacy in the elementary school. School literacy was very formal and exercises consisted of filling in blanks on worksheets that were taken home to be completed. Some parents had difficulty in helping their children as they either did not understand the task or did not have the skills to help their child. They had little or no knowledge of how children were taught in school. Some felt isolated and did not have the confidence to approach the school.

Some parents, however, had children who had been through kindergarten. The kindergarten teacher held regular parent training sessions on various topics including how parents might help their children's early literacy development. These parents were not only empowered in how to enrich their children's literacy development but they also had the confidence to approach the school.

Delgado-Gaitan acted as a facilitator in forming a parent group (later known as COPLA) in the elementary school to enable the more knowledgeable parents to help those who did not understand the school culture or were afraid of approaching the school and the teachers to seek advice. The parents invited the kindergarten teacher and teachers into school. The group later expanded to include parents and teachers from five schools. The question remained as to how the school would incorporate the knowledge gained about the families into the school curriculum.

The preschool programme highlighted the effectiveness of institutions (the family and the school) working together to overcome factors such as language, culture and class that had previously been seen as constraints in enabling successful home-school links. Positive effects in children's achievement lasted as long as four years. Two way empowerment involving teachers and families was achieved as interaction was created through advocates and facilitators.

Literacy and empowerment

A later report entitled 'Protean Literacy' (Delgado-Gaitan 1996) outlined Delgado-Gaitan's decade of ethnographic study in Carpinteria, California (1985-1995). (Delgado-Gaitan does not give a definition of 'Protean Literacy' but The Oxford Illustrated Dictionary (1981) defines 'protean' as 'variable, or versatile'). She reported how the Carpinteria Latino immigrant community interacted with the Euro-American community on issues related to their children's literacy and learning. She discussed her role as researcher and facilitator with the Mexican Spanish-speaking community, the schools and the key figures in the School District (some of which has been reported earlier), and how she herself changed through her interaction and relationships with the participants.

On the issue of ethnic research and democracy Delgado-Gaitan pointed out:

To build understanding and communication in an ethnically, racially and linguistically diverse community requires a strong commitment and dependable collaboration between families and schools if we are to succeed as a democratic society. Ethnic research and in particular, ethnography offers a window of opportunity for researchers to study directions toward democracy. (Delgado-Gaitan, 1996, p.23).

Delgado-Gaitan's view of empowerment

Delgado-Gaitan's philosophy on empowerment was one of the driving forces in her research. She stated:

Empowerment is not something that one does to another. No one can empower someone else. Power, the pivotal construct in empowerment, is inherent in every person as an inner source of knowledge, strength and ability. The potential to exercise power resides within everyone and is developed through one's life journey - dislodged every time we deal with common issues. (Delgado-Gaitan, 1996, p.3).

She also highlighted certain principles in the process that she termed empowerment. These included an essential critical ethnographic approach to understand literacy and how empowerment works in ethnic and linguistic communities that have been under-represented and isolated; an understanding that literacy is not only a process of learning to read written text but about one's social position in the world; the individual's resilience and ability to cope with continual change; education should be the right of every member of society with the skills that will enable them to use it in the light of their own personal experiences.

She pointed out that in our places of work or our homes we are often presented with negative stimuli. These could be lack of money, demands from insensitive people or complaints and criticism from people who lack empathy. We have two courses of action. We can be negative by being angry, upset, sad, by giving up or by blaming or we can be proactive by realising that we can choose our own response. In her work she shows how the Latino families in Carpinteria were empowered through their response to a collaborative approach and collective efforts. She also showed how they challenged the obstacles that had prevented them from becoming involved in their children's literacy development.

A collaborative approach

Delgado-Gaitan reported on the importance of the collaborative approach. Administrators, researchers, teachers and parents all worked together towards a common goal - to create a learning environment for the children in the home, the

community and the school. There were initially, however, different perceptions as to how this could be achieved.

Certain key figures made a significant contribution and one of these was the preschool teacher. She lived in Carpinteria, spoke Spanish and knew the culture and the families. She made the parents co-teachers and showed them how they could help their children at home as well as welcoming them into the classroom. Most of the parents were not educated beyond fourth grade in Mexico but she taught them how to read books to their children and encouraged them to talk with them when involved in housework.

However, as in many initiatives, when the children left preschool there were fewer resources to enable the parents to connect with school. The gap between parents and their children's schooling widened as the children learned more English. Parents became frustrated at their children's under-achievement and the teachers became frustrated at the Latino parents apparent lack of interest in their children's learning. These and other reasons became the basis for the Latino parents organisation of COPLA (Comite de Padres Latinos). The purpose of COPLA was to make family-school connections between the Latino families and the schools with 'the child' as the explicit focus. The criterion for membership was that people were involved with some level of schooling in Carpinteria. Parents, principals, teachers, an administrator and the researcher attended the meetings.

There were three phases of development in COPLA. Phase 1 established a power base; phase 2 saw structural changes and phase 3 involved redefining and redesigning COPLA. Delgado-Gaitan outlined the following 5 major features of COPLA:

1. Continuous critical reflection on the part of COPLA members allows for systematic growth for the organisation as the group pursues new goals and directions to learn from each other ways to work for children
 2. Parents and school personnel hold 'the child' as the key mutual stake
 3. An egalitarian mode of interaction allows for shared power between parents and the school personnel
 4. Parents address multifaceted social needs which impact on the family, classroom and community at large and
 5. Continuous dialogue extends beyond the crisis issues.
- (Delgado-Gaitan, 1996, p.61).

COPLA enabled the Latino families to have a voice and therefore power. Through their newly found collective and personal awareness the parents changed their view of themselves, changed the way they saw each other and took action to change conditions.

Parent-to-parent communication

During the three phases of the development of parental involvement in COPLA, the most significant finding was the Latino parents claim that the success of COPLA was due to the learned culture and how they could now be supportive advocates of their children. COPLA gave them the opportunity to share this knowledge with other parents of similar historical and cultural experience and provide opportunities for development and change.

A significant contribution from the COPLA parents was a workshop led by two parents for the benefit of other less informed parents. The workshop started with a brainstorm of the obstacles which parents felt prevented them from advocating for their children. These obstacles included issues such as being unable to speak English, not having transport, not knowing how to help children with their homework, no childcare services and being afraid to go to schools on their own. The next task was to make a list of the rights they knew they had in schools. Their responses included the right to question, to comment, to know, the right to participate in decision-making and the right to communicate with their children in their own language.

The two parent workshop leaders then elicited from parents a list of parent responsibilities. Parents felt these responsibilities were: to advocate for their children, to help children with their homework, to speak with teachers, to ask for assistance when they were unable to help their children, and to learn English to enable them to still communicate with their children as they became less fluent in Spanish and more fluent in English. Through such workshops the parents motivated each other and noticed that their children made progress as a result of their increased knowledge through their involvement in COPLA. Parents had high expectations for their children's achievement but these alone were insufficient. They learned that hard work and acceptance of their responsibilities were also needed.

Delgado-Gaitan reported, as could be anticipated, that there was a variation between families. Whilst some were involved in leadership, others suffered a feeling of

hopelessness through lost jobs, crowded apartments, alcohol abuse or physical abuse within the family. These families kept silent and school was the only outlet of fear for the children. Their achievement suffered due to the constant emotional stress. Delgado-Gaitan asked how such families could find strength and power in such circumstances. She conceded that people cannot always find their power when their lives are out of control but by sharing experiences with others there is a chance to change lives and to redirect the pain outwards rather than inwards.

Family-school relationships

In Carpentaria home-school relationships were very important. Delgado-Gaitan found through interviews with 40 bilingual and non-bilingual primary grade teachers through to 6th grade that 98% of teachers felt parental involvement was "very important", but many felt that parents did not work with their children. Parental involvement was more widespread in kindergarten through to third grade where each situation was seen by teachers as potential for parents to be involved in their child's schooling.

Many teachers claimed that the most successful efforts to communicate with parents were at the Parent-Teacher Conferences and at the 'Back to School Night'. Both of these events were mandatory for teachers. Obstacles to family-school communication were identified by teachers as: parents lack of time for their children, Latino parents' lack of confidence and understanding of the school system and their inability to speak English. Teachers welcomed the support offered by COPLA *but* they also needed support and more release time to work with parents.

A family literacy project

Delgado-Gaitan, in her role as a researcher, worked with COPLA and the school district to co-ordinate a two-year family literacy project. The first year concentrated on teaching families a literacy programme; the second year saw parents practising their reading in the home with their children and the research team visited periodically to assess their progress. Family literacy classes were planned by COPLA parents. The project was based on the following three beliefs.

1. All literacy is based on specific social practices.
2. Children become empowered through interaction with parents about the story which links with their personal experience.

3. Intervention involving families must consider home culture.
(Delgado-Gaitan, 1996, p.112).

As a result of the project, COPLA parents became aware that the more they read with their children the better readers they became. Many of the parents had been involved in the parents' workshops in preschool so were familiar with interaction with parents and professionals. Their confidence increased - one parent helped with the family literacy class - another organised childcare and children's story sessions during parent literacy evenings. The family literacy class met only once a month but there were other connected activities in between such as reading sessions during the evening, meetings with the child's teacher, keeping a record of all materials read, meeting monthly with the research team for interviews and video sessions of parent and child reading together. Interactive discussions developed between child and parent involving stories, likes and dislikes, criticism and the parent's own beliefs and attitudes.

Delgado-Gaitan believed that culture was the most critical aspect of family-school relationships. Teachers and parents were reported as sometimes fearing each other but, nevertheless, they made an attempt to reach out to each other and one teacher ensured parents' diverse talents were brought into the classroom, organising her teaching to reflect cultural diversity. Respect and knowledge of cultural practices enabled parents and teachers to communicate better, and whilst teachers welcomed parents in school, parents also wanted teachers to learn about the home culture so that they would not only reflect it in their curriculum but would also respect their children and the cultural influences on their lives.

On gender issues, some parents wanted a good education for all their children, others felt a good education was not as important for their daughters. However, through COPLA many parents changed their mind and "educating all our children" was an issue discussed at one of the meetings. The message was very clear - daughters as well as sons deserve parents' dedication and encouragement to advance their education.

Some parents through their empowerment and involvement in COPLA were later employed in school. Delgado-Gaitan recalled how she first met Maria through her son in preschool in Carpentaria. Her involvement in COPLA enabled development and recognition of her skills and she became a part-time teacher assistant in a bilingual

classroom. As Delgado-Gaitan pointed out, the position on empowerment began with the rejection of the 'deficit theory'.

Delgado-Gaitan outlined some of the problems when the support offered in primary school was not continued in secondary school. She reported how one student who completed primary school with high grades found his grades dropped in high school. He felt disillusioned and let down by his teachers. He recalled:

Teachers did not help us to see opportunities...(they) dedicated themselves just to their material and they don't prepare you for a vocation; it was always like a vision was missing.

(Delgado-Gaitan, 1996, p.87)

A 'Vision for common goals'

Although parents were agreed on the success of the Family Literacy Project, Delgado-Gaitan reported how neglect of the home culture and native literacy left the project wanting. I would suggest that the oral story-telling in families that existed before the Family Literacy Project was set up could have been used as a basis for parents acquiring questioning strategies, further interaction and recognition of their child's achievements. A natural progression would have been to encourage the children to create their own stories and storybooks and to connect with the children's storybooks used in schools. If teachers had been given release time to communicate closer with parents and families and make home visits, such issues may have been taken up. Although support was received from central administration and indeed from the District Superintendent who met with groups monthly and made links with the community through a column in the local newspaper, such requests for teacher release time were felt to be the responsibility of the principals of the schools. An outcome of the project was that new principals would have to show a strong commitment to family-school projects.

To illustrate a vision from the top, Delgado-Gaitan included the following message all educators should remember, from an article by Dr. Pablo Seda, District Superintendent (1990-1994):

"Winning isn't always Defeating Somebody"

It is OK to rank students, when one is among the top, but how would we like to be 499th out of 500? Where does it say that we should have so

many A's, so many B's, C's, D's, E's and F's? School is not a football game where for one to win, another must lose!

School can and should be a place where all can succeed, where all can win. There should be nothing wrong with all students getting all A's.

Universities would then probably want to rank students some other way so that they can decide who to admit and who to refuse.

Likewise if we truly believe that education is the answer to our society's problems, then we would want all classes, all schools, and all districts to win. We all win in education when all students learn and reach their potential. (Cited by Delgado-Gaitan, 1996, p.128).

Delgado-Gaitan's vision for common goals included empowerment principles. In Carpinteria, women, ethnic, linguistically different and poor people were under-represented. People from diverse backgrounds should be given choices and opportunities. Through literacy people are entitled to make choices for ways to conduct their lives and participate in society. Delgado-Gaitan claimed that if parents were empowered through 'a collective process, critical reflection and mutual respect' (Delgado-Gaitan, 1996, p.130.) their children would benefit from their newfound confidence and knowledge.

Parent mentorship: socialising children to school culture

In a further study, (Delgado-Gaitan and Ruiz, 1992), the researchers outlined a study of 18 Mexican-American children in 3rd grade selected from three different reading levels in Spanish - high, middle and low. Three were in the high group, (one grade above the norm), seven were in the middle group, (group norm) and eight in the low group, (at least one year below the norm).

Two principal research questions drove the study. One was to find out the degree of effective parental intervention of children in high and low reading groups, the other was to find out how parental communication with the teacher affected student participation in school.

Students and families were observed over a period of eight months both at home and at school. Data collection methods included observations recorded in field notes and on audio tapes. Observations were made of parent-child interactions at home as homework was completed and also of parental visits to school, teacher-student interactions and of teacher-parent conferences.

Parent participation

Parents participated in their children's schooling in a variety of ways.

1. Some families had minimal contact with the teacher but took part in school-based literacy activities.
2. Some were in frequent contact with the teacher about their child's progress and left the child to be accountable for completing homework tasks but did not read to children at home.
3. Other parents did not communicate frequently with teachers but attempted to help their children in school-related tasks because according to the reports sent home, their children were underachieving in school.

The different levels of participation did not appear to relate to levels of parental education. (The majority had less than 6th grade education in Mexico. Only two had the equivalent of high school education and the children of these two parents were in the middle group). Delgado-Gaitan and Ruiz maintain that the differences in the ways parents dealt with their children's problems indicated two main approaches to school.

1. Parents of children in the higher reading group were very interested with school and offered appropriate intervention.
2. Other parents had minimal contact with school and accepted school authority.

Delgado-Gaitan and Ruiz (1992) found that the distinction between the nature of the contact with parents' and children's reading levels showed there was a qualitative difference in the way teachers communicated with parents. Of the 18 families in the study, 11 had minimal communication and contact with the school. Eight of those 11 children read in the low reading group, one at the grade norm and two at the higher level. Homework emerged as a significant factor in understanding parental involvement. Parents who were less confident and competent felt inadequate and antagonistic towards school while others felt confident to question and challenge the teacher. Parents did not receive feedback on their child's homework. If the homework

was not completed they were given more of the same without any suggestions to parents as to how they could assist with their child's reading. Consequently, in the low reading groups neither child nor parent had the necessary knowledge to improve, or were in receipt of direction from the teacher.

This study revealed several significant issues:

- 1 There was a mistaken assumption that all children had access to books in Spanish at home.
- 2 Story-reading in Mexican-American families was less frequent than in middle-class families.
- 3 If the teacher had knowledge of home literacy activities they could be incorporated into classroom teaching.
- 4 Knowledge of home circumstances and formal policy recommendations in school could provide more guidance to parents on storybook reading.
- 5 This is a specific area where school-home programmes would benefit from further research.
- 6 An important predictor of parental involvement was whether children had attended the Carpinteria Bilingual Preschool.

The teacher in the Carpinteria Bilingual Preschool encouraged and relied upon parental involvement in children's activities and impressed upon them the importance of communicating with the school. This involvement appeared to be reflected in the children's reading ability:

Three out of eight low level readers attended the preschool.

Six out of seven middle level readers attended preschool.

All three of the high level readers attended preschool.

Although this was a relatively small study the indicators for the connection between parental involvement in preschool and children's later reading levels are clear. The preschool component appears to be a factor in teaching parents about school culture. This support was not available to parents beyond preschool. It was also important to note that working with parents was mandatory in preschool but not beyond.

School matters in the Mexican-American home.

A further study by Delgado-Gaitan (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992) concentrated on family interaction and home socialisation around educational issues in six Mexican-American families in Carpinteria. This study confirmed her dismissal of the deficit theory asserting that family strengths are relevant to education. Her observations of interactions in the home environment revealed three significant components that lead to an understanding of family strengths. These were physical resources, the emotional climate and interpersonal interactions. These three components revealed further significant similarities with the ORIM framework as described in Hannon, (1995).

In using the term home environment, Delgado-Gaitan was clear that environment was not necessarily a geographic setting. She used the term to depict "the social interaction occurring between family members in the home," (p.497). The common issue in all the families was their concern about their children's education. The ways they became involved were directly related to the parents' cultural knowledge of the school. She claimed that cultural differences, for example, religion, moral values, recreation and education were reflected in child-rearing practices and that part of the socialisation of children is whether they are taught to value education. In the Mexican-American families the socio-economic status of the family and the low levels of parents' formal education affected the transmission of values. As education was seen as economic mobility for their children, it was highly valued.

Delgado-Gaitan pointed out that children were socialised through the family structure and subsequently the wider social order. Parents trained their children to adapt to a changing social order. It was in these areas that the Mexican-American family strengths were seen as well as in families from other culturally different social groups. It was therefore inappropriate to suggest that such groups were culturally deficient.

A study of six Mexican-American families

Six Mexican-American families were selected from one community in Carpinteria to examine daily parent-child interactions, household circumstances and conditions to study how parents conveyed the value of education. All six families in the study were part of the immigrant working class community, had Spanish as a common language and wanted their children to succeed in school.

The six second grade children were chosen from either the novice or higher reading groups so that the researcher could observe and compare the home environments, how parents supported their children and how the children learned to value schooling.

Over a nine-month period all the families were visited six times. The visits lasted two hours each. Data collection methods were through ethnographic observations and interviews. Trust was established with the families during the first two visits. Families were visited to ascertain the best time to observe parent/child interactions.

Delgado-Gaitan found that three categories emerged from the analysis of parent-child interactions - the physical environment, the emotional and motivational climate and interpersonal interaction. The physical environment involved the level of educational resources, visual stimulation and the physical arrangements of the family. The emotional and motivational climate took into account the emotional relationships in the home, parental recollections of literacy and the aspirations of family members. Interpersonal interactions were assessed by ascertaining the child's literacy opportunities through interpersonal interaction with parents, siblings and other family members who offered correction, explanation or other feedback.

Findings from the study of six Mexican-American families

Apart from parental contact with school, there were only minor differences in home learning environments of children in the different reading groups. Resources related to education were not known to all parents, therefore social networks were important to many families. All parents offered emotional support and valued education. The approach to homework tasks revealed the greatest variation in home learning environments. In the advanced readers' homes parents were available to help and offered supervision. When they felt inadequate, although they were frustrated, they did contact the school to find ways to help their children. Parents of the novice readers, however, assisted directly by giving children the answers. When unable to assist there was a feeling of helplessness and they did not seem to be aware of the ways in which to seek advice. The low level decontextualised tasks caused difficulty for parents. The homework set seldom encouraged higher level language exchanges between children and parents.

Delgado-Gaitan concluded that it was necessary to continue examining the learning environments of children from different ethnic groups to help educators understand the discreet circumstances in children's lives. The learning environments created by

such groups as the Mexican-Americans needed to be recognised by the school so that effective liaison could be created which would provide meaningful educational opportunities for those children.

The importance of recognised educational materials, parental support, recognition and interaction, and the need for appropriate models are all significant factors in this study, which are inherent in the ORIM framework (Nutbrown and Hannon, 1997-Appendix 1). The main difference, however, was the reported emphasis on children's school-based literacy tasks. Although lip service was paid by the researchers to the importance of naturally and frequently occurring literacy tasks in the home (Delgado-Gaitan and Ruiz, 1992) these appear to be too insignificant or detached from school literacy tasks to be worthy of a detailed study. Delgado-Gaitan's work would appear to benefit from a wider view of early literacy development.

Researching change and changing the researcher

Although Delgado-Gaitan believes in the process of empowerment for all, ironically in her article 'Researching Change and Changing the Researcher' (Delgado-Gaitan, 1993) she outlined, consciously or subconsciously, how her own position of power enabled her to conduct many years of research in Carpinteria. As a professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara, she was in a position of power to liaise with the Carpinteria School District and principals in the schools. However, she must be given credit for using this unequal power position (weighted in her favour) to become involved in the local community and offering support to the Mexican-American families in their process of empowerment through 'mutual respect, critical reflection and collective participation'. (Delgado-Gaitan, 1993).

She argued how having the same ethnic background as the participants was not necessarily an asset as an assumed cultural knowledge can stand in the way of understanding the participants' feelings, values and practices. She realised how her own academic training and acculturation into the dominant culture had actually distanced her from the people she felt she could identify with so well. As a result of this realisation she felt that interpretative fieldwork strategies with an on-going dialogue between researcher and researched would promise a more complete interpretation. She became very aware that the 'Ethnography of Empowerment' framework not only brought about change in a community, but also resulted in the

researcher being changed by the community being studied, which in turn could change the research.

Her research interest in Carpinteria started with a study of family literacy in the Spanish-speaking Mexican-American community, but evolved as she became a facilitator of parental involvement and empowerment of Mexican-American parents, first of all in one school and then across the Carpinteria district. She explained in detail how problematic this switch was for her as (a) she did not wish to direct the families and (b) she was unsure whether she could reconcile her insider/outsider interpretation of their reality.

A discussion of Delgado-Gaitan's research.

Delgado-Gaitan's research of family literacy involved sharing data about literacy practices in the home. She referred to family literacy practices such as oral-story-telling with young children, letter writing and storybook reading of popular Spanish books but it was disappointing that she provided little evidence of the family literacy activities. Her main concern seemed to be with the narrow view of home literacy that concentrated on formal school-based literacy tasks. She did, however, acknowledge that home literacy tasks which occur naturally and frequently outside school could be incorporated into classroom activities which would give all children but especially culturally different children the opportunity to demonstrate their ability with familiar tasks.

Through COPLA opportunities were provided for more parents to recognise their children's achievements and interact appropriately by providing a model for their children's literacy achievements. For some parents in her study the model provided by parents may initially have been mainly that of motivation but through interaction with the community, school and their children, parents came to recognise how they were helping their children. As their children progressed through school, some recognised how they could help with more specific school-based literacy tasks with training. Teachers would benefit from opportunities for greater interaction with all families so that they could use the knowledge gained to work more closely with all parents. Insufficient attention appears to have been paid in Delgado-Gaitan's research to any interaction in the home with environmental print, children's rhymes or emergent writing, important aspects of children's literacy development. Parents may have been

contributing far more to their children's early literacy development than was recognised by the researcher.

Although each study stated clearly the number of participating students and families she did not make clear how many families in total were involved with children's literacy development compared with those who may have been involved in the wider issue of empowerment. The families referred to in the studies could be the same families but with a different research focus. In Delgado-Gaitan (1996) she does refer to involvement with over a hundred families but does not sufficiently substantiate her claims with statistical evidence.

Her holistic approach complements her philosophy of early childhood. She observed children in both the home and school settings, taking into account the child's cultural background and how in many instances this was so distanced from the culture of the school.

She did not impose her beliefs on how a group should be organised but stood back, observed and learned how the parents established their own organisation in COPLA in accordance with their own culture - an organisation which was based on democracy and where everyone's voice should be heard.

Delgado-Gaitan clearly opposed the cultural deficit theory and claimed that this explanation of culturally different groups deflects attention away from the school's need to provide effective programmes for students from under-represented groups. She stressed the importance of parental involvement and awareness of the school culture in preschool. The skills parents acquired while their children were in preschool stayed with them as their children progressed through school. Such training enabled parents to overcome their fear and ignorance about the school system and encouraged participation in their children's education. Generally, children of parents who did not receive such training were not such advanced readers.

Her research raised issues for schools, researchers and policymakers. Schools need resources such as materials, training and time to work with parents. It is significant that in preschool where working with parents was mandatory that such positive and lasting effects were observed. Teachers need to be aware of the home circumstances and how parents can be most effective in their teaching role. This means being allocated time to visit, observe and talk to families. A teacher's knowledge of home circumstances alongside formal policy recommendations in the schools could open

lines of communication and give parents more direct guidance in their child's literacy development. Researchers need to fill the gaps in Delgado-Gaitan's work by taking a wider view of early literacy development and by paying more attention to naturally occurring literacy in the home and who in the family interacts with the child to enhance this wider view of literacy. There is also a place for researched home-and school-based programmes that build on what the family is already doing.

Delgado-Gaitan's 'Ethnography of Empowerment' has produced a model for connecting the researcher with the participants' views and a process for change in culturally different and under-represented groups in the world. Her own power position as a known researcher enabled her to conduct her research by gaining access to schools and one community over one decade. It is left to others to determine whether her findings can be generalised or transferred to other language groups in other communities. Nevertheless, she did claim that a big issue with this community was the children's access to books and that storybook routines were less frequent in these Mexican-American families than in other middle class families. This is a specific area that could be researched with other under-represented, culturally different groups and where school and or home-based programmes would benefit from relevant research.

Huss-Keeler (1997)

A case study of teacher perceptions of ethnic and linguistic minority parental involvement and its effect on children's literacy learning

Huss-Keeler (1997) (previously Huss), conducted a year-long ethnographic study which was, by coincidence, conducted in the same school in Britain that my research was conducted. She examined the influence of teacher perceptions of Pakistani parental involvement and interest in their children's education, on teacher expectations of the children's language and literacy achievement. The study revealed that EAL (English as an Additional Language) Pakistani origin parents were very interested in their children's education but showed it in culturally different ways from the middle class white parents. Teachers misinterpreted this as a lack of parental interest that was reflected in an underestimation of the children's achievement.

As has been discussed in Chapter 2, and earlier in this chapter, parental involvement is a key element to children's success in school. Huss-Keeler claims that research shows that teachers perceive those parents who support their children in traditional ways both

in and out of school as 'interested' parents (Moleš, 1993). However, as she pointed out, all parents are not actively involved in the school setting either through lack of confidence, lack of knowledge of the school system, work conflicts, language difficulties or through different perceptions of the parent-teacher role. Consequently, teachers often misinterpret this lack of traditional participation as lack of interest, reinforcing the deficit view of those families who show interest in their children's education in culturally different ways. Huss-Keeler suggested that this deficit view was projected onto the children as a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' and low expectations of the children's abilities. Another factor that has a direct influence on ethnic and linguistic minority children is the deficit model held by teachers of children in the lower socio-economic groups.

Huss-Keeler claimed that with the increasing numbers of lower income, ethnic minority children in schools, it was necessary to consider the impact of teacher perception on the expectations for children's success in school. Far from showing lack of interest in their children's education, research supports the view that immigrant and ethnic minority parents are very interested in their children's achievements as they view education as the route to social and economic advancement (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, Gregory and Williams, 2000).

The study by Huss-Keeler took place in a multi-ethnic urban primary school in which 80% of the children were from Punjabi speaking Pakistani origin Muslim families who were mainly working class and in receipt of low income. The focus of the study was on nine Pakistani origin 5-or 6-year-old children in a class of fourteen. The parents were mainly first generation immigrants from the rural Punjab area of Pakistan. Most of the mothers had limited education in Pakistan, consequently their literacy levels were low in both Urdu and English. The fathers were taxi-drivers, worked in shops or other service-related professions and generally had more spoken English than the mothers. All of the families were devout Muslims and the children attended the mosque school, after mainstream school, four days a week. The mosque school was held in the dining room of the English school.

Huss-Keeler worked as a volunteer teacher assistant in the school setting for three to four days a week, observing classroom literacy interactions and assisting with literacy activities such as writing. Formal, structured audio taped interviews were conducted with the deputy head, a 'veteran' teacher, the EAL post holder and classroom teachers. The focus of the interview was on their perception of parental participation in school

and its relationship to the children's language and literacy development. Informal interviews were also held during the year with class teachers.

In addition, children were interviewed at school about their home literacy learning. Parents were interviewed at home about their home literacy interactions with their children, with the assistance of a Punjabi-speaking translator who was known to the mothers. They were also asked about their understanding of and involvement in the school system. To ensure triangulation and enhance validity the same types of data were collected from as many sources as possible in different settings and at different points in time. One of the issues in the study was whether Pakistani origin parents' participation in school reflected their interest in their children's learning.

Results

The results showed very different perspectives between home and school concerning children's literacy learning and parent involvement. The Pakistani origin parents were very interested in their children's literacy learning but because this view was not held by the school, limited access was given to parents for information on literacy learning. Teachers held low expectations of the literacy ability of the children. Parents had limited means of finding out the school's teaching methods on reading. There was no reading policy at the time and the school handbook (written in Urdu and English) was vague in explaining the school's methods of teaching reading and writing. Other sources of information consisted of curriculum evenings, parents' evenings and occasional conferences. On all these occasions parents were expected to reach out to the school. There were no occasions when the school reached out to the parent.

Progress reports were not sent to the parents at the time of the study. The reason offered was that parents could not read English - again a misconception as many fathers or other family members could. Ironically, parents were expected to read the notes taken home by the children from school that were written in English. Attendance at parents' evenings was high, despite the lack of translators. All the parents appeared interested in their children's progress that was demonstrated by the time they spent looking at their children's work and talking about it with their children and class teachers.

Differences in parental involvement in school

The Pakistani origin parents' involvement in school was more passive than other parents. The white middle-class and Afro-Caribbean parents were seen as 'interested' and were actively involved in traditional ways such as supporting the class teacher with artefacts to support topic work, watering the school garden, helping with the jumble sale and serving on the school Board of Governors.

Pakistani origin parents, on the other hand, who were seen as lacking interest in their children's education, had a more passive role but did take part. They attended school events, but while the white parents helped the teachers organise a games evening, it was the Pakistani fathers, grandfathers and children who played the games. At the 'Bring and Buy' sale the white parents served while the Pakistani origin parents purchased.

Many Pakistani origin parents attended the Eid concert or play and two of the Indian bilingual staff acted as translators for the parents. However, such participation and interest did not seem to count in the teachers' perceptions of parental participation and interest. Some Pakistani origin parents who had good English and were familiar with the school system served in the school dining room or were on the Board of Governors. Their ability to speak English and their knowledge of western ways made entry into school less threatening.

The school's view of home life in Pakistani origin families

According to Huss-Keeler, teachers saw school and the Pakistani origin children's homes as very separate and different. Through conversations and interviews she found they had a negative view of the children's home and family life and felt there was no English language or literacy learning that linked with school. Their totally inaccurate view was that Pakistani origin parents were not capable of helping their children with their literacy learning due to the mother's illiteracy. Fathers, relatives and older siblings who were literate in English were not even considered as models or potential helpers with the children's literacy achievements. They did not think children had books in the home or attended the public library. The children's homes were thought to be in a deprived state with few or no literacy activities taking place. These perceptions were not based on fact, as there was little or no communication

between home and school. Because of these perceptions school work and library books were rarely sent home.

However, when two teachers of the 5- and 6-year-olds visited one of the children's homes (Iflaq's home), they were very surprised. One of the teachers commented:

It's such a lovely home. You go in and you feel everybody cares about them, talking to them. Older brother, Hasim, has a very good command of English as well, so the whole atmosphere encourages everything. The home is clean and beautiful. (Huss-Keeler, 1997, p.186)

Until the home visit, the teachers had disregarded Iflaq, did not recognise his progress and limited his access to literacy opportunities, including borrowing library books. They spoke of his home language environment in a negative way.

After the home visit, the teachers' perceptions of Iflaq changed, but it was almost the end of the school year, and too late to make up for his lost literacy opportunities in that school year - lost opportunities due to the teachers' misconceptions of his home experiences and home environment. These misconceptions were then interpreted into perceptions about his not 'being ready' to learn.

In contrast, Saira, a Pakistani origin girl, was the most advanced literacy learner in the class. Her teachers perceived her parents to be 'better off than most' and had 'higher standards' (Huss-Keeler, 1997, p.187). Data showed that in reality Saira was on free school meals, which indicated that the family income was no higher than many of the other children in the class. She was however, in a home environment where more English was spoken as both parents were literate in English and her older siblings spoke English. Saira's mother was able to come into school and communicate well with teachers due to her command of the English language. Saira was considered 'ready' by the teachers and was included in all the literacy opportunities as well as being encouraged to borrow books from the school library.

Iflaq who was considered 'not ready' was ironically denied access to books which might have increased his progress, whereas Saira who already borrowed books from the public library was allowed to take home school library books because she was an advanced learner.

The teachers' perceptions created a self-fulfilling prophecy for these children and had a detrimental effect on Iflaq's learning. Their misguided views of Iflaq's home environment also made them blind to the progress Iflaq had made.

Consequences of the parent-teacher relationship

One of the consequences resulting from these parent-teacher relationships reported by Huss-Keeler was a perpetuation of the stereotype of these Pakistani origin children and their family life. Teachers either chose to ignore, or were unaware of, the extent of the literacy learning which took place out of school. It would be difficult for them to be unaware of the children's attendance at the mosque school where Qu'ranic Arabic was learned as the children could be seen returning to the school premises at half past four, four days a week (the mosque school was held in the dining room of the mainstream school). Many families also taught their children Urdu at home and supported their children's English literacy activities, but due to the lack of teachers' communication with home, they were either unaware of these activities or minimised the importance of the children's literacy learning in other languages.

Teachers' impressions of parents were based on a hierarchy, dependent upon their perceived views of the parents' command of English and their interest in their child's education. This perceived interest was based on how often the parents visited school. The child's access to literacy activities and resources was dependent upon the position of the parent's place on the hierarchy.

The parents' view: literacy learning in the home

Huss-Keeler made home visits herself to hear the parents' views on their involvement in their children's education and to observe any literacy activities.

Contrary to the perceived deprived home environments mentioned by the teachers, she found that many of the children lived in large terraced houses which were clean and well furnished, including a television and a video recorder. The pictures, wall hangings, a calendar and daily newspapers reflected the children's Pakistani heritage and Muslim religion. Children's books in English were to be found in the homes also. All three scripts therefore were evident in the children's homes - Qu'ranic Arabic, Urdu and English.

The children were involved in reading, writing and drawing with various family members, and some were regular users of the public library. They watched television frequently, viewing such programmes as 'Sesame Street' and the Australian soap

'Neighbours'. They also watched various Pakistani videos in Punjabi (their spoken language), therefore as many as four spoken languages were heard in the home. Some of the children were learning to read and write in Urdu. Parents had high aspirations for their children and hoped they would go to University.

Huss-Keeler found that parents were very aware of the differences between schools in Pakistan and Britain. Saira's mother felt there were too many children in a class in Pakistan and she told how children were often hit by the teacher. She was aware of how young children learn through play in Britain, but this was not the case in Pakistan.

A Pakistani origin educator reported how schools were more formal in Pakistan and parents were not expected or encouraged to talk with teachers in school. In the rural areas where many of the families came from, girls were not encouraged to go to school consequently there was a low literacy level amongst women in Pakistan. Women were expected to have a traditional place in the home and experience low status, consequently most of these non-educated, illiterate, non-English speaking women found it difficult to enter an English school and talk to teachers.

The concept of a 'good parent' in Pakistan was to stay away from school and concentrate on bringing up their children at home. Many parents therefore, were not aware that being a 'good parent' in Britain meant active involvement with school and their children's school-based learning. Being a 'good parent' in Pakistan could be interpreted as being an uninterested parent in Britain - and was interpreted this way by the teachers in this study. The school did not make clear its expectations of the parents and did not reach out to them in their homes, so the diverse cultural expectations continued. A similar experience of diverse cultural expectations was reported earlier in the study by Gregory (1994).

Huss-Keeler explained how some parents did not come into school because they were not confident speakers of English and felt uncomfortable. Other family members were sent to parents' evenings instead. Large young families also made it difficult for some mothers to come to school in the early evening. Huss-Keeler stated how Saila's mother had limited English and a large family and did not enter school regularly. However, the teachers, due to their lack of outreach to such families, were unaware of Saila's literacy activities at home which included playing school with other children in her family, of which there were seven cousins in the same household.

Teachers continued to have a deficit view of many of the parents, thus perpetuating the home/school diversity. The only parents who were not considered as 'different' were those who came into school and communicated in English with the teachers. It was their children who benefited most from the literacy opportunities in school.

Discussion and implications of the study by Huss-Keeler (1997)

Huss-Keeler claimed that this study supported the previous research of Moles (1993) and Ogbu (1987) with ethnic minority families. The results showed that parents had high aspirations for their children's education and were very interested in their progress in school. The parents supported their children at home according to the Pakistani culture, and therefore few of them were actively involved in school. Because the parents were not so involved in school this was interpreted by the teachers as lack of interest and reinforced their deficit view of the families.

Due to a lack of two-way communication between school and home the parents were not in a position to be directly informed of school matters. Some children managed to make progress with their in-school literacy activities as they drew upon their home and Mosque school literacy experiences. Huss-Keeler observed that this happened despite the teachers' negative views about the home learning environment. It was not until the teachers made a home visit and saw positive experiences and support that their negative views could begin to change. Their changed views about the family then enhanced the children's learning opportunities and the teachers saw the children in a different light.

Huss-Keeler concluded by stating that although the findings could not be related to all Pakistani families or to all multi-ethnic school settings, the study has implications for all those who work with EAL children and their families. She called for additional teacher training in this area. An awareness of the families can support teachers' methods of working with parents and improve communication.

Rather than take school practices into the home or concentrating on parents working in school, Huss-Keeler claimed that teachers should value the interactions of parents and family members in everyday life and class this as parental involvement too.

Emphasis should be on the continuities rather than the discontinuities between home and school and the necessity for two-way communication. This supports Delgado-Gaitan's view of the importance of two-way communication between home and

school. As Huss-Keeler stated if *all* teachers started with the assumption that *all* Pakistani origin parents were interested in their children's learning they would be in a better position to provide a successful school education for *all* children, not just those who speak English.

Blackledge (2000)

A study involving Bangladeshi parents in school

Blackledge (2000), in his research with Bangladeshi families in the UK, challenges the deficit view held by some educators that parents who do not speak English are unable to help with their children's literacy development. He suggests that some teachers perceive parents who have limited literacy in English, as illiterate, and are therefore unable to support their children's literacy learning at home. Parents, Blackledge claims, internalise this attitude and accept they are powerless to help their children. The same parents, however, are highly competent in their own language, have power in their community, and support their children's literacy learning in their home language.

Blackledge suggests that the negative views held of Bangladeshi parents by some teachers may lead to discriminatory practices. English reading books, of an unsuitable level, are sent home and older siblings are expected to act as interpreters with their parents, about the younger child's reading and school experiences. He found that when parents' ability to help their children is recognised, they no longer feel disempowered and their children show marked progress in their learning.

Blackledge (2000) discusses whether literacy should be seen as 'a set of *individual skills* or as *cultural practices*' (p.2). He describes the *individual skills* model and the *cultural practices* model as follows.

The *individual skills* model sees literacy as a set of decontextualised information processing skills, which the individual learns and then contextualises by applying them to a progressively wider range of activities. The *cultural practices* model is useful for addressing ways in which literacy behaviours are closely fitted to and vary with the contexts in which they occur. (Blackledge, 2000, p.2)

He claims that these views are not contradictory, but complement each other. The *cultural practices* model assumes that literacy is shaped by the social situations in which the individual encounters literacy. He suggests that a critical issue in this model is whether the literacy interactions produce gains in literacy.

Literacy may have a different meaning in 'minority-culture households and dominant-culture households in Britain, or in minority-culture households and dominant-culture schools' (Blackledge, 2000, p.3). The assumption that poor minority-culture families do not support their children's literacy development as effectively as middle-class, majority-culture families has been challenged by researchers such as Delgado-Gaitan (1990), Gregory (1993, 1998), and Huss-Keeler (1997). The literacy environments and practices of middle-class majority-cultures, claims Blackledge, are more likely to be the same as the culture of schools and as Heath (1983) suggested children from these families may have an advantage over children from minority-culture families or working-class families. There is, therefore, a need to investigate how minority-culture families could support their children's literacy in school.

A study of 18 Bangladeshi six-year-olds

Blackledge (2000) reported a study of Bangladeshi parents in an urban setting in Britain as they help their children to acquire school and community literacies. The study reported by Blackledge took place in a school with a high minority language population (21% Bangladeshi origin and 73% Pakistani origin). Criteria for choosing children for the study was that they were of Bangladeshi origin, were six years old and in their third year of schooling (this gave teachers and parents time to reflect on the children's literacy learning). Twenty children were originally selected, but two chose not to be involved in the research. Consequently, the study focused on 18 Bangladeshi origin six-year-olds (10 boys and 8 girls). All the children were born in Britain to Bangladeshi origin parents. The families spoke Sylheti at home.

By observing reading sessions at home and at school Blackledge compared the strategies used by family members and teachers. His four research questions were as follows.

1. How do Bangladeshi families respond to the task of supporting their children reading school books at home?

2. What are teachers' expectations of Bangladeshi parents as home literacy tutors?
3. What are Bangladeshi parents' attitudes to their role as home literacy tutor?
4. How do Bangladeshi families' home literacies contribute to their children's literacy learning? (Blackledge, 2000, p.61)

Research methods included observations of reading sessions at home and at school and interviews with the parents and teachers of the 18 children.

Findings from the study of 18 Bangladeshi children

Blackledge aimed to investigate specific strategies used by Bangladeshi parents as they attempted to help their six-year-old children read school books at home. There were clear differences in the support strategies offered to the children at home and at school. The support at home was mainly by siblings (some as young as eight years), who used a narrow range of intervention strategies, possibly based on their understanding of how to teach reading. The children's parents reported how they felt frustrated at being unable to be more directly involved in their child's school related reading. The majority of parents said they could not help because of their lack of English. Blackledge suggests that this presents a picture of disempowerment as the parents were required to be literate in a language they could not access. It should not be assumed that families know what to do with the book their child brings home from school. Blackledge also found that the books sent home were not of the same quality as those read in school, (they were less attractive and less interesting), and as children chose their own books, they were often inappropriate to their reading level.

However, Blackledge points out, there is a great deal that schools can do 'to reverse the structure of power in society which prevents full participation by minority groups' (p. 107). Providing interpreters, ensuring parents are aware of teachers' availability, creating a school environment which values and is visibly positive to diversity, and investing in resources in minority-language parental involvement are all factors that enable these parents to participate in their children's schooling. Schools can also build on the cultural resources of its families.

Storytelling was a family activity in most families and one that was shared by the school. Of the 18 families, 15 said they told children stories in their home language.

Teachers views; however, were that the amount of quality talk in families was insufficient for children's learning.

Literacy for religious purposes was not recognised by the teachers as making any purposeful contribution to the children's literacy learning. Teachers did not acknowledge or share the parents' views of the commitment to learning Arabic. This is a requirement of their Islamic law and therefore was highly valued by parents and an important aspect of most children's lives.

What schools can do to build on the language and literacy learning of the home

Blackledge suggests an approach to literacy teaching in schools which allows teachers to provide continuity and consistency in children's language experiences at home and at school. This requires that teachers use children's existing cultural and linguistic knowledge, have high expectations, and develop activities that are purposeful and meaningful. Texts need to be culturally compatible and challenging. Blackledge claims that in adopting such an approach teachers will provide classroom activities that engage with the children's culture, identity and understanding of their world which is often hidden from school.

Blackledge points out that when schools fail to incorporate family language and literacy, opportunities are lost to make connections with their community. For example, by building on home literacy, children can be given the opportunity to retell stories they have heard at home, (sometimes religious stories), and to present them bilingually through puppet shows and drama. The stories can be published in book form in the community language. Parents and other family members can be invited to tell stories in the classroom and to help in writing them in the community language. Further examples of building on home literacies reported by Blackledge are the production of a school newspaper in several languages and inviting parents to class assemblies where children could translate into community languages. As Blackledge points out, the message being conveyed to families through such activities is that the families' languages, cultures and religions are being valued. Teachers should be proactively building on existing literacies and informing parents of how they can become involved in their children's school literacy learning.

A curriculum which makes planned authentic use of children's language and literacies and which teaches children to ask critical questions of their

worlds can begin to reverse the unjust power between majority-culture institutions and minority-culture families. (Blackledge, 2000, p.126)

Blackledge concludes that a two-way process of collaboration is required. Teachers need to learn from parents about their literacy practices at home so that they can value them and design collaborative activities. Similarly, when teachers send home school reading books they must ensure that parents understand what is required of them.

Kenner (2000)

Home pages - Creating a multilingual environment in early years settings

Kenner (2000) supports the views of Blackledge (2000) by claiming that all children can benefit from sharing their home language and home literacy experiences in school. She asks why the gap between home and school persists and suggests it may be because traditionally, in the education system, there has been an expectation that a certain percentage of children will fail. She reflects that this may be changing, but that bilingual children, with white children from non-middle class backgrounds, are seen as 'outside the mainstream' and therefore 'lacking in literacy' (p.2). School is meant to fill the gap.

Her research, based in a south London nursery class, combines theories of emergent literacy and bilingual learning. Working collaboratively with the nursery teacher, Kenner aimed to find out about the children's home literacy knowledge and experiences. They chatted with parents at the start of each nursery session, brought in multilingual newspapers and other materials themselves, and asked for comments from the parents. They also observed how the children reacted to the materials and listened to their talk. An informal interview followed with parents around the writing table, where parents shared their children's literacy experiences at home.

Parents from various cultures then brought in such items as: Turkish newspapers, the Arabic alphabet chart, Indian film videos in Gujarati and letters written to Thailand. Such materials from the children's home literacy worlds contributed to the school being able to offer a familiar setting for families. Kenner is clear, however, that the parents and teachers were not trying to replicate home literacy practices, but to make connections with the children's home experiences. They worked together to reflect and enhance the literacy world of home. Kenner provides case studies showing how

Billy and Recep found their role as writers, Meera investigated written language and Mohammed designed different texts.

Kenner points out the importance of bilingual and biliteracy learning.

Government policy currently emphasises the importance of education in maximising options for the future, and we need to ensure that bilingual children's options are thoroughly recognised and included. At any time in the future these young people may decide that they want to make use of biliteracy for work or study. Rather than closing the doors to bilingual learning as soon as they enter school, the education system has a responsibility to keep the doors open for them to do so. (Kenner, 2000 p.88)

Kenner restricted her research to the classroom and acknowledges that had she visited homes, or accompanied families to the local temple or video shop, she would have learnt much more. However, she concentrated on how to build a multilingual environment in the nursery. Kenner concludes that the gap between home and school can be bridged, particularly for bilingual children and their families.

Discussion of the work of Blackledge and Kenner

As in the study of Pakistani origin families by Huss-Keeler (1997), Blackledge (2000) found that the Bangladeshi families' interactions at home were not valued by the teachers, and they viewed the Bangladeshi women as deficient in providing a language learning environment for their children. He pointed out that such views could lead to discriminatory practices. Both Blackledge (2000) and Kenner (2000) added to the work of such key researchers as Gregory, Delgado-Gaitan and Huss-Keeler. They highlighted the contribution that parents from minority-culture families can make to their children's school literacies by sharing with teachers their knowledge of the children's home literacy experiences. The study by Blackledge (2000) took place in a primary school with six-year-old Bangladeshi origin children, whereas the work of Kenner (2000) took place in a south London nursery with children and parents from various ethnic origins. Both researchers were keen to work collaboratively with the parents and teachers in school.

Blackledge, like Delgado-Gaitan, addressed the issue of empowerment and aimed to change parents' views that they were unable to help their child's literacy development

in school if they were not literate in English. He pointed out how the meaning of literacy in minority-culture households could be different from that in majority-culture households and different from that of dominant-culture schools, and that teachers should not expect Bangladeshi origin parents to know how to use school reading books that were sent home.

He found that most parents experienced frustration and felt inadequate to support their children's school literacy learning at home due to their lack of English. However, by finding out about children's home literacy experiences such as storytelling and literacy for religious purposes from parents, and inviting them to share these experiences in school, parents felt more confident in their ability to help their child.

Kenner (2000) similarly found that by interviewing parents and inviting them into the nursery to collaborate with teachers, that they were in a position to enhance their child's literacy development. By bringing in literacy materials from home to create a familiar setting for the children, they too found that they could help to create a multilingual and multiliterate nursery. Kenner acknowledged that she could have learnt more about the families' literacy learning had she visited their homes or observed the literacy activities in the community, but chose to focus her work in school.

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE RESEARCH REVIEWED

The research by Hazareesingh (1994), Huss-Keeler (1997), Blackledge (2000) and Kenner (2000) was mostly based in school although Huss-Keeler and Blackledge did interview parents at home about their views on parental involvement and home literacy. In the studies by Gregory (1994) and Delgado-Gaitan (1990, 1996) Huss-Keeler (1997) and Blackledge (2000) researchers found that no clear information was given to parents by the school of literacy teaching methods or ways in which children could acquire literacy. In spite of this, the parents and family members were actively involved in their children's home literacy learning but were not in a position to make the link with school literacy learning.

As Siraj-Blatchford (1994) pointed out, if children and parents are used to formal methods of teaching and learning, then the informal methods of learning through play and reading for pleasure which are used in British schools need to be carefully explained. Educators need to learn from parents, children and the community about

the similarities and differences in cultures that can enhance or jeopardise children's education and literacy experiences according to the flexibility, knowledge and sensitivity of the teachers. As Heath (1983) also illustrated, not all cultural practices are the same and although all have a positive input to children's education and life experiences, some as in the case of the Trackton families are not as favourable to the new learning environment of school. Although educators need to be aware of the various cultural practices which children experience outside school, this does not necessarily indicate that teachers need to change to more formal methods, as suggested by Gregory (1994). Many ethnic minority parents are not happy with the formal methods and strict discipline which they experienced in their childhood (Huss-Keeler, 1997).

The literacy experiences in school were alien to many of the Mexican parents in Delgado-Gaitan's research, but parents quickly became aware that the more they read with their children the better readers they became. In the research by Delgado-Gaitan and Ruiz (1992), the connection between parental involvement in preschool and children's later reading levels were clear, and what is more the preschool component was a significant factor in teaching parents about school culture. Parents had high expectations for their children's achievement, but these alone were insufficient. Through their parent organisation (COPLA) they learned that hard work and acceptance of their responsibilities were also needed.

Huss-Keeler (1997) pointed out that when children were given the opportunity to be more autonomous in their learning there were positive outcomes in their achievements. When parents were aware of teaching methods in school they were anxious to support their children in any way they could. Although many of the parents had different and more formal experiences themselves they did not report that those experiences were better. On the contrary, Saira's mother felt there were too many children in a class in Pakistan and told how children were often hit by the teacher.

The concept of a good parent in Pakistan meant keeping away from school and allowing teachers to concentrate on the task of educating the children. Being a good parent in Pakistan could be interpreted as being an uninterested parent in Britain and these are issues of which educators need to be aware. Schools need to send out clear messages and meet families in their own familiar, safe surroundings before expecting them to feel comfortable in school.

The study by Hazareesingh (1994) highlighted the importance of drawing on children's cultural experiences in school. His work with Pakistani origin five- and six-year-old children drew on the parents' experiences, knowledge and expertise. Stories told or read in English and Urdu were an essential feature of the project. He claimed that speaking a language other than English (especially a non-European language) need not be a source of problems and difficulties in educational life, and showed what could be achieved with an informed, sensitive approach.

Blackledge (2000) and Kenner (2000), like Hazareesingh (1994), also based their work with ethnic minority parents in school, encouraging them to share their home storytelling and to bring in literacy materials from home to enhance their children's literacy activities in school. Kenner, however, was clear that the intention was not to reproduce home literacy activities, but to make the connection to bridge the gap between home and school.

There is, then, some research with Asian bilingual families on early literacy development but none has been found that involves working with families in the homes of Pakistani origin *preschool* children where the mother tongue is Urdu or Punjabi, to enhance children's early literacy development. Other issues have been explored on racial equality (Siraj-Blatchford, 1994) but little is known about children's *early* literacy activities at home in these families. Research has shown that there is frequently an unfounded deficit view held by educators of the attitudes of ethnic minority families to education and their involvement in their children's early literacy development (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, 1996; Gregory, 1993, 1998; Hazareesingh, 1994; Huss-Keeler, 1997, Blackledge, 2000; Kenner 2000).

Hirst and Hannon (1990), Delgado-Gaitan (1990, 1996), Hazareesingh, (1994), Huss-Keeler (1997), Gregory, (1993, 1998, 2000) Blackledge, (2000) and Kenner (2000) have common views on the need for two-way communication and positive attitudes towards families stressing the importance of a friendly approach built on mutual trust. When working with ethnic minority families there is a further issue of the need to attempt to understand the culture of the children and their families so that misconceptions are not created or perpetuated which are not based on reality.

Although the formal out-of-school methods of education of the Bengali and Chinese children (Gregory 1993, 1994, 1998, 2000) and the Pakistani origin children (Huss-Keeler, 1997) are to be valued and embraced, the ORIM framework (Nutbrown and Hannon, 1997) (see Appendix 1) could offer a flexible informal approach to preschool

literacy learning with ethnic minority children and their families, enabling families to make the link between home literacy experiences and school literacy learning.

This chapter has reported my theoretical stance on working with bilingual families and discussed some relevant studies by Titone, Hazareesingh, Gregory, Delgado-Gaitan, Huss-Keeler, Blackledge and Kenner. The main points to emerge of relevance to my study are as follows.

1. Children can learn to read at home in two languages before going to school (Titone, 1985).
2. Literacy experiences in school are alien to many ethnic minority parents (Gregory, 1993, 1994, 1998, 2000; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, 1991, 1996; Huss-Keeler, 1997; Blackledge, 2000).
3. If children and parents are familiar with formal methods of teaching and learning, then the British informal methods of learning through play and reading for pleasure need to be carefully explained (Gregory, 1993; Siraj-Blatchford, 1994; Huss-Keeler, 1997; Blackledge, 2000).
4. There is frequently an unfounded deficit view held by educators about the attitudes of ethnic minority families to education and their involvement in their children's literacy learning (Gregory, 1994, 1998, 2000; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, 1991, 1996; Huss-Keeler, 1997; Blackledge, 2000; Kenner, 2000)
5. There is a need for two-way communication and positive attitudes to ethnic minority families (Gregory, 1993, 1994, 1998, 2000; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, 1991, 1996; Hazareesingh, 1994; Siraj-Blatchford, 1994; Huss-Keeler, 1997; Blackledge, 2000; Kenner, 2000).
6. Teachers need to work collaboratively with ethnic minority families and find out about their children's home literacy experiences so that these can be recognised and enhanced in school (Gregory, 1993, 1994, 1998, 2000; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, 1991, 1996; Hazareesingh, 1994; Siraj-Blatchford, 1994; Huss-Keeler, 1997; Blackledge, 2000; Kenner, 2000).
7. Ethnic minority parents in Britain who do not speak English can and do contribute to their children's literacy development (Gregory, 1993, 1994, 1998, 2000; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, 1991, 1996; Hazareesingh, 1994; Siraj-Blatchford, 1994; Huss-Keeler, 1997; Blackledge, 2000; Kenner, 2000).
8. The gap between home and school can be bridged (Gregory, 1993, 1994, 1998; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, 1991, 1996; Hazareesingh, 1994; Siraj-Blatchford, 1994; Huss-Keeler, 1997; Blackledge, 2000; Kenner, 2000).

The research reported here is relevant to this thesis as my study intends, firstly, to find out about family literacies in Pakistani origin families, not by initially inviting parents into school, as reported by Hazareesingh (1994), and Kenner (2000), but by interviewing parents in the non-threatening environment of their own homes. Later, it is the intention to implement a programme to work collaboratively with preschool Pakistani origin children and their families in their homes. Meetings in the community or in school may be arranged if parents are confident to join in a group situation.

The following chapter reports the research questions and research methods for my study.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will address the research questions and discuss the rationale for the methods used in the three studies, the survey of family literacy, observations of Qu'ranic classes and the evaluation of a programme.

Many of the theoretical stances and research studies in Chapters 2 and 3 have influenced this study (Heath, 1983; Auerbach, 1989; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Hannon, Weinberger and Nutbrown, 1991, Huss, 1991; Hannon and James, 1993; Cairney and Munsie, 1995; Weinberger, 1996; Huss-Keeler, 1997; Gregory, 1998). However, the research studies that have been most influential are Heath (1983), Delgado-Gaitan (1990), Huss-Keeler (1997) and Gregory (1998) on literacy and culture in different communities, and Hannon, Weinberger and Nutbrown (1991) and Weinberger (1996) on home-school links to develop preschool children's literacy. The single most influential research on my research questions was that of Hannon, Weinberger and Nutbrown (1990).

Certain features distinguished the families in this study from those in many other early literacy research studies. These included multilingualism in the home, writing systems, religion and gender. Young children of Pakistani origin may be exposed to as many as four languages, Punjabi, Urdu, Arabic and English. Families may use different writing systems for Urdu, Arabic and English. (The Mirpuri Punjabi dialect of the rural areas of Pakistan, which was spoken by many families in this study, does not have a writing system). The Muslim religion is an important part of the culture in many Pakistani families and therefore influences their lifestyle. There is a desire to learn to read Arabic to enable participation in the religious ceremonies and prayers both at home and at the Mosque. Most Pakistani children attend Qu'ranic classes either at the Mosque or in a neighbour's home. Traditionally there have been low academic expectations in some families for girls. (This may now be changing in some communities).

These distinctive features are likely to affect the home literacy environment. The findings from previous research, the distinctive features mentioned above and a

desire to find out whether parents would be interested in greater home-school links involving an early literacy focus, led to the following research questions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the family and community literacy contexts of preschool Pakistani origin children's literacy development?
2. What are the parents' views about literacy education for young Pakistani origin children and possible home-school collaboration?
3. Is it feasible to develop and implement a family literacy programme with Pakistani origin families before children enter school?
4. What is the value of a bilingual family literacy programme?

Addressing research questions 3 and 4 depended on the findings from research questions 1 and 2.

A survey of family literacy and observations of Qu'ranic classes were undertaken to answer research questions 1 and 2. These are reported in Chapter 6. Findings from the survey and observations of Qu'ranic classes, indicated that a programme to work with a small group of families to enhance young children's literacy development may be feasible. Such a programme was developed and is reported in Chapters 7 and 8. The programme is evaluated in Chapters 8 and 9.

The following table (Table 4.1) shows in which chapter each research question has been addressed.

Table 4.1

Where each research question will be addressed

Research Question	Where Addressed
1	Chapter 6
2	Chapter 6
3	Chapters 7, 8 and 9
4	Chapters 8 and 9

This thesis, then, includes three main studies; a survey of family literacy, observations of Qu'ranic classes and evaluation of a programme.

METHODS OF RESEARCH

Qualitative and quantitative methods were used in the three main studies reported in this thesis. Historically there has existed considerable tension between these two methods of research. However, the following view of Merton and Kendall, cited in Cohen and Mannion (1994), is adopted here.

Social scientists have come to abandon the spurious choice between qualitative and quantitative data: they are concerned rather with that combination of both which makes use of the most valuable features of each. The problem becomes one of determining *at which points* they should adopt the one, and at which the other, approach. (Merton and Kendall, 1946, cited in Cohen and Manion, 1994, p. 40)

Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1996) offer some assistance with this dilemma. They stated that when undertaking qualitative research

Scientists must gain an empathic understanding of societal phenomena and they must recognize both the historical dimension of human behaviour and the subjective aspects of the human experience....Qualitative researchers attempt to understand behaviour and institutions by getting to know the persons involved and their values, symbols, beliefs and emotions. (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996, p.280).

Although as teaching Head of Nursery I had some understanding of the Pakistani community which would be the focus of my research, it was necessary to gain a

greater understanding of their culture, lifestyle, 'values, symbols, beliefs and emotions'. It was therefore, essential to undertake research out in the community.

I was already in the advantageous position of having contact with the community through parents in school. Home-visiting took place before a child entered nursery and I had initiated a small home-visiting project working with a few parents before their child started nursery to ascertain the literacy environment of two-year-olds and to work with parents on certain aspects of early literacy development (mainly book-sharing). This small project, however, made me realise how little was known about the home literacy environment of children from this particular ethnic background and how further field research was necessary.

Emerson (1983) referred to field research as the study of people as they go about their daily lives and that the fieldworker enters into their world to learn how people live, talk and behave and to find out what captivates and what distresses them.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) pointed out that qualitative methods are useful when little is known about any phenomenon.

Some areas of research naturally lend themselves more to qualitative types of research, for instance, research that attempts to uncover the nature of a person's experiences...or to uncover and understand what lies behind any phenomena about which little is known. (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p.19).

Qualitative methods can also provide opportunities to observe, find out and interpret the intricate details of phenomena - meanings of experiences of people or of places.

Initially, a survey was conducted of 30 families with two-, three- or four-year-old children through interviews in the home. I also engaged in participant observation of community life (observation of children's Qu'ranic classes) that might influence home literacy

The programme, to be discussed later, involved working with Pakistani origin families to enhance young children's literacy development and is evaluated using qualitative and quantitative methods including statistical analysis using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

A survey of family literacy

The underpinning theory of the survey on early literacy development with parents is based upon the importance of the role of the family in children's emerging literacy. Parents (or other members of the family) may provide '*opportunities for learning, recognition of the child's achievements, interaction around literacy activities and a model of literacy*' (Hannon, 1995, p.51).

The ORIM framework outlined by Hannon (1995), initiated in the Sheffield Early Literacy Development Project, Hannon, Weinberger and Nutbrown (1991) is the framework upon which the survey is based.

The aims of the survey are given in Chapter 6

Interviewing as one of the preferred research methods

The preferred research method for the survey of family literacy was interviewing, with the bilingual nursery nurse in the study school acting as interpreter where necessary. Thirty families were interviewed to find out the literacy environment in the home of 10 two-year-olds, 10 three-year-olds and 10 four-year-olds. An equal number of boys and girls were selected in each age range (see Chapter 6 for further details of selection criteria.) Although a set number of questions were predetermined and asked in accordance with an interview schedule (see Appendix 2), a flexible, informal conversational approach was adopted which made the situation more comfortable for the interviewee. Also, the sequence of the questions could be modified if, for instance, the interviewee answered a question that appeared later in the schedule and similarly, the wording could be changed to enable either the interpreter or the interviewee to understand the question more easily or to elaborate on an answer. If there were any difficulty in understanding, the interviewer would explain in detail to the interpreter who would then modify or elaborate as necessary in Urdu or Punjabi to the interviewee.

It is for these reasons that the method of interviewing was chosen rather than a postal questionnaire. A postal questionnaire would have been an almost impossible task as the necessary three-way interaction between interviewer, interpreter and interviewee would not have been possible. The postal questionnaire would have produced fewer responses due to the limited literacy skills in some of the families and the need for

explanations. It was also appropriate to enter into the oral tradition in this community where face-to-face communication was more commonplace than written communication. It meant too, that families could extend their traditional hospitality to their visitors, an important aspect of the Muslim Pakistani culture.

Although the direct interaction of the interview has its advantages, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) point out that a disadvantage is that it is 'prone to subjectivity and bias on the part of the interviewer' (p.269). Stenhouse (1975), however, points out that concern should be with the development of a sensitive perspective rather than 'an aspiration towards an unattainable objectivity' (p.157).

Working with an interpreter will always have its difficulties as some explanations will be needed and some aspect of a question may be missed. There is also the added complication of interviews taking much longer than a monolingual interview. The latter did not seem to cause the families any problems, as most were reluctant for us to leave. Working with the bilingual nursery nurse from the nursery was a great advantage as she was known and seemed to be respected by the families in the neighbourhood. The women both related to her and appeared to trust her. As Head of Nursery I too felt I was respected, liked and trusted by the families. Being women was also an important issue as many of the women in the families for religious and cultural reasons would not have been interviewed by a man, in the same way that they would not enter a shop if only a man was serving.

The interview schedule was a modified version of the one used in the Sheffield Early Literacy Development Project and described in Hannon, Weinberger and Nutbrown, (1991). With the addition of various adaptations to take account of issues of language, religion and culture, it became an appropriate instrument for finding out about family literacies in a Muslim community. A copy of the modified version can be found in Appendix 2.

As the results of the interviews were analysed, it was clear that certain activities were emerging that demanded further investigation - activities that could clearly influence the literacy environment of these young children, such as the Mosque school and Urdu or Arabic classes for adults and children. Observation, with some discussion with the children and the Mullah, (a Muslim learned in theology and the sacred law of the Qu'ran) seemed to be the appropriate research method.

Observations of Qu'ranic classes

The observations of Qu'ranic classes were influenced by some of the literature on ethnography.

Yates (1987) defines ethnography as 'the study of the world of people' (p.62) while Quicke (1994) remarks:

The research strategy employed in ethnography is participant observation. One enters the social world of persons and groups being studied in an attempt to understand their shared meanings and taken for granted assumptions. There are varying degrees of participation from total immersion, as when one is a full participant who is an observer, to a more marginal position when one is essentially an observer who occasionally participates. (Quicke, 1994, p.2).

When observing Qu'ranic classes in the Mosque school or in the home, my position was as participant observer in a 'marginal position' but I became more involved when listening to participants' accounts of what they do and why.

It is important to remember as Quicke (1994) pointed out that the researcher is not looking for a 'true' account. The most that can be expected is take into account the various 'features of locations' which may be influencing the accounts produced. It was my intention when visiting the Qu'ranic classes to be aware of the various 'locations' which might influence the children's 'accounts' of their multi-lingual literacy learning which in turn, may influence the literacy learning of the preschool children in this study.

Spindler and Spindler (1987) stated that the native's viewpoint is essential and both behaviour and explanation must be recorded as carefully as possible using field notes, tape recorders and cameras.

Wolcott (1987) pointed out how additional data suggests avenues for further enquiry:

Data and interpretation evolve together each informing the other. Additional data provide illustration, test the adequacy of the developing account, and suggest some avenues for interpretation. (Wolcott, 1987, p.40).

Field notes were used to record data, written down either during, or as soon after, the observations of the Qu'ranic classes, as was possible. Speech was written down verbatim during observations where this did not interfere with or inhibit the relationship between researcher and participants. Tape recorders and cameras were used where possible, although the noise in one of the boys' Qu'ranic classrooms resulted in poor quality recording.

Many Pakistani origin women were not happy having their photograph taken other than snaps for the family album. Only four out of the thirty families in the literacy survey agreed to the use of a tape recorder during interviews but none objected to extensive note taking.

An Evaluation of a Programme

Results of the survey of family literacy (reported in Chapter 6) indicated that parents would be prepared to collaborate with school to enhance their young children's literacy development. I was committed to developing and evaluating some kind of programme of work with families that had to meet certain criteria. An opportunity arose to collaborate with the REAL (Raising Early Achievement in Literacy) project (Hannon and Nutbrown, 2001) taking place in Sheffield and, given the advantage of being able to relate my work to that of others, I decided to try a modified version of the REAL programme. The REAL project did not have bilingual families, so my collaboration with it could be mutually beneficial.

The Raising Early Achievement in Literacy (REAL) project involved a partnership between the University of Sheffield, Sheffield Education Authority and local schools. This partnership aimed to find ways of raising the literacy achievement of preschool children attending inner city primary schools by focusing on home literacy learning, involving parents and addressing parents' own learning. The development and evaluation of the 18-month programme involved 10 other schools and 80 families. The evaluation consisted of qualitative studies of processes and an experimental study with measurable outcomes of children's literacy achievements. Including the control groups, over 300 families were involved and it was intended that there would be follow-ups until the children reach the age of eight in 2002. The programme was based on the ORIM framework (Nutbrown and Hannon, 1997) and aimed to promote parents' awareness of how they could help to enhance their preschool child's reading, writing and related oral language. Literacy resources were provided. It was intended

that the programme should have been enough to make a difference, but not so expensive as to preclude others from introducing the programme should it be proved to be successful.

The research design of the programme evaluation

It was decided to work with a cohort of 16 families (8 programme families and 8 control group families, with equal boys and girls in each group). This was a number that was manageable in terms of both my time and the time of the bilingual nursery nurse who would be working with me. It was also a manageable number should others wish to replicate the study and was the same size group as the REAL project schools so comparisons could be made.

Gaining access to school and nursery

Access to the school and the nursery had to be renegotiated for the programme as by this time I was no longer a member of staff and there was a new Headteacher. A visit was made to explain my research. The new Headteacher raised no objections to my continuing with my research providing I did not take up much of the new nursery teacher's time. She had recently been moved into nursery from school and was trying to consolidate the staff team after a series of staff changes.

Two staff other, than the Head of Nursery, had also changed since I was there, so to get to know all staff and possibly current parents in the nursery, I assisted on a voluntary basis half a day a week. This meant I was a familiar face to parents and children. On the whole relationships developed well with nursery staff and the Head of Nursery always voiced that I was welcome anytime. I ensured that the Headteacher of the school and the Head of Nursery were kept informed of the purpose and progress of the programme.

Selection of children

It was decided to select children from the Spring birth cohort (i.e. born between 1 January 1994 and 30 April 1994). This allowed almost 12 months to work with families after negotiation with parents and the project school during the 1997 Autumn term. Assessments of children and interviews with parents were held early in the

1998 Spring term. The REAL project had selected from the Spring 1994 birth cohort so comparisons could be made, if appropriate

Sixteen three-year-old children, preferably born in the 1994 Spring birth cohort, who were expected to be admitted to Reception class in January 1999 were needed for the programme, with equal numbers of boys and girls. Eight girls were available but only six boys, so the two oldest boys in the 1994 Summer cohort were selected to make up the eight boys.

Gaining access to parents

Shaheen Khan, the bilingual nursery nurse, who acted as interpreter for the survey, readily agreed to continue to work in a more interactive role on the programme. Her involvement was invaluable as a person from the Pakistani culture whom all parents knew through her work in school.

All 16 parents were approached in the first instance by an informal request in nursery by Shaheen or me. Both of us were present at the time of request. Many of the parents remembered me as Head of Nursery or had seen me working since in a voluntary capacity. Only a few of the families were new to me. At the time of the informal verbal request, a letter was given to parents explaining the first part of the programme (the assessment of all the children involved in the programme). Parents were given time to take the letter home for discussion with other family members, if they wished, to consider the invitation. All parents accepted the invitation and visits were then arranged in the same informal way for a home visit to obtain a literacy profile of their child.

Methods of research for the programme

Although both qualitative and quantitative methods were chosen, the main thrust of the programme was qualitative and was concerned with the meaning of the experiences for the participants. The qualitative data consisted of reports on take-up, participation, implementation, involvement processes, reports on home visits and other contacts with parents. The families' views on the programme were ascertained through interviews.

My earlier research (Hirst, 1990) was mainly qualitative with no measures of achievement. Indeed, this would have been impossible to undertake as the project evaluated was set up by the LEA and did not include a research design at the outset. In this study, therefore, I decided to adopt an experimental design also, as I wanted to assess the impact of the programme in terms of children's literacy achievements.

I struggled initially with the use of tests as part of the research design. Johnston (1997) claimed that bias can be a problem for 'people living at the margins of mainstream, and for people whose language patterns and experience are not favoured by the tests' (p.145). Although the Pakistani origin children taking part in the programme could be said to be 'living on the margins of the mainstream', children were allowed to use their preferred language wherever appropriate. The presence of a tester from their own culture enabled as full an understanding as possible of the assessments. These issues are discussed later in this chapter under 'Assessment - Which tests and why?' 'Which languages for assessment?' and 'How tests were administered'. The tests to which Johnston was referring may have included those in the States that require adults to reach a certain standard on a test before being accepted onto a programme. However, no such criteria formed part of acceptance onto the programme that is reported here.

Further concerns were:

1. The sample would be small.
2. I was unsure of the appropriateness of using tests or profiles to measure young children's literacy achievements.
3. It was possible there would be a big difference in children's scores due to class, experiences and the variation in language differences in the home and some children may not need the support as much as others. (As mentioned later in the report of the survey in Chapter 6, this community was not a homogenous group).

My further concerns about the testing aspects of the research design were resolved as follows:

1. The group would be small but within time and manpower constraints of this thesis it was as much as could be managed.

As Cohen and Mannion (1994) pointed out, 'Sampling decisions are bound up with the question of funds, manpower and time available for the experimentation' (p.173). Also, the research design was similar to that of the programme schools in the REAL project so it could be useful for comparison purposes at a later date.

2. The choice of a profile or test was important. I became satisfied that the profile chosen was appropriate (see later discussion in this chapter) and the children's achievement scores would only be one small part of the assessment.

Ongoing assessment by teachers is an appropriate tool for teaching and learning. Nutbrown (1999), however, suggests that different assessment instruments are appropriate according to the purpose of assessment.

Different assessment instruments can satisfy different purposes, and decisions about which assessment instruments to use will depend on the purpose of the assessment, and choices about processes and techniques of assessment will depend on the purpose for which the results are to be used. (Nutbrown, 1999, p.125)

Nutbrown (1999) outlines three broad areas for assessment: assessment for teaching and learning, assessment for management and accountability, and assessment for research. She suggests possible characteristics of the three purposes for early assessment (p.127). Nutbrown points out that assessment instruments in the research category may include 'tools for evaluation' for, for example, research studies or intervention studies. The Sheffield Early Literacy Development Profile (SELDP) (Nutbrown, 1997) is one such assessment instrument and will be discussed in some detail later in this chapter. It enables 'researchers to measure literacy in ways which are compatible to their research focus and more in step with current research in which present recognition of early literacy is based' (Nutbrown, 1997, p.100).

3. The potential diversity in children's scores due to difference in home background ultimately proved to be a good reason for choosing an experimental design.

Sixteen children were allocated at random to a programme or control group. Children were put in pairs that were similar. I attempted to have each pair the same gender, similar age and similar SELDP scores. One child from each pair was randomly allocated to the programme group on the toss of a coin the other was

allocated to the control group. The reason for allocating from pairs, (rather than just picking names from the whole sample) was to reduce the likelihood of differences between the two groups, whilst also retaining the advantages of random allocation.

Random selection, however, has its problems. There is always the concern that some children and parents will benefit from the programme and others do not have that opportunity. This issue presented itself from two parents. A white monolingual parent not involved but who had heard of the programme, commented, "This should be available to everyone." I agreed that in an ideal world, it should, but that it was only by such research taking place on a small scale which may have an influence on government policy, that there could be possible benefits for other children in the future. She seemed satisfied with this explanation. A Pakistani parent in the control group said her child was upset that we were visiting her cousin but not visiting her. A social call to the house appeared to satisfy both parent and child.

There is also the issue that test scores need to be compared with something or they are meaningless. In this study it was decided to adopt pre- and post-tests with a programme group and a control group. The post-test scores of the children in the programme group were compared with the scores of the children in the control group who had not received the programme (see Chapter 9). There was still a possibility of programme diffusion to the control group in such a close knit community but this was checked out in the family interviews and found not to be the case even where two families were related.

Assessment - Which tests and why?

Before answering this question, I first had to struggle with the dilemma of testing three-year-olds and ask the question - Why test three-year-olds at all? Teale (1990) advocated that informal assessment is the best type of balanced assessment and this can be carried out by teachers. As a teacher, this was the type of assessment with which I was most comfortable. However, after much thought, discussion and reading, I came to the conclusion, as Nutbrown (1997) pointed out, that researchers sometimes also need 'a quick, reliable and valid measure against which their interventions can be viewed' (p.101). As I was undertaking an intervention study that was to follow the research design of the REAL project as closely as possible (but with Asian origin families and their preschool children), I decided to use one of the measures used by

the REAL project (The Sheffield Early Literacy Development Profile, Nutbrown, 1997). The rationale for using this profile is discussed later.

Which Language (s) for Assessment - Further questions on which languages should be used by the assessor and the children being assessed, still required an answer. The following questions were still causing me some concern:

1. Are these tests appropriate for young children for whom English is an Additional Language?
2. In which language or languages should the tests be administered and assessed and in which language or languages should the children be asked to make responses?

A long discussion with my supervisor Peter Hannon and Cathy Nutbrown, (who were respectively the Director and Co-ordinator of the REAL project), produced the following matrix (Figure 4.1) of possibilities for the language of assessment (i.e. the language used in administration of the profile and the language of the child's responses) and the focus of assessment (i.e. which literacy is being assessed).

Issues raised in the literature on assessment of bilingual children were:

- the languages of administration, assessment and performance
- the variety of skills and abilities of bilingual children when given the opportunity to express them in a preferred language
- SATS related issues pertinent to assessment of children of any age who are learning English as an Additional Language
- fairness - who should be present at the time of assessment

Fig. 4.1

Possibilities for the language of assessment

		<u>Focus of Assessment</u> (which literacy is being assessed)	
		English	Punjabi \ Urdu
<u>Language of Assessment</u> (language of administration and response)	English	A	B
	Punjabi \ Urdu	C	D

Some options for languages of tests

- A
- C
- A+C
- B
- D
- A+B+C+D

Mills (1995) in her chapter 'Bilingual children and their assessment through Mother Tongue' pointed out that some children have skills that are only apparent in one language. Those of us who have had the experience of meeting children who are monosyllabic in English will know that there are those children who can carry out lengthy and complex conversations in another tongue, or those who are competent users of English but cannot communicate in their first language. Also some children have transferable abilities across language boundaries and can describe, report incidents and tell stories in two languages.

Mills then provides two examples: The first, six-year-old Shahira composed a story that she started in English and finished in Pushtu. The second, six-year-old Kuldip, a Punjabi speaker, had been in the UK for six months. He did not know the names of shapes in Punjabi but did know them in English. Mills stated how this illustrated the lexical transfer from the second language to the first in the form of loan words, a phenomenon first identified by Appel and Muijken (1987).

Although these two examples were of older children, similar issues could arise when assessing the three-year-olds in this study who, for instance, may be able to tell a story from the pictures in Punjabi, or Punjabi and English but not wholly in English, or they may know the word for 'letter' in English but not in Punjabi. Mills also points out how inappropriate it would be to assess bilingual children only in their mother tongue and that in her experience the language of administration needs to be appropriately matched to the child.

It would be inappropriate to test emerging bilingual children in only one language albeit their mother tongue or English if we wish to give them the opportunity to display their full knowledge and understanding. The test should be administered in a language or languages appropriately matched to the child and children should be given the opportunity to respond in their preferred language. There may be certain exceptions to this, for instance, if the question/activity is being used to assess a child's language or knowledge of literacy in a particular language (for example, in response to "What does this say?" when showing an example of decontextualised print in English).

Mills (1995) emphasises the importance of differences in performance according to the child's mood, relationship with other speakers and the setting in which they are to perform. It is important that young children are in a relaxed setting, are not under pressure, are with familiar adults and that activities are introduced as a game.

She reports on a small-scale project involving seven bilingual classroom assistants and 14 EAL teachers in six schools and raises issues involved in mother tongue assessment. The report involves SATS tasks undertaken by bilingual children aged six, seven and eight in three schools. Staff from the three schools gave their opinions on the testing. Again, these examples are of older children and the tasks are SATS assessments but they raise issues pertinent to the younger children in this study.

In School A three Year 1 six-year-old bilingual children were assessed on SAT SC9 in the library with the bilingual assistant. The teachers and the assistant had prepared a script in English and Punjabi but found they had to deviate from it at times especially when children had to talk about changes in the weather and the effect it had on their lives. The children were happier replying in English even when spoken to in Punjabi. They did however offer Punjabi words when they did not know the English and one child confused the English words 'hot' and 'cold' but knew the difference in Punjabi.

In School B five Year 2 bilingual children aged seven were being assessed on SAT SC6. The children were introduced to the room in which they would be working in the week prior to the assessment. The activities were introduced to the children as a game and they were told that they could speak in Punjabi and English. Most children chose to answer in English although all used both languages some of the time. One child who was reluctant to speak was encouraged by the use of Punjabi. He was able to name all the objects in both English and Punjabi. Staff felt that the two languages reinforced each other.

The findings from this small-scale project suggested that there was evidence for bilingually assessing emerging bilingual children and that all children should be tested and allowed to respond in their preferred language, unless as previously stated, in the case of literacy assessment, the response is necessary in a particular language.

These examples were all with older children and were assessments of science tasks but the findings show the importance of using both languages if children are to be given the opportunity to display their full knowledge. Clearly, similar issues could arise when assessing the multiliteracy development of three-year-olds. Children would not be able to show their full understanding if both languages were not used for the language of administration and if children were not given the opportunity to respond in their preferred tongue.

Returning to the grid discussed earlier (Figure 4.1), I feel the languages of assessment in this study (i.e. the languages used in administration of the 'test' and the language of the child's responses), in the light of further reading and much thought, should be A+C (English + Urdu/Punjabi) to assess a child's understanding, when English is the literacy being assessed.

Johnston (1997) stated that he was looking forward to assessments that have community learning and involvement built into their use. These issues have not been ignored in this study.

The next sections discuss the rationale for the assessments used.

The Sheffield Early Literacy Development Profile - This profile was devised to 'enable researchers to measure children's emergent and developmental literacy in terms of environmental print, knowledge of books and early writing' (Nutbrown, 1997 p.101).

These issues were the main research focus of this study. The profile uses literacy to assess literacy and the author presents a rigorous rationale. The following features outlined by Nutbrown (1997) indicate its appropriateness for this study:

1. The Profile can be administered on several occasions over a two-year period with little likelihood of children becoming 'practised' in the task and achieving increased scores as a result.
 2. Scoring allows for a range of abilities from three-year-olds who are somewhat 'new' to literacy to children who are almost five with many literacy accomplishments.
 3. The profile provides an indication of changes in performance at intervals over two years.
 4. The profile provides for useful comparison of a child's performance at different ages or stages, for example, before and after an initiative. The Sheffield Early Literacy Development Profile could also be used in comparing cohorts of children, for example a group participating in a literacy project or programme with a comparison or control group.
 5. The Profile covers the three main areas of literacy: environmental print, book knowledge, and writing.
 6. All three parts of the Profile are of equal importance.
- (Nutbrown, 1997, p.103)

Although not initially designed to measure the emergent and developmental literacy of bilingual children, following discussions with the author and Shaheen Khan, the bilingual interpreter, it was decided that adaptations could be made to include the Urdu script. Administration of the profile could be translated into Urdu and Mirpuri Punjabi without affecting its validity.

The profile, for reasons discussed earlier, would be administered in English and Punjabi or Urdu simultaneously and children should answer in their preferred language. If answering in Punjabi they could be asked if they could reply in English also if it was felt necessary to have a separate assessment in English, but not if this was causing the child to be confused, withdrawn or distressed. As the profile took approximately 12 minutes to administer in English it would inevitably take longer in two languages. This could be a problem in terms of concentration of a three-year-old. However, the questions and activities were presented in an exciting way as a game, so this was not a problem. The profile would not be continued if children were showing signs of distress or disinterest.

Multi-Literacy concepts - The next issue to consider was the issue of multi-literacy development and the need for children to have the opportunity to display their knowledge of concepts of literacy which are common to many languages. I was concerned that children's understanding of literacy concepts in any language should be acknowledged and respected, but the next question was, how to do this?

From further discussions with Cathy Nutbrown, the REAL Project Co-ordinator I thought I needed to draw two to three concepts from each literacy strand of the REAL Project (Environmental print, Books and Story-telling and Writing), which were the same as the areas of literacy in the Sheffield Profile and use these to assess the children's understanding of multi-literacy concepts. I started to do this and found that I was confusing commonalities across literacies with which *tasks* in the profile could be directly used to assess literacy performance in another language.

My second attempt was little better. I found that by going through the tasks in the profile I was repeating a concept (for example, recognition of print was evident in tasks in both the Environmental print and the Books and Storytelling sections). My third attempt came closer to finding a way to acknowledge and respect a child's understanding of literacy concepts that crosses language boundaries and different scripts. I listed the following 25 literacy concepts that would be important in a preschool child's multi-literacy assessment.

Literacy Concepts

1. Can differentiate between print and pictures.
2. Knows that print/written word conveys meaning.

3. Recognises a book.
4. Knows front of book.
5. Knows what a page is.
6. Knows about turning to the next page
7. Can recognise words.
8. Can identify one word.
9. Can identify one letter.
10. Knows specific letters.
11. Knows (can read) a word/words.
12. Knows about authors.
13. Knows about illustrators.
14. Knows what a title is.
15. Can retell a story from the pictures.
16. Can talk about characters and plot.
17. Knows about sequence in a story (beginning, middle, end).
18. Recognises act of writing
19. Knows what writing is for
20. Believes he/she can write.
21. Can recognise own name
22. Can write own name.
23. Knows that spoken word can be written.
24. Knows about directionality (L - R, R- L, top - bottom)
25. Knows there are different scripts.

All except four of those listed proved to be in the Sheffield Profile. The four additional concepts above are:

- knows about authors
- knows about illustrators
- understands what a title is
- knows there are different scripts

The last concept (25) would not have been appropriate for the Sheffield Profile as the profile was designed to assess monoliteracy performance in English.

I then considered whether I needed a separate test or profile to assess a child's concepts of literacy or whether a more appropriate way would be through informal assessment. I present the argument, as in Nutbrown, (1997) that the best assessment is the on-going informal assessment by teachers even though there are times when

researchers may need a quicker more structured test or profile. As mentioned earlier Teale (1990) noted that a child's concept of the function of literacy was crucial and a test of performance is not the best way to assess a child's achievements. I wanted a picture of competence that crossed language boundaries. Nutbrown (1997) reviewed various assessments, the LARR Test of Emergent Literacy, (NFER-Nelson, 1993), the Infant Index (Desforges and Lindsay, 1995), Wandsworth LEA Baseline Assessment Wandsworth Borough Council, 1994) and the Literacy Baseline (Vincent, Crumpler and de la Mare, 1996) to mention a few, and found most wanting for monolingual children. The problem is compounded for a child for whom English is an Additional Language.

The SELDP gives children for whom English is an Additional Language the opportunities to display their knowledge of literacy concepts, but additional informal assessments, through observation and interaction on the 25 literacy concepts listed earlier, were also made during the first few visits or contacts with each child.

The SELDP profile, then, would seem to be the best possible available for the purposes of assessing the achievements of literacy in English of children for whom English is an Additional Language. This profile was used to assess all 16 children in the sample at the beginning of the programme and at the end of their last term in nursery.

Administration of the Profiles

Sheffield Early Literacy Development Profile - This assessment was administered by Shaheen Khan, the bilingual nursery nurse and me. The pre-tests were administered in the children's homes as it was felt this was a good opportunity for families to ask any questions about the programme. The Headteacher of the study school had asked me not to cause any disruption to the nursery routine as the Head of Nursery was newly appointed and still 'finding her feet'. The assessment was administered mostly by Shaheen in the child's preferred language. I was on hand to guide Shaheen, offer advice when needed and record the child's responses on the record sheet a copy of which can be found in Appendix 3.

Allocation of children to programme and control groups

As mentioned earlier, initial assessments were administered to all 16 children selected. Pairings of children were then made according to three criteria - gender, age and the SELDP scores. However, these three criteria seemed to be as valid as was possible.

One child from each pair was then selected at random for the programme group by tossing a coin (the other being allocated to a control group). This was the fairest way of allocating children to the programme and one, hopefully, that would be understood by parents should they ask why their child was not in the programme.

Notification to programme and control group parents

All parents of children allocated to the programme group were asked informally in the nursery whether they would be willing to take part in a programme working with Shaheen Khan and I to enhance their child's literacy development. It was also made clear (verbally and in writing) that families would be visited over a 12-month period until their child entered reception class, (15 months for the boy in the Summer cohort) but that they could withdraw from the programme at anytime

All parents of children in the control group were also given a letter personally, thanking them for their participation in the first part of the programme and expressing the hope that they would agree to be involved again as their child started school.

Details of parents' take-up in both groups and implementation of the programme are recorded in Chapter 7.

EVALUATION

Evaluation of the programme can be found in Chapters 8 and 9. Chapter 8 evaluates the implementation and processes of the programme. Most aspects of the programme evaluation use qualitative methods of evaluation that can explore the processes and personal experiences which test-based evaluation cannot measure. The qualitative data consists of reports on take-up, participation, implementation, involvement

processes, reports on home visits and other contacts with parents, parent-teacher and parent-child interactions and parents' views.

To find out about parents' views, both programme and control parents were interviewed during the first few weeks of their child's entry into reception class. I devised an interview schedule, partly in collaboration with the REAL project and partly just for my own purposes. The multilingual environment and religious culture of the families in the programme were taken into account when devising the interview schedule. It was designed to find out what was going on in families that might enhance their young children's literacy development. Parents were asked questions about their involvement in the four strands of literacy focused in the project: books, environmental print, writing and phonological awareness. The schedule was based on the ORIM framework (opportunities, recognition, interaction and model). Programme parents were also asked their views on the project and all parents were asked whether they thought such a programme should be available to all families with young children. Demographic information on family structure, and occupations of parents was also requested. A copy of the schedules can be found in Appendices 4 and 5.

Patten (1987) points out that process evaluations are aimed at 'elucidating and understanding the internal dynamics of program operation.' (Patten, 1987, p.23). In other words, the value of the programme should be addressed so that ideas and issues can be shared. We can then build on each other's efforts so that programmes can be replicated or modified to meet the needs of others. As Hannon (1995) stated without evaluation 'we are at the mercy of prejudice and fashion' (p.109).

'Test-based' measures are discussed in Chapter 9.

ETHICS AND THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

The Oxford Illustrated Dictionary (1981) defines ethics as 'science of morals, study of principles of human duty...moral principles, rules of conduct...(p.286). It is commonly accepted that such issues must be taken into consideration when undertaking academic research. Burgess (1989) remarked that key concerns are relationships, anonymity, confidentiality, informal consent, and the right of the individual to privacy and knowledge.

These issues were addressed in this study. Good working relationships were established and maintained with families. These were based on mutual trust and a respect for the rights of the individual. Punch (1986) pointed out:

Pivotal to the relationship between researcher and researched, for instance, is access and acceptance. Far more so than with other styles of social research then, this approach (fieldwork) means that the investigator engages in a close relationship during a considerable period of time with those he or she observes. This is of vital significance, because the development of that relationship is subtly intertwined with both the outcome of the project and the nature of the data. (Punch, 1986, p.73)

Such relationships were the linchpin for gaining access to both sets of families, the families in the survey and the programme families.

While the survey was being conducted I was Head of Nursery in the study school and was working closely both in school and in the community with Shaheen Khan, the bilingual nursery nurse in the nursery. We were both known in the community and were always welcome in the close-knit community Pakistani surrounding the school. Working with Shaheen, who was a member of the Pakistani culture, was reassuring to both the families and to me, enabling easier communication and access to members of the families who did not speak much English.

The gender of the researcher is an important issue when working with Pakistani Muslim women. We were women, working mainly with women and this sat comfortably with the cultural norms and practices of the Pakistani Muslim community. Access may not have been so easy for a male researcher wishing to work with women in their homes unless a male member of the community was present.

Criticism could be made of me as a white researcher engaging in fieldwork in another culture. Parekh (1986) commenting on white researchers in connection with race relations, made the following forceful point:

Most researchers in the field are white. They have no experience of what it means to be black and lack an intuitive understanding of the complex mental processes and social structures of communities. (Parekh, 1986, p. 24)

Parekh made a valid point here. As a white researcher, I could not claim to have experience of what it means to be part of another culture. I did, however, attempt to understand that culture by working closely in the community with a Pakistani member of staff and by visiting the Mosque to find out some of the out-of-school experiences of the Pakistani origin children.

Delgado-Gaitan (1993) presented an argument concerning the ethnicity of the researcher. She remarked that sharing the same ethnic background as the participants (as she did) 'does not make the researcher more knowledgeable about the meanings of the participants' feelings, values and practices based on influences such as assumed cultural knowledge.' (p.391). Although originating from a humble Spanish-Mexican background herself, she was very aware of her current power position, status and class while conducting research in the Spanish-Mexican communities. She acknowledged her potential biases and subjectivity and as a result, kept her participants informed and shared as much data as possible with them to ensure accuracy.

During the studies reported here, I, through Shaheen Khan as my interpreter, checked out our processes with the families. Informed consent was an essential part of this study and families were aware that at anytime they could withdraw or cancel appointments. Many of the families did need to change appointments at some time, due to unexpected incidents that inevitably occur in any family, but they were always eager to make a further appointment. This at least indicated that we were welcome and that what we were offering was perceived as worthwhile.

Families were also promised anonymity. Most mothers in the programme said they were happy for their children's names to be used in the report. Where mothers did not offer this, the children's names were changed. It is the intention that all programme parents will be issued with a report of the programme. Shaheen Khan was offered anonymity too, but she specifically requested that her own name should be used in any report.

My role, and to a certain extent, that of Shaheen Khan, involved acting as facilitator, advocate, enabler, teacher and interviewer.

Negotiations with the school were also necessary for the implementation of the programme, because by that time I was no longer a member of staff and there was a new Headteacher. As Woods (1986) reported:

...as guest, visitor, supplicant, one must behave with tact, discretion and decorum, and flawless recognition of proprieties at all times. (Woods, 1986, p.56).

Diplomatic negotiations with the new Headteacher and the new Head of Nursery enabled my research to continue and Shaheen Khan to be bought out to work some half days during the school day. This meant that, although willing to do so, Shaheen did not have to work so much out of school hours, in addition to full-time employment.

Ethical Dilemmas

Research dilemmas did arise during the programme. One dilemma concerned the health of a child and another concerned assessment that took place in the home. Due to issues of confidentiality, full details cannot be reported. It is when such issues arise that there can be, as Simons (1989) remarks, a tension in evaluation 'to find the appropriate balance in the conduct of research between the public 'right to know' and the individual 'right to privacy.' (p.118).

However, as Burgess (1989) argued:

...such ethical dilemmas and their 'solutions' will be problematic, but as Bronfenbrenner (1952) remarked, the only way to avoid this problem would be 'to refrain from doing research altogether' (p.453). (Burgess, 1989, p.8).

The ethical dilemmas of this study have been referred to also in Chapters 7 and 9.

This chapter has addressed the research questions and discussed the rationale for the methods used in the three studies, the survey of family literacy, observations of Qu'ranic classes and the evaluation of a programme.

Chapter 5 describes the research setting of the school and the community.

CHAPTER 5

THE RESEARCH SETTING: SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

This chapter describes the research setting of the school and the community in which this study was based.

THE STUDY SCHOOL

The school in this study was a large stone built Victorian school in Sheffield, Britain that was established just over 100 years ago. It consisted of two large stone built buildings - one originally the girls' school and one the boys' school. It is now a community primary school consisting of a nursery, a junior and an infant department. Two mobile units have been added, one of which was used by the community for sewing classes and also by the Health Authority for the clinic; the other was used as a classroom for Year 1 pupils.

There was a well-used Community room in the lower stone-built building close to the nursery and the reception class. Over the years the room has been used for Adult Education Urdu and EAL (English as an Additional Language) classes, Asian Women's meetings, a Parent and Toddler Group and Carers' Corner (a self-run group for Nannies). The room is used at lunchtime as a dining room for children who take sandwiches. The community also used the cookery room in the upper building for cookery classes. Once a week the premises were used for a children's Woodcraft group in the evening. The local tertiary college employed workers to run some of the groups; others were organised by local people.

Positive Action

At the start of this study in 1994, Positive Action Funding calculations by the Local Education Authority based on free school meals, (Sheffield LEA, 1994), showed that, in 1994, 37.9% of the 285 school children in the study school (excluding 39 full-time equivalent nursery children) were eligible for free school meals. Only 65 out of 156 primary schools in the city had a greater percentage of children eligible for free school meals than the study school. The highest percentage was 81.6% at an inner city school. All schools had some children eligible for free school meals, the

lowest being 1.3% in an affluent residential part of the city. Table 5.1 shows the number of schools in the city with the percentage of children on free school meals.

Table 5.1
Percentage of children on free school meals in Sheffield schools in 1994

Percentage of children on free school meals	Number of schools in city
Over 80%	2
Over 70%	4
Over 60%	12
Over 50%	22
Over 40%	23
Over 30%	9
Over 20%	15
Over 10%	35
Under 10%	34

Taken from Calculation of positive action funding 1994-95. Sheffield LEA(1994)

In 1994, out of 39,424 primary school children in the city 12,009 were entitled to free school meals. These figures portray the significance of unemployment and poverty in families with young children in the city.

Language Survey

At the start of this study, the 1994 Schools Language Survey (Sheffield LEA, 1994) showed that 80.6% of the pupils in the study school were bilingual (275 pupils including nursery). Only one other Infant and one other Junior school (separate schools on the same site) had higher percentages, 85.6% for the Junior school, and 80.9% for the Infant school. Only two other schools in the city had over 80%, no school had between 70 and 80% and only four, between 60 and 70%. The study school therefore was third in the table of percentages of bilingual children.

Table 5.2 shows the number of bilingual children in the study school and the languages spoken.

Table 5.2**Number of bilingual children in the study school and languages spoken**

Language spoken	Number of children
Urdu/Punjabi	261
Arabic	1
Bengali	3
Gujerati	1
Pushto	4
Somali	1
Others whose first language was not English	4

Taken from Sheffield schools language survey 1994. Sheffield LEA (1994)

Staffing.

Staffing changed during the period of time covered by this study due to budget constraints and falling rolls. Monolingual and bilingual teachers, monolingual and bilingual nursery nurses and monolingual child-care assistants were employed in the school. At the start of the study the Headteacher was of Pakistani origin but as he retired a monolingual white headteacher was appointed.

Literacy Standards in the School

Sheffield LEA provided the earliest figures available for literacy standards in the school. These were for 1996. The 1996 Key Stage 2 SATS results in English (National Standard Assessment Tasks at age 11) showed that 43% of children reached the required standard compared with the National Average of 56.3%. There appeared to be a need for a programme to support literacy development in the school.

The Community

The area in which the school was located was a mixed residential area interspersed with a local shopping area and small businesses at the upper end, with a hospital

close by. Departments of the hospital were being closed and transferred to other hospitals in the city.

The housing consisted of large Victorian stone and brick built terraced and detached houses with some post-war semi-detached houses. Many of the streets were tree-lined but there was also a maze of streets containing high-density large brick terraced housing. The area housed white British middle and working class families as well as a small number of African-Caribbean families and a large number of Asian origin families many of whom were inter-related.

The lower part of the area accommodated small businesses and industry as well as providing some terraced housing. A busy arterial road passed the lower end of the school. This main road was lined with shops, some of which were Asian food, material, craft and video shops. Estate agents, accountants, solicitors, banks and building societies could also be found along this road.

MOSQUES

The two local mosques were about half a mile away but the dining room of the school was used for the 'school mosque' each day. Muslim children in the school attended one of the three mosque schools. They could be seen leaving school each day and returning half an hour later carrying their Qu'ranic books on their way to their Qu'ranic classes. Most children were at least five years of age before they attended Qu'ranic classes, although a few did attend at four years of age.

It is within the context reported in this chapter that the research study was undertaken. The next chapter addresses and reports a survey of family literacy and observations of Qu'ranic classes.

CHAPTER 6

A SURVEY OF FAMILY LITERACY AND OBSERVATIONS OF QU'RANIC CLASSES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is mostly concerned with a report of a survey of family literacy, including interviews with 30 families of preschool children in the local community of the study school. However, due to what I believe to be very different teaching styles in the Mosque schools and other venues for Qu'ranic teaching, I am also interested in the influence of community literacy in the home. The last sections of this chapter, therefore, describe visits to two Mosque schools and Qu'ranic teaching sessions in the neighbourhood. The activities observed there are reported. Comments from the children who attend and the Qu'ranic teachers are also documented.

This chapter therefore addresses two of the research questions listed in Chapter 4, viz.

1. What are the family and community literacy contexts of preschool Pakistani origin children's literacy development?
2. What are the parents' views about literacy education for young Pakistani origin children and possible home-school collaboration?

The aims of the survey are also addressed and were as follows:

1. To understand some of the home literacy experiences of preschool children whose first language is Urdu or Punjabi.
2. To be aware of parents' own literacy experiences.
3. To find out about parents' attitudes to education.
4. To discover whether parents would be interested in closer home-school links to enhance their preschool child's early literacy development

Although the research questions refer to Pakistani origin children, in the event, one of the children interviewed in the survey was of Indian origin and the home languages were Gujarati and English.

Families of 30 Asian origin preschool (29 Pakistani origin, and 1 Indian origin) children in the local community of the study school were interviewed using a schedule based on the ORIM framework (see Chapters 2 and 4). The interview schedule was also designed to ascertain the influence of the ethnic culture and multilingualism on the early literacy experiences of the selected preschool children. A subsidiary aim was to ascertain whether the ORIM framework was useful as a means to analyse the survey.

THE SURVEY OF FAMILY LITERACY

The general scope and design of the survey were outlined in Chapter 4. In this chapter a full report is given.

The setting

The survey took place within one mile of the study school. The school was situated in an inner-city area, fringed by a more affluent part of the city. The area had mixed housing, was densely populated and accommodated a close-knit Pakistani origin community.

Selection of children

The intention was to interview 30 Pakistani origin families. In the event, one Indian Gujarati-speaking family was interviewed. This occurred because most of the children's names were taken from the nursery waiting list of the study school and the child's origin was not apparent from her name. It was not until I was interviewing that I was aware the family was English/Gujarati-speaking. The family was, however, Muslim and their specific cultural identity did not seem to distinguish them markedly from other families in the survey. Therefore, this family was retained in the sample. Rather than explain this single exception on each occasion when reference is

made to the sample, I will, for the sake of simplicity, refer to the survey as being of Pakistani origin families.

Of the 30 children in the survey, there were 10 each aged two, three and four years with equal numbers of boys and girls at each level. It was intended to select all families from the nursery waiting list. However, all the four-year-olds were already in nursery, so a random selection of four-year-olds was taken from the nursery register, all 10 three-year-olds from the waiting list, and the five oldest two-year-old boys and two-year-old girls from the waiting list.

Area from which children were selected

All the children selected lived within one mile of the study school. It was expected that all the children who were not yet in nursery would attend when there was a place. In the term in which they were five, children would attend either the study school or one of several schools within a one-mile radius of the study school.

Gaining access to the homes

In families where children were already in nursery, parents were invited to take part in the survey as they brought their children to the nursery session. A telephone call was made to other parents to arrange a home visit to explain the survey and to make an appointment to complete the survey. All parents accepted. Interviews took place either on home visits during the day, after school, or during the school holidays.

In families where an English speaker was not available the bilingual nursery nurse, Shaheen Khan, from the nursery acted as interpreter. She spoke Urdu, Punjabi and English and was very aware of early childhood education as well as being a sensitive person with excellent interpersonal skills. The families in the local community responded positively to her and appeared to trust her.

The interview schedule

The main literacy issues covered were book sharing, writing and drawing, environmental print, oracy and the extent to which the mother or other family

members interacted with the child during these activities. Further issues covered family characteristics including the socio-economic status of families, multilingualism in the home, writing systems, religion as part of the family culture, the place of residence of the extended family and gender.

The interview schedule for the survey of family literacy can be found in Appendix 2.

Findings of the survey

The findings of the survey covered the following key issues and will be reported under these headings.

Family characteristics

The children

Other significant caregivers and their occupations

Preschool experience outside the home

Children's health

Languages spoken at home

Emergent literacy

Sharing books and stories

Ages when books first shared

Frequency with which books are shared and kind of interaction

Access to books

Favourite books

Looking at books and pretending to read

Environmental print

Children's involvement in the family's reading and writing

Children's exposure to different scripts

Writing and drawing

Children's mark-making

Adult as model for writing

Pretending to read written messages

Parents' views on their involvement in their children's literacy development

Oracy.

Talking and listening

Storytelling

- General talk
- Listening to rhymes
- Level of child's language
- Clarity of speech
- Children's talk
- Children telling stories
- Children repeating rhymes
- Watching television and video
- Access to computers
- Influence of religious practices
- Where parents were born
- Where grandparents lived
- Parents' memories of their own literacy experiences
- Parents' aspirations for their children
- Home-school links

Family characteristics

Most of the parents were born in Pakistan, mostly in rural communities, but both parents of all children were now living in the local community. Nevertheless, this was not a homogenous group. For example, fathers' schooling ranged from those who had minimal primary schooling to higher education. Less than a third, however, had any qualifications. There was a *considerable* difference between the mothers' and fathers' education, almost half the mothers had never been to school and those that had were generally less educated than the fathers.

The socio-economic status of the families was also varied. The majority of fathers were working whilst most mothers had not been in any employment. Almost all the parents owned their own house. One family jointly owned their house with a brother and three families lived in their parents' or grandparents' house.

When we think of a community like this we must not fall into the trap of thinking that all members are the same.

The children

All the children in the study were born in Britain in the city where they now lived. The community was in an inner city area. In six of the families some older siblings had been born in Pakistan.

Twenty-four of the children had older siblings, 20 had two or more and 12 had four or more. In the largest families, six had five children, three had six children, one had seven and two had eight children.

Twenty-four of the survey children had older siblings at school and five had older siblings who had left school. (Having older brothers or sisters who have been through the British education system is a potentially significant factor when looking at literacy levels in the family.)

Other significant caregivers and their occupations

Six children were reported as having no other caregivers than their parents. Of the remaining 24 children, grandparents, aunts, older sisters, friends or neighbours looked after the children sometimes when parents were not around. A neighbour who was a nursery nurse in the project school sometimes cared for one of the children. Often one of the older teenage girls in the family became one of the main caregivers for the younger children. Apart from the nursery nurse, only one of the other caregivers was reported as having an occupation and she was a shopkeeper.

Preschool experience outside the home

Only six children had some kind of preschool experience outside the home before starting nursery and two of those involved only an occasional visit to a playgroup or crèche.

Children's health

Eight of the 30 children had some kind of diagnosed health problem including eczema, asthma, underweight, eyesight, frequent throat infections or a kidney problem.

Languages spoken at home

Just over half of the children were learning three languages and some were exposed to four. Eight of the mothers spoke fluent English but most spoke little or no English.

The majority of parents felt all languages were equally important. As one mother of a three-year-old boy said:

'All are important - English for here, Urdu for letters to Pakistan, Punjabi for the family to speak altogether and Arabic for the Qu'ran.'

There was obviously a rich multilingual environment in the children's homes.

Emergent Literacy

Sharing books and stories

Almost all the children (27 out of 30) shared books or stories with family members as well as magazines, catalogues or newspapers. Only three were reported as not being read to at all and these were all two-year-olds. Of the 27 children who were involved with books and stories, 13 were read to by their mothers. Twelve of the mothers were unable to read in any language. In these families seven were read to by siblings, three by fathers, siblings or other relatives and two were not read to at all.

The families made the following comments about the child's interest in books and stories.

Gujerati and English speaking mother of two-year-old Romana:

'I read in English. I can't read Gujerati. My husband can but we don't have books in Gujerati.'

The family of three-year-old Irshid encouraged her to look at books even though she may not have chosen to look at a book on her own. Her mother said:

'(We have) no books at home. We bring them home from nursery, or (the) older children bring them. She wants to play but (she's) not interested in books. If someone sits with her she'll look at a book with them but not on her own. (It) could be me, her father or (the) older children.'

Mother of three-year-old Fozia:

'She likes books and stories and asks questions when big sister reading to her. She talks about the pictures. We've children's books. Her two older sisters read to her. We read in English. She makes sure that what is read makes sense with the picture.'

Mother of three-year-old Ramzan:

'Me and my husband (look at books with him)'

Ramzan's mother produced three Ladybird books and looked at one with Ramzan. She was very proud that he labelled all the pictures in English, (for example, 'table', 'chair', 'sink', 'towel'). She was using this book to teach him English words pointing to the print. (It is possible she was also learning alongside her son.)

The teenage sister of Shazad told how he was read to and she had very high expectations!

'Romana (another sister - reads to him) usually at night before he goes to bed and in the day. He's lots of books and carries them around. He thinks he's reading. I read a paper in English, then stop and explain in Urdu and ask him questions.'

Parents of four-year-old Sonia:

Mother: - '(She has) number (books), ABC (and) stories. Mother, father, sisters all read to her.

Father: - 'Her grandparents look at books with her but can't read. They're not educated. Her aunt (and) my sister (read to her) at her Grandparents' house. My parents speak Punjabi to her.'

Mother of four-year-old Sarraiya:

'She likes me to read to her ... Daddy's a taxi driver, he's too busy. Her older brother reads quite a bit to her. She goes to Irshid's (her aunt). She reads to them all. She's most like a teacher.'

Mother of four-year-old Zain:

'He wants me to read the same story over and over again. "Goldilocks and the Three bears" - (that's his) favourite. Anyone reads to him, Auntie, father, whoever is available.'

In a few families where only young brothers or sisters read, the level of interaction may have been limited, but nevertheless siblings were providing a model of literacy and the preschool children were experiencing book handling skills.

Ages when books were first used

Over half the children had been introduced to books and stories by the time they were two years of age (nine girls and nine boys) and some from the age of one. All except the three who had not been read to at all shared books and stories at home by the time they were four.

Some were read to in Punjabi (translated by the family from English), some in English and two children were read stories in Punjabi followed by a translation in English.

Although a large percentage of the survey children shared books at an early age, wide variations were reported in the quality of the interaction and the frequency with which the books were shared as shown in the following sections.

Frequency with which books were shared and kind of interaction

Most of the children shared books on a regular basis with someone in the family. Most of them (23) were said to look at books at least three times a week and twelve looked at them on a daily basis. There was no significant difference in the frequency

of book-sharing activities between girls and boys or in the age of the child. Three children shared books only once a week and one less frequently.

The level of interaction and the child's concentration are important factors in later reading achievement. Families were asked whether the child initiated interaction and whether the reader asked questions during book-sharing time

Twenty-four of the children were said to initiate interaction during book-sharing sessions. By far the most frequent interaction was through questions, but labelling, repetition, discussion and non-verbal interaction (e.g. pointing) were also mentioned. Families made the following comments concerning the child's interaction during book-sharing:

Mother of two-year-old Nazia:

'When I read to her "Little Teddy Bear and Big Teddy Bear" ("Can't You Sleep Little Bear?"), she used to repeat after me. I translate the story into Punjabi'

Two-year-old Ahmed's mother told how he skillfully used two languages when interacting during book-sharing: ...

'He likes to lift the flap on the "Spot" books. He talks about the pictures in Punjabi. He repeats the story in English.'

Two-year-old Saboor's Aunt:

'He repeats what we say and points to the pictures.'

Three-year-old Fozia's mother pointed out Fozia's use of questions in two languages:

'She asks questions in Punjabi or simple questions like "What's this?" in English.'

Four-year-old Iffat's father felt she was too young for stories but her mother and teenage sister thought otherwise. Her father said:

'It's a bit of a young age for a story.'

but her mother said:

'Her big sister looks at books (with her) once a day. They (Iffat and her three-year-old sister) come and look and ask questions.'

Eight children frequently used more than one language, some code switching (switching languages) mid-sentence while they were talking about stories. Several children were beginning to use more than one of their home languages by the time they were three, when talking about pictures and stories.

Most of the family members who read to the children (21) asked questions when looking at books and four said they used more than one language during time set aside for book-sharing.

A teenage older sister who was the main carer of a two-old-boy said:

'Yes, (I do ask questions) but he always wants me to tell him first and then says "It's my turn now. You ask me.'

Another teenage sister explained how she involved her three-year-old brother, Shazad in high order reading skills in two languages:

'I read a page in English then stop and explain in Urdu and ask him questions. He also knows A B C - he can recite it but doesn't know it all. He's learning the Urdu alphabet at the same time.

Children were read to at various times of day. Some were read to at bedtime but several parents felt children were too tired to listen at bedtime.

Access to books

Of the 30, more than half the children owned books themselves, (most owned between 4 and 12), a few (5) borrowed books from the local library and some (10) from the nursery library. Others had books passed on to them.

The education of one 19-year-old sister, the oldest of six children in the family influenced the book ownership of Shazad, her three-year-old brother. She had this to say:

'It's only since we've had him (Shazad) that we've had books. I did Sociology and realised he needs these things when he's young.'

Others however, were unaware of the benefits to children from regular access to a variety of quality books. It was possible to look at the books used by the children at home during the interview. Most parents were eager to show them, or an older

sibling would produce a book and read to the child, partly to occupy the child while the parent was being interviewed but this provided a good opportunity to inspect the books. Of those children who did have access to picture and storybooks, some owned by the children were of poor quality or too advanced. A few of the children had only alphabet, number or colouring books that offer limited opportunities for interaction but almost all the families were presenting *some* opportunities for the children and were eager to learn more about their child's emergent literacy.

Ownership of books does not in itself ensure that children have regular access to them as the following scenario shows. The mother of a four-year-old boy explained in Punjabi to the bilingual nursery nurse during interview:

'He has some books upstairs but he's not allowed to look at them because he might tear them.'

This child, however, had access to books through the nursery library. While his mother was being interviewed this boy was sharing a nursery library book with his older sister who was reading to him in English.

Family members in half the families borrowed from either the mobile library or the local library. Two parents borrowed books in Urdu. Families would therefore be providing a *model* of reading for the younger children and in some cases in more than one language.

Books were bought for 22 of the children in the survey. These were purchased by parents, sisters, brothers or aunts from a variety of outlets - local shops, supermarkets, jumble sales, W. H. Smith and the Early Learning Centre. Some children received books as a birthday present while others received books on a more regular basis. There was no significant difference in age or gender. Parents however did vary in their awareness of the quality of books for children as the following comments show from parents of four-year-old girls Hansa and Shaiba.

Hansa's mother said

'Yes, (I buy books) when we go out shopping and if she sees a book and I think it's appropriate I'll buy it or she'll get it for a present.'

Shaiba's mother was eager to help her child but not aware of the importance of quality books and teaching children to respect books. She said:

'Yes, me and my sister (buy books). Birthday. The mobile library usually sells books. There might be a few pages torn out. They're in English. Sometimes buy from town - very rare. Usually from mobile library They can scribble on them and do what they want. I don't mind.'

The question could also be raised why the mobile library was selling damaged children's books!

The mother of two-year-old Sameera was unaware of the western tradition of sharing books with children before they can read. There were no children's books in this house but this could be due to traditional culture differences of teaching children the alphabet first and she was indeed teaching Sameera the Urdu alphabet. She explained why books were not bought for Sameera:

'No, (I don't buy books) because (she) can't read.'

When asked who chooses children's books, sixteen families said either parent, sisters, brothers or aunts. In seven families children were given a choice but with adult guidance. In only three families did children choose their own without help. Sometimes, parents placed emphasis on alphabet and number books whereas children preferred storybooks, for example, 'Thomas the Tank Engine'.

Favourite books

Weinberger (1996) found that an indication of later reading success is whether children have a favourite book. Interviewees reported that many children did have a favourite book. These included traditional children's books such as 'The Gingerbread Man', 'Spot' books, 'Postman Pat', 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears', 'Each Peach, Pear, Plum' and 'Peter Pan' as well as favourite family books. Two parents said their child's favourite book was an alphabet book, Others said a certain category of book such as picture books, 'pop-up' books or 'lift the flap' books. Ten children were reported as not having a favourite book.

Looking at books and pretending to read

Children having sufficient interest in books to look at them on their own and pretending to read are important factors in literacy development. Nearly all the children who had access to books looked at them on their own and pretended to read

as the following comments show. One four-year-old girl, Hansa could read several words. Her mother had this to say:

'Yes, (she pretends) all the time. She's seen me read. She recognises the alphabet I should think, and she knows family words - mummy, daddy, her name and her brother's name. She knows cat, dog, baby, tree, grass. I taught her A B C but it's hard to put letters together to read A B C. She doesn't understand where sounds come from so I've gone along with /a/, /b/, /k/ (short sounds) afterwards.'

Other parents made the following comments.

'Yes, she pretends to read. (She can) just do the alphabet in Urdu.'

Mother of two-year-old girl, Sameera

'He points to the pictures, turns the pages and pretends he's reading.'

Mother of two-year-old boy, Amur

'Yes, she pretends to read in Punjabi. Brothers and sisters read and she copies them.'

Mother of three-year-old girl, Shazia

'Yes. He sees Daddy reading and writing in English. He's learning English at Mount Pleasant (the local adult education centre).'

Mother of three-year-old boy, Asad

'He pretends to read story of "Funny Bones" with sounds of story - in mixture of English and Punjabi.'

Mother of four-year-old boy, Ayaz:

Clearly, children were involved in reading practices in the home and some cases in more than one language.

All except one of the children were reported as seeing other members of the family providing a *model* by reading for a variety of purposes and in as many as three languages. Children were said to see parents reading from Mosque books in Arabic and particularly so as a few families (with their permission) were interviewed during Ramadan, a time of fasting. (This was convenient for some parents as they were not preparing family meals until after sunset.) Parents or grandparents were said to be seen reading newspapers in English or Urdu. Children were reported as seeing parents or other members of their family reading magazines, catalogues and library books in Urdu and English. Children were also reported as seeing siblings reading

library books, school books, or books to enable them to complete their homework such as an encyclopaedia or a dictionary. Other reading materials read by siblings in the presence of the children were magazines, comics or the Qu'ran.

Families made the following comments about the family reading activities observed by the children.

Mother of two-year-old girl, Romana:

'I'm always reading. Her Dad reads newspapers, that's all.'

Mother of two-year-old girl, Nadia:

'(She sees) me and her Daddy (reading). She is surprised these days with the prayers going on all day (during Ramadan) - five times a day.'

Mother of two-year-old girl Saira:

'Naseeb (Saira's brother) reads his school book. When I read the Qu'ran she wants to read it. She sees Daddy reading the newspaper in Urdu.'

Mother of two-year old girl, Sameera:

'She sees us reading newspapers and books in Urdu, English and Arabic. When I'm reading the newspaper in Urdu she'll ask, "What does that say?'

(Although Sameera did not have access to children's books she was very aware that print represented the spoken word and conveyed meaning.)

The mother of two-year-old Ahmed explained how he saw his father, brother and sisters reading and tried to read himself:

'(He sees his) sisters (and) brother (reading and) dad reading Urdu newspapers. He tries to read the newspaper when it comes through the door, or magazines.'

Two-year old Nazaqat's sister told how he reacted when he saw his older siblings reading:

'(He sees) me (reading a) magazine or (he sees his) brothers when doing their homework in English. That's what gets him going so he brings his book out.'

The teenage sister of three-year-old Nigat said:

'(She sees me using a) dictionary, encyclopaedia, (and reading) storybooks and novels. (She sees) dad reading a newspaper.'

Family members of three-year-old boys had this to say:

'He sees Grandad reading the newspaper in Urdu and English.' Mohsen

'(His) father (is) learning English at classes. He reads newspaper, his sister school books and I (mother) read the Qu'ran and letters.' Asad

Environmental print

Most of the three-and four-year-olds and some of the two-year-olds were said to pretend to read environmental print at some time in the home. This may have been messages, letters, shopping lists, birthday or Christmas cards in English and wedding invitations or cards in Urdu.

Very few children recognised or had their attention drawn to environmental print outside the home but many were aware of pictures on advertisements and would recognise products from the pictures. Hansa's mother had this to say:

'She could recognise things before she could read. I remember I was walking past Netto, you know Netto - it's really boldish yellow and black writing and she saw it and she says "Mum, there's a Netto van", and she was only about two or something like that and I thought she'd read it.'

Children's involvement in the family's reading and writing

Families varied greatly in the extent to which they involved the children in their own reading and writing. Most of the three-year-old children were involved in some way and parents or other members of the family *recognised* and usually valued their contributions. Some children asked for paper when older siblings were doing their homework and many across the age range joined in when cards were being written. The teenage sister of Shazad, a three-year-old boy, told how he wrote a letter and drew a picture when his parents went to Pakistan. The mother of Sarraiya, a four-year-old girl, however, had this to say:

... 'She's too young for that - eventually, yes (I'll let her join in).'

Sarraiya's mother was not on her own. Nine other parents did not involve their young children in their reading and writing.

Children's exposure to different scripts

Families also varied in the number of different scripts their children saw around the home. In seven families, parents said their children only saw English. Although copies of the Qu'ran were in most homes some families felt it was too precious to be shown to young children. If the parents had been to school in this country, some could not read Urdu so English was the script used in the home. Other children (13) saw as many as three different scripts in the home, English, Urdu and Arabic and one four-year-old boy was beginning to know the difference:

'He can tell English. He gets Urdu and Arabic mixed up. He just knows English and Urdu. He knows the Holy Qu'ran is Arabic.'

In other families children were exposed to English and Arabic or English and Urdu.

Writing and drawing

All the children from two to four years were provided with mark-making materials - either pens, pencils, felt tips, crayons or water colours - and with paper, writing books, blackboards or a magic slate on which to draw or write. More than half the children (19) had these materials bought specially for them, others used what was in the house. All the children used these materials frequently, 15 every day and others from once to a few times a week.

Bearing in mind that shapes and letters emerge from children's scribble, parents were asked whether they had observed circular or up and down marks. All but seven had observed this; some had not taken particular notice.

Parents or family members reported that 25 of the children claimed they were writing with such comments as 'This is Rosanna' as she showed her attempt at her name, or 'I'm writing'. Four children would say they were writing their name when they were making their marks on paper.

Several parents observed how their child took their emergent writing into their role play with comments such as:

‘Sometimes he pretends he's a policeman and he writes letters and folds them.’
(Four-year-old boy, Moneeb)

‘I've written a shopping list.’
(Four-year-old girl, Hansa)

Sameera's mother was teaching her the Urdu alphabet. Two-year-old Sameera would pretend to write it on her own with distinctive marks representing the Urdu script.

Children's mark-making

Half the children had begun to make letter-like marks or strings of letters. One child wrote 'Zes, the first three letters of his name, another wrote 'A' which was the first letter of his name, and four-year-old Hansa could copy her name. Other children were reported as writing letters randomly. One three-year-old boy, Asad, did not miss any opportunity and was not defeated by the lack of immediate access to pencil and paper. He wrote on the windows 'when they're misty'.

Models for writing

Half the children asked an adult or older brother or sister to act as scribe or to draw pictures for them. All the children had family members who would write with them, many were older siblings, but mothers, fathers or aunts would join in too. In just over half the families, children were involved when family members were writing themselves. This could be writing birthday or Eid cards, letters or when older children were writing or doing their homework. In most families, (27 out of 30) someone other than the child would initiate the child's drawing or writing and all the children saw other family members writing for a purpose.

Pretending to read written messages

Families were asked whether messages were written at home that their child might see and pretend to read. Twenty-three families said that the child would see messages being written at home such as shopping lists, cards, letters, wedding

invitations or a parent writing in a homework diary. Messages would be in English or Urdu in some families or in English and Urdu in others. Three families reported that their child would pretend to read a card, letter or wedding invitation. Four more families reported that children would pretend to read written messages that came through the post.

Parents' views on their involvement in their child's literacy development

When parents were asked whether they thought the family could help their child to read and write all but two felt they could. This was supported with comments such as:

'Definitely'

'Yes. It depends how much interest parents take in their children.'

'Parents can help a lot.'

In one family the 19-year-old educated sister was introducing a greater awareness of the importance of family support. She remarked:

'I guess so, but Nazam (one of her younger brothers) only started to read when he was seven. Mum just thought - with a different culture - send them to school and that's it. I don't think Asian parents realise how much they can help. In Pakistan it's a different ball game.'

This may be true of some Asian parents but in the majority of families interviewed in this study, young children were said to be given many early literacy experiences by different members of the family. In cases where mothers were not confident in literacy skills themselves they provided the materials and other family members provided the interaction.

Oracy. Talking and Listening

Storytelling

A child's experience of storytelling was found by Wells (1987) to be a strong indicator of a young child's reading attainment at school entry. Parents said that all children in the survey (except three two-year-olds) were *told* stories. Some were told stories that parents made up while a few were told stories that parents remembered from childhood. Members of the families made the following comments:

Mother of two-year-old girl, Nazia:

'I make up stories. Not about Pakistan because I haven't been but about things that happen to her.'

Mother of four-year-old girl, Hansa:

'Yes, we tell stories. Me or Daddy. Daddy would tell them in Urdu.'

Father of four-year-old girl, Sonia:

'Grandma tells her stories in Punjabi. I make up stories in both languages (Punjabi and English).'

Mother of four-year-old boy, Ijaz:

'I tell stories in my language (Urdu) without a book. Stories we learnt when we were young. They like listening to true stories - Uncle stories and grandma stories - some of them are funny.'

Some children had stories made up about their everyday experiences, others talked frequently with members of the family about everyday happenings.

Mother of three-year-old girl, Fozia:

'(We) talk about things that happen everyday. By me in Punjabi and brothers and sisters in English.'

Children were taking part in both contextualised and decontextualised talk. More than half the children heard stories about Pakistan and the family out there, or of their parent's childhood experiences. Some of the tales were supported by photographs or a video. Parents were eager to share their culture and experiences in Pakistan with their children as the following comments illustrate:

Mother of two-year-old boy, Amur:

'I talk (to him) about Pakistan and my parents who live there.'

Mother of three-year-old girl, Irshid:

'(We) tell her about life in Pakistan in Punjabi. We made a video about our house in Pakistan and she enjoys looking and talking about that.'

Mother of three-year-old girl, Shazia:

'I was about seven when I came from Pakistan. I can't remember much. I talk to her about when I was little and show her photos.'

Mother of four-year-old girl, Iffat:

'We talk about Pakistan. She's been there and they know my parents, aunt and uncle. Every day they want to look at the video of their Uncle's wedding in Pakistan. They want to go back there.'

Mother of four-year-old boy, Moneeb:

'I talk about all the family in Pakistan and our house over there.'

General talk

All the children were spoken to as their mothers went about their daily tasks. Two-year-old Amur's mother talked to him about the baby in Punjabi while she was bathing and feeding him. She also talked about her parents and life in Pakistan. Nigat's mother would speak to her three-year-old daughter while she was making chapatis and samosas while the teenage sister of three-year-old Shazad said:

'Yes, (we talk to him as we work in the house). There's no sexism in this house. He'll do everything we're doing (and) we talk to him in Urdu, English and Punjabi.'

Listening to rhymes

Wells (1987) pointed out the importance of children's understanding of rhyme and rhythm in early literacy development and how the early introduction to rhymes could have a positive influence on later reading achievement. Parents and families were therefore asked whether children heard nursery rhymes at home and if so in which languages.

Only six of the children heard rhymes in Urdu or Punjabi. The father of two-year-old Amur told how his wife said a traditional Holy rhyme in Punjabi to all their children before they go to sleep. Two-year-old Nazia also benefited from the oral tradition of passing on rhymes. Her mother said:

'I know one in Punjabi. I say that as they go to bed. There must be some in Urdu books but you can't get them here. It's just what I've picked up.'

Shazad's older sister had introduced him to books but it was his mother who maintained the oral tradition of teaching her three-year-old son rhymes in Urdu. His sister said:

'Mum knows lots (of rhymes in Urdu). Mum always tells them to him. I can't remember them. Mum knows them from what her mother taught her.'

Twenty-four of the thirty children did not hear any rhymes in Urdu or Punjabi at home. Several parents felt there must be some, but either they had not learnt them when they were younger or they had forgotten them. Some parents were not aware that there were any children's rhymes in their mother tongue.

Although only six children were reported as hearing rhymes in Urdu or Punjabi, 15 children heard rhymes in English at home. Two-year-old Azam's mother could not read English but his sisters could. His nine-year-old sister, Nazia said:

'Me and my sister do (say rhymes) at night. We say "Little Bo-peep" and "Hey Diddle Diddle" from books. I've got rhyme books from the library and learnt them since I can read. Now I say them to Azam and Sarraiya (her four-year-old sister).'

In some cases the children had learnt rhymes in nursery, the parents had learnt them from the children and were then in a position to join in when the children started to sing. Moneeb's mother had purchased a tape of nursery rhymes and had this to say:

'If the tape is on I know them but I can't remember them. Fareen (her six year old daughter) and Moneeb have taught them me in English. "point to the window, point to the door" (from "One little finger, one little finger")'

So, although some parents may not have known the rhymes themselves they provided *opportunities* for their children and *recognised* the value of buying tapes and encouraging their children to sing as well as learning the rhymes themselves.

Sarraiya's mother felt it was more important to sing the songs Sarraiya had learnt in nursery than to sing the songs she herself had learnt as a child. She said:

'Yes (she hears rhymes at home and) she picks them up at school. We've caught her singing "Ring a ring o' roses". When I was a little girl they were different. There are new ones now. We sung "Ring a ring o' roses" (but) "Ik alo, do alo" ("One potato, two potato" in Urdu) is new to me. She sings that. She tells me. I didn't sing any I know - we sing Sarraiya's songs.'

In another family, three-year-old Nigat heard songs and rhymes in English from her Aunt. Her mother had this to say:

'I understand Urdu but I can't speak it. She's not heard any rhymes in Urdu or Punjabi. Auntie Irshid sings "Wheels on the bus" (and) "Walking through the Jungle" (songs sung in nursery). We sing it in the back of the van when we're going somewhere.'

Twenty-one out of the 30 children heard rhymes at home before they were five in either Punjabi, Urdu or English. Nine were reported as not hearing rhymes and these were: two two-year-old boys, three two-year-old girls, three three-year-old girls and one four-year-old girl. In this sample the older children were said to be more likely to hear rhymes than the younger children (this could be partly due to children having first learnt the rhymes in nursery) but the under-fours were more likely to hear rhymes in Urdu or Punjabi.

Children's knowledge of nursery rhymes is reported later under 'Children repeating rhymes'.

Level of child's language

To understand the richness and level of the child's talk, families were asked the level of their child's language in English, Punjabi and Urdu. They were asked whether their child was speaking in single words, short phrases, sentences or holding a fluent conversation in each language. The linguistic level of the children was high for their age.

All but two of the children in the survey were said to be emerging bilinguals although there was variation in which two languages and in which language they spoke most fluently.

Two of the two-year-olds spoke only Punjabi but they were fluent in this, their first language. One two-year-old girl, Sameera, spoke Punjabi and some Urdu. All other children were reported as emerging or competent bilinguals in English and at least one other language. Some children were multilingual.

Assumptions cannot be made about which language is the main language spoken at home. In the homes of two of the girls who were cousins, four-year-old Sarraiya and

three-year-old Shaheen, English was the main language spoken so they were fluent in English but spoke only single words or short phrases in Punjabi. Their mothers had this to say:

Mother of three-year-old Shaheen:

'(She's) holding (a) conversation in English. In Pakistani (Punjabi) single words or a few words together.'

Mother of four-year-old Sarraiya:

'(In) English, she holds a good conversation. She never speaks our language. She understand it all but won't speak it. I always speak in our language to her but she won't speak back to me. I'll say milk is "do" - "do". If Irfan (the younger child) drops his shoe, in Pakistani its "boot", so she says "He's dropped his boot." She mixes them. She won't make a sentence in our language but in English she'll make a sentence.'

It is worth noting that Sarraiya spent a lot of time in the company of her extended family. Two sisters and their brother (Sarraiya's father) lived close to each other and the main language in all three families was English. All three mothers had been born and educated in this country.

Twenty-two children were said to hold fluent conversations in Punjabi. These were evenly spread throughout the age range and gender - four each of two-year-old boys and girls, three each of three-year-old and four-year-old girls and four each of three-year-old and four-year-old boys.

In English, eleven children were said to be at the stage of single words or labelling and again these were spread across the age ranges and gender. Seven were said to be speaking in short phrases, three in sentences and six were holding a fluent conversation. The six said to be holding a fluent conversation in English consisted of one two-year-old girl, one three-year-old girl, three four-year-old girls and one four-year-old boy. The girls outnumbered the boys here but the variations could be due to the differences in the main language spoken in the family and whether the child had older siblings or relatives who spoke English.

The mother of two-year-old Ahmed reported how he was at the stage of code switching. She said:

'(In) Punjabi (he holds) fluent conversations. (In English) short phrases. He mixes Punjabi and English in one sentence.'

Ahmed had spent a lot of time in hospital being treated for his asthma, so in addition to learning English from his older siblings he had also learnt English from the nurses and would act as interpreter in hospital to enable some communication between the nurses and his mother. Some achievement at two years of age!

Four-year-old Hansa's mother told how Hansa was already a fluent multilinguist. She said:

'She speaks fluent conversation in English, Urdu and Punjabi. She can speak properly in conversation. It's just writing and recognising words that she hasn't got to (in Urdu and English).'

Hansa's mother had very high expectations for Hansa, as Hansa had already shown during the interview how she could write her own name, that of her brother, Suhayl and 'mummy' and 'daddy'.

During the interview with the mother of four-year-old Ijaz, his father, a local government officer, returned home from work. At this point he continued with the interview while his wife made a cup of tea. He had very definite views on the teaching and appropriateness of the different languages in his culture. He said:

'Long conversations we have in Urdu. We consciously want to develop a level in our language. We work with a concept in English. He (Ijaz) will come back and say, "What did you say?" If I say it in Urdu he will say "In English. In English." We (husband and wife) hold conversations in our mother tongue (Punjabi).'

He continued later:

'Our mother tongue is Punjabi. Our home language is Urdu. We became Urdu because we want our children to learn that. People we socialise with from our background mostly speak that language. Within religion, different languages are spoken.

If only Punjabi is spoken, communication in Pakistan would be restricted. Urdu is the common denominator in Pakistan and India. Most of the people (in this city) who come to (this) school - their home language is Punjabi.

I made a list when Mohsen (the seven-year-old brother of Ijaz) was small of his shift in sentence structure. In Punjabi there are a lot of English words.

We talk in Urdu and then in English with him if something is new to him - new places - for example, farms, animals, museums. It's not a skill

learning two languages. Children learn two languages instinctively. British people have the concept that it's a skill because they're monolingual and insular on this little island. Children learn from their peer group, parents and teachers. Two languages are very easy if children are in that environment.'

These parents had high aspirations for their children and did not want them to learn Punjabi as they considered it to be unacceptable in their social circle. They did, however, maintain the language in their conversations with each other. The mother was an Adult Education Youth Worker and may have needed the language in her work or they may have needed to maintain the language to communicate with other members of their family and people in the neighbourhood. Whatever the reason there was a different set of rules for the children and the parents.

Two mothers of three-year-old boys were pleased with their child's progress in English.

Ramzan's mother said:

'(He is) fluent in Punjabi. (He speaks) single words in English but he sings songs in English. He learnt them in nursery - "Ring o' ring o' roses", "Walking through the jungle".

Ramzan started to sing the songs with great delight.

The mother of Sadaqat said:

'(In) Punjabi (he holds) fluent conversations. (In English) - single words mostly (but) Shaiba (his older sister) said, "I'm hungry" and Sadaqat repeated it this morning. (He can say) sentences in songs.'

Clarity of speech

Only two families said that the child in the survey did not speak clearly. The mother of four-year-old Shazana simply said that she didn't speak clearly and the teenage sister of three-year-old Shazad said:

'He breaks off. He doesn't pronounce them (words) right. Mum is concerned he doesn't speak fluently - (but) she thinks he's making a lot of progress. We understand what he says.'

Children's talk

All the children except one were said to recall their experiences of home, nursery, or mother and toddler group, or what they had seen on a bus journey or when visiting relatives. Only one child, four-year-old Shazana, was said to be "very quiet - doesn't talk to anybody very much." There was however a lot of domestic disharmony in this family that was picked up by Shazana. She frequently came into nursery very withdrawn and disturbed and was usually very quiet in nursery too.

All except three children were said to vocalise their actions. The mothers of two three-year-old girls gave examples of what their daughters would say:

'I'm ironing (or) I'm brushing.'

'I'm ironing my Mum's jumper.'

and the mother of four-year-old Ayaz said:

'He says "I'm drawing a teddy bear" and he'll kiss them.'

Children telling stories

Families were also asked whether their preschool child told any stories. Eight families reported that their children did tell stories.

None of the two-year-old girls were reported as telling stories. One two-year-old boy, Shabir, was said to make up stories about 'cats and mouse' while another two-year-old boy, Amur, related to characters in a library book left for him as part of a short term preschool literacy project. Amur's mother said (in Punjabi):

'In "Going to Playschool" he points to a boy in the story and says it's him and other people in the story are Zain (the baby), mummy and Asad (his brother). He points to the toy rabbit and says it's been left in the rabbit's hutch.'

Clearly Amur was beginning to identify with the characters in a story adding his own interpretations and meanings.

Only one of the three-year old girls was said to tell stories. Three-year-old Shaheen would tell her four-year-old cousin, Sarraiya, a story that her father had told her the

previous night. None of the three-year-old boys were reported as telling stories but two were said to report on their experiences and happenings during the day.

Two of the four-year old girls and four of the four-year-old boys were said to tell stories. Some from stories in books and some made up their own stories. Their parents made the following comments:

'He tells about the three bears.' (Four-year old boy, Zain)

'Irfan and my daughter tell each other stories. They play together mostly.'
(Four-year-old boy, Irfan)

'He'd make (up) a story and tell stories with sounds and actions.' (Four-year-old boy, Ijaz)

'Yes. He remembers stories from books.' (Four-year-old boy, Moneeb)

Children repeating rhymes

Seventeen children were said to repeat rhymes at home (eleven boys and six girls), mostly in English, although two of the two-year-olds repeated the bedtime rhyme in Punjabi which their mother said to them. Two children (one three-year-old boy and one four-year-old girl) could repeat rhymes in two languages, Urdu and English.

Only four families said children had learnt rhymes at home. Six of the children were said to repeat rhymes at home they had learnt in nursery. Other families did not specify where the rhymes had been learnt.

Three two-year-olds (one boy and two girls) were said to repeat rhymes, one boy and one girl in Punjabi as previously mentioned and one girl could sing 'Wind the bobbin up' in English.

Only one three-year-old girl but all three-year-old boys were said to repeat rhymes. Two of the boys and the girl said them in English, one boy in Urdu, one boy in English and Urdu and one boy in Punjabi. Members of the families made the following comments:

Mohsen's mother said:

'He sings "Ik nikki unglia" ("One Little Finger" in Urdu). He's learnt that in nursery.'

Shazad's teenage sister said:

'Yes (he says rhymes) from TV and from Mum and now a bit from nursery. (He says) "Fly away Peter, Fly away Paul" I taught him that in Urdu.'

Ramzan's mother proudly told which songs he sang in English:

"Ring a ring o' roses", "Walking through the jungle", "Jingle Bells", (and) "Wind the bobbin up".'

Asad's mother told how he repeated rhymes in Punjabi.

Of the four-year-olds, all the boys and three girls were said to repeat rhymes. One girl was said to sing them in English and Urdu. Asad's mother did not understand English well. She had this to say:

'Yes (he repeats rhymes) in English. He sings songs to me but I don't understand them.'

It was rather sad hearing this dilemma created by the cultural generation gap.

Zain was said to repeat "Humpty Dumpty" and two other boys, Irfan and Moneeb were said to repeat songs they had learnt in nursery.

Watching television and videos

Children can learn stories, rhymes, increase their language skills and knowledge and practice listening skills from watching selected TV programmes or videos. Marsh and Millard (2000) showed that acknowledging children's interest in popular culture on television can be successful stimuli for children's reading and writing. Families were asked, therefore, whether their child watched TV or videos and if so, which programmes or videos, in which languages and for how long each day.

All children except one were said to watch TV or videos. Only one two-year-old girl was reported as not watching any TV or videos. Two other two-year-old girls were said to watch for a 'few minutes' or not to "watch any regularly'. One three-year-old

boy, Sadaqat, was said to watch a few minutes a day and viewing was selected by his parents. A four-year-old girl was said to be 'usually playing - (she'll) watch for a short time.' All of the other 25 children (11 girls and 14 boys) watched between ten minutes and over four hours a day.

Videos and films included videos of weddings or birthdays in Punjabi, and films in English, Urdu or Gujarati. Many children liked to watch cartoons and children's programmes such as "Tots TV", 'Playschool', 'Sesame Street', 'Superman' and 'Batman'. Other programmes watched included 'Wildlife on 4', 'Mr. Bean', 'James Bond', 'The Bill', (because he likes policemen), 'Neighbours' and 'Home and Away'.

Television and videos were popular forms of entertainment in most families and although some of the children may have spent an excessive amount of time viewing each day most were exposed to at least two languages during their viewing time.

Access to computers

Only ten out of the thirty children (five boys and five girls) had access to a computer. Nine families owned one but the brothers of one of the two-year old girls would not allow her to use it. Two children had access to a relative's computer. None of the children were reported as receiving instruction on the use of the computer. Children across the age range were reported as using a computer: two two-year-old boys, two three-year-old boys, one four-year-old boy, three three-year-old girls and two four-year-old girls.

Three of the girls were only allowed to use the computer when their older brothers had finished using it. The following comments were made by some family members:

Mother of two-year-old girl, Saira:

'We have one but the boys won't let her use it.'

Mother of two-year-old boy, Shabir:

'(He plays) with (a) relative's - he just presses any keys.'

Father of two-year-old boy, Amur:

'(He) plays with his brother - "Commando". He sees the print but he can't read it.'

Teenage sister of three-year-old girl, Nigat:

'She tries to play on the computer. Both the games and pressing the keys for the letters. When my brother's finished with a game he lets her mess about on it.'

Nigat's use of the computer is obviously not taken seriously by the family and there is no attempt to show her how to use it. She is, however, allowed 'to mess about on it' but only when her brother has finished with it.

Mother of three-year-old girl, Shaheen:

'Bobby (her older brother) has a Sega Mega-Drive game and she'll play with that.'

Older sister of three-year-old Shazad:

'(We have a) Sega. He likes pressing the buttons and watching the games. I don't like them, they're too violent.'

Father of four-year old girl, Sonia:

'Yes (we have a computer). She won't put it away. I have to say come and get your dinner now. She press all the letters and numbers.'

Although ten children had access to a computer and may have been able to familiarise themselves with it to some extent, none of the families seemed to think it was necessary to show the children how to use it apart from the playing of games.

Influence of religious practices

I was interested to find out whether attendance at Mosque school had any influence on the children's literacy learning. Only one child, Sonia, attended. Another child, Hansa, had been once or twice but her mother decided she was too young. Many other parents said their child was too young at present. Some said their child would go when he/she was older.

The mother of Ijaz reported her husband's view of Mosque school:

'No, (Ijaz doesn't go to Mosque school.) Mohsen (seven-year-old brother) goes next door to pray, not to the Mosque. My husband feels they only teach them parrot fashion - they don't understand what they're learning.'

Other parents reported how their children joined in when hearing prayers or when a tutor came to teach Arabic to the family. Some reported how their child pretended to read Arabic.

Sister of two-year-old Nazaqat:

'He sees us reading Arabic. A woman comes to teach us. As he hears us he'll repeat it.'

Mother of three-year-old Irshid:

'She sees me reading the Qu'ran and listens and she copies me when I pray.'

Mother of three-year-old Asad:

'At 5 o'clock I learn my daughter and niece the Qu'ran and he says 'I'm reading' but he can't.'

Father of four-year-old Sonia:

'She goes to the Mosque. Children come here to read Arabic and she joins in.'

Any other comments?

None of the parents had anything else to add about their child's literacy learning except for Mohsen's mother who said, "You've been helpful coming to the house today."

Where parents were born

All except seven parents were born in Pakistan. Of those seven, four mothers were born in Sheffield, one father in Birmingham (married to one of the mothers born in Sheffield) and Romana's Gujarati-speaking parents were born in India although her mother was only nine months when she came to Britain.

Most of the parents were born in the villages in the rural areas of Pakistan - in Mirpur, Khatli (near Mirpur), Gujerumwali, Lehri, Namando, Jaila or Jukswari. Ten parents came from Rawalpindhi and ten parents from Azad Kashmir. One mother came from a city, Lahore, and other parents came from the small towns of Jhelum and Kahuta (near Rawalpindhi). Two mothers did not know in which village or town their husbands were born.

Table 6.1
Where parents were born

	Pakistan	India	Britain
Mothers	25	1	4
Fathers	28	1	1

Where grandparents lived

To understand whether children had grandparents in this country who may offer support to families, parents were asked where the grandparents lived.

Table 6.2
Where grandparents lived.
Number of children with grandparents living in Britain or Pakistan

Living in same city	Living in Britain	Living in Pakistan
14	23	23

Twenty-three children had at least one grandparent in Britain and 14 families said grandparents lived in the same city, in some cases with the family. More grandparents may have lived in the same city but some interviewees were not specific about where in Britain the grandparents were living.

Twenty-three children had either maternal or paternal grandparents living in Pakistan. Seven families did not have any grandparents in Britain, both sets of grandparents were in Pakistan. Some mothers said how they missed their parents and wished they could see them more often.

Parents' memories of their own literacy experiences

When parents were asked about any memories of their own literacy experiences, twelve parents said they did not have any memories. Three parents said they could remember going to the Mosque to learn Arabic. Three parents who were born in Britain and educated here made the following comments.

The mother of Romana remembered how strict her father was. She said:

'I can remember at home. I couldn't write a letter 'b'. My dad hit me for that and I hid behind the sofa.'

Sadaqat's mother recalled the lack of books in the home and how she used the local library:

'I didn't go to nursery. I went straight to school. I can't remember any books at home. I went to the local library a lot. I lived close by.'

Amur's father recalled learning Arabic and Urdu:

'I can remember going to the Mosque to learn Arabic. My brother used to teach us Urdu.'

Other parents provided an interesting insight for the interviewer into life and literacy experiences in Pakistan both then and now.

Sameera's mother said:

'When I was at home (in Pakistan) I started to write on a slate. I had to write properly. You are not allowed to scribble in Pakistan or make marks. It is still the same. When (Sameera) goes to bed I teach her some Arabic words to pray and ABC in Urdu and 1 2 3 in Urdu. Most children are taught this by heart.'

Sameera's mother was using her own childhood experiences as a basis for teaching her daughter.

Asad's mother recalled struggling to learn Urdu:

'I found it hard. I used a slate and chalk to write the alphabet in Urdu'

Ahmed's mother said:

'(I) didn't learn to read English or Urdu (but I) read the Qu'ran. I didn't go to school. Girls weren't sent to school in the villages. They are now. They're opening new schools in the villages.'

Irshid's mother was proud of her achievement in learning Urdu:

'Learning to read Urdu was hard. I was in the top group.'

Fozia's mother left school in Pakistan at age 16 after being in six classes. She said:

'(It's) easier to talk to teachers here and you have to learn even if you don't understand. (There's) a lot of competition between families. In Pakistan they go to school in the morning, dinner at home, tutor in the afternoon, if you can afford it. They learn the Qu'ran after tea.'

Sonia's father went to school in Pakistan until he was eleven. He recalled:

'Very limited things were available. There were no other children in the house to read with. My parents were not educated. I came back from school and did the chores.'

Nigat's mother did not go to school: she said:

'I can remember my brothers doing their homework. I had to do the washing and the cooking but I didn't mind. Still, in the village in Pakistan they have boys' and girls' schools. In the city they have mixed schools. Electricity is only just coming to the village. We have a generator (now).'

Having heard these experiences it is easy to understand how some parents may have difficulty understanding and valuing 'emergent literacy', and may use more formal methods of teaching their young children at home. It is also understandable how some parents may find it difficult to take up home-school collaboration without a specific personal invitation. This, however, must not be confused with lack of interest by parents or a misconception of a lack of home literacy activities.

Parents aspirations for their children

Parents' aspirations for their children's education were high. They thought children should be better educated than their parents and in many cases - a university education.

Parents made the following comments concerning their aspirations for their children's education and in some cases, for their occupation:

The teenage sister of two-year-old Nazaqat reported her older parents' views:

'They'd like him to follow through education. Not for me as a girl - but I'm spoilt because I'm the only girl. (I have a lot of work) but what's work? I'm lucky. There's a lot worse than me.'

Most families, however thought education was important for girls too. The young mother of two-year-old Nazia was quite adamant about her hopes for her children, regretting her own missed opportunities:

'I want them (both girls) to achieve what I didn't. I want them to go to university. I left school to look after the family. I would have loved to be a doctor.'

Three-year-old Shaheen's mother also regretted her missed opportunities. She had this to say:

'I hope they get more education than I did (three GCSE's). When I left (school) I had to go straight into work for my father. I want to give my children the part of life I didn't get. That's what my husband wants as well. (He went to university in Lahore.) We wouldn't marry them off straight away. They've got a life ahead of them. I can't say "Wait and see". You've got to look ahead. We treat them both the same even though she's a girl and he's a boy.'

The father of two-year-old Amur said:

'I'd like all my children to go to a high level and my daughter. She's the cleverest of the lot. Every one of them to degree level if possible.'

The mother of two-year-old Shabir had high aspirations, but reservations too:

'(I want) a good education for all my children but it depends on the child as well.'

Three-year-old Fozia's family had this to say:

Teenage sister: 'Father has high expectations. He wants us to continue to study. He'll let us go to University if we work hard, but if we mess about he won't let us.'

Mother: 'A good education for girls and boys.'

Three-year-old Nigat's mother said:

'For girls and boys - teaching or a doctor. My brother is a doctor and my Uncle is a doctor in Pakistan.'

Sister of three-year-old-boy, Shazad:

'They'd (my parents) go for the top. They've seen I've done it and my brothers. They want us all to go to university. Some families want their son or daughter to follow in their own professions.'

Father of four-year-old boy, Ijaz:

'They should go to degree level. They can then choose their own profession.'

Mother of four-year-old boy, Ayaz:

'I'd like them to go to college, but it depends on the children and how far they can go, how much they want to learn and if they want to go.'

Mother of four-year-old boy, Moneeb:

'It would make me and my husband happy if they go to university because we didn't have any education.'

Home-school links

There was a very positive attitude to collaboration with school to promote young children's literacy development.

Five mothers said they preferred home visits due to family circumstances or ill health, three parents preferred meetings in school and 15 parents said they would like both home visits and school meetings. Of the remaining seven families, two did not give a clear answer, two were unsure and three said they would not like to be involved.

They said:

'You are the professionals, you know best'

'No time. It's hard work with young children.'

'They (parents) might be interfering with the teacher's work. Other parents might feel you're not concentrating on their child as much.'

These latter comments bear out the traditional views of education in Pakistan where parents were not expected to make home-school links.

The majority of families, however, (23) said they would like some form of home-school collaboration to enhance their young children's literacy development, with most parents (15) favouring this taking place in the home and in school. If only one kind of collaboration were possible, most parents (20) preferred home visits compared with 18 in school.

Summary of findings of family literacy survey

All children in the survey were living in a rich print and linguistic environment. The ORIM framework offered a basis for determining the *opportunities, recognition, interaction* and *models* provided by the families in the home environment. The following sections provide a summary under each of these headings.

Opportunities

Twenty-seven of the thirty children were said to be given opportunities to share books and stories at home. Three two-year-olds were said not to have this opportunity. More than half the children owned between four and 12 books. Twenty-two families reported that they bought books for the children. Some of the children's books used in the home were borrowed from either the nursery, school or local library, others had been passed on.

Children were in a rich linguistic environment and many were said to be given opportunities to hear stories in Punjabi, Urdu or English. Over half the children were reported as having been introduced to books and stories in the home by the time they were two years of age. Most were said to be read to regularly (12 on a daily basis) with no significant difference in frequency between boys and girls and no significant difference according to the age of the child. Older siblings were said to be important

contributors to the young children's literacy experiences - many were said to read to the children in more than one language.

From the reports given families seemed to vary greatly in the extent to which parents provided opportunities for children to be involved in their own reading and writing. Most three-year-olds were said to be involved and some children asked for paper when older siblings were doing their homework. Many across the age range joined in when cards were being written.

All 30 children were said to have opportunities to use a variety of mark-making materials. More than half were said to have materials bought for them while others used what was in the home. All children were said to use them frequently.

Twenty-one out of 30 children were said to be given the opportunity to hear rhymes at home in either Punjabi, Urdu or English. The older children were said to be more likely to hear rhymes than the younger children (possibly due to the older children having learnt rhymes in nursery), but the under fours in this sample were more likely to hear rhymes in Punjabi or Urdu.

Twenty-two children were said to speak fluently and hold conversations in Punjabi which suggests there were many opportunities for children to speak in the home environment. Opportunities to hear and speak English were also present in all the families. Eleven children across the age range were said to be either using single words or labelling in English, seven were said to be speaking in short phrases, three in sentences and six holding a fluent conversation. Variations could be due not only to the child's development, but to the differences in the main language spoken at home and to what extent family members conversed in English. One four-year-old was already a fluent linguist in three languages.

Hearing prayers and readings from the Holy Qu'ran in the home gave children opportunities to become familiar with and in some cases, repeat, readings and prayers in Arabic, an important aspect of the Muslim religion.

Recognition

There was a wide variation in the recognition of the need for quality story and picture books for young children. Most parents recognised the need for children to have

access to books and stories but three families did not. One family did not see the importance of children's books being respected and kept in good condition and would purchase books from the local library with pages missing. The mother felt it would not matter then if the child scribbled in it.

Some parents, building on their own experiences and practices in Pakistan and the Mosque school, thought children should learn to recognise and write the alphabet in English or Urdu (or both) before they learnt to read. It is maybe from this understanding that a few children owned only alphabet, number or colouring books or no books at all.

Although most of the three-and four-year-olds were said to pretend to read environmental print in the home, very few families recognised the opportunities of pointing out environmental print outside the home.

All but seven children were said to have their early mark-makings recognised. Some parents had not taken particular notice or recognised the importance of those early marks. However, parents or family members of 25 children claimed that their children said they were writing and some children were writing their name or some letters in their names.

Most parents recognised their role in their children's early literacy development. All but two felt the family could help the child with reading and writing. It was pointed out, however, by one of the educated teenage siblings that some Pakistani origin parents felt it was the role of the school and not the family to educate the children.

Over half the children were said to be given opportunities to hear rhymes at home. Only six children were said to hear rhymes in Urdu or Punjabi and these were usually Holy rhymes said at bedtime, but 15 children were said to hear rhymes at home in English. Although parents did not always know the rhymes they recognised the value of buying tapes or encouraging their children to sing and in some cases learning the rhymes themselves.

Most families recognised the importance of children learning all four languages - English to speak in this country and for education, Urdu for writing and speaking to relations here and in Pakistan, Punjabi to speak with the family, (especially grandparents or family in Pakistan who may not speak English) and Arabic to take part in the Muslim religion.

Interaction

Most children experienced interaction during book-sharing sessions. Twenty-four out of 30 children were said to initiate interaction. The most frequent interaction was through questions but labelling, repetition, discussion and non-verbal interaction (pointing) were also used. Family members in 21 of the families were also said to initiate interaction by asking questions when reading stories or sharing books. Four families said they used more than one language with the child during time set aside for looking at books.

Many families were said to involve their children in their own writing activities and many children across the age range were reported as joining in when cards or letters were written.

All except three two-year-olds were *told* stories and a strong verbal interaction was reported with parents either telling traditional stories, stories they had made up or telling their own experiences in Pakistan. Family members claimed that they encouraged children to talk about their everyday experiences of home, nursery or toddler group.

Parents and other family members were said to provide opportunities for their children to sing rhymes. Fifteen children heard rhymes in English at home and some parents interacted by learning the rhymes and joining in. Twenty-one out of 30 children heard rhymes at home in Punjabi, Urdu or English before they were five years of age.

The children's level of language in Punjabi was said to be good across the age range. Twenty-two were said to hold fluent conversations in Punjabi. Such command of language could only have initially developed through opportunities to talk and interact with the family. Children had the opportunity to hear and speak English too and as 27 children were said to speak some English, interaction must be present.

Model

In all 30 families, children were reported as seeing some and in some cases most, family members providing a model of reading books, magazines, comics, catalogues,

newspapers, letters, cards or shopping lists. In over half the families, parents or other members of the family were reported as providing a model of borrowing books from the local library. Proof that families provided such models would seem to be born out by the number of children who were said to pretend to read. Nearly all children who had access to books looked at them on their own and pretended to read. Many children saw family members reading for religious reasons and joined in or pretended to read during family prayers.

Most three-year olds were said to be involved in family reading and writing activities with parents or other family members providing a model. Again there was a wide variation between families. Children across the age range joined in when cards were being written, but the mother of Sarraiya, a four-year-old girl, thought she was much too young to be involved in such activities as writing cards. She did however, provide a model by letting her child watch. Half the children were said to ask an adult or older sibling to act as scribe or draw pictures. All children had someone in the family who was said to act as a model for their own writing.

Family members provided a model for language in as many as four languages. In a few families only English was spoken regularly although children would also hear Punjabi and Arabic.

The findings related to the aims of the family literacy survey were as follows.

Aim 1. To understand some of the home literacy experiences of preschool children whose first language is Urdu or Punjabi.

Finding - Extensive preschool literacy activity in the home and children were in a multilinguistic and print rich environment.

Aim 2. To be aware of parents' own literacy experiences.

Finding - Parents own literacy experiences were varied.

Aim 3. To find out about parents' attitudes to education.

Finding - Parents' aspirations for their children's education were high – in most cases, for girls too.

Aim 4. To discover whether parents would be interested in closer home-school links to enhance their preschool child's early literacy development.

Finding - Parents were keen to link with school.

Further discussion of these findings can be found in Chapter 10

Before progressing further with home-school links there is a need for educators to have a greater understanding of the out-of-school literacy learning in these families that influences the literacy learning in the home. The survey also indicated that family literacy learning took place in the Mosque school, community classes and friends', neighbours' or parents' homes (for Urdu or Qu'ranic classes).

Observation of literacy learning in some of those contexts was the next stage of my research so that I could be more aware of the literacies that influenced young children's literacy learning in these families.

OBSERVATIONS OF QU'RANIC CLASSES

An important part of the Islamic religion involves daily reading of the Qu'ran, the Holy book which is written in Arabic. From the age of four to five years children in many Muslim families attend classes to learn Arabic. These take place in either the Mosque, with separate rooms for boys and girls, or in the home of one of the families in the neighbourhood where boys and girls may learn together. Only one child from the family literacy survey attended the Mosque school but almost all families had older children who attended either Mosque school or Qu'ranic classes in a neighbour's home. I was interested to observe these classes so that I could be more aware of the literacies in the children's lives, the styles of teaching and learning and the influence of multi-literacy learning from the community to home.

Arranging access to the Mosque school

Access to two Mosque schools was arranged through the husband of Shaheen Khan, the bilingual nursery nurse. Shaheen's husband spoke to the Mullah in two Mosques and arranged a visit to each during the school holidays. During term-time classes in both Mosques were held after school from 4.30 to 6.30pm but during the school

holidays they were held from 10.00 to 12 noon in the first Mosque and from 5.30 to 7.00 in the second Mosque. I visited the first Mosque with Shaheen and her 18 year-old son and the second Mosque with Shaheen and her husband. Shaheen also arranged for me to visit the home of a friend during classes that she held in her own home. In term-time these were held at 4.00pm after school but at 10.00am during the holidays. Some parents preferred to send their children to a friend's or neighbour's house rather than to the more communal Mosque school where discipline could be very strict.

Shared feelings about the visits

Both Shaheen and I were excited about the visits. Neither of us had observed the classes before. Shaheen did not attend the Mosque as, like many Muslim women, she performed her religious ceremonies at home, and I had only been inside a Mosque once before by invitation from the father of another colleague. I must admit to some apprehension. How would I be received? Although Shaheen's husband had obtained permission for me to take photographs and talk to the children, would that still be acceptable? I remembered to take my scarf and that I would need to remove my shoes, but, nevertheless, I felt a little uncomfortable stepping into the religious practices of another culture. Shaheen's son was willing to be there to support his mother and to help me, but also admitted to some apprehension at approaching a Mullah whom he did not know.

Visit to Mosque 1

This Mosque was approximately 15 minutes walk from the project school. We had arranged to be at the Mosque for 11.00am. (Before being converted to the Mosque the building had been the local Co-op.) Shaheen's son went into the Mosque first to check whether it was an appropriate time to enter the class. He returned shortly and said the Mullah had asked us to wait a few minutes as he was listening to one of the boys recite the Qu'ran. Within five minutes he was showing us where to leave our shoes and we went bare-footed up the stone steps to meet the Mullah in the main worship room. Shaheen and I covered our heads before we entered. I was introduced to the Mullah who invited us to sit down. The only chair in the room was the impressive Mullah's chair in the corner so we followed the Mullah's example and sat on the floor on the ornately patterned, spotlessly clean cloth that covered the carpet.

The Mullah welcomed us and said that Shaheen's husband had explained the purpose of our visit. I thanked him for allowing us to visit. The Mullah was very eager to tell me about the classes. I was keen to show my interest and appreciation at being allowed to visit such a cultural specific occasion. The Mullah gave me permission to take photographs, to make notes of my observations and conversations and to use the tape recorder.

The Mullah explained that the boys' classroom was upstairs and the girls' classroom was downstairs. He explained how there would normally be two or three teachers in each room but due to holidays the Mullah was on his own on this day with approximately 60 boys and there was only one woman teacher with approximately the same number of girls. One Pakistani origin mother had also come along to learn alongside her daughter. Some of the older boys were standing in as teachers and helping those who were not so advanced in their readings. As the children progressed and needed less practice they attended for just one hour rather than two. The Mullah then took us to the classrooms.

The classrooms

The boys' classroom was in a light airy room upstairs. The girls' classroom was in the basement and there was no natural light. In each room the children were sitting cross-legged on the floor with their readers (a small book containing the Arabic alphabet phrases and simple passages from the Qu'ran) resting on small sloping benches. The benches were placed end to end and formed a rectangle. There was insufficient space for all the children at the benches so some children sat in small groups scattered around the edge of the room. In the girls' room the teacher sat cross-legged on a large cushion at the far end of the room. Three benches formed three sides of a small rectangle around her and she would call a group of children to sit at these benches and recite to her from their readers. One wall was lined with open shelves where the children's readers were stored.

Dress

The boys were dressed in their jeans or trousers and shirts or sweaters and in most cases their heads were covered. On this day the children were not dressed in the traditional loose clothing that the men wear when they go to the Mosque. The girls were dressed in shalwar chemise and their heads were mostly covered.

Ages and grouping of children

The children were aged from four years to 16 years and were placed in ability groups, therefore teenagers could be in the lowest group with five-year-olds and nine-year-olds with 16 year-olds.

Sessions

The Mullah explained that children were expected to attend each day from Monday to Friday to learn the Holy Qu'ran. Sessions were from one to two hours according to the ability of the child, the less able staying for the full two hours. Arabic classes were not held on Saturday and Sunday but Urdu classes were held on Sundays and the children were expected to attend.

Teaching style and content

The Mullah told me there were 30 volumes of the Qu'ran. The children must learn the alphabet first (see Fig 6.1). They were then expected to progress to the simple readers and then work their way through the chapters until all 30 chapters of the Qu'ran had been learnt by heart.

The children spent most of the time learning by rote, either on their own or in collaboration with friends. The boys were allowed to chant aloud with a fairly high noise level but the girls were expected to learn in a quieter atmosphere. The Mullah or female teacher called children to them in small groups to recite what they had been learning. They were then corrected where necessary and the child had to repeat the correction before continuing. If further revision was needed of that part of the text they would return to their seats to continue learning on their own. If the teacher was satisfied that they had learnt sufficiently well the next section of the alphabet or their reader was introduced.

Discipline

The children were expected to read and recite to themselves throughout the session when not in a direct teaching situation. If the noise level was getting too high the

Fig 6.1
The Arabic alphabet used in Qu'ranic teaching

سبق ۱				
ا	ب	ت	ث	ج
ح	خ	د	ذ	ر
ز	س	ش	ص	ض
ط	ظ	ع	غ	ف
ق	ک	ل	م	ن
و	ه	ء	ی	ے

teacher would bang on the wooden bench with a block of wood and the children would be quiet until the noise level built up again. The children had to remain in their place unless called by the teacher to recite to her. I had been told that children were hit with a stick if they did not attend or did not learn. There was no evidence of this during my visit although one girl whispered to her friend in English, 'Don't mention the stick'.

Provision of materials and fees

No fees were charged for the classes. As the Mullah said, 'Learning is free in the Mosque from birth to death.' The children could borrow the alphabet cards (see Fig 6.1), simple readers or the Qu'ran from the Mosque, although some children brought their own. The teachers all worked on an independent basis.

The boys' classroom

It was noisy as I entered the boys' classroom as the children had not been supervised while the Mullah was talking to us. The Mullah explained that some of the more able children were becoming restless as the first session had finished and they were eager to go home. The children quietened down and looked surprised as they saw Shaheen, her son and me follow the Mullah into the room. I waited for an introduction but as none was forthcoming I introduced myself to the children. Many of the children remembered me as Head of Nursery but others did not know me. I explained that I was interested in finding out how they learnt to read the Qu'ran and would like to talk to them and take some photographs of them learning in the class. The groups were very co-operative and eager to have their photographs taken, including the older teenagers whom I thought may not be so co-operative. It was too noisy to tape in this room but I did ask questions of boys of different ages. Their answers are reported later in this section.

I recognised a seven-year-old boy from school with identified Special Educational Needs and wondered how he coped with a two hour session learning the Qu'ran. Understandably he was in the lowest ability group. He was sitting passively with his reader in front of him. As could be expected, abilities varied greatly. The Mullah told me how some of the teenagers were in the low ability groups but one nine-year-old boy could recite all 30 chapters of the Qu'ran.

The girls' classroom

After visiting the boys' classroom the Mullah took us down to the basement to the girls' classroom. As he entered they all greeted him and repeated the greeting to Shaheen and I. (Shaheen's son did not come to the girls' classroom). Again it was left to me to introduce myself and explain why I was there. I thanked the teacher for allowing me to visit her class. I took photographs of the children learning and as with the boys all of the groups were eager to be photographed. Some of the children recognised me from school, and the older ones were eager to chat.

Some of the younger children were shy but Shaheen coaxed a four-year-old to recite the Arabic alphabet. When she faltered or shyness overcame her, Shaheen or her older sister would prompt her. She happily recited with her seven-year-old sister. An 11-year-old girl read from Chapter 10 with a little help from Shaheen and a very

confident 12-year-old who could read the whole of the Qu'ran and was now reading 'small books about the prophets'.

Homework

I asked the Mullah whether the children were expected to do homework. He replied, 'Not as such. As with school, learning depends on interested parents.'

I thanked the Mullah once again and said what a privilege it had been to be allowed into the Mosque and the classrooms. I commented that within their culture there was a great respect for both the culture and their religion and I was keen to report that respect and make it known how learning takes place both at home and in the community. The Mullah was most appreciative of my comments and asked me if I would put that in writing. I said I was happy to do that.

Visit to Mosque 2

This Mosque was situated approximately 10 minutes walk from the project school. It was in an old building that had previously been a Methodist church. The visit was again arranged by Shaheen's husband. This was the Mosque he, himself, attended. The children attended this Mosque from 5.00pm to 7.00pm so our visit was arranged for 6.00pm. Shaheen's husband attended prayers while Shaheen and I were in the children's classrooms.

The classrooms

The boys' classroom was in an upper room. The arrangement of the room was similar to that of the first Mosque but the room was smaller. There were approximately 30 boys in the room aged between 5 and 15 years. All the boys were kneeling at the sloping benches on which the Qu'ran, their reader, or alphabet card was placed.

The girls' classroom once again was in the basement but here there was some natural light through high windows. Approximately 20 girls were seated in a similar manner to the boys and again there were fewer girls than in the girls' classroom in the first Mosque visited.

Dress, ages and grouping of children

The children were dressed similarly to those in the first Mosque. The ages of the children attending were the same and the children were grouped according to their ability to read in Arabic.

Sessions

The length of the sessions and expectation for attendance at all sessions were the same as those at the first Mosque we visited.

Teaching style and content

There was a more relaxed teaching style in this Mosque and the children were far more relaxed. The content and format of the sessions were the same as the first Mosque.

Discipline

The discipline seemed to be more relaxed than in the first Mosque and the children seemed to relate to their teachers in a more friendly manner. The noise level was high and although chanting aloud was encouraged there appeared to be an element of unruliness in the boys' classroom. However, on the whole, the children appeared to be on task and enjoying their classes.

Provision of materials and fees

These were the same as for the first Mosque.

The boys' classroom

We were taken to the boys' classroom first and introduced to the teacher. As previously mentioned approximately 30 boys were kneeling at the small sloping benches reading from their alphabet cards, Kaiders or the Qu'ran. The teacher was paying attention to a small group of boys who were reciting to him and made no attempt to control the noise level, even though some of the time it was almost impossible to hear one's own voice. Consequently, taping audible responses to my questions proved difficult. However, sufficient responses were audible to transcribe

and some of those are reported in the section headed 'The children's views on learning at Qu'ranic classes.

The girls' classroom

The atmosphere in this basement room was very relaxed and friendly. Shaheen and I observed the girls at their different stages of learning Arabic. After a while the teacher allowed the children to pause and talk to me. This allowed me to discuss with them their views about their attendance and learning at the Mosque. Some of their responses are recorded in the next section.

The children's views on learning at Qu'ranic classes

After a busy day at school, most children from the age of four or five go to classes either at the Mosque or in the home of a respected member of the community. I was interested to find out the children's views on their weekday attendance at these classes and their attitudes to learning in the community compared with learning in school.

With the permission of the teachers, I asked children of different ages, some or all, of the following questions, either individually, or in groups.

1. Tell me about learning here in your class.
What do you learn?
In which language?
2. How do you feel about coming to the Mosque everyday?
3. What do you enjoy most?
4. Is there anything you don't like?
5. Do you prefer learning at school or learning here? Why?
6. Is there anything you find easy about learning here?
7. Is there anything you find difficult about learning here?
8. Do you have homework?
9. Do you ever get confused learning different languages?
10. Do you understand what you are reading?
11. What happens if you don't attend? Are you in trouble or are you excused?

Seven boys aged six to 14 years and seven girls aged between six and 14 years were interviewed during the Mosque classes. Children were asked all or some of the

questions according to time constraints, the concentration of the younger children and (in the case of the boys' classroom at the second Mosque), the noise level. Many of the taped responses in this classroom were inaudible.

When asked whether they enjoyed going to Mosque classes, all 14 children said they did. Only two girls, one aged 12 and one aged 13, expressed some reservations.

'It's OK, but sometimes it's a bit weird because, you know, all your friends (who are not Muslim) go out after school and your friends don't understand why you have to come.'

13-year-old girl

'Well, it's like - you're feeling tired when you've just finished school - and coming home from the bus and everything after all the lessons - then just coming home when you're really tired you just feel like going to sleep and you have to - like - wash yourself and everything and then come. You just can't go to sleep, like that.'

12-year-old-girl

When asked what they enjoyed most at the Mosque all the children said reading. This could have been reading the Kaider or the Qu'ran, of in the case of the younger children, learning the alphabet. Thirteen-year-old Nasmaen said she enjoyed learning about her culture and a six-year-old girl added an important dimension! She said,

'Squash (a drink) and reading the Kaider.'

Some children were proud to report which chapter of the Qu'ran they were reading and one 10-year-old boy had read all 30 chapters.

A few children said there were things they disliked about the Mosque classes. In the very noisy boys' classroom a 14-year-old explained how he hated the noise when everyone was talking at once. The boys were chanting the Qu'ran but there was a lack of control which made the noise level unbearable, especially when compared with the previous Mosque visited. On my visit to the second Mosque the weather was very hot, even at 6 o'clock in the evening. This caused problems for a four- and a six-year-old girl who said they didn't like feeling hot or being inside when it was hot. When reading to the teacher, six-year-old Abda said she didn't 'like to get it wrong'.

The children were asked whether they had a preference for learning at the Mosque or learning at school. Although some children said they liked both, the younger children

all said they liked learning at the Mosque best. An older girl explained how the children were heard to read in their class at Mosque school. She commented:

'One by one, then two little ones read (to the teacher), 'cos there's lots of little ones. The big ones can hear the little ones read as well.'

Other older girls offered more detailed explanations:

'(I like it best) at the Mosque. I think it's the atmosphere. It's more like - you know where you are and you can confide in people and they won't like - you feel more comfortable with people of your own culture who understand who you are.'

13-year-old girl

and

'(I like it best) at the Mosque because in school you do all the same subjects but in the Mosque you do different subjects. We do the Qu'ran, the Kaider, the Alphabet in Arabic, Urdu and reciting prayers. The Kaider is what helps you understand the Qu'ran and it tells you what letters. First you do the butti (alphabet), then the Kaider, then the Qu'ran. It's got 30 chapters. I've done 13 chapters because I got sent back because I missed a few weeks. If it's not right you have to learn it again. Two or three mistakes don't matter.'

11-year-old girl

A 12-year-old girl had this to say:

'I like it all - enjoying learning at school and at the Mosque. In school, like, you've got all your friends there and you can play and everything at playtime - but here (Mosque 1) you can only go to the loos - if you like - and all you've got to do is learn people and learn yourself but sometimes it's enjoyable as well when you're learning.'

If I learn about my religion I can tell people about that and I can go to school and tell them about it in RE and history, and everything, in lessons.'

12-year-old girl

A 14 year-old-boy said he enjoyed learning best at the Mosque because at school 'they mess around.'

When asked whether they found it hard or easy to learn the Arabic, most of the younger boys said it was hard, the eight to ten-year-olds said boastfully that it was easy. The older teenage boys said it was hard at first when they were younger but was easy now. It did not seem so easy to me and I had to admire these children,

especially when the Mullah explained that the same symbol could be written in Urdu and Arabic but would be pronounced differently and have a different meaning.

Two of the six-year-old girls felt learning Urdu was easy but the Qu'ran was hard. The older girls said learning the Kaider was easy but each new chapter of the Qu'ran was difficult as were the pronunciations of words in Arabic. This would seem to bear out the Mullah's comments about different pronunciations having different meanings. One 14-year-old boy perhaps gave a clear view of all learning. 'It's easy when you know it,' he said.

All the children said they read and practised at home at some time with members of their family, but as two girls said,

'You don't have to. I learn at home. Sometimes my Mum and sometimes my auntie helps me.'

11-year-old girl

and

'Well, that's your choice. If you're really stuck at Mosque, you can practise at home and if it's really hard for you like when you're young and you're just starting, you can practise it at home if you like. My Mum and Dad know it already - and your sisters and your brothers - they can help you reading it.'

13-year-old girl

It would seem there was a lot of support in the families of children with whom I spoke. Only one child said she did not learn Arabic much at home.

One 11-year-old girl was proud to report how she could speak, or was beginning to learn, seven languages.

'I can speak English, Urdu, Punjabi and a bit of Pushto and I'm learning Arabic, French and German.'

I was interested in finding out whether children became confused when learning so many different languages, especially when Urdu and Arabic appeared to be similar. I asked both a six-year-old and a 12-year-old boy whether they were ever confused learning Urdu, Arabic and English. The six-year-old said he mixed them up but the 12-year-old said it was not confusing - Urdu was learnt from Urdu books and Arabic from the Qu'ran.

A lot depended on the languages used and spoken at home and the age of the child. Some children said they didn't get confused at all and some said,

'I don't get mixed up with English. I speak that most. I get mixed up with Urdu.'

6-year-old girl

or

'I don't really get confused. We speak mostly Urdu at home.'

13-year-old girl

If children as they got older were not so confused with the different languages, did they read with understanding when they were reading the Kaider or the Qu'ran?

One 11-year-old girl said she did understand what she was reading because, in the Qu'ran, the meaning was written underneath the Arabic. A six-year-old said her older cousin explained the meaning to her and a 13-year-old said,

'Bits. It's hard to understand the whole Qu'ran because there are 30 chapters and each one is - well - different. I mean, our teacher, she explains to us the meanings of some. Others, we ask our parents or people older than us to tell us what the meanings are.'

I was also interested to know the children's views on sanctions for non-attendance. All the children said they weren't 'in trouble' if they did not attend classes. As one girl said,

'You should come every day if you can but if you can't make it - I mean - you don't get told off or anything because some people just can't make it - and there's (the problem of) transport as well.'

These responses were very informative and I looked forward to hearing about the children's literacy classes held in a neighbour's home.

LITERACY LEARNING IN CLASSES HELD IN A HOME

Shaheen arranged for us to visit, during the school holidays, the home of Samia, one of the women in the community who held children's classes in her home similar to

those held in the Mosque. In term-time classes were held every day after school. During the school holidays, classes were held at 11.00 am each day.

We were welcomed into Shazia's home and she told me, through Shaheen, that she used to have 40 children in her classes each day. She then used two rooms in her home to accommodate the children. Since she had been ill she had reduced the number to 20. Both boys and girls aged between five and 15 years attended her classes. She would have liked to use the community room in the project school for the classes but parents were not willing to contribute to the cost of the hire of the room so classes continued in her home. On four days of the week the classes were for an hour and a half when the Kaider or the Qu'ran was learnt. On Thursdays the Muslim prayers were learnt.

Fees

A fee of fifty pence per week was paid for each child by those families who could afford to pay. The money was spent on alphabet cards and Kaiders. Any monies left over were paid to the Mosque.

The session - teaching style and content

Shaheen and I visited on a Thursday when prayers were being learnt. There was no furniture in the room but cushions were placed on the floor round the edge of the room. The children and Shazia sat on the cushions and we were invited to join the circle. The children were very aware of the routine. The teaching style was formal but relaxed and the children seemed free from pressure.

Shazia, the teacher, started the children off with a line of a prayer and they went around the circle repeating the prayer in turn. They were prompted by the teacher if they were unsure, or an older child would say the prayer with one of the younger children until they were confident enough to recite it on their own. The atmosphere was relaxed but controlled.

The children first of all recited the six 'special' prayers to be said on certain occasions throughout the day - before eating, before going to sleep, before drinking milk, before and after using the bathroom, and a prayer to become a good Muslim. In addition to these six prayers the children learnt the five prayers which were said in the morning, at mid-day and in the afternoon. Two methods of learning and teaching were

adopted. Either the children who knew the prayers chanted a line and the other children repeated it, or each child would attempt to say a prayer and was prompted by the teacher if they hesitated or were incorrect before moving on the children had to repeat the correct version. Shazia's 14-year-old daughter assumed the role of teacher for part of the session. She said a line of each prayer and the children repeated it.

The whole session was oral. The session was taped and some of the questions asked of the children in the Mosque classes were asked of the children here. Some of the responses are reported later.

After the class the children all received a drink and a biscuit. Those children who were considered old enough to find their own way home safely would then leave, taking their younger siblings with them. Others waited for their parents to collect them.

Discussion with the family after the class

When all the children had gone home Shazia's mother-in-law joined us for a cup of tea. She was eager to join in the conversation about the children's learning and to tell me her son was one of the respected members of the second Mosque I visited and was in fact the teacher I had consulted. Shazia mentioned how she sometimes feels she is wasting her time if parents do not follow up the teachings at home. She said:

'Sometimes I feel I am wasting my time if teachings are not followed up at home. Clever children or children with interested parents learn quickly. Some others do not seem to learn at all.'

Children's views on learning at Shazia's home

Three of the girls who were waiting for their parents after the class shared their thoughts with me. Like the children who attended the Mosque classes, seven-year-old Haniya and Naseema said how they enjoyed coming to classes each day. Both girls liked reading the Kaider in preference to learning prayers. When asked if there was anything they did not enjoy about the classes, Haniya sheepishly said,

'I don't like not being able to talk when we're reading.'

Both Haniya and Naseema preferred Qu'ranic classes to classes in school giving the following reasons:

'I like best reading here because when you grow big you can read the Qu'ran and teach people.'

Haniya, 7-year-old

'When you've finished you can have parties'

Naseema, 7-year-old

I think the latter comment was reference to the juice and biscuits they received at the end of each session!

Concerning family support for learning prayers and the Qu'ran at home, Haniya offered,

'Sometimes I learn at home. My older sister listens to me.'

and nine-year-old Sara said,

'My mum listens to me.'

The children were eager to tell me about their religious practices. Naseema told me how they came to classes every day except Saturday and Sunday, while Haniya explained how they learn prayers one day a week and the Kaider or the Qu'ran on the other days. Sara told me that some children buy their books from the teacher and other children borrow them. I noticed how clean and cared for the books were. Some had a transparent adhesive covering to protect them.

At this point the children's parents came to collect them and the conversation drew to a close. It was clear that the children enjoyed their daily classes and on the whole were eager to learn and proud of their achievements.

KEY FINDINGS FROM QU'RANIC LITERACY, LANGUAGE AND LEARNING

All the children said they enjoyed their Qu'ranic classes and the majority preferred them to learning in school. It would have been interesting to find out whether the same responses would have been received if the same questions had been asked in school, but that is another study.

The role of older siblings or more able children as mediators of children's literacy learning for their religious practices was significant. Gregory (1998) argued that teachers should move beyond the paradigm of *parental involvement* in reading to a model which embraces the "finely tuned scaffolding" offered by siblings in linguistic minority communities. The survey of family literacy reported earlier in this chapter also indicated the importance of the role of siblings in young children's multilingual literacy learning.

There were expectations and a desire to learn from most of the children and an unquestioned acceptance of their attendance at classes even though this created a long day during term-time.

The comments from the teachers reflected some of the comments from parents in the survey in terms of family involvement in children's literacy learning.

'As in school, those children with interested parents learn more.'
Mullah in Mosque 1

'Sometimes I feel I am wasting my time if teachings are not followed up at home. Clever children or children with interested parents learn quickly. Some others do not seem to learn at all.'

Shazia- Neighbourhood teacher.

Further discussion of the findings from this survey and the links with religious language and literacy learning can be found in Chapter 10.

The findings in this chapter seem to indicate that a programme to work with families to build on young children's literacy learning at home and in the community would be appropriate. Children's Qu'ranic classes appear to impact on the lives of the children who attend and it is highly likely that this influence on children's literacy learning is taken into the home.

Furthermore, this study attempts to take up the challenge offered by Street, 1997, (p.56) to develop a collaborative research project 'that looks at both home and school with a view...to mutual recognition of these literacy practices.'

This chapter has reported and discussed the finding of a survey of family literacy, including interviews with 30 families of preschool children in the local community of

the study school. As I am interested in the influence of community literacy in the home, especially the influence of siblings attendance at Qu'ranic classes, the last sections of this chapter, described visits to two Mosque schools and Qu'ranic teaching sessions in the neighbourhood. The activities observed there have been reported. Comments from the children who attended the classes and the Qu'ranic teachers have also been documented.

This chapter therefore has addressed two of the research questions listed in Chapter 4, viz.

1. What are the family and community literacy contexts of preschool Pakistani origin children's literacy development?
2. What are the parents' views about literacy education for young Pakistani origin children and possible home-school collaboration?

Chapter 7 discusses the development of a programme of work with families.

CHAPTER 7

DEVELOPMENT OF A PROGRAMME OF WORK WITH FAMILIES

This chapter describes the development of the programme of work with families. Although the plan for this research involved working with families in the home, this could not be achieved without a willingness of families to participate in a programme. The results of the survey, which took place in the local community of the study school, indicated that literacy activities involving children under five were already taking place but that there was also a willingness on the part of parents to be more involved in their children's early literacy development. Results of the family literacy survey indicated that parents would welcome home-school links and would be prepared to be involved in the literacy development of their children under five through home visits and meetings in school.

The programme, therefore, was based in the same community and study school as the survey but with a different group of parents. As the use of the ORIM framework proved to be an appropriate tool for the analysis of the survey, I was interested to find out whether the framework would be appropriate to develop work with families. The Raising Early Achievement in Literacy (REAL) project (see Chapter 4 for a description of the REAL project) was already using the ORIM framework with schools and families across the city but there was not a participating school with such a high percentage of bilingual families, and none of the schools were working bilingually. I was committed to developing and evaluating a programme of work with families, which had to meet certain criteria (see Chapter 4). An opportunity arose to collaborate with the REAL project and, given the opportunity to relate my research to that of others, I decided to try a modified version of the REAL project programme. The REAL project could inform my programme, I could benefit from the work of others and they could benefit from mine, both now and in the future. This collaboration was mutually beneficial.

PROGRAMME AIMS

The programme aims were as follows.

1. To work with a small group of randomly selected families and their preschool child to enhance the child's literacy development.
2. To increase the amount of support provided by parents for their children's literacy development in terms of opportunities, recognition, interaction and model.
3. To enhance children's literacy development.
4. To heighten parents' awareness of the family's role in children's literacy development.
5. To facilitate parents' access to adult education opportunities.

GAINING ACCESS TO SCHOOL AND NURSERY

By the time my study was taking place I was no longer on the staff of the school and there had also been a change of Headteacher. Access to the school and the community, therefore, had to be renegotiated. The new Headteacher of the school was visited and my research was explained to him. He raised no objections to my continuing with the research providing it was kept as my individual research and did not involve the nursery teacher's time. She was newly appointed on a temporary basis, in the first instance, and was working hard to pull the nursery round after a series of staff changes.

I had maintained contact with Shaheen Khan, the bilingual nursery nurse, who acted as interpreter and translator in the survey and, in the event, continued in a similar but more interactive role in the programme. However, in addition to the new Head of Nursery, two out of the three nursery nurses had been newly appointed, so relationships needed to be established with them also. To get to know the new staff and current parents in the nursery I volunteered to assist in the nursery for half a day a week. Sometimes I assisted

in the morning and sometimes in the afternoon so that I could get to know both sets of parents and children. I helped out purely as an assistant, acknowledging the new teacher as Head of Nursery by checking out organisation and procedures which had changed since I was there.

On the whole, relationships developed well with nursery staff and the Head of Nursery always voiced that I was welcome anytime. I ensured that the Head of the school and the Head of Nursery were kept informed of the purpose and progress of the project, although the Head of Nursery was very busy on occasions due, I think, to a forthcoming school inspection.

LIAISON WITH THE LOCAL MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION SERVICE

Shaheen Khan, a bilingual nursery nurse in the study school nursery was employed by the local Multicultural Education Service which was funded through the government's Section 11 funding for work with ethnic minority children. On the grounds of her professional development, the Head of the Multicultural Education Service willingly agreed that some of her training half days could be spent working with me and with families in the community. Shaheen was released from training for several afternoons a term to work with families. This meant that the nursery did not lose any of her time. This planning of Shaheen's time also required diplomatic negotiations with both the Headteacher of the school and the Head of Nursery.

SELECTION OF CHILDREN

I decided to select children from the Spring birth cohort (i.e. born between 1 January 1994 and 30 April 1994). This allowed almost 12 months to work with families after negotiation with parents and the project school during the 1997 Autumn term. Assessments of children and interviews with parents were held early in the 1998 Spring term. The REAL project had selected from the Spring 1994 birth cohort so comparisons could be made, if appropriate

Sixteen three-year-old children, preferably born in the 1994 Spring birth cohort, who were expected to be admitted to Reception class in January 1999 were needed for the project, with equal numbers of boys and girls. Eight girls were available but only six boys, so the two oldest boys in the 1994 Summer cohort were selected to make up the eight boys.

GAINING ACCESS TO PARENTS

Shaheen or I approached all 16 parents in the first instance by an informal request in nursery. Both of us were present at the time of request. Many of the parents remembered me from the time I had been Head of Nursery, or they had seen me working in a voluntary capacity so that I could keep in touch with families. Only a few of the families were new to me. At the time of the informal request a letter was given to parents explaining the first part of the project (the assessment of all the children involved in the project). Parents were given time to take the letter home if they wished before accepting the invitation. All parents accepted the invitation and visits were then arranged, in the same informal way, for a home visit to obtain a literacy profile of their child.

ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN'S LITERACY PERFORMANCE AND ENGLISH VOCABULARY

The Sheffield Early Literacy Development Profile (SELDP) (see Appendix 3) was used to assess all 16 children. Criteria for the choice of test were discussed in Chapter 4. The SELDP was administered at home for all the children and Shaheen acted as interpreter.

An explanation was given to parents about the content and purpose of the assessment; the SELDP assessed the children's awareness of print they see around them (environmental print), book knowledge, early writing and recognition of letters. As explained in Chapter 4, the SELDP was administered bilingually when necessary and children answered in their preferred language. The assessments were conducted informally and children were not made to feel that they had given incorrect answers. Most children appeared to enjoy the 'game' and were pleased to display their knowledge even though some of them were shy. All parents were very interested in the assessment and their child's performance.

Parents and children were thanked for taking part and children were praised on their performance.

ALLOCATION OF CHILDREN TO CONTROL AND PROGRAMME GROUPS

The 16 children selected were put in pairs according to three criteria - gender, age and SELDP scores. The paired children were then allocated at random to the programme or control groups by tossing a coin. This was the fairest way of allocating children to the programme and one, hopefully, that would be understood by parents should they ask why their child was not in the programme.

INITIAL SCORES

It was decided to assess all children before the programme and at the end of the programme. The initial scores are shown in the table below. These will be compared later with post-programme scores in Chapter 9.

Table 7.1
Pre-programme scores

Programme Group				Control Group			
ID	Gender	Age in months	SELDP score English/All languages	ID	Gender	Age in months	SELDP score English/All languages
1	Female	46	19.5 19.5	9	Female	46	22.0 22.0
2	Female	44	24.5 24.5	10	Female	45	26.0 26.0
3	Female	43	21.0 21.0	11	Female	43	26.5 26.5
4	Female	43	19.0 19.0	12	Female	43	22.5 22.5
5	Male	45	26.5 26.5	13	Male	45	32.0 32.0
6	Male	45	19.0 22.0	14	Male	45	19.0 19.0
7	Male	44	13.5 13.5	15	Male	43	13.5 13.5
8	Male	41	21.0 21.0	16	Male	40	16.0 16.0
Mean Score		43.8	20.5 20.9			43.8	22.2

The first four children in each group are girls and the second four are boys. Pairs are shown on the same row. As can be seen, the paired children are close in terms of gender, age and SELDP scores.

TAKE-UP

Parents of children allocated to the programme group were again asked informally as well as by letter whether they would be interested in taking part in the programme. The programme was explained to them as well as the expectation that they themselves would be involved in the programme as well as their child. Parents also understood they could withdraw at any time. *All* parents of children in the programme group unhesitatingly accepted the invitation to take part in the programme but several requested that it should start after Ramadan and Eid. It was explained that that was the intention.

NOTIFICATION TO CONTROL GROUP PARENTS

All parents of children in the control group were also given a letter personally, thanking them for their participation in the first part of the programme and expressing the hope that they would agree to be interviewed again as their child started school. All parents agreed to this. Only one parent later approached Shaheen in nursery saying how disappointed her daughter was that we were not visiting her as we were visiting her cousin. It was felt this was more the mother's disappointment than her child's so a social visit was arranged and this seemed to satisfy her.

PLANNING THE PROGRAMME FOR PARTICIPATING FAMILIES

The programme was planned, to ensure that, as far as possible, the number of face-to-face contacts were manageable, taking into account the following factors.

1. The out of school hours it was reasonable to ask Shaheen, the bilingual nursery nurse, to undertake in addition to a full time post. (The Multicultural Education Service did free her for a few afternoons, but the majority of visits took place after school or in the school holidays)
2. The time families felt they could commit to the programme.
3. The time I, as a researcher, could allocate.
4. The time anyone wishing to replicate this study could reasonably manage while in full-time employment.

Taking all these factors into account, the programme was planned in the first instance as follows.

1. The programme would have started in January for 12 months but Ramadan and Eid fell in January so this was not an appropriate time for families. The programme, therefore, started in February which allowed 11 months participation for most families. The child in the programme group who was due to start school at Easter could have 14 months involvement.
2. Fortnightly visits were planned for the first two months to enable families to become familiar with the programme and the commitment required from them.
3. For the remainder of the programme, visits were planned every three weeks with postal contact in between. This meant that, for Shaheen, every third week in term time was free from visits. Shaheen was agreeable to spending some time in the school holidays to work with families so a few visits were made then.
4. Three or four group meetings were planned to take place, one each term, subject to parents' approval.

The initial plan therefore indicated:

- 14 visits (mainly in the home but may involve other venues)
- 10 postal contacts (between three-weekly visits)
- 3-4 group meetings.

FUNDING RESOURCES

The resources were funded by a sum of approximately £2,500 from my ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council) funding for fieldwork. Books were borrowed through an arrangement with the schools department of the library. Others wishing to replicate the

study would need to find minimal funding either from the school fund, by fund-raising specifically for the programme, by linking with other interested agencies or by applying to agencies which offer funds for such programmes. My time has not been included in the costings.

WORKING WITH THE PROGRAMME FAMILIES

The programme did continue as planned, for a period of 11 months for seven families and for the child who was going to school at Easter, it continued for 14 months. The programme started with home visits, as this seemed to be the best way to build up relationships. Group meetings or visits were held in different venues, but these were not planned until the second term. Mothers of the study school did not have a good record of attending meetings and I wanted to be as sure as I could be, that parents were reasonably confident and we had a good relationship before I asked them to attend group events. These issues will be discussed further in a later section.

As shown below the programme consisted of:

Home visits - between 9 and 14 per family

Postal Contacts - 3 per family

Group Meetings planned - 4

Table 7.2

Number of home visits, postal contacts and group meetings attended

Name	Home visits	Postal contacts	Group meetings attended
Mehreen	14	3	3
Zara	9	3	4
Tehseena	13	3	2
Aneela	9	3	1
Zain	14	3	3
Zeeshan	10	3	4
Khaizer	10	3	4
Naail	14	3	2

As can be seen from Table 7.3, six out of eight programme children lived with their nuclear family and two with their extended family. The number of people in the same household varied from four to nine, while the number of children in the house varied from two to seven. All children had older siblings at home and three had younger siblings. All fathers were employed but only one of the mothers was employed. She did outreach sewing from her own home.

When families were offered anonymity, most said they did not mind their children's first names being used. When this was the case, the children's own names have been used. In all other cases pseudonyms have been used.

Table 7.3.
The programme families
Family members in each household and parents' occupations

Name	Position in family	Others in household	Total in household	Father's occupation	Mother's occupation
Mehreen	2/2	Both parents	4	Foundry worker	Housewife
Zara	2/3	Both parents	5	Taxi driver	Housewife
Tehseena	6/6	Both parents	8	Taxi driver	Outreach sewing machinist
Aneela	3/5	Both parents Paternal grandparents	9	Taxi driver	Housewife
Zain	3/3	Both parents	5	Cutler	Housewife
Zeeshan	7/7	Both parents	9	Taxi driver	Housewife
Khaizer	3/3	Both parents	5	Cook	Housewife
Naail	3/4	Both parents Paternal grandmother	7	Lecturer in Programme engineering	Housewife

CREATING RELATIONSHIPS AND BUILDING CONFIDENCE

All visits started just after Eid so the discussion of this religious celebration created a good talking point in all the families. A 'Spot the dog' toy was also taken as an icebreaker. Some children wanted to keep 'Spot'. However, when I explained that he had 'to go home for his tea', they parted without tears. At the beginning of each subsequent session, time was allowed to exchange news and to review which literacy activities the child and family had been doing between visits.

One father was quite self-conscious of his limited literacy but was eager to show us his decorating skills. During our visits he had painted the outside, decorated the living room, made units in the kitchen and laid a new floor in the kitchen. It seemed important to him that he had other skills. We admired his work and he was very pleased and proud.

Children varied in their confidence. I had visited nursery and had assessed all the children, but I was still not well known to them. Even though they knew Shaheen well, four out of eight children were extremely shy at first. One girl, Mehreen, spoke only three words on the first visit and they were to name her drawings. One boy, Zain, took up to four visits before he fully joined in. Although he was very interested in observing, the materials and activities from a distance and his older brother and sister were in the room as well as his mother, his shyness overcame him. The progress with Zain and the strategies used to win his confidence are described later in 'Sharing Books and Stories' and 'Writing'.

HOME VISITS

As can be seen from Table 7.2, not all families received the same number of visits due to personal unavoidable circumstances in the family such as illness, family celebrations, bereavement and birth. All families informed us if there was a problem for the next visit and another visit was arranged. One family had experienced many difficulties during the year, but insisted we continued to visit. Nevertheless, *all* families were eager for us to continue visiting when family circumstances permitted. Families were always very welcoming, looked forward to our visits and good relationships were established. Two families 'stopped out' (left and then returned) for a few weeks but none 'dropped out' (left the programme).

Visits were planned using the ORIM framework (Hannon, 1995). The focus for the first visits for all families was book sharing and early writing as it was felt these aspects of literacy would be familiar to all families. During the first few visits the interview schedule undertaken in the survey was completed to ascertain the literacy activities already taking place in the family. The findings were used as a basis for planning a programme for each child and the family. The planning sheet devised by one of the teachers on the REAL project was used for this study (see Appendix 6). The headings consisted of Review (of what had taken place at home since the visit), Focus (of the visit) and Anticipate (suggestions for families between visits).

MATERIALS

All children were provided, at the start of the programme, with a book bag, pencil, pencil sharpener, scissors, paper, glue, and a ruler. The children were very proud of their bags and produced them at the start of each visit. Books, videos, tapes, and a child's tape-recorder were available for families to borrow. Children were also given, at some time during the programme, an alphabet book, a picture/story book, photocopies of nursery rhymes and nursery rhyme cards. Other materials were provided to make books, puppets and games. Most families decided to purchase their own literacy materials, such as A4 pads, writing books, picture/story books, magnetic letters, pencils and crayons at some time during the project, although it was made clear that it was not a requirement that parents should purchase materials.

CONTENT OF HOME VISITS

The programme of work and content of home visits was based on my theoretical stance as described in Chapter 1. Previous research and theories as reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3 informed the programme of work. Collaboration with the REAL project Director, Professor Peter Hannon, the project Co-ordinator, Dr Cathy Nutbrown and all the REAL project teachers enhanced my learning and the content of the programme.

The content of the visits will be discussed under Strands of Literacy (books, writing, environmental print and oral language).

Strands of literacy

1 Books

Book loan scheme

A selection of books was borrowed from the Schools Library. A removable REAL project logo was attached to the front of each book so that they were easily distinguishable from other library books. Children came to connect this logo with our visits as it was also on the postal communications. This was also an opportunity for recognition of print and logos. Picture books and storybooks with simple text were chosen as these were particularly useful for members of the family with limited literacy skills. Many dual language books were included (Urdu and English) as some members of the families could read Urdu although they may have had limited literacy in English. Texts were selected to accommodate different reading skills in the family as well as children's differing stages of development. Books, which reflected the four strands of literacy in their content, were also chosen.

Children borrowed books on each visit. A selection of books was taken to the home bearing in mind the reading levels of the family, the children's interests or favourite books and the strands of literacy being covered in the visit. All children also borrowed books from the nursery library and a few from the local or mobile library. As the programme progressed, children presented us with their library books and were eager to choose others. This took various forms - sometimes the child would choose on their own, especially if they spotted a favourite book, or one which particularly interested them, sometimes Shaheen or I would help them choose and sometimes the parent would help the child choose. During visits, where appropriate, the parents were guided in their choice of books and discussions held on what makes a good book.

In many families younger or older siblings borrowed books too and they were shared by the family. One parent was concerned about the younger child destroying books. We discussed the importance of sharing books with younger children and suggested that a responsible person was present to share the book while the child was learning to respect

books. Nevertheless, we acknowledged that accidents could happen but were prepared to take that risk rather than deny younger children the opportunity to share books.

The number of books borrowed by each family is shown below.

Table 7.4
Number of books borrowed by each family

Mehreen	31
Zara	31
Tehseena	30
Aneela	19
Zain	31
Zeeshan	17
Khaizer	22
Naail	26

On occasions, when a child chose a book, he or she would take it to someone to read immediately. Usually, someone would read the book during the visit but if stories had already been read or the visit was drawing to a close, it was suggested that someone would read it later. Sometimes a child would request a book that was out on loan. The child was assured it would be reserved and watched while a note was made showing his or her name, and the title and author. The child was observing an adult as a role model, writing for a purpose.

When choosing books, Naail's mother said:

'He enjoys books very much, including reference books - especially books with animals. We need more books if he can have them. Can he choose three?'

Sharing books and stories

Children shared books and stories during the home visits with either a member of the family or with Shaheen in English, Punjabi or Urdu, or with me in English. Even children as young as eight years of age were very good at sharing stories including code-switching between Punjabi and English to ensure the child understood.

One very shy boy, Zain, refused to leave his mother's side or participate in any activities on the first visit. On the second visit he needed his mother to look at a book with him. She chose an alphabet book which she was happy with and shared this with him in Punjabi and English. On the third visit, Zain shared a book with Shaheen from a distance. He refused to sit or stand near her but listened to the story standing by his mother, coming over to point to the pictures on several occasions. He gradually became more confident, receiving encouragement from his mother, eight-year-old sister and six-year-old brother. On one occasion his sister read the story. By the end of the project he was requesting stories from both Shaheen and me. On one occasion, all three children sat enthralled as I read 'We're going on a Bear Hunt' (Rosen, 1989) and he excitedly joined in the repetitive phrases and sentences. His mother said that was his favourite story so the children made a book of the story (see Appendix 7). This is explained in more detail under 'Making books'.

Children were encouraged to retell stories and, if this was in Punjabi, Shaheen would make notes so that I knew how the child had progressed. Attention was drawn to detail in pictures, to print and repetitive words, to the characters in the story and to the plot, where appropriate. Khaizer's mother observed that her child liked looking at the pictures most and encouraged him to tell the story from the pictures.

It was interesting to observe how children in the study were learning how to act as a model for younger relatives. In one family, a two-year-old cousin was visiting while we were there. During the visit, the project child, Tehseena, shared a book with her younger cousin, talking her through the story from the pictures. She also showed her how to lift the flaps and turn the pages of the book.

Dual language books

A few parents appreciated the dual language books in English and Urdu because some member of the family, who would read to the child, may have limited reading skills in English but could read Urdu. One parent commented:

'Grandma will read this to her in Urdu.'

Children were also given an opportunity to display their knowledge of different scripts and their preferred language for story. On one occasion, Shaheen started to read a story to Tehseena in Urdu. Tehseena pointed to the English script and said, "No, read this."

When children made books, Shaheen scribed their dictated text in Urdu as well as it being written in English (see Appendices 8, 9, 10 and 13).

Talk with the family about reading with their children

There was on-going incidental talk with parents about reading to children and the importance of quiet times, sharing a book every day if possible. Suggestions for ways of sharing books with children were also left in the family notebook.

What makes a book?

When looking at books with children, Shaheen and I paid attention to what makes a book. Vocabulary such as cover, front, back, page letter, word, picture, title, author and illustrator was introduced and reinforced. Families also reinforced this between visits. On one occasion, Zeeshan made his own contribution. He said 'spine' and pointed to the spine of the book. His teenage sister had told him this word.

Authors, illustrators and titles

Children were introduced to the meaning of author, illustrator and title and encouraged to see that they too could be illustrators and authors and could give a title for a story they

had created. They were also encouraged through favourite books and stories to observe that authors and illustrators had their own style. Favourite authors included Eric Carle, Eric Hill, Sarah Garland and Michael Rosen.

Some children became very aware of titles. After talking to Tehseena about titles and leaving a suggestion for follow-up in the family notebook, Shaheen chose a book to read to her. Tehseena had borrowed the book between visits. Before starting to read, Shaheen asked Tehseena, "What is the title of this book?" Tehseena pointed to the title and immediately answered, "Who sank the boat?" Her older teenage sister had followed up our suggestion between visits.

Making books

Storybooks were often used as a stimulus for a child's own story. 'Doing the washing' (Garland, 1983) and 'Good Days, Bad Days' (Arnholt, 1993) stimulated Mehreen's stories (see Appendices 8 and 9) 'Owl Babies' (Waddell and Benson, 1984) stimulated the writing of two children's books, one of which was created as a dual language book (see Appendix 10). Eric Hill's 'Spot' books also acted as a stimulus for other children's books (see Appendix 11). Nursery rhymes, stories in comics, television programmes or children's home videos, for example 'Teletubbies', or 'Batman' (see Appendices 12 and 13) initiated other books which were made. Marsh and Millard (2000) show that, although acknowledging children's interest in popular culture in comics and on television is unpopular with many educationists, they can be successful stimuli for children's reading and writing.

In Zain's family, all three children contributed to their own version of 'We're going on a Bear Hunt', (see Appendix 7) based on the book by Rosen (1989). Each took a part of the story and illustrated it. Romana, Zain's eight-year-old sister made the title page with the children cited as authors. She also wrote part of the text. Zain wrote about the bear in emergent writing and I wrote the remainder of the dictated text for the two younger children. In this family, Zain's eight-year-old sister, Romana and his six-year-old brother, Waqas were acting as models of literacy while Zain's mother watched, offering praise and encouragement.

Alphabet books were also used to encourage children to make their own alphabet book. Pictures were drawn or cut out from catalogues and placed on the appropriate page. A member of the family, Shaheen or I would write the 'label'. Sometimes the children copied the whole word or wrote the first letter themselves. It was felt, for alphabet books, that if the child used emergent writing, a model should also be provided of the correct spelling.

These issues are discussed further in 'Writing' and 'Role of the family'.

Book reviews

Parents and children were encouraged to discuss what they liked or disliked about the books they borrowed. Book review sheets were provided for members of the family to complete after I had completed some with them first to give them some ideas (see Appendix 14). Two families completed these on their own. Other families preferred to discuss the books while I completed the review. Examples of some of these reviews are given in 'The Role of the family'.

Bedtime reading

The bedtime routines varied greatly in the programme families. In a few families the children went to bed early and had a bedtime story. In others the child was allowed to fall asleep on the sofa and was covered with a blanket until it was the mother's bedtime. In some families, the child would be in bed until lunchtime. This was often a deliberate part of family routine as fathers worked night shifts, or were taxi drivers working through the night and therefore needed their sleep during the morning. If the child was asleep too their sleep was undisturbed and the mother could do her housework without interruption. Because of this culture and family routine it was not felt appropriate to encourage bedtime stories. However, family members were encouraged to read stories at other times of day.

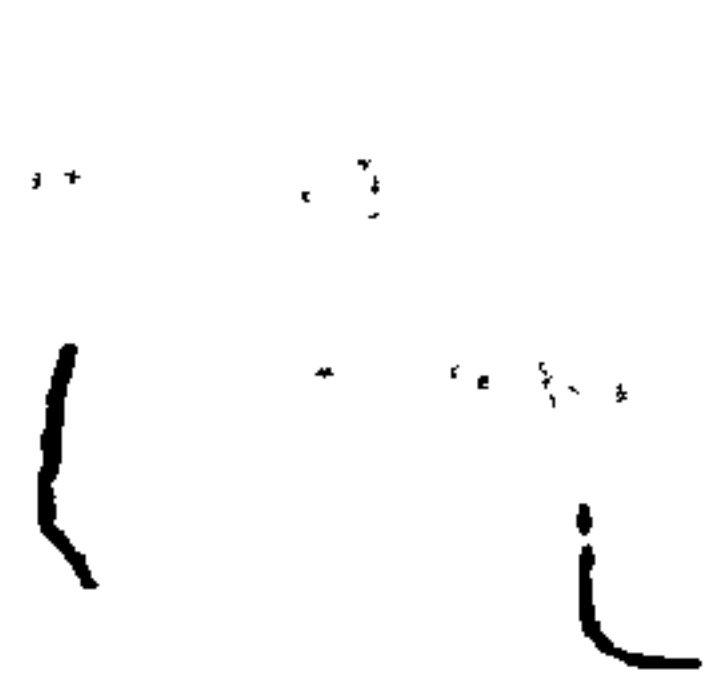
2 Writing

A scrapbook, paper, glue, pencil and pencil sharpener were given to each child and young sibling to assist with writing and saving examples of writing. It was explained to members of the family that drawings and mark-making or writing could be saved in the scrapbook and this would provide an interesting collection which would illustrate the child's progress and be a valued possession for the future.

All the children had some writing materials available. Some parents added to these either for birthdays or as they went shopping. Further details are provided later under 'Opportunities' in 'Role of the family'. As some children received their new writing materials they were very eager to 'write' or draw. Zeeshan wrote a message for 'Spot the dog' and Zara was proud to show how she could 'write' her name. Both these samples of writing were put in their scrapbooks. All the families used the scrapbooks with children at some time between visits but some used them more than others. Half the families used them frequently. Others used them with great enthusiasm at first and then infrequently. Shaheen and I used the scrapbooks on home visits and encouraged the child and parent to value the child's early attempts at drawing and writing. Emergent writing was encouraged which surprised some parents as children were mostly expected to 'join the dots' when writing in nursery.

Opportunities for the child to write his or her name

Many opportunities were provided during visits for the child to write his or her name. Mehreen's attempt at the beginning of the project was just a few lines.



Then she wrote 'M'. Shortly she was writing



And by the end of the programme

Mehreen

Older siblings supported the young child's writing. Mehreen's eight-year-old sister, Meryem said:

'I write her name and she watches, then she can do it.'

Romana, Zain's eight-year-old sister told me:

'I kept writing it for him and now he can do it.'

Appendix 15 shows how children were writing their name at the beginning and end of the programme.

Emergent writing

As mentioned earlier, emergent writing was encouraged. Initially three children were hesitant about attempting to 'write'. Naail and Khaizer lacked confidence without dots to guide them (this was the practice at that time in nursery) and Zain's shyness prevented him at first from attempting to 'write'. All the other children at the start of the programme were at the stage of emergent writing either as marks, single letters and marks (Zara) or a 'string' of marks and letters (Tehseena) (see Appendix 16).

Mehreen's early attempt at writing accompanied drawings of her family. The words mummy and Meryem (her sister's name) and daddy were represented by lines and circles. These were good schematic representations when compared with the letters in each word.

Khaizer's earliest attempts at writing his name during visits was a series of five crosses which were then scribbled over. He said:

"I've written my name - and now I've covered it up."

This was a classic graphic representation of the enclosure schema (Nutbrown, 1999) which was illustrated in other aspects of Khaizer's play.

Explanations were given to parents of the importance of praise for the child's 'writing' and that each stage of development should be valued.

Writing messages

As previously mentioned, on the early visits, Shaheen and I were accompanied by 'Spot the dog'. Children were encouraged to write a message for Spot. Tehseena wrote copiously with a mixture of letters and marks, Mehreen wrote the first letter of her name and Zeeshan drew many circles across and down the page. When asked what he had written, Zeeshan said he had told Spot about his birthday and pointed to the marks that represented 'Zeeshan', 'Bubbly', 'card,' and 'Spot'. Zeeshan was praised for his 'writing' and shown how these words could be written 'another way'. Tehseena also drew pictures of her birthday presents for 'Spot' and 'wrote' what they were in emergent writing.

Making books

As previously mentioned from writing messages several children progressed to making small books. After the story 'Doing the Washing' (Garland, 1983), at my suggestion, Mehreen made her own book (see Appendix 8). Encouraged by her mother, she drew their washing machine and a picture of her mother hanging out the washing. She dictated the text for me to write on a separate piece of paper so that she could copy it because, she explained to Shaheen in Punjabi, she wanted it 'to be right'. Children reach a stage where they recognise that emergent writing is not how other writers scribe and sometimes want a 'correct' version. She copied most of the dictated text into her 'book' then showed her impatience with the task by drawing an extended line from one of the letters. She then asked me to write the rest of her story from her dictated text. This is one of many examples of the 'zone of proximal development' referred to by Vygotsky (1978) - what a child can do with adult help today, she can do on her own tomorrow. On another visit to Mehreen, after the story 'Good days, Bad days' (Arnholt, 1983) again with her mother's encouragement, Mehreen made a mini-book of what she liked doing on 'a good day'. On this occasion the story was written by Mehreen in emergent writing and dictated adult scribe by Shaheen in Urdu and by me in English (see Appendix 9)

Naail and Tehseena drew and wrote their story of 'Owl Babies' after hearing the story by Waddell and Benson (1984). With Tehseena's permission her book was made into a dual language story by Shaheen (see Appendix 10). As mentioned earlier, Tehseena was very aware of different scripts. Naail 'wrote' two more stories which will be discussed under 'Pictures and writing from current events and children's interests'.

Zeeshan produced a mini-book of Humpty Dumpty. After listening to a nursery rhyme tape during a visit, Usman, Zeeshan's six-year-old brother, acted as a model by choosing to draw a picture of Humpty Dumpty. Zeeshan decided he would like to do the same and asked for the rhyme to be written underneath his picture.

Writing through play

The cafe and shop play at home were very popular, not only with the programme children but also, with their younger and older siblings and their parents. The play situations provided opportunities for writing menus, labels, orders, bills and telephone messages as well as family interaction in the children's play (see Appendix 17 for Khaizer's menu).

The older siblings provided models of literacy and role models for interactive play, while the adults participated and offered encouragement. An amusing incident illustrated Mehreen's understanding. Mehreen had given Shaheen a bill in emergent writing for her 'purchases' in the take-away. Shaheen said she did not want such a big bill as she had only bought a salad sandwich. Mehreen went back to her notepad and produced another bill in much smaller 'writing'!

Pictures and writing from current events and children's interests

There were many opportunities for writing by picking up current events in families and children's interests, especially in television characters. These approaches felt comfortable and informal in the home, as it was the intention to create an atmosphere that was conducive to family life and not too school-oriented. Children were given the opportunity to write in the context of their daily lives by writing birthday cards, messages, and, where appropriate, letters to Pakistan.

We were visiting Khaizer on his mother's birthday, so he made her a card during the visit and proudly presented it to her. Tehseena wanted to 'write' a message to her neighbour to tell him (as well as Spot the dog) about her birthday presents. Zara wrote a letter to her father who had gone to Pakistan for six weeks. It was this kind of flexibility in the planning that created and maintained the children's interest.

Children were also interested in drawing and writing about their favourite television programmes. Naail drew and dictated 'stories' about 'Batman' (see Appendix 13) 'Teenage Mutant heroes', and an on-going story about tigers. (This will be discussed in more detail under 'Role of the family'). Aneela's, Mehreen's and Tehseena's favourite television characters were the 'Teletubbies'. They all chose to draw and 'write' about them. This was picked up in Mehreen's and her sister's letters. They both sent me a letter during the school holidays about their favourite programme (see also Postal Contact to be discussed later). Mehreen's mother had scribed for her but eight-year-old Meryem had written herself. A drawing was included in each letter. Mehreen's mother had written for Mehreen (see Appendix 18).

Gregory (1998, 2000) reported the importance of the support of older siblings for a younger child's reading. Older siblings in this study too, not only acted as 'mediators' of literacy but were stimulated to take part in literacy activities at their own level.

Effect on siblings

Both older siblings and younger siblings took part in writing activities. Zain's two older siblings Romana, eight years and Waqas, six years, eagerly awaited every visit. They joined in at their own level as well as encouraging Zain and acting as models of literacy. Meryem, Mehreen's older sister, joined in on most occasions and purchased materials with her birthday money. She said:

'I got a new book with papers like you got (an A4 pad) and I got new felt tips.'

She was also eager to share her knowledge with us. On one occasion she pointed out speech marks and question marks in a storybook. Usmaan, Zara's two-year-old brother joined in on every visit and his mother ensured he received the same attention as Zara.

Talk with parents about writing

During visits and group meetings, I explained to parents and families the stages of development in writing and the need to value each stage even though the early stages may look like unimportant 'scribble' to the adult eye. Parents and families were also offered strategies to involve children in writing, stressing the importance of emergent writing and praise. I also suggested to parents that children were not put under any pressure to write, (or indeed, to be involved in any of the activities) and that children performed better when they wanted to take part.

Initial non-participation in writing

Most, but not all children were interested initially in writing or drawing. Zain however, refused to write or draw for the first five visits, which was partly due to shyness. Obviously he was not pressurised to take part but strategies were found to gradually involve him. He took a great interest in his toy cars so I encouraged him to play with them and talk about them. We then talked about family journeys. On the fourth visit he told the following story about a 'journey' to Manchester which I scribed.

Zain's story

This car goes fast. It's going to Manchester. Waqas banged my car. I'm going to call a policeman. He did write my name and Waqas' name.

On the fifth visit, his older brother and sister, Romana and Waqas, made a large map to assist the 'journey' to Manchester. Waqas drew the roads and Romana wrote places of interest and towns on the map. Zain was delighted to play with the road map on the floor and from that visit we seemed to have made a breakthrough and he joined in writing and other activities with enthusiasm.

3 Environmental print

All families were informed or reminded of the importance of drawing children's attention to print in the environment. At the beginning of the project most families reported that children would occasionally ask about print in the home but very few reported that members of the family specifically pointed it out to the child. Even fewer reported drawing children's attention to print outside the home. Based on this information the first main focus on environmental print was on the environmental print walk. This visit focused on both English and Urdu script in the local park. Details of this visit are reported later in this chapter under 'Group meetings and visits'. On the home visits, there was on going discussion with all children and families about print that is around us.

Due to the varying interests and the pace at which children and families participated during visits, two children were not involved in planned activities and games in the home to enhance environmental print, although all engaged in interaction with Shaheen and me on a more opportunist basis. Such occasions included interaction with environmental print in English, Urdu or Arabic.

Six children engaged in planned activities that involved saving food wrappers and making games. Older children or mothers encouraged the children to save the wrappers. Mothers or older siblings and the child were involved in making matching, memory or word recognition games from the wrappers with Shaheen and me. Where parents did not take part in the making of the games, they recognised the importance of offering encouragement and praise during the making and played the games with the child when they were completed. After playing such a game between visits, Zara's mother said during a 'review' on the next home visit:

'She knows what all these say now.'

Opportunities for children to receive environmental print were provided by postal communications. I sent postcards and birthday cards to the children. These created considerable interest. Parents or other family members read the cards to the children and reported in the 'review' time during visits how their children had been delighted to receive communication through the post. Mehreen's mother and Naail's mother reported as follows:

'She's been telling everyone she's got a postcard from her teacher.'
Mehreen's mother

'He's told everyone his teacher had sent him a birthday card.'
Naail's mother

Opportunities to point out environmental print arose incidentally during visits. For instance, on one occasion Zain was eating a packet of crisps as we arrived. I took the opportunity to point out the print on the crisp packet to Zain and suggested his mother did the same when there was a naturally occurring opportunity. On other occasions, Tehseena and Zeeshan were looking for their favourite toys in a toy catalogue. The planned activity was to talk about the toys, or television programmes about the toys but the activity also provided opportunities to point out print which children might recognise in the future, for example 'Teletubbies' or 'Batman'. When they had created their 'story', on some occasions, this would be scribed in English and Urdu as well as the child's emergent writing.

Many families were eager to point out and encourage their child to recognise, the Urdu and Arabic script. Naail's mother was quite surprised when she realised that Naail had recognised the Arabic script on advertising received through the post. All parents said they would encourage their children to be more aware of print that was around them, either inside or outside the home.

4 Oral language-Developing language for literacy

Three aspects of oral language that have an impact on children's literacy learning and development were the key components of the oral language strand of literacy, namely, phonological awareness, storytelling and talk about literacy. Research supporting the view that developing language for literacy enhances literacy development has been reviewed in Chapter 2. This section outlines the work done bilingually with families to enhance young children's literacy development through oral language.

Opportunities for enhancing phonological awareness

Nursery rhymes-books, tapes and videos - All children were given the opportunity to hear and say nursery rhymes during home visits. Shaheen and I used rhymes from books and nursery rhyme tapes. Nursery rhyme videos were left for families to share between visits. Blank tapes and a child's tape recorder were also provided so children could hear their own voices on tape. At first some children were shy of the tape recorder as this was a new experience for them, but by the end of the visit most children were singing onto the tape. In two families where older children were present, Shaheen and I left all the children totally absorbed singing nursery rhymes into the tape recorder.

After leaving nursery rhyme tapes for the family to use between visits, Zain's mother reported how Zain had 'listened to them a lot'. Aneela's mother reported how Aneela and she watched the nursery rhyme video together and joined in with the singing.

Younger children also listened and joined in as they came to know the songs. Older siblings gave the children encouragement and confidence. Usman, Zeeshan's six-year-old brother sang rhymes in English and then sang the translated version in Urdu, which he had learnt in school. They sustained their 'recordings' for 20 minutes. One mother did not know the songs but was both amused and delighted as she listened to her daughter, Tehseena sing rhymes. She recognised her daughter's achievement and applauded. Tehseena's teenage sister came into the room when Tehseena had finished singing, took the tape, and to Tehseena's delight, said she was going to listen to it on her own system.

Photocopies of nursery rhymes and a set of nursery rhyme cards were given to all the children. Tehseena's older sister taught her all 20 of them. Naail knew many of the rhymes already as his sister had taught him, but he was eager to learn more. Finger puppets were made with the children of some of the rhymes.

Opportunities for storytelling and creating story

In addition to children listening to stories read aloud, which has been described in an earlier section, children and parents were given opportunities for enhancing storytelling and creating story.

As a starting point, children were encouraged during visits, to retell a story that had been read to them and parents were encouraged to do the same. Either Shaheen or I would read a story, and depending on the child's level of English, the story would be discussed in English or Punjabi, encouraging the child to comment and retell the story in their preferred language. Most children progressed, as described earlier, to making their own book with the story as a stimulus for their own story. Comics were also used in the same way. As previously mentioned Zeeshan created a story about the Teletubbies going to sleep, from a comic I had sent through the post (see Appendix 12). He gave his story the title 'Sleep'. As previously mentioned, opportunities arose for many areas of literacy in an activity. As I scribed the dictated title for him, he pointed to the double e in 'Sleep' and said, "Those two are in my name."

On the group visit to the local park, to be discussed later in this chapter under 'Group Meetings', all parents were given a disposable camera to take photographs of print in the environment. I put the photographs, in sequence, in a small photograph album. This was then used by me, and then the parents to tell the story of the visit and to encourage the child to create a story about their visit to the park. After I had used the photographs to tell the story, Naail's mother commented, "That's a nice story." Naail then said, "I'll tell it to you now." He proceeded to tell the story, starting at the beginning and carefully turning the photograph album pages one at a time so that the story was told in sequence.

Children were also encouraged to create a story from their interests or favourite television characters. After Naail had told the story from the photographs using the sentence 'Don't go near the water.' He then told a story about Batman, in which the same sentence occurred (see Appendix 13). Naail also wrote a 'serialised' story about a tiger, adding to it over several weeks. His older brother scribed for him between visits. Each week he would produce his story to show the latest 'episode'.

Picture postcards purchased by me, were also used as a stimulus for story. These could be arranged in different sequences to create different stories. Both parents and children enjoyed this activity.

Opportunities for talk about literacy

Opportunities for talk about literacy and enhancing literacy vocabulary occur in any strand of literacy. These opportunities were taken up with children, and pointed out to parents, at any appropriate moment during the visits. Specific opportunities were provided by materials such as magnetic letters, alphabet games, videos and songs.

All children were encouraged to spell their name and family names by finding the appropriate magnetic letters. Younger and older children joined in this activity with support from parents and older family members. Sometimes the letters in a child's name were jumbled, and, with the help of a name card, the child would put them in the correct order. Most children progressed to being able to select the letters of their name with little or no assistance. Children were also introduced to letter sounds and names during these activities. Children also enjoyed the alphabet game that involved matching an initial letter to a picture and word.

As with all areas of literacy, a few ideas for parents to follow up were entered in the 'family notebook' at the end of each visit.

LITERACY JIGSAWS

The literacy jigsaws, as found in Nutbrown and Hannon (1997), for 'Books', 'Writing' and 'Environmental print' and 'Language for literacy' were shared with all families during visits. Others were shared at the group meetings and are discussed in that section later in this chapter. Some families found these easy to complete and others needed assistance. However, all families were very interested in the outline they provided of their child's progress and achievements.

POSTAL CONTACTS

Due to the oral tradition in the Pakistani culture, it was decided to maintain contact with parents and children between visits mostly through face-to-face contact at nursery or over the telephone.

Postal contacts, however, were also used for the following purposes.

1. Notes to respond to a request to change a visit if the parent could not be contacted at nursery or over the telephone.
2. To maintain contact during school holidays.
3. Correspondence to convey the concepts of environmental print and writing for a purpose to the child and parent.

Communication under the third heading was as follows:

1. A letter was addressed to the child asking, for instance, how they were enjoying the materials that had been left or what they had enjoyed doing during the holidays. Each child was asked if they would like to send me a picture with some 'writing' and/or ask a member of the family to write with them. A stamped addressed envelope was enclosed for a reply. Only three replies were received out of eight but all parents reported how excited their child had been to receive a letter through the post.
2. A postcard was sent from my holiday with a request again for a picture or note from the child to tell me what they were doing while on holiday from nursery. No replies were received on this occasion but again parents reported how the children had been excited at receiving a postcard and had shown it to their relatives saying, 'It's from my teacher.' They had then told the relative what the card said or had asked them to read it. Children had kept the postcard and showed me they had received it on my next visit.
3. A comic containing stories and activities was sent with an accompanying letter. The aim was to convey that print comes in many forms and 'popular culture' literature has its place in the early literacy development of children (Marsh and Millard, 2000). All children were pleased to receive the comic and all had a member of the family who had read the stories and helped them with the activities. Again all the children had saved the comic and produced it on my next visit. Some had been very well used and were becoming quite tattered but still treasured. There was no evidence that family members had purchased

comics themselves. Zeeshan was still so interested in the comic that it was used as a stimulus for his own 'story' entitled 'Sleep' (Appendix 12) on my next visit.

GROUP MEETINGS

The original plan was to arrange three to four group meetings during the programme. However, as contact with families through regular home visits did not start until February due to Eid, it was decided to wait until both the programme and good relationships were well established.

In the event, four group sessions were held as follows:

1. Video of the REAL project – Month 4
2. An Environmental Print walk – Month 6
3. Meeting in school - Sharing books and writing – Month 9
4. Meeting in school - Environmental print/Oral language/Parents' accreditation - Month 10

The Pakistani origin mothers had not been good at attending meetings in school, so by way of transition to school meetings, it was decided to hold the first two group sessions at a venue other than school. The video session was held at my home and the environmental print walk was arranged in the local park. On both occasions, transport was provided.

Video of the REAL project – Month 4

Two sessions were held to enable parents to attend while their children were in nursery. All parents attended one of the sessions. My home was not far from the community where parents lived and as two sessions were organised, it was possible to transport all parents in either Shaheen's or my car. The morning session was altered at only two days' notice, as, due to a member of staff being off sick, Shaheen could not be released from school. As this was the first group session, I was concerned that this might adversely affect the attitude of parents to group sessions but all were very understanding and attended on the newly negotiated date.

Three parents came to the morning session and five to the afternoon session. One parent had arranged to attend the afternoon session but cancelled as she was not well and was due in hospital the next day. She did, however attend the other session and brought her daughter with her.

On arrival all parents were offered a drink with fruit and biscuits in the conservatory. I hoped this would create an informal atmosphere and give them an opportunity to talk informally before the video session began. I realised they felt very privileged to visit my home, so I assured them I was returning their hospitality.

The REAL video (Nutbrown, Hannon and Collier, 1996) outlined the four strands of the project and showed situations where parents were interacting with their children through literacy activities at home or in the environment. It also outlined the parents' role through opportunities, recognition, interaction and model. I introduced and gave a brief outline of the content of each section of the video in English (some parents understood and spoke excellent English). Shaheen then acted as interpreter. After the first section of the video, we checked whether all parents had understood or had any questions. All parents had some understanding of English, although some could understand English better than they could speak it. When all parents said confidently that they had understood, we felt confident to proceed in the same manner. We felt that by breaking the video down into sections it would be easier to follow rather than imposing a forty-minute video on them. Shaheen and I were also aware of the limited reading and writing skills of some of the parents so we offered encouragement throughout and suggestions how they could help their children even if they experienced difficulty reading and writing English. We also offered suggestions how, given the time, they could participate in their children's literacy learning, even though they have had some difficulty reading and writing English.

On a home visit on the same day as one of the video sessions, the fifteen-year-old daughter who had taken on the parent's role in enhancing her young brother's literacy development, said:

'Mum said that video was really good. Could I borrow it please? She also said you have a lovely house and she was really pleased you invited her.'

Environmental print walk – Month 6

I had already discussed with parents the purpose of the environmental print walk and they had recalled the section on the video that related to print in the neighbourhood. I planned the walk in the local park in the afternoon during school time. This meant parents would be free to come without bringing their older children. This time the children were invited. Permission was received from the school for the afternoon children to be absent from nursery. The walk round the park was planned and a handout prepared showing the print to be found. Drawings were included to assist both children and the parents who had limited English.

Seven out of the eight children came on the walk; five with their mothers, one with her older teenage sister and one accompanied by Shaheen. (His mother intended to come but had to make an unexpected doctor's appointment at the last minute.) One child did not come as her mother was feeling ill and tired due to pregnancy and the mother tried to ensure that her two children under five had a rest when she did. Transport was provided for all the families. Each child was given a clipboard with details of the print to be found on the walk and each parent (or older sister) was given a camera. Parents were asked to help their children look for the print, point it out and take some photographs both of the print and of their children. Shaheen and I also took photographs during the walk and joined in the 'search'.

All the mothers who came could read English and only one of the parents needed help to read one notice. Attention was drawn to notices in the park and in the cafe. Some children were quick to recognise the signs for Coca-Cola and ice cream before they were pointed out! The walk had a fun element with breaks for a ride in the playground, snack taken while sitting on the wall by the boating pool and an ice cream or drink in the cafe.

The photographs were placed in small photograph albums with accompanying text to tell a story. This was written either by me or the parent.

Group meetings held in school

Group meetings were held in the community room in the school towards the end of the programme. The two previous meetings held off school premises had enabled parents to get to know each other as a group. It was now time to attempt meetings in school. This was done with some apprehension, for although findings from the survey indicated that parents would be prepared to attend sessions held in school, attendance at any such meetings held by the school had been poor. Both meetings were planned to last approximately one hour and were held from 1.15-2.15pm. Shaheen was 'bought out' so that she could be present at both meetings.

Meeting 1 (Month 9) – Sharing books and early writing

Five out eight parents attended this meeting. Of those who did not attend, one of the parents was pregnant and did not feel well enough to come, one child was ill and one parent had to do her sewing outreach work while the family was out. One child who attended nursery in the morning was in the first half of the session, the other children who attended nursery in the afternoon were brought in for the second part of the session when parents were asked to take part in activities with their children.

The first half of this meeting was planned as a reminder of the aims of the programme and in some cases to encourage parents to take greater responsibility for contributing to their child's early literacy development. Emphasis was given to home being a strong influence on children's learning. The ORIM framework was re-visited encouraging parents and/or other family members to create opportunities for children, to interact with their children, to recognise their achievements through praise and to act as a model by children observing them taking part in literacy activities. Great care was taken to ensure all parents could take part and were not excluded by their own limited literacy.

In this meeting the focus was on sharing books and early writing. Books were used to reinforce how parents could take part in their children's book sharing and how members of the family who were able to read could take the child further. 'Jigsaws' on book sharing and early writing from the REAL project manual 'Preparing for Early Literacy Education with Parents' (Nutbrown and Hannon, 1997) were used. Where necessary, Shaheen would offer assistance with translation and understanding. With the parents' permission, photographs of literacy activities in the home were shared with the group. In

some families, siblings made a significant contribution to the early literacy experiences of the children on the project either during or between visits and this was acknowledged.

For the second half of the meeting, literacy activities were set up for the children. These included a table set up with writing materials, a book corner, dough with name cards and a café with opportunities for making menu cards, labels and ordering.

Meeting 2 (Month 10) – Environmental print, oral language and opportunities for parents

It was decided to hold this meeting without the children as it was felt, at the last meeting, that combining the first half of the meeting for parents with the second half for parents and children had limited success. It seemed parents would have spent more time in discussion if the children had not been there. Maybe we were moving too fast, for some parents, by expecting them to join in with the children, especially as there was very little, if any, parental involvement of the Pakistani origin parents in nursery at this time.

The focus of this meeting was on environmental print, oral language, opportunities for parents' own education and training and opportunity for parent accreditation for taking part in the project. Four parents out of eight attended. Of those who did not attend, one had recently given birth, two were genuinely not well and one was doing her outreach work at home. Four parents attended both the meetings in school, one attended one meeting and three did not attend any.

Parents were given examples of how they could support their children's literacy learning through environmental print. The photographs of Millhouses Park were shared along with a 'story' I had made up from the photographs. Matching games from food packets and labels were shared. These had been made with some of the children, either with Shaheen and me or with members of the family. The 'jigsaw' for environmental print from the REAL project manual (Nutbrown and Hannon, 1997) was used and again Shaheen assisted with translation and understanding where necessary. Parents were reminded of the importance of drawing children's attention to print both inside and outside the home.

The importance of knowledge of nursery rhymes as an indication of later literacy achievement was discussed and we listened to tapes of some of the children singing at home. All parents had borrowed commercially produced tapes of rhymes and stories between visits. The 'literacy web' from Nutbrown and Hannon, (1997) was also shared to illustrate the importance of 'talk about literacy'.

FACILITATING PARENTS' ACCESS TO ADULT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

In Meeting 2 held in the study school, attention was given to opportunities for parents to undertake further education or training, if they so wished. Those parents who did not attend were informed of the opportunities during a home visit.

Some parents expressed an interest in courses (for example, English as a Second Language for women and Computer skills). The women were not prepared to travel to the further education colleges (sometimes due to requirements of their culture) and needed access to courses in their local community. English as a Second Language was available but not Computer skills, possibly due to the cost of placing enough computers to run a course in the neighbourhood centres. Three parents expressed an interest in Parent Accreditation through the Open College and handouts were given to them which would be useful for their portfolios should they choose to follow this up. Arrangements were made for someone employed by the REAL project to pursue their interest. This was not the remit of this study.

THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY

All families participated in the programme, although inevitably the extent and quality of involvement varied between families and this is discussed in detail in Chapter 9. A review of literacy activities already taking place in the programme families was undertaken to establish a starting point for work with each family. The results showed, as in the survey, that all families were enabling their young children's literacy development in some ways. It was made clear that we acknowledged and valued what the families were doing, but that together we could build on that.

Through the ORIM framework and activities in each of the strands of literacy, the importance of the family role was outlined during home visits. Discussions were held on the importance of *opportunities* for the child through the provision of time, space, encouragement and materials and *recognition* of the child's achievements through praise and encouraging the child to share their literacy experiences with others. *Interaction*, from family members, with the child, during activities was important and seeing family members as *models* of literacy provided motivation and encouragement.

Both Shaheen and I acted as models for the family and we pointed out while we working with the child how the four aspects of the ORIM framework were being provided.

WORKING BILINGUALLY WITH FAMILIES

Shaheen's contribution to the programme was invaluable. Not only did she act as interpreter, but communicated with the children and the parents in their preferred language and acted as a scribe in Urdu. She also contributed to the activities bilingually and translated letters into Urdu where necessary.

Initially some mothers felt they had little to offer due to their perception of their own limited skills in English. They were pleased to hear how we acknowledged that their literacy in another language was important and how they could offer opportunities, interaction, recognition of their child's achievements and act as a model of literacy to their child through their own literacy activities. They also realised that their knowledge of English was greater than they thought as we looked at environmental print.

Throughout the programme, the importance of the bilingual role of the family in young children's literacy development was reinforced. Evidence of the ORIM framework in families and the families' views on their involvement in the programme are discussed in Chapter 9.

AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME

During the processes and implementation of the programme the following five aims of the programme had been addressed.

1. To work with a small group of randomly selected families and their preschool child to enhance the child's literacy development.
2. To increase the amount of support provided by parents for their children's literacy development in terms of opportunities, recognition, interaction and model.
3. To enhance children's literacy development.
4. To heighten parents' awareness of the family's role in children's literacy development.
5. To facilitate parents' access to adult education opportunities.

The evaluation of the programme can be found in the following two chapters.

CHAPTER 8

EVALUATION OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND PROCESSES

This chapter evaluates the programme described in the previous chapter in terms of its implementation and processes thereby addressing two of the research questions for the study, listed in Chapter 4

Research question 3. Is it feasible to develop and implement a family literacy programme with such families before children enter school?

Research question 4. What is the value of a bilingual family literacy programme?

The evaluation of any programme has to relate to its aims. This programme had five aims (previously outlined in Chapter 7).

1. To work with a small group of randomly selected families and their preschool child on the child's literacy development.
2. To increase the amount of support provided by parents for their children's literacy development in terms of opportunities, recognition interaction and model.
3. To enhance children's literacy development.
4. To heighten parents' awareness of the family's role in children's literacy development.
5. To facilitate parents' access to adult education opportunities.

This chapter focuses primarily on whether aims 1 and 2 were achieved. Aims 3, 4 and 5 concern outcomes and will be addressed in Chapter 9.

Some of the issues which require discussion in this chapter have already been touched upon in the previous chapter which concerned the development of the programme, but here the emphasis will be on how well or how badly it was done, and to what extent families were involved. The method of programme evaluation was explained in Chapter 4. In what follows, the evaluation of success in meeting programme aim 1 will be discussed first, followed by evaluation of success in meeting programme aim 2.

Comparisons of families in the programme and control groups will be made.

EVALUATION IN RELATION TO PROGRAMME AIM 1

To work with a small group of randomly selected families and their preschool child on the child's literacy development.

This section focuses on the following issues:

- Gaining Access
- Take-up by Participants
- Drop out and Stop out
- Participation Rate
- Implementation of the programme
- Involvement Processes
- Programme Diffusion

Gaining Access

As mentioned in Chapter 7, when it was time to implement the programme, I was not in post in the school, a new headteacher and a new Head of Nursery had recently been appointed. A careful sensitive approach was necessary to obtain permission to conduct the programme as there were tensions in the school due to a forthcoming inspection and the newly appointed Headteacher and Head of Nursery were still 'finding their feet'. Returning to the school and community as a researcher had its advantages as I knew the school and had good relationships with the nursery staff and parents whom I knew when I was a member of staff. The Headteacher and Head of Nursery were approached with courtesy and diplomacy to create mutual trust (Woods, 1986, Burgess, 1989). Although I had been a member of staff for seven years, I was careful to ensure that my approach was that of visitor, if a well known one. This approach was successful in re-gaining access to the school. After explaining the programme as

the next stage of my research, the Headteacher was happy for me to continue, providing I did not take up too much time of the newly appointed Head of Nursery.

I volunteered to spend some time in the nursery to give parents and children the opportunity to see me around before the programme started. The Head of Nursery readily accepted my offer to work with the children. I was able to renew acquaintances with some of the parents and chat with those who were new to me. This strategy proved to be successful. Many parents remembered me as a member of staff and remembered my working in the community when conducting the first study. Invitations such as 'You are welcome at my house any time' were very reassuring. Parents' apparent pleasure at seeing me around again created a 'buzz' in the community and parents whose children had gone into school came to the nursery to see me.

With relationships re-established in this close-knit community, I was in a good position to introduce the idea of a programme to work with parents to enhance young children's literacy learning. My joint working relationship with Shaheen, the bilingual nursery nurse, was also beneficial when asking parents if they would be prepared to take part in the programme. The basis for selecting families was explained in Chapters 4 and 7.

Gaining access to the parents was through a personal approach with Shaheen Khan, at the end of the nursery session as explained in chapter 7. Shaheen acted as interpreter where necessary and a letter was given explaining the project. Arrangements to visit the home were made in the same way. Good relationships are essential to a study of this nature.

Take-up by Participants

As explained in Chapter 7, all 16 families accepted the invitation to take part. This was a clear indication at this stage that parents were at least interested in supporting their children's literacy development. This supports the findings from the survey. It was explained to families that only half the children would be allocated to the programme but that we would be asking for the support, at a later stage, of those families not allocated to the programme. All parents accepted this explanation initially but one parent reported later that her child was not too happy when she realised we would not be visiting her at home any more but we were visiting other children. As Patten (1990) pointed out, there is always the problem with experimental designs that some clients are excluded from the

study. This appeared to be resolved by making a social visit to the home. I explained to the parent that by conducting the study and reporting the outcomes to the policymakers there is always the possibility that policy and practice could change, but it was only possible to work initially with a sample of children and families. She understood that children had been selected at random and appeared to accept this explanation.

Take-up by programme families

All eight families accepted the invitation to take part in a programme that would last at least 10 months (14 months for one family) until their child would start in the reception class. Parents were at least saying they were willing to collaborate with educators on a long-term basis to enhance their child's literacy development and that parents saw potential value in the programme.

Drop out and stop-out

None of the families dropped out of the programme. This amount of commitment to the programme appeared to indicate that parents valued it highly. As will be reported in Chapter 9, most parents were "sad" to see the programme end and two had indicated during the programme that they would like it to continue when children were in school. Two parents would have liked a similar programme for their older primary children.

Two families needed to 'Stop-out' of the programme for a while (i.e. to step out of the programme for a short time and re-enter). In both cases, the latter stages of pregnancy and birth of a child caused the 'Stop-out' for about six to eight weeks. One of those families also had the disruption of extensive external and internal house repairs. Both families returned to the programme when their domestic circumstances settled down, which again showed the families' willingness to be involved in the programme.

Participation rate

Families varied in the extent of their involvement and in the quality of involvement in the programme. As can be seen in Table 8.1, most families had a high rate of perceived

involvement. This perceived rate of involvement is based on observations and reported involvement by families between visits, sometimes, but not always supported by evidence. It was easier to provide evidence for some aspects of involvement than others, for instance involvement with writing compared to involvement in listening to stories on tape. A table of participation levels of programme families (Table 8.1) and the definitions of participation levels according to my judgement are given below.

Table 8.1
Participation levels of programme families

ID No.	Level of participation					Comment
	1	2	3	4	5	
1				•		Participation by mother and older sister (age 8/9)
2					•	Full participation by mother, some by father and sister
3					•	Greatest participation by 2 teenage sisters with support from parents and aunt
4		•				'Stopped-out' due to pregnancy and major house repairs. Minimal participation due to domestic circumstances
5				•		Participation by whole family- parents and two siblings, girl-9, boy-7
6				•		Participation by mother and teenage sister-16
7				•		Participation by mother and sibling, boy-12
8					•	'Stopped-out' due to pregnancy and birth. Participation by whole family at other times- parents, two siblings-girl 10, boy-12 and grandmother

Participation levels

(1 = low participation, 5 = high participation)

1. No participation by families either during or between visits.
2. Minimal participation by families during and between visits.
3. Participation by families during visits but none between.
4. Participation by families both during and sometimes between visits.
5. Full participation by families both during and between visits.

The comments in the table provide more information on the family members involved and details of any 'stop-out'.

Table 7.2 showed the variation in the number of home visits and attendance at group meetings. It was the intention to make the same number of visits to each family, but flexibility was necessary to accommodate the personal circumstances in families, for example, birth, bereavement, illness, major house repairs and refurbishment and unexpected domestic circumstances. The number of visits, however, does not necessarily reflect the quality of involvement, as one family with the lowest number of visits was amongst the families with the highest rate of involvement, due to the interaction with the child between visits.

Implementation of the programme

Much of what happened during visits and group meetings was described in Chapter 7. The following sections discuss and evaluate further aspects of the Implementation process.

Dilemmas and problems

One of the first problems to be negotiated was the time of Shaheen the bilingual assistant. Although Shaheen was quite happy to give of her time after school, to cover fortnightly visits to each family would have meant her working on the project after school up to three or four days a week. This appeared to be an unreasonable expectation so, as explained in Chapter 7, negotiations, on the grounds of professional development, were made with the school and SUMES (Sheffield Unified Multi-cultural Education Service) and she was allowed to spend some half days on the project instead of attending SUMES training sessions. It was this kind of negotiation and flexibility that helped to make the project run smoothly.

Parents shared many of their problems with us that introduced the issue of confidentiality. On the whole this was not a problem, but there was one occasion when I, as researcher, had to take some action which was misunderstood by some of the nursery staff. After explanations were given and shared, this was rectified and the atmosphere became more comfortable. Such ethical dilemmas can present themselves when research

is undertaken but as mentioned in Chapter 4 'to refrain from doing research altogether would be the only way to avoid the problem' (Burgess, 1989, p.8).

As previously mentioned some families experienced personal or domestic problems that caused them to postpone visits or 'stop-out' of the programme for a while. This could be expected in any programme that took place over 10-14 months. The need for flexibility and patience was essential. By keeping in touch and offering sympathy and understanding, the families appeared to be in a position to offer genuine reasons for postponing their visits. The mutual trust built up between researcher and participants was crucial in maintaining families' involvement in the programme and resolving most problems and dilemmas.

Although a little wary of the study at first, the new Headteacher appeared to appreciate the meetings arranged to keep him informed of the processes of the programme. He was happy for the involvement with families to proceed providing the school was given a written report at the end of the programme.

The ORIM framework as a tool for planning and recording

The ORIM framework (Nutbrown and Hannon, 1997) proved a useful tool for planning home visits. The ORIM grid was also initially used for each family, to record the areas of involvement of visitors and families, in addition to a narrative record. The use of the grid (see Appendix 1) provided an 'at a glance' record of areas of involvement. Although the framework was used for planning visits and ensuring concepts for parents were covered the additional use of the grid became time consuming in addition to a narrative report. The narrative report proved more useful by providing greater detail, including quotes from parents. Notes were entered in the margin as a brief reminder of the areas of involvement by families. These were useful when analysing the data.

Involvement processes

Some of the involvement processes were inevitably reported in Chapter 7. This section will focus on the value of such processes, including the role of the family, the programme teacher and the bilingual assistant.

The role of the family

Many studies have been concerned with working with parents to promote children's early literacy (see Chapters 2 and 3). The literacy development of the young Pakistani origin children in this programme was not only the concern of parents, but of other family members. Gregory (1998) and Gregory and Williams (2000) refer to siblings in Bangladeshi families as 'mediators of literacy' and this was certainly the case with many of the programme families. This section is concerned with the value of working with the Pakistani origin *families* in the programme (rather than just parents) and their role in the young child's literacy development.

In *all* families older siblings, including teenage siblings in four families, made a frequent contribution to the young child's literacy development. In one family, the thirteen-year-old girl was the main contributor but she showed her teenage brothers and sisters what she was doing and ensured they were involved too. She said:

I make sure they know what's happening and I show them the notebook you write in. They're not getting away with it.

The mother in this family offered her encouragement and support but due to domestic commitments to a large family and her commitment to a home outreach sewing contract she did not have as much time as she would have liked to offer to her youngest child's literacy development. Having little English, she also felt quite restricted in her contribution although it was made clear how she could help in her own language and how valuable her support and encouragement were.

In four families, fathers too, were actively involved between visits and in four families the extended family was involved.

Pace of working

The role of the family was the central focus of the programme, so it was important to assess and be very aware of the pace at which each family could be involved. To expect

families to be involved at an inappropriate pace would have created anxiety and feelings of inadequacy. From the beginning a calm, relaxed atmosphere was encouraged, with parents and other family members being given plenty of time to observe before becoming involved in activities. Involvement was on their terms, at their pace, with the option to withdraw at any time.

This strategy appeared to be successful as *all* families remained involved, although as could be expected, to varying degrees and with varying confidence in different aspects of the programme. This will be discussed in more detail in some of the following sections.

The role of the programme teacher and the bilingual collaborator

My role, as programme teacher, was to work closely with the Pakistani origin families to develop and implement a family literacy programme before the children started school. I was closely assisted by Shaheen Khan the bilingual nursery nurse, who was invaluable as a known, and I believe, respected, member of the Pakistani culture. She acted as interpreter and collaborator throughout.

I planned the programme in consultation with Shaheen. Before each visit, Shaheen was given an outline of our roles during the visit. As explained previously, this was only a plan and flexibility was needed at all times. We provided opportunities, recognised the families achievements, interacted with the children and families and provided not only a model of literacy, but a model for parents that they could use when working with their children.

The multiliteracies already taking place in the home were acknowledged and valued. I believe a feeling of mutual trust and a good relationship was maintained with each family.

Programme diffusion

When undertaking a study of this nature in a close-knit community there is always a possibility of programme diffusion. Parents in both the programme and control groups were asked questions to find out whether there had been any influence on the children's

literacy activities in control group families as a result of programme families talking about the programme.

Because age was one of the initial criteria for selection of children to the study, programme parents were asked whether they knew that some children of the same age in nursery had not been included in the programme. Seven out of eight programme mothers knew there were children of the same age who were not part of the programme. Only three out of eight programme mothers had told others what their children were doing on the programme. These three parents had only told a maximum of eleven people. None had any idea whether their conversations had influenced what other families did with their children.

In the control group, three out of eight parents were aware that young children were taking part in the programme, but all three reported that they did not know what programme children and parents had been doing.

It is fairly safe to assume from this data that there was no element of programme diffusion to control group families.

EVALUATION IN RELATION TO PROGRAMME AIM 2

To increase the amount of support provided by parents for their children's literacy development in terms of opportunities, recognition, interaction and model.

This section reports on the support provided by programme parents and families for their children's literacy activities. Where appropriate, a comparison is made with the support provided by control group parents and families to their children. Data has been provided from interviews with parents in both groups and from information by programme parents during visits. Data from observations during visits are also included where appropriate.

The interview schedule

The interview schedule for parents covered the following points.

A. Family details

In the next six sections (B-G) questions were asked about *opportunities, recognition, interaction* and a *model* in the home for the child's literacy development

B. Sharing books

C. Reading - other than books (environmental print)

D. Writing

E. Talk about literacy

F. Phonological awareness – rhyming

G. Storytelling

H. Parents' view of literacy, expectations for child, and view of parent role experience

(The next section (I) was for programme parents only)

I. Experience of the programme)

J. Programme diffusion

K. Parents' background

L. Any other questions

The interview schedules for programme and control group parents are in Appendices 4 and 5

Analysis of findings

The ORIM framework will be used as a tool for analysis to report the home literacy activities of children in both the programme and control group families in each strand of literacy within the framework, viz: sharing books, environmental print, writing and oral language (talk about literacy, phonological awareness – rhyming and storytelling).

Opportunities provided by families

Books

All families found time to provide opportunities for book sharing. All programme families borrowed books on each visit. In most families, family members helped children to choose their books; on other occasions, Shaheen and I helped. Many books were dual text in Urdu and English and at least five families had members who would read the Urdu text as well as English.

Zara's mother reported:

'There aren't any story books like these in Urdu for children, so it's good that English books are translated.'

Two programme families reported providing opportunities for their child to make a book. This is reported in more detail under 'Interaction.'

All parents in the programme said they bought books for their children during the project; five from a bookshop and three from other shops. One parent reported that they bought 'only colouring books, not story books'. Programme children were proud of their books and eager to share them with us. This was encouraged as our intention was to build on what the family was already doing. All except one of the control group children owned books of their own too, but only one parent said she had bought them. This parent said she bought a book every week.

All the books purchased or owned by the children were in English in both groups. The following table shows the number of books owned by children in each group.

Table 8.2
Books owned by children in each group

	None	1-2	3-9	10-19	20-49	50-99	100+
Programme	0	0	3	2	3	0	0
Control	1	0	3	1	2	0	1

As can be seen from Table 8.3, there was a greater variation in the number of books owned by the control group children than by the programme children. Children in the programme group owned between 3 and 49 books whereas one of the control group children owned none and one owned 100+. The remainder were in the same range as the programme children.

- Families in both groups were asked whether books were kept where children could get them for themselves or whether someone had to get them for him/her. There was no difference here between the groups. In each group seven out of eight children could get them for themselves and had to ask someone else to get them.

When asked whether anyone read to the child, all families in both groups reported that children were read to by members of the family - sometimes parents, sometimes other family members, especially older siblings. When asked about the frequency, five children in each group were read to daily and three several times a week.

These findings for the opportunities for book sharing provided by families in the programme in this Pakistani community, correlate with the findings from the survey reported in Chapter 6. All children were given opportunities to share books.

Writing

Materials for writing were provided by all programme parents in addition to those provided by the project. Tehseena's teenage sister reported:

'Tehseena has her own A4 pad and many notebooks for writing. When she's outside she plays, then she comes in, she gets her books and starts doing everything - writing and a story.'

Zara's mother provided opportunities for all three children. She bought folders so that they could 'put in their crayons and paper and save their drawings and writing.'

Seven out of eight programme families found time to encourage their children to write and draw, although as previously described in Chapter 7 some children were more eager to 'write' and draw than others. Similarly in the control group one child was reported as having little interest in writing. However, as with the programme children all children in

the control group were given opportunities to write at home with a variety of materials; pens, pencils, and felt tips. All children from both groups were reported to 'write' in English, whereas two children in the programme group could write in Urdu or Arabic also (see Appendix 18)

Environmental print

This strand of literacy was one that seemed initially to be a new concept to some programme families, although they mostly responded to input from the programme.

On being interviewed, six out of eight programme families reported that they provided opportunities for their child to recognise print in the environment and the same five reported that their child noticed print and would ask 'what it said'. One mother reported how both of her two young children were noticing environmental print. She reported:

'She notices them before I point it. It's not just her, Usmaan, (the three-year-old bother) is doing the same now. He's asking what they say.'

Opportunities to make games from labels and food packaging as suggested on visits were also provided by two programme families.

In the control group, five out of eight families reported that they pointed out print to the children other than in books and one control group mother offered, "She notices herself." However as is reported later, there seemed to be a greater recognition by programme parents of their child's interest in such print.

Oral language -Talk about literacy/Phonological awareness/Storytelling

All programme and control group families found time to deliberately talk about literacy referring to words such as book, page, word.

All programme families provided opportunities for their child to hear nursery rhymes in English, either from audio tapes, videos or from nursery rhyme cards and books. Siblings

and cousins were the main participants, although Aunts and parents joined in too. Zara's mother told how her husband suggested singing rhymes:

'When I go into the kitchen, they want to go with me so Dad says, "Let's sing nursery rhymes - see if you know this one." It's Dad mostly.'

In the control group, all children heard nursery rhymes and two heard them also in Urdu. (These could have been the Urdu translations of English rhymes as taught in nursery and school, as none of the families reported knowing rhymes which originated in Urdu. Nevertheless, these children were given the opportunity to hear rhymes in two languages.) Control families did not report whether the rhymes were supported with tapes, books or videos. Programme families were more specific during visits about the way they helped their child.

Some families in the programme purchased materials for the children that would enhance their phonological awareness. Tehseena's family bought a 'magic slate', an alphabet jigsaw and magnetic letters. Zara's family bought audio nursery rhyme tapes and Zeeshan's family had joined a children's book club that provided literacy activities and nursery rhyme cards.

All families of the programme children were keen to find time for the child to become familiar with the English alphabet and provided opportunities for them to look at alphabet books and watch Paddington Bear and Mr. Men alphabet videos on loan from the project. At least four were learning the Urdu or Arabic alphabet also.

Bearing in mind the oral tradition of the Pakistani culture, it was not surprising that many children were told stories that were spoken - not just from a book. There was no difference in the number of children from each group that were told stories, seven from each, but more children in the programme group were told them frequently, four out of seven, compared with two out of seven from the control group.

Families also *asked children* to tell a story. All parents in the programme group and six in the control group reported that they asked the child to tell a story (see Appendix 20). Children also used their multilingual skills to tell their stories. More children in the programme group, six out of eight, were reported to tell stories in Punjabi and English than in the control group, which was three out of six.

Tehseena, in the programme, was aware that her mother could not speak or understand much English so she chose the language accordingly. Her sister reported:

‘(She’ll tell stories in) English for us (i.e. siblings). She’d tell Mum in Punjabi because she knows she doesn’t speak much English.’

One mother in the programme said her son would tell stories in Punjabi and English. She added:

‘Romana and Waqas (siblings) ask him to tell a story. He likes telling the story of ‘Spot’ and ‘We’re going on a Bear Hunt’. He’ll tell stories he’s heard at school. He makes up stories.’

This is born out by the story Zain made up about his ‘journey’ to Manchester as reported in Chapter 7

A mother from the control group reported how a visit to Pakistan influenced her daughter’s storytelling. She said:

‘She went to Pakistan and she heard too many stories out there! She tells those. She tells Dad stories about Pakistan and the stories she heard there, because he didn’t go.’

Recognition by families

All strands of literacy

As there is not quite so much detail to report under ‘Recognition by families’ it seemed more appropriate to report findings here under the general heading of ‘All strands of literacy’. Findings are reported from interviews with programme and control families and from data recorded during visits to programme children.

All programme families recognised the importance of support and encouragement of the child’s literacy development. Many families offered support, encouragement and praise. The following incident describes this in one family.

On one occasion, when visited, Zeeshan's mother and father were at the hospital as one of their sons had been admitted. As programme home visitors, Shaheen and I said we would call back another time when it was more convenient, but, as was the practice in the Pakistani culture, the teenage daughter took over family responsibility and insisted that we stayed for Zeeshan's visit. As the other children in the family arrived home from school, (boys and girls between seven and fifteen years of age) they joined us in the lounge, offering support and encouragement to their youngest brother throughout the visit.

In another programme family, Khaizer's older sister came in from school just as he had copied his name. She had not seen him do this before. She was surprised but praised him and told him how clever he was, clearly recognising his achievement. On another visit, Khaizer made a birthday card 'secretly' for his mother, who chatted with Shaheen pretending not to notice. He had written 'mummy' in emergent writing and clearly written his name. His mother recognised his achievements, and told him how pleased she was and how well he had made the card.

On occasions when older children were involved with the programme children, parents observed and offered appropriate encouragement and praise.

All programme parents recognised their child's achievements and their role in sharing books with the children. Zara's mother recognised her child's interest in books. She said:

‘She can't get enough of books. She would listen to stories all day.’

Naail's mother reported how interested he had been in the books he had borrowed from the project. She commented:

‘He likes listening to stories. His favourite last week was 'Ten in a Bed'. He thought it was funny and he liked the rhymes.’

When asked how children used books, all programme children were reported to look at books themselves, turn the pages one at a time and pretend to read. Mehreen's mother said:

‘Sometimes she makes words up and pretends to read. She asks about the pictures and I explain to her. She starts at the front and turns one page at a time.’

Parents of control children also told how their child looked at books and sometimes asked someone to read it. Sometimes they pretended to read or make up stories themselves. Programme parents or families, however, appeared to recognise more, the concepts of starting at the beginning, turning the pages one at a time and telling a story from the pictures. Families in both groups seemed to recognise and value the importance of children pretending to read.

When asked whether children had a favourite book (an indicator of later reading achievement according to Weinberger, 1996), parents of seven out of eight programme children said the child had, but only five out of eight of the control children were said to have a favourite book. 'Spot' books, nursery rhyme books and 'We're going on a bear hunt' (Rosen, 1989) were some of the favourites of the programme children. All of these had been used during the project. Zeeshan's teenage sister recognised the importance of children's favourite books and recorded her young brother's interest in one of the project books left. The favourite books of the control children included 'Spot', 'Titch', 'Henny Penny', 'Goldilocks' and 'Robinson Crusoe'.

Families were asked whether they had noticed if their child showed interest in other things which could be read at home and in the neighbourhood (apart from books), for example, newspapers, comics, packaging, adverts, road signs, shop signs, handwritten notes or writing on clothes. All children in the programme were reported as showing interest in such print. Similarly, all children in the control group were also said to show an interest, but one parent did qualify this with, "Not so much. He's pointed out a few words but not very often." All children in the programme were said to take an interest in both English and Arabic print, compared with only one child taking an interest in Arabic print in the control group. Both groups showed some recognition of their child's interest in environmental print. The most detailed answers have been selected from each group.

Programme families:

She asks me what it says or tells me what it says if she recognises the word, for example, 'Pops' (the local mini supermarket). She knows Smarties, Chewits, Mars and Kit Kat.'

(At this point in the interview, this child showed me her toy telephone pointed to the back and said, "It says 'Made in China' here.")

She reads it or she will ask. She spells it out and says, "Am I right or wrong?" The headteacher says there are few children who can read as well at her age. You only get one or two in the class.

'He says the names of chocolate and drinks. If he sees something and he doesn't know what it is, he asks.'

'He asks what it says and reads it if he can. He notices himself, like Cornflakes, Coco Pops, Walkers' crisps. He knows which clothes we are wearing (from logos or print).'

Control families:

'The other day she saw a leaflet about road signs and asked about that. They sent a letter from school about sponsoring and she wanted to know what it said.'

'She notices shop signs and asks what they say. She notices Arabic on the calendars and plaques and now she goes to the Mosque she asks what they say.'

'He notices cereal packets, that's all, because they get toys in there. When he sees something in a shop he likes he points but he doesn't know what it says.'

'When letters come in the morning he pretends he's reading them. He notices the covers on videos. He's worked out which video is which. He'll say, "Look, this is Matilda".'

Programme parents and other family members were eager to report their children's achievements and interests between visits. These are some of their comments:

'She' been telling everyone she's got a postcard from her teacher and asking them to read it.'
Mehreen's mother

'Zara's told me this story about going to the shops so I wrote it down.'
(see Appendix 20)

'Zara's written her name for the first time without help.'

'Zara is on the eighth page of her Kaider.'
Zara's mother

'I've written down how Zeeshan liked that book you left.'
Asma, Zeeshan's teenage sister.

'Tehseena's really interested in the alphabet and alphabet books now.'

'Tehseena's never stopped playing that nursery rhyme tape. She knows lots of them. My sister's hidden it for a bit 'cos she's sick of hearing it.'
Shazia, Tehseena's older sister

On one of the visits to Tehseena's, I had taped her singing nursery rhymes. Her mother had encouraged her and praised her throughout. Shazia, Tehseena's older sister came into the room as Tehseena was finishing listening to the tape. Shazia told her how good she was and listened to the tape herself. Tehseena was delighted. Both her mother and her sister had recognised her achievement. Naail's mother told us of Naail's interest in nursery rhymes and the alphabet videos. She said:

'He liked the nursery rhymes (cards). He's showing everyone. His auntie came and he showed her and he told her which ones he knows. He really enjoyed the (alphabet) videos. Everyone who came he showed it to. He liked the Paddington Bear one and wants to borrow it again.'

All parents, except one in the control group, recognised that their children knew nursery rhymes. All except one programme family could name at least three nursery rhymes that the children knew and four families could name five. In the control group only two families could name more than three rhymes that their child knew. The tapes, videos, nursery rhyme cards and singing of nursery rhymes during visits appeared to have made the programme families more aware of the number of nursery rhymes the child knew. Maclean, Bryant and Bradley (1987), found that the number of nursery rhymes children knew, predicted later reading success in school.

Two families in the control group indicated that they were aware their child knew rhymes in Urdu also. These were mostly English rhymes translated but one child was said to know a traditional Urdu rhyme.

Listening to stories read aloud was found by Wells (1987) to be a strong indicator of young children's later reading attainment on school entry. Parents were asked whether

their child was interested in being told stories (i.e. stories that are spoken not read from a book). Seven of the programme families and six control families recognised that their child was interested in being told stories. Four of the programme families told stories in Urdu or Punjabi as well as English. Topics ranged from stories about Pakistan, traditional stories, (for example, Little Red Riding Hood, Stories of when the child was younger and stories about things that had happened during the day. Only two of the control families told stories in Punjabi and English and they did not specify in the same way the content of their stories. Just two families specified telling stories about Pakistan.

All parents in both groups recognised that their child was writing. In the programme group all parents except one recognised that their child could write their own name, although not necessarily independently and all except one recognised that their child was writing letters. Four families reported their child's interest in writing the alphabet and all recognised their child's emergent writing. One parent reported her daughter's knowledge of different scripts. She said:

'She mostly writes in English, sometimes Arabic. She learns Urdu and Arabic at the Mosque now.'

Mehreen's mother recognised her role in encouraging Mehreen to write a story. As mentioned in Chapter 7, Mehreen had heard the story 'Good days, Bad Days' (Arnholt, 1993) and this was being used as a stimulus for her own story. Her mother encouraged her to draw and enhanced her second language development, by saying in Punjabi and English, "If you had a nice day, what would you have been doing?"

Only four control group parents, compared with seven programme parents recognised that their child could write their own name but only one compared to all the programme parents, appeared to recognise the child's emergent writing. The control group mother pointed out how her child tried to write on a birthday card but 'you can't make anything of it. It doesn't say anything.' This raises the question whether she attached any significance to her child's emergent writing.

Programme parents also recognised the child's need to concentrate during visits. As we arrived Zain's mother turned off the television, recognising that he would concentrate better without the distraction. She said, "He can listen to that when you're not here."

Some programme mothers completed the 'literacy jigsaws' (Nutbrown and Hannon, 1997) during or between visits and some completed them during the workshops. They were surprised at how much their child could do and as a result recognised how such achievements contributed to their child's literacy development.

Interaction by families

All programme families interacted to enhance their child's literacy development both during and between visits. As shown in Table 8.1, the quality of this interaction varied between families. The mother's limited ability to read or write English was not in itself an indication of the quality or quantity of interaction, neither was the extent to which the mother was heavily committed to domestic duties. An important factor in these situations was whether there were older children who were encouraged or prepared to take on the role of support and interaction. In one family in particular, where the mother had limited literacy skills in English and was heavily committed to outreach work and domestic duties, the teenage children, and one teenage sister in particular, helped the child's literacy development in all strands of literacy. The mother, however, did offer support and encouragement.

In similar circumstances in another programme family where such support and encouragement were not available from older siblings, or offered infrequently from other family members, the quality and quantity of interaction was affected. However, most programme families interacted with their children frequently both during, and between visits.

Books

When interviewed just after the children had entered reception class, both programme and control group parents said they shared books with the child. They were then asked *what happened* when they shared a book with their child.

Three families in the programme group said they read the story and explained what it was about. Several families reported that they asked questions and so did the child. If words, or parts of the story, were difficult they would explain in Punjabi. Both Punjabi and

English were used in five programme families when sharing a book, and only English in three families. In one family where the mother read little English, she said:

'Dad asks questions of Zain about the story. I look at books too and talk about the pictures with him. When he shares a book with daddy, he and Zain speak English; when with me, we speak Punjabi.'

Several programme families reported that the child asked questions and if words or parts of the story were difficult, they would explain in Punjabi. One teenage sister reported:

'I just read the story but when it is my Auntie who lives next door, she explains because she is a teacher herself. If Dad reads he translates into our language.'

Other families reported frequent interaction. Mehreen's mother said:

'Every day she brings her book and asks me to read a story. She likes the alphabet book as well. If the story is difficult I explain to her what the story is about. (I use) Punjabi and English.'

Zeeshan's mother reported:

'He would listen to them (stories) all the time if he's in a good mood. Zeeshan asks questions and I explain to him. Dad reads to him and asks questions and points to the pictures. Dad and his sister read in Punjabi and English.'

Zeeshan's mother did not read English as fluently as her daughter or her husband but she did support and interact with him in other ways. During one visit, after Shaheen had read a story to Zeeshan about tigers, his mother reminded him of his visit to a Safari Park and encouraged him to tell about the visit and the tigers he saw there.

In the control group, four families used English and Punjabi when sharing a book, three used only English and one only Punjabi. Three families reported reading the book and asking the child to repeat what they had read, two said they asked the child questions and two that the child asked questions. Only one parent said they offered an explanation.

Six programme group mothers and six fathers (not necessarily in the same families) were reported to share a book with the child, with siblings in seven families and other family members in two families. This compared with five control group mothers and two

fathers, siblings in four families and other family members in two families. There was interaction from more people in the programme families than the control group families.

Interaction in the programme families was more concerned with explanations, questions and answering questions. Emphasis in the control group families seemed to be placed on repetition, as in teachings in the Qu'ranic classes, with just two families asking and answering questions and one offering explanations.

Five out of eight programme children made their own 'story' books either during a visit or between visits. On all these occasions, parents or siblings interacted to ask the child questions to encourage the development of the story (see Chapter 7 and Appendices 7-13).

Programme parents were introduced to the idea of book reviews by encouraging their child to say what they liked or disliked about a book then writing the child's comments on a 'Book Review' form. Many parents found this a difficult concept even though examples were given. Two mothers, however, did ask their child their views on books and recorded them. An example is given in Appendix 14.

Writing

As part of the interview with parents, just after the children's school entry, parents were asked about the family's interaction with the child's writing activities. All children had someone who wrote with them or offered them help. In the programme families, parents wrote with the child or helped with writing in six families and siblings in all families. In the control group, parents wrote or helped with writing in five families and siblings in three families. The kind of help they gave differed considerably.

In the control group, two families said they held the pen or the child's hand so 'they did it properly' – and 'if she does it wrong then (we) ask her to write again.' Three other families helped the child to write the alphabet or their name. Writing 'correctly' was important for these families. One child was said to write in a play situation 'in her own way' with her sister.

The programme families reported that they wrote for different purposes. Two acted as scribe, 'He asks us to write if he's drawn a picture or he'll ask for words.' One child wrote with siblings in a play situation and was reported as liking to write on birthday cards. Another child was writing independently. Her mother said,

'Me, her dad and (her sister) Shazmia (help her). Mostly its telling her if it's a 'b' or a 'd' now. If we dictate, she'll write.'

Two children were said to copy words and one child was being taught to write Urdu by his older sister.

In addition to the above, *all* programme families interacted with children's writing during visits and all except one between visits. Some families were surprised initially to find that emergent writing was valued but understood why when stages of writing were explained. This initial reluctance to accept emergent writing could have been due to the more formal methods some had experienced in school and the more formal Qu'ranic teaching in the Mosque schools. This was reflected in the help offered by the control group families.

All programme families were eager to report that they had been helping their child to write his or her name. Zain's father proudly reported that he and Zain's eight-year-old sister had been teaching him to write his name. Zara's mother encouraged and praised Zara's attempts to write her name throughout the early stages of the project, sounding out the letters to her in the later stages. She then proudly announced at the beginning of one visit:

'She can write her name now without help - her full name.'
(see Appendix 21)

Zara's mother was, however, careful not to neglect her younger child and praised him for his drawings and mark-making.

Six out of the eight programme children made books during a visit and either the mother and/or siblings interacted with the child during the making of these, either with questions to enable them to start the story or to develop the story.

Play situations created during visits to the programme children provided many opportunities for writing. Café and shop play were very popular with both the project

child and siblings of all ages. Siblings mostly provided interaction for the child's writing, offering support for writing menus, labels, orders, bills and telephone messages. An example is shown in Appendix 17.

A few parents picked up the idea of children drawing and writing about current events in the family or children's interests. As previously mentioned, during the holidays, Mehreen's mother encouraged the children to respond to my postal communication. Both Mehreen's and her sister's favourite television characters were the 'Teletubbies'. They both sent me a letter about their favourite programme. Mehreen's mother had scribed for her but eight-year-old Meryem had written herself (see Appendix 18)

Naail offered to write a story about a tiger and started this during a visit. Such flexibility enabled the success of the project. With the help of his teenage brother, Naail created a story over a few months. Umar, his brother scribed for him and on one of the final visits his mother said:

'He's finished the 'Tiger, Tiger' book we started months ago and he read it all back to me.'

Naail then fetched the book and read it. He was delighted when we praised him and told him he was an 'author'.

Environmental print

During visits, it was pointed out to families the importance of drawing the child's attention to print that is around us. Many programme parents reported that their children were beginning to notice print on food packages, on television, in newspapers or on shop logos, for example, shop names on carrier bags.

Families were asked to save wrappers from food, sweets or chocolate (items that would interest the children) so that games could be made on a later visit. Of the six families asked four did save wrappers and games were made with the family during visits. Zara's mother reported on a later visit that they had been playing the game and Zara could now read all six words or logos in the game. Khaizer's older brother saved wrappers from packets of different flavoured crisps and both a memory game and a matching game were

made. Khaizer was encouraged to recognise the writing on the packets as the game was played.

Mehreen's mother and older sister helped her to make a game during a visit from sweet wrappers and Naail's mother reported how he recognised print on the television. She said:

'He recognises letters in his name from TV adverts and programmes and recognises names on TV, like Walkers Crisps.'

Oral language - Developing language for literacy

Programme families were encouraged to participate in three aspects of oral language - phonological awareness, described to families as 'sounds in a language', storytelling and talk about literacy. Phonological awareness is discussed under three headings - Nursery rhymes, Storytelling and creating story and Talk about literacy. This section discusses the interaction of families with children in these three areas.

Phonological awareness - Nursery rhymes

Nursery Rhymes were very popular with all the programme families, especially the 'Teletubbies' video and sound tapes. *All* families interacted with their children and encouraged them to listen and learn them. Some mothers were keen to watch the video themselves. As Aneela's mother said, "I like the Teletubbies (nursery rhyme) video. We watch Teletubbies everyday. Aneela sings some of the songs. We watch it together. It's good." Zain's mother too reported how they watched the nursery rhyme video together.

The nursery rhyme books were not as popular as the tapes and videos. Families seemed to prefer a tape so that they could 'sing-along'. However, in families where older children knew the tunes the nursery rhyme cards (a set of 20 cards with pictures and rhymes) were very popular and used well with the children.

Naail's mother reported that he had learnt 15 from the set. His older brother and sister had been teaching him new ones and singing those he already knew. He was eager to sing to his relatives when they called. Tehseena's older sister taught her all 20 rhymes.

Tehseena took great delight in singing them into the tape recorder. Although her mother did not know the rhymes, she applauded and praised her achievement.

Photocopies of nursery rhymes were also provided. Children coloured these in, sang the rhymes and saved them in their scrapbook.

Phonological awareness - Storytelling and creating story

Most programme families encouraged their child to retell a story they had heard. Zara's mother reported how she extended this activity to stories Zara had heard in nursery. She said Zara could often remember the story and she encouraged her to retell it. She was careful, however, that this did not become a routine that took the spontaneity and fun out of listening to stories. Zara was also interested in creating her own stories about everyday occurrences. As mentioned earlier, at her mother's initiation, she made up her own story about going to the shops, which her mother wrote down (see Appendix 20).

Parents particularly liked the idea of telling a story from the photographs they had taken with disposable cameras on a group visit to the park. I had the photographs developed and put each set in an album. Naail listened to his 'story' then said, "I'll tell it now." He took the photographs to tell the story to his mother who listened attentively, then she talked about his 'story' with him. Khaizer's mother picked up the suggestion of telling a story from the photographs and told it to Khaizer herself as they looked through the album.

Phonological awareness - Talk about literacy

Families' interaction to enhance talk about literacy was encouraged. Families picked up on the idea of using words relating to literacy when looking at books with their children using phrases such as 'This is the title', 'The person who writes a book is an author' and referring to words such as 'page', 'word', 'letter'. Zeeshan was keen to show us that he knew the front and back of the book and also the 'spine'. "Asma (his older sister) told me," he said proudly.

Parents were particularly interested in their child becoming familiar with the alphabet. This was encouraged through 'fun' activities such as making an alphabet book; singing

alphabet rhymes, watching alphabet videos (Mr. Men and Paddington Bear), looking at alphabet books and using magnetic letters.

Mehreen's mother had been looking at the alphabet book with Mehreen and said:

'I've been doing 'g' for girl and 'h' for house. She knew them all but I've not done it so regularly this week. I'll do this over the next week.'

Tehseena's sister had been helping her to find the letters in her name from magnetic letters. She had been bought a set and on the next visit her name was spelt out on the fridge door.

Even the child whose family was experiencing difficult domestic circumstances had learnt at home and could recognise the first six letters of the English alphabet.

Families providing a models of literacy

All Strands

I was interested to find out whether children saw members of their family as models of literacy. When interviewed, both programme and control group parents were asked whether the child saw anyone in the family reading books and all families said that they did.

The programme families mentioned the following activities: reading a novel in Urdu, reading Islamic books in English and older children reading library books. All families mentioned that the child would see family members reading the Qu'ran. Control group families reported that a child would see one or more of the following: reading magazines, novels in English, older children with their schoolbooks, and again the Qu'ran being read in all families.

Both programme and control group children saw families writing for many purposes. Programme families mentioned writing notes and letters, telephone messages, cards, writing cheques, seeing parents working at home or working at the office, when the child visited her father's place of work. Siblings were seen writing when playing, when doing their homework or when writing letters. Five programme children saw at least two

languages being written in their families. Control group families reported writing for similar purposes. These included: adults writing letters or signing their name, making shopping lists from the shopping channel on television and siblings doing homework or writing when playing.

All programme and control families said their child saw them reading print in the environment. All except one control group parent said they thought the child knew they were reading.

These findings supported the findings of the survey in Chapter 6. All children were growing up in a multiliterate and multilingual environment.

In addition to the above, programme families presented many models of literacy for their children. During visits and group meetings, it was explained to parents how important it was for children to see family members involved in literacy activities. As the previous chapters and earlier sections in this chapter have shown, many activities took place already in the family where children could see models of many literacies. These were in all strands of literacy; books, (English, Urdu or Arabic), writing (English or Urdu), environmental print (newspapers, television, labels on clothes, signs etc) and phonological awareness. It was my intention, that, in addition to providing a model, family members should draw children's attention to the importance of these literacy activities. Families generally found this easier through the models of literacy they provided during interaction with the child's own literacy activities. The following examples illustrate this.

Tehseena's father was self-employed as a taxi-driver but also helped out in the office in his father's travel agency. He reported:

'Tehseena sees me writing at the office and wants to write herself. I've been teaching her to write her name.'

Zara's father acted as a model of literacy as the children watched him write their names on their new folders. Mehreen's older sister, Meryem reported how she wrote Mehreen's name as a model for her.

'I write her name and she watches, then she does it.'

Meryem

On another occasion, Meryem was reading a story to Mehreen and drew her attention to the punctuation, showing her a full stop and a question mark. These incidental instances of talk about literacy are the opportunities families provided. During another visit, Meryem arrived home with a friend as Mehreen was listening to nursery rhymes. We left all three singing the rhymes and using the tape recorder. The older children not only acted as a model but taught Mehreen the rhymes too. Mehreen's mother said:

'Mehreen's listened to nursery rhymes so much, the batteries have run out on the tape recorder! They taped themselves singing.'

Zeeshan's and Tehseena's older sisters wrote about the children in their scrapbooks, for example: 'Now I am 4. I have brown eyes. I like....' etc. Tehseena's sister told how Tehseena had been watching her write. "She's really into writing now", she said.

Whenever family members acted as scribe they were presenting a model of literacy for the child. Khaizer had drawn pictures in his scrapbook and his mother had labelled the drawings. She also acted as scribe as he dictated a 'story' about his picture showing him going to the doctor's surgery with his father.

Khaizer's, Zara's and Mehreen's older brothers or sisters acted as models of literacy which the younger children copied as they produced their emergent writing. When children saw their older siblings reading and writing, doing their homework or learning Urdu and Arabic they were observing them as models of literacy. Similarly, when family members were reading the newspaper in English or Urdu, children saw them taking part in everyday literacy activities.

All programme families recognised the role they could play in enhancing their child's literacy development and all provided some opportunities, interaction and models of literacy. Older children benefited from working on the project. One 16-year-old girl asked for recognition of her work in the form of a certificate for her portfolio at school.

Programme parents in group meetings

Viewing the REAL project video (Nutbrown, Hannon and Collier, 1996)

All programme mothers attended at least one group meeting. The viewing of the REAL project video in my home (see Chapter 7 for a report on this) and the visit to the local park for the environmental print walk were purposely arranged as less threatening out of school visits before inviting parents to attend a group meeting in school. This particularly helped one mother who said:

'I think they were OK. The video (REAL project video) taught me a lot of those things. Millhouses Park was good - we all enjoyed looking for signs in the park and the cafe. It was easier meeting the other mums out of school first and then it was OK to go to the meeting in school about reading and writing.'

Two other mothers who did not leave the house much but did manage to go to the meeting in my home said:

'It helped a lot and I can help Tehseena a lot since seeing the video.'

'I learned from that meeting, watching the video.'

All programme parents were very appreciative of the invitation and the interest taken in their children. All said how they understood the parents' role and the message on the video. Due to domestic commitments, three mothers said they would find it difficult for them personally to spend much time with their child (all three had a large family and one had her mother-in-law and incapacitated father-in-law living with her too). However, they all said that other family members were fulfilling this role. All said they would continue to offer praise and encouragement to their child and would encourage and offer support to other family members to take on their role if they themselves were not able to participate as much as they would like. The three mothers expressing concern, also had limited spoken English and limited English reading and writing skills. I realised that this may be causing some apprehension and was pleased that we had reassured them that, given the time, there was a lot they could do.

All said they would like notes on the video so that they could show other family members. Three mothers asked to borrow the video. Naail's mother said

'That's been really helpful to me. It's helped me understand more. I'd like my husband and the children to see this video, then they will understand more too.'

An environmental print walk

All programme parents said how they enjoyed the walk and how they felt it had helped them to understand the importance of pointing out signs and notices to children. All parents on this walk had provided opportunities, recognition, interaction and a model for their child's recognition of print in the environment.

First meeting in school

The content of this meeting was reported in Chapter 7. Parents were very interested in the first half of the meeting, especially in completing the 'jigsaws' on book-sharing and early writing. They were all pleasantly surprised at how much their children had already achieved. One mother could complete all the sections for her child in book-sharing and most in early writing. This part of the meeting over-ran and some parents did not have sufficient time to join in with the children's activities. Two had to leave early. I am not sure whether there were genuine commitments elsewhere or whether they felt uncomfortable joining in with children's activities in a group situation.

Second meeting in school

All parents said how they had enjoyed the meeting (reported in Chapter 7) and had learnt from it. They enjoyed listening to the tapes of children singing and had a discussion about the handouts. One parent who was especially interested in the opportunity for Parent Accreditation said, "I tell you, I really want to do this."

All mothers said the group meetings were helpful, with comments such as:

'I went to all of them (meetings). I learned how you teach your children when they're little and you make it easy for them to learn.'

'I thought it was good to get all the parents together and to get to know the other parents. It's been helpful.'

Parents' views of the programme

An evaluation of a qualitative study is not complete without triangulation. Seeking the parents' views on the programme enhances the validity of other data.

In obtaining parents' views of the programme, parents were first asked why they agreed to take part in the programme. Five of the eight parents were clear that they thought the programme would help both them and their children. Some of their comments were as follows:

'I said 'Yes' because I thought it would help me to know what to do and help her. She was shy, but she's not now.'

'I think he will learn from you. I will learn how to help Zain and the other children.'

One parent's thoughts were just for the child-

'First of all I wanted you to come and Shaheen because I thought it would improve Tehseena's education.'

Another parent decided she would 'give it a try' but it was 'no big thing' because she was already 'doing most things with her children'.

When asked how the programme had been since then, all families offered very positive comments such as:

'OK. She asks me every day, "Is my teacher coming?'

'I admire your work. You always brought something for him to do and then I got ideas. It's been very, very helpful.'

'It was good. It was enjoyable. We learned different things with the project.'

All families said they enjoyed working on the programme. When asked what it was like having a teacher visit them at home, all parents said it was good and some added:

**It was good. I liked it. I didn't want to go in school at first.
(This mother later attended most of the group meetings.)**

'I was very happy for you to come to our house and what we did with her made her more interested in wanting to do things.'

The parent who had previously said she worked with her children anyway, explained how she worked more with her younger daughter due to our visits.

'I thought it was fine. It made me tend to work with Zara. With Shazma, sometimes we wouldn't do anything at all but with Zara we've been doing something every week.'

When asked whether parents felt the things they were involved in were too much like school, none of them felt this was so. None of the parents felt the project was a pressure and when asked what kept them going over a period of at least a year, all eight mothers offered very interesting comments.

'The work you've been doing (kept me going) - The things that you've left me, and looking forward to the next visit. Mehreen kept me going because she liked you coming.'

**'It was so nice. I was very upset when you stopped coming.' (Mother)
'I liked showing the notebook to all of them (other teenage siblings) so that they could all help.' (Teenage sister who worked a lot with the child on the visits.)**

'We looked forward to your visits. All three children looked forward to your visits. You always brought something interesting and we learnt a lot.'

'In school they just work with the children but at home you helped us to understand how to work with our children.'

Only one of the parents said she experienced any difficulty being part of the programme, and that was to do with explaining to other parents why her child was in the programme and not their children. She attempted to overcome this by offering an explanation of how children were selected. 'I told them names were pulled out of a hat.'

All programme parents said they were 'sad' or 'upset' that the project was ending. One parent represented the views of all when she said:

'I think we and the children are going to miss you. I want you still to come to my house.'

When asked the *best* thing about the programme, all parents said everything was good. Some parents added more:

'It's helped me and Mehreen a lot. Reading and writing. She never knew how to use a pen before.'

'He learns so many things about reading and writing. I learnt too. I enjoyed you both coming.'

'That we were *involved* in everything.'

When asked what was the *worst* thing about the programme, *all* parents said there was 'no worst thing'.

All mothers were in favour of the programme being offered to all families. As one parent said:

'It's helping families how to help their children.'

When asked what other families might get out of the programme, *all* mothers had something to say. The following are some of their comments:

'A lot - sometimes you don't know whether your kids are bright. She didn't do anything before. It's made it easier for her to go to school. She's settled really well and she likes it. It was hard for Meryem (her sister) when she went - she didn't like it.'

‘Their children would be educated better.’

‘The same as us. All the family got something from it and it helped him a lot with reading and playing games.’

Were the research questions addressed and programme aims achieved?

The evaluation in this chapter addressed two of the research questions for the study, listed in Chapter 4 and aims 1 and 2 of the four programme aims.

Research Questions

Research question 3 Is it feasible to develop and implement a family literacy programme with Pakistani origin families before children enter school?

This chapter has shown that it is feasible to develop and implement a family literacy programme with Pakistani origin families before children enter school and that parents reported being involved in such a programme was beneficial, not only to the child but to the family.

Research question 4. What is the value of a bilingual family literacy programme?

This chapter has shown the value in parents' participation in their children's literacy development in all strands of literacy within the ORIM framework. All families said they appreciated the programme (this will be discussed further in Chapter 9) and none dropped out which would indicate their satisfaction with the programme and that the manner of working with families was a success. Programme families reported in interviews that they were still maintaining their involvement in their child's literacy development. When comparing the information given in interviews by programme and control group parents, the programme families appeared to be more knowledgeable and have more varied interaction with their children in most strands of literacy than the control group families.

Programme aims

1. To work with a small group of randomly selected families and their preschool child on the child's literacy development.
2. To increase the amount of support provided by parents for their children's literacy development in terms of opportunities, recognition interaction and model.

This chapter has shown that it is possible to work with a group of randomly selected families to enhance the child's literacy development over a period of between 10 and 14 months. It has illustrated how families have been enabled to provide *opportunities*, *recognise* their children's achievements, *interacted* with their children and provided *models* of literacy.

The next chapter discusses the outcomes for children and parents and parents views. These will be compared with children and parents in the control group.

CHAPTER 9

EVALUATION OF PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

This chapter continues to evaluate the programme that was described in Chapter 7 and evaluated in Chapter 8 in terms of programme implementation and processes. This evaluation chapter addresses the fourth research question for the study.

Research question 4. What is the value of a bilingual family literacy programme?

This chapter aims to evaluate the programme outcomes for children and parents, comparing these with what was happening in the control group of children and parents who did not participate in the programme. Parents' views on participation in the programme are also reported and whether all parents (programme and control) would be in favour of this sort of programme being offered to all families in the future.

As reported in Chapter 8, the evaluation of any programme has to relate to its aims. The five aims of the programme were as follows.

1. To work with a small group of randomly selected families and their preschool child on the child's literacy development.
2. To increase the amount of support provided by parents for their children's literacy development in terms of opportunities, recognition interaction and model.
3. To enhance children's literacy development.
4. To heighten parents' awareness of the family's role in children's literacy development.
5. To facilitate parents' access to adult education opportunities.

This chapter focuses primarily on whether aims 3, 4 and 5 were achieved.

The method of programme evaluation was explained in the thesis in Chapter 4. In what follows, the evaluation of success in meeting programme aim 3 will be discussed first, followed by an evaluation of success in meeting aims 4 and 5.

Triangulation is an important part of any qualitative study, so in addition to parents' perceptions of the child's literacy achievements and quantitative data from assessments, parents' views on the programme as a whole were sought, as well as finding out whether there had been any diffusion of the programme to control group families.

This chapter then, discusses the following:

- Evaluation in relation to programme aim 3

- Parents' views of literacy, expectations for the child, and view of their role

- Parents' views on the programme

- Evaluation in relation to programme aim 4

- Evaluation in relation to programme aim 5

EVALUATION IN RELATION TO PROGRAMME AIM 3:

To enhance children's literacy development.

This section focuses on the outcomes for children's literacy development. Data on programme parents' perceptions of their children's literacy development and their perceived contribution to that development were obtained through interviews at the end of the programme. Similar interviews were held with parents in the control group with the exclusion of questions that related to participation in the project. Copies of the interview schedules used with programme parents and control group parents can be found in Appendices 4 and 5. Data from the interviews has been used as part of the evaluation process.

Data from assessments of children's literacy achievements at age three (before the programme started) and at the end of the term prior to entry into reception class (the end of the programme) were also part of the evaluation, thereby enabling evaluation by both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Findings from the assessment of children's literacy

As reported in Chapter 4, children's literacy achievements were assessed using the Sheffield Early Literacy Development Profile (SELDP) (see Appendix 2) at the start of the programme and at the end of the programme (just before children started in the reception class at school). The SELDP assesses children's awareness of environmental print, book knowledge and early writing skills. The following table (Table 9.1) shows, the children's gender, age at assessment and pre-programme scores.

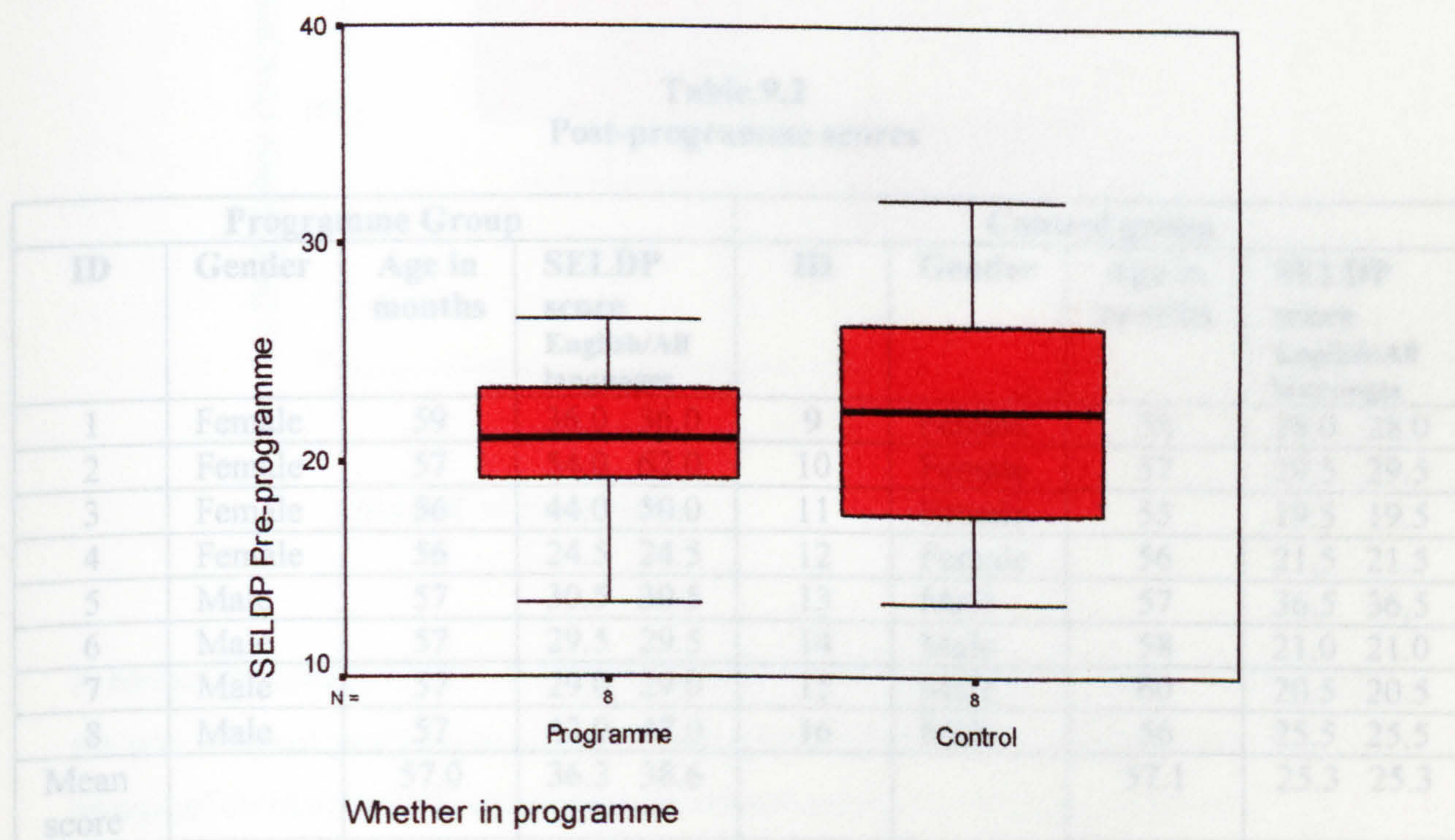
Table 9.1
Pre-programme scores

Programme Group				Control Group			
ID	Gender	Age in months	SELDP score English/All languages	ID	Gender	Age in months	SELDP score English/All languages
1	Female	46	19.5 19.5	9	Female	46	22.0 22.0
2	Female	44	24.5 24.5	10	Female	45	26.0 26.0
3	Female	43	21.0 21.0	11	Female	43	26.5 26.5
4	Female	43	19.0 19.0	12	Female	43	22.5 22.5
5	Male	45	26.5 26.5	13	Male	45	32.0 32.0
6	Male	45	19.0 22.0	14	Male	45	19.0 19.0
7	Male	44	13.5 13.5	15	Male	43	13.5 13.5
8	Male	41	21.0 21.0	16	Male	40	16.0 16.0
Mean Score		43.8	20.5 20.9			43.8	22.2 22.2

The list of children in Table 9.1 shows the pairing which was used prior to random allocation. Thus numbers 1 and 9 were a pair formed by matching on the basis of gender, then age and SELDP scores. The child subsequently numbered '1' was allocated to the experimental group on the toss of a coin (and the other child became '9' in the control group).

As can be seen from Table 9.1, by placing children in pairs that were the same gender, similar age, and similar SELDP scores, and then randomly allocating one child from each pair to the programme group (the other then being in the control group) resulted, as intended, in very similar mean scores for each group at the start of the programme. Differences in the pre-programme scores of the two groups were compared by the Mann-Whitney U test and found to be statistically insignificant, as would be expected by the random allocation.

SELDP pre-programme scores for each group



The boxes in Figure 9.1 represent the scores from the 25th percentile to the 75th percentile in each group, the black line across each box represents the median score and the horizontal lines at the top and bottom of the whiskers represent the highest and lowest scores. (There were no outliers or extreme scores in either group so all 16 scores are represented in the plot.) Figure 9.1 illustrates that, at the beginning of the programme,

the control group had a somewhat wider range of scores than the programme group. The lowest score was the same, with the median also being extremely close (21 compared to 22). This closer, more visual, analysis of SELDP scores confirms the impression given by the similarity in means, that the two groups were essentially very similar before the programme.

Post-programme scores on the SELDP at the end of the term before the children started in reception class are shown in Table 9.2. This now shows clearly the higher SELDP scores in both English and all the child's home languages for the programme group compared to the control group (as reported in Chapter 4, children scored also for knowledge of their home writing system).

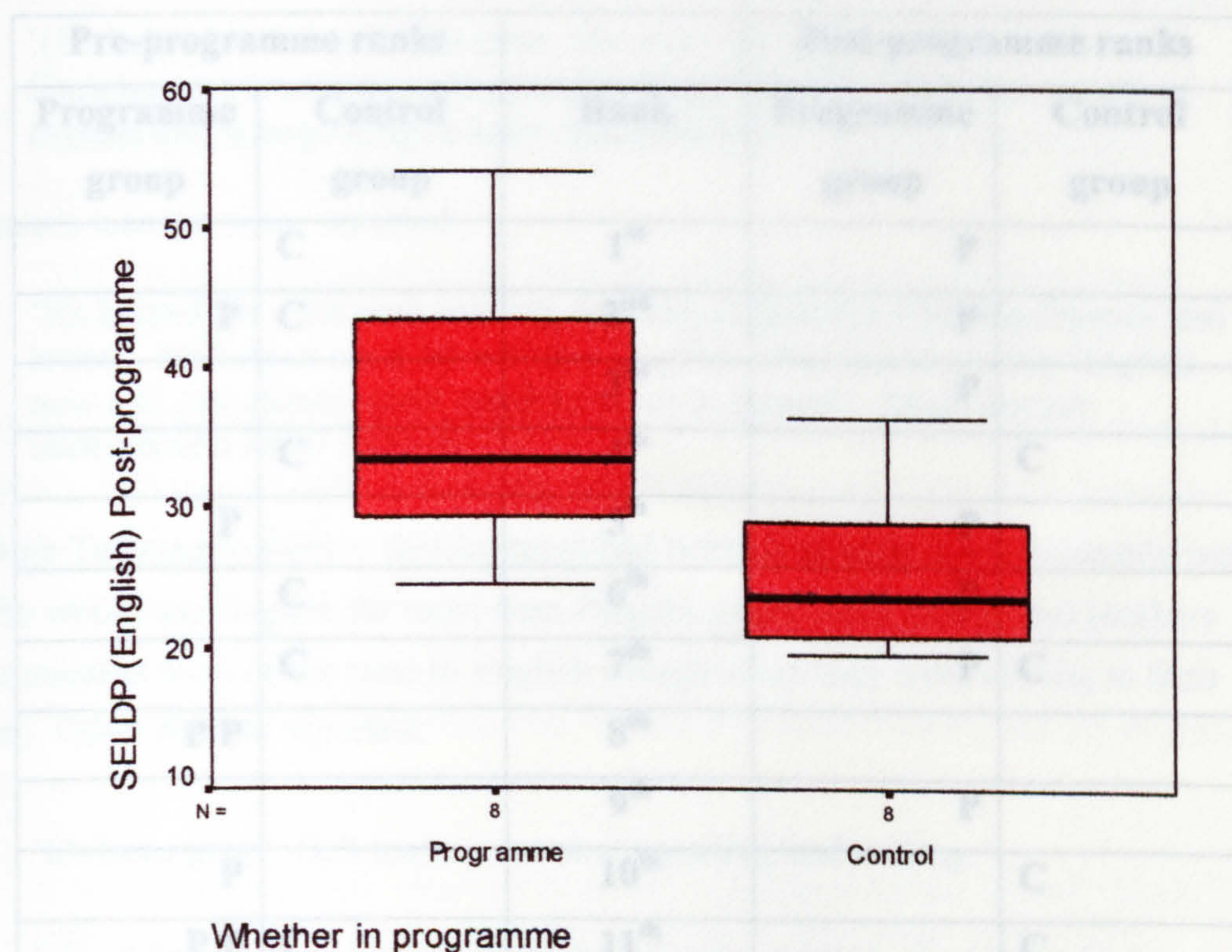
Table 9.2
Post-programme scores

Programme Group				Control group			
ID	Gender	Age in months	SELDP score English/All languages	ID	Gender	Age in months	SELDP score English/All languages
1	Female	59	36.0 36.0	9	Female	58	28.0 28.0
2	Female	57	54.0 62.0	10	Female	57	29.5 29.5
3	Female	56	44.0 50.0	11	Female.	55	19.5 19.5
4	Female	56	24.5 24.5	12	Female	56	21.5 21.5
5	Male	57	30.5 30.5	13	Male	57	36.5 36.5
6	Male	57	29.5 29.5	14	Male	58	21.0 21.0
7	Male	57	29.0 29.0	15	Male	60	20.5 20.5
8	Male	57	43.0 47.0	16	Male	56	25.5 25.5
Mean score		57.0	36.3 38.6			57.1	25.3 25.3

The boxplots shown in Figure 2 present a powerful picture of the gains made by the children in the programme group.

The statistical significance of the difference in scores between the two groups was $p = 0.015$. The samples are small but the difference is so great, that the Mann-Whitney U Test shows that this is most unlikely to have arisen by chance.

Figure 9.2
SELDP post-programme scores for each group



A further illustration (Table. 9.3) demonstrates clearly the difference in the rankings of the pre- and post-programme scores of each group. Before the programme, the two groups of children were fairly evenly distributed across the rankings. After the programme, the high rankings were more likely to be occupied by programme children. These scores indicate that the programme proved an overall success in enhancing children's literacy achievements when comparing the programme group with the control group using the SELDP as a measure.

Table 9.3

Pre- and post-programme scores by ranks (English scores)

Pre-programme ranks		Rank	Post-programme ranks	
Programme group	Control group		Programme group	Control group
	C	1 st	P	
P	C	2 nd	P	
		3 rd	P	
	C	4 th		C
P		5 th	P	
	C	6 th	P	
	C	7 th	P	C
PP		8 th		
		9 th	P	
P		10 th		C
PP	C	11 th		C
		12 th	P	
		13 th		C
	C	14 th		C
P	C	15 th		C
		16 th		C

Similar analyses were conducted for the SELDP scores in all languages with similar results.

Parents' views of the programme's influence on their child's literacy achievements

All parents said that the programme had helped their child. Mehreen's mother reported how it had helped Mehreen's communication skills as well enhancing other areas of literacy. She said:

'(It's helped her) communication, she was very quiet, now she talks a lot. She's learnt a lot about writing and looking at books. She knows a lot of rhymes and is beginning to know the alphabet.'

Tehseena's teenage sister reported:

'It's helped her a lot with reading, looking at pictures, learning rhymes and letters. It's helped her a lot with her English. She speaks mostly English now and sometimes won't speak to mum in Punjabi. Mum doesn't understand a lot of English.'

Although Tehseena's literacy development had been enhanced, it was probably inevitable that she would use English far more than Punjabi as her older sisters and brothers communicated most of the time in English except when they were talking to their mother. Other parents reported:

'It's been good. He's learnt a lot about reading and writing.'

'He understands a lot more now about books, writing, rhymes and a lot more English.'

'Did good for him. He knows to look after things well - the things you left he looked after.'

EVALUATION IN RELATION TO PROGRAMME AIM 4:

To heighten parents' awareness of the family's role in children's literacy development.

Programme parents were asked, as part of the interview held just after their child entered reception class, whether they thought the programme had made a difference to what they did when the programme teacher was not there. All programme parents, except one, who due to domestic circumstances was often 'too busy', said the programme had made a

difference. The mother who was 'too busy' had supported her child between visits by at least, sharing alphabet and nursery rhyme videos with her, but was conscious that she was unable to do as much as she would have liked.

Two families also said the programme had affected what they did with their other children and their comments are reported below. In three families all other children were in secondary school so the content of the programme would not have been appropriate.

'Yes (it did affect what we've done). They've wanted to write and read more and listen to the tapes and videos. They all recorded themselves singing nursery rhymes.'

'Yes. I understand more now. I and the family didn't do the things with Usmaan (a seven-year old son) before because I didn't know as much.'

Questions were asked in interviews about the parents' view of their role in their child's education. Both programme and control group parents were asked how important they felt their contribution before school was, to how well their child would do in the next year or two in school.

All mothers in the programme group said the family's contribution was important or very important. In addition four parents had this to say:

'I think it's important. She can write her own name before school. She's learnt how to use a book. She takes interest in her sister's work. She knows what it will be like in school.'

'Very important. What you did helped me to help him.'

'It's important what they do at home because a teacher's got a lot of children to see and we can help a lot.'

'Yes, if you teach him at home, he will learn quickly in school.'

Six out of eight of the control group parents felt their role before school was important. The other two control group parents felt they did not do much to help their child at home, although one of these parents did say she read stories everyday to all three children. Perhaps she did not recognise that this was helping her preschool child in his early

literacy development. She said she spent more time with her seven-year-old son who was about to take his SATS (compulsory Statutory Assessment Tasks at age seven, eleven and fourteen in the UK). She was not too concerned about concentrating on the younger child as she felt the younger children would learn from the older one. Her view was that 'they learn more from older children than from adults' and indeed, research by Baghban (1994) suggested that children's reading achievement was enhanced more by interaction with siblings than by interaction with adults.

One control group parent mentioned the importance of the family's contribution to her daughter's bilingual development. She said:

'She's learnt in English and Punjabi at home and that's helped her for when she goes to school. Her English is getting better.'

Another parent, who had taken a one-year training course in Pakistan to be a teacher, made a conscious contribution to her daughter's literacy development. She said:

'We helped her with writing her name and reading books and it's important for when the teacher asks her to do things at school. She knows her ABC but gets a bit muddled sometimes.'

I was interested to find out whether the parents would speak to their child's reception teacher about what they had done at home. Only two mothers in each group said they would share the child's home experiences with the teacher. One mother in the programme group said the teacher had not asked her what she did at home, so felt it was not her place to tell her.

All parents were asked how they would explain to their child what *use* it is to be able to read and write well. Programme parents all said it was good for their education. Two said they would be able to read books and three said they need to read and write to learn. One parent said, "So she can read and write books and letters." - letters to and from Pakistan being an important part of the culture. One parent said she would make it clear that being able to read and write would enable her child to have the chance of a good education. She said:

'My son has just done his degree and all of them (girls and boys) can have the chance if they want it but they need to work hard.'

A teenage daughter in another family said:

'I tell him a lot. He always says he wants a big car, so I tell him he has to learn to read and write and get good grades at school and then he'll get a good job.'

Two of the control group parents said they did not need to explain what use it was to read and write well. One said her young daughter saw the older children learning and could see it was important, in other words, she saw them as a model and the other mother felt her daughter 'understands she will get better and read on her own eventually.' Another mother knew it was important but did not know why. The grandmother added, "If you haven't got education you haven't got anything in your life."

Two more control group parents reported:

'Education is important for their life and the job they get. It is important for girls and boys.'

'I tell him about my relations who have been to college and university and tell him that when he grows up it is good to have had a good education for a good job and it's just nice to have.'

One control group mother whose child had been diagnosed as having special needs, could only focus on the next steps in his life. She said:

'At the moment, I'm focusing on getting him into school. I say if you learn to write your name you can go into school and you can stay sandwiches like your cousin.'

All parents, then, whether they had taken part in the programme or not, said it was important for children to have a good education and to learn to read and write well. This finding agrees with the findings from the family literacy survey reported in Chapter 6. However, all the eight programme mothers were able to explain to their child why it was useful for children to be able to read and write well, compared with five of the control group mothers. More parents, then, in the programme group were sufficiently aware to be able to explain to their child what *use* it is to be able to read and write.

There was no difference between programme and control group mothers in their expectations of how well their child would do in reading and writing at school. All except one in each group were confident their child would do well. One programme parent was unsure and the parent of the special needs child reserved judgement. She said:

‘Sometimes he's very interested but sometimes he gets bored and he won't do anything. I think he'll be interested.’

Both groups, generally then, had high expectations of how well their children would perform in school in reading and writing. This also agrees with the findings from the survey of family literacy in this community reported in Chapter 6. There was a slightly stronger feeling from the programme parents that their contribution before school was important and this group was more aware of, and more emphatic about, the contribution they made.

All programme mothers said the programme made a difference to *them* apart from affecting the child. Four parents said they had ‘learnt a lot’ - others added:

‘It's given me more confidence about what I wanted to do - and do the certificate.’

‘t was good, especially for me, because I haven't been to this kind of school here.’

Four out the eight parents said they would deal with teachers differently in school now. They commented:

‘Yes, I'll know how to talk to teachers because you've helped me to understand more.’

‘I'll tend to ask more questions.’

‘Yes, if he wasn't learning. I feel I can talk to them.’

‘Yes. I'll go ask teachers now. I'm more confident.’

In two families, mothers said they would not talk to teachers differently as the mothers did not take their children to school or collect them. Other members of the family did the school trip and attended parents' evenings. These were the two mothers who spoke and

understood the least English. One mother, whose husband was a lecturer, said she would not speak to teachers differently due to the programme. She already spoke to them frequently and was reasonably confident in their presence.

EVALUATION IN RELATION TO AIM 5:

To facilitate parents' access to adult education.

Although parents' training and education opportunities were not the main thrust of the programme or this study, the opportunity to obtain accreditation for their involvement, through the Open College Network, was offered to all programme parents. Details of local Adult Education Courses and support on how to apply for the courses were also provided.

Educational background of mothers

As can be seen from Table 9.4, which shows details of the mothers' education in both the programme and control groups, there is a significant difference in the schooling of mothers within the groups but no significant difference overall between groups. More mothers had higher qualifications in the control group than the programme group, which could indicate that without any support, they were in a better position to help with their children's literacy development.

Table 9.4
Details of mothers' education

	Programme group	Control group
Age on leaving school	1- Did not go to school 1-11yrs -Pakistan 1-15yrs-Britain/Pakistan 2-15yrs-Pakistan 2-16yrs -Britain 1-18yrs-Pakistan	2-Did not go to school 1-11yrs-Pakistan 1-14yrs-Pakistan 3-16yrs-Britain 1-18yrs-Pakistan
No. with qualifications from school	1	2
Kind of qualifications	1-1GCSE-'O'level Art	1-7 GCSE-'O' level equivalent in Pakistan 1-8 GCSE-'O' level equivalent in Pakistan
Highest qualification so far	1- 1GCSE-'O' level Art	1-Further Education(Britain) City & Guilds Computing(level 2) 1-Teacher Training Certificate (1 year training in Pakistan) 1-Further Education(Britain) BTEC-Art & Design

Mothers' interest in adult education and training

The following Table 9.5 shows the number of parents who had attended or showed an interest in attending adult education and training classes. Four of the eight programme mothers expressed an interest in obtaining Open College accreditation and all met at least once in their own homes with the REAL Project facilitator, who offered guidance on how to start a portfolio. However, it appears that it was not possible, due to the time constraints of the facilitator, to meet them on a regular basis in their own homes. They

did not wish to meet as a group, so they did not pursue the completion of their portfolios. This is one instance where the needs of parents in the Pakistani culture were unable to be met and was one of my concerns when offering the opportunity to the mothers.

Table 9.5
Number of mothers interested in adult education and training

	Programme group	Control group
Attended courses/classes prior to project	3	5
Expressed interest in Open College accreditation	4	n/a
Expressed interest in EAL classes	1	0
Expressed interest in EAL learning at home	2	0
Expressed interest in other classes/courses	3	3
Achieved Open College accreditation	0	n/a

Three of the same four programme parents said they would be interested in taking up education courses in the future, one of these parents was interested in learning English as an Additional Language either at home or at classes. A different mother said she would like to learn English as an Additional Language in the home. I contacted SAVTE (the local Association for the Voluntary Teaching of English) for the two parents who said they would like home teaching and a name and telephone number was left with them. One of the programme mothers interested in Open College accreditation said she was also interested in an NVQ in Childcare but her husband was not happy about her attending the FE college so she did not pursue this option. Information and opportunities were offered to all the programme parents.

More of the control group parents had previously attended adult education courses or classes than the programme parents, but the same number expressed an interest in the possibility of attending courses or classes in the future.

WERE THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS ADDRESSED AND PROGRAMME AIMS ACHIEVED?

The evaluation in this chapter addressed one of the research questions in chapter 4 and aims 3,4 and 5 of the programme aims

Research questions

The fourth research question was addressed in this chapter:

Research question 4. What is the value of a bilingual family literacy programme?

This chapter, then, has shown that ‘the value in such a programme’ is in the enhanced literacy achievements of the programme children compared to the control group children and the success of the collaborative approach of educators working with families in the home. By taking into account the Pakistani culture, developing relationships based on mutual trust and valuing the contribution of home to the child’s literacy achievements, a collaborative programme was developed, which benefited both families and the children in the programme. Parents were empowered to contribute more effectively to their child’s early literacy by building on what was already happening in the home. A measure of the degree of success of the programme is that all programme parents felt the programme should be offered to all families with young children.

Programme aims

The following programme aims were discussed in this chapter:

Aim 3. To enhance children's literacy development.

Aim 4. To heighten parents' awareness of the family's role in children's literacy development.

Aim 5. To facilitate parents' access to adult education opportunities.

Aim 3. To enhance children's literacy development.

Findings reported in this chapter indicate Aim 3 was achieved. The assessment of children's literacy using the SELDP showed that children in the programme group made significant gains over those in the control group ($p = 0.015$). Programme parents' views were that their children's literacy achievements had been enhanced.

Aim 4. To heighten parents' awareness of the family's role in children's literacy development.

Findings from the programme parent interviews reported in this chapter indicated that parents and families were more aware of their role in their children's literacy development. Compared with most programme families they were more informed and offered more quality interaction to support their child.

Aim 5. To facilitate parents' access to adult education opportunities.

This aim was achieved insofar as all programme parents were given information about courses to enhance their own education and the possibility of obtaining an Open College accreditation for their work on the programme. Information was given about local Further education Courses and contact was made with the local voluntary organisation that enabled women to learn English as an additional Language in the home. It was not the remit of this study to follow this up so it was left with the voluntary organisation, the REAL project facilitator and parents to pursue this.

Chapter 10 discusses findings from the study with conclusions and implications for practice, policy and theory.

CHAPTER 10

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

This study has explored the nature of family literacy in a Pakistani origin community in Britain, reported on the implementation and development of a family literacy programme with bilingual families and their preschool children, and evaluated that programme. The study arose from my interest in working with parents and home-school links, and was influenced by my previous research into working with parents in an inner-city community (Hirst, 1987; Hirst and Hannon, 1990).

My theoretical stance drew on the work of researchers in the field of early childhood (Goodman, 1980; Hall, 1987; Auerbach, 1989; Clay, 1991; Teale and Sulzby, 1986; Wolfendale, 1996; Nutbrown and Hannon, 1997). Hannon and James (1990) reported that parents may be actively involved in their children's literacy learning and would welcome advice but may believe that teachers are unhappy about involving them in their children's literacy development. Other researchers found that early literacy programmes designed to work with families can benefit both parents and children (Hannon, Weinberger and Nutbrown, 1991; Cairney and Munsie, 1995; Brooks et al. 1996; Weinberger, 1996; Hannon and Nutbrown, 2001).

The issue of cultural practices of the home, which may be different from the cultural practice of school and the influences of the home on bilingual children's literacy development were researched by Heath (1983); Delgado-Gaitan (1990, 1996); Gregory (1993, 1994, 1998); Huss-Keeler (1997); Blackledge (2000); Gregory and Williams (2000) and Kenner (2000).

However, the research studies that have most shaped my research questions are Heath (1983), Delgado-Gaitan (1990), Huss-Keeler (1991) and Gregory (1993, 1998) on literacy and culture in different communities, and Hannon, Weinberger and Nutbrown (1991) and Weinberger (1996) on home-school links to develop preschool children's literacy. The single most influential study for my research questions was probably that of Hannon,

Weinberger and Nutbrown (1991). The commitment of parents to enhancing the literacy development of their preschool children on that project left me wondering whether a similar programme would be feasible with Pakistani origin bilingual families. The design of the programme of work described in Chapter 7 and evaluated in Chapters 8 and 9 was as a result of subsequent collaboration with the Raising Early Achievement in Literacy (REAL) project at The University of Sheffield (Hannon and Nutbrown, 2001).

This study addressed four research questions informed by the research studies mentioned above. Developing research questions 3 and 4 depended on the findings from research questions 1 and 2.

Table.10.1 shows in which chapter each research question has been addressed.

Table 10.1
Where each research question has been addressed

Research Question	Where Addressed
1. What are the family and community literacy contexts of preschool Pakistani origin children's literacy development?	Chapter 6
2. What are parents' views about literacy education for young Pakistani children and possible home-school collaboration?	Chapter 6
3. Is it feasible to develop and implement a family literacy programme with Pakistani origin families before children enter school?	Chapters 7, 8 and 9
4. What is the value of a bilingual family literacy programme?	Chapters 8 and 9

The survey reported in Chapter 6 was conducted to answer research questions 1 and 2. Findings from the survey confirmed that parents were interested in closer involvement with school and provided information on which to base an involvement programme. To develop that programme I took the opportunity to collaborate with the REAL project. The programme reported in Chapter 7 was implemented in the same Pakistani origin community in which I had undertaken the survey. Chapters 7, 8 and 9 addressed research question 3 and Chapters 8 and 9 addressed research question 4.

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY OF FAMILY LITERACY AND OBSERVATIONS OF QU'RANIC CLASSES

The next two sections of this chapter discuss the findings from the survey of family literacy and observations of Qu'ranic classes reported in Chapter 6. The third section discusses how far the findings answered research questions 1 and 2.

Discussion of findings from the survey of family literacy

Certain features distinguished the families in this research topic from those in many other early literacy research studies. These distinguishing features included multilingualism in the home, the presence of many writing systems in the home, the importance of the Muslim religion and the impact of this on the Pakistani culture, and whether gender affected opportunities for higher education of children in this community.

The aims of the survey were as follows:

1. To understand some of the home literacy experiences of preschool children whose first language is Urdu or Punjabi.
2. To be aware of parents' own literacy experiences.
3. To find out about parents' attitudes to education.
4. To discover whether parents would be interested in closer home-school links to enhance their preschool child's early literacy development

Findings showed that all 30 children in the survey were living in a rich print and linguistic environment. Viewed through the ORIM framework families were providing opportunities, recognition, interaction and models that facilitated children's literacy development (Chapter 6).

Referring to the aims, the survey indicated the following findings.

1. Extensive preschool literacy activity in the home and children were in a multilinguistic and print rich environment.
2. Parents own literacy experiences were varied.
3. Parents' aspirations for their children's education were high - in most cases, for girls too.
4. Parents were keen to link with school.

Most parents and families were already supporting their preschool children's early literacy development and were eager to learn more. Although some of the mothers in the local community had never attended school, there seemed more that these mothers and families could do with a greater understanding of early literacy development. There appeared to be great opportunities and a willingness on the part of the parents for families and school to work together.

This survey adds to current research, as it is the only one that has looked at the home literacy activities of preschool Pakistani origin children and their families who are resident in the United Kingdom. It is the only one to look at the Pakistani community (whose mother tongue is Punjabi or Urdu), where such families reside in a country other than their country of origin. It confirms and extends the research of Huss (1991), Delgado-Gaitan (1990,1996), Huss-Keeler (1997), Gregory, (1998,) Blackledge (2000), Gregory and Williams (2000)and Kenner (2000) who have challenged the deficit view held by some educators of the attitudes of ethnic minority families to education. Their studies (of somewhat older primary children, except for Kenner whose research was with preschool children) also found that parents in ethnic minority families (Latino-Mexican, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Turkish, Indian and Thai) were very interested in their child's education and that literacy learning did take place at home. As found in the majority of families in this study, parents were eager to be involved in home-school collaboration but many parents needed a facilitator to enable the first steps to be taken. These issues will be discussed further under 'Conclusion, links with other studies, and implications for practice, policy and theory'.

Gregory (1993, 1996a) found with the Chinese families that their methods of teaching young children, based on their own experiences and practices in China, were very different from the methods taught in school in the western world. Families would need an explanation of 'emergent literacy' theory to understand that it is often acceptable in the western countries if a child's early attempt at reading and writing is not perfect. A child can learn to read through access to books and actually reading, as well as through rote learning of the alphabet and correct formation of letters before encountering a book.

Heath (1983) found that the home literacies in the Trackton community did not enhance literacy learning in school. The families in this study, (like the Trackton community) could not be described as advantaged, but the literacy activities in most of the families in this study (and according to Heath, (1983), unlike the Trackton community) would enhance literacy learning in school. However, there was a wide variation between families in the recognition of the role of the family in the child's early literacy activities, in the understanding of 'emergent literacy' and of the benefits of home-school collaboration. There were clear implications for the role of the school in reaching out to parents (as stated in Chapter 6).

The findings from this survey indicated that if educators want to understand their students' literacy development, they need a greater appreciation of the out-of-school literacy learning in such families. This view is supported by Gregory (1996a), Huss-Keeler (1997), Martin (1999), Blackledge, (2000), Cairney (2000) and Kenner (2000). The survey also indicated that family literacy learning took place in a wide range of settings, including the mosque school, community classes and friends', neighbours' or parents' homes (for Urdu or Qu'ranic classes).

To enable me to be more aware of the literacies that influenced young children's literacy learning in these families, observation of literacy learning in Qu'ranic classes was the next stage of my research. The next section discusses the findings from my observations.

Discussion of findings from the observations of Qu'ranic classes

The children in the Qu'ranic classes were older than the preschool children in this study as they did not normally attend the Mosque school until they were five years of age. All

the children I spoke to on my visit said they enjoyed their Qu'ranic classes and the majority said they preferred them to learning in school. The role of older siblings or more able children as mediators of children's literacy learning for their religious practices was significant in the Qu'ranic classes. Gregory (1998) pointed out that the 'repeating, echoing and choral work' (p.51) of Bangladeshi siblings in her study (based on literacy learning in Qu'ranic classes) seemed alien to Early Years' teachers and yet was not so different from small group work where the teacher repeats the 'scaffolding' offered by peers. She suggested that teachers should embrace the 'finely tuned scaffolding' (p.51) offered by siblings in linguistic minority communities. (The survey of family literacy also indicated the importance of the role of siblings in young children's multilingual and multiliteracy learning.)

The children interviewed in the Qu'ranic classes were eager to learn and had high expectations. There was an unquestioned acceptance of their attendance at classes even though this created a long day during term-time. Many children said they practiced at home and that their parents helped them with their Qu'ranic learning. Comments from the teachers in the Mosque and the neighbourhood classes reflected some of the comments from parents in the survey in terms of family involvement in children's literacy learning – if parents are willing to support their children, their Qu'ranic learning will be enhanced.

Street (1997), treating language and literacy as social practices, suggested that they should be studied 'as they occur naturally in social life, taking account of the context and their different meanings for different cultural groups.' (p.47). Street's earlier studies of Qu'ranic literacies in an Iranian village (Street, 1984), argued that 'maktab' literacy (literacy learnt in the traditional religious schools or 'maktab', where Mullahs delivered Qu'ranic learning) imparted certain skills. Amongst other things, he suggested such skills were learnt as understanding the specific links between speech and print and the significance of format, layout and conventions of presentation for meaning. He also claimed, that, like Heath's 'Mainstream' children (Heath, 1983) 'maktab' students 'were learning attention to books and were being conditioned to apply the information and attitudes learnt in that context to daily life and non-literate experiences.' (Street, 1984, p.156) There is, however, also some similarity, according to Street (1984), with Heath's description of the Roadville children insofar as they, like the 'maktab' students, learnt from their home or community literacy learning that stories were 'true' events. As such,

they would look for moral truths in them and use them as a frame of reference for their sense of morality.

To what extent were the first two research questions addressed?

Findings from the survey of family literacy showed that there was much happening already in these homes to support children's literacy development. The rich family and community contexts of preschool children's literacy development was clearly demonstrated. Parents were clearly interested in their children's education and said they would welcome home school collaboration to further enhance their preschool child's literacy. Research Questions 1 and 2 have therefore been fully addressed.

These findings indicated that a programme to work with families to build on young children's literacy learning at home and in the community would be appropriate. In collaboration with the REAL (Raising Early Achievement in Literacy) project, a programme was implemented to work with a small group of families to enhance young children's literacy development in this Pakistani community. The implementation and processes of the programme have been reported and evaluated. Outcomes for programme parents and children were evaluated in Chapter 9. Comparisons were made with control group families in both chapters 8 and 9 where appropriate.

The following section discusses the findings from the programme evaluation.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS FROM THE PROGRAMME EVALUATION

The findings from the programme indicated that it is possible to implement a programme to work with Pakistani origin families in their own homes to enable young children's literacy development. This programme has demonstrated the value of working, not only with parents, but also with the whole family, especially siblings. The survey of family literacy showed how siblings and older children supported home literacies and this was found to be the case in the programme families. Mothers who had limited literacy skills in English, who had previously thought there was little they could do to help their child, found that they too could support their child's literacy development.

Strengths of the programme evaluation

The strengths of the programme evaluation have been in its research design combining both qualitative and quantitative methods. The experimental design involved a random selection of children. The bilingual assessment of children using the SELDP (Sheffield Early Literacy Development Profile - a profile that uses literacy to assess literacy) ensured that children's home languages were valued and that children could use their preferred language in the assessment. The pairing of children by gender, age and SELDP scores and the tossing of a coin to place one of each pair in the programme group and control group, ensured an unbiased method of allocation for all children. The same assessment instrument was used at the end of the programme, for comparison of the programme group with the control group. The informal method of assessment reduced any anxiety levels that might have impaired performance. Children seemed very relaxed when taking part in the assessments and appeared to regard it as fun. Engaging the co-operation and support of the study school and of the Local Education Authority enabled an acceptable working schedule for the bilingual nursery nurse. She also said that working on the programme enhanced her professional development.

All parents were very supportive and said they appreciated the programme. None dropped out and those that needed to leave the programme for a short while for domestic reasons, returned when circumstances eased. This is a clear indication that the programme was valued and that the collaborative approach to working with families was a success. The programme families appeared to be more knowledgeable and have more varied interaction with their children in most strands of literacy than the control group families. Findings from this programme support the findings of Wagner and Spratt (1988). They found that although parental levels of education seemed more important than socio-economic status as indicators of their ability to contribute to their child's literacy achievement, a full third of mothers of the highest scoring readers in that study had never been to school. Certain beliefs and attitudes strongly predicted their child's beliefs about reading achievement and were not directly related to parental educational levels or socio-economic class. The programme reported here, followed the recommendations of Wagner and Spratt (1988), who argued that teachers and researchers should concentrate on creating and maintaining, positive parental attitudes irrespective of the parents' educational or socio-economic status. Delgado-Gaitan (1990) also strongly

believed that children could succeed academically regardless of family socio-economic and socio-cultural background.

The discussion here and in Chapters 8 and 9 has shown that it is feasible to develop and implement a programme to work with Pakistani families before children enter school. The value in such a programme was in the enhanced literacy achievements of the programme children compared to the control group children as was seen in the results reported in Chapter 9. Parents were empowered to contribute more effectively to their child's early literacy by building on what was already happening in the home. A measure of the degree of success of the programme is that all programme parents felt that involvement in such a programme was beneficial, not only for the child, but in the families increased awareness of their role in their child's literacy development. They also maintained that the programme should be offered to all families with young children.

The programme produced a positive response from families and illustrated how families have been enabled to provide opportunities, recognise their children's achievements, interacted with their children and provided models of literacy. The assessments of the programme children have shown significant outcomes for children in their literacy development compared with the control group children.

Limitations of the programme evaluation

The number of children in the programme was small - 16 in all, eight programme and eight control. If the programme effect had been only a modest one, then it might not have been detectable with such small groups. As the effect turned out to be quite strong, the sample size proved to be adequate. The SELDP has not been standardised so it is difficult to relate these gains to national norms. On the other hand, it was perfectly adequate for determining programme-control differences. It could be argued that the programme teacher and bilingual nursery nurse who worked on the programme were not as appropriate for interviewers or assessors as individuals unconnected with the programme. However, I would argue that we were more likely to get honest and full responses than an independent stranger.

Delgado-Gaitan (1990) pointed out the disadvantages of conducting research in her own culture when she was removed from the community socially but brought with her cultural understanding and was seen to be in a position of power. Similar criticism could be made of me, as I was not part of the culture but could be seen as a teacher and researcher who was also in a position of power. It was hoped that by working closely with a member of the culture and by creating good relationships and a position of mutual trust that these problems were minimised.

Working with an interpreter can be seen as a weakness of the research as one can never be completely sure that interpretations are accurate. However, the bilingual nursery nurse was well informed of the processes and a woman of integrity so, again, everything that could be done was done to ensure accurate responses and a professional approach. For example, she was asked to interpret responses as accurately as possible, offer explanations if she thought parents did not understand questions or the purpose of an activity on home visits (checked out first with me, if appropriate) or offer explanations in simple language to children to ensure they understood activities. As Stenhouse (1975), pointed out, concern should be with the development of a sensitive perspective rather than 'an aspiration towards an unattainable objectivity' (p.157).

Another criticism of this way of evaluating the programme could be that experimental design research offers support to some families and not to others. This is true, but one of the measures of the value of a programme is whether participants have gained, compared with non-participants in a control group. If findings suggest that a programme has been successful, dissemination of the findings to policy makers, schools and researchers could enhance the chance of others benefiting from such a programme. Also, there were never enough resources to provide the programme to all 16 families and random selection of eight was a process which was clear and understandable by families.

A further criticism could be that the hopes of participants were raised, and on going support may not be sustained as children enter school. This is an issue that cannot be resolved in the remit of this study, but the school was given a report of the findings, so it is in their hands as to what kind of continuity, if any, was offered. Parents in the

programme group were at least in a position of having greater confidence as a result of the programme and most said in post-programme interviews that they would contact their child's teacher if the need arose.

Despite the above limitations, this study has documented what has previously been undocumented and the strengths of the study outweigh its limitations.

CONCLUSIONS, LINKS WITH OTHER STUDIES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE, POLICY AND THEORY

This study has outlined the nature of family literacy in a Pakistani community in Britain. It builds on previous research in family literacy and particularly on the role of families in their preschool child's literacy development early literacy and home-school links. It has dealt with the relationship between home literacy and school literacy – a problematic relationship as Hannon (1995) has pointed out:

Those of us who value parental involvement in the teaching of literacy face a dilemma. On the one hand we wish to listen to learn from parents, to respect their language and literacy, and we do not want uncritically to impose school literacy on families. On the other hand, school literacy is our business and it is self-deceiving to imagine that involvement can mean wholly accepting all families' literacies as a *substitute* (my italics) for school literacy. For many families involvement in the teaching of literacy is bound to mean being involved in new and different forms of literacy. (Hannon, 1995, p.150)

These issues were considered in this study. Although home and community languages and literacies were acknowledged and supported (home languages spoken by the interpreter, dual language books, children's written emergent English, Urdu and Arabic encouraged, children's dictated text written in both languages, children's preferred language for assessment), parents said they valued the school literacies (presented informally) that were taken into the home. The following comments by parents confirm this.

‘In school they just work with the children but at home you helped us to understand how to work with our children.’

‘You always brought something for him to do and then I got ideas. It’s been very, very helpful.’

The influence of, and links with, some other studies are illustrated next and how my study is similar to, but different from these. The study reported in this thesis adds to the previous body of knowledge on the literacy learning of bilingual children and on working with parents in the home to enhance their young children’s literacy development. In particular, my research relates to that of researchers whose work was reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3: Adrian Blackledge, Charmian Kenner, Eve Gregory, Concha Delgado-Gaitan, Rebecca Huss-Keeler, Trevor Cairney and Hannon, Weinberger and Nutbrown.

Blackledge (2000) and Kenner (2000) highlighted the contribution that ethnic minority families can make to their children’s school literacies, by sharing with teachers their knowledge of children’s home literacy experiences. Both of these studies took place in school, Blackledge worked with 18 Bangladeshi origin six-year-olds and their parents, Kenner worked in nursery with preschool children and their parents from varied ethnic origins, for example, Thai, Turkish and Indian. Both researchers challenged the deficit view of many educators, that ethnic minority families are not interested in their children’s education. They found that it was possible to work collaboratively with ethnic minority families in school.

My study was similar to the studies by Blackledge (2000) and Kenner (2000) as it also challenged the deficit view of ethnic minority families held by some educators and also found that it was possible to collaborate with such families. My emphasis, however, was to develop a programme to work with Pakistani origin families and their preschool children at home. Kenner acknowledged that she would have learnt more if she had gone into the homes of the families and out into the community to find out about the children’s home and community literacy experiences. Blackledge did investigate children’s home literacy experiences by interviewing families at home. My study included such interviews and also visits to children’s Qu’ranic classes to find out about the influence of religion and the culture on home and community literacies. My study also addressed

children's pre-programme and post-programme achievements in literacy. Blackledge (2000) and Kenner (2000) did not address such issues.

My study both complements and adds to the work of Gregory. She reported on the different literacy learning practices of children from other cultures (Gregory, 1993; 1996a; 1996b; 1997; 1998; and Gregory and Williams, 2000) and how teachers should be aware of these and encompass strategies that are compatible with learning to read in other cultures. Her work with children of primary school age concerns observations of a Chinese child in the reception class but mainly concerns 5, 6 and 7-year-old children from the British-Bangladeshi community. Gregory involved older siblings in one of her studies of British-Bangladeshi children (Gregory, 1998). She observed the 'scaffolding' strategies of older siblings in home reading sessions with younger children in the family. She was interested in how they might transfer these strategies to school and whether the teachers might build on them. Gregory worked with older children than the children in my study and concentrated on the technical skills in learning to read. She did not work in the home but encouraged siblings to bring their home reading practices into school. My study adopts a more informal and wider approach to early literacy with emerging bilingual preschool children and their families in the home, through book-sharing, early writing, environmental print and phonological awareness. It is more action-oriented with parents and siblings in the community and adopts the ORIM framework as a model for informing and working with families. There are similarities between my study and Gregory's work. She addresses the children's Mosque literacy learning and the impact it has on their literacy learning in school. I was eager to learn about older siblings' Mosque literacy learning to find out whether it might impact on the observed home literacies of the preschool children (which it did).

Delgado-Gaitan's study of family literacy with bilingual Mexican-American children (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992) involved finding out about literacy practices in the home (such as oral story-telling with young children, letter writing, sharing popular Spanish books and stories) but provided little evidence of such activities. She reported more on the narrow view of home literacy that concentrated on formal school-based literacy tasks such as were presented in homework. She did, however, acknowledge that home literacy events that occurred naturally outside school could be incorporated into classroom activities. My study both complements and adds to the research of Delgado-Gaitan by providing details of the activities in the home programme and school based meetings in which parents were actively involved both alongside the teacher and nursery nurse and

separately between visits and meetings. My study also aimed to enhance parents' awareness of their role in their children's literacy learning.

Delgado-Gaitan stressed the importance of parental involvement in preschool and awareness of the school culture. She found that the skills parents acquired in preschool stayed with them as their children progressed through school. She claimed that in the preschools of Carpentaria, where working with parents was mandatory, positive and lasting effects were observed both in the parents' involvement and in the children's achievements.

Delgado-Gaitan was concerned with empowerment of parents and the need to enable them to overcome their fear and ignorance about the school system so that they could be encouraged to participate in their children's education and even be part of the managing body of the school. My study addresses and certainly encourages and enables Pakistani parents and families to participate in their children's education but addresses empowerment to a lesser degree. Programme parents in my study, as reported in Chapter 9, appeared to be in a better position to support their child's literacy development and many said in post-programme interviews, that they would feel confident to approach school, either to discuss their child's education, or if they had concerns about their child's progress. It was not the remit of my study to facilitate empowerment of parents to be part of, for example, the school governing body.

Huss-Keeler (1997) suggested that Pakistani origin parents had high aspirations and were very interested in their children's progress in school and were involved in supporting their children at home in the Pakistani culture. My findings provide evidence on this point in my survey of family literacy, but also, that parents supported their young children's literacy learning. Huss-Keeler reported negative views of the teachers in school of the children's home learning environment until the teachers made a home visit and saw positive experiences in the home. Their views then changed about families and they were in a better position to view children in a different light. As a result the children's learning opportunities were enhanced. Huss-Keeler claimed that rather than take school practices into the home or concentrate on parents working in school, teachers should value the interactions of parents and family members in everyday life and class this as parental involvement too. However, adopting this stance does not put parents in a better position to enhance their child's learning. Huss-Keeler visited the homes and encouraged children to share their home experiences in class but she did not work with

parents. Although there are similarities between my study and the study by Huss-Keeler in valuing and acknowledging the children's home culture and learning, my study has shown how working with parents and families in the home can encourage and enable families to be actively involved in school literacies also. Even those parents with limited literacy themselves can feel confident to contribute to their young child's literacy development.

Cairney's project 'Talk to a Literacy Learner' (TTAL) (Cairney and Munsie, 1995), was relevant to my study as it focused on parents who may have received limited education themselves and also on their interactions with their children as they learnt to read and write. Although not addressing ethnic minority parents, it has similarities to my study insofar as it outlined one way of closely involving parents in their children's literacy learning while at the same time, developing closer links between home and school. The TTAL programme took place in school and involved parents of preschool and older primary children. However, some of the aims were very similar to my study, (for example, increasing parental participation in the literacy activities of their children, changing the nature of adult-child interactions as children read and write, introducing parents to a range of literacy practices that are related to success in schooling). Other aims were not part of my study. My study, therefore, complements the study reported by Cairney and Munsie (1995) but also provides an additional focus by working mainly in the homes with bilingual families of preschool children as well as a few school-based meetings.

The Sheffield Early Literacy Development project (Hannon, Weinberger and Nutbrown, 1991) was one of the greatest influences on this study. As forerunner and feasibility study of the joint University and LEA Raising Early Achievement in Literacy (REAL) project (Hannon and Nutbrown, 2001), it aimed to promote practical ways of working with parents with preschool children. Using the ORIM framework (Hannon, 1995) it provided *opportunities* for early literacy development, attempted to change parents' *interaction* with their children, increase parents' *recognition* of their children's preschool literacy achievements and increase parents' awareness of how they could act as models of literacy. The focus was on certain strands of literacy (environmental print, writing and book-sharing) but no direct attempt was made to increase children's literacy achievement. Pre-programme and post-programme interviews were conducted. Participation levels were high with no 'drop outs'. Home-based methods were more effective than school-based methods, especially on book sharing. The positive results of

this study and my involvement in the post-programme interviews added to my interest in working with parents in the home to enhance their children's literacy development. This project and the subsequent collaboration with colleagues of the University of Sheffield REAL project have shown the feasibility of working with monolingual parents in the home. My study has added to the Sheffield Early Literacy Development study by working with bilingual families, including pre-programme and post-programme assessments and including an extra strand of literacy (phonological awareness). It has shown the feasibility of such an action-oriented programme and the impact on parents and children. It has also shown the feasibility the ORIM framework as a useful tool for working with bilingual families and their preschool children.

Empowerment, cultural identity and the impact of religion on children's literacy experiences were all issues that were addressed in this study. Martin (1999) argues that, to effectively liaise with linguistic minority parents and families, the expertise of many minority parents in languages and literacies other than English should be recognised and a process should be devised that empowers them to support their children's learning. This programme has addressed these issues and has gone some way towards a process of empowerment to enable families to support their young children's literacy learning.

This thesis has not addressed the issue of the acquisition of additional languages. This seems to be a far greater problem to theorists than to those who are in the process of naturally becoming bilingual or multilingual. One father reported in the survey of family and community literacy (reported in Chapter 6) had this to say about his child becoming bilingual:

'We talk in Urdu and then in English with him if something is new to him—new places—for example, farms animals, museums. It's not a skill learning two languages. Children learn two languages instinctively. British people have the concept that it's a skill because they're monolingual and insular on this little island. Children learn from their peer group, parents and teachers. Two languages are very easy if children are in that environment.'

Children in the Mosque were asked whether they were ever confused learning three languages, Urdu, Arabic and English simultaneously when their home language may be Punjabi. Much depended on the languages spoken at home. The six-year-old said he did mix up the languages (code-switching) but the 12-year-old said:

'It's not confusing. Urdu is learnt from Urdu books and Arabic from the Qu'ran.'

A 13-year-old girl said she did not get confused as Urdu was spoken mostly at home. The multilingual and multiliterate environment has been addressed in this study but with reports such as these from those who are learning the languages or are teaching their children several languages, it did not seem necessary to make the process of acquisition of additional languages a main focus of the study.

This study has, however, in accordance with other researchers, challenged the 'deficit hypothesis' theory associated with becoming or being bilingual (Hazareesingh, 1994; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Gregory, 1997; Martin, 1999; Blackledge, 2000; Gregory and Williams, (2000) and Kenner, 2000). Martin (1999) pointed out that the deficit hypothesis proposes that 'emerging bilinguals bring little or nothing' to learning about literacy. It may also extend to the literacy and language learning of the home where parents are seen as 'being 'illiterate' and not providing or being able to provide, literacy experiences for their children' (p.68). The study reported here adds to the body of research that opposes the deficit theory and supports cultural diversity and achievement. It has shown that Pakistani family members who are bilingual, or emerging bilinguals, not only can, but are also keen to contribute to their children's literacy development.

It cannot be denied that children do need to belong the 'literacy club' (Smith, 1988). Robertson (1997) pointed out that there are, however, many different 'reading clubs' or communities that bilingual children need to belong to and that 'the process of joining in (the school 'reading club') may be a highly complicated social and cultural issue' (p.174). Being part of a preschool (or school) programme such as the one reported in this study, which involved being introduced to the school 'reading club' alongside children's own interests and culture, could make this a less 'complicated social and cultural issue'.

Working with families in the home is expensive and needs resourcing, in terms of time, materials and educators. However, if such programmes do indeed enhance children's literacy development, a long term view needs to be taken of the resources involved in support given to children at a later stage in their education if they are not achieving. It

may be a worthwhile investment and ‘value for money’ for community educators to engage in home-school links with preschool children and their families. What is needed now is a follow-up study of the children studied here and a large-scale collaborative study with Pakistani origin families and educators to enhance the early literacy attainment of preschool bilingual children.

The study reported here has shown that both the ‘social-contextual’ model and the ‘transmission’ model (Auerbach (1989) can be combined in a successful programme with Pakistani families which enhances young children’s literacy learning. I was aware of the home literacy practices in the family and aimed to build on these while enhancing and introducing some of the less formal ‘school’ practices. Such practices involved book sharing, writing for purpose and pleasure, environmental print awareness, phonological awareness through rhymes and the alphabet and talk about literacy. The culture and languages of the family, with the support of Shaheen Khan (the Pakistani bilingual nursery nurse) were taken into account throughout the programme and all activities were entered into in a relaxed atmosphere with an element of fun.

My study is unique insofar as no one appears to have undertaken a study working with Pakistani origin families in the home to enhance their preschool child’s literacy development. Previous studies have undertaken research with monolingual children but this study has made a contribution to research with bilingual Pakistani origin families and their young children’s literacy development. It shows that such work is possible, that families responded positively and there were significant gains in the programme children’s literacy development compared with the control group children. The families in this study were not hand-picked. One of its strengths was that from a random selection, the parents and families have shown to be committed, resourceful, responsive and knowledgeable. Although a small-scale study, the nature of the close-knit Pakistani community and the results of the survey indicated that the findings could be generalised to a larger group.

I conclude with a summary of what I believe to be the key findings from research reported in this thesis.

Findings from the survey of family literacy indicated

- extensive preschool literacy activity in the home and children were in a multilinguistic and print rich environment
- parents own literacy experiences were varied
- parents' aspirations for their children's education were high - in most cases, for girls too
- parents were keen to link with school.

Findings indicated that a programme to work with families to build on young children's literacy learning at home and in the community was appropriate.

Findings from the observations of Qu'ranic classes indicated that:

- children's Qu'ranic classes appeared to impact on the lives of the children who attended, and it seemed that this influence on children's literacy learning was taken into the home.

Findings from the programme indicated that:

- it is possible to work with a representative group of families from the community to enhance the child's literacy development over a period of between 10 and 14 months.
- programme parents' views were that their children's literacy achievements had been enhanced.
- children in the programme group made significant gains over those in the control group.

It is my hope that the research reported in this thesis will help those concerned with early childhood education in bilingual communities, by showing families' capacity to enhance young children's literacy development through collaboration with practitioners.

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Appendix 1

The ORIM framework (Hannon and Nutbrown, 1997)

The ORIM Framework

Strands of Early Literacy Experience

		<i>Environmental Print</i>	<i>Books</i>	<i>Writing</i>	<i>Oral Language</i>
<i>Parents can Provide</i>	<i>Opportunities</i>				
	<i>Recognition</i>				
	<i>Interaction</i>				
	<i>Model</i>				

Appendix 2

Interview schedule for the survey of family literacy

Interview schedule for the survey of family literacy

Checklist for families to establish the opportunities, recognition, interaction and models of literacy in the home

1. Child's name, date of birth, sex and where born.
2. Family structure, number of siblings and ages.
3. Other significant care-givers and their occupations
4. Pre-school experience outside the home.
5. Child health problems.
6. Home language(s) 1 2 3
 Languages child speaks 1 2 3
7. Can you tell me something about _____'s interest in books and stories? (In which language) for example?
 Does anyone read to _____? Yes/No

<u>Language</u>	<u>Language</u>	<u>Language</u>
Mother	Sibling	Other
Father	Grandparent	
8. When _____ is read to, whose idea is it?
 Does it come from him/her, or from someone else or both?
 Child Someone else Both
9. Does _____ join in when read to? (e.g. by telling you things, asking questions?)
 Yes/No.
 If yes give examples and in which languages
10. What kind of reading material does _____ look at?

<u>Languages</u>	<u>Languages</u>
Picture books	Mail order catalogues
Story books	Comics
Magazines	Any other (religious?)
11. Age of child when parent or other person began sharing books and/or telling stories and in which languages.
12. Do you or does anyone else ask questions as you look at books together? (e.g. What's that? Where's the _____? What happened next?) Yes/No
 In which language(s)?

27. Does _____ ever visit Mosque school or see others reading Arabic?
Does s/he try to do the same?
28. Does _____ look after/respect books?
29. Are messages written at home which _____ may see and pretend to read e.g. shopping lists, cards, notes for family members to each other.
In which language(s)?
30. Whether people in the family enjoy reading to _____ ?
If so whom and in which languages?
31. Does _____ see family members reading?
Which family members?
Reading what?
In which languages?
32. Do members of the family involve _____ in their own reading and writing e.g. messages, form filling, cards.

Can I ask about drawing and writing now?

33. Does _____ like to make marks on paper, scribble or draw? Yes/No
How often?
Several times a day Daily
Few times a day Less than once a week
34. Does _____ make circular or up and down marks?
In any particular direction? R-->L L-->R
35. Does _____ ever pretend to write and say "I'm writing" or "That's my name" etc.?
36. Does _____ make letter-like marks, string of letters or words from any written language? Which language(s)?
37. Does _____ ever dictate what they want to be written? In which languages?
38. Which family members draw or write with _____ if any?
Examples and languages
Who suggests drawing or writing with _____ ? Child Other
39. Do any family members involve _____ in their own writing? For example, cards, messages etc., teaching Urdu etc.
40. Does _____ see other family members writing?
If so what and in which languages?

41. Has anybody ever bought, made or borrowed anything to help _____ to learn to read or write? For example, chalkboard, letters, activity books, crayons, books for writing in.
42. Does anyone suggest drawing or writing with _____ ?
If so whom and in which languages?
43. Do you think the family can help a child to learn to read and write?
In which languages
44. Do you think home (the family) and school can work together to help children to read and write?
45. Do you think any of the languages _____ is exposed to are more important or given greater emphasis at home than others in
(a) speaking
(b) reading
(c) writing
46. Has the family received any help in the teaching of reading and writing in any of the languages?
- 46(a). Would you like to see more help from school?
If so would you like
(a) in the home
(b) to come into school for help
(c) both (help in the home and to come to school)

Oracy (Talking and listening)

47. Is _____ ever told stories without books? Yes/No
Or real life experiences e.g. life in Pakistan, stories about parent's childhood
If so by whom and in which languages
48. Is _____ spoken to while helping with domestic tasks or while playing with/looking after young children?
If so in which languages?
By whom?
49. Has _____ heard nursery rhymes at home?
If so in which languages, which rhymes, from which age
50. What is the level of _____'s language?
English Punjabi Urdu
Single words/labelling

63. Are all grandparents in this country?
If so where?
Where born?
64. Any extended family (aunts/uncles/cousins) in this country?
If so where?
Does _____ see them regularly?
65. Any extended family in Pakistan?
How often does _____ see them?
66. Were all of your children born in Sheffield?
If not, which in Pakistan/elsewhere
Are all of your children living with you, if not where?
67. Father's occupation (or latest) if unemployed?
Mother's occupation (or latest)?
68. Whether parents went to school in Pakistan/Sheffield/elsewhere?
69. Whether parents own, rent home or live with relatives?
70. Mother and father's school leaving age and qualifications held?
71. Your own memories on literacy experiences
at home
at Mosque
at school
elsewhere
72. Do you have any hopes for _____'s education?
What level would you like him/her to reach?
Is that the same for all your children, boys and girls?
73. Anything else you would like to add?

Appendix 3

The Sheffield Early Literacy Development Profile score sheet
(Nutbrown, 1997, pp.124-130)

Appendix 1

Score sheet

Early Literacy Development Profile - Score sheet - 1997 Version

Child's first name	
Date of birth	
Date of Profile	
Age at testing	years months

Note: PS = Possible score AS = Actual score achieved by the child

Part 1: Environmental Print

Task 1: Identifying print in the outdoor environment

Show the child the set of colour photographs of street scenes. Ask the following in this order:

No.	Question	PS	AS
1	What can you see in the pictures?	0	
2	Can you point to some signs, some words, in the pictures?	1	
3	What are signs for? (simple 1) more detailed (2)	1 or 2	
4	Do you know what any of these signs say? (simple 1 detailed 2)	1 or 2	
Total		5	

Task 2: Identifying words and logos

Picture	What is this?	PS	AS	PS	AS	PS	AS	PS	AS	Total
Weetabix		1		1		1		1		
Coca Cola		1		1		1		1		
Walkers Crisps		1		1		1		1		
Persil Washing Powder		1		1		1		1		
Fairy Liquid		1		1		1		1		
Raw total										
Divide by 2 for actual score										

Add the total scores for each row. Total all the scores in the total boxes on the right hand side of the table. Insert the 'raw' score. Divide by 2 for the actual score for Task 2. Maximum score 10 points.

Task 3: Decontextualised print

Word	PS	AS	PS	AS
Weetabix			1	
Coca Cola			1	
Walkers			1	
Persil			1	
Fairy			1	
Total			5	

Part 1: Environmental Print - Possible score 20 Child's score

Part 2: Book Knowledge
Task 1: Knowing about books

No. Question	PS	AS
1 Pass me the book please?	1	
2 Do you know what this is for? What do we do with a book?	1	
3 Show me the front of the book.	1	
4 Show me a page in the book.	1	
5 Show me a picture.	1	
6 Show me the words.	1	
7 Show me just one word.	1	
8 Show me just one letter.	1	
9 Show me the letter 'c' (say letter name).	1	
10 What letter is this (point to 'b')?	1	
11 Show me a full stop on this page.	1	
12 Show me a capital letter on this page.	1	
Maximum score 12 points		score

Task 2: Using books, retelling stories

No. Question	PS	AS
1 Who is in the story? (one character 1-2+ score 2)	2	
2 How does the story begin? brief description score 1 more detailed score 2	2	
3 What happens in the story? brief description score 1 more detailed score 2	2	
4 How does the story end? brief description score 1 more detailed score 2	2	
Maximum score 8 points		score
Part 2: Book Knowledge - Possible score 20		Child's score

Part 3: Early Writing
Task 1: Identifying and knowing about writing

No. Question	PS	AS
1 Fester writes in front of the child. Do you know what I am doing?	1	
2 Do you know what writing is for?	1	
3 Show the 5 cards: (1,2,3,4,5). Which one of these is writing?	1	
Maximum score 3 points		score

Task 2: Writing

Child does a sample of writing, score after the child has left the room as follows:

	PS	AS
Making any line of marks	1	
Making letter-like marks	1	
Writing conventional letters	1	
Writing left to right	1	
Writing from top to bottom	1	
Maximum score 5 points		score

Ask the child to write his or her name, score as follows:

	PS	AS
Name correctly written	1	
PLUS beginning name with capital letter	1	
Maximum score 7 points		score

Task 3: Writing words

	PS	AS
1 word written (spelled) correctly apart from own name	1	
2-4 words written (spelled) correctly	2	
5 words written (spelled) correctly	3	
Maximum score 3 points		score

Score sheet - Part 3 Task 4 Write all the letters you know

a b c d e f g h i j
 k l m n o p q r s t
 u v w x y z

A B C D E F G H I J
 K L M N O P Q R S T
 U V W X Y Z

Total number of letters written

Score (see scale below)

Name _____

Date _____

Letters written	Scoring scale score
1-5	1 point
6-10	2 points
11-15	3 points
16-25	4 points
26-32	5 points
33-44	6 points
45-52	7 points

Task 3: Writing letters

Number of letters written	PS	AS
1-5	OR 1	
6-10	OR 2	
11-15	OR 3	
16-25	OR 4	
26-32	OR 5	
33-44	OR 6	
45-52	OR 7	
Maximum score	OR 7	

Part 3: Early Writing - Possible score 20

Child's score

**Sheffield Early Literacy Development
Profile score sheet summary**

Part	Focus	PS	AS
1	Environmental Print	20	
Task 1	Identifying print in the outdoor environment	5	
Task 2	Identifying words and logos	10	
Task 3	Decontextualised print	5	
2	Book Knowledge	20	
Task 1	Knowing about books	12	
Task 2	Using books - retelling stories	8	
3	Early Writing	20	
Task 1	Identifying and knowing about writing;	7	
Task 2	Writing	7	
Task 3	Writing words	3	
Task 4	Writing letters	7	
Total score for Profile		60	

REMEMBER TO ATTACH THE WRITING SAMPLE TO THE SCORE SHEET

Tester's Comments

Note briefly any points which were of particular mention in the administration on this occasion e.g. anything; you did which may have influenced the outcomes, any interruptions, the child refusing to continue and subsequent abandonment of the Profile etc.

Time taken to administer the Profile minutes,

This includes completing the score sheet when the child has left.

Administered by Project

Appendix 4

Interview schedule for programme parents

University of Sheffield Department of Educational Studies
Interview schedule *for parents in programme**

Interviewer _____ Date of interview _____ Child's name _____

Place of interview _____ Interviewee's name _____ Relationship to child _____

Child's ID number	
-------------------	--

Preamble

I'm now doing a survey of young children's literacy development and what parents think about it. You helped me a couple of years ago when I did some assessments of [child] and you've also been involved in the programme since then. I'd like to ask you about that and get your view about how [child] is getting on. It shouldn't take more than 45 minutes or so.

I'm very grateful to you - and to other families - for giving me your time to answer some questions. What you tell me is extremely helpful for my research.

Unless you give your permission, you will not be named or identified in the results of this survey. If there are any questions you prefer not to answer - for any reason - that's fine, but what you tell me can help improve education for young children and their families.

I'd like to make some notes of what you say on this [*indicate schedule*] as we go along. I hope you don't mind me stopping to read questions and write down your answers - it may look a lot but it's mainly blank spaces. I won't be able to write everything down so if you don't mind, I'd also like to tape record our talk - that way I can go back and check my notes. When the my study is over, all the tapes and notes get destroyed. Is that OK? [*If interviewee agrees to be taped, produce tape recorder and switch on*]
Sometimes I mark this [*schedule*] to remind me to go back to the tape later.
Is there anything you want to ask me before we begin?

Reminder

Participants may need to be reassured during the interview that what they're saying is helpful.

If participants do not immediately answer some questions, always pause to give them time to think. Be ready to repeat or clarify questions and use the prompts provided but, in general, avoid further prompting (what some participants don't say in answer to a question can be as revealing as what others do say). Be careful not to move on to the next question letting participants feel they 'didn't know the answer' to a question or that they gave the 'wrong' answer.

'Flag up' comments which are particularly noteworthy but too long to write out by putting a Tick around the flag symbol, ♣.

I'd like to begin by asking about [child] and who she/he lives with at home.

<i>A. About the child and family</i>	Tick one response	Tape	Code
1. Can you tell me how old [child] is now?	Years ____ Mths ____	☒	
2. Does she/he have any <u>older brothers or sisters</u> at home?	Yes No Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	☒	
Ages _____			
3. Does she/he have any <u>younger brothers or sisters</u> at home?	Yes No Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	☒	
Ages _____			
4. Who else is there at home? [e.g. partner/spouse]		☒	
5. Is [child] regularly looked after by anyone else?	Yes No Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	☒	
6. Who helps [child] most with reading and writing?		☒	
In which language? eg English, Arabic, Urdu, other?			

Now I'd like to ask you about [child] and books.

<i>B. Sharing books</i>	Tick or ring responses	Tape	Code
<p><i>Opportunities</i> 1. Does [child] have books around at home that are for her/him?</p> <p>In which languages?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Ⓟ</p>	
<p><i>Recognition</i> 2. How does [child] use books?</p>		<p>Ⓟ</p>	
<p><i>Recognition</i> 3. Has she/he had <u>favourite books</u> or a favourite? <i>If yes, seek details of at least one favourite.</i></p>	<p>Yes No Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Ⓟ</p>	
<p><i>Opportunities</i> 4. Roughly <u>how many books</u> would you say there are for her/him - just a guess?</p>	<p>None 1-2 3-9 10-19 20-49 50-99 100+</p>	<p>Ⓟ</p>	
<p><i>Opportunities</i> 5. Do you keep books where she/he can get them for herself/himself or does someone have to get them for her/him?</p>	<p>Gets books for self Others get them Access Unclear</p>	<p>Ⓟ</p>	
<p><i>Opportunities</i> 6. Does anyone at home get to sit down and <u>read a book</u> with [child]?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Ⓟ</p>	<p>323</p>

<p><i>Opportunities</i></p> <p>7. Can you give me any idea <u>how often</u> that happens?</p>	<p>Never Weekly More than once a day</p> <p>Rarely Several times a week Daily</p>	<p>Ⓡ</p>		
<p><i>Interaction</i></p> <p>8. Can you tell me what happens when you share a book with your child? <i>Prompt if necessary:</i> Do you make a point of doing anything in particular when you read with [child]?</p> <p>In which languages do you share a book?</p>		<p>Ⓡ</p>		
<p><i>Interaction</i></p> <p>9. Does anyone else <u>read</u> with her/him?</p> <p>Who?</p> <p>In which languages?</p>		<p>Ⓡ</p>		
<p><i>Model</i></p> <p>10. Do you think [child] ever sees you or anyone else in the family <u>reading books</u>?</p> <p>Who?</p> <p>In which languages?</p> <p><i>Prompt:</i> How about the Qu'ran?</p>		<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Ⓡ</p>	

So far we've been talking about sharing and reading books but of course there are lots of other things which can be read at home and in the neighbourhood - for example, newspapers, comics, packaging, adverts, road signs, shop signs, handwritten notes (even clothes can have writing on them).

<i>C. Reading - other than books</i>	Tick one response	Tape	Code
<p><i>Recognition</i></p> <p>1. Have you noticed whether [child] shows any interest in this kind of print and writing? <i>If Yes</i> What have you noticed?</p> <p>In which languages does [child] notice this kind of print?</p> <p>On what?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Ⓡ</p>	
<p><i>Recognition</i></p> <p>2. Does [child] ever say or do anything when she/he sees this kind of print and writing?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Ⓡ</p>	
<p><i>Opportunities/interaction</i></p> <p>3. Do you point out this kind of print and writing to [child]?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Ⓡ</p>	
<p><i>Model</i></p> <p>4. Does she/he ever see you or anyone else in the family reading this kind of print and writing - either at home or when you're out together?</p> <p>Who?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Ⓡ</p>	
<p><i>Model</i></p> <p>5. Do you think she/he knows you're reading these things?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Ⓡ</p>	

Now I'd like to ask you about writing.

<i>D. Writing</i>	Tick one response	Tape	Code
<p><i>Recognition</i></p> <p>1. Have you noticed whether [child] has made a start in <u>writing</u> over the last year or so? <i>Accept <u>parent's</u> concept of what counts as 'writing'.</i></p> <p>What have you noticed?</p> <p>In which languages?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>FB</p>	
<p><i>Opportunities</i></p> <p>2. Does she/he get much chance to <u>write</u> at home?</p> <p>What does she/he use to write with?</p> <p>In which languages does [child] write at home?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>FB</p>	
<p><i>Interaction</i></p> <p>3. Does anyone at home ever <u>write</u> with [child] or ever help her/him with writing? Who?</p> <p>What kind of help do you or they give?</p> <p>In which languages?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>FB</p>	
<p><i>Model</i></p> <p>4. Does [child] ever see anyone in the family <u>writing</u>? Who?</p> <p>What sorts of things do they write?</p> <p>In which languages?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>FB</p>	<p>326</p>

Now I've got a couple of questions about talking about reading and writing.

<i>E. Talk about literacy</i>	Tick one response	Tape	Code
<p><i>Recognition</i></p> <p>1. Have you noticed whether [child] ever <u>talks about</u> reading or writing - using words like 'book', 'page', 'word', 'letter'?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>☒</p>	
<p><i>Opportunities/Interaction</i></p> <p>2. Does anyone ever deliberately <u>talk</u> to [child] about books, reading or writing - using words like 'book', 'page', 'word', 'letter'?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>☒</p>	

I'd like to ask about nursery rhymes and storytelling now.

<i>F. Phonological awareness - rhyming</i>	Tick one response	Tape	Code
<p><i>Recognition</i></p> <p>1. Have you noticed whether [child] knows any <u>nursery rhymes</u>? <i>If yes, seek up to three examples.</i></p> <p>In which languages?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>☒</p>	
<p><i>Interaction</i></p> <p>2. Does anyone at home make a point of saying/singing <u>nursery rhymes</u> with [child]?</p> <p>Who?</p> <p>In which languages?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>☒</p>	<p>327</p>

I've got two or three questions now about storytelling.

<i>G. Storytelling</i>	Tick or ring responses	Tape	Code
<p><i>Recognition</i></p> <p>1. Have you noticed whether [child] is interested in being told <u>stories</u> (I mean stories that are just spoken - not from a book)?</p> <p>In which languages?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>☒</p>	
<p><i>If Yes to above - Opportunities</i></p> <p>2. Does this happen often or just occasionally?</p>	<p>Often Occasionally</p>	<p>☒</p>	
<p><i>Opportunities</i></p> <p>3. Does anyone ever <u>ask</u> [child] to tell a story?</p> <p>In which languages?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>☒</p>	

I've got some general questions about reading and writing.

<i>H. View of literacy, expectations for child, and view of parent role</i>	Tick one response	Tape	Code
1. How would you explain to your child what <u>use</u> it is to be able to read and write well?		Pb	
2. How do you think [child] will do in reading and writing at school?		Pb	
3. How important is what you did before [child] started school for how well she/he will do in the next year or two?		Pb	
4. Have you talked to the teacher your child has now about what you've been doing to help [child]?	Yes No Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Pb	
5. Where would you say you get ideas for how to help [child] with reading and writing?		Pb	

I'd like to get your views about the project you've been involved in.

<i>I. Experience of the programme</i>	Tick one response	Tape	Code
1. Go back to when you first heard about the project. Can you remember why you agreed to be part of it?		Pb	
2. How has it been (since then)?		Pb	
3. How have you found working with the project teacher?		Pb	
4. What did you think about a having a teacher visit you at home?		Pb	
5. Did you go to any meetings or groups organised by the project teacher? <i>If any, How did you find that?</i>	Yes No Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Pb	
6. Did you feel that the things you were involved in the project were <u>too much</u> like school?	Yes No Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Pb	
7. Have you ever felt being in the project as a <u>pressure</u> ?	Yes No Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Pb	

8. What kept you going?		
9. Have there been difficulties? <i>If yes</i> What were the main difficulties?	Yes No Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
10. What do you think it's done for [child]?		
11. Did the project make a difference to what you did with [child] when the teacher wasn't there?	Yes No Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<i>[If there are other children in the family]</i> 12. Has the project affected what you've done with your other children? <i>Seek details. Give opportunity for comparisons with other children and how parent was/is able to help them.</i>	Yes No Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
13. Did you remember getting information about the Open College certificate you can get for the work you've been doing on the project?	Yes No Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	

14. What did you feel about the idea of getting credit, and having a certificate, for your work with your child?	Rb	
15. How do you feel about the project ending?	Rb	
16. What was the best thing about it?	Rb	
17. What was the worst thing about it?	Rb	
18. Has the project made any difference to <u>you</u> - apart from affecting [child]?	Yes No Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Rb
19. Do you think you'll deal with teachers and school in the future any differently because of the project?	Yes No Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Rb
20. Would you be in favour of this sort of project being offered to all families in the future? <i>Why? Seek reasons if possible.</i>	In favour No view either way Against offering it	Rb
21. What do you think other families would get out of it?	Rb	

There have been lots of families in this project and we're trying to get a picture of them all. I'd like to ask some questions about you now, and about other adults in the home. As I said at the beginning, if there is anything you don't want to go into, that's fine.

<i>K. Parents' background</i>	Tick or ring	Tape	Code
1. If you had the opportunity to go to school, can you tell me how old were you when you left school? In which country was this?	Under 8 8-11 12-15 16 17+ If 17+, give age _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Did you get any qualifications (exam passes) at school?	Yes No Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<i>[If yes to above]</i> 3. What kind of qualifications were they?	One GCSE Several GCSEs A-level Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Have you been in any education or training since school? <i>If Yes, seek details.</i>	Yes No Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<i>[If not obvious from answers so far]</i> 5. What's the highest level qualification you've got so far?	FE certificate A-level Degree Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Do you think you're likely to do any education or training courses in the future? <i>If yes, How have you heard about courses?</i>	Yes No Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

<p>7. Are you employed at the moment?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Yes No Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>8. What is your current job or your last main job? <i>Try to get the fullest job title possible.</i></p> <p><i>If never worked or never had any paid work, put down 'Never employed'</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p><i>Ask only if a partner/spouse was mentioned earlier in interview as living at home.</i></p> <p>9. Can you tell me whether your [partner/spouse] is employed at the moment?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Yes No Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p><i>Ask only if a partner/spouse was mentioned earlier in interview as living at home.</i></p> <p>9. Can you tell me what is your [partner's/spouse's] current or last main job? <i>Try to get the fullest job title possible.</i></p> <p><i>If never worked or never had any paid work, put down 'Never employed'</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Well, thank you very much for answering all those questions.

<i>L. Final question</i>	Tape	Code
Is there anything you want to ask me or anything you want to add to what you've told me?	P	

I hope that what you've told me will help get better education for young children and their families.

It will be a year or more before I finish this survey but if you want to know what comes out, I'd be happy to tell you. All I need is your name and address on this envelope and I'll send you some information.

Thanks again.

Appendix 5

Interview schedule for control group parents

University of Sheffield Department of Educational Studies

Interview schedule for parents NOT in programme*

Interviewer _____ Date of interview _____ Child's name _____

Place of interview _____ Interviewee's name _____ Relationship to child _____



Child's ID number	
-------------------	--

Preamble

My name is _____. You may remember I'm doing a research study at the University of Sheffield. I'm now doing a survey of young children's literacy development and what parents think about it. You helped me a couple of years ago when I did some assessments of [child] and now I'd like to ask you about how [child] is getting on. It shouldn't take more than 30 minutes or so.

I'm very grateful to you - and to other families - for giving me your time to answer some questions. What you tell me is extremely helpful for my research.

Unless you give your permission, you will not be named or identified in the results of this survey.. If there are any questions you prefer not to answer - for any reason - that's fine, but what you tell me may help improve education for young children and their families.

I'd like to make some notes of what you say on this [*indicate schedule*] as we go along. I hope you don't mind me stopping to read questions and write down your answers - it may look a lot but it's mainly blank spaces. I won't be able to write everything down so if you don't mind, I'd also like to tape record our talk - that way I can go back and check my notes. When the study is over, all the tapes and notes get destroyed. Is that OK? [*If interviewee agrees to be taped, produce tape recorder and switch on*]
Sometimes I mark this [*schedule*] to remind me to go back to the tape later.

Is there anything you want to ask me before we begin?

Reminder

Participants may need to be reassured during the interview that what they're saying is helpful.

If participants do not immediately answer some questions, always pause to give them time to think. Be ready to repeat or clarify questions and use the prompts provided but, in general, avoid further prompting (what some participants don't say in answer to a question can be as revealing as what others do say). Be careful not to move on to the next question letting participants feel they 'didn't know the answer' to a question or that they gave the 'wrong' answer.

'Flag up' comments which are particularly noteworthy but too long to write out by putting a ring around the flag symbol, ☐.

I'd like to begin by asking about [child] and who she/he lives with at home.

<i>A. About the child and family</i>	Tick one response	Tape	Code
1. Can you tell me how old [child] is now?	Years ____ Mths ____	P	
2. Does she/he have any <u>older brothers or sisters</u> at home?	Yes No Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	P	
Ages _____			
3. Does she/he have any <u>younger brothers or sisters</u> at home?	Yes No Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	P	
Ages _____			
4. Who else is there at home? [e.g. partner/spouse]		P	
5. Is [child] regularly looked after by anyone else?	Yes No Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	P	
6. Who helps [child] most with reading and writing?		P	
In which languages? English, Arabic, Urdu, other			

Now I'd like to ask you about [child] and books.

<i>B. Sharing books</i>	Tick or ring responses	Tape	Code
<p><i>Opportunities</i> 1. Does [child] have books around at home that are for her/him?</p> <p>In which languages?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>☒</p>	
<p><i>Recognition</i> 2. How does [child] use books?</p>		<p>☒</p>	
<p><i>Recognition</i> 3. Has she/he had <u>favourite books</u> or a favourite? <i>If yes, seek details of at least one favourite.</i></p>	<p>Yes No Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>☒</p>	
<p><i>Opportunities</i> 4. Roughly <u>how many books</u> would you say there are for her/him - just a guess?</p>	<p>None 1-2 3-9 10-19 20-49 50-99 100+</p>	<p>☒</p>	
<p><i>Opportunities</i> 5. Do you keep books where she/he can get them for herself/himself or does someone have to get them for her/him?</p>	<p>Gets books for self Others get them Access Unclear</p>	<p>☒</p>	
<p><i>Opportunities</i> 6. Does anyone at home get to sit down and <u>read a book</u> with [child]?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>☒</p>	

<p><i>Opportunities</i> 7. Can you give me any idea <u>how often</u> that happens?</p>	<p>Never Weekly More than once a day</p> <p>Rarely Several times a week Daily</p>	<p>FB</p>	
<p><i>Interaction</i> 8. Can you tell me what happens when you share a book with your child?</p> <p><i>Prompt if necessary:</i> Do you make a point of doing anything in particular when you read with [child]?</p> <p>In which language(s) do you share a book?</p>		<p>FB</p>	
<p><i>Interaction</i> 9. Does anyone else <u>read</u> with her/him?</p> <p>Who?</p> <p>In which languages?</p>		<p>FB</p>	
<p><i>Model</i> 10. Do you think [child] ever sees you or anyone else in the family <u>reading books</u>?</p> <p>Who?</p> <p>In which languages?</p> <p><i>Prompt:</i> How about the Koran?</p>		<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>FB</p>	

Now I'd like to ask you about writing.

D. Writing	Tick one response	Tape	Code
<p><i>Recognition</i></p> <p>1. Have you noticed whether [child] has made a start in <u>writing</u> over the last year or so? <i>Accept <u>parent's</u> concept of what counts as 'writing'.</i></p> <p>What have you noticed?</p> <p>In which languages?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>☐</p>	
<p><i>Opportunities</i></p> <p>2. Does she/he get much chance to <u>write</u> at home?</p> <p>What does she/he use to write with?</p> <p>In which languages does [child] write at home?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>☐</p>	
<p><i>Interaction</i></p> <p>3. Does anyone at home ever <u>write</u> with [child] or ever help her/him with writing?</p> <p>Who?</p> <p>What kind of help do you or they give?</p> <p>In which languages?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>☐</p>	
<p><i>Model</i></p> <p>4. Does [child] ever see anyone in the family <u>writing</u>?</p> <p>Who?</p> <p>What sorts of things do they write?</p> <p>In which languages?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>☐</p>	

Now I've got a couple of questions about talking about reading and writing.

<i>E. Talk about literacy</i>	Tick one response	Tape	Code
<p><i>Recognition</i></p> <p>1. Have you noticed whether [child] ever <u>talks about</u> reading or writing - using words like 'book', 'page', 'word', 'letter'?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p><i>Opportunities/Interaction</i></p> <p>2. Does anyone ever deliberately <u>talk</u> to [child] about books, reading or writing - using words like 'book', 'page', 'word', 'letter'?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	

I'd like to ask about nursery rhymes and storytelling now.

<i>F. Phonological awareness - rhyming</i>	Tick one response	Tape	Code
<p><i>Recognition</i></p> <p>1. Have you noticed whether [child] knows any <u>nursery rhymes</u>? <i>If yes, seek up to three examples.</i></p> <p>In which languages?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p><i>Interaction</i></p> <p>2. Does anyone at home make a point of saying/singing <u>nursery rhymes</u> with [child]?</p> <p>Who?</p> <p>In which languages?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	

I've got two or three questions now about storytelling.

<i>G. Storytelling</i>	Tick or ring responses	Tape	Code
<p><i>Recognition</i></p> <p>1. Have you noticed whether [child] is interested in being told <u>stories</u> (I mean stories that are just spoken - not from a book)?</p> <p>In which languages?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Ⓟ</p>	
<p><i>If Yes to above - Opportunities</i></p> <p>2. Does this happen often or just occasionally?</p>	<p>Often</p> <p>Occasionally</p>	<p>Ⓟ</p>	
<p><i>Opportunities</i></p> <p>3. Does anyone ever <u>ask</u> [child] to tell a story?</p> <p>In which languages?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Ⓟ</p>	

I've got some general questions about reading and writing.

<i>H. View of literacy, expectations for child, and view of parent role</i>	Tick one response	Tape	Code
1. How would you explain to your child what <u>use</u> it is to be able to read and write well?		R	
2. How do you think [child] will do in reading and writing at school?		R	
3. How important is what you did before [child] started school for how well she/he will do in the next year or two?		R	
4. Have you talked to the teacher your child has now about what you've been doing to help [child]?	Yes No Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	R	
5. Where would you say you get ideas for how to help [child] with reading and writing?		R	

[Note: There is no Section I, Experience of the programme, for these parents.]

J. Programme diffusion	Tick one response	Tape	Code
<p>1. Did you know that some children the same age as [child] going to [school/centre] have been in a project - it's called the 'REAL Project'?</p> <p>[If 'No', say "OK, I don't need to ask any questions about that" and omit remainder of this section]</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>☐</p>	
<p>[If 'Yes' or 'Unsure' to above]</p> <p>2. Do you know what they've been doing?</p> <p>[If 'No', say "OK, I don't need to ask any questions about that" and omit remainder of this section]</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>☐</p>	
<p>[If 'Yes' or 'Unsure' to above]</p> <p>3. Have you talked to any of those parents?</p> <p>[If 'No', say "OK, I don't need to ask any questions about that" and omit remainder of this section]</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>☐</p>	
<p>[If 'Yes' or 'Unsure' to above]</p> <p>4. Has it changed what you have been doing with [child]?</p> <p>[If 'No', say "OK, I don't need to ask any questions about that" and omit remainder of this section]</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>☐</p>	
<p>[If 'Yes' or 'Unsure' to above]</p> <p>5. Can you tell me the sort of things you've done differently after talking to them?</p>		<p>☐</p>	

There are lots of families in this project and we're trying to get a picture of them all. I'd like to ask some questions about you now, and about other adults in the home. As I said at the beginning, if there is anything you don't want to go into, that's fine.

<i>K. Parents' background</i>	Tick or ring	Tape	Code
<p>1. If you had the opportunity to go to school, can you tell me how old were you when you left school?</p> <p>In which country was this?</p>	<p>Under 8 8-11 12-15</p> <p>16 17+ If</p> <p>17+, give age _____</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>2. Did you get any qualifications (exam passes) at school?</p>	<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p><i>[If yes to above]</i></p> <p>3. What kind of qualifications were they?</p>	<p>One GCSE Several GCSEs A-level Other</p> <p>_____</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>4. Have you been in any education or training since school?</p> <p><i>If Yes, seek details.</i></p>	<p>Yes No Unclear</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p><i>[If not obvious from answers so far]</i></p> <p>5. What's the highest level qualification you've got so far?</p>	<p>FE certificate A-level Degree Other _____</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>6. Do you think you're likely to do any education or training courses in the future?</p> <p><i>If yes, How have you heard about courses?</i></p>	<p>Yes No Unsure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	

<p>7. Are you employed at the moment?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Yes No Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<p>8. What is your current job or your last main job? <i>Try to get the fullest job title possible.</i></p> <p><i>If never worked or never had any paid work, put down 'Never employed'</i></p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<p><i>Ask only if a partner/spouse was mentioned earlier in interview as living at home.</i></p> <p>9. Can you tell me whether your [partner/spouse] is employed at the moment?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Yes No Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<p><i>Ask only if a partner/spouse was mentioned earlier in interview as living at home.</i></p> <p>9. Can you tell me what is your [partner's/spouse's] current or last main job? <i>Try to get the fullest job title possible.</i></p> <p><i>If never worked or never had any paid work, put down 'Never employed'</i></p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Well, thank you very much for answering all those questions.

<i>L. Final question</i>	Tape	Code
Is there anything you want to ask me or anything you want to add to what you've told me?	F	

I hope that what you've told me will help get better education for young children and their families.

It will be a year or more before I finish this survey but if you want to know what comes out, I'd be happy to tell you. All I need is your name and address on this envelope and I'll send you some information.

Thanks again.

Appendix 6

Planning sheet for home visits

HOME VISIT

Date.....

Family.....

Visitor.....

Child's I.D. Number.....

Review what parents and child have been doing

Focus on a planned aspect of literacy and parent's role

Anticipate what parent might do following visit

Env. P Books Writing Oral Language
Phon Story Talk

O					
R					
I					
M					

R = review F = focus

Appendix 7

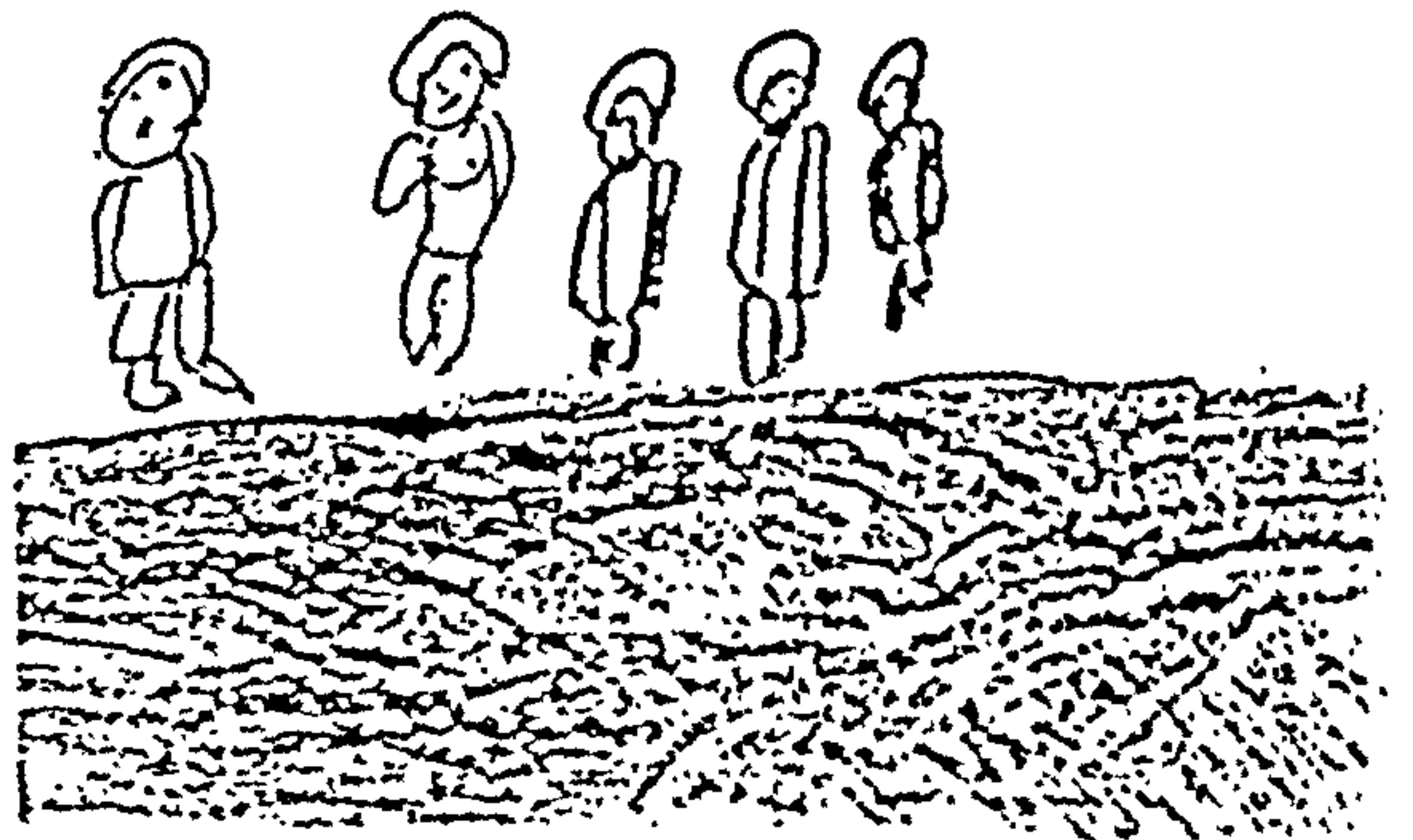
Extracts from Zain's, Romana's and Waqas' book stimulated by
'We're going on a bear hunt' (Rosen, 1989)

We're going on a
bear hunt.



By Romans
wasps and zain.

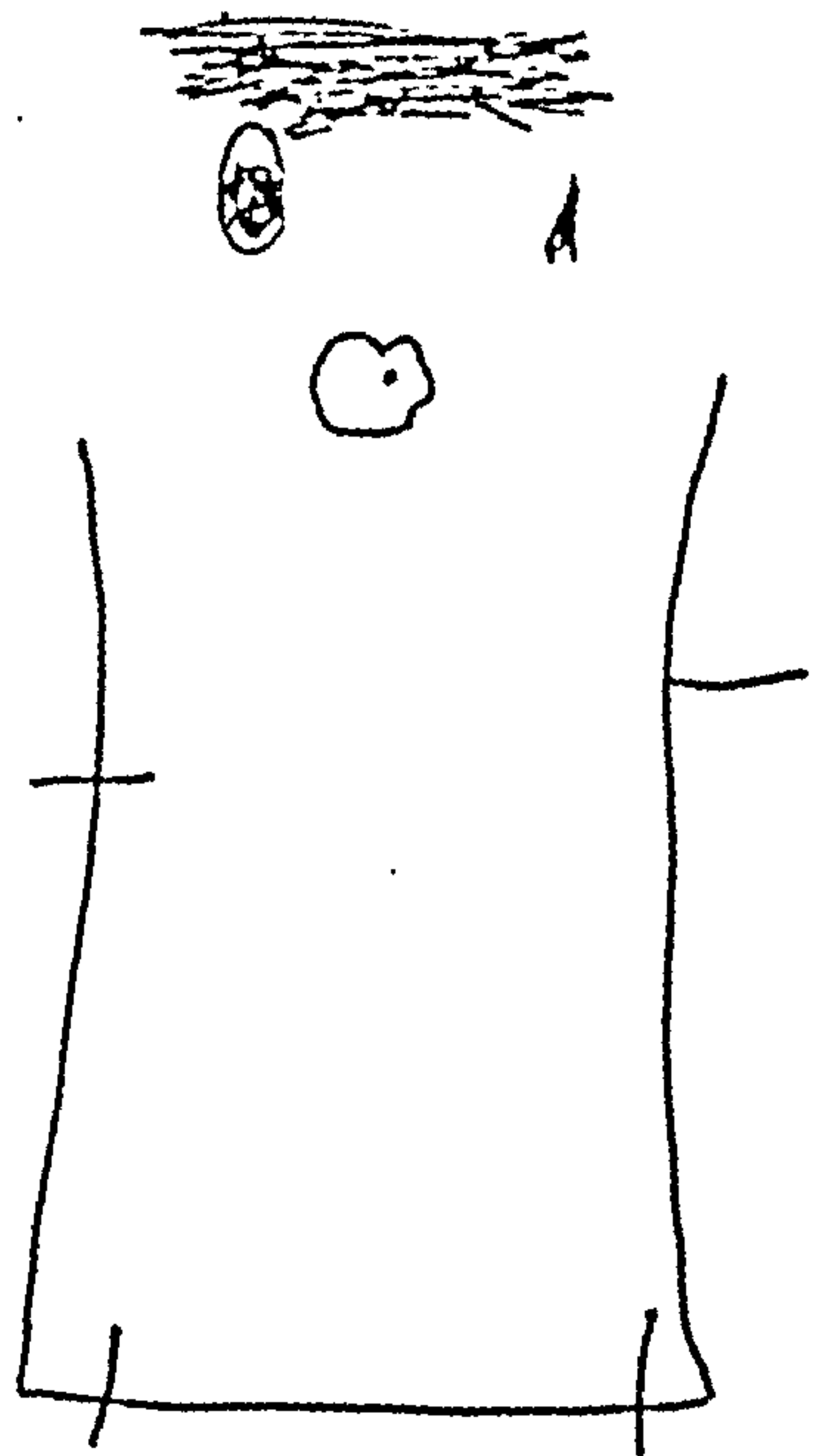
We're going on a bear hunt
Long grass oh no we've
got to go through it



Zain



ri
b j
r



Oh, no. A big bear

Appendix 8

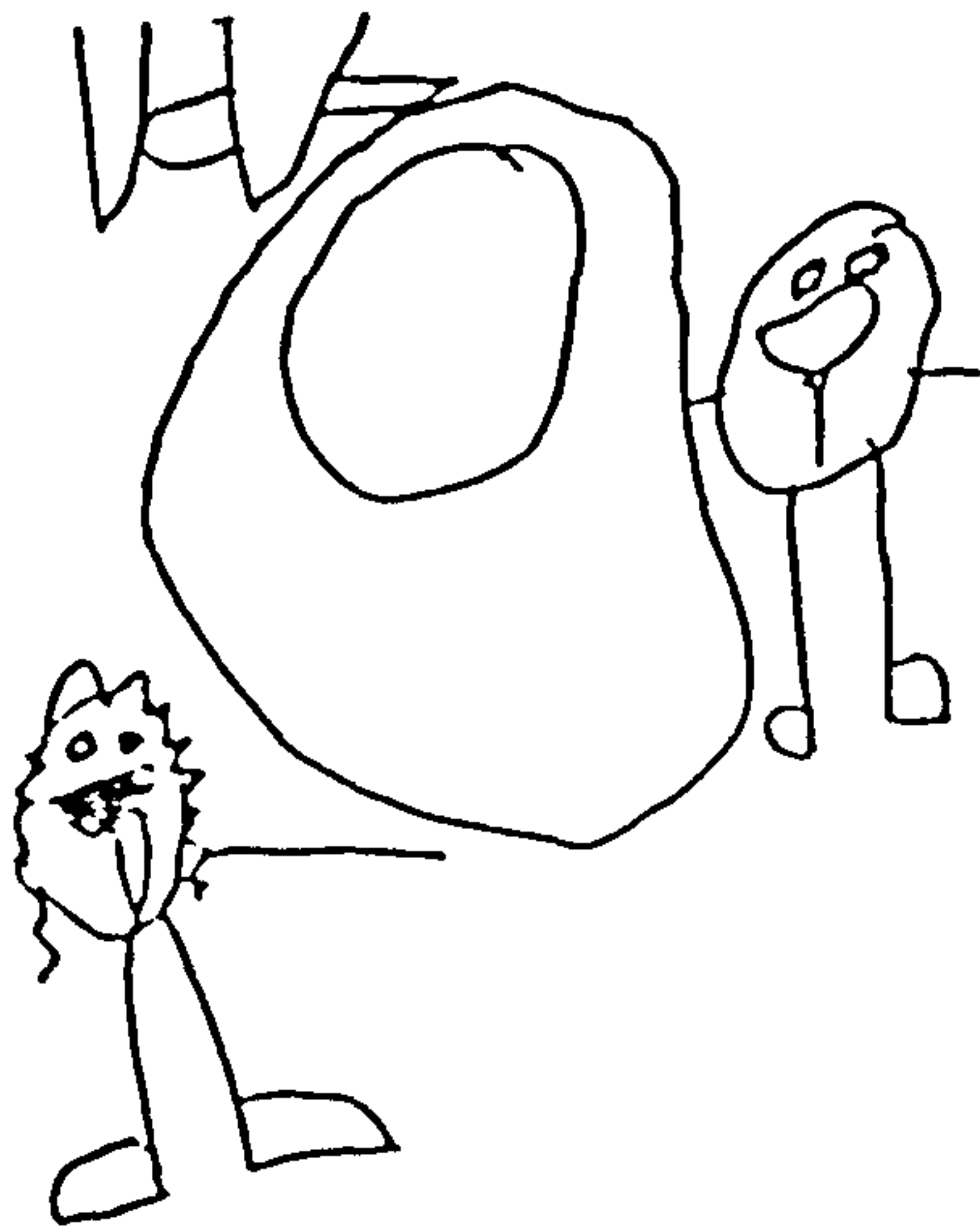
Mehreen's dual language book stimulated by 'Doing the washing'
(Garland, 1983)

پیشروں کی ذمہ داری
مہرین کاوش

Doing the washing.

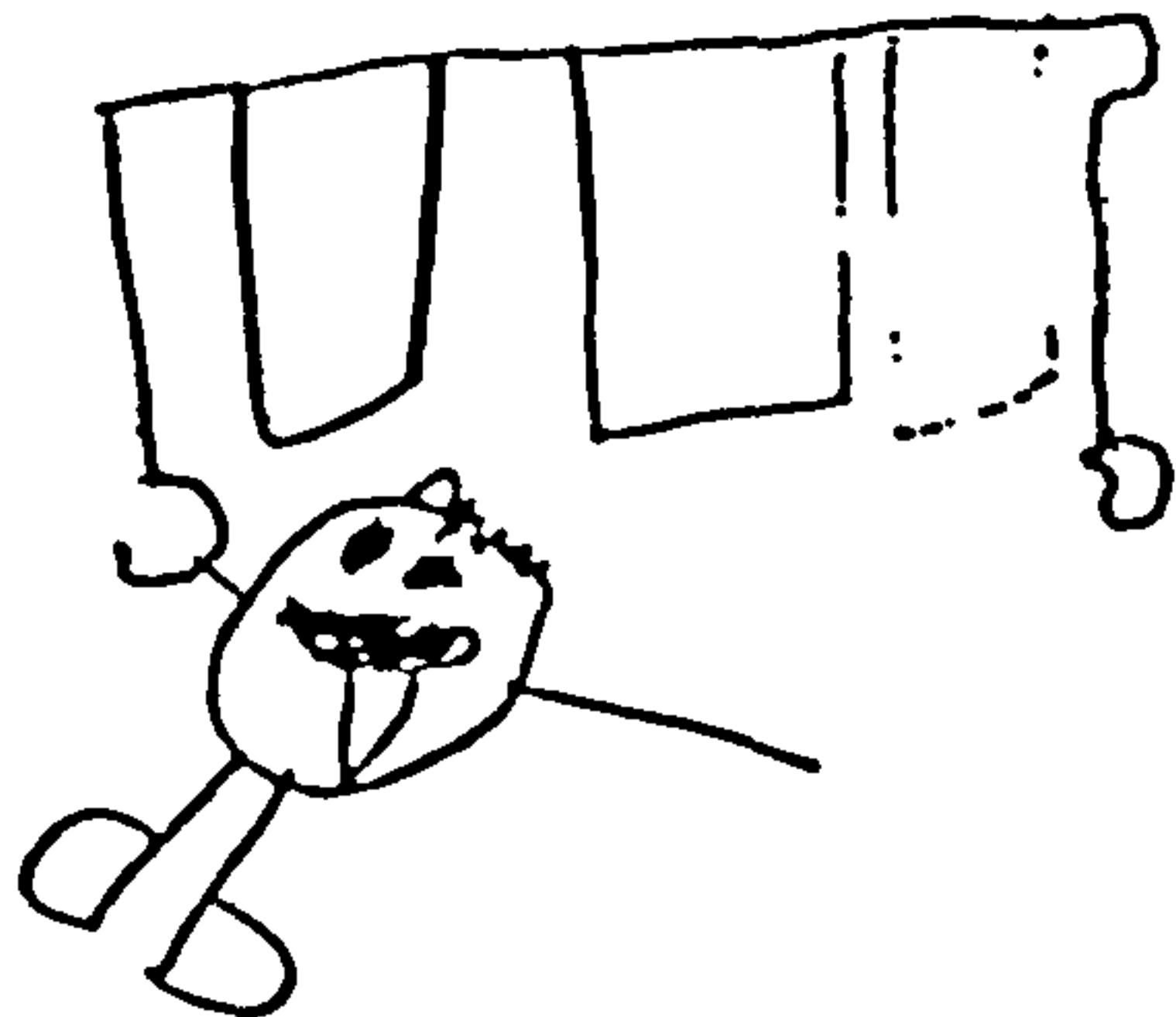
by

Mehreen
Kauser



مہرین اور
پیشروں کی ذمہ داری
پیشروں کی ذمہ داری

Mummy and
Mehreen are
doing the washing



مہرین
پیشروں کی ذمہ داری
مہرین اور
پیشروں کی ذمہ داری

Mummy is
putting the
clothes on the
washing line.

Appendix 9

Mehreen's dual language book 'Nice days' stimulated by
'Good days, bad days' (Arnholt, 1993)

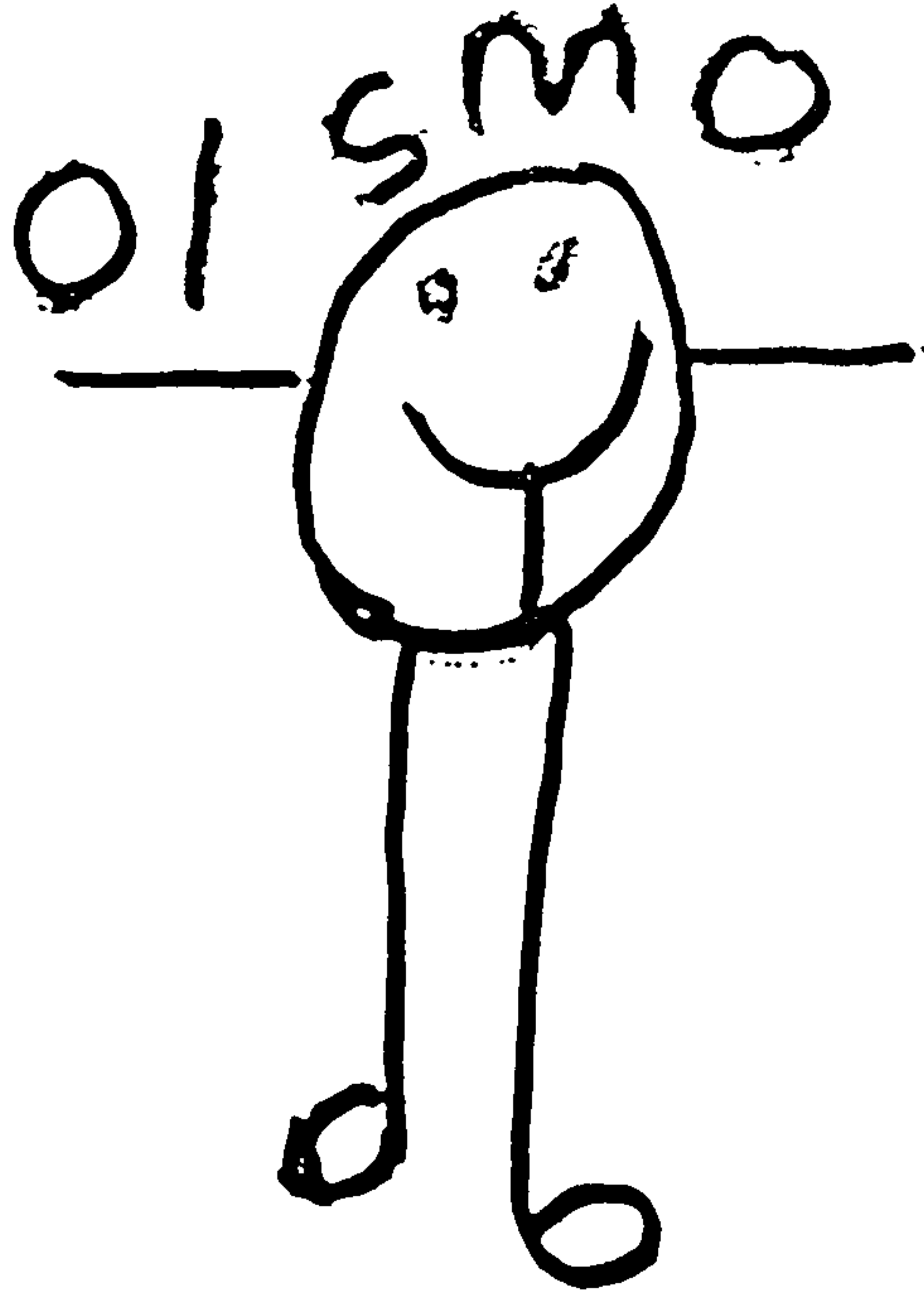
Nice days

ایچا دن بائے مرین

by

میری بہن مریم

یہ ہیں ہوں مریم



On a nice day I'm playing
with my sister

میری بہن مریم

o n m s



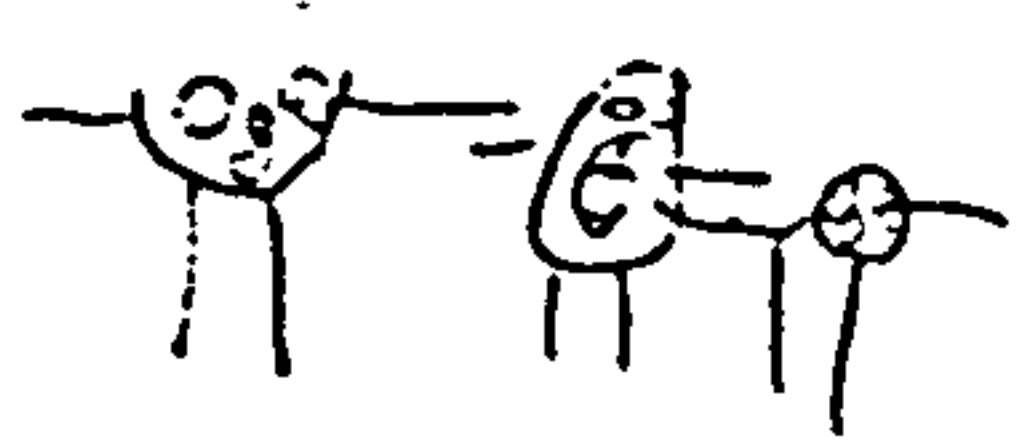
جس دن اچھا ہوتا ہے میں اور میری بہن کھیلتے ہیں

Appendix 10

**Tehseena's dual language book stimulated by 'Owl babies'
(Waddell and Benson, 1994)**

Owl Babies
الو کے بچے
by
Tehseena
Tehseena

Author and Illustrator
Tehseena Rehman



Sarah, Percy and Bill
سیرا، پرسی اور بل
are in the tree.

درخت کے اوپر بیٹھے تھے

Their mother's gone
ان کی اتی چلی گئی تھی۔
She didn't come back.

اور واپس نہیں آئی تھی

Sarah, Percy and Bill
سیرا، پرسی اور بل
sat on the tree and said,
درخت کے اوپر اُداسی بیٹھے تھے۔

"I want my mummy".

مجھے میری اتی چاہیے

They went to sleep and
وہ سوئے چلے گئے۔
their Mummy came back.
اور پھر ان کی اتی واپس آئی۔



Appendix 11

Zara's book stimulated by Eric Hill's 'Spot' books

Spot is playing
with the blocks
Spot's Mummy is
helping him.



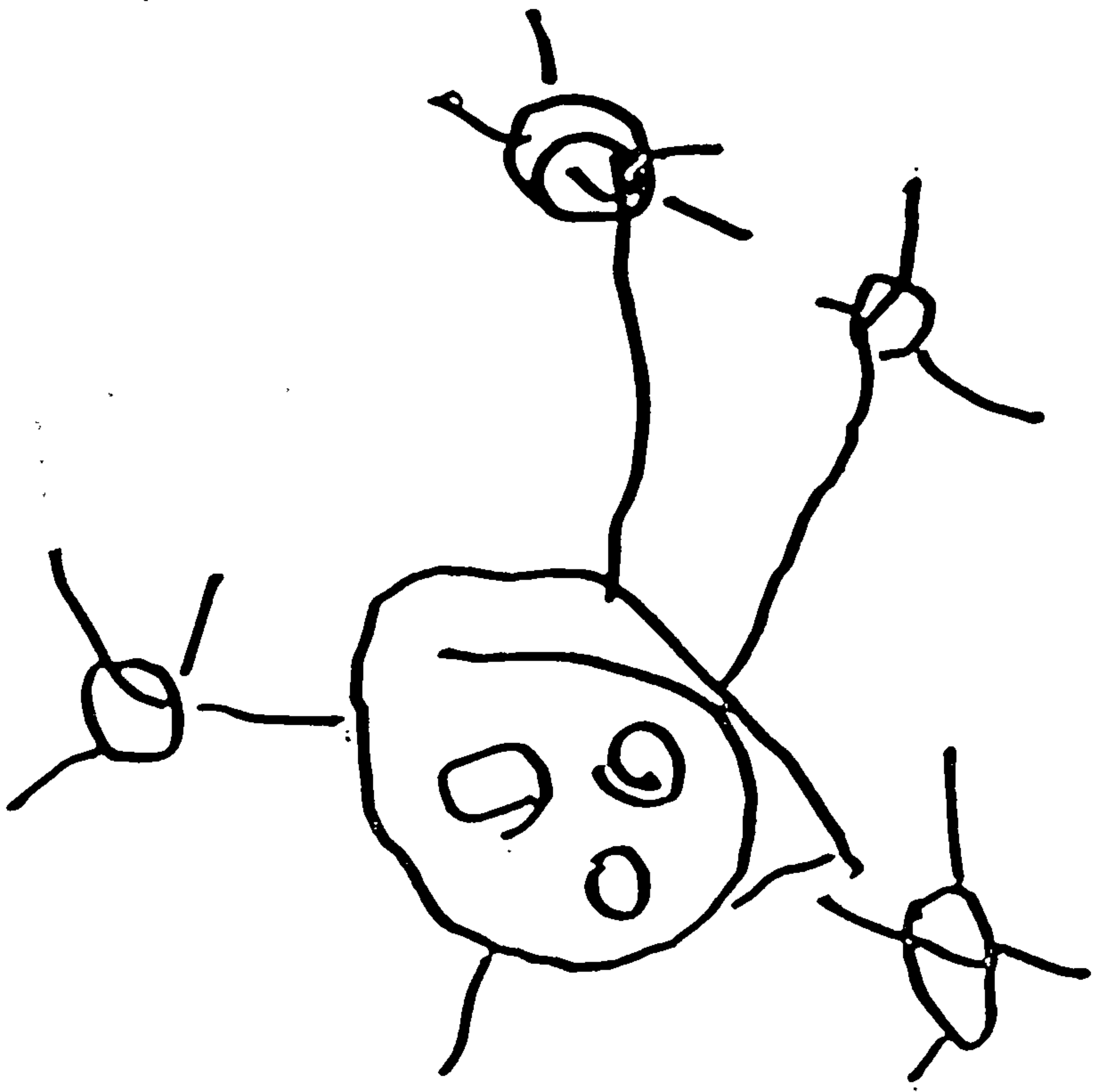
Appendix 12

Zeeshan's story 'Sleep' stimulated by a Teletubbies strip in a comic sent as a postal contact



soo zzz

slaspl



Laa - Laa is sleep

Appendix 13

Naail's dual language book 'Flying Batman' stimulated by his interest in Batman seen on his home video and on television

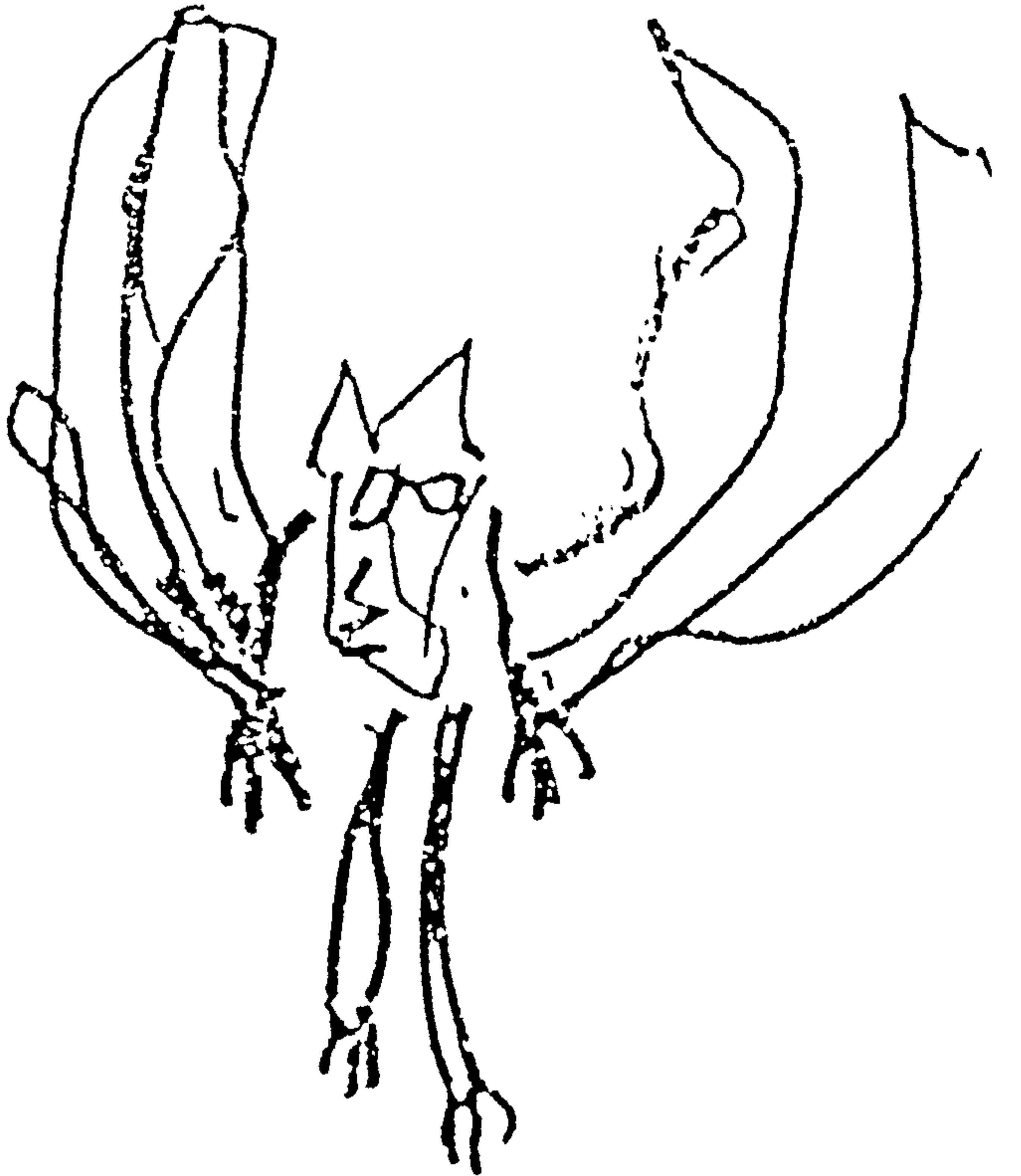
Flying Batman.

آٹنے دالا بیٹ میں

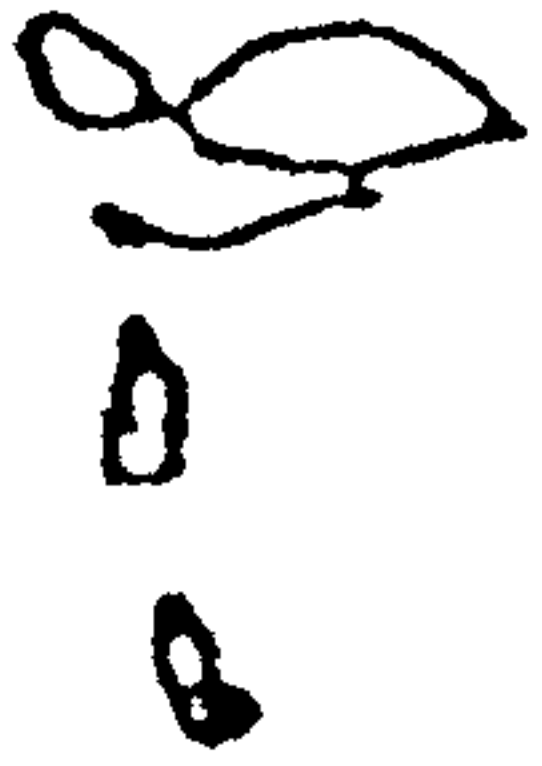
by

بانے

نائل



نائل



Please don't go near the
water, batman.

مہربانی سے بیٹ میں پانی کے قریب
ہیں جا بیٹا.

Appendix 14

Example of 'Book reviews'

'Five minutes peace' written by me as dictated by Zara.
'The very hungry caterpillar' written later (between visits) by
mother as dictated by Zara.

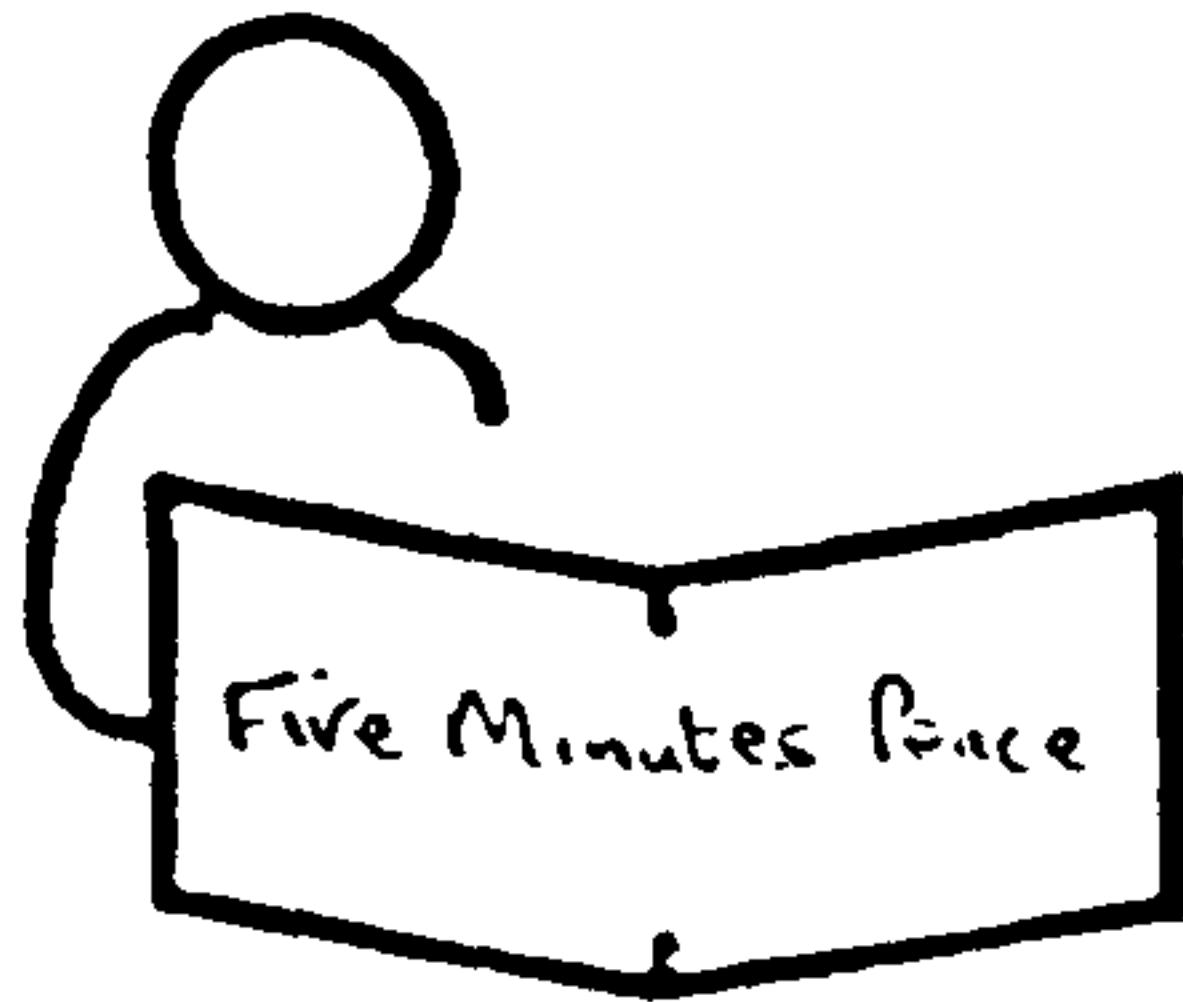


BOOK REVIEW

① 5 Minutes Peace.

Zora

② The Hungry Caterpillar



😊 I liked

Mummy in the bath having
a cup of tea.

😞 I didn't like

I liked it all.

😊 I liked

the caterpillar eating
so much that he became
so fat and I liked
the cocoon.

😞 I didn't like

when he got
a tumour.



Appendix 15

Programme children's independent writing of their name at the beginning of the programme (on the left) and at the end of the programme (on the right)

||
L
Z
M
W

No response

Handwritten scribbles and lines

No response

Handwritten symbols

Monton

Zarajaved

Tehseen a

(Aneela)

(Khaizer)

(Zeeshan)

Zoin

Handwritten symbols

(Nawal Masood)

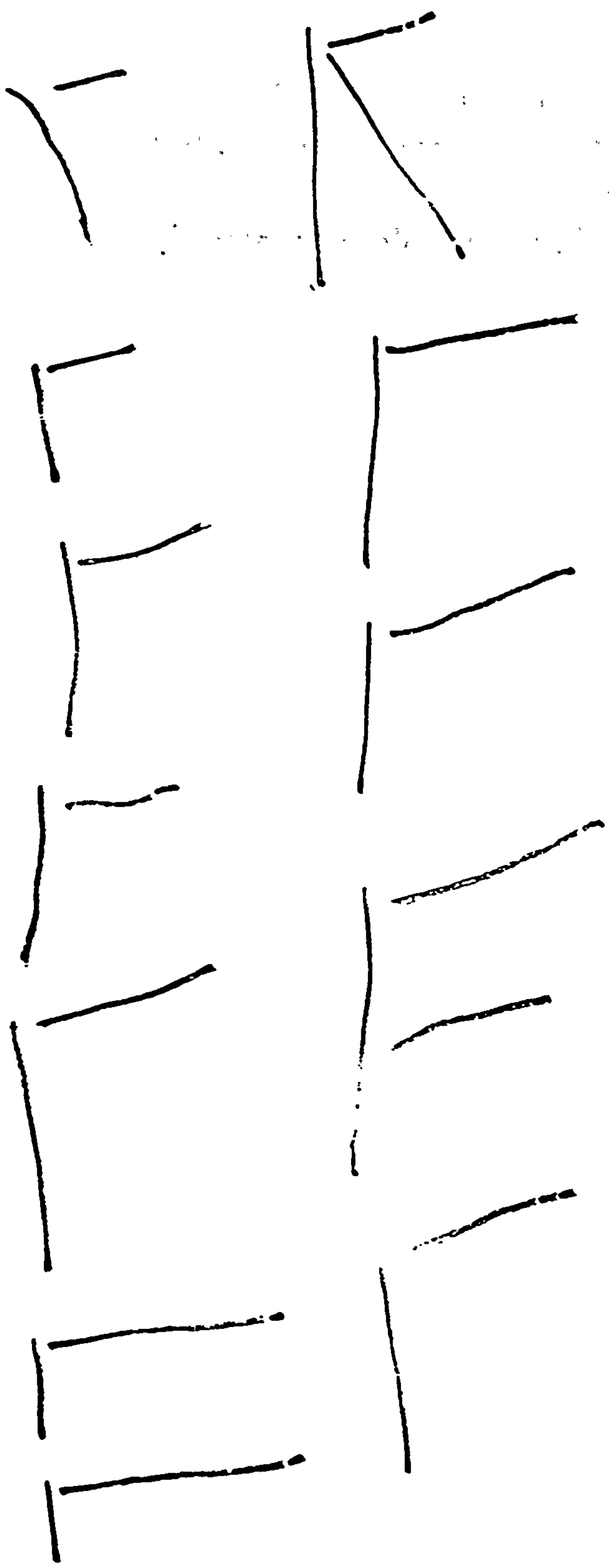
Appendix 16

Programme children's emergent writing and 'string of letters' at the beginning of the programme



Appendix 17

Khaizer's menu from café play during home visit



Khaizer's
menu

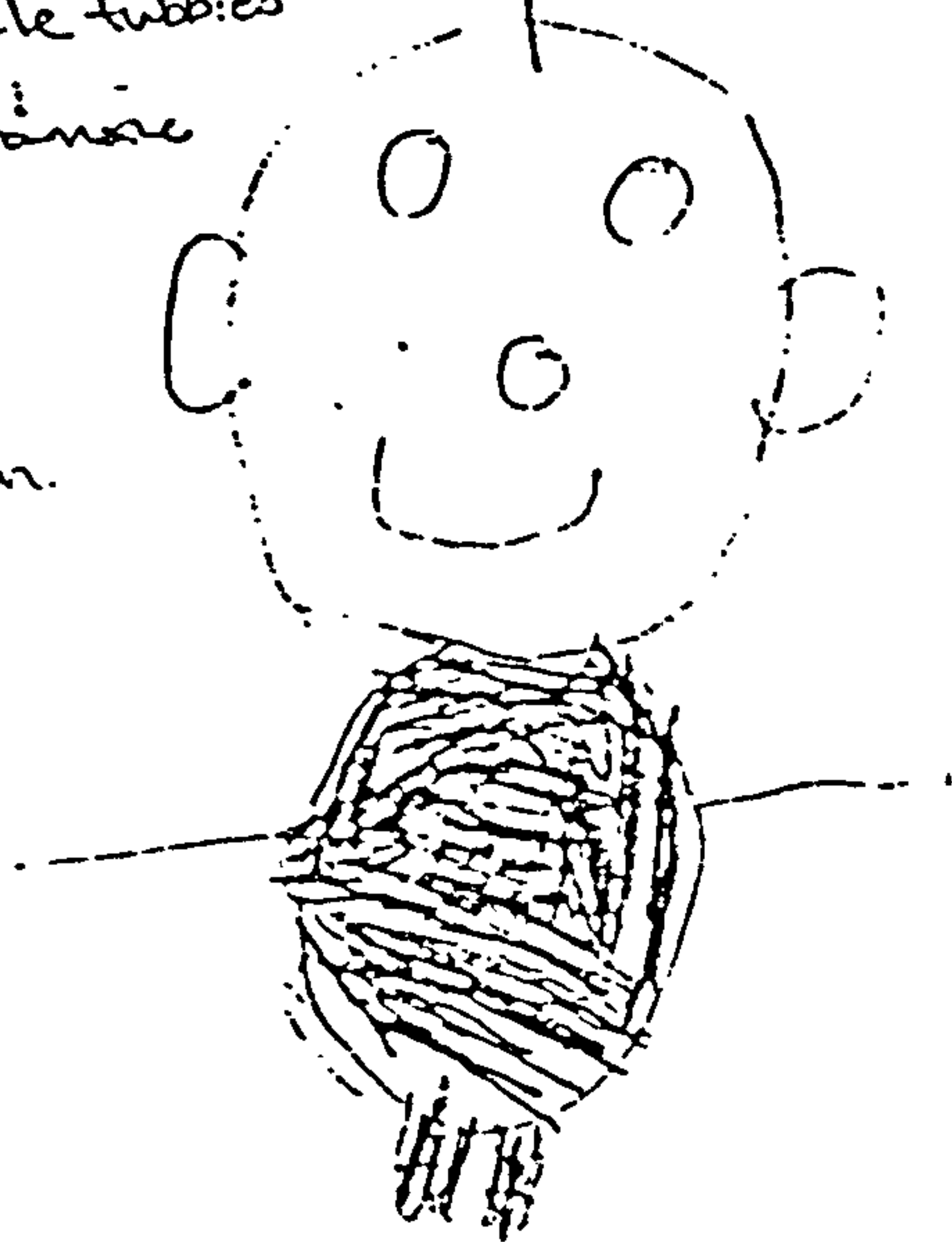
Appendix 18

Postal contact from programme child and her sister.
Letter from Mehreen (on left). Text written by mother as dictated
by Mehreen.

Letter from older sister, Meryem (on right), written by Meryem

I like teletubbies
my favourite
teletubbies
programme

From
Mehreen.



I like teletubbies they
are my favourite program
and I love them
I like po and lala
from Meryem

Appendix 19

Zara's and Tehseena's writing in Urdu and/ or Arabic at the end of the programme

Appendix 20

Zara's story, 'Zara's day out', dictated by Zara and written by her mother between visits

tuesday in '18

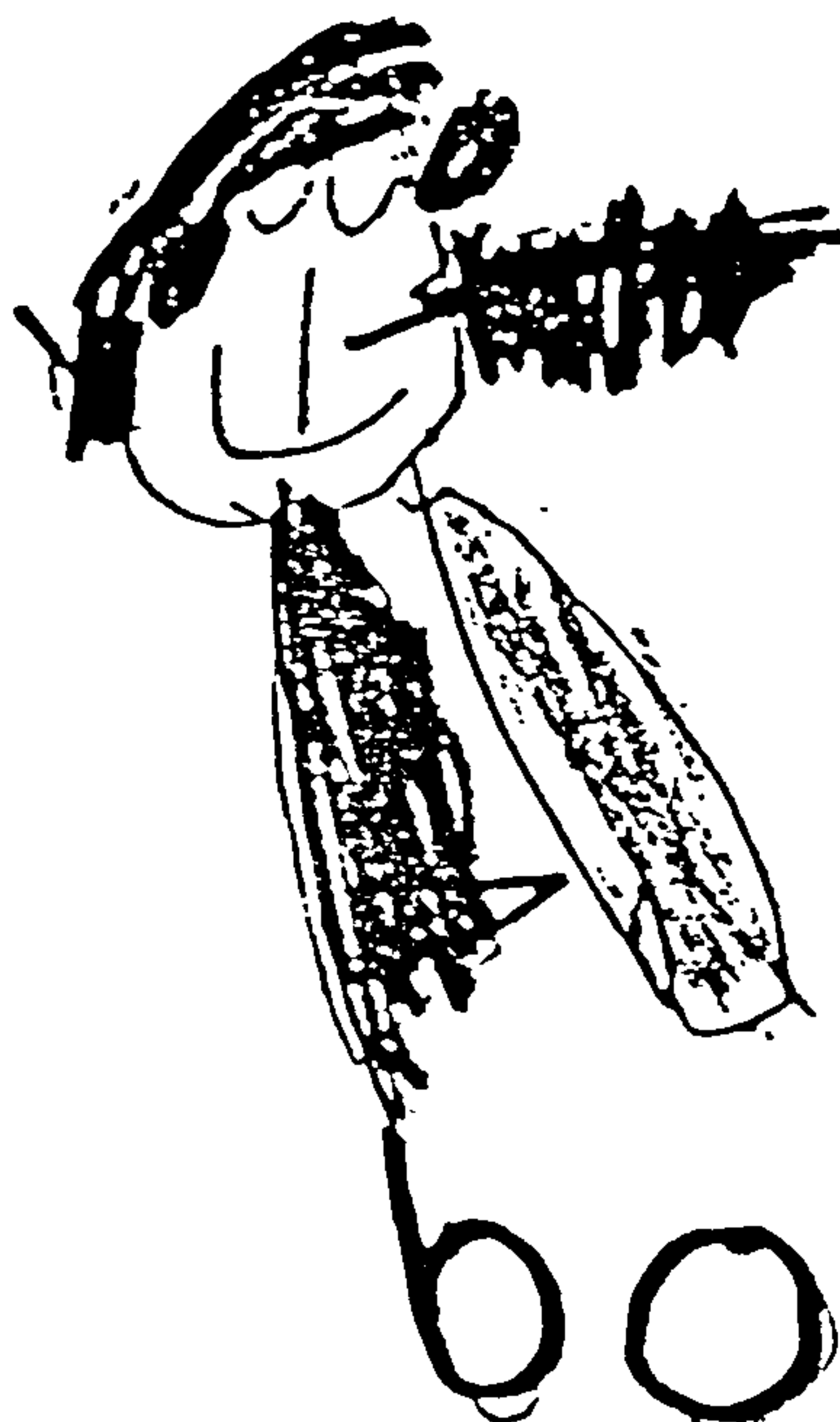
Zara's day out

Zara sat with Saneem and she wrote her name in the orange book. Zara called some playdoh first one side then the other side. Then Zara cut a Z out. Then she cut out R, A, Then it was playtime. Zara put on her coat and she went out. Zara didn't want to play so she stood with Saneem in the playground. Then Zara came in to have her milk and biscuits. After that Zara watched some tv and then it was home time. Mummy and Usman came to get Zara. Baiji Rana came in get Husna. Mummy dropped off Baiji Rana house, Saneem and Alisha in their house. Zara had some dinner. Then it was time for

daddy to come home. Mummy and dad had dinner. Mummy went to the shop. Uncle Tarek and Tay came so Zara, Usman and dad went with uncle Tarek to town. Dad so mummy at the shop. he stopped the taxi. Zara got out then daddy drove off. Mummy and Zara went to the first stop. They got some fruit. They walked back to the car. Mummy went to get Baiji from school.

Appendix 21

Zara's independent writing between visits



ZAYA
LAVED

boy



gini

gini