Supporting teachers in EAL classrooms: working towards the centralised provision of subject-specific, EAL-tailored resources for primary classrooms.

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ABSTRACT

Over the last year the density of learners who speak English as their second or even third language has increased by 1% in all state funded schools in England (NALDIC, 2014). Many of these learners have to acquire English alongside their learning of the National Curriculum. Specific practices have to be put in place to allow EAL learners achieve their best potential in the British educational system. One way of helping these learners and their teachers is to provide them with resources that would support the acquisition of English language on the one hand, and the learning of the subject content on the other. This practice is very well observed in contemporary secondary schools; in primary schools, however, there is still a substantial lack of subject-specific-EAL-tailored materials that could be used effectively both by teachers and learners. What is largely used to date, are either materials developed or adapted by teachers especially for their EAL learners, or completely non-EAL, mainstream subject-specific materials. This article discusses the limitations of the use of teacher-developed and teacher-adapted EAL materials, highlights the need for provision of EAL-specific materials for primary schools at the national level, and suggests ways in which these materials could be developed, drawing on the most recent research in the field of ESL/EAL materials' development.

1. INTRODUCTION

In England, children who do not speak English as their first language are known as children with English as an additional language (EAL). The degree of familiarity with English for these children may vary dramatically - some can be completely new to English, having just arrived in the country, while others can be quite fluent in English, having lived in England for some time or having been born into ethnic minority families settled in England.

The data from the School Census undertaken in January 2014 by the Department for Education has shown that in England the number of pupils who do not speak English as their first language has increased by another one per cent over the last year, reaching a level of 18.5% in primary and 14.2% in secondary schools (NALDIC, 2014). In practice this means that across the country every sixth child in state primary and every eighth child in state secondary school speak English as their second or even third language.

Working with children who have EAL poses numerous challenges to teachers. In addition to supporting these children in learning the national curriculum as effectively as possible (SCAA, 1996), the teachers also become responsible for supporting and developing these children's English language proficiency. Many teachers in EAL classrooms often do not feel that they are adequately prepared by university degrees or teacher training courses for their new EAL roles, nor do they feel that they have adequate resources to support EAL learners in their classrooms. This is an experience they share with teachers in other contexts who have to teach the curriculum through a second language (L2). For example, with respect to Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), Deller and Price (2007: 6) comment: 'unfortunately the push for CLIL has been faster than the training for the teachers who are required to deliver it. Many subject and language teachers suddenly find themselves having to teach a subject through English without the support or training they need'. Many EAL teachers would agree.

It is almost assumed that subject teachers will figure out on their own –through practice, perhaps – effective ways of educating learners with EAL. The problem, however, is that

many subject teachers – unlike language teachers – may not know, for example, that pedagogic practices which are familiar in teaching subjects in L2, such as repetition, checking of understanding and active learning (Deller and Price, 2007: 7) need to be included in lessons on top of routine subject-content instruction in order to effectively support learning of pupils with EAL.

Since 1997 the number of EAL pupils in England has doubled and the educational authorities have finally started taking concrete action to actively support mainstream teachers in their work with non-native speaking learners. This is done in two ways: via provision of continuing professional development courses for teachers and by supplying schools with 'EAL-friendly' teaching and learning materials. The development and use of EAL-friendly materials to support learning of various mainstream subjects such as chemistry, physics, mathematics, art, drama, design and technology, is becoming more common at secondary school level. EAL-friendly materials for primary school level, however, are largely yet to be developed. Meanwhile, the teachers continue – with varying degrees of efficiency – to develop either their own EAL-friendly materials or to adapt existing mainstream materials for EAL purposes.

2. THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

Learning materials for learners working in English as a second or additional language in English-speaking countries tend to be made by teachers. Published materials are rare. The same is true, though to a lesser extent, of materials used in forms of English-medium education in different parts of the world, for example in CLIL in Europe (Naves, 2009). Teachers tend by and large to make their own materials; it is often noted that it is hard for CLIL teachers to find materials (Euridyce, 2006) and commentators observe that this increases their preparation time considerably (Mehisto et al, 2008). It is uncommon for published CLIL-specific subject courses to be available, but some are. In what follows, we will consider briefly the character, quality and effectiveness of materials, both teacher-made and published, use in these contexts.

In the education of EAL learners in the UK, Australia and Ireland, materials are largely made by teachers. In the UK, the conventional approach to the education of EAL learners is to support them using a range of teacher-interventions designed to provide a language-supportive environment tailored to the needs of individual lessons and sometimes of individual learners. This approach is defined in detail by advice to teachers and schools from education authorities (e.g. DfES, 2006). Both the accepted culture of this form of support and the limited market for commercial materials which it presents mean that published materials are rarely available.

Teacher-made materials are not easily accessible unless shared on a common website. Government and non-governmental agencies may also make materials available. In the UK, the sources of such materials may be education authorities or local language minority language support services, or the Department for Education (DfE). The Access and Engagement series (DfES, 2002), for instance, is a UK Education Department initiative which provides examples of EAL support tasks within subjects for secondary schools. Government-or EU-supported agencies such as The British Council Nexus project (https://eal.britishcouncil.org/) or non-governmental agencies (e.g. Collaborative Learning, http://www.collaborativelearning.org/) or in Ireland ELSP (English Language Support Programme, http://www.elsp.ie), also offer materials, as do EAL subject associations such as

the UK National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum (NALDIC, http://www.naldic.org.uk/), as well as commercial websites. The materials available may be generated by the provider themselves or they may be contributed by teachers to a common pool of resources.

The type of resources available depends partly on the role which EAL plays in education. UK EAL provision may sometimes take the form of separate language-focussed classes, but by and large support is provided in mainstream primary or secondary subject classrooms in direct relationship to the subject being taught. Some available resources may therefore focus on aspects of language, such as grammar or non-subject-specific vocabulary; but most are related to aspects of science, maths, history etc.

Materials are normally offered to support writing, reading or talk. They aim to develop the academic variety of language – what Cummins (2000) has called cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). This form of language ability is what learners need when learning school subjects and is distinct from their ability to use language for informal social purposes. It includes, for example, the ability to read subject textbooks, to understand teacher-presentations of new concepts, to talk about concepts in small groups and to write about them using the genres which subject teachers expect within their subject. Materials of this kind take the form of any of the accepted range of language support tasks familiar in L2-medium or bilingual education, for example, writing/talking frames, sentence starters, gap-filling and matching activities, substitution tables, visually supported tasks, etc.

In the UK a few commercial publishers, such as Crick (http://www.cricksoft.com) publish web-based EAL support materials, both language- and subject-focussed. Materials in learners' first languages may also be available through governmental and informal channels. These may take the form of stories or word lists. Publishers also produce dual language story books.

In the USA, materials are also often made by teachers or supplied by commercial websites or governmental and non-governmental agencies. They also take the form, outlined above, of a range of language support task types which has become familiar to practitioners of L2-medium and bilingual education. In addition, teacher education courses exist which are aimed at helping teachers develop materials, within a language –supportive framework, orientated both to the development of subject knowledge and academic English language ability, for example, the work of Chamot (2009) and Echevarria et al (2013). Courses of this kind are aimed at the subject teacher working in sheltered subject classes, as well as the English language specialist who is familiar with the need for learners to develop and use CALP and who may be working in a language-led course which functions as an adjunct programme to the mainstream subject curriculum and prepares ESL learners to use CALP strategies within the conventional subject classroom. Published language-supportive subject courses for ESL learners are also available, e.g. Chamot et al (2003).

In various countries, for example the UK and USA, guidance for teachers – as opposed to learning materials – is available on governmental and non-governmental websites, which offers professional academic and pedagogical support in the form of short articles, to teachers who may need professional upgrading in respect of L2-medium and bilingual education.

In the world of CLIL, subject teachers also tend to make their own materials. CLIL in Europe often generates pools of materials, organised by governmental and non-governmental agencies and containing subject-specific language support resources, created either by contributing teachers or by CLIL agencies themselves. These pools are normally generated by country- and region-specific agencies. In Spain, for example, several education authorities

support CLIL and maintain materials websites, for example in Catalonia (http://srvcnpbs.xtec.cat/cirel/cirel/index.php?option=com.content&view=article&id=45&Item=73), Asturias (http://web.educastur.princast.es/ies/sanchezl/archivos/materiales_dide1cticos.html) or the Basque Country (http://www.eleanitz.org/node/172). Similarly the Austrian portal for technical schools HTL (http://www.htl.at/de/htlat/schwerpunktportale/clil_content_and_language_integrated_learning/samples_of_good_practice.html.) has an archive of shared CLIL materials.

A few publishers produce collections of example activities within subjects, e.g. Kelly (2008), and collections of example activities across the curriculum, e.g. Dale and Tanner (2012). By their nature, however, these activities can rarely be used directly by subject teachers and must be adapted to specific teaching contexts. It is doubtful whether hard-pressed subject teachers have the time to do this. There is evidence to suggest that publishers may find it unprofitable to publish CLIL materials which are specific to the very local needs of national or regional subject curricula (Banegas, 2012). Some publishers, however, do produce whole CLIL courses. Oxford University Press (e.g. Blair et al, 2014) and Richmond Santillana (e.g. Zarzuelo et al, 2006), for example, publish primary courses for science and social science in Spain, for primary schools offering CLIL programmes in these subjects. In Germany, publishers such as Cornelsen (e.g. Weeke, 2006), for example, publish secondary courses in subjects such as biology, history and geography for bilingual classes. These publications combine conventional subject teaching with the principles of L2-medium education, to produce accessible texts and language-supportive task design enabling learners with L2 abilities which are still developing to achieve grade-appropriate levels of subject knowledge.

3. THE STUDY

The data presented in this paper are derived from the EAL science project, a two-year long collaborative research project between the University of Sheffield and Sheffield City Council. The main aim of the project was to investigate how the science and language learning of children for whom English is not their first language could be further enhanced and supported in primary schools in the UK. As part of the project the teachers were invited to talk about their routine classroom practices and the use of materials for EAL learners. Fifteen teachers from four state primary schools in Sheffield area with varied densities of learners with EAL (see Table 1 below) have reported on their experiences. The data were collected by means of semi-structured interviews and were audio-recorded.

School code	Density of EAL learners in school	Year group	General teaching experience*	EAL training	Experience in teaching EAL learners**	Additional expertise in linguistics	Number of EAL learners in class	EAL learners' English language proficiency
		Y3	< 10 years	Yes	< 3 years	No	6-15	Beginner Intermediate
		Y4	> 1 year	Yes	> 1 year	No	16-30	Beginner Intermediate Advanced
FPS1		Y5	5-10 years	Yes	< 3 years	No	16-30	Advanced

	85-100%	Y6	1-5 years	Yes	1-3 years	No	16-30	Intermediate Advanced
TPS2		Y3	5-10 years	Yes	< 3 years	No	16-30	Intermediate Advanced
		Y4	5-10 years	Yes	< 3 years	No	16-30	Intermediate
		Y5	1-5 years	No	< 3 years	No	6-15	Intermediate
		Y6	< 10 years	Yes	< 3 years	Yes	16-30	Advanced
PPS3		Y3	1-5 years	Yes	< 3 years	No	16-30	Intermediate Advanced
		Y4	5-10 years	Yes	1-3 years	No	16-30	Intermediate Advanced
	35-80%	Y5	< 10 years	No	< 3 years	No	16-30	Intermediate
		Y6	1-5 years	No	1-3 years	No	6-15	Advanced
LPS4		Y4	< 10 years	No	< 3 years	No	1-5	Intermediate
		Y5	< 10 years	No	< 3 years	No	6-15	Advanced
		Y6	< 10 years	Yes	< 3 years	No	6-15	Advanced

* ☐ - least experienced teachers   ☐ - moderately experienced teachers   ☐ - most experienced teachers

** Note that majority of teachers have at least 3 years experience of working with EAL learners.

Table 1: Descriptive teacher data by school

Two specific questions are of major interest in this paper: where do materials and activities that teachers use for EAL learners come from, and how long does it take them to prepare a lesson in which they have to support a number of EAL learners. The data reported below reveals quite a remarkable number of similarities in teacher practices regardless of the context in which they work (density of EAL learners in school, number of learners in class, level of English language proficiency of EAL learners) and of the teacher characteristics (general teaching experience, professional qualifications, EAL specific teaching experience). The data will however also reveal some discrepancies in teaching practices prompting us to question the degree of consistency and efficiency of EAL provision – none of which is the teachers' responsibility - across various primary contexts in one city, in the case of this paper; and, perhaps, across the entire country if we look at the picture from a broader perspective. These discrepancies I would argue are in due to the present very scarce provision, if at all, of centralised EAL resources and teacher training courses for primary mainstream teachers at the national level. This paper discusses the former problem only - the absence of nationally developed teaching resources for use with EAL learners in primary schools.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Having found themselves in a situation where half - or even more - of the learners in a class do not speak English as their first language and where no ready-to-use EAL-friendly materials are provided, the teachers have been forced to search for these materials by themselves. These searches have resulted in the teachers' extensive use of a wide range of sources – some more reliable and useful than others – in their attempts to find and create materials suitable for the EAL learners. While there is nothing wrong with consulting a wide range of sources for any specific purpose, the difficulty arises when the teachers try to adapt materials developed for mainstream, i.e. English native-speaking learners, to suit the needs of EAL learners. In some cases it is indeed possible. However, a few questions remain open and need addressing. Are the teachers qualified for this purpose? Should they really be asked to do this job? Do they have time to carry it out effectively? Would it not be easier, more

productive and more valid if the teachers were invited to adapt materials already developed for EAL learners to suit the needs of their specific classes even further? At present we seem to be putting a triple burden on the teachers' shoulders making them responsible not only for the teaching of content of the national curriculum and the English language to EAL leaners, but also for the development of materials' – for quite specific purposes - from scratch.

Below are some quotes from the teacher interviews revealing how teachers deal with the current situation.

> I make some [materials]. I make most of them. I make all in 'Communicate: In Print'. The planning framework I've had today, that was from a lot of research, a lot of website research. (TI-Y6-M-PPS3-18.11.2013)

> I use a lot of 'Communicate: In Print'. So its things that we make in school with that programme, and quite often I bring things in from home. They are practical examples from home. We have some science resources in school: we use language based ones, kind of flash cards, and labels and things… I nearly always make [materials] myself with 'Communicate: In Print' in school. (TI-Y4-M-PPS3-18.11.2013)

> Mainly that will be stuff that I've researched myself on the internet and found through various teacher resource websites … there is not one specific … I go to things like 'Primary Resources' which has got a lot of resources for primary teachers. I go for things like 'The Times Education' website, things like that. (TI-Y5-M-PPS3-18.11.2013)

> I make them quite a lot. I use 'Twinkl' quite a lot, for like the key words because they are quite good at display words and they are quite good at key word posters and things. Primary Resources is another one. It has a lot of ready-made lessons. Sometimes they are not always useful. TES is another one. I generally use them more to get the idea and then I do it how I do it for my kids. (TI-Y3-M-PPS3-18.11.2013)

> We pick up resources from lots of different places. We have lots of resources in school that we got through the Sheffield advisory service. I do not know if it is still in existence. We picked up things from the Curriculum and Qualifications Authority. We've adapted and created our own resources […] We did use to have some help from X school with some of our resources; they used to give us extra resources. We could go there and have the science lesson there. (TI-Y6-M-LPS4-18.12.2013)

> All sort of places, wherever I can get them. I do use the Internet a lot. We have got books in school that we can use, but we do not use them too often, and we have packs of resources that other teachers have put together. (TI-Y4-M-LPS4-18.12.2013)

> Communication: In Print. We use that for lots of things to help them structure the language. (TI-Y6-H-FPS1-21.10.2013)

> It's ones that I am making up or getting ideas from books or from the Internet. (TI-Y3-H-FPS1-21.10.2013)

> I use Internet quite a lot. BBC learning zone is quite good. I just Google and find different areas that I think would be suitable […] We use Hamilton which is a website that gives you the plans […] There is a science cupboard upstairs with quite a bit of equipment inside … some equipment from university. (TI-Y6-H-TPS2-18.10.2013)

> We've got equipment in school. Things like vocabulary sheets and all the rest - I have to make. Sometimes I literally make them out. […] I got quite a lot form my previous school that I have obviously brought here. (TI-Y4-H-TPS2-18.10.2013)

> We are teaching from the IPC curriculum which is the International Primary Curriculum … sometimes if you can't find them [activities and resources] you just have to make them, […] you have to type them and make them yourself whether it is on a computer, or whether it is by hand and then photocopy them. (TI-Y3-H-TPS2-18.10.2013)

The data presented above can be categorised into five groups according to the origin of the target materials. Firstly, the teachers report using universal search engines, such as Google, to help them find teaching materials potentially suitable for their classes. Secondly, the teachers report using specialised teacher resource websites (such as Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, Primary Resources, Twinkl, TES Connect, BBC learning zone, Hamilton Education, The Times Education, The International Primary Curriculum) to help them identify appropriate materials. Thirdly, the teachers mention making use of the resources already kept in their schools, such as those that came with them from their previous places of employment (previous primary schools) or places of education (universities), those that were provided by the City's Advisory Service or by secondary schools, and those that were put together by the teachers themselves, over the years. Fourthly, the teachers say they have created their own materials either from scratch or on the basis of ideas taken from other published resources or from the Internet. Finally, a minority of teachers mention using specialised educational software (Communicate: In Print) to help them develop materials to address the EAL learners' needs specifically.

Using a wide range of resources to develop materials for any group of learners is a good thing - in this way we ensure variety and diversity of input for our learners. The problem creeps in when the variety and diversity of materials and knowledge embedded in them becomes accessible to the learners in some schools but not in others; when the consistency and wholeness of provision is affected by the teachers' searching and materials' development skills. At present, some schools demonstrate very good materials development practices, using well-known and reputable sources and specialised software, while others still have room for improvement. Whatever the source of the problem is, the learners' experiences should not be affected. One way to ensure consistent and equal educational provision for all learners in all state schools is to supply the schools with nationally produced materials for EAL-learning purposes across the country, in the same way that schools are supplied with the educational materials for the purpose of learning mainstream subjects at present.

Unfortunately, the problem with the range of resources is not the only one that the teachers face in their attempts to cater for the needs of EAL learners. There is also a difficulty related to effective differentiation between materials for EAL and non-EAL learners. The empirical data suggest that every now and then the teachers differentiate their materials not by EAL/non-EAL criteria but by the learners' academic ability assuming, presumably, that EAL learners will benefit from materials for the lower achieving, or SEN, learners due to their 'reduced' cognitive and linguistic complexity. Several extracts below illustrate this point:

> I do take the resources and differentiate certainly some of the language or some of the key concepts. I'll simplify it or I might provide for children – and that could be EAL but it could also be children who have special educational needs - I might give them a frame to structure the writing, the conclusion, so they have the language features which I would do anyway. But I think in our particular school, I think, sometimes it is hard to unpick for some children whether it is EAL or for some of those whether it is SEN because sometimes, quite often, those two do go together - not always - but for some of our children they do. (TI-Y6-M-LPS4-18.12.2013)

> You have to search, look for things so higher ability children they need less support less visual support with my lower ability children they need a huge range of material in front of them. (TI-Y4-M-PPS3-18.11.2013)

> Try and make sure you cater for the high [ability] learners that will need an extension than catering for the opposite end of the pupils who need their own individual resources. (TI-Y4-H-FPS1-21.10.2013)

There is a tendency – reported on in the literature on EA/SL learners – for teachers to place EA/SL and low achievers in the same category, see for example Driver and Ullmann (2011). While it may seem to teachers that there is an overlap between the performance-related learning outcomes of early-stage EAL learners and those of lower-achieving native-speakers, the two categories of learner are different. Low achievers may sometimes need somewhat less cognitively demanding materials. What EAL learners need, on the other hand, is cognitively demanding but language-supported materials. It should not be assumed that learners with EAL will always need 'simplified' resources. As EAL learners progress through their learning, they should, as well as non-EAL children in the class, be challenged further and further to stimulate their cognitive and linguistic development; and appropriate materials are to be used for these purposes.

On the positive side of current EAL provision in schools, the teachers report using a wide range of appropriate techniques and methods to support EAL learners in their classes – such as using visuals, simplified language, sentence starters, mixed ability groups to facilitate language modelling and encourage co-learning, to name a few. However, the teachers also make very clear that centralised provision of EAL-specific materials for non-native English speaking learners would be very helpful to them, for two main reasons: firstly, because the they do not always have the knowledge needed to develop these materials as successfully and effectively as professional material developers could and, secondly, because of the amount of time it takes to prepare any one lesson involving differentiated instruction. In relation to the question of the provision of systematic professional support for the development of EAL materials, the teachers have commented:

> Yeah it will be easier to have it just systematically because at the minute I am just doing it like: 'oh, what do I need for this lesson' like, put it up, this kind of thing. (TI-Y3-M-PPS3-18.11.2013)

> We've adapted and created our own resources. We look for good practice that we can see and pick up on that; so there is nobody, sort of, giving it to us; in a way, we sort of, develop it as a team. (TI-Y6-M-LPS4-18.12.2013)

> A few years ago I had a boy from Latvia who came with no English at all and we had a lot of EAL support, much more so than these days. They [i.e. EAL specialists from the Local Authority] came in and they made a brilliant pack for us of the day-to-day things and gave us things that could support, you know. They asked what we were teaching so it was great because they came in and basically found that for us. But I know that there is no where near the support, I do not know, it was a different authority that I worked for so I do not know whether it is a fact that it is a different authority or the fact that everyone is in the same boat that funding is being cut everywhere, so I am not sure which one it is for that… (TI-Y4-M-LPS4-18.12.2013)

> [Having materials developed for us] would really help because it just makes our job a little bit easier - having something, you know, sort of prepared for you. Its not like, you know, you can't be bothered doing it, its just the actual time it takes and with everything else that you've got on, you know… It's just the actual getting, finding the time to make those resources. (TI-Y3-H-TPS2-18.10.2013)

The latter two excerpts highlight the fact the teachers have appreciated and benefitted from support that used to be provided to them by Local Authorities and that they would very much appreciate it if it could be re-established in the schools again. The former two excerpts outline the fragmented nature of the teachers' current practices in which only the top of the EAL-needs' iceberg is being seen and dealt with, due to the lack of specialised knowledge, time and resources. Teachers tend to use 'survival strategies' (such as use of team work) to help them, and their EAL learners, survive in the classrooms.

In relation to the time constraint issue the teachers also comment:

> Finding the resources, making a flipchart for the children to follow, and any differentiation… I would say - probably a couple of hours, but that's from having a plan, that's not from scratch … if it was from scratch it would be, I would say, probably three or four, maybe three hours / four hours depending on my knowledge as well. (TI-Y6-M-LPS4-18.12.2013)

> If it was from scratch it would be about half an hour … if you've got to do a lot of searching, things like that […] I think, if you know where to look, there are certain places that you can trust more than others and there are quite a lot of resources out there and I think it is finding that thing that is appropriate for your class at that time because something which may be appropriate one year might not be the next depending on the level of the children. (TI-Y4-M-LPS4-18.12.2013)

> Sometimes if you can't find them [the resources] you just have to make them, I mean that's what takes most of the time … to prepare it could take you hours, it could take you several hours to prepare the flipchart, you know, to search for any videos and activities to do with your lesson. (TI-Y3-H-TPS2-18.10.2013)

> It just depends on what kind of lesson … for my class it will take about an hour, an hour and a half, to get all materials and things ready then probably got another hour on top of that just to get things ready for some of the EAL learners (TI-Y3-H-FPS1-21.10.2013)

> I have been doing it bit by bit. I do it little bits at a time … I'd say about half an hour … I planned it beforehand … [if not prepared] about an hour…. That's what takes the longest looking around. I do not just pick the first thing that I see I look around to see what's available. (TI-Y6-M-PPS3-18.11.2013)

> It depends on how familiar I am with a particular subject. It [can take] up to several hours [as it may involve a lot of researching]. (TI-Y5-M-PPS3-18.11.2013)

> A long time. That's what I do. I do not know maybe a few hours each hour lesson (TI-Y5-H-TPS2-18.10.2013)
> It can take a good couple of hours if not more. (TI-Y6-H-TPS2-18.10.2013)
> Quite a while really - couple of hours, probably. (TI-Y4-H-TPS2-18.10.2013)
> Ages … you have to search, look for things. (TI-Y4-M-PPS3-18.11.2013)
> A couple of hours. (TI-Y3-M-PPS3-18.11.2013)
> New lesson I never taught; it would be probably, take anywhere above an hour. (TI-Y4-H-FPS1-21.10.2013)
> To prepare something from scratch - it would take hours. (TI-Y5-M-LPS4-18.12.2013)

In the extracts above, the teachers have noted that it could take them anything between an hour to several hours to prepare materials for any one lesson, taking more time to prepare the materials for brand new lessons, i.e. for those lessons that they have never taught before, and less time to prepare the materials for existing lessons, i.e. for the lessons that they have already taught in the past. It does not come as a surprise then that on many occasions the teachers simply do not have enough time to prepare high quality EAL materials for their

English non-native speaking learners. Hence again, support, in the form of the centralised provision of EAL-specific and subject-specific materials, is needed.

There are, of course, good reasons why teachers, either in EA/SL or CLIL make their own materials. The main one is that every subject, class and lesson is different. Support for language within a mainstream subject or CLIL lesson is always, to a degree, specific to the particular subject or topic and even the specific learners – or indeed the individual learner – concerned. A fundamental principle of teaching subjects in L2 is what is known as language demands analysis: the teacher make a brief assessment, during lesson planning, of the language demands which a given lesson will make on learners – either on all the learners, for example in a CLIL lesson, or on specific EAL learners in a mainstream subject lesson. Some parts of the lesson will make language demands which some learners will not be able to meet without support. For example, they may find it difficult to follow a teacher-presentation because subject-specific vocabulary may not be familiar. They may not be able to participate in small-group talk about a topic because they do not have the requisite oral fluency. Or they make find it hard to write about a topic after having studied it, because they cannot easily construct sentences or string them together coherently in a text according to the exigencies of genre within the subject. These language needs may make it difficult for some learners to acquire sufficient knowledge of the subject concepts at the heart of the lesson; but with language support, they can achieve this.

A mainstream subject teacher or CLIL teacher who is familiar with the provision of language support within the subject can make provision for these particular learners in this particular subject lesson. They are familiar with the task-type range which is used in L2-medium education and can design simple support activities fairly quickly in their lesson planning. Crucially, they may not find elsewhere the forms of support with the specificity they require in this particular case

However, there are also good reasons why this situation is rare. Firstly, few mainstream subject teachers or CLIL teachers have the necessary familiarity with language support to design their own materials. EAL specialists may have this professional skill, but few subject teachers in EAL or CLIL are trained or experienced enough in L2-medium education to do this effectively. Secondly, as the teachers in this study illustrate, the process takes time; more time than most subject teachers have available for the preparation of lessons. They may have a subject textbook, but they may alternatively have to search for appropriate materials on the internet. The textbook or web-based resource will then have to be adapted so that it provides language support. A support task may have to be designed to give guidance in writing, reading or talk. This takes time as well as skill. As the EAL teachers in this study show, a great deal of preparation time is spent providing language support. Often, this is time which the teacher does not have, and support provided is therefore insufficient; or it is time which considerable enough to become a professional burden.

For these reasons, ready-made EAL resources are useful. They provide teachers who have neither the skill nor the time to make lesson-specific support resources with materials which they can import into lessons. Materials of this kind may make the difference between EAL or CLIL learners failing, for language reasons, to acquire key subject concepts effectively, and those same learners receiving sufficient language support to enable them to operate cognitively at a level which is age-appropriate.

5. CONCLUSION

It is not easy for mainstream teachers to support EAL learners. To do so requires professional EAL skill and preparation time. Mainstream teachers normally have neither of these. If, as most do, teachers make their own support materials, the quality is likely to be inadequate and to vary from school to school, generating inconsistency and inequality of provision for EAL learners. In addition, as the teachers in this study have indicated, materials provided may occasionally be cognitively inappropriate. In the UK and in other English-speaking countries it is often the norm to assume that published materials will not be available. Sometimes local educational support services may be available to help a teacher, but as these interviews indicate, these services are, at least in the UK, becoming rarer. The central issue is of course making the curriculum accessible to EAL learners. At present, because teachers are not able to make this access as effective as possible, EAL learners are at a disadvantage. It is the contention of this paper that centrally provided high-quality support materials specific to the main subjects in the primary curriculum would benefit both learners and teachers. The study, which this paper reports on, has as one of its objectives the trialling of EAL support materials, the developmental procedures and rationale for which are reported in Afitska (forthcoming).

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