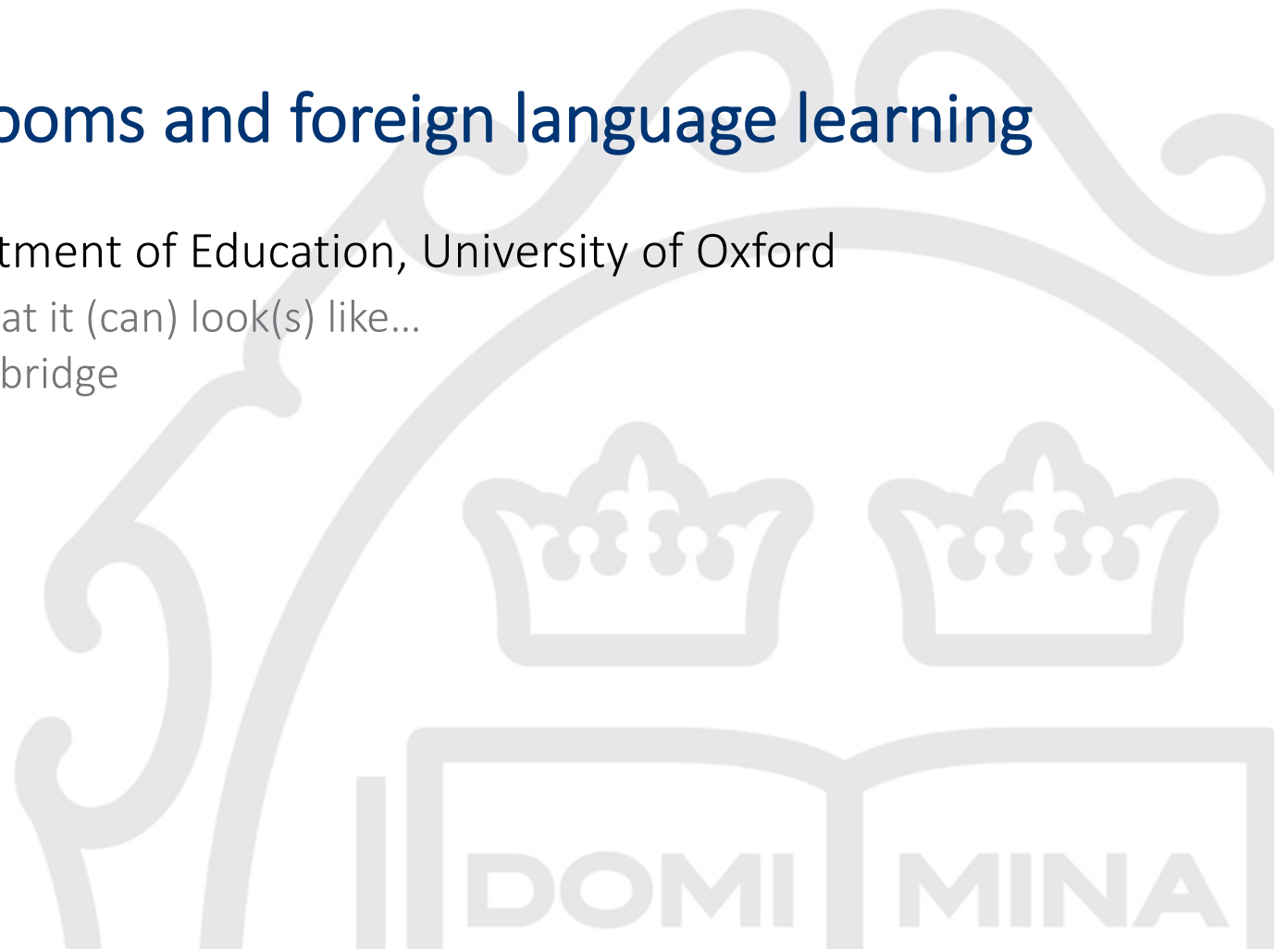

Multilingual classrooms and foreign language learning

Victoria A. Murphy, Department of Education, University of Oxford

Early Language Learning: What it (can) look(s) like...

Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge

24.10.2019



Linguistically diverse/Multilingual learners

Minority Language Learners – **EAL in UK**

- Typically are learners who speak a language in the home, that is not the same language as the language of the wider society (where home language \neq the language of education)
- For many the 1st point of significant exposure to the L2 is during early childhood education and primary (elementary) school years.

Currently (2018) over 20% of primary school population is
EAL in England

Academic Achievement

In England - 2013 (Strand, Malmberg & Hall, 2015)

Age	Stage	Domain	Measure	Source	EF %	EAL %	Odds Ratio
5	EYFSP	Reading	At least expected level	SFR 2013-47	73	63	0.63
		Maths	At least expected level		71	62	0.67
		Overall	Good level of Development (GLD)		54	44	0.67
7	KS1	Reading	Level 2A+	SFR 2013-37 (Table 14)	57	48	0.70
		Maths	Level 2A+		53	46	0.76
		Overall	Average Re + Ma (2A+)		55	47	0.73
11	KS2	Reading	Level 4B+	SFR 2013-51 (Table 8b)	77	69	0.65
		Maths	Level 4B+		74	72	0.90
		Overall	Level 4B+ in RWM		64	59	0.81
16	KS4	English	GCSE A*-C pass	SFR 2014-05	68.8	64.6	0.83
		Maths	GCSE A*-C pass		71.2	71.8	1.03
		MFL	GCSE A*-C pass		32.3	47.5	1.90
		Overall	5+A*-C Incl. En & Ma		60.9	58.3	0.90
		Overall	EBacc achieved		22.5	24.4	1.11

By end of Reception, 44% EAL achieve 'good level of development' on EYFSP relative to 54% (i.e., odds of achieving a 'good' are 33% lower for EAL)

Achievement gap narrows at higher levels, and at KS4 EAL matched or higher than non-EAL on Mathematics and MFL

Notes

Source= DFE Statistical First Release (SFR) from which the data is drawn. RWM= Reading, writing and mathematics. MFL= Modern foreign Language.

(Majority) Language Development

Target language (e.g. English for EAL)

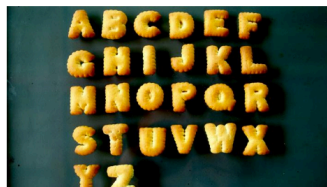
- **Cummins (2000)**:- verbal fluency is relatively quick to develop (2-3 years for conversational skills (aka BICS))
 - **Demie (2013)**:- takes 6 years to develop English fluency
 - Academic language proficiency takes longer (5-7 cf Cummins);
- Why do we need good language skills for school?

Reception children with poor language skills still struggling by Year 2

Children who start Reception with poor English language skills are more likely than their peers to have academic, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in later years, a new study has found.

By Adi Bloom
20 September 2016

Share this



This is equally true whether the children speak English as a first language or as an additional language, according to academics from University College London and Royal Holloway, University of London.

Language underpins everything that a child will do at school, weak language skills have serious consequences for later academic achievement.

Language is key for developing literacy – and in particular, vocabulary knowledge

Vocabulary knowledge in EAL learners

Children with EAL have less vocabulary knowledge (small vocabulary sizes) than NS children (e.g., Cameron, 2002; Bialystok et al., 2010) [NB: in English!]

- children with EAL score significantly below their age-matched non-EAL peers on measures of expressive vocabulary breadth and receptive vocabulary breadth
- relationships between vocabulary breadth and comprehension are stronger for EAL than for EL1 children
- The relationship between expressive vocabulary breadth and reading comprehension is particularly strong for EAL children
- Beech & Keys, 1997; Burgoyne et al., 2009, 2011a, 2011b; Cameron, 2002; Hutchinson et al., 2003; Stuart, 2004.

Our research focusing on vocabulary...

EAL children tend to score lower than nonEAL on

- measures tapping in to extended meanings (McKendry & Murphy, 2014)
- on measures of collocational knowledge and idioms (McKendry & Murphy; Smith & Murphy, 2015)
- measures that estimate their comprehension of texts containing multiword vocabulary (**lack of awareness** of their non-understanding) (Kan & Murphy, under review)
- Metaphor (Hessel & Murphy, 2018; Hessel, Nation & Murphy, under review)
- lower reading comprehension than nonEAL

What about EAL and MFL?

- Despite huge diversity in the EAL population, one thing they all have in common is **some degree of proficiency in more than one language**
- Given appropriate support, EAL students have the potential to become bilingual speakers with a high degree of proficiency in more than one language
- Despite this... discourse surrounding EAL in England and beyond is one of deficit
- **MFL is an area where EAL have clear strengths/advantage over nonEAL** (cf. Strand et al., Hutchinson, 2018)

What is the official guidance to teachers for MFL provision?

- Tends to be generic
- Typically fails to consider the EAL population
- **Bauckham, 2016 – MFL Pedagogy review.** EAL is mentioned once:

“Nearly 16% of pupils in secondary school already have some exposure to a language other than English from home. Language teachers should be aware of where this is the case and should, where practical and appropriate, draw on pupils’ knowledge of their home language to make comparisons both with English and with the new language being taught. This can help develop pupils’ conscious language awareness which has many cognitive benefits”.
(pg. 13).
- Methodological debates assume monolingual, English-speaking population. E.g., use of L1 in the MFL classroom ignores possibility that many students don’t share the teacher’s L1.
- **despite MFL being an area of comparative strength for EAL pupils, little (no?) guidance for teachers about to harness EAL students’ language learning expertise and use it as a resource in the classroom**

What does the research say?

- Very little
- Anecdotal evidence that EAL pupils are withdrawn from MFL provision to receive additional support in English literacy
 - **Is this a good idea?**
 - **Probably NOT.** EAL pupils are at an advantage in the MFL class and given their prior language learning experiences are likely to have more effective language learning strategies, and/or greater metalinguistic awareness.
 - Home language might share similarities with MFL re: lexis, morphosyntax and phonology.
 - These suspected advantages are borne out by EAL pupils' academic achievement at GCSE level on MFL.
 - **NB: not due to learning their heritage language.**

What can the MFL class offer students?

Beyond learning the foreign language

- Many researchers have hypothesized MFL offers other advantages (i.e., cognitive flexibility, reading and math (Landry, 1974; Stewart, 2005))
- **Murphy et al., 2015 Does learning a MFL have an impact on developing L1 literacy?**
 - Compared Year 3 children learning: i) Italian or ii) French or iii) nothing (control group)
 - pre- and post- test scores on various aspects of English (L1) literacy
 - **Specific advantages to learning a FL on English L1 literacy:**
 - Single word reading
 - Phonological processing (alliteration, rhyme, spoonerism)
 - Some evidence learning a FL with transparent orthography (Italian) had advantages over opaque (French)


Conclusions & Next steps

- MFL guidance to teachers needs to be more specific and inclusive of *all* the pupils in our classrooms
- **More research on the intersection between EAL and MFL [ideally, a co-constructed research agenda with practitioners]**
 - Systematic analysis of EAL students' attainment in MFL
 - What advantages do they have, and why?
 - How can teachers leverage EAL pupils' advantages in the MFL classroom
 - Support for MFL teaching (generally) and specifically for MFL teaching of multilingual pupils

Abolish the Monolingual Mindset in our Multilingual World

Thank You, Merci, Grazie, Gracias, Gratias tibi

victoria.murphy@education.ox.ac.uk

 @vmurphyox

RiPL network: <http://www.ripl.uk/>

NALDIC: <http://www.ripl.uk/>

Acknowledgements:

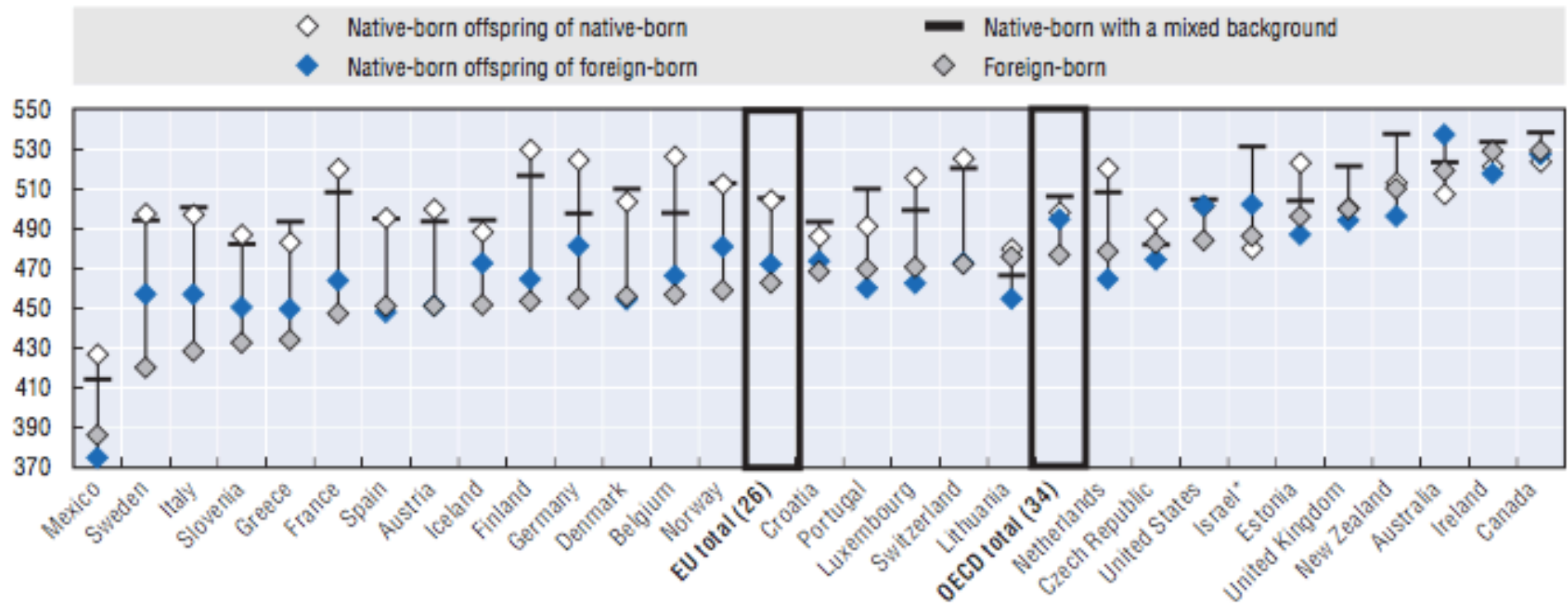
EEF, The R.E.A.L. Forum (<http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/research/applied-linguistics/r-e-a-l/>)


The Leverhulme Trust

Academic Achievement

Programme for International Student Assessment, OECD

Figure 13.7. Mean **PISA reading scores** of 15-year-old students by migration background, 2012

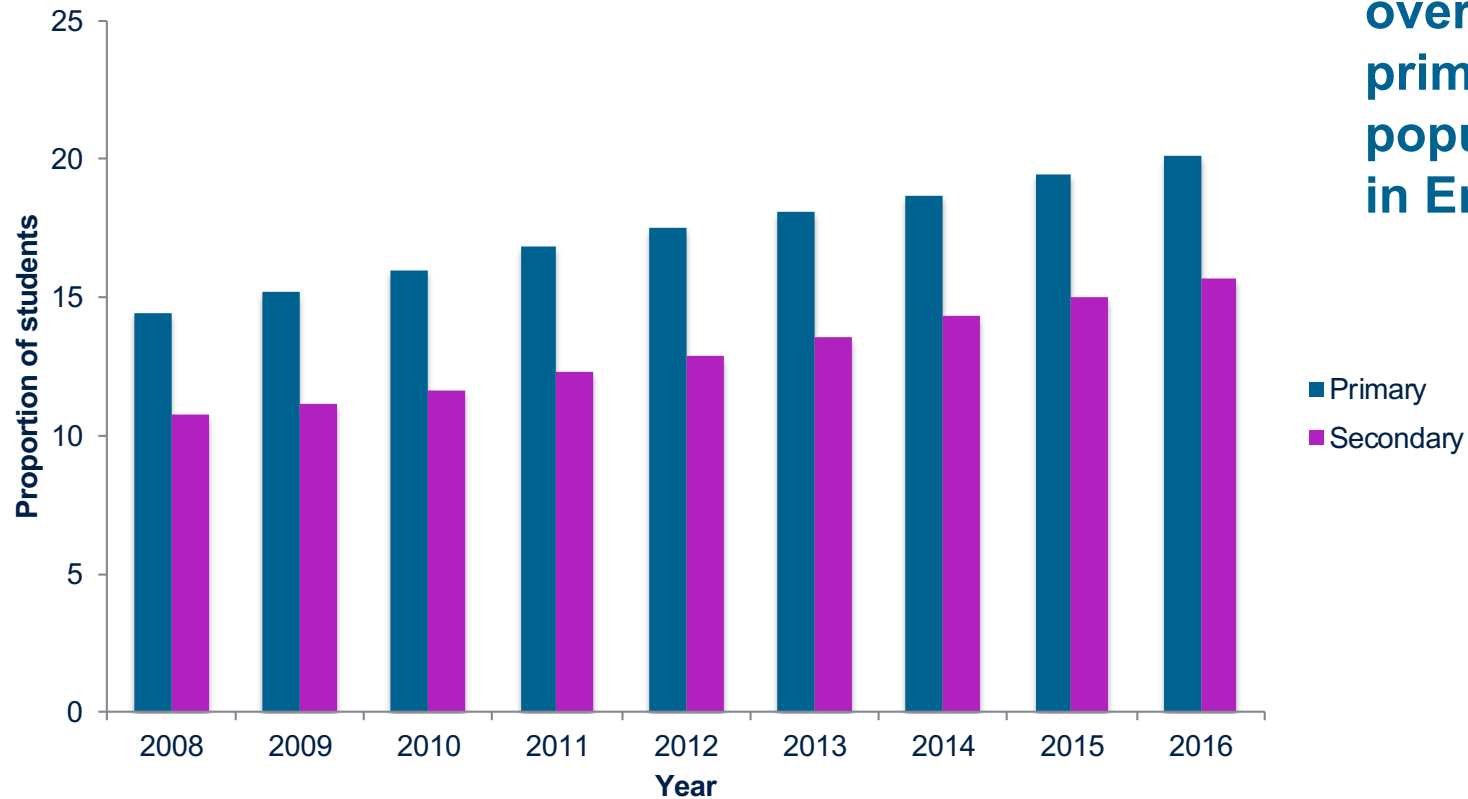


StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/8888933213509>

Prevalence

In England

Proportion of primary and secondary school students in England with EAL



**Currently (2018)
over 20% of
primary school
population is EAL
in England**

Despite progress overall...

EPI report, 2018

Educational Outcomes of Children with English as an Additional Language

Jo Hutchinson

February 2018


the bell foundation

UNBOUND

EDUCATION
POLICY
INSTITUTE

“The most potentially damaging feature of EAL policy in England is the absence of any national oversight or provision of professional qualifications, staff development and specialist roles for teachers and other school staff working with children with EAL”. – EPI, 2018 (pg. 9)