An exploration into how children, young people and adults conceptualise and enhance children and young people's participation through meta-ethnography and collaborative action research

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Declaration

This thesis is being submitted for the award of Doctorate in Applied Educational Psychology. I declare that it is my own work and does not include material that is the work of others without acknowledgement, that I have consulted all materials cited, and I have not submitted this assignment for any other academic award.

Overarching Abstract

This thesis is comprised of a systematic literature review, empirical study, bridging document and a reflective commentary. Chapter one reports a systematic literature review which addresses the question: 'How is the participation of children and young people within meetings considered from children, young people and adult perspectives in an English context?'. An interpretive qualitative synthesis approach, meta-ethnography, was used to analyse the data, methods and research design of eight papers to construct new understandings in relation to the review question. Findings suggest that constructs relating to purpose, relationships and power underpinned conceptualisations of children and young people's (CYP) participation within meetings. These three constructs offer a starting point for understanding of how CYP and adults might work together to enhance CYP's participation.

Chapter 2 aims to link the meta-ethnography and the empirical research project. This chapter discusses the rationale for the thesis, including a critical consideration of research methodology and underpinning ontological and epistemological assumptions. Consideration is also given to the ethical complexities which underpinned the design and approach of the empirical study.

The empirical research had a transformative purpose and moved beyond exploring perspectives to actively improving school practice. Using a collaborative approach to action research, chapter three reports on this empirical project. It aims to explore how school staff might enhance opportunities and experiences for pupil participation specifically for children identified as having English as an additional language (EAL). The research was completed in a North East primary school in collaboration with one Special Educational Needs Coordinator as a co-researcher. The research is discussed using the structure of its collaborative action research phases to demonstrate a holistic, collaborative and action-oriented inquiry.

The inquiry involved an initial meeting with the co-researcher, a focus group with seven Teaching Assistants, semi-structured interviews with five pupils, and a review meeting with the co-researcher. Data was transcribed and then analysed

using an abbreviated version of constructivist grounded theory. The chapter offers a rationale for using this within an action research design. Codes generated within the focus group and interviews were then compared to generate categories. The findings from this inquiry were used as a catalyst for discussion between the co-researcher and I, which led to identification of a range of outcomes for future school practice. These were concerned with providing space for pupils to add value to their school community; creating space for home-school language partnerships and continuing to build staff confidence and capacity in supporting participatory practice. This study demonstrates how action research can be useful in the development of professional learning and reflection.

Chapter 4 discusses key learnings and reflections which occurred during the research process. Specifically, I reflect on how this research journey has influenced my development and professional practice both as a Trainee Educational Psychologist and as a researcher.

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Chapter 1. Systematic Literature Review

How is the participation of children and young people within meetings considered from children, young people and adult perspectives in an English context?

1.0 Abstract

Aims: This chapter reports a systematic literature review which addresses the question: 'How is the participation of children and young people within meetings considered from children, young people and adult perspectives in an English context?'. I have prepared this for submission to Educational Psychology in Practice.

Rationale: This chapter has been informed by Article 12 of the United Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which states that children have the right to be heard on matters affecting them and that these views should be given due weight. This legislation guides current key English legislation, policy and SEND guidance (Children and Families Act, 2014; SEND Code of Practice, 2015). However, authors remain unsure whether adults are 'genuinely attentive and responsive to young people's perspectives' (Hartas and Lindsay, 2011, p131). The lack of CYP's participation in decision making contexts has also long been noted (Munro, 2001; Thomas, 2007). This review attempted to further understand CYP's participation in meetings by exploring CYP and adult perspectives. It was hoped this might encourage further debate regarding CYP's participatory rights and how adults might create spaces for CYP's participation within meetings.

Method: Current literature was systematically searched, and refined, until eight papers were selected to be included in the analysis. An interpretive qualitative synthesis approach, meta-ethnography, was used to analyse the data, methods and research design to construct new understandings in relation to the review question (Noblit & Hare, 1988).

Findings: Findings suggest that constructs relating to purpose, relationships and power underpinned conceptualisations of CYP's participation within meetings.

These three constructs offer a starting point for understanding possible barriers to CYP's participation and further understanding of how CYP and adults might work together to enhance CYP's participation.

Limitations: This meta ethnography has been carried out by one person as opposed to a research team. Conducting this meta-ethnography in a research team may have led to further interpretations and further depth within the meta-analysis. Findings are also subjective and further interpretations may have added depth and meaning.

Conclusions: Research exploring CYP and adult perspectives of CYP's participation within meetings in an English context remains limited. Findings suggest that studies often sought to understand and conceptualise participation rather than explore how professionals and children might develop participatory practice for CYP (Diaz et al., 2018; Muench et al., 2017).

Keywords: Children and young people, adults, decision-making processes, meetings, participation, voice, England.

1.1 Introduction

This qualitative literature review explores the question 'How is the participation of children and young people (CYP) within meetings considered from CYP and adult perspectives in an English context?'. The following sections provide the context and rationale for this focus, before presenting the review methodology.

Much of the research on CYP's participation has been structured around the 1989 United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Lucas, 2017; Nthontho, 2017). This legislation and research has resulted in a growing acceptance that CYP have a right to be involved in decisions that affect them (Lundy, 2007; Nthontho, 2017). The implications of this for practices in schools are reflected within the literature (Georgeson et al., 2014; McVeety & Farren, 2020). CYP's participation has been argued to challenge issues associated with social exclusion and positively contribute to the wellbeing of CYP, their families and wider communities (James & Lane, 2018; Stafford et al., 2021).

Despite the increasing legislative support for the importance of CYP's participation, It is unclear whether this has resulted in any meaningful change for CYP (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010). For example, Davis and Hill (2006) state that CYP's involvement in decision making contexts is often 'tokenistic, unrepresentative in membership, adult-led in process and ineffective in acting upon what children want' (p9). Some authors query whether listening to CYP's voices guarantees any benefits for CYP, and whether decision-making outcomes are shaped or impacted by CYP's participation (Graham et al., 2018; Nolas, 2015).

The UNCRC states CYP have a right to voice their opinions on all matters affecting them (UNCRC, 1989). Despite the UNCRC being an internationally endorsed set of standards, there has been critique of some of the policies and practices which have developed in an attempt to support CYP to realise their participatory rights (Facca et al., 2020; Lundy, 2007). The UNCRC has been interpreted in ways which some consider reflects western notions of individualism and self-reliance (Wyness, 2013, p432). It has been argued that within Western culture CYP's participation may seek to prepare CYP for a role as consumer driven subjects (Bragg, 2007). Policies such as the Children and Families Act

(2014), which stipulates that Local Authorities in England are expected to ascertain the wishes of CYP regarding the services they receive, may arguably work towards developing CYP's autonomy and future participation within a neo-liberal education system (Raby, 2014). This may suggest that CYP are valued as consumers, rather than as citizens taking part in democratic process of decision making (Raby, 2014)

1.1.1 Key concepts

Participation is constructed and understood in a plethora of ways, most commonly, as 'taking part' (Shaik, 2016). Venninen et al. (2013) asserts that participation occurs when CYP's opinions are valued and acted upon by others (p.2). Neale (2004) argued that participation should respect children as individuals who may differ from their parents and other adults. Further, literature has indicated that participation should serve a useful purpose for CYP (Diaz et al., 2018; Murray, 2015; Neale, 2004).

CYP's participation is often used in conjunction with 'child voice' (Mager & Nowak, 2012). Child voice is a complex concept which may refer to CYP in conversation and consultation on issues which may concern them (Fleming, 2015). However, authors have questioned the perhaps well-intentioned yet problematic use of voice as the most effective means of framing children's participation (A. James, 2007; Mannion, 2007). For example, 'voice' may imply there is a single homogenous voice, rather than multiple voices (Thomson, 2011). It has been argued that voice is an ambiguous term, as CYP's voices may be shaped by established ideas and used to support a dominant adult led narrative (Mazzei, 2009). Authors have argued that any consideration of CYP's participation must recognise the nature of the relationship and power struggles between adults and children (Foucault, 1979; Graham et al., 2018). Giving voice to children is therefore 'not simply about letting children speak; it is about exploring the unique contribution to our understanding of, and theorising about the social world, that children's perspectives can provide' (James, 2007, p263).

I believe child voice might be considered as one aspect of CYP's participation. However, the term participation implies a focus on the role of adults and CYP in creating spaces for CYP's views to be considered and acted upon (Facca et al.,

2020). The next section will explore how participation is conceptualised in the literature.

1.1.2 Frameworks of participation

There is no universally agreed definition of participation (Mager & Nowak, 2012). Some authors have conceptualised it using scales to differentiate between levels of participation (Hart, 1992, 2008; Lundy, 2007; Shier, 2001; Treseder, 1997). Lundy (2007) has developed a framework which encourages considerations regarding factors which enable CYP to express a view and ensure that it is given due weight (Mager & Nowak, 2012). Lundy's (2007) framework focuses on four elements:

Table 1.1: Lundy's 2007 Framework

1. Space: children must be given the opportunity to express a view.
2. Voice: children must be facilitated to express their views.
3. Audience: the view must be listened to.
4. Influence: the view must be acted on, as appropriate.

Hart's 'Ladder of Participation' is one of the most often used models within the field (Wyness, 2013) and uses a hierarchical scale to consider participative activities (Table 1.2).

Table 1.2: Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation (1992)

Stages of participation	**Explanation of CYP's participation**
Rung 8:	Young people and adults share decision-making
Rung 7:	Young people lead and initiate action
Rung 6:	Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people
Rung 5:	Young people consulted and informed
Rung 4:	Young people assigned and informed
Rung 3:	Young people are tokenised
Rung 2:	Young people are decoration
Rung 1:	Young people are manipulated

Hart's (1992)'s model describes 'levels' of participation, ranging from manipulation to co-production. Hart (1992) suggested that the bottom three rungs of the ladder were a form of 'tokenism' rather than 'genuine forms of children's participation' (p. 9). Tokenism for Hart (2008) is where no choice is given in how CYP formulate their opinions or communicate their views. However, some activities considered tokenistic may according to Lundy (2018) actually be considered a useful step towards more respectful and meaningful engagement with CYP.

Hart's (1992) ladder of participation might also imply that CYP's involvement is dependent on adult devised techniques (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008), and that 'without aid and encouragement from adult-designed participatory methods, children cannot fully exercise their agency' (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008, p503). Authors have argued that it may be more useful to classify children's participation and the involvement of adults horizontally rather than categorising participative activities vertically on basis of the affordances made by adults, as shown in Hart (1992)'s ladder (Wyness, 2013). This may work against hierarchical assumptions which may be associated with the vertical positioning of Hart's 1992 ladder and support the notion of CYP being respected as competent social actors who can engage in participatory practices with adults (Thomas, 2012). This may lead to further considerations regarding how adults and CYP might create spaces to promote participatory practices.

Wyness (2013) notes that there has been a shift in the field of childhood studies: from a focus on adults mediating CYP's worlds, to children's perspectives being central to the research field. Some authors argue that participatory practices are now associated with adults occupying more marginal positions (Lundy, 2007; Mannion, 2007) and may work towards children being in charge (Gallagher, 2006). Gallagher (2006), argues that CYP are perhaps most involved when they independently 'shape and organise the world around them' (p.503). However, Hart (2008) argues that the 'highest degree of citizenship is when children or adults not only feel they can initiate change themselves but also recognise that it is sometimes appropriate to also include others' (p.24). This implies a shift towards considering how CYP and adults might jointly engage in practices which

seek to promote CYP's participation. This review therefore assumes that engaging in participatory practices should aim to involve CYP and adults in a democratic and shared process of decision-making (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010).

The discussion so far has considered some critique of approaches to participation but there is still a need to consider how we conceptualise participation if we are to avoid adopting instrumental approaches focussing on CYP's skills development (i.e Hart, 2008). CYP's participation involves more than building CYP's skills and may also involve ways of understanding the social world. Further consideration on how best to theorise and interpret CYP's participation is therefore required (Thomas, 2012).

1.1.3 Theoretical considerations

Broadly, thinking has shifted from models aiming to classify participative activities (Hart, 1992) to a relational and dialogic understanding (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010; Mannion, 2007). This may reflect the shift in conceptualising CYP's voice as a component of participative activities (Facca et al., 2020) and an increased focus on the dialogue created between adults and CYP. I will now explore this shift in the literature further to clarify how participation is conceptualised in this review.

Authors have argued that closer attention must be given to the act of dialogue, which some researchers state is central to the participatory process (Barrow, 2010; Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010). A dialogic understanding of participatory processes suggests that the mechanisms of transformation happen in the space between those involved (Van der Riet & Boettiger, 2009). Within a dialogic space 'different perspectives might be held in tension in a way which does not lead to resolution but produces sparks of insight, learning and creativity' (Wegerif, 2007 p.118). This perspective is shared by others within the children's rights literature, who argue for a shift in emphasis from CYP's voice towards relational, dialogical practices (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010; Mannion, 2007). Thomson (2012) contends that democratically stronger forms of voice are characterised by 'dialogue, reciprocity, recognition and respect' (p.21)'. Dialogic encounters might therefore include consideration about the space in which CYP and adults engage

together to create knowledge which may be transformative. This implies a conceptualisation which moves beyond individual child voice (Raby, 2014).

Dialogic processes are considered crucial to participative practice due to the potential to shift power relationships (Van der Riet & Boettiger, 2009). However, this does not imply symmetrical relationships between all involved (Markova et al., 2007). A key assumption of participatory approaches is the emphasis on accessing the voices of the least powerful members of a community (Van der Riet & Boettiger, 2009). This may lead to transformation as previously marginalised voices are included within the generation of knowledge (Van der Riet & Boettiger, 2009).

Dialogue may also play an important role in creating the conditions for recognising and valuing children (Wyness, 2013). This will require us to find ‘spaces’ for adult-child dialogic encounters (Mannion, 2007). A dialogic encounter implies that conversations begin from a standpoint of respect for the views, perspectives and assumptions of the other and that individuals remain open to new understandings and insights which cannot be generated alone (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005). Participation might therefore be viewed as a space for ethical practice and one which is comfortable with the uncertainty that engaging in dialogue with CYP may inevitably bring (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005).

Based on these perspectives, it could be suggested that the dialogic interaction between CYP and adults may have the power to create new understandings about how to promote participatory practices for CYP (Van de Riet & Boettiger, 2009). However, Thomas (2012) argues that shared understandings are not merely reducible to the act of dialogue. Instead, Thomas (2012) states that participation might be further considered through Honneth’s categories of recognition (love, friendship and solidarity). For example, CYP might not engage in ‘full participation’ if they do not feel a sense of warmth from the adults who support them; feel recognised as right-holders; and have a sense of solidarity and shared purpose with the adults around them (Thomas, 2012).

This overview of the literature has emphasised that participation involves more than listening to the voices of children. CYP’s participation may also encourage fundamental questions about children’s place in society and intergenerational

interactions (Thomas, 2012). Some authors have emphasised the importance of participation occurring within relationships and collective actions, which works towards building children's self-understanding, individual agency and their understanding of the role of the adults involved in encouraging their participation (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010; Raby, 2014; Thomas, 2012). This approach to participation may encourage authors to consider the role of both adults and CYP in creating spaces to promote CYP's participation (Wyness, 2013).

1.1.4 Meetings as decision making contexts

This review has selected decision making meetings about individual CYP as a context in which to study CYP's participation within educational and social care settings. Meetings may involve a range of stages (Rubinger et al., 2020) and offer a bounded space where parents and multiple professionals might work together to support CYP (Bolin, 2016). This review defines meetings as a formal mechanism for discussing individual CYP's needs and strengths and where it is intended that CYP, professionals, parents and carers will work together to jointly support CYP.

Meetings are embedded in their social-cultural historical contexts (Allen et al., 2015). The dialogue, processes and dynamics involved before and after the meeting itself suggests that the boundaries around any meeting are fluid. For example, meetings may bring parents and professionals together for discussion. However, communication between parents, CYP and professionals before and after the meeting may impact on the meeting itself.

Meetings may present a challenging context for engaging CYP. Research has found that CYP may feel their views are not heard within meetings (Diaz et al., 2018) and that professionals make decisions for rather than with them (Edwards et al., 2020). Roffey (2013) argues that it may be difficult to encourage participation within educational settings, as these are based on adult power and control. (Munro, 2001) questioned whether the meeting itself was an appropriate vehicle to promote participation as there may be a lack of focus on the importance of adults listening and responding to the voices of children. However, meetings offer a formal mechanism for discussing CYP's needs, strengths and progress and to plan for a CYP's future and evaluate the effectiveness of different

educational provisions for CYP (SEND Code of Practice, 2015). The Looked After Child (LAC) reviews aims to involve CYP, professionals and carers in reviewing a CYP's care plan and discussing future aims (Pert et al., 2017). Although meetings are common in education and children's services, the role of CYP within these meetings, and how professionals facilitate their participation has not been widely researched (Pert et al., 2017; Roesch-Marsh et al., 2017).

This review therefore seeks to explore the question: 'How is CYP's participation within meetings considered from CYP and adult perspectives in an English context?'. The review focusses on CYP's and adult perspectives because the literature emphasises the importance of participation being a relational practice requiring collective actions which help build CYP's and adults understanding of space required for participation (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010; Raby, 2014; Thomas, 2012). Including the perspectives of both CYP and adults may develop a more nuanced understanding of how CYP and adults might work together, and possibly change, to facilitate CYP's participation (Wyness, 2013).

1.2 Review methodology

Exploring the perspectives of CYP and adults is central to this research synthesis. It was therefore decided that this review would focus on qualitative research, to enable a detailed exploration of these perspectives (Mertens, 2010).

This synthesis seeks to build a 'comparative understanding' and to answer 'how to put together' written interpretive accounts (Noblit & Hare, 1988, p.7) of CYP's participation from multiple perspectives. It was therefore deemed that a meta-ethnography (Noblit & Hare, 1988) would be an appropriate approach to synthesising qualitative studies. The process of a meta ethnography involves translation of studies into one another, which may encourage the researcher to understand and transfer ideas, concepts and metaphors across a variety of studies (Britten et al., 2002). It was hoped that adopting a meta-ethnographic approach would enable a 'critical examination of multiple accounts of a situation' (Noblit & Hare, 1998, p.13), in this case, CYP and adult perspectives.

The seven stages of meta-ethnography as defined by Noblit and Hare (1988) (Table 1.3) are used hereafter to structure the stages of my review.

Table 1.3: Seven steps of meta-ethnography

1. Getting started 2. Deciding what is relevant to the initial interest 3. Reading the studies 4. Determining how the studies are related 5. Translating the studies into one another 6. Synthesising translations 7. Expressing the synthesis These steps or 'phases' do not have to be linear, but rather they can overlap as the process unfolds (Noblit & Hare, 1988).

1.2.1 Phase one: Getting started – a review question

Noblit and Hare (1988) originally defined this stage as 'identifying an intellectual interest that qualitative research might inform' (p. 26), where the focus is on 'a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context' (p. 27). The review question to be explored was: 'How is the participation of CYP's within meetings considered from CYP and adult perspectives in an English context?'.

A number of issues arise in the literature in relation to CYP's participative role in meetings (Munro, 2001; Thomas, 2007). Hartas and Lindsay (2011) question whether adults are genuinely attentive and responsive to young people's perspectives, and aware of the plurality and polyphony of their voices' (p131). There has also been little scrutiny of CYP's feelings about meetings where decisions are made about them (Diaz et al., 2018). The papers reviewed in this synthesis attempt to bridge this gap, by interviewing CYP about their perspectives of participation within meetings and the perspectives of carers, parents and staff from educational and care backgrounds.

1.2.2 Phase Two: Deciding what is relevant to the initial interest

Noblit and Hare (1988) recommend considerable effort should be made when deciding which studies are relevant. To ensure an extensive search of the literature, a systematic search was carried out to 'locate the maximum amount of primary research in the most efficient way before undertaking further assessment of the material' (Campbell et al., 2011, p27). Numerous search terms were trialled

during the scoping and searching phases, culminating in the terms outlined in Table 1.4. Boolean phrases of OR and AND were used to combine terms within and across columns respectively. The terms were used to search five databases from August 2021 to March 2022: Eric, British Education Index (all within EBSCO), Scopus, PsychInfo (OVID) and Web of Science.

Table 1.4: Final search terms

"child*" OR "pupil*" OR "student*" OR "youth*" OR "teen*" OR "young person" OR "young people" OR "adolescent*"	“Adult” OR “teacher*” OR “social worker*” OR “parent*” OR “Mother” OR “Father” OR “Guardian” OR “Carer*”		“participation” OR “rights” OR “child* rights” OR “decision making” OR “participatory research” OR “voice” OR “view” OR “opinion” OR “feel*” OR "attitudes" OR "experience" OR "perspective"	“meeting*” OR “conference” OR “consultation” OR “review”

NOT “systematic review” OR “literature review*” OR “scoping search*” OR “scoping review*” OR “physical* activity” were also applied to the searches.

All terms were ‘exploded’ to ensure that search results included all related and narrower terms of keywords.

This review is specific to the English context as it was hoped that this research would be relevant to current practice within England and reflect current legislation (Children and Families Act, 2014; SEND Code 2015). Although the Children and Families Act (2014) resulted in some policy changes for Wales and Northern Ireland (Children and Families, Act, 2014), the Act primarily resulted in policy changes within England. The SEND Code (2015) also only applies to England (Children and Families Act, 2014, p19).

The search results were further refined using the inclusion and exclusion criteria listed below:

Table 1.5: Inclusion criteria

Criteria	Justification
Empirical study	To access primary data
Written in English	Accessibility to researcher
Based in England	Applicability to English context
Published within a peer reviewed journal	To allow for systematic search trail and ensure data quality
Published from 2014	To access recent and relevant literature reflecting up to date policy for including children within meetings (Children and Families Act, 2014)
Qualitative data	Relevance to research questions.
Specific focus on the perspectives of CYP and adults of children's participation within meetings	Relevance to research question

Employing the inclusion criteria, 20 papers were read in full. The number of papers was steadily refined (Light, 1980) to the final eight selected for the synthesis (see Figure 1.1 and Figure 2.2).

The search terms included a range of terms which have been used to describe CYP's participation within the literature, to avoid excluding relevant papers which may use different terminologies. Papers within the initial searches featured scoping reviews and research involving physical activity. This review therefore also applied NOT criteria (Table 1.4) which excluded these papers.

Figure 1.1: Flow chart representation of the SLR

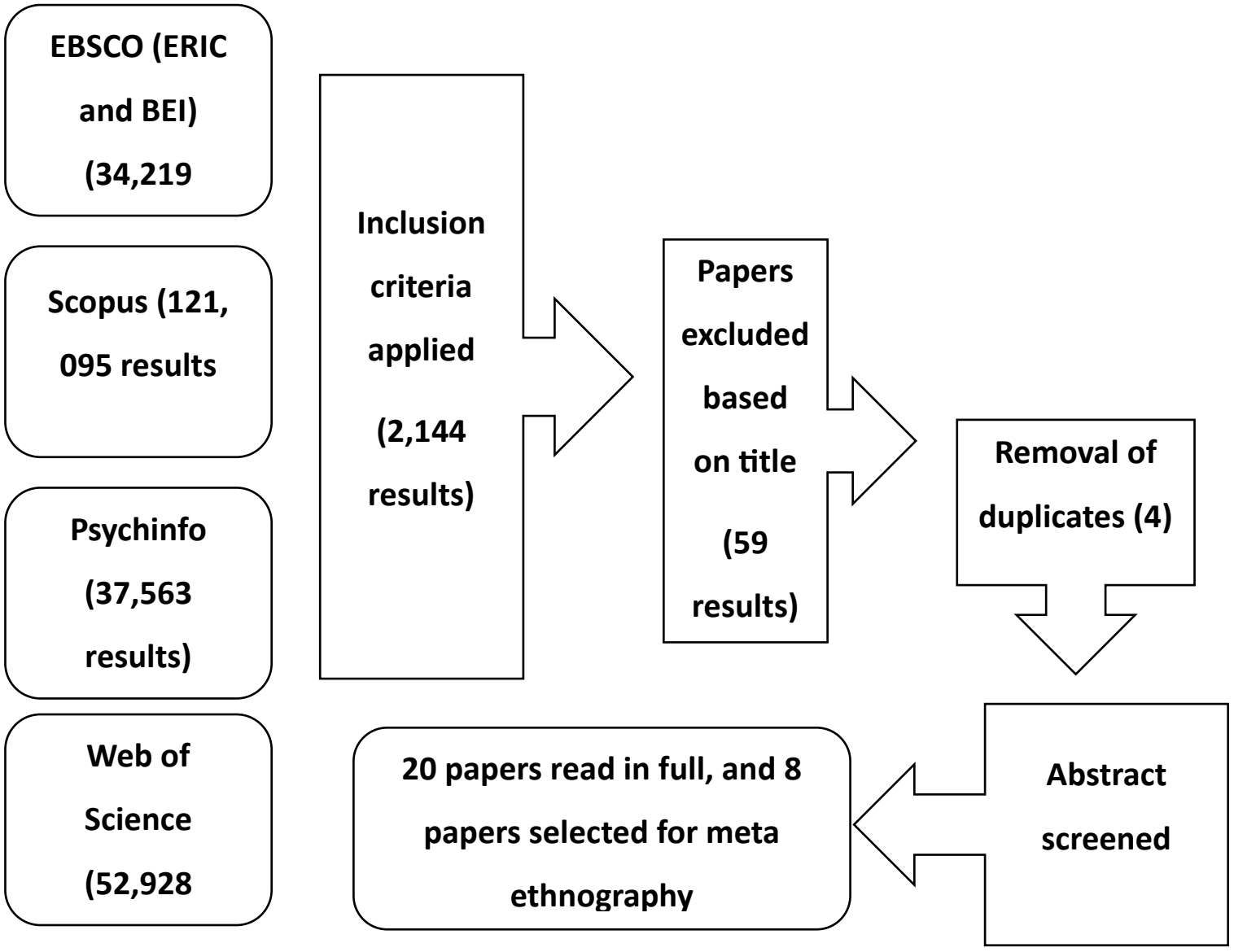
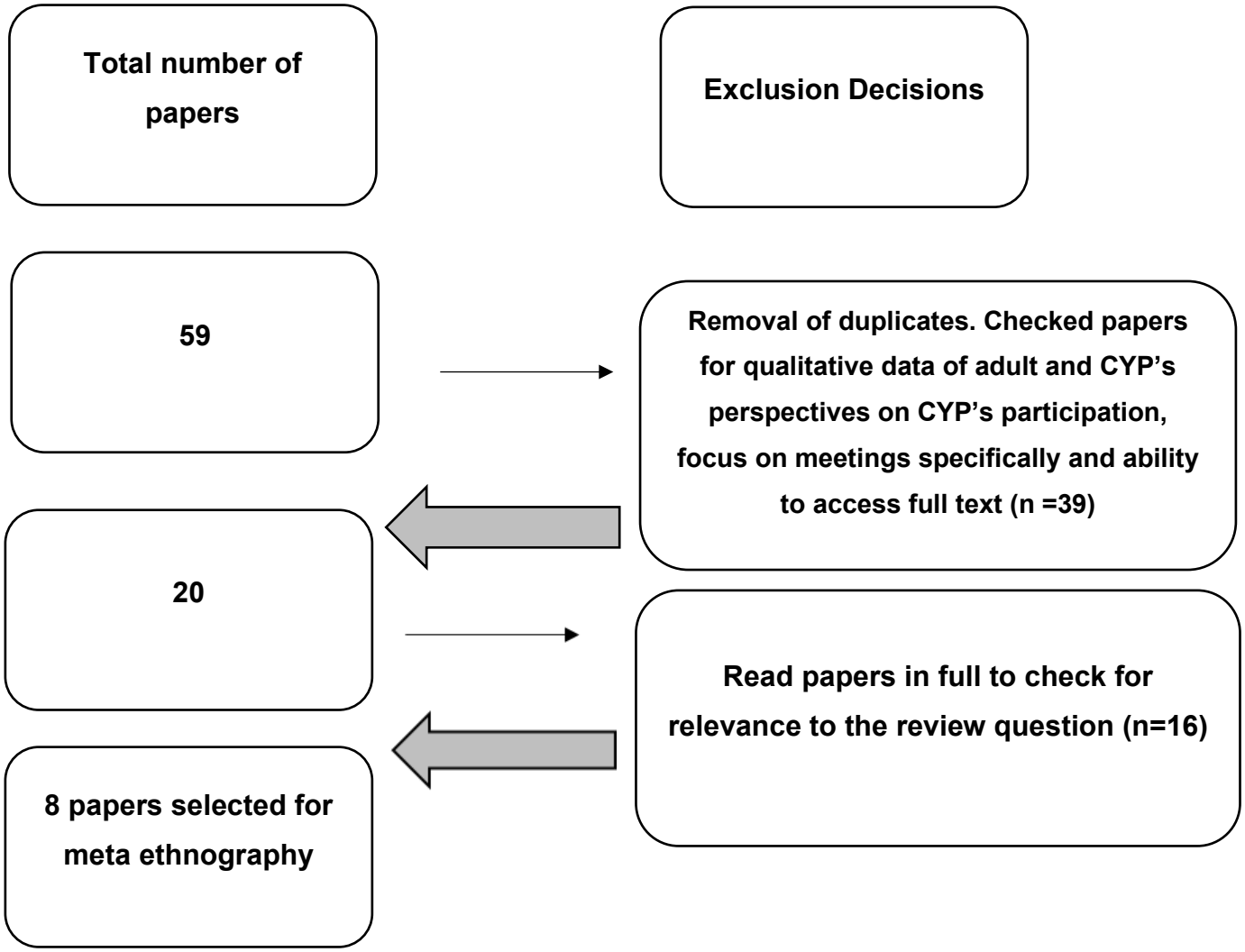


Figure 1.2: Flow chart representation of the refining process



1.2.3 Quality assessment

Quality assessments are argued to be an important component of an SLR, as this process seeks to prevent the inclusion of 'poorly conducted trials' (Atkins et al., 2008) and may 'increase their importance and relevance in the evidence base' (France et al., 2014, p. 2). However, the application of quality assessment criteria to qualitative research is widely debated, and there is currently no consensus on criteria selection, rationale and application (Atkins et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2020). In addition, Noblit and Hare (1988) did not advocate for a formal appraisal of studies prior to a meta-ethnography.

Quality appraisal tools may reduce research to a 'list of technical procedures' (Barbour, 2001, p.117) and may result in an over-rigorous application of criteria which is counterproductive to the aims of the research (Atkins et al., 2008). This has led some researchers to question whether the use of a quality assessment tool contributes any further understanding on the selection of studies for qualitative synthesis (Atkins et al., 2008). Some quality appraisal tools may also impose a positivist approach to quality which may not be suitable for studies conducted from a qualitative paradigm (Atkins et al., 2008).

I believe that applying a quality appraisal tool is antithetical to my espoused philosophical position, which acknowledges that beliefs are inherently provisional and open to change (Morgan, 2014). I acknowledge that this research will be guided by my beliefs, but I also hope to be guided by the shared beliefs of the research community and the views of the participants' (Morgan, 2014, p29-31). Using a quality assessment tool may also silence the voices of participants, who may not be as well versed in the traditional academic ways of writing (i.e. CYP co-researchers). I therefore consider the adoption of quality appraisal tools as problematic given the aim of this review. I instead hope to value and acknowledge each study and the contribution they might bring to our understanding of CYP's participation.

1.2.4 Phase 3 & 4: Reading the studies & determining how the studies are related

This stage involved careful reading of the chosen papers, to identify the main concepts within each paper (Britten et al., 2002). Following worked examples by Britten et al. (2002) and Atkins et al. (2008) I chose to include a range of contextual

information about each study's sample (Table 1.6). Many of the selected studies featured meetings which were led by social services. Lucas (2017) is the only paper which features meetings which were led by some educational professionals as part of the Common Assessment Framework. Three papers were also part of a wider study and are a limitation of the SLR. However, each paper offered a different perspective and research participants and were therefore included within the review.

Table 1.6: Contextual information of papers selected for meta-ethnography

Study	Participants	Setting and focus of the meetings	Research Design	Data collection Method	Data analysis	Key findings
Diaz et al. (2018)	10 CYP aged between 11 and 17.	Child in Care Reviews in a Rural Local Authority in England	Qualitative research design	Semi structured interviews	Thematic analysis	Positive and reciprocal relationships between CYP and social workers supported CYP's participation.
Muench et al. (2017)	22 CYP aged between eight to 18 years (14 girls and eight boys). 26 parents aged between 27 to 50 (21 women and 5 men).	Child Protection Conferences in an English Local Authority	Qualitative research design using semi-structured interviews.	Semi structured interviews	Thematic analysis	Relationships with social workers supported CYP's and parent participation. Children and parents were unaware of the purpose of meetings this was a possible barrier to participation. Accessible information shared in advance of meetings facilitated participation.
Diaz et al. (2019)	11 social workers and 8 Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs).	Child in Care Reviews in a Rural Local	Qualitative research design using semi-	Semi structured interviews	Thematic analysis	Relationships with IROs supported CYP's participation.

		Authority in England	structured interviews.			Professionals did not receive training on how to promote CYP's participation within decision making contexts. CYP's had negative experiences of review meetings. Structure of reviews were not child centred.
Lucas (2017)	15 parents and 7 CYP.	Multi agency meetings in one local authority in the Midlands of England	Qualitative research design using semi-structured interviews	Semi structured interviews	Thematic analysis	CYP were informed about purpose and structure of meeting prior to attending. This supported their participation, as they were able to select how they participative within the meeting. Relationships with parents/ carers supported CYP's participation.
Diaz and Aylward (2019)	7 Senior Managers of Children's Homes	Child in Care Reviews in a Rural Local Authority in England	Qualitative research design using semi-structured interviews.	Semi structured interviews	Thematic analysis	Relationship between Senior managers and CYP supported CYP's participation. Social workers did not appear to understand how

						to promote CYP's participation.
Pert et al. (2017)	25 CYP and 16 Foster carers	Looked after child reviews in one Local Authority in England.	Qualitative research design using semi-structured interviews	Semi structured interviews	Thematic analysis	CYP experienced barriers in engaging with the review process. CYP's participation may not be valued within procedural and statutory requirements.
(Watts, 2021)	17 Social workers, 4 Independent Reviewing officers and 5 foster carers. carers. 4 CYP	Child in Care Reviews. Research focuses on social workers, IRO's and foster carers writing reports to be viewed by the child.	A qualitative approach was employed in three stages. These included a documentary analysis of 'Me and My World review reports, semi structured interviews and groups.	Focus groups, semi structured interviews and documentary analysis.	Thematic analysis	Social workers comprised a report (documenting the child in care review) which was addressed to the child. Emphasis was placed on co-production of the report with the child. This appeared to support children to access information and appeared to build relationships with adults who supported CYP in decision making contexts.

(Cossar et al., 2016)	26 CYP aged six to 17 years.	Child Protection meetings in England	The study was a qualitative research study.	Activity based interviews. CYP contributed all aspects of the research design and implementation. For example, CYP designed recruitment leaflets, advised on ethical aspects of the research, contributed to the design of activity-based interviews and co-facilitated a workshop	Thematic analysis	CYP's were partially aware of the child protection process. However, CYP's stated that their participation was often difficult and emotionally draining. The child's relationship with their social worker was central to meaningful participation. Where children attended, they did not feel well prepared and supported. In some cases, they were asked difficult questions in front of their parents. Findings suggest that closer attention should be given to the complexity of children's participation in such meetings, which can be enabling but can also be a disempowering and emotive experience.

I then completed an initial mapping process, which explored the first and second order constructs of the eight final papers (Appendix A). First order constructs are described as constructs or direct quotes from participants (France et al., 2015). Second order constructs are referred to as the study researcher's interpretation of what participants originally said during data collection (Schutz, 1962). Third order constructs are reached because of the meta-ethnography, resulting from new interpretations following the synthesis (Britten et al., 2002).

Wherever possible, I sought to emphasise first order constructs of the original data to maintain the voices of the participants (Britten et al., 2002). It is important to acknowledge that first order constructs have been chosen and interpreted twice; once by the original research and again in this meta-ethnography (Atkins et al., 2008). Within Appendix A I have therefore collapsed the first and second order constructs.

The initial mapping process supported the identification of commonalities and dissimilarities across the eight papers. To ensure that materials were drawn from all papers, it was decided that only concepts that arose in at least two of the studies were further developed.

1.2.5 Phases 5 & 6: Translating the studies and synthesising translations

The translation of concepts from each paper proved problematic for several reasons. Firstly, the studies involved multiple perspectives that conveyed a variety of information and views. The studies also focussed on a range of decision-making contexts. Barbour (2001) raised the issue of qualitative researchers aiming to 'produce an artificially neat and tidy account that is descriptive rather than analytical and which militates against formulating in-depth analyses' (p. 1116). I therefore decided to explore concepts which were similar and overlapping, and concepts which contradicted each other. I subsequently completed two types of synthesis: reciprocal and refutational. The concepts constructed from the studies are presented in Table 1.7.

Table 1.7: List of concepts which informed the synthesis

Concepts	Where did this concept come from?							
	Diaz et al., 2018	**Pert et al., 2017**	**Muench et al., 2017**	**Diaz et a., 2019**	**Lucas, 2017**	**Diaz & Aylward 2019**	**Cossar et al., 2016**	**Watts, 2021**
Support from adults facilitated CYP's participation **(reciprocal)**	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Relationships with adults hindered CYP's participation **(refutational)**	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CYP felt safe and emotionally connected to others **(reciprocal)**	✓			✓			✓	✓
Adults used meetings as a mechanism to shame and undermine CYP **(refutational)**	✓			✓			✓	✓
Adult feelings and understanding of the meetings **(reciprocal)**	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
CYP's feelings and understanding of the meetings **(reciprocal)**	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
CYP were given the opportunity to have agency	✓	✓		✓			✓	

(reciprocal)								
Adults restricted opportunities for CYP to demonstrate agency **(refutational)**	✓	✓		✓			✓	
CYP were given the opportunity to have space to express their views **(reciprocal)**	✓	✓					✓	✓
Conflict in whether the views of CYP were valued and acted upon by adults **(refutational).**	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓
Meetings were not accessible for parents and/or CYP **(reciprocal)**			✓	✓			✓	✓
Lack of preparation and understanding from professionals on how to promote CYP's participation **(reciprocal)**		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Disjunction between professional's 'espoused theory' and 'theory in use' **(reciprocal)**		✓		✓		✓		✓
Adults were driven by value-based practice **(refutational)**		✓		✓		✓		✓

Concepts which formed a reciprocal and refutational translation are expressed in Table 1.8 and were informed by collapsed first and second order constructs (direct quotes are in italics).

Table 1.8: Concepts which informed third order constructs

Concepts (generated from the initial mapping process)	**Interpretation** (First order interpretations made by the participants/ researcher)	**My Questions and thoughts, which led to third order constructs**	**Construction** – guided by the review question: 'How is the participation of CYP within meetings considered from CYP and adult perspectives in an English context?'.
Support from adults facilitated CYP's participation (Reciprocal)	One young person stated *'If you have a good relationship with your social worker it works a little bit more because it's less of a meeting and more of a chat and it's more of a like – it's an actual discussion instead of point-to-point things...'* CYP suggested that their foster carer was key to their voices being heard: *'She helps me to say things because . . . well, it's difficult . . . he [IRO] . . . speaks lots and then asks, do you want that? She (foster carer) will push me to speak up'* Without a trusting relationship, some of the CYP people had no opportunity in which to explore and express their opinions and feelings, let alone feel that those opinions had an impact on decision-making One foster carer reported that her foster children disliked their social worker so	Does the positioning of adults within this research diminish a child's agency to participate?	**Relationships** CYP reported that if they experienced a positive relationship with an adult, it was likely to impact how willing they were to participate. Feeling safe and emotionally connected with others also appeared to be a prerequisite to CYP's participation. This may suggest that more dialogic forms of participation must emphasise the emotional safety of CYP and how connected the CYP feels to an adult within the meeting. Some CYP suggested that this relationship with an adult 'transformed' how they viewed decision making contexts. For example, a positive relationship with a social worker was described to transform the context of a meeting into an accessible 'chat' where the young person felt able to participate. Some of these accounts suggest if one adult had a relationship with the CYP, they could support CYP's participation even when the CYP had poor relationships with

Relationships with adults hindered CYP's participation (Refutational)	much that they hid from her. This would certainly impede the social worker's ability to prepare these children for reviews. One young person stated *'When I was in the meeting it was like tensed up and stuff like that because obviously I didn't build a relationship with my social worker. He was really bad, like he didn't do anything... He'd say all this stuff and he barely ever saw me... When the meeting ended it was like 'Well, thank God for that' kind of thing'.*		other adults within the meeting. However, CYP also stated that the lack of time and opportunities they had to build relationships with professionals, may have impacted on the adult's ability to support them within meetings. This may also indicate how the current context of social care workload and staffing in social care contexts is impacting upon social worker's abilities to form relationships.
CYP feeling safe and emotionally connected to others (reciprocal)	*'Researcher: What do you think the main things are that lead to good participation from young people in children's care reviews? IRO2: Well, I suppose they've got to feel safe […]'* One young person stated *'If someone had sat me down, fed me some pizza, chilled for a bit and then started talking about some serious stuff I might have accepted it. It was the fact that it was just thrown on top of me: 'Hey, here's a meeting' for the first one; 'Go talk about all your problems' basically is what it felt [like] to me, and then you feel judged by everyone around you'.*	I felt aspects of safety and connectedness further expanded upon the theme of 'relationships with adults'. How do CYP feel they 'matter' within these contexts? What influence or value are they perceived to have?	

Adults used meetings as a mechanism to shame and undermine CYP (refutational).	The children's descriptions of their relationships with social workers and of what they chose to say or not to say make clear the importance of a trusting relationship as a prerequisite for participation. One carer stated *he (Head of Year) wanted to take us through the whatever, 28 incidents, and he was a tiny little boy, very small for his age with some physical disability, and I could just see him shrivelling up. So, how on earth can that child have a voice in that meeting?'* One social worker *stated 'Foster carers and teachers will use the review as an opportunity to shame the child by bringing up their bad behaviour'.*		
Adult feelings and understanding of the meetings (reciprocal)	Social workers and carers felt that multiple unknown attendees acted as a barrier to engaging CYP with the review meeting and process. *'The first conference was terrifying, I (carer) didn't know what was happening'.*	How can adults help promote participation if they are unsure of what the purpose of the meeting is? What shapes and influences how adults perceive the role of CYP within meetings? Are these broader social/cultural factors?	**Purpose** These papers suggested that some professionals, parents and carers were unsure about the purpose of the meeting. For example, some adults viewed the purpose of a meeting as 'keeping children safe' as opposed to upholding the rights of the CYP to participate within meetings. This highlights the potential tensions which

	One social worker stated that '*keeping children safe'* was more important than upholding their rights to participate meaningfully in decisions made about their lives. One social worker stated *'I think for real participation it is a very labour intensive, time intensive exercise and you really have to give it space... I don't think caseload ties, workload management really allows and builds in enough time for that to take place properly''*		might occur within a meeting. For example, the tension between encouraging CYP to have a voice and to protect them from possible harm or information which may be discussed within the meeting. Some adults may have viewed their role as primarily keeping 'CYP safe' and experienced difficulties creating space and opportunities for CYP to participate. CYP perceived meetings to lack purpose which may have exacerbated underlining negative feelings towards professionals. CYP described feeling unsure about 'what was happening' within a meeting. In some cases, it does not appear that adults have explained the purpose of the meeting to CYP in a child friendly and accessible manner. This may have resulted in CYP feeling 'out of control' and 'daunted' when in these decision-making contexts. It also appeared that few attempts were made to ensure documents were accessible to CYP, which may act as a barrier to supporting CYP's participation. CYP often did not feel adequately prepared or supported. Some felt that their chosen supporter, often a family member, was not welcome and this may have been beneficial in helping to make the meetings more accessible for them. Research which
Lack of preparation and understanding from professionals on how to promote CYP's participation (reciprocal)	Aside from the use of forms, none of the CYP interviewed could remember being asked what they would like to talk about at their review. Some explanations were brief, vague and failed to give sufficient detail that would aid a child's understanding of what was happening in their life. Some review meetings took place without CYP even being aware that they were happening. One social worker stated, *'A lot of social workers don't really know what to expect from a Child in Care Review […] So,*	Does professional understanding of meetings impact their ability to prepare CYP? Some adults may not view CYP's participation as an important factor within meetings.	

	often the social worker comes to a review and they might not know what to expect so aren't really able to prepare the child.' When social workers were asked if they had a magic wand and they could do anything to improve children in care reviews, their response was as follows: '*I'd like to be certain that every professional going to a review understands exactly what they're there for and what their role is. Because if everyone does that then it should be a good experience'* Social workers felt that the reporting process was designed for an 'adult audience' and 'the professional network'. As a result, social workers and IRO's identified that children and their experiences were situated on the periphery with one social worker identifying that the process was *'not for the child'.*		encouraged professionals to write documents to children appeared to support their participation within meetings, as these documents were stated by adults to be 'child centred and accessible'.
Children's feelings and understanding of the meetings (reciprocal)	One young person stated *'Most kids haven't got a clue what's going on and then they sit there and it's not like they haven't tried to tell them. I feel like they tried to tell me in the early days but I just didn't want to listen to them because I hated everybody'.*	It appears that feeling uncertain about the purpose of the meeting has exacerbated underlying negative feelings CYP may experience within reviews.	

	One child stated *'The meetings themselves are a bit scary, they are a bit daunting really, so then I'm not in the right frame of mind to talk about anything and it's just . . . embarrassing I just sit, I don't say anything. It's weird, I just want them out of the way'.* How useful CYP found their LAC reviews was linked to their understanding of the purpose of reviews. Without understanding meaningful participation for CYP is arguably limited.		
Meetings were not accessible to CYP (reciprocal)	One young person stated *'I read through the report myself, the social worker didn't go through it with me and I found it very confusing. I only read one though as my mum said I shouldn't because it will upset me'.* *One social worker stated I've been at reviews, sadly, where young people don't know what the plan's going to be, let alone think about things that we need to talk about, so that can make it really, really difficult to have an honest and open discussion'.*	It appeared that little emphasis was placed on ensuring CYP were prepared for decision making contexts.	
Disjunction between 'espoused theory' (what professionals	The researchers stated that*, 'perhaps more cynical, view would be that these CYP people had correctly identified the*	Do professionals value CYP's participation?	The practical limitations of promoting CYP's participation across different systems

say they do) and 'theory in use' (what they actually do) (reciprocal)	*actual, bureaucratic, purpose of LAC reviews as practised by some professionals, in distinction to the official purpose as set out in legislation and guidance'.* Although all social workers asserted that children's participation in review meetings was extremely important, they also reported that either they or the IRO would make all key decisions regarding the arrangements for the meeting. Whilst many professionals in this and other studies clearly wish to include and involve children, there appears to be a disconnect between what this means to practitioners and how this can be realised in practice. Senior managers of Children's Homes, whilst supportive of the concept of CYP being at the heart of practice, were unable to articulate how they were going to ensure this happened. Senior managers appeared to have low expectations for both the CYP in care as well as the staff they led. Overall, there was a sense that the reports had interrupted the bureaucratic monotony of 'just another report' to a	Macro and micro system interactions.	This research suggests that many professionals wished to include and involve children within meetings. However, it appeared that professionals experienced difficulties implementing participatory practices, as it was difficult to realise these principles within meetings. For example, although senior managers of Children's Homes valued CYP's participation, they were unable to articulate how they might ensure CYP were heard within reviews. Professionals also discussed the 'bureaucratic monotony' of participatory processes and how this resulted in fewer opportunities for CYP to meaningfully participate. It appeared that professionals may have lacked the resources, knowledge and space to reflect on and implement participatory practices within meetings. This may reflect how participatory practices are restricted by the discursive and structural hierarchies within which CYP and professionals are embedded (ie., educational and care settings) (Rhodes, 2018). It is therefore important to be aware of and respond to the practical and ethical limitations which CYP and adults might face in promoting participatory practices across a range of settings. CYP's participation might therefore involve an

Adults were driven by value-based practice (refutational)	more meaningful process which was congruent with the values of why they had become social workers.		aspect of 'ethical irony' which involves pursuing ethical concerns (ie., rights of CYP to participate) whilst also communicating the inevitable personal and structural limitations of this endeavour (Rhodes & Badham, 2018). Overall, it appears that there are a range of ethical and practical limitations involved in implementing CYP's participation, which occur across a range of structural hierarchies and systems.
The opportunity for CYP to express a view (reciprocal)	One young person stated *'Well, no, it's the fact that they'd kind of talk about it if I wasn't there anyway. Does that make sense? So, I would rather be there and be like, 'I can sit here and fight my battle', than walk away and be called guilty for something I haven't done'.* CYP felt the meetings did not include them and were boring; they saw them as essentially a meeting for adults. One child young person stated, *'every time I went to speak, someone interrupted me and that really annoyed me so I was like right I'm going, I've got to get to school'.*	Are CYP respected as a central member of the meeting? Why are CYP perceived to have a 'diminished status' within these meetings?	**Power** Power imbalances appeared to be a consistent thread throughout the research papers. For example, CYP reported that within meetings it did not feel as if they were included and described decision-making contexts as 'a meeting for adults'. This may have resulted in some CYP taking a 'combative' stance and viewing meetings as a place where they would need to 'fight their battles'. CYP's also stated that they did not have a choice in attending meetings. Whereas other CYP described how they had opportunities to have a degree of agency. For example, professionals spoke about CYP chairing their own meetings. However, it appeared that greater

Adults restricted opportunities for CYP to demonstrate agency (refutational) **The opportunity for CYP to control parts of the meeting** (refutational)	Attendance at reviews was not always an active choice for CYP, particularly when they reported not understanding the process and feeling negatively about them. A significant proportion of CYP people reported attending reviews because they *'had to'.* CYP reported using strategies to ensure that reviews ended more quickly (ie., agreeing with everything being said, saying as little as possible or physically leaving the room. '*Everything is boring, but they have to be done.'* The social workers had a paternalistic approach which means that they think that the concepts are too complex for children to understand, and that even if they see the child ahead of the review it will not impact on the agenda, structure or focus of the review. One young person stated *'I go there, then me and [the independent reviewing office (IRO) go in the room first and we talk. Then everyone else gets invited into the room, then we just talk about everything we talk about'.*	Would CYP have a greater opportunity to exert agency if professionals broadened their definition of CYP's participation? Is 'chairing a meeting' the only way CYP can meaningfully participate? Does this simplify what it is to 'participate' and perhaps illustrates a lack of understanding about what participation is?	consideration is warranted on how professionals conceptualise CYP's participation. This is because CYP's participation within meetings appears to centre around restricted roles, which do not consider how CYP may demonstrate agency before, after and during decision making contexts.

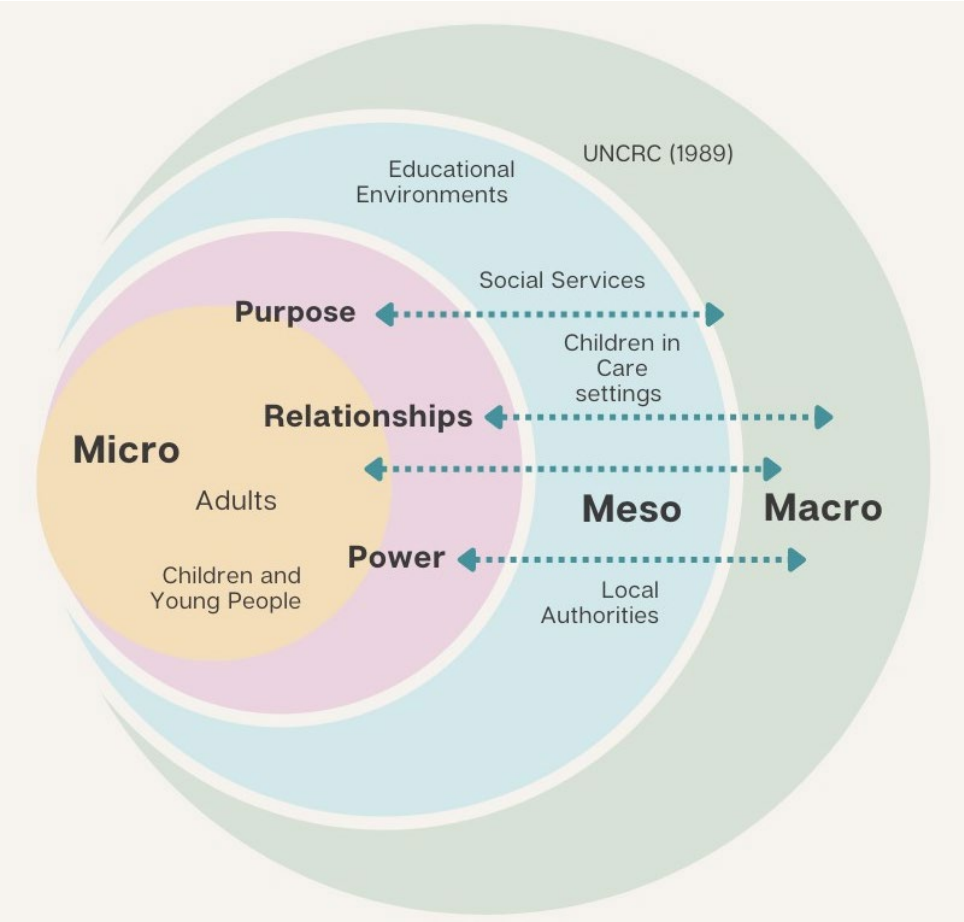
	Most social workers spoke positively about young people chairing their own reviews and, indeed, saw it as an effective way through which to increase meaningful participation. Foster carers suggested that the benefit to CYP came from professionals taking action post-review. One social worker stated *'because he can't cope with me writing something that he doesn't know is going to be in there, so we literally sit with a blank template, so we know what box is that what's going in what box and that works for him, that's what he needs.*		
Disagreement about whether the views of CYP were valued or acted upon by adults (refutational	A number of young people thought that their reviews were not beneficial to them. It may be that these young people were not made aware of the actions or outcomes of their reviews, engendering a sense of apathy and dissatisfaction. Few children in this study were offered a genuine opportunity to influence any aspect of the meeting. CYP who chaired their reviews had more meaningful engagement in the	How would CYP like to influence in their meetings? How can adults create opportunities for CYP to influence parts of the meeting?	

	review process and had the opportunity to get their voice heard. For example, deciding when and where it took place, who was invited and what was on the agenda. Writing the report directly to the child also helped support social workers, IRO's and foster carers hold in mind that what they write will be read by the child at some point		

1.2.6 Phase 7: Expressing the synthesis

Noblit and Hare (1988) assert that within this stage the synthesis can be 'expressed in a variety of ways' (p.77) to ensure that the account is accessible and relevant to the audience. I therefore sought to present my findings in a visual format. A visual model, presented in Figure 1.3, attempts to present the synthesis from Table 1.8.

Figure 1.3: A visual representation of the SLR findings



The visual diagram is based on my interpretation of the review findings. However, I have chosen to use aspects of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory, to explore findings of this review. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) systemic framework conceptualised the ecological environment as a set of embedded structures (Bronfenbrenner, 1979): the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystems, macrosystem and chronosystem.

The microsystem is a 'pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given setting' (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 22). It consists of immediate settings of the individual (i.e., family setting and school). The mesosystem is a set of interrelations or links between the various settings in the

microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These are viewed as the connections between adults and CYP. In this case, these settings may feature schools and social service settings. The macrosystem is defined as the culture which frames the structures and relationships among the constituent systems (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 258).

Bronfenbrenner's earlier work (1979) suggests that our environment is based on the interactions between these subsystems. Interpretation of the findings of this review suggest that areas of tension occurred within different aspects of the microsystem, mesosystem and macrosystem, which then influenced participatory practices. I will now explore the overarching constructs outlined in the visual diagram.

1.3 Discussion

1.3.1 Relationships

Within this review, CYP highlight the importance of having a relationship with the professionals who have the power to make decisions about them (Cossar et al., 2016). Children appeared to conceptualise 'having a relationship' with professionals as 'feeling safe' and 'listened to' (Diaz et al., 2019; Diaz & Aylward, 2019). In Diaz's et al., 2018 study one young person described how they met with the social worker before the meeting. The young person then described how everyone else was then 'invited into the room, to talk about everything we talked about' (Diaz et al., 2018). This appeared to promote a sense of safety and encouraged the young person to verbally participate throughout their meeting (Diaz et al., 2018).

Studies reviewed here also suggest that adults believed relationships supported the participation of CYP (Diaz et al., 2019; Muench et al., 2017). Within Diaz et al's (2019) study professionals stated that positive relationships should be at the heart of meaningful participation of CYP. However, frequent changes of social workers were argued to impact opportunities to build relationships and prioritise the views of CYP (Diaz & Aylward, 2019; Diaz et al., 2018). For example CYP stated that professionals may not have the time to build relationships with them, which then impacted on the adult's ability to support them within meetings (Pert et al., 2017). This may reflect the current workload pressure on social workers and is an important consideration also for educational professionals who are similarly pressured (Diaz et al., 2019; Näkk & Timoštšuk, 2021). This reflects how pressures within the mesosystem impact relationships within the microsystem.

Some CYP stated they did not feel listened to (Cossar et al., 2016), prepared or supported by professionals (Cossar et al., 2016). This has led some authors to argue that participation cannot be reduced to a procedural requirement but must be based on the quality of the relationships established between CYP and professionals (Cossar et al., 2016). The relationship is therefore considered central to both assessing the needs of CYP and supporting their participation (Cossar et al., 2016; McVeety & Farren, 2020). This echoes literature which emphasises that CYP may not participate if they do not feel a sense of warmth from the adults supporting them (Thomas, 2012).

1.3.2 Purpose

The synthesis highlights how professionals, parents and carers appeared unsure about the purpose of the meetings. Some adults described the tensions which might be involved in keeping CYP safe and/or upholding the rights of CYP to participate within meetings (Diaz et al., 2019). CYP perceived meetings to lack purpose which may have exacerbated underlying negative feelings towards professionals (Diaz et al., 2018). In some cases, it appears the purpose of the meeting was not explained to CYP in an accessible manner, which resulted in them feeling unsure during meetings (Diaz et al., 2018; Pert et al., 2017).

It has been argued there is a lack of awareness about the rights of CYP and how to promote these, which may prevent organisations from working in a participatory manner (Donnelly & Kilkelly, 2011). It appears that although CYP's participation has legislative and international support, professionals remain unclear about what CYP's participation means and how to promote this within the microsystem of meetings.

1.3.3 Power

Power has been defined as the ability to control resources and is rooted in theories of dependency and interdependency (Foucault, 1979; Lammers & Galinsky, 2009). Power has also been constructed as an enabling or disempowering experience (Lammers & Galinsky, 2009). An empowering experience may involve promoting opportunities for cooperation and collaboration (Lammers & Galinsky, 2009). Whereas a disempowering experience may involve commanding the compliance of others through coercion (Lammers & Galinsky, 2009).

Papers in this review reported that CYP frequently cited issues relating to power when describing their experiences of participation within meetings. Some CYP valued having the space to articulate their views (Cossar et al., 2016; Diaz et al., 2018) and others felt dissatisfied with their levels of participation (Cossar et al., 2016). Muench et al. (2017) reported that half of the CYP within their study stated that receiving support from an advocate positively impacted their experiences of meetings. It is possible that an advocate helps create space for CYP to articulate their views and reduce power imbalances between CYP and professionals. However, CYP also reported that they had a lack of choice and control over the attendees (Cossar et al., 2016; Pert et al., 2017) and the time and location of these meetings (Pert et al., 2017).

It was interesting that the papers did not refer to professionals explicitly in discussing issues relating to power (Cossar et al., 2016; Diaz et al., 2019; Pert et al., 2017). Some social workers discussed experiences of where CYP chaired their own review (Diaz et al., 2019). Within Diaz and Aylward's (2019) study social workers reported that, as a service, there was a need to help CYP feel confident enough to chair their own reviews. However, this statement does not appear to imply consideration regarding the role of professionals in addressing and reducing power imbalances to enable CYP's participation.

It has been argued that closer attention should be given to the complexity of children's participation in contexts which are both enabling and potentially disempowering (Cossar et al., 2016). CYP within this review indicated that further consideration regarding the importance of adults giving CYP a space to express their view (Diaz et al., 2018); listening to their views; and acting upon these views (Cossar et al., 2016; Diaz et al., 2018; Lucas, 2017; Muench et al., 2017) may be helpful in increasing their participation within meetings. The review findings suggested a lack of consideration from professionals over issues relating to power and how these might impact CYP's participation. However, CYP consistently reported issues relating to power (ie., control, choice and space) as having a negative impact on their participation within meetings. Empowering experiences might involve professionals providing CYP with time and space to articulate their views and involving CYP in the purpose, outcomes and proposed actions of the meeting.

It is also important to consider power in the contexts in which CYP and adults operate (e.g., working conditions within the social care sector). Arguably, the value professionals place on CYP's participation may be influenced by a range of different agendas. Within England there is a high turnover of child and families workers, which is stated to significantly impact the participation and welfare of CYP in care (Diaz & Aylward, 2019; McCafferty, 2021). Enabling CYP's participation in the child protection and alternative care context is also stated to be particularly challenging (Kennan et al., 2016), and workers across these fields report a lack of skills in communicating with CYP as well as increasing stress and fatigue from the complex and emotional work of child protection (McCafferty, 2021). These pressures, may make it increasingly difficult for professionals to reflect on and identify possible barriers in encouraging CYP's participation (Bruce, 2014).

This may decrease the opportunities for adults to provide enabling experiences for CYP or to challenge structures which may seek to minimise CYP's participation in meetings. For example, the high turnover of social workers may result in limited opportunities to communicate the purpose, outcomes and proposed actions of meetings for CYP. Further work is perhaps required on exploring the value professionals place on CYP's participation and balancing the tension between the needs of busy professionals and the rights of CYP to participate (Bruce, 2014).

It appeared that CYP within this review frequently emphasised the importance of their views being heard and having control over decisions made within meetings. This review has therefore indicated that further consideration on how professionals seek to address power imbalance between adults and CYP, may be helpful when considering CYP's participation within meetings.

1.4 Summary

This systematic review has offered a range of constructs which I hope lead to further considerations about how CYP and adults might work together and possibly change, to facilitate CYP's participation (Wyness, 2013).

The model represents how the constructs of relationship, power and purpose might impact on CYP's and adults' conceptualisation of CYP's participation within meetings. However, this model resides in the wider context in which meetings take place, which will impact upon adult and CYP's experiences within a meeting. The

model utilised Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory to consider how CYP's participation may be impacted by multiple systemic levels.

Constructs reviewed here indicated the importance of relationships in acting as a foundation for CYP's participation. However, current pressures on educational and care sectors within England may impact the quality of relationships CYP have with those who may facilitate their participation within meetings. This review also indicated that further consideration on how professionals seek to address power imbalance between adults and CYP, may be helpful when considering CYP's participation within meetings. It also appeared that parents and carers were unsure about the purpose of the meetings. This indicates that further consideration about explaining the purpose of the meeting, and why this may be important in encouraging CYP's participation, may be beneficial when engaging in meetings with CYP and their families.

1.4.1 Limitations

This meta ethnography has been carried out by one person as opposed to a research team. Conducting this meta-ethnography in a research team may have led to additional interpretations and further depth within the meta-analysis. My own personal values, assumptions and experiences will have also impacted on the synthesis and the new interpretations reached (Noblit & Hare, 1988, p35). This synthesis is based on my own evolving judgements, biases and are subject to critique and debate. Papers within this review predominantly feature papers which occurred within children in care settings. Children in care may be faced with more opportunities to participate in meetings through regular 'child in care reviews' than children from a non-care background (Cossar et al., 2016; Diaz et al., 2019; Watts, 2021). However, these papers may have relevance to an educational context, which face similar work-related pressures found in social care.

1.4.2 Implications

These findings have implications for EPs, who have a role in advocating for educational practice which seeks to encourage CYP participation (Greig et al., 2014). CYP's participation is argued to be relevant across the spectrum of EP work, and EPs should aim to develop practice that enables CYP's voices to be heard (Todd, 2003).

Research has indicated that the adults around CYP may need support to develop CYP's participatory skills (Hardy & Hobbs, 2017). EPs may have a role in providing training to school staff around pupil participation, which may facilitate organisational change and development across schools. EPs may also work with staff to reflect on their own personal values and attitudes towards CYP participation and how they might reduce power imbalances and build relationships with CYP to encourage their participation (Wicks, 2013).

1.5 Conclusion

It appears that CYP who may already face challenges (i.e., children in care) may face additional pressures to attend meetings. Promoting CYP's participation may also challenge issues associated with social exclusion and positively contribute to the wellbeing of CYP, their families and wider communities (James & Lane, 2018; Stafford et al., 2021). Promoting CYP's participation may therefore be particularly beneficial for CYP facing additional challenges. There may therefore be opportunities for EPs to be proactive and work as change agents for these children (Roffey, 2015).

Chapter 2. Methodological and Ethical Considerations

2.1 Introduction and research focus

Chapter 2 provides a critical consideration of my research methodology. However, the precise methods will be further explored in chapter 3. In this chapter, I present my personal and professional rationale, my epistemological stance and how this has informed the purpose of my research and methodology. I relate the findings from my systematic literature review (SLR) in chapter 1, to my methodological approach. I then explore the ethical complexities which underpin the design and approach of my research.

2.2 Literature review and implications for research

My literature review sought to explore the question: 'How is the participation of children and young people (CYP) within meetings considered from CYP and adult perspectives in an English context?'. Authors argue that there has been a 'dialogic turn' within the literature and that participation should be considered as a shared and democratic decision-making process (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010; Van der Riet & Boettiger, 2009). Previous discourse may have assumed that pupil voice was something which might be gathered by the researcher (Lane et al., 2019). Instead of something which is co-constructed and influenced by the complex system in which the individual exists (Facca et al., 2020).

My literature review emphasised the importance of pupil participation occurring within relationships, and how this might develop CYP's and adults' understanding of participatory processes (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010; Raby, 2014; Thomas, 2012). I therefore included both CYP and adults perspectives within my review. I hoped that by including the voices of both CYP and adults, this thesis might work towards new understandings (Van der Riet & Boettiger, 2009) and produce 'sparks of insight' (Wegerif, 2007 p.118) as well as a curiosity about learning from the perspectives of both CYP and adults. Within my review it appeared that some studies sought to understand and conceptualise participation rather than explore how adults and CYP might develop participatory practice for CYP (Diaz et al., 2018; Muench et al., 2017). I felt that a study which sought to explore how school staff might work together with children to develop participatory practices may be helpful in supporting the

development of practices. Therefore, the empirical study utilised a collaborative action research (CAR) design, to explore how school staff might enhance participatory practices for children within one school setting.

2.3 Why is research into children's participation in meetings important?

There have been few recent studies in England that have considered professionals' perspectives of CYP's participation in meetings, and fewer studies which have explored how these perspectives might inform future participatory practices (Diaz et al., 2018; Diaz et al., 2019; Whitby, 2021). Recent research has also highlighted a lack of professional understanding of children's participatory rights and limited training of professionals in enabling children's participation in meetings (ie., children in care reviews) (Diaz et al., 2018; Lucas, 2017; Pert et al., 2017). Much of the research in England has also explored how children in care might be meaningfully engaged in decision-making processes (Diaz et al., 2018; Lucas, 2017; Pert et al., 2017). However, this current project sought to support participative practices more widely within one school context and with a range of children. This research project was therefore interested in how practice and knowledge might change and develop to enable children's participation.

2.3.1 Personal and professional rationale

As a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP), I have attended a variety of meetings with CYP, parents, carers, and professionals. These have included children in care reviews, review meetings for CYP with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and child protection meetings. I felt that these meetings were sometimes a challenging context for CYP. In my experience, it appeared that professionals may have sought to make decisions about CYP rather than with them. It was also often assumed by care staff that CYP did not want to participate in these meetings. For example, when I enquired about how staff had prepared CYP for these meetings, I was told that little or few attempts were made. My observations of these meetings led me to the view that CYP often felt confused and isolated during the meeting, as they reported feeling unsure about the 'point of the meeting' and 'why some professionals were there, and some were not'.

I believe that all individuals have a right to take part in decisions which might impact upon them. However, it is important that I remain aware of my own biases. For example, efforts to promote CYP participation may make assumptions about CYP's abilities to think and act (Freire, 1972). Gallacher and Gallagher (2008) also emphasise the importance of not being distracted by the 'ethical allure of empowerment, agency or self-determination' (p,501), as the notion of believing an individual needs to be empowered, may serve to disempower those we seek to empower (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008). I therefore reflected on my practice and as I undertook this research sought to provide opportunities for CYP to feel empowered throughout all stages of the research process. Further, my study aimed to move beyond focussing on individual CYP's voice and instead focused on building a school culture and ethos which valued CYP's participation.

2.4 Philosophical position

Billington and Williams (2017) state it is important that researchers within the field of educational psychology should 'identify and make transparent the epistemological, ontological and methodological assumptions they bring to their work' (p.9). Knowledge production is often shaped by 'dichotomous notions of ontology and epistemology, which require researchers to position themselves in terms of methodological approaches' (Clark et al., 2017, p244). However, studying issues which occur in complex social contexts (i.e. within education) may require a variety of ontological approaches to enable multiple interpretations to be encountered and understood (J. Clark et al., 2017). I do not wish to assert a worldview which might be perceived as fixed or static. However, I acknowledge that a range of philosophical positions have influenced my approach to this thesis, and I will subsequently explore each of these.

Firstly, the transformative paradigm was evident through the concerns relating to the pursuit of social change (Mertens, 2010). This later informed the CAR approach within the empirical study, which is informed by an agenda of reform and empowerment (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). I viewed transformativism as the overarching driving force of my research and a way in which I might consider social injustices, power imbalances, and promote positive change.

This research sought to employ an active process of inquiry which viewed knowledge as an interplay between both beliefs and actions (Morgan, 2014). CAR involves co-working with a co-researcher to develop new understanding and ways of thinking about research (Clark et al., 2019) and may therefore support change in practice or an organisation (Cho & Trent, 2006). Philosophical pragmatism argues that something can be said to be true if it 'works' and helps individuals to solve problematic situations (Dewey, 1929). The empirical project utilised an inquiry-based approach and may work in line with aspects of pragmatism, due to the cyclical and action driven nature of action research (AR).

This research was also conducted with an appreciation of an interpretative, social constructionist paradigm (Burr, 2003), as I believed individuals construct their own realities through interactions with others (Burr, 2003). Social constructionists believe humans cannot be viewed objectively (Burr, 2003) and this paradigm is often associated with qualitative methods. Researchers have stated that constructionist research is shaped from a bottom-up approach (i.e., individual perspectives may inform broad understandings) (Creswell, 2017). CAR is also often associated with qualitative methods (Cresswell, 2012). In addition, Reason and Bradbury (2006) state that AR may create knowledge which is constructed through social interactions (p.9). A CAR approach may therefore fit with a social constructionist viewpoint, which acknowledges the importance of social, historical and cultural factors in shaping our understanding of the world (Burr, 2003).

2.5 Purpose of the research

In line with my philosophical positioning, the aims of the empirical study were twofold: (1) to consider perspectives from staff and pupils on what enhances pupil participation (2) to explore how school staff might work together with pupils to develop participatory practices for pupils with EAL. I hoped my study would provide an opportunity to enquire collaboratively about participatory practices in a school in ways which would support changes in understanding and practice for all involved.

2.6 Methodology

The study involved a qualitative CAR design. This design enabled me to work with a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCo) as a co-researcher. CAR is a subdivision of AR and a design which references working with different individuals

towards a shared purpose (Heron & Reason, 2006). I hoped to explore with school staff how participatory practices might be developed in the school. I therefore felt CAR as an enquiry-based approach, was appropriate for this research purpose (Cho & Trent, 2006). Working with adults as partners within this research provided an opportunity to develop our knowledge regarding participatory practice. This design also provided an opportunity for personal reflections on working with staff to facilitate change within a school culture.

2.6.1 Collaborative action research

This research aimed to draw upon a method which was democratic, equitable and addressed and recognised power imbalances (Kemmis et al., 2014). In addition, I hoped to enable a critical consideration of participatory practices whilst seeking to implement changes through the research processes (McNiff, 2013).

This study therefore sought to move beyond exploring individual perspectives and aimed to develop practice and organisational change, and as such, required a transformative research design (Chandler & Torbert, 2003). Transformative research can contribute to positive change in the lives of the people involved through its very process (Biddle & Schafft, 2015; Creswell, 2014) and may often include action orientated and participatory research methods (Mertens, 2010). This approach was in line with the aims and values underpinning this research. AR is enacted through phases of research, reflection and action (Kemmis et al., 2014) and this approach is further outlined in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.

This research was driven by values relating to collective participation and outcomes relating to democracy, voice and emancipation as well as an intention to facilitate social change (Cohen, 2018, p.445). However, it was not possible to involve my co-researcher in all aspects of the research process, as the realities of completing this research as part of my doctoral thesis did not enable a fully democratic CAR (Ospina et al., 2004). For example, the university requires a submission of a research proposal prior to the identification of potential co-researchers. Some decisions about the research focus were therefore made prior to consulting with my co-researcher.

One important consideration was to avoid adding to the already heavy workloads of school staff. I planned to work flexibly with my co-researcher, being led by their willingness and available resources (Heron & Reason, 2001). This required research judgements to consider teachers involved to be ‘research engaged’ (Baumfield et al 2008, p.8) in a way that is ‘both manageable within their existing professional responsibilities and sufficiently robust to effect change’ (Baumfield et al., 2008, p.8). Baumfield et al. (2008) suggest three key aspects to be considered in educational AR: the intention of the enquiry, the process by which the enquiry is pursued and the audience with which the enquiry is shared (Baumfield et al., 2008, p8). These areas may become less or more focal throughout the research. For example, my audience included the university examination process. This impacted on decisions made throughout the research process, as I had to adhere to university examination criteria. These areas are further considered in the Table 2.1 below:

Table 2.1: My reflections on principles which inform AR in educational settings

Principles of AR in the classroom (Baumfield et al., 2008; Wall & Hall, 2017).	**Reflections:**
Autonomy and intention of enquiry	• The realities of completing this research as part of my doctoral thesis did not enable a fully democratic AR (Ospina et al., 2004). The university required a submission of a research proposal prior to the identification of a potential co-researcher. Decisions about research focus were therefore made prior to consulting with my potential co-researcher. • My empirical study had a broad focus on enhancing participatory practices. However, the purpose of the research would be finalised through joint discussions with my co-researcher. I acknowledge that for staff to remain research engaged, it is important to have a degree of ownership over the research process (Day et al., 2006). I therefore used the Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH) tool (Appendix M) to explore my co-researcher's hopes and aims for the research. This resulted in a study which focused on enhancing participatory practices for pupils who spoke English as an additional language (EAL). Working with EAL pupils was an area I had not initially considered. However, my co-researcher had significant experience working with this population of pupils. Therefore this provided an opportunity for my co-researcher to shape aspects of the research. It also enabled us to explore how the research would be useful for my co-researcher and her school community (Wall & Hall, 2017). • Participatory research can be constructed as a continuum rather than a set of dichotomous criteria (Kindon et al., 2007). Through an ongoing process and reflection and action I was able to be compassionate, flexible and responsible to the needs of my co-researcher and the context, whilst also reflecting upon how the research moved on the continuum (Kindon et al., 2007). For example, my co-researcher expressed that she would like a greater involvement during the planning and reviewing stages. I completed the data analysis. However, emerging concepts were discussed and explored with my co-researcher.
Process by which the enquiry is pursued	• I acknowledge the heavy workloads faced by professionals working within the education system. I had an ethical responsibility to be mindful of the wellbeing of those I worked with and to ensure that my research did not significantly add to work demands and involve more commitment than educational professionals were willing to offer. I therefore took a more flexible approach when seeking to involve my co-researcher, which was led by their willingness and available resources (Heron & Reason, 2001).

	• To prevent this study from feeling like too much of an extra burden we structured the stages of our CAR within a 'plan, act and review model'. This was familiar to my co-researcher and staff members and helped contain the different phrases of CAR. • Within the study we prioritised opportunities for educational staff to learn from each other through dialogue (Baumfield et al., 2008). For example, my co-researcher hoped this study might increase staff confidence in enhancing participatory practices. We therefore completed a focus group with all Teaching Assistants (TAs). This provided an opportunity to share and enhance practice across the school.
Audience by which the enquiry is shared	• Transcripts and emerging concepts were shared with the co-researcher throughout the research. These have been used to implement change within the school setting. For example, sharing feedback with school staff who identified feeling unconfident with participatory practices. • Moments of change have also occurred throughout the research. For example, within our initial meeting my co-researcher discussed how pupil views were often gathered prior to meetings (ie., SEND reviews). However, my co-researcher noted that these were not always shared in meetings. We explored literature which emphasised the importance of influence (Lundy et al., 2018) and acting upon CYP's views. This has led to a change in how pupil views were prioritised and presented in future meetings. • The emerging concepts were shared with my co-researcher in our review meeting. These will be shared with educational staff. • I hope to share a condensed version of the research, so this might be accessible for the wider school community. • I hope that the impact of this research process is not limited to the research 'results' and instead has built capacity and staff knowledge of inquiry. Data produced in the empirical research was used as a catalyst for discussion within the review meeting (see Chapter 3, Section 3.7).

2.6.2 Defining the role of co-researcher

Collaboration is a central feature of CAR (Armstrong & Tsokova, 2019; Mertler, 2019). I therefore felt it was important to define the role of the 'co-researcher' and how this research sought to promote collaboration.

I viewed the role of my co-researchers as someone who had made a significant contribution to the research project (Armstrong & Tsokova, 2019). The Initial meeting helped the co-researcher and I to build our relationship and collaboratively plan our research. I had worked with my co-researcher for 10 months, prior to our first initial meeting as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) during my second year of placement. Within this role, I acted as the school's allocated TEP and worked with pupils who were referred to the Educational Psychology Service. This role enabled me to build a relationship with the SENDCo and school community. However, I was aware that I would need to be clear about my role, expectations and boundaries as a researcher, to avoid these becoming conflated with my previous role as the school's TEP. I therefore constructed my role as an 'insider outsider' (Nakata, 2015). I believed my role reflected an 'insider' perspective due to my pre-existing relationship with the co-researcher and history of working with the school community. However, I was an outsider as I was not a member of the school. My role as an insider-outsider provided me with the space to critically reflect on the research process (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2007). This aligns with the transformative agenda of this research (Van der Riet, 208).

I wanted my interactions with my co-researcher to be built on honest and transparent communication, as well as respect of the SENDCos' significant experience and expertise in the field of education. The co-researcher and I regularly reviewed stages of the research to determine areas where the co-researcher wanted a greater or lesser amount of involvement (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3). This involved my co-researcher guiding the initial stages of the research and making sense of the research during the closing action phases of the research (Heron & Reason, 2001). Through an ongoing process, reflection and action, I aimed to be flexible and responsive to the needs of my co-researcher and the school (Kindon et al., 2007). For example, I regularly reviewed the CAR process with the co-researcher by asking

how she was finding the process, what she was finding helpful or anything she might like to change or discuss.

2.7 Adults as partners in a study focusing on child participation

I chose to explore child participation by working with an adult co-researcher, which may reflect an adult-initiated model of participation (Hart, 2008). This may appear the antithesis of the aims of the study. However, some researchers have questioned whether child led research is a viable and ethical research method (Hammersley, 2017). Hammersley (2017) argues that social research involves specialised skills and the ability to ensure the validity of findings and reflect on the myriad of ethical considerations present in social research (Hammersley, 2017). This implies that researchers may need to facilitate aspects of social research, to ignore this might threaten the quality of research (Hammersley, 2017). Categorising research as 'adult or child led' may not reflect the dynamic nature of 'real world research' and may, paradoxically, lead to shifting the responsibility of children's participation away from the researcher and onto the child participants (Crook & Cox, 2022; Hammersley, 2017).

This study conceptualised CYP's participation as a relational encounter. CYP's participation therefore required an ongoing dialogue between school staff, to further develop their and my understanding of developing a participatory school culture (Cassidy et al., 2022). This is based on adults considering their own participatory practices and using new understandings to enhance pupil participation (Wall et al., 2019). Working with adults as partners within this research provided an opportunity to explore together understandings of participative practice. Working with adults as partners also enabled a research design where ethical considerations were an ongoing feature of the research. Strategies and resources applied in the research also enabled CYP to express their views throughout. The study sought to incorporate opportunities for shared decision-making throughout the research (ie., visual methodologies selected by pupils) (Hart, 2008). Introducing an adult co-researcher enabled adults and CYP to further explore relationships as a prerequisite for change (Mannion, 2007).

2.8 Ethical considerations

I viewed ethics as an ongoing process in which ethical dilemmas were considered and negotiated (Cutcliffe & Ramcharan, 2002). Miller (2012) also states that 'regular reflections help to ensure that ethical and methodological considerations are continually reassessed' (p67). Self-reflectivity and honesty are also cited as key criteria for assessing validity within AR (Walsh & Downe, 2006; Yoak & Brydon-Miller, 2014). Miller, (2012) advocates for clearly defining and communicating the ethical foundations of AR. I have therefore explored how my values were defined and considered in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Values which informed stages of the research

Values	**Why is this important/ what does this mean to me?**
Respect	I defined respect as treating individuals as autonomous agents. All views shared within the research were listened to and I reflected on how these views influenced areas of my practice. I assumed that all individuals involved in the research had the capacity to contribute to the process of knowledge generation and had a right to play an active role in shaping the school community (Miller, 2012). AR is argued to be based on an abiding respect for persons as active agents of change (Miller, 2012). Considering and respecting alternative perspectives is a key criterion for evaluating quality of AR (Herr & Anderson, 2005).
Transparency	I viewed transparency as involving clear and honest communication with my co-researcher and participants. I sought to share knowledge which built capacity within the school community. This involves being held accountable to the school community. Research has indicated that professionals, parents and CYP may need additional support understanding educational and care processes (Muench et al., 2017). I hoped to clearly communicate the purpose of different stages of the research to my co-researcher and participants. This would support my co-researcher and participants to have informed consent.
Integrity	Within AR there is a commitment to working together with problem owners in a participative way which aims to solve a pertinent problem (M Levin & Greenwood, 2001). I viewed integrity as working towards addressing the 'problem' highlighted by my co-researcher and participants, whilst rigorously analysing experiences and data produced within our research-based findings (Levin, 2012). This reflects the dual purpose of AR (action and reflection) (Levin, 2012). Throughout the research I referred to my co-researchers aims and hopes for the research (as defined in our PATH see Appendix M). This supported us

	to reflect on the research process and whether actions were working in line with espoused hopes and aims.
Collaboration	The concept of collaboration and the challenges of realising this in practice are recognised within the literature, due to individual, group or organisational factors (Cribb & Gewirtz, 2012; Liasidou, 2011). This may lead to forms of cooperation, rather than collaboration (Dillenbourg, 1999) which may also be prioritised in neo-liberal ideals of performative individualism (Raby, 2014). I understood cooperation to refer to individuals working on individual tasks which all contributed towards an overall product. Whereas, collaboration implied a shared process of knowledge creation which examined and respected each individual's perspective through discussion and negotiation (Dillenbourg, 1999; Shin, 2018). Throughout this research I aimed to provide opportunities for shared decision making. For example, by consulting with my co-researcher at each stage of the AR process. I also aimed to provide opportunities for staff to collaborate with each other (ie., sharing practice within the focus group).

The concept of informed consent is integral to ethical practice within research (BPS, 2018) and was viewed as a shared decision making process that was ongoing (Whitney et al., 2004) rather than a functional, one off event (Hill, 2006b). I provided regular opportunities to review and negotiate consent with my co-researcher and participants (Miller, 2012). I provided regular opportunities for participants to give or withdraw their verbal and written consent (Cascio et al., 2020) throughout the research and up to the point of data analysis. For example, there were regular opportunities to discuss ground rules and alternative ways of 'opting out' with pupils. Table 2.3 sets out key questions I asked myself in implementing the project.

Table 2.3: Ethical considerations informed by the work of Brydon-Miller et al. (2015) and Smith & Mockler et al (2007)

Value	Developing partnership with co-researcher	Planning project/ action	Recruiting participants	Analysing data/evaluating action	Dissemination of research
Respect	Have I explained my true intentions in developing this partnership? How do I clearly separate my role as the school's TEP from that of a co-researcher? How might I acknowledge these potentially competing responsibilities?	Have I shared planning meeting document notes at the end of the meeting to check for shared understanding?	Have I provided opportunities for staff to ask any questions about the research? Have I asked participants when might be the best time to compete the focus groups? Have I respected the range of communities involved in the research? How might I find out more about the different cultures I am working with?	Have I provided opportunities for my co-researcher to ask questions about the data analysis process? Have I ensured that data is accessible for my co-researcher?	How might the review use data as a catalyst for conversation? Is the data presented in an accessible way? How might I respect the views of my co-researcher during the review? How might these views influence data we have generated and outcome of our research?
Transparency	Have I made clear the limits of my own areas of competency and need to refer to another professional (ie., supervisor) when completing CAR? How can I ensure that the process is transparent?	How might we work towards building school community and sharing knowledge and ideas? How might we communicate the purpose of the research to CYP? How might this research benefit CYP and include their views within the planning of the project?	How might I support pupil understanding of the interview process? How might their views shape the interview process? How might I support parental understanding of the interview process? What translating services are available?	How might I support my co-researcher's understanding of the chosen method of data analysis? How might my co-researcher's views be incorporated into the data analysis?	How can we be accountable to the school community? How might the school community comment or feedback on the outcome of the research? Are the research outcomes actionable? Are they useful or relevant?

		Have I shared my position of no longer being the school TEP? Will this change what the co-researcher has consented to or expectations around this research?			
Integrity	What information does my co-researcher need? How do I communicate what I need from the research process? How might the co-researcher address any issues which arise? How do we jointly conceptualise participation and work towards this definition?	How do I communicate ethical protocol and processes to my co-researcher? What obstacles are there to working within the current time constraints/ pressures of this school? How can I ensure this work does not place increasing demands/ pressure on the co-researcher?	How do we jointly conceptualise informed consent? How might we provide opportunities for participants to demonstrate informed consent? How might I discuss the possible ethical implications of my co-researcher being a 'gatekeeper'?	What information does my co-researcher need? To what extent does my co-researcher hope to be involved in the data analysis process? How might I appreciate time constraints faced by my co-researcher?	Will this work serve my co-researcher and the school community or is it only for my own purposes? How might action reflect this joint responsibility? How do I effectively compensate my co-researcher and the school community for the time and energy they had spent on this research process?
Collaboration	How might I encourage my co-researcher's participation when aspects of the research have been determined? How might my co-researcher have a degree of ownership over the research process?	How might I engage participants during the data collection process?	How might I provide opportunities for my co-researcher and staff to share, discuss and debate aspects of their practice?	How might we share responsibility when seeking to 'make sense of the data'?	How will we jointly determinate dissemination of the research? How might we provide opportunities for the school community to comment on the research? How might we create joint outcomes?

2.9 A bridge to Chapter Three

The aim of this chapter was to demonstrate the philosophical assumptions and the motivations underpinning this work. Arguably, outlining the reflexive decision-making processes and the ethical underpinnings are an essential foundation of quality and rigour in qualitative research (Carter & Little, 2007). Ongoing reflections in supervision and through a research diary helped me to understand and appreciate tension in the ’messy world’ of AR. Chapter Three will outline the empirical study.

Chapter 3. How might school staff enhance participatory practices for children identified as having English as an Additional Language?

3.0 Abstract

This chapter presents an account of the collaborative action research (CAR) process to provide methodological transparency. The research is discussed using the structure of its action research (AR) phases to demonstrate a holistic, collaborative and action-oriented inquiry, which was based on collective reflections between the co-researcher, participants and I (Azulai, 2021). The co-researcher and I chose to engage in an inquiry for the 'action' phase of the CAR process. The inquiry aimed to explore how school staff might enhance opportunities and experiences for pupil participation for children identified as having English as an additional language (EAL). The research was conducted in a North East primary school in collaboration with one Special Educational Needs Coordinator as a co-researcher. I have prepared this for submission to Pastoral Care in Education.

The inquiry featured one AR cycle. This involved an initial meeting with the co-researcher, a focus group with seven Teaching Assistants, semi-structured interviews with five pupils and a review meeting with the co-researcher. Data was transcribed and then analysed using an abbreviated version of constructivist grounded theory. The chapter offers a rationale for using this within an AR design. Codes generated within the focus group and interviews were then compared to generate categories. The findings from this inquiry were used as a catalyst for discussion between the co-researcher and I, which led to identification of a range of outcomes for future school practice. These were concerned with providing space for pupils to add value to their school community; creating space for home-school language partnerships and continuing to build staff confidence and capacity in supporting participatory practice. This study demonstrates how AR can be useful in the development of professional learning and reflection. Key learnings from the research are discussed with implications for professional learning, research and practice.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reports on a collaborative action research (CAR) project which aimed to explore how school staff might enhance participatory practices for children[1] identified as having 'English as an additional language' (EAL). Action research (AR) is a form of 'self-reflective enquiry' which evolves with the project (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p.162). I therefore present an account of this research as it developed to demonstrate methodological transparency (Cook, 2009). I hope that this paper encourages reflections amongst practitioners and researchers regarding how a school might consider and enhance participatory practices for pupils (Van der Riet & Boettiger, 2009).

3.1.1 Conceptualising participation

This paper has been informed by the United Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which states that children and young people (CYP) have the right to be heard on matters affecting them and their views should be given due weight (Pare, 2015). This assumes that CYP's views, feelings and needs are worthy of consideration (Gal & Duramy, 2015) and should lead to action (Harris & Davidge, 2019). It underpins relevant English legislation and policy (Children and Families Act, 2014; SEN Code of Practice, 2015). It has been argued that such consultation should extend beyond decisions about individual children to those impacting on children collectively (Pickett & Taylor-Robinson, 2021).

Conceptualising participation is challenging and contested (Cassidy et al., 2022). The terms 'voice' and 'participation' are often used interchangeably within research (Mager & Nowak, 2012) (see Chapter 4, Section 4.3 for further discussion). Alternative conceptualisations have emerged questioning the transformative potential of voice (Lundy, 2007; Mannion, 2007; Hill, 2006). Understandings of participation appeared to have moved beyond voice and many writers focus on relational spaces for intergenerational 'dialogue, confrontation deliberation and critical thinking' (Hill, 2006, p.84). Understood this way, participation then involves more than facilitating children to express their views. It Involves adults willing to create spaces for CYP's views to be considered and acted upon (A. Clark & Percy-

[1] I will also use the word 'children' and 'pupils' within this paper, as the term 'young people' was not perceived to be relevant to primary school aged pupils.

Smith, 2006). Participation is therefore viewed as something which is co-constructed and influenced by the complex systems in which the individual exists (Facca et al., 2020).

3.1.2 Working with EAL pupils

There is an increased need to consider how the English education system reflects and respects the increasing diversity of its pupils (Knowles & Lander, 2011). Various terms are used to refer to pupils who are acquiring English language skills. Terms have included: EAL, languages beyond English, multi-lingual learners and bilingual learners (Pickett & Taylor-Robinson, 2021). This is not a homogenous group and comprises learners from a variety of linguistic, cultural and social backgrounds (Gibbons, 2009). EAL will be the term used in this chapter to reflect current school practice and legislation (Department for Education, 2020). I will also use the term global majority when referring to pupils from perceived ethnic minority groups (UK Government, 2021). This term positions ethnic minority groups and individuals on a global stage and reframes notions of 'minority' by highlighting global majority status (Campbell-Stephens, 2020).

Research has indicated that pupils with EAL have unique needs and that schools need to proactively address these (Reynolds, 2008). Moving to another country may result in a range of challenges for pupils with EAL (McCarthy, 2003). Such as isolation from peers due to lack of fluency in English or differing cultural practices, or lack of belonging in the school community (McCarthy, 2003). Pupils with EAL may also experience difficulties feeling like they belong within the school community (McCarthy, 2003). Supporting the participation of EAL pupils within their school community may therefore be especially important.

Authors have noted that the experiences of EAL pupils within research are 'conspicuously absent' which may contribute to their voices 'remaining silent' (Anderson et al., 2016). Pickett and Taylor- Robinson (2021) highlight the importance of listening to the perspectives of global majority children who they argue are routinely overlooked in British policy but whose voices might offer a genuine insight into their social reality (Prilleltensky, 2013). Research may therefore provide an opportunity to explore ways of promoting the rights of pupils with EAL to participate within school (Sanger & Sewell, 2023). A key assumption of participatory

approaches is the emphasis on encouraging participation of the least powerful members of a community (Van der Riet & Boettiger, 2009). This may lead to transformation as previously marginalised voices are included within the generation of knowledge (Van der Riet & Boettiger, 2009). Focussing on the participation of pupils with EAL therefore is an important consideration when exploring the participation of children in school.

3.2 Study rationale

Participatory practices need critical consideration for CYP who may face additional challenges (i.e., CYP in care, pupils who have recently arrived in England or CYP with SEND), as these children may be more at risk of experiencing social exclusion, and issues relating to their wellbeing (Driscoll, 2011; Pearlman & Michaels, 2019; Wardman, 2013). It was therefore felt that research which explored how practice and knowledge might change and develop to enable the participation of EAL pupils may be a helpful addition to the literature.

This research utilised a transformative approach with the intent of furthering social justice (Mertens, 2010), by exploring how school staff might enhance participatory practices. It was hoped that this research might provide new insights that might develop understanding of the practice of promoting pupil participation (Willig, 2013), whilst influencing changes in school practice (Reason & Bradbury, 2006). The present study sought to contribute to understanding of supporting participative practices within a school setting and with a range of pupils.

3.3 Research design

This section outlines the study methodology and research context, before providing an overview of the stages involved in the CAR. This section intends to guide the reader through the research process before the review phase is discussed in greater detail.

3.3.1 The research process

The project adopted an AR framework, which enabled a critical consideration of participatory practices whilst also seeking to implement changes through its research processes (McNiff, 2013). AR seeks to encourage change through research processes, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of concern, whilst working with others (Reason & Bradbury, 2006). As the present study was concerned with

enhancing participatory practices within a school, I chose to work with a co-researcher to deepen my understanding of enhancing participatory practices. I initially sought to use a participatory action research (PAR) design, which is a subdivision of AR. This design seeks to involve those who might otherwise be subjects of research as co-researchers (Reason & Bradbury, 2006). This may imply working with children as co-researchers. However, I chose to work with a SENDCo as a co-researcher. This was because EPs often work with SENDCos as partners and the SENDCo had been allocated time to participate in the research process. Working with a SENDCo as a co-researcher is further explored in Chapter 2, Section 2.6 and 2.7. Although the principles of PAR influenced this research, it was felt that this research may more so reflect a CAR design, which involves individuals with differing roles working together towards a shared purpose (Reason & Bradbury, 2006).

AR is often carried out through phases of planning, action and reflection (Baumfield et al., 2008; Kemmis et al., 2013; Mertler, 2019) and these were used to loosely guide this research. This approach reflected a ‘plan, do and review model’ familiar to educational staff (Baumfield et al., 2013). Table 3.1 depicts the research phases which occurred throughout the CAR research. However, the flow from stage to stage was not linear and moved iteratively between the ‘plan, act and reflect’ cycle. This enabled the co-researcher and I to respond flexibly to opportunities developing throughout the research (Baumfield et al., 2008). Table 3.1 was regularly reviewed with my co-researcher to support our joint understanding of the research process.

Phase of AR	Stages within Project	Activities undertaken
Preparing and creating a communicative space	**Stage 1: Preparation** January 2022-May 2022	● Decided an overarching focus for the project and suitable methodology. ● Gained ethical approval from Newcastle University
	Stage 2: Recruitment May 2022- June 2022	● Approached setting and shared expression of interest form (Appendix B) ● Contact from interested SENDCos and arrangement of an initial meeting.
Planning	**Stage 3: Introductions, contracting and opening a communicative space** June 2022- July 2022	● Initial meeting with potential co-researcher: discussed the parameters and possibilities of the project. ● Explored whether this research worked towards the school's development plan and resonated with the school's values. ● Co-researcher agreed to join the study and both parties agreed roles and responsibilities, as well as expectations for the CAR research. ● Clarified what was required at each stage of the research and established a beginning and end point for the CAR.
	Stage 4: Negotiating Action July 2022	● Discussed defining pupil participation. Supported by sharing emerging findings from my SLR and models of participation from literature. ● Identified issues in practice (ie., staff feeling unsure about how to support pupil voice for EAL pupils) and areas for further exploration.

		● This was supported through using a planning alternative tomorrow with hope (PATH) framework (Pearpoint et al., 1993) (Appendix M). ● We developed shared aims and focus for our CAR and agreed to conduct an inquiry into identifying factors which might enhance pupil participation and explore how school staff might develop participatory practices for pupils.
Doing	**Stage 5: Organising the study** July 2022 – January 2023	● Our aims and focus for action was explored by using a PATH framework. ● We agreed to specifically focus on increasing participation for pupils with EAL and developing school staff knowledge and confidence in supporting pupil participation. This was because my co-researcher identified pupils with EAL as having the least impact within the school as they were perceived to have the 'quietest voices'. ● My co-researcher and I hoped to develop an understanding of current school practices as well as increase staff's confidence in enhancing pupil participation. It was therefore felt that a focus group aligned with our shared aims and hopes for the research. This focus group would inform the semi-structured interviews with pupils. ● Recruited participants by sharing project information and gaining informed consent (Appendix C and D) for participants to be involved in focus group and audio recorded. The purpose of the focus group was to explore current staff practices in trying to support pupil participation.

		● The SENDCo and I reviewed categories which emerged from the focus group before determining the focus of the semi-structured interviews with pupils.
	Stage 6: Collecting Data October 2022- January 2023	● Audio recorded focus group and followed focus group schedule (Appendix O). ● Focus groups were completed with seven Teaching Assistants (TAs) and carried out by researcher.
	Stage 7: Analysis January 2023- March 2023	● I transcribed the recordings and shared this with co-researcher. ● I analysed the focus group using an abbreviated form of grounded theory to interpret findings from the focus group. These were then discussed with my co-researcher. ● As a result of these findings we felt it might be helpful to interview KS2 pupils. To explore what may support them to feel heard and listened to in school. ● We identified and recruited participants by sharing project information and gaining informed consent (Appendix C) for participants to be involved in semi-structured interviews. These forms were translated into three different languages and translators were used by school staff to support parent participation and informed consent.
Doing (part 2)	**Stage 6.1 Collecting data** January 2023	● Interview structure was informed by information gathered in the focus groups, discussion with my co-researcher and supervision with my supervisor (Appendix N). ● Within research supervision, we discussed how participation may be a difficult concept for pupils to understand and discuss.

		● We wondered if I might ask TAs to take photographs of children engaging in activities which they considered participative. These activities might involve pupils expressing their views to the TA. These photographs were then used as visual tools to stimulate discussion in pupil interviews. These photos were shown only to the individual pupil being interviewed. ● Discussed with my co-researcher who felt this was a useful suggestion. This informed our interview schedule (Appendix N). ● These additions to the project plan were submitted and approved by Newcastle University Ethics Committee.
	Stage 7.1 Analysis January -March 2023	● I transcribed the interviews. ● I analysed the data using an abbreviated form of grounded theory and created a visual representation from codes which emerged from both the focus group and semi-structured interviews.
Reviewing	**Stage 8: Share Review** March 2023	● Meeting between researcher and co-researcher to discuss and share findings. ● Drawing on interview and focus group data to aid our joint understanding in relation to our research aims. ● Reflecting on the research process, using our PATH. We then reflected on next steps and hopes for future practice.
Acting	**Stage 9: Next Steps** Ongoing	Writing up the project To be completed:

		● Feeding back project to participants. ● Planning upcoming cycles of change. ● Share learnings from project through publication. ● Share condensed version with school community.

Table 3.1: Description of the research process

3.3.2 Research Context

The project was based in a North East primary school. The school had approximately 268 pupils on roll and a staff body of 30 (including teachers and teaching/support assistants). The proportion of pupils who spoke EAL and were from global majority groups was above average. The school was working towards enhancing pupil participation. This research was therefore designed to contribute to the school's development plan. The SENDCO was keen to participate in the project to support this agenda. The focus sharpened as outlined in section 3.4 below. A CAR approach fitted the aims of the research and appeared to be an effective way to collaborate and understand the perspectives of educational professionals whilst supporting development of practice. This approach may also work towards ensuring validity, authenticity and changes in school practice (Cho & Trent, 2006).

3.3.3 Ethics

This project was subject to an enhanced ethics assessment and subsequent approval by Newcastle University Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee. Careful consideration was given to ensuring that the research adhered to BPS (BPS, 2018) and HPCP HCPC (2018) ethical code and conduct. The co-researcher, parents and participants, from whom data was collected as part of the collaborative inquiry, received an information sheet detailing aims and purposes of the research, their rights as participants, how their data would be stored and relevant contact information (Appendix B, C & D). Debrief information, after the data collection, was available to the co-researcher and participants (Appendix E, F & G). A more comprehensive discussion of the ethical considerations can be found in Chapter 2, Section 2.8.

3.3.4 Reporting the study

Kemmis et al. (2013) contend that AR requires a flexible and dynamic design to effectively impact real-life problems. For this reason I have chosen to report this research in its CAR phases to reflect a holistic collaborative and action-oriented inquiry, which was based on collective reflections between the co-researcher, participants and I (Azulai, 2021).

3.4 Phase 1: Plan

This phase of the research was concerned with jointly planning the project.

3.4.1 Developing a shared focus

Contracting between the co-researcher and I, during the planning stage, allowed us to set the study's parameters, our expectations of each other (Kemmis et al., 2013) and outline areas where the co-researcher hoped to have greater involvement within our CAR cycle (Table 3.2).

During the initial meeting my co-researcher and I discussed how we each conceptualised participation. This conversation was facilitated through sharing my SLR findings and CYP's rights frameworks (Lundy, 2007). Facca et al. (2020) suggest that conceptualising CYP's participation is 'not a story of progress' but of 'intriguing shifts and tensions' (p.2). Table 3.3 explores how I perceived our conceptualisations of participation.

Stages of AR	Involvement of researcher	Involvement of co-researcher
Preparing	**High** Researcher contacted schools and determined area of focus through submitting University ethical and project approval.	**Moderate** Co-researcher was provided with information forms and opportunities to discuss parameters and possibilities of the project. Co-researcher determined how the research might support the school's development plan.
Planning	**Moderate** I facilitated our initial meeting and discussions about our conceptualisations of pupil participation by sharing SLR findings. SENDCo identified issues related to practice (ie., staff feeling unsure about how to support pupil participation for pupils with EAL). This was not an area I had previously considered, and I was initially unsure of the practicalities of engaging with pupils with EAL (ie., use of translators).	**High** Co-researcher had a significant role in narrowing the focus of the research, to increasing participatory practices and staff knowledge around pupils with EAL. Co-researcher discussed how this research worked towards the school's development plan, areas of her own practice and the school's values. Co-researcher agreed to join the study and both parties agreed roles and responsibilities and expectations for the AR research.
Doing	**High** Ethical approval had been gained for completing focus groups and/or interviews with participants. My co-researcher and I felt focus groups would be the most appropriate method for exploring staff views and practices around pupil participation (see Section 3.4.3 for our rationale). We felt semi-structured interviews would be the most supportive context to engage pupils with EAL (see Section 3.4.2 for our rationale). I facilitated the focus group and semi-structured interviews and transcribed and analysed the data. This	**Low/Moderate** Co-researcher and I reviewed categories which emerged from the focus group to determine the focus of semi-structured interviews with pupils. The co-researcher expressed enthusiasm about reviewing codes, but she did not have the time or resources to be involved in the data analysis process. My co-researcher was keen for school staff to have space to express their own views and felt staff might not feel as comfortable doing this with a member of the senior leadership present. My co-researcher therefore requested that I lead the focus group, to

	was reviewed with my co-researcher during our review meeting.	provide this supportive space for staff to discuss their feelings and views openly.
Reviewing	**High** I facilitated our review meeting by drawing on interview and focus group data to aid our joint understanding in relation to our research aims. We also used our PATH to reflect on my co-researcher's hopes for the research and to determine next steps for future practice.	**High/Moderate** Throughout the data analysis stage I discussed categories which emerged with my co-researcher. Transcripts were also shared with the co-researcher to encourage joint understanding of emerging categories. Co-researcher determined feasible next steps for the school (see Section 3.7 Phase 3: reflecting and reviewing). Co-researcher then took over responsibility for future actions and further AR cycles.

Table 3.2: The participation continuum between the co-researcher and I

How I understood participation	My perceptions of my co-researcher's understanding of participation
• At the start of this research, I used the terms child voice and participation interchangeably. However, ongoing reflections in research supervision and the completion of my SLR had enabled me to reflect on both terms. • I subsequently viewed participation as a relational process which recognised that pupil participation emerges through dialogue with adults (Conn et al., 2020), rather than being captured as a fixed or authentic phenomenon from children (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010). Authors have argued that any consideration of pupil participation must be understood from a relational perspective which recognises the nature of the relationship and power differentials between adults and children (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010). The term 'child voice' may not encourage consideration of the role of powerful adult agendas at play and the opportunities adults might afford children to 'have a say' (Percy-Smith, 2006). • I believed that giving voice to children is not simply about letting children speak; 'it is about exploring the unique contribution to our understanding of, and theorising about, the social world that children's perspectives can provide' (James, 2007, p263). • I therefore hoped to focus on how I might work with the co-researcher to support the school's capacity to provide CYP with required support or space to be 'co-authors' in decision making contexts (Roesch-Marsh et	• My co-researcher described how schools were expected to consult with children as part of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) meetings. My co-researcher stated that 'pupil voice' was a 'buzz word' in education but was unsure about how this might be meaningfully realised within practice. We wondered whether schools were engaging in 'meaningful voice practice'. • My co-researcher explained that children were consulted by TAs on their views (i.e., views on transition and to inform SEND reviews) through using a range of visual tools. Within our meeting we explored Lundy's (2007) rights framework and discussed how pupil views influence areas of school practice. My co-researcher shared that pupil views were gathered for SEND reviews. However, these might not always be shared or discussed within the meetings. My co-researcher stated that these would now be shared and inform future meetings. • We reflected on how we might act upon child views and how these might influence areas of school practice (Hill, 2006a). • My co-researcher stated that the school used a range of visuals to record the views of pupils with EAL. This work was predominantly carried out with TAs, suggesting it may be helpful to consider pupil participation across different elements of school practice. • Some of the school staffs' views of participation resonated with views and practices I had held as a primary school teacher (ie.,I had requested TAs complete pupil view work outside of the main classroom). During my time as a teacher, I believe I might have reflected more on how the views and perspectives of pupils influenced my classroom practice and classroom ethos. It is therefore important to consider the role of adults in CYP's

al., 2017), by also focussing on improving staff confidence and knowledge of participatory practices.	participation and how adults might work towards creating opportunities and spaces for child-adult interactions. • Our initial meeting provided an opportunity to discuss CYP's right to voice their opinion on matters impacting them. Authors have highlighted that there may be a lack of awareness about the rights of CYP and how to promote these, which may prevent schools from working in a participatory manner (Donnelly & Kilkelly, 2011). This initial meeting provided an opportunity to share Article 12 of the UNCRC.

Table 3.3: How I and co-researcher appeared to conceptualise participation during our initial meeting

The Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH) tool was used to explore the co-researcher's aims and hopes for the research (Appendix M). PATH utilises person centred planning (PCP) techniques and aims to create meaningful change by placing an individual's hopes and wishes at the forefront of a decision-making process (Wood et al., 2019). Research has demonstrated that PATH may support organisational change and is a familiar tool for educational professionals (Carpenter et al., 2023). The PATH enabled the co-researcher to explore their hopes and goals for the research. This seemed important given that some decisions about the research had been made prior to our initial meeting.

Through completing the PATH, we developed shared aims and focus. We then agreed to conduct an inquiry into how school staff might enhance participatory practices for pupils with EAL (see Table 3.4 for overview of research aims). We agreed to specifically focus on increasing participation for pupils with EAL and developing school staff knowledge and confidence in supporting pupil participation. This was because my co-researcher identified pupils with EAL as having the least impact within the school as they were perceived to have the 'quietest voices'. This perspective resonates with literature in this area (Anderson et al. 2016). Table 3.4 sets out the shared aims for our research.

Table 3.4: Respective aims for the research

My research aims	Co-researcher's aims
(1) to consider perspectives from staff and pupils on what enhances pupil participation. (2) to explore how school staff might work together with pupils to develop participatory practices for pupils with EAL.	(3) For school staff to develop their knowledge and confidence when supporting pupil participation. (4) To explore how we might increase pupil participation for pupils with EAL.

3.4.2 Determining our methodology

Qualitative methods are vital to the aims of this study, as they enabled an in-depth exploration of how school staff might enhance pupil participation (MacDonald, 2012). Further, qualitative methods provided an opportunity to link human experience with social action (Parker, 2004) and are often associated with AR (Cresswell, 2012).

Within our initial meeting, my co-researcher and I hoped to develop an understanding of current school practices as well as increase staff's confidence in enhancing pupil participation. It was felt that a focus group with TAs aligned with our shared aims and hopes for the research. This was because a focus group might enable participants to jointly construct an understanding of meaningful practices (Markova et al., 2007) and further develop their own thoughts and practices around pupil participation. A focus group enabled me as a facilitator to utilise clarifying questions, make links and apply summarising skills to facilitate a shared understanding of current pupil participation practice (Kennedy, 2004). Given the study's focus on promoting the participation of pupils with EAL, semi structured interviews were deemed to be the most appropriate method for exploring pupil perspectives. This was because semi-structured interviews may result in rich data about individual views and enable children's perspectives to be heard (Willig, 2013). Semi-structured interviews may also provide space to discuss a range of topics, with the aim of the interviews being an empowering experience (Yeo et al., 2014). The interview and focus group questions were developed to ensure that the data collected enabled the inquiry questions to be answered (Willig, 2013). The interview schedule was also informed by the work of Robson (2002) and Yeo et al. (2014). The focus group's schedule was informed by Finch et al. (2014) to ensure participants felt welcomed and supported to explore pupil participation as well as supported to transition back to school activities.

During the recruitment of participants non-participation was considered a respected component of participation (Sanger & Sewell, 2023). Open communication with participants aimed to support trust and respect and provided them with understanding of what it meant to take part. For child participants this was supported through providing the pupils' TAs and teachers with a pupil assent form and information sheet (Appendices J & L). Methods were accessible to the pupils and

attempted to support them in forming and engaging in sharing their views (Table 3.5).

Table 3.5: Methods used to support pupil participation during semi-structured interview

Methods used to support pupils during semi-structured interviews:
1. Photographs and sorting activities
2. Visual representation of interview process
3. Access to interview questions prior to interview
4. Access to creative materials such as Lego, pens and paper if participants chose to draw or write in order to develop and share their responses

3.5 Phase 2: Do

This section describes different stages of the data collection process which occurred with the 'doing phases' of our CAR.

3.5.1 Identifying participants and collecting data

The co-researcher and I agreed to recruit TAs for the focus group, as the SENDCo reported that TAs were often asked to complete 'pupil voice' work in school. For example, TAs might use visual tools to explore pupils' likes and dislikes before a SEND review. We also reflected on how TAs might miss opportunities to attend training and develop their skills and confidence, due to timetable associated constraints. We hoped that the research might provide space and time for TAs to reflect and develop their practice in encouraging pupil participation (Sharples et al., 2016). The focus group aimed to address research question 1, 2 and 3. The interviews aimed to address research question 1 and 4 (see Table 3.4).

TAs were recruited through purposive sampling. Eight TAs were approached by the co-researcher and seven agreed to take part in the study. A sample size of seven supported a detailed exploration on participants' perspectives (Mertens, 2010). Information sheets were provided for TAs (See Appendix B). Participants were provided with a focus group schedule and information to support their understanding of the process prior to consent to take part in the research (See Appendix O). It was made clear that TAs did not need to participate if they did not want to. Participants chose their desired time and location to engage in the research (during a school assembly) to ensure minimal disruption for their classes.

Transcribed recordings of the focus group were shared with my co-researcher. Data was analysed using a constructivist version of abbreviated grounded theory, as this was complementary with my chosen design and provided a structure for generating and exploring categories with my co-researcher (Azulai, 2021). Using GT supported my co-researcher and I to begin to consider a range of perspectives and reach new meanings and understandings about the research process (Van der Riet & Boettiger, 2009).

This resulted in an initial category map (see Appendix R & S), which resulted in subsequent reflections with my co-researcher. We felt it might be helpful to interview key stage two (KS2) EAL pupils as TAs felt the 'least confident' supporting participation within this age group. This was because TAs felt unsure about approaches and tools, they might use with this age group. We identified and recruited pupil participants through purposive sampling and by sharing project information and gaining informed consent from parents (Appendix C), as well as assent for pupils to be involved in semi-structured interviews (Appendix J & L).

The inclusion criteria for taking part in the study for pupils were:

- Participants who were EAL.
- Participants who attended the school and were in KS2.
- Participants who had a good understanding of the English language and were able to communicate with another person in English.

Six pupils were felt to meet the inclusion criteria and five (including parental consent) consented to take part in the study.

These forms were translated into three different languages and translators were used by school staff to encourage informed parental consent. Semi structured interviews were subsequently conducted with five key stage two pupils. I will next discuss how my co-researcher, school staff and I supported pupils to express their views during the interviews.

3.5.2 Visual methodologies

There are a range of methods which seek to explore pupil perspectives and promote pupil agency (Niemi et al., 2018; Wall, 2017). However, photographs and a sorting activity were chosen for data collection because these methods might increase pupil

understanding during interviews (Niemi et al., 2015). This is particularly the case for those who might experience some difficulties with their English language skills (J. Clark et al., 2013). I was aware that pupils within this study had arrived in England with limited English language skills during Key Stage one (KS1), and visual methodologies might therefore support their understanding during the interviews. School staff also expressed to the pupils that their school hoped to listen more to the 'views of their pupils' and improve areas of school practice.

Authors have argued that by employing visual methods, researchers move away from 'research on children' to 'research with children' (Clark, 2012; Lipponen et al., 2016). This is because children are given the opportunity to have a degree of influence in collecting data (Lipponen et al., 2016). Digital technology is also argued to be quick and easy to use and appealing for children (Lipponen et al., 2016). Within this study, children were asked to take pictures with their TAs of tools or experiences which helped them to feel heard in school (Clark et al., 2013). These photos, taken in collaboration with TAs, were then discussed and reflected upon in the interviews. They might also provide further information on what children consider to be important when having their voices heard (Johnson et al., 2012). However it is possible that photos taken may have been dominated by the views of the TAs, despite staff being supported to consider how to provide space for the child during the photo activities.

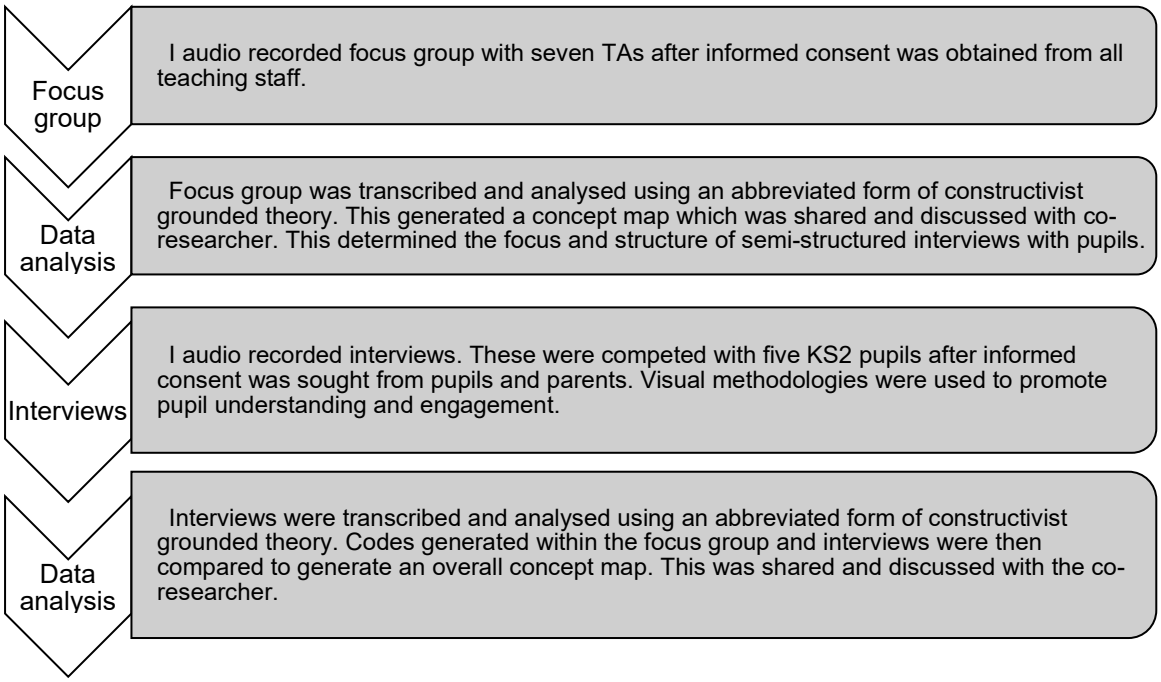
A sorting activity was also used to reflect on concepts which emerged from the focus group (Appendix N). Children sorted these concepts into 'this is like me'; 'this is like me sometimes'; and 'this is not like me'. Sorting tools have been used in classrooms to clarify pupil's feelings on a range of topics and are believed to be motivating for pupils (Haapaniemi et al., 2021). This activity was completed after reflecting on the pupil's chosen photographs. This is because research has highlighted that photographic methods are useful in fostering dialogue through the use of familiar images (Johnson et al., 2012). The use of photographs appeared to help develop rapport and increase engagement for the subsequent sorting activity.

3.6 Interpreting the data

This section describes the data analysis process.

The figure below describes the different stages of data collection and analysis which occurred during the action phase of the CAR.

Figure 3.1: Stages of data collection and analysis



3.6.1 Tension in the data analysis

The research data was analysed using an abbreviated form of constructivist grounded theory (GT). I felt this was compatible with my chosen methodological approach (CAR) and aims of the research, owing to mutual emphasis on reflexivity and democratic participation (Azulai, 2021). GT and AR methodologies are widely used in qualitative research (Lingard et al., 2008). However, they each have 'multiple iterations and forms, which vary in their epistemological and methodological underpinnings' (Azulai, 2021, p,4). Rieger (2019) argues that more detailed attention should be given to the potential compatibility between the different iterations of GT and forms of AR. Therefore, I hope to outline some of the tensions which arose when seeking to utilise an abbreviated version of constructivist GT within AR. Specifically, tensions related to the role of the researcher and conceptualising action and theory.

AR emphasises the role of the researcher as a co-participant in a holistic and action-oriented inquiry (J. Clark et al., 2019). Within constructivist GT, the researcher is argued to be a co-producer of experience (Charmaz, 2014). Charmaz (2014) advocates for maintaining participants' presence throughout the process of data analysis through naming action codes as close to the original wording as possible. However, even in constructivist iterations of GT, the researcher is ultimately viewed as having control over the data analysis (Charmaz, 2014). This conflicts with the co-

production principles of AR. However, the co-researcher has been continually negotiated throughout the research. Within the planning stage, it was decided that I would carry out the data analysis of the focus group and interviews. This was in recognition of the co-researcher's workload, and it was intended that I would bring back my findings for further discussion.

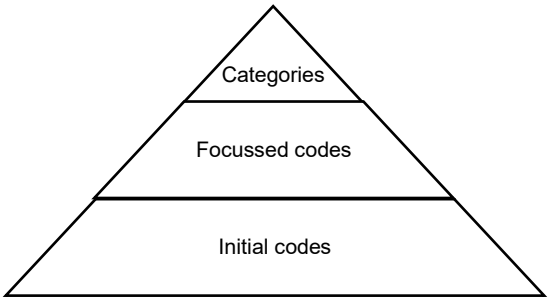
Tension also occurred when seeking to conceptualise and report action and theory. In constructivist GT, knowledge is viewed as the theorising of relationships between concepts and is, therefore, theory driven (Charmaz, 2017). AR views knowledge as an interplay between both beliefs and actions (Morgan, 2014) and is, therefore, action driven. Action as a concept is defined in a myriad of ways within AR (Guy et al., 2020). However, Chevalier and Buckles (2013) defines action as the 'deciding, planning, and doing things to achieve concrete goals' (p. 50). This reflects actions which occurred within this CAR, as goals (discussed within the PATH) were referred to throughout the research to reflect and plan stages of data collection. For example, my co-researcher hoped to increase staff confidence and knowledge of participatory practices. This informed our decision to complete a focus group with staff. Therefore, I believe that data within this study represents a series of social actions and reflections, which have worked towards common goals. During the data analysis process, it was also important that the categories did not attempt to offer a picture of truth but was understood as a way of interpreting data (Bryman, 2016). These interpretations then functioned as a catalyst for discussion and reflection with my co-researcher. I believe data in this study, consequently, sought to be both driven by theory and collective action. However, despite this collaborative intention this research was to be examined as part of a doctoral qualification. Tension therefore occurred when seeking to represent data and new learnings to a variety of audiences (Baumfield et al., 2008).

Overall, I believe using abbreviated GT within AR supported and enhanced aspects of the research. GT provided a structure for generating and exploring categories with my co-researcher (Azulai, 2021). CAR also encouraged me, as a researcher, to learn how best to engage participants throughout the research (Azulai 2021). Some authors have, therefore, advocated for borrowing each other's methods and skills when seeking to utilise GT and AR (Dick, 2007).

3.6.2 Data analysis

Data analysis occurred across three iterative phases: initial coding; focussed coding and formation of categories (see Figure 3.2). Each phase of analysis will now be explored.

Figure 3.2: A visual representation of the different coding stages in constructivist grounded theory (Adapted from Charmaz, 2014).



Charmaz (2014) states that the first phase of data analysis in constructivist GT is 'initial coding'. Line-by-line coding is recommended for novice researchers (Charmaz, 2014) and when using abbreviated GT (Willig, 2013). Consequently, I opted for line-by-line coding (see Appendix P & Q for examples). During this stage, I attempted to generate codes which were analytical, short and closely related to the data by moving swiftly and freely (Charmaz, 2014). I renamed codes when needed, which aided my ability to work quickly with the data (Charmaz, 2014).

During the initial coding phase, I placed emphasis on actions and used gerunds where possible (see Appendix T & U for more example). This encouraged me to focus on the data and to avoid using pre-existing theories at an early stage of the research (Charmaz, 2014). Focussed codes then emerged from comparing initial codes and through memo writing (Appendix P & Q), where I sought to consider whether focussed codes revealed gaps in the data and which codes had more theoretical reach and direction (Charmaz, 2014). Continual critical reflection and comparison of focussed codes then informed categories. Theoretical saturation was achieved when no new focussed codes appeared for each category.

3.6.3 Preparing for review

The category maps (see Appendix T & U) were used to facilitate reflection and discussion during the review with my co-researcher. Through research supervision, I

explored ways in which I might share my interpretations of the data which would encourage reflection and dialogue, rather than position my views as ‘knowledge’. I chose to review our PATH framework before sharing my category map to relate findings back to the co-researcher’s initial hopes and aims. I also made notes of points of interest which occurred within the focus group and interview data. This information is summarised in Table 3.6.

Concepts	Relationships	School- Home Partnership	Wellbeing	Space	Influence	Purpose
Strengths and area to address	Positive relationships with TA supports pupil voice and wellbeing. Positive class culture. Playful and fun adults *"She's (TA) she's like a really fun teacher and I like doing work with her".* *"They are always like having fun- like that outside (points to adult playing on field). There are always like having fun with children with like that adult who was dancing. That shows they understand us and want to have fun with us".*	Inclusive Differentiation was valued. Multi-lingual staff as champions. Celebrating diversity- *"But I don't like speaking at home English. But I love my language. I love to speak this and celebrate this at home".* *"I am proud to be Armenian!"*	Feeling safe in school Feeling supported *Routine supports understanding and reduces fear 'I know what will happen to me here'.* Staff are there to help me. Wellbeing benches. *"I like school because I come to school every day and I learn different things. I get to see my friends. I get to play with them rather than sitting at home".* Pupils spoke of the fear they felt when they moved from their home country.	I enjoy using visual tools. Staff are always there to listen. *"They listen to me like all the time".* Appreciate feedback on my English language skills (peers and TA). Speaking and thinking in home language supports my understanding.	Choice in activities (small group activities were preferred) Using visual tools Celebrating home language.	Some pupils indicated that they were sometimes unsure of what was happening in lessons. *"I understand some of them (visual tools) but not always and some lessons really not at all".* Sometimes unsure of the purpose of activities/ visuals. *"I'm not sure what the point was".*
Next steps	Some pupils stated they felt more able to share views with TAs as opposed to their class teacher. How might we develop pupil participation in class? Reduce power	How might we create space for home-school language partnership? How	Recognised emotional impact of moving and importance of TA in helping pupils to feel safe and connected (particularly early on).	How might we create space for home-school language partnership? How might this support learning?	Pupils cited examples for space, voice and audience (particularly with TA). However, the majority of pupils were unsure of whether their views made a difference.	Opportunities to explain the purpose of visual tools. How might we develop independence skills or strategies?

	imbalances (TAs viewed as friends/ more approachable)? Felt most connected and listened to during play. Where are the opportunities for this and continuing to value this environment?	might this support learning?	Some pupils felt isolated at times (from peers) and indicated a dislike of bullies. Y6 pressure. Continue to facilitate opportunities to connect with peers.	How might we build on visual tools?	“My views don’t make a difference really.” “I still have to go to school”. “Everyone is just living their life”. How might pupils have influence in the power imbalance structures present in school?	

Table 3.6: Record of reflections formed in the review

I also used action-oriented questions for each goal, to help ground our discussion into actions for practice (Kemmis et al., 2013), for example, by asking the SENDCo what is useful to take forwards into practice, and what the next steps for the school were going to be.

3.7 Phase 3: reflecting and reviewing

Within the review meeting, I attempted to loosely follow my planned schedule whilst letting the conversation develop naturally. My use of action-oriented questions appeared to ground our discussion into actions for practice (Kemmis et al., 2013) especially when the SENDCo and I reflected on 'how complex' these issues were. The SENDCo supported me to consider how issues raised in the data might be meaningfully and practically applied within the school context. Within this discussion, we sought to develop a shared meaning of the data and possible implications for future school practice. I felt we were responsive to the views of each other, which enabled our knowledge to be explored, challenged and developed (Van der Riet & Boettiger, 2009).

3.8 Reflecting on our data

The 'credibility and validity of AR is argued to be measured according to whether actions arising from AR solve real life problems' (Levin & Greenwood, 2001, p. 105). I have therefore sought to present my findings by discussing each research question, as these reflect the 'real-life problems' my co-researcher and I attempted to address. Jointly reviewing the data also led to changes in thinking for both of us. I will evidence these reflections throughout the findings and discuss how these might impact future school practice.

Figure 3.3 and 3.4 provides an overview of the categories which relate to RQ1 and RQ2.

Figure 3.3: RQ1: To consider perspectives from staff and pupils on what enhances pupil participation

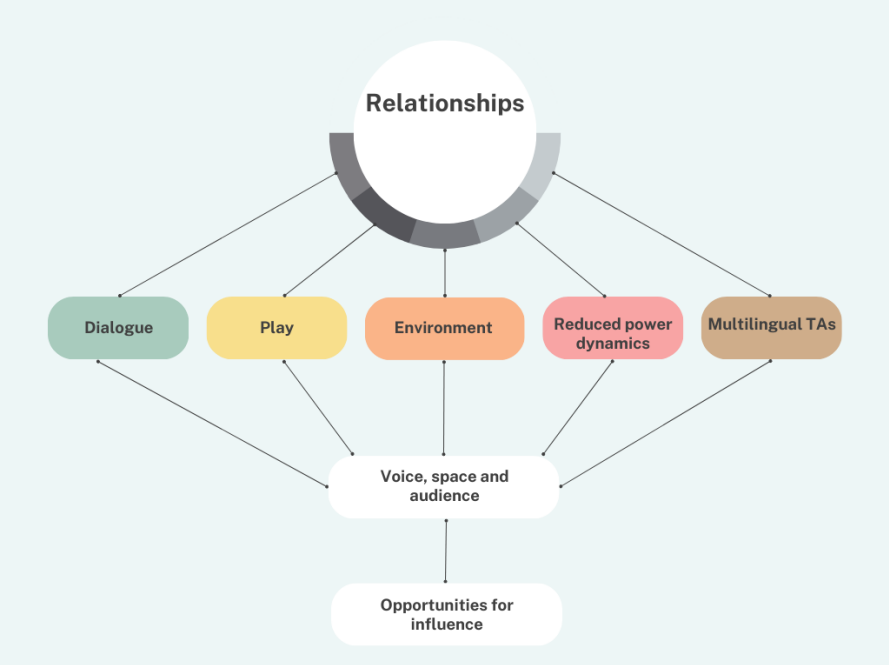


Figure 3.4: RQ2: To explore how school staff might work together with pupils to develop participatory practices for pupils with EAL

3.8.1 RQ1: To consider perspectives from staff and pupils on what enhances pupil participation

A range of categories emerged when considering RQ1 (see Figure 3.3). These categories developed during the analysis of interview and focus group data.

Some of the related focused codes: dialogue, play, environment, power dynamics and multi-lingual TAs will also be subsequently discussed.

3.8.2 Relationships

Codes constructed in the interview data indicated that pupils felt able to express their views in schools. However, pupils expressed they felt more able to share their views with their TA as opposed to their teacher. Pupils felt that their TA had more time and space to respond to their views in comparison to their teacher. Researchers have noted that TAs might improve pupil's motivation and self-esteem through fostering positive relationships (Wilson & Bedford, 2008). Within the review, my co-researcher stated that TAs were highly valued within the school community. For example, a significant portion of the school's EAL funding is spent on hiring TAs, with a particular focus on multi-lingual TAs. Multi-lingual TAs have also been argued to support the educational inclusion of EAL pupils (Kakos, 2022). It appears that EAL pupils within this study had built a positive relationship with their TA which appears to have supported their ability to express their wants and needs. Within the focus group TAs also emphasised the importance of building relationships when seeking to support pupil participation:

"You need to build a relationship with that child before anything."

The notion of 'listening' is closely bound up with issues of power and involves both hearing and responding (McLeod, 2007).

Within interviews, pupils stated that they viewed TAs as 'more like friends'.

"When I came to school, I did not understand anything, and she [referring to TA] really helped me to understand and feel ok when I was scared. She is a friend I can just talk to".

This might indicate a reduction in perceived power imbalances between pupil and adult. Some authors suggest that multi-lingual TAs might also work with EAL pupils to 'construct spaces which challenge power relations and enable pupils to exercise a level of control and power to collaborate with staff' (Kakos, 2022, p1). Multi-lingual TAs, within the focus group, also described how their experiences as multi-lingual learners fostered a sense of connection with EAL pupils.

“And I click quite well with EAL pupils just from knowing how it is and being in a mixed language household”.

Interactions between children and multi-lingual TAs within this study appear to have the potential to provide a sense of community and reciprocal interactions. For example, shared experiences of being multi-lingual and providing a sense of safety (Pooley et al., 2008). The interview and focus group data allowed my co-researcher and I to consider the perspectives of both TAs and children. My co-researcher reflected on pupils with EALs forming close relationships with their TAs and possible concerns relating to pupil independence. For example, my co-researcher felt that some of the pupils within the study might prioritise their relationship with their TA at the expense of engaging in interactions with peers. This led me to question the assumptions I brought to the research; in that I had assumed that pupil and TA relationships might provide a sense of safety and community, rather than contribute to potentially isolating pupils from their peers.

Some pupils felt that adults understood them the most during playtime. For example, one pupil stated that teachers listen to us ‘*when they are outside and having fun with us’*. Bae (2012) states that by taking part in playful interactions ‘children and adults might be connected in a spirit of joyful vitality’ (p,60). This might then contribute to democratic moments between children and adults (Bae, 2009). Within our review meeting the co-researcher and I reflected on the reduced opportunities for teachers to participate in children’s play. TAs might work as break and lunch time monitors, and have more opportunities to engage in playful interactions, which might act as a foundation for child-adult dialogue (Bae, 2012). Opportunities for child’s play become more restricted as children progress through primary school. We discussed the difficulties of increasing opportunities for play within a busy school schedule. This led to a discussion about how school staff view and prioritise opportunities for play as spaces to support relationship and build participatory practices. We also reflected on how favourable environments are argued to support autonomy, encourage skill acquisition and relationships (Prilleltensky, 2020). This research might, therefore, support the importance of all adults in this school (TAs and teachers) spending time playing with children in favourable environments.

When considering factors which might enhance pupil participation, the co-researcher and I felt that relationships where adults are responsive, engage in playful interactions and listen to pupil views, may provide opportunities for meaningful pupil participation. Edmiston (2008)'s work highlighted the importance of emotional connection, closeness to the child's perspective and staff's playfulness, as important in reducing power imbalances. The data collection actions taken in this study appear to support these views. It is also important to note that being immersed into an English language dominant environment may increase possible feelings of stress and anxiety for EAL pupils (Anderson et al., 2016). Pupils indicated that their TAs helped develop a sense of emotional safety when they first arrived at school.

3.8.3 Voice, space and influence

Categories constructed in the data analysis appeared to indicate that pupils had opportunities for voice, space and audience (Lundy, 2007). For example, pupils stated they had frequent opportunities to share their views with their TAs (space), felt safe and supported to do so (voice) and that TAs were '*always there to listen to them'* (audience). However, most pupils indicated that their views had 'little impact' and they had 'little influence within school'. It appeared that children enjoyed expressing their views to trusted adults. However, pupils felt that their views had a minimal impact on the school. One child stated that *'everyone is just living their lives'* when asked about his impact on the school. This indicates that having a sense of safety with key adults may not necessarily lead to pupils having influence.

Further consideration might therefore be required on providing opportunities for pupils to have influence within this school setting. My co-researcher and I discussed whether it was possible for pupils to feel like they had influence in school. Research has indicated that primary aged pupils might not view influence as an important construct in their lives (Sayer et al., 2013). This may be because primary aged children might not view themselves as active agents, given the power imbalance between teachers, pupils and school structures (Devine, 2002). However, Prilleltensky (2013)'s social justice theory highlights the benefit of global majority children participating in the processes impacting their lives.

It may be helpful to consider how pupils feel valued and add value to their school community when considering pupil influence (Prilleltensky, 2020). For example, my co-researcher wondered if creating a 'cultural club' or space for pupils to share practices relating to their culture might encourage pupils to view themselves as adding value to their school community. My co-researcher felt that pupils from Eastern European backgrounds might be especially overlooked by the school curriculum, due to some of the school staff having little previous experience of working with pupils from this background. My co-researcher wondered about providing opportunity for these pupils to share aspects of their culture in order to increase their sense of adding value to and increasing their influence within the wider school community. This might contribute to a sense of feeling and adding value to the school community, which might also increase perceived pupil influence. However, some authors have highlighted that CYP may experience personal discomfort, bullying and microaggressions when sharing aspects of their culture (Bhopal, 2018; Wong et al., 2022). We discussed the need to establish psychological safety for pupils with EAL and that sharing cultural practices should be led by children. Further, celebration of diversity by itself is unlikely to support social justice if there is no re-positioning of global majority groups (Bhopal, 2018).

3.8.4 RQ2 To explore how school staff might work together with pupils to develop participatory practices for pupils with EAL

A range of categories and focussed codes emerged when considering RQ2 (Appendix U). These will be subsequently discussed.

3.8.5 Home school language partnership

Categories appeared to indicate that multi-lingual TAs and the majority of pupils valued opportunities to speak both their home language and English within school. Other pupils cited other home language peers as central to their wellbeing and learning. For example, one pupil stated her home language peers helped her to understand when in class.

"I.. I sometime only understand some of what the teacher says. And then I struggle. But then, like my friends can speak Portuguese and it helps me understand a little more."

One pupil within this study did not have peers who spoke his home language and stated:

“Like I would really, really like that. I would really like to speak Armenian to someone in school.”

TAs also spoke of the importance of peer friendships in supporting pupil participation:

“They become a bit reclusive, don’t they? So it might be hard to hear their voice as they might not express their views when they feel alone?”

This study appears to indicate the importance of providing space and opportunities for peer relationships and for pupils to use both their home and English language within school. Within our review, my co-researcher and I discussed how we might provide space for the pupil’s home language. We noted that one pupil spoke of ‘speaking quietly in his home language’. This might suggest that the pupil did not feel comfortable speaking his home language within class. We wondered how we might encourage a class ethos which accepts and values the use of different languages during classroom activities. We reflected on how schools in England are becoming increasingly multilingual and the significant challenges in providing opportunities for home language within an institution and curriculum which remains predominantly English (Stewart et al., 2022). However, we considered small steps staff might take to provide spaces for home and school language (ie., designated thinking spaces in class and in workbooks) so pupils might feel that their home language is recognised, accepted, and valued.

TAs within the focus group highlighted tensions which may occur in school/parent relationships:

“If the parents don't speak English and you've got nobody to translate, it's really difficult to get any feedback about what is helping the child in school to move forwards with”.

Research indicates that multi-lingual TAs may be able to act as parent advocates (Kakos, 2022) and might bridge communication between home and school through their role as cultural mediators (Ernst-Slavit & Wenger, 2006). Within our

review my co-researcher hoped to further consider how to increase parent participation. McWayne et al. (2022) suggests that, as a starting point, educators might emphasise the resources and strengths EAL pupils and parents bring. This might contribute to more 'respectful, reciprocal, and non-hierarchical relationships with families' (McWayne et al., 2022, p,5) which might support a culturally inclusive and welcoming space for children to participate (McWayne et al., 2022).

It appears further consideration is required on how school staff build relationships with parents of EAL pupils and increase their knowledge and understanding of different cultures might support pupil participation. It may also be important for school staff to receive relevant professional development opportunities, to support them to work effectively with EAL families (Stewart et al., 2022).

For example, one TA talked about difficulties adapting to a school with a higher number of EAL pupils: *"I came from a school with no EAL… Coming here I had to completely re-educate myself. I don't follow religion or anything like that. So, so all the different religions and that in here and literally I had to re-educate myself".*

3.8.6 Developing staff confidence and knowledge

Within this research we hoped to develop staff confidence and knowledge in supporting pupil participation. Children and adults occupy different positions in school, and as such, 'children's perspectives should not be assumed to be the same as or more deficient versions of adults' (Hammersley, 2017, p115). This AR has provided an opportunity to explore EAL pupil's perspectives. At the start of the research my co-researcher suggested that EAL pupils voices were the 'quietest' voices in school. Some authors have claimed that subordinated or marginalised groups may provide more genuine insight into social reality than those of dominant groups (Prilleltensky, 2013). The views expressed by pupils appeared to challenge some of the perceptions held by staff as well as provide opportunities to highlight strengths in school practice.

The initial meeting, focus group and review also appeared to provide space to reflect on school practice. For example, a TA noted:

"I just wanted to say that it was really helpful to have the space and time to hear about what everyone is doing...across the school. We often don't get the chance

to hear about that and it was helpful to hear about ideas within other year groups. I might try something that was suggested by KS1".

Within our review my co-researcher also stated that the school staff *'never would have explored this in depth and with EAL pupils without the time and space afforded by this research'*. This indicates the role of AR is supporting a school to implement changes through its research processes (McNiff, 2013).

Seven outcomes were developed and agreed within our review meeting, as shown in Table 3.7. These include aspects of practice that were working well (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). I believe some of these actions contain ongoing and exciting dilemmas that may change and develop in response to school practice. Actions are therefore not viewed as final outcomes.

Table 3.7: Outcomes from the review

Outcome	Rationale
1. AR facilitated micro moments of change and new learnings	The AR design appeared to support change through its very process. For example, through collaboratively examining SLR findings and reflecting on how pupils may have opportunities for influence. The focus group also provided a space for TAs to share and reflect on collective pupil participation practice. School staff might continue to create spaces for TAs and teacher to engage in dialogue about developing areas of their practice.
2. Co-researcher to feedback findings of the research to all teaching staff	It was hoped this would encourage school staff to view pupil participation as a collective responsibility, and something which would continue to be developed as part of wider school practice. It was also hoped this might present an opportunity to reflect on the school's conceptualisations of pupil participation.
3. To further consider how to increase parent participation	We both felt that a significant limitation of this research was not exploring the views of the parents of pupils with EAL. A starting point might emphasise the resources and strengths EAL pupils and parents bring. This might contribute to more

	'respectful, reciprocal and non-hierarchical relationships with families' (p,5) which might support a cultural inclusive and welcoming space for children to participate (McWayne et al., 2022). Future AR cycles might be considered with parents of EAL pupils. For example, school staff might explore how parents support the participation of their EAL children.
4. To consider how to create safe places to celebrate diversity	Further consideration may be required on how the school staff and community consider the participation of pupils with EAL. The celebration of diversity by itself is unlikely to support social justice if there is no re-positioning of global majority groups (Benjamin, 2013). We therefore agreed that pupils from Eastern European cultures would be consulted when seeking to explore diversity in the school. For example, exploration of different cultures might be pupil led and initiated and supported by school wide policies and initiatives.
5. Further considerations around creating a class ethos which accepts and values the use of different languages in the classroom	We spoke of small steps staff might take to provide spaces for home and school language (ie., designated thinking spaces in class and in workbooks) so pupils might feel that their home language is recognised, accepted and valued. However, we spoke of creating psychological safety for pupils to express views in their language, without enduring microaggressions from peers. This might be achieved through normalising differentiation within the class, and discussing how learners may need different strategies and supports during learning tasks. This might also include using a range of languages.
6. To utilise the CAR framework to create time and space to focus on priority areas for the school	The SENDCo stated that the school had found out 'more about the world of EAL pupils' and stated they wanted to 'continue to explore new learnings which emerged during the review'. The SENDCo said that the school would 'never have explored this issue

	fully' without the time and space afforded by the research. We wondered how we might use aspects of the research process to support time and space to engage in participatory practices. For example, the PATH tool might be used to explore participatory practices and hopes with all school staff.
7. To continue to explore digital technology as a way to explore complex concepts/ pupil views.	The use of photos as a stimulus to discussing participative opportunities provided further information on what children consider to be important when having their voices heard (Johnson et al., 2012). These might be used again with the same pupils or with a greater variety of pupils.
8. Reflecting on participation is complex and requires ongoing commitment	Further consideration is required on providing opportunities for pupils to have influence within this school setting. My co-researcher and I discussed whether it was possible for pupils to feel like they had influence in school. We felt it was helpful to focus on 'small steps of progress' and working towards participatory practices. The co-researcher and I had therefore shifted our perspectives on participation which will impact upon both of our future practices.

3.9 Discussion

3.9.1 Limitations

This research project existed within constraints that limited its scope and possibilities for action. It would have been helpful to engage in further AR cycles with the co-researcher to implement outcomes identified in our review and explore their impact. Future cycles may have also sought to include the perspectives of parents of EAL pupils. Further information regarding the parent views might have increased my and the school's understanding of how to work effectively and sensitively with the school community (Stewart et al., 2022). However, inquiries are not highly boundaried and I leave the SENDCo to develop this inquiry to the next stage.

It is also not appropriate to offer guidance on ideal practice for increasing pupil participation. Each school setting is unique, and CAR provided an opportunity to consider unique aspects of one school setting. It is hoped that this study might encourage further participatory AR which seeks to increase pupil participation within a range of school settings.

The research process also did not follow a linear process and moved between the 'plan, act and reflect' cycle. It is important to acknowledge the mess in AR without trying to oversimply the research process (Cook, 2009). Phelps and Hase (2002) stated that 'explicit recognition of complexity can provide a fresh and enlightening perspective on action research' (p.507). Throughout this project I have therefore sought to be explicit about the complexity involved in CAR, how this project evolved and how choices within the research were made (Herr & Anderson, 2005). I also believe this research contributed to new learnings and enabled school staff and I to reflect on alternative practices (see Table 3.7).

3.9.2 Implications for EP practice

This study has demonstrated that EPs are well placed to support schools to consider factors which might promote pupil participation, by using consultation; and research skills (Ashton & Roberts, 2006). However, EPs need to remain aware of the relative weight given to children's views in terms of impact on broader decision-making in spite of legislative and policy imperatives (Tisdall, 2013).

Saxton (2017) stresses that greater recognition of the diverse populations within which EPs work is needed if they are to work towards social justice. EPs may have a role promoting pupil participation through building community and family support networks. This may be especially important for parents of pupils with EAL who may feel isolated from professionals and the school community due to cultural or linguistic barriers (Demie, 2018). Within this research I became more aware of constraints faced by school staff when seeking to enhance EAL pupil participation. For example, EAL is no longer considered to be a separate subject area (Wardman, 2013). As a result, professional standards have not been established and possible professional development needs are less apparent to policy makers (Wardman, 2013). In addition, school staff experienced resource

restrictions translating research documents into different languages. I therefore paid for documents to be translated. Schools are becoming increasingly multi-lingual and further consideration is required at a systemic and national level, on how we might promote educational equity and pupil participation for pupils with EAL (McWayne et al., 2022).

3.9.3 Conclusion

The study had a transformative purpose and attempted to move beyond exploring perspectives to actively developing school practice. This collaborative inquiry led to identification of a range of potential actions for future school practice. These were concerned with providing space for pupils to add value to their school community; creating space for home-school language partnerships, continuing to build staff confidence and capacity in supporting participatory practice and utilising aspects of the AR process to continue to explore pupil participation and develop parent participation.

The study reflected on how participation occurs within relationships and collective actions which work towards building CYP's and adults' understanding of participatory processes (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010; Raby, 2014; Thomas, 2012). Several challenges to pupil participation were also highlighted. For example, adult expectations and limited time and funding for pupils with EAL. Creating the conditions for children's participation and democratic exchanges between children and adults arguably requires 'insight, an open perception and a commitment to respecting children as human beings' (Bae, 2012, p402). These democratic encounters may promote children's right to participate (Bae, 2012). This study demonstrates how AR can be useful in the development of professional learning and provide space for reflecting on practices which might promote the participation of pupils with EAL.

Chapter 4. How did I shape the research and how did the research shape me? Personal and professional reflections

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I reflect on my experience of engaging in collaborative action research (CAR) as a researcher and as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP). I will first consider my role as a white researcher conducting research with those who speak English as an additional language (EAL). I will then reflect on the complexities involved in interpreting and promoting CYP's participation. These will inform future actions and implications.

This research would not have occurred without the participation of my co-researcher and participants. I acknowledge my responsibility to those involved in this research. This chapter offers a critical and reflective account of my personal experiences and may not represent the views of my co-researcher and participants.

4.2 Personal Reflexivity

During our initial planning meeting, my co-researcher and I discussed values which underpinned our practice. We spoke of the importance of an inclusive school community, where dignity and respect for all is paramount. We hoped to focus on increasing participation for EAL pupils, as these pupils may face additional challenges in feeling heard within a national school system that prioritises English language skills. Throughout the study, I reflected on the structures of privilege and marginalisation that define us all and the ways in which we perform and negotiate them (Chadderton, 2012). This will be subsequently discussed.

White people have historically spoken for and about perceived ethnic minority groups, which may contribute to the continued marginalisation of global majority voices (Smith, 2013). Some authors have reflected on whether members of a given social group should be the ones to conduct research with that group (Pillow, 2003). Pupils within this research moved to England from a variety of countries. I have resided in England since birth and have no experience adapting to a different culture or taking school examinations in another language. These

experiences may have shaped my knowledge and understanding of promoting participation for EAL pupils. However, stating that research with different cultural groups should be conducted by those of a similar background may support the notion that structural discrimination is the responsibility of perceived minority groups (Chadderton, 2012; Powell & Kelly, 2017). I hoped that I might work with the co-researcher, who had built strong relationships with parents of EAL pupils and members of the school community, to practice sensitively and ethically.

A significant limitation of this research was not completing further work with the parents of EAL pupils. For example, I might have consulted with parents when my co-researcher and I decided to focus on promoting the participation of EAL pupils during the initial stages of the research. Limes-Taylor Henderson and Esposito (2019) describe how 'social justice minded qualitative researchers may often take it upon themselves 'to give some marginalised group a voice' (P.876). The decision to focus on EAL pupils was not taken on my own and was informed by the aims of my co-researcher, who has significant experience working for her school community. The insight of my co-researcher and multi-lingual TAs provided further information on tensions that might exist when seeking to promote home and school languages. However, opportunities to speak to parents of EAL pupils may have developed my understanding of the oppressive discourse that may shape the world of newly arrived families in England (Chadderton, 2012).

Another tension within this research is that it is written in English and features participants whose first language may not be English. This research is based on collective actions, which were informed by interactions between my co-researcher, the school community, and myself. However, I have taken responsibility for the editing and presentation of this thesis. It could therefore be argued that this research, whilst aiming to promote participatory practices, may have instead recentred my own voice. Within our review, my co-researcher and I spoke of creating a condensed version of this thesis that would be accessible to the school community. Ideally, it would have been helpful to translate this into the languages spoken by the school community. Parents of EAL pupils might then be provided with opportunities to reflect on this research and engage in an ongoing dialogue with the school. Limes-Taylor Henderson and Esposito (2019) suggest that researchers might explore how we 'effectively compensate for our

participation in ways that they recognise and desire' (p. 885). I was aware that I had discussed suitable dissemination of the research with my co-researcher, but I might have also consulted the school community.

This research has provided me with space to further reflect on my role as a white researcher, who seeks to promote principles of social justice, inclusion, and participation, Limes-Taylor Henderson and Esposito (2019) argue that to resist oppression, 'we must understand how we currently enact that oppression in our work' (p. 888) (see Appendix V). I hope to continue to view my knowledge as provisional and continually shaped by those I work with. Through this research I have reflected on how I might continue to work with different communities and ask 'what they need from us, how we can best help them, and if they want or need our help' (Limes- Taylor Henderson & Esposito, p.887).

4.3 Reconsidering participation

Throughout this research, I aimed to create relational spaces to enhance CYP's participation within a school community, however, translating this into practice was challenging (Cassidy et al., 2022). My understanding of CYP's participation continues to shift as I reflect on the myriad of complexities involved in enhancing participatory practices.

For pupils to participate, I believe they must be sensitively heard, feel valued, and add value to their community (Prilleltensky, 2020). Some pupils within this study felt their voice had little impact on their school community. This indicates that further thought is required on how children's rights and views are given due weight (UNCR, 1989). Struthers (2015) argues that feeling heard and having influence may support children to learn about their human rights. However, this may also be dependent on staff knowledge of children's rights and participatory practices. Participation may require an ongoing dialogue between school staff, to further develop their understanding of participation (Cassidy et al., 2022). Space to discuss the discourse on children's rights (UNCRC, 1989), and how to listen to children within the school context, may further support participatory practices (Stern, 2015). This may support school staff to view pupil participation as a 'legal imperative which is the right of the child' (Lundy, 2007, p, 931).

Within this research, I prioritised the spoken word within my chosen methodologies. Greater consideration may have also been given to other forms of pupil participation, for example, silence, the importance of which has been increasingly highlighted by researchers (Lewis, 2010; Spyrou, 2016). Conceptualising participation beyond language may have created a more inclusive view of participation for EAL pupils within this study.

This research has emphasised that participation cannot be a fixed concept (Facca et al., 2020) and must be continually revisited. Increasing pupil participation also appears to be synonymous with improving relationships between school staff and developing a school ethos which critically reflects on child rights and participation literature. However, it is important that there is a continued dialogue with adults, children, parents and the school community when discussing the dilemmas and tensions inherent in promoting CYP's participation.

4.4 Implications

4.4.1 As a Trainee Educational Psychologist

Throughout this research I have reflected on my values and hopes for future practice as an Educational Psychologist (EP). I hope to work with EP colleagues to build a nurturing and inclusive EP practice where CYP and service users feel valued and add value to their community (Prilleltensky, 2020). In this way I hope we might work towards addressing social inequalities and contribute positively to the lives of others (Walton & Wilson, 2018, p.624). This is especially important given the widening economic and social inequalities across England (Pickett & Taylor-Robinson, 2021). Overall, I believe it is important to support CYP and adults to feel like they matter (Prilleltensky, 2020). This stance, developed because of this research, has guided areas of my practice and specific examples will be subsequently discussed.

As a TEP, I am often asked to complete pupil voice work to inform traded and statutory pieces of work. The research has supported me to critically consider these requests and reflect on the purpose of this work and whether this will result in any meaningful change for CYP. Cassidy et al (2022) argue that the 'purpose and goals of facilitating ... children's voices need to be clear, agreed upon and carefully communicated' (p.44). Exploring the purpose behind pupil voice work

has led to changes in practice for school staff. For example, one of my schools hoped to use EP time to explore the views of pupils who had experienced a ‘managed move’. Upon receiving this request, I arranged a meeting with school staff and explored how they conceptualised pupil participation. We then reflected on the purpose of exploring pupil views and whether this will provide any meaningful change. As a result, school staff are considering the purpose behind consulting with pupils and how these views will impact school policy. School staff might then clearly communicate the purpose and goals of facilitating pupil voice and explore whether pupils may want to contribute to this. This may further enable school staff to involve pupils in a shared purpose, which may work towards meaningful change for the school.

Within this research, pupils emphasised that they felt more comfortable with adults who were responsive to their views and knew them well. I have increasingly sought to involve key adults in pupil voice work and create opportunities for CYP to participate in decisions regarding their involvement. I have also supported school staff to consider a broader view of pupil participation. Within pieces of work, the views of children within Early Year (EYs) settings are often not sought, as these children are viewed as too young to communicate their wants and needs. This stance may prioritise the spoken word as the dominant form of child participation. I therefore explored the meaningful contributions of pupil silence and body language with EY school staff. This has led to a more nuanced understanding of how children might express their agency during school interactions. These discussions may have also increased staff understanding of the various forms of pupil participation and how we might respond to a range of pupil initiatives.

Overall, this research has supported me to engage in conversations with staff and colleagues about developing the skills, language and reflective stance required for participatory practices. As an EP, I hope to critically explore how to promote pupil participation through working with CYP, professionals, and parents within the systems in which I practise.

4.4.2 As a researcher

Attempting to engage with CAR has supported my ability to negotiate, plan and evaluate research with another educational professional. I felt my research design supported my co-researcher and I to develop a research project which served a school community. Throughout this research, I have viewed knowledge as a fluid and socially constructed process where there is a genuine interest and openness to be changed by the views of others (Cooper et al., 2013). My knowledge has therefore been shaped and transformed by the experiences of my co-researcher, participants and school community.

This research was initiated by my co-researcher and I, who are both educational professionals. In the future, I hope that I can be involved in work which CYP initiate. Cassidy et al (2022) highlight the importance of enabling children to be the initiators of their own participation. I hope to consider research opportunities which facilitate CYP's research initiatives, rather than these being predominantly initiated by adults, by working with CYP in the planning and discussion of school-based action research (AR).

This research has supported my ability to theorise complex concepts such as 'voice' and 'participation' (Facca et al., 2020). I have also reflected on tension which occurred within the data generation and how children's contributions have been presented within this research. This research represents an ongoing journey of my reflective practice on CYP's participation, and I hope to continue to learn, with CYP and adults, to understand the different facets of pupil participation.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has offered a reflective account of learning experiences during this research. Key learning points and next steps for my future practice are outlined in Table 4.1 and are viewed as catalysts for further reflection, rather than definitive steps which might be 'completed'. I believe engaging in participatory practice requires ongoing reflection and commitment to the CYP and adults I work with.

Table 4.1: Summary of next steps

Key learning points	**Summary of next steps**
This research provided space for reflection on my role as a white researcher, who seeks to promote principles of social justice, inclusion and participation. This has led to a greater understanding of how I enact oppression within my work, and how I might work against this. When working with a diverse population it is important to consult with school communities and ask 'what they need from us, how we can best help them, and if they want or need our help' (Limes-Taylor Henderson & Esposito, p.887). I have therefore increasingly sought to consult with diverse communities (including parents of EAL pupils) when seeking to promote participatory practices.	Continue to develop my knowledge of anti-discriminatory practices and my awareness of cultural differences. For example, I have created training for my Year 3 placement on working with and supporting multi-lingual learners. This training was based on community feedback which indicated a need to further consider how to support our increasingly diverse population.
Further consideration is required regarding how adults develop and consider their participatory practices and apply this understanding in practice.	To continue to engage in conversations with staff and colleagues about developing the skills, language and reflective stance required for participatory practices.
Pupil participation may take various forms, which may work towards inclusive practice.	Greater consideration to be given to the various forms of pupil participation. For example, silences, body language and expression (Wall et al., 2019) and how adults respond.

I have become aware of the evolving nature of pupil participation and how this has been selected, interpreted and represented within my reports (Facca et al., 2020).	Changes have been made to my reports and how I feedback information to CYP, parents and the school community. For example, nonverbal forms of participation are now referred to throughout my report, as well as reflections with school staff on what this might indicate about a pupil's wants and needs. This is especially apparent within my EY reports.
Accessibility of this research	To create a condensed version of this thesis which will be shared with my co-researcher and with the school community. This thesis might also be shared through discussions with the school community.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Initial mapping process of first and second order constructs

Papers	(Diaz et al., 2018)	(Pert et al., 2017)	Muench et al. (2017)	(Diaz et al., 2019)	(Lucas, 2017; Pert et al., 2017)	(Diaz & Aylward, 2019)	(Cossar et al., 2016)	(Watts, 2021)
Relationships with adults supported CYP's participation								
Refutational	All the young people recounted frequent changes of social worker. They all said that this instability had the effect of reducing their ability to form meaningful relationships. *'When I was in the*	One foster carer reported that her foster children disliked their social worker so much that they hid from her. This would certainly impede the social worker's ability to prepare these children for reviews.	*'They made me feel depressed, I won't speak to them. They haven't helped, they just make things worse'.* *'I don't like talking to her, she talks too much and for too long.'*	High turnover of social workers serving as a potential barrier to children's participation in reviews.	One recurring issue here was the scarcity of sustained working relationships between the young people and individual practitioners. Such provision appeared to be highly time limited if available.	Some of the SWs did not seem to think that it was their business to know about the review process, let alone improve it. Following of procedures and completion of forms appeared to	A central theme was the importance of a trusting relationship with the social worker in allowing children and young people to voice their thoughts and feelings. Thirteen of the children described a good relationship with their social worker, whilst six	Inevitably, there are instances where practice is less fully realized and progress more tentative, particularly a lack of explicit reference to children and young people's voices and limited opportunities for them to co-construct their

	meeting it was like tensed up and stuff like that because obviously I didn't build a relationship with my social worker. He was really bad, like he didn't do anything... He'd say all this stuff and he barely ever saw me... When the meeting ended it was like 'Well, thank God for that' kind of thing'.				*'She [family support worker] doesn't come now I'm going to school, she comes to talk to Mum, but when I'm at school, she doesn't talk to me coming here because I'm at school'.*	be more important than children's participation Frequent changes of SW or infrequent visits are noted to 'reduce opportunities to hear children's views and understand their experience' When asked for basic information about the	did not and would not confide in them at all.	reports resulting in adult professional perspectives remaining dominant.
Reciprocal	Some CYP had a close	The social worker–child relationship is important in how the child engages with	Nearly one-half of the children who attended a child protection conference were	All the social workers and IROs interviewed agreed that participation in	The young people in this study valued	review process, there was a lack of knowledge from the SMs and indeed a	The younger children who described positive relationships with social workers described them	The principles of the model are not disputed and its foundations in supporting emotional

	bond with a particular practitioner, which helped them to build trust. *'If you have a good relationship with your social worker it works a little bit more because it's less of a meeting and more of a chat and it's more of a like – it's an actual discussion instead of point-to-point things...'*	the review process. CYP suggested that their foster carer was key to their voices being heard: *'She helps me to say things because . . . well, it's difficult . . . he [IRO] . . . speaks lots and then asks, do you want that? She (foster carer) will push me to speak up'.* Foster carers also reported feeling responsible for ensuring their foster child's wishes were	supported by an advocate and these children were more positive about their experiences. *'I feel I have someone to talk to, I can call them if I'm upset or worried about anything'.* *'I felt like I had someone to speak to and could let my worries out. They are there when you need them'.*	the review process was very important for young people and that a trusting relationship with the social worker and IRO was integral to this: *'The child's got to sit in and whether they feel they can speak honestly about it […] it can only be meaningful if that relationship [with the IRO] is actually there'.* All participants concurred that the concept of a positive relationship (between the	the relationships that could be built with practitioners, and in all their interviews demonstrated their willingness to engage with practitioners who would take the time to work with them.	lack of curiosity. To confide in the social worker, they needed to establish a relationship of trust. One of the young people explained the importance of trust as follows: *Because if you're not honest with her she can't really help you and like it'll make things harder, if you lie about something it will make things harder,*	as 'kind' or 'really nice'. They wanted workers who would listen, before coming to a judgement or offering advice. Carol, aged 12, said of her social worker *'a good listener . . . she just listens and tries not to get the words muddled around'* The children's descriptions of their relationships with social workers and of what they chose to say or not to say make clear the importance of a trusting relationship as a prerequisite for participation.	connection, remembering who the report is for and validating relationships can form the basis on which to address current limitations and build on successes in the future.

		heard and considered.		IRO, social worker and child/young person) should be at the heart of meaningful participation		*because she does try and help you with it and it it's not the truth and that it's not going to make things any easier and she won't trust you either, because you've got to trust her and she's got to trust you. Otherwise there's no point.*		
Adult feelings and understanding of the meetings								
Reciprocal	Adults felt that multiple unknown attendees act as a barrier to engaging CYP with the review meeting and process.	Many foster carers felt that the review meetings were superficial, focusing on routine questions about health or education.	*'The first conference was terrifying, I didn't know what was happening'.* *'I wanted more support for the initial*	"keeping children safe" was more important than upholding their rights to participate meaningfully in decisions		*'I'm sure most social workers would want to give more time but I think there's lots of competing demands... I think for real*		Social workers felt that the reporting process was designed for an 'adult audience' and 'the professional network'. As a result, social

		There was little mention of the purpose of meetings. Foster carers suggested that having the meetings made children feel different: *They don't attend; they don't like meetings at all. Their feeling is why should we have meetings? We want to be normal kids, why do we have all this paperwork, why do we have to talk to all these people?* Foster carers stated that the	*conference, I felt blindfolded, it was like a lamb being led to slaughter'.*	made about their lives.		*participation it is a very labour intensive, time intensive exercise and you really have to give it space... I don't think caseload ties, workload management really allows and builds in enough time for that to take place properly''* Of the seven SMs who were interviewed, only one had been to a CiC review in the last year, five had not been to one in over twenty years and one SM		workers and IRO's identified that children and their experiences were situated on the periphery with one social worker identifying that the process was *'not for the child'.* Social workers and IRO's involved in the study were also attempting to use the reports to provide explanations for the child about what is happening in their life and when and how decisions will be made, particularly in relation to why

		children they cared for appeared to gain nothing from the meetings themselves: *Personally I don't think the children get a lot out of the reviews, I think they do in the sense that I make sure what we agree actually happens and the goals are then met.*				had never been to a review. Given this lack of attendance at review meetings, it is reasonable to assume that this would contribute to the limited understanding and oversight of the review process by the majority Despite their lack of knowledge about reviews, all seven SMs were aware that children and young people sometimes chaired their own reviews and all were		they are in foster care and the context of legal proceedings. For one social worker there was a direct link between these written explanations as a way of rehearsing conversations that they then had directly with the child.

						positive about this happening. It might be the case that workloads for SMs are now so high that it has become an almost impossible job to do well. It could therefore be argued that it is inevitable in the current context of austerity that SMs become wilfully blind (emotional capacity of the adults).		
Children's feelings and understanding of the decision making								
Reciprocal	*'Most kids haven't got a clue what's going on and then they sit there and it's*	*'The meetings themselves are a bit scary, they are a bit daunting really, so then*	Very few children had meaningful understanding of a child protection		CYP described meetings as generally uncomfortable experiences.		One young person said that she had two workers, referring to '*the social worker that*	

	not like they haven't tried to tell them. I feel like they tried to tell me in the early days but I just didn't want to listen to them because I hated everybody. If someone had sat me down, fed me some pizza, chilled for a bit and then started talking about some serious stuff I might have accepted it. It was the fact that it was just thrown on top of me: 'Hey, here's a meeting' for the first one; 'Go talk about	*I'm not in the right frame of mind to talk about anything and it's just . . . embarrassing I just sit, I don't say anything. It's weird, I just want them out of the way'.* CYP do not enjoy being part of adult centric decision-making forums. The view of review meetings as 'necessary' and part of life in the care system could serve to oppress already	conference and the purpose of these meetings. The children's understanding was rated into two categories; minimal understanding and partial understanding. *'They talk about stuff I'm not allowed to hear'.* *'Afterwards I stormed out crying and never went back. The chair asked me a question then shut me off. I felt they were there for my mum's behaviour, not to support us'.*		Young people often felt that the purpose of attendance at meetings struggled to move beyond a disciplinary one, and they did not feel that they could contribute significantly to planning and decision making:		*decides everything . . . she doesn't really work with me much.'* Children disliked their social worker being a remote figure, particularly when they knew that the social worker had a key role in decision-making about their lives. Without understanding meaningful participation is arguably limited. Older children were more likely to have a clear understanding of child protection. It was clear that the children were struggling to	

	all your problems' basically is what it felt [like] to me, and then you feel judged by everyone around you'.	vulnerable CYP people and exacerbate feelings of being different. Not understanding the process was raised by children and young people as a barrier to participation. Some CYP felt their meetings were positive. '*I like the meetings, I like to have a chat and it's nice to talk about me.'* How useful children and young people found their					make sense of what was going on and, in some cases, their misunderstanding was a cause of distress. , 'I did go once but it was awful . . . they were just all talking and I didn't understand what they were saying. It was about me. I didn't really enjoy it that much'.	

Refutational		LAC reviews was linked to their understanding of the purpose of reviews. *'If you didn't have them then you wouldn't know who to see or what to do and nothing would be changed.'*						A six-year-old girl was asked how she felt on reading her letters and she responded 'comfort'. Her nine-year-old brother said, 'I like the remembering'.

Space: children must be given the opportunity to express a view								
Reciprocal	Well, no, it's the fact that they'd kind of talk about it if I wasn't there anyway.	An approach that emphasizes ongoing consultation with children					The 10 children who had attended meetings (either a child protection conference or a	For one worker, the combination of writing to the child and the flexibility of the report provided

	Does that make sense? So, I would rather be there and be like, 'I can sit here and fight my battle', than walk away and be called guilty for something I haven't done.	and young people in how their LAC reviews are held would be more successful at encouraging participation. CYP felt the meetings did not include them and were boring; they saw them as essentially a meeting for adults.					core group meeting) ranged in age from 9 to 15 years. These children rarely felt able to ask questions and five out of eight who responded said that they were not satisfied with their level of participation. During the meetings, it could be difficult for children's voices to be heard. One young person was frustrated because, *'every time I went to speak, someone interrupted me and that really annoyed me so I was like right I'm going, I've got to get to school'*	a space to sit with uncertainty and wonder about what the child might be experiencing without taking absolute or fixed positions. In turn, the process seemed to promote 'noticing' and 'observing' aspects of their role with children rather than 'doing'. A third of social workers were sharing reports on an ongoing basis with children and young people.
Agency: CYP must be given the opportunity to control parts of the review process.								

Reciprocal	*'I had loads of people and I didn't know who half of them were. But that meeting, I had no choice to attend. I was kind of picked up by the social worker and dragged there and then returned to the foster home'.* CYP should have the choice not to attend their review meetings.	Lack of choice and control in who attended reviews: *At my last review random people starting turning up and I was like, who are you? I didn't know who they were, it was crap.* Attendance at reviews was not always an active choice for children and young people, particularly when they reported not understanding the process and feeling negatively about them. A significant proportion of		The social workers had a paternalistic approach which means that they think that the concepts are too complex for children to understand, and that even if they see the child ahead of the review it will not impact on the agenda, structure or focus of the review.			Some of the young people did not feel adequately prepared or supported. Some felt that their chosen supporter, often a family member, was not welcome. '*I'd rather go with someone from my family and my parents usually can't go. But they got angry and didn't like who I brought. I could tell they didn't want him there because of the way they looked at him. They wanted me to bring the headmaster instead but I wanted someone from my family'.*	

		CYP people reported attending reviews because they *'had to'.* Participants reported using strategies to ensure that reviews ended more quickly (ie., agreeing with everything being said, saying as little as possible or physically leaving the room. '*Everything is boring but they have to be done.'* None of the CYP interviewed could recall being offered,					The children are likely to have chosen carefully what they shared with researchers, mirroring their descriptions of choosing carefully what they said to social care professionals.	

Refutational	*'I go there, then me and [the IRO] go in the room first and we talk. Then*	on a regular basis, choice in where and when to hold the review: '*It's always after school when I'm tired and everyone else is going to the shops and hanging out. . . but they stop work at 5 so it has to be then, doesn't it? I'd have it on Sunday morning at 9am and make them get up early!'*		Most social workers spoke positively about young people chairing their own reviews and, indeed, saw it as an		*'We could help them understand that the reviews are a really great place for their voice to be heard as well, around their progression, around their*		*I will meet him and read through it, and just kind of read it out loud to him, and I ask that he chimes in with anything that he wants to … he's just been like, yes, like I really feel*

	everyone else gets invited into the room, then we just talk about everything we talk about'.	Adolescents particularly felt disassociated from the outcomes of their LAC review: *'What's the point? Nothing ever changes so there is no point.*		effective way through which to increase meaningful participation: *'I did a Child in Care review…where it was chaired by the young person and he decided how he wanted to do it…so it was completely different to how a normal Child in Care review would be. My experience would be that when things are calm and settled and straightforward then participation is thought of more.*		*plan and their opportunity to take control and chair their own reviews at times, which we have seen happen in some of the older ones.... We obviously need to try and support that as a service area to make sure we are helping young people to feel confident enough to chair their own reviews and see what we can do to support that side of it.'*		*you've got that, and that feels fine to have written that. He kind of talks to it a bit, and it's kind of quite powerful, I think, in terms of that space to be kind of held in mind, and then I can leave him that bit of paper for him to have and think about.*
Influence: the views of CYP must be acted on, as appropriate								

Reciprocal		A number of young people thought that their reviews were not beneficial to them. It may be that these young people were not made aware of the actions or outcomes of their reviews, engendering a sense of apathy and dissatisfaction.	None of the children who had attended a conference had been told the outcome of the meeting, and none of them were able to identify any actions or goals of the meeting. The children described feeling disappointed by this and that the meeting had been a waste of time because they still did not know what they needed to do for things to change. Few children in this study were offered a			‘		Writing the report directly to the child also helped support social workers, IRO’s and foster carers hold in mind that what they write will be read by the child at some point. One social worker commented *‘I don’t expect them not to read it’*

			genuine opportunity to influence any aspect of the meeting.					
Refutational	CYP who chaired their reviews had more meaningful engagement in the review process and had the opportunity to get their voice heard.., such as when and where it took place, who was invited and what was on the agenda.	Foster carers suggested that the benefit to CYP came from professionals taking action post-review.				*Participation for me means that we ask children what their views are, whatever the level, that we ensure that those views are included in the consultation process or whatever it is and then we tell the children what the outcome of that was after. That would be my*		A social worker explained: It enables you to be able to say, you know, this happened last month and we spoke about it and you told me this and it really recalls it and I think for young people they think wow, you actually really listened. *Because he can't cope with me writing something that he doesn't know is going to be in*

						view of what is participation',		*there, so we literally sit with a blank template, so we know what box is that, what's going in what box and that works for him, that's what he needs.*
Connection: CYP and adults were given the opportunity to feel safe and emotionally connect to others.								
Reciprocal	Making the CYP person feel more comfortable and relaxed may			*'Researcher: What do you think the main things are that lead to good participation*			The children's accounts reinforce existing findings about the crucial importance of a	Social workers and IRO's identified a synergy between writing to the child and

	encourage CYP to engage. *'If I knew I had the option [to bring a friend] I probably would have brought in my best friend who I had known for a while to be there with me, because he'd known and still does know everything like that's going on'.* The option to bring a friend or close family member to such an important meeting			*from young people in children's care reviews? IRO2: Well, I suppose they've got to feel safe […]'*			trusting relationship with the social worker and this relationship aspect of the work could not be delegated to another worker as the young people recognized that the social worker had the power to make decisions about them. The findings suggested a trusting relationship could offer opportunities to promote confidence, feelings of safety and self-efficacy. Without a trusting relationship, some of the children and	relationship-based practice and participants appreciated the value of a reporting mechanism that was not experienced as sitting at odds with, but directly supporting this. As one social worker put it, the approach enabled them to write 'from you a person, to them a person'. Social workers, IRO's and foster carers talked of including their feelings of pride, encouragement, care and concern and what their relationships with the child

	seems likely to be particularly pertinent for a young person who lacks an established relationship with professionals.						young people had no opportunity in which to explore and express their opinions and feelings, let alone feel that those opinions had an impact on decision-making.	had meant to them. The opportunity to reflect on the strengths of children and young people also helped focus on progress within their network too. Foster carers who took part in the study valued having a space to focus on strengths which enabled them to reflect on the progress they had made and validated their achievements as carers.
Refutational				*'Foster carers and teachers will use the review as an opportunity to shame the*			The young people's experience of formal participation in child protection	

				child by bringing up their bad behaviour. I did a review at a secondary school the other day. The boy is in Year 7[3] with quite a few additional needs and his care plan is complex, but he was on that day facing permanent exclusion and the head had made a decision that he couldn't enter the school that day for his review.' *'He (Head of Year) wanted to take us*			conferences and core group meetings was largely negative. They found them stressful and did not feel listened to.	

				through the whatever, 28 incidents, and he was a tiny little boy, very small for his age with some physical disability, and I could just see him shrivelling up. So, how on earth can that child have a voice in that meeting?'				
Meetings were not accessible to parents and/or CYP								
Reciprocal			*'I read through the report myself, the social worker didn't go through it with me and I found it very confusing. I only read one though as my mum said I shouldn't because it will upset me'.*	*I've been at reviews, sadly, where young people don't know what the plan's going to be, let alone think about things that we need to talk about, so that can make it really, really difficult to have an*			*'I did go once but it was awful . . . they were just all talking and I didn't understand what they were saying'.* Of all the children who were aware of meetings, the outcome was explained to six,	The documentary analysis showed that the explanations that IRO's and social workers provided were not universally written in this straight forward way that successfully captured specific

			The extent of the understanding of the child protection process from children's perspectives was largely age related. CYP are not being given age-appropriate information relating to child protection conferences and are therefore not given the opportunity to attend these meetings	*honest and open discussion'.*			and a further eight said that it had not been explained. Where children attended, they did not feel well prepared and supported. In some cases, they were asked difficult questions in front of their parents	contexts for children. Some explanations were brief, vague and failed to give sufficient detail that would aid a child's understanding of what was happening in their life.
Lack of preparation and understanding from professionals on how to promote CYP's participation								
Reciprocal		Aside from the use of forms, none of the	Local authorities should ensure	*'They're (social workers) so*		There is an acceptance that things are		Now I'm actually given a proper license

		CYP interviewed could remember being asked what they would like to talk about at their review. Many foster carers suggested that their foster child might engage more if meetings were less professional-centred: *Honestly I'm not sure what they could do, it's hard, but they could invest more time planning things instead of going through the motions.*	reports for child protection conferences are shared with children and young people in advance of the meeting in an age-appropriate manner. Thought should be given to how such reports are communicated, with the child protection chair ensuring they meet with children and young people prior to the conference to allow their views to be heard.	*busy […] they're so, so, busy, and I don't mean just on the ground but in their heads. They've got so many things they're carrying, so many pressures […] they're not able to think ahead or plan ahead because everything is on the ground'.* Some review meetings took place without children and young people even being aware that they were happening.		just the way that they are and there are no plans to address these issues. This fatigue towards reform in many respects is unsurprising. The data from this study suggested that the seven SMs in this LA held only a superficial understanding of the term 'participation' and that tokenistic participation was deemed 'good enough': *And participation for me means that we ask*		to have a relationship with that child and for that to be recognized as meaningful and valuable. I don't think that it was before. I think that this was all about do the reviews, have you quality assured this and what does the report look like in terms of stats.

		CYP people reported being offered little opportunity to input their views at most stages of this process (especially within the planning stages of the LAC review). Overall, children do not feel adequately prepared for reviews.	Child protection chairs need to meet with parents and young people prior to the conference to ensure they understand the purpose of such meetings and to allow their views to be shared.	*'A lot of social workers don't really know what to expect from a Child in Care Review […] So, often the social worker comes to a review and they might not know what to expect so aren't really able to prepare the child.'* CYP's participation in reviews was most frequently described by social workers implicitly as "tokenistic" or "manipulative."		*children what their views are, whatever the level, that we ensure that those views are included in the consultation process or whatever it is and then we tell the children what the outcome of that was after. That would be my view of what is participation.* When they were asked, if they had a magic wand and they could do anything to improve children in		

Refutational		Only two younger children reported that their social worker visited them before the review to ask them what they would like to talk about. A small number of children and young people recalled being asked to contribute to the agenda via				care reviews, their response was as follows: 'I'd like to be certain that every professional going to a review understands exactly what they're there for and what their role is. Because if everyone does that then it should be a good experience'		Writing reports to the child has also facilitated changes to the language which IRO's and social workers use. Practitioners recognize the need to provide explanations that can be understood by the child, for example, a simple, direct writing style with a decrease in the use of

		a form sent in the post.						jargon and acronyms. There is also evidence that the process supports relationship-based practice by encouraging practitioners to reflect on their relationships with children, promotes conversations about life stories and allows children to know what workers have noticed about them and their world.
Disjunction between “espoused theory” (what professionals say they do) and “theory in use” (what they actually do)								
		An alternative, perhaps more cynical, view would be that these CYP people had		Despite the recognition of the importance of children’s participation in decision		Some SWs would prefer to be in front of the computer rather than		Overall, there was a sense that the reports had interrupted the bureaucratic monotony of

		correctly identified the actual, bureaucratic, purpose of LAC reviews as practiced by some professionals, in distinction to the official purpose as set out in legislation and guidance.		making, only one professional interviewed (an IRO) had received any training on participation. It was very important that children participate meaningfully in their review meetings. However, there was confusion about what this actually meant in practice. *'Participation to me just means a group of people all working together for the same goal*		spending time with CYP. One SW stated in her interview that, when a child came into care, she wanted to spend time with him, ensuring that he had settled into placement, but instead her managers put her under pressure to fill out the twenty-one forms that needed to be completed when a child comes into care SMs, whilst supportive of the concept of		'just another report' to a more meaningful process which was congruent with the values of why they had become social workers. Children's voices also continue to be absent in some reports with a lack of detail of what the child has explicitly said, their thoughts, wishes and feelings and how this has impacted on decision-making.

				or achievement'. Although all social workers asserted that children's participation in review meetings was extremely important, they also reported that either they or the IRO would make all key decisions regarding the arrangements for the meeting. Whilst many professionals in this and other studies clearly wish to include and involve children, there appears to be a disconnect		children and young people being at the heart of practice, were unable to articulate how they were going to ensure this happened. SMs appeared to have low expectations for both the children and young people in care as well as the staff they led.		

				between what this means to practitioners and how this can be realised in practice.				

Appendix B Co-researcher information sheet for school setting

Newcastle University
School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences

Action Research: How might educational staff promote participatory practices for pupils within one school setting.

Researcher:	Katie Smith (Trainee Educational Psychologist)
University Contact Details	School of Education, Communication and Language. George VI Building, Queen Victoria Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, Ne17RU
Email	K.E.smith2@newcastle.ac.uk
Email of supervisor	w.barrow@newcastle.ac.uk

I am seeking expressions of interest from Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENDCos) to take part in a study which aims to explore how a school setting might promote pupils' voice and participation. This project forms part of my programme requirement for my Educational Psychology Training course at Newcastle University.

This is an action research study, which aims to develop professional practice in this area. I hope this research will contribute towards practice which foster a greater understanding of how one school might effectively support and facilitate pupils' right to participate. There are few recent studies which have considered professional and pupil perspective of pupils' participation in decision making. However, the Children's and Families Act (2014) and SEND Code of Practice emphasises the importance of ensuring children and young people are provided with the information, advice and support to enable them to participate in decision making. However, research suggest 'young people's involvement is often a tokenistic, adult-led in process and ineffective in acting upon what children want (Diaz et al., 2018).

I am hoping to recruit SENCos to become involved in this study as co-researchers. As a co-researcher you will have opportunity to shape the research question and

design to suit the needs and interests of you and your setting, in line with the broad theme of promoting practice around pupils' participation. The action research format will allow changes to be implemented in practice as part of the study. Therefore, if you are a SENDCo and have an interest in promoting pupils' voice and participation, this project offers opportunity for you to explore this in your setting and to develop practice in this area.

Why is this project important?

- Pupils' participation is a key element in the SEND Code of Practice and other key legislations (e.g Children's and Families Act; UNCRC).
- Meaningful participation challenges issues associated with social exclusion and positively contributes to the wellbeing of children and young people, their families and wider communities.
- Pupils' participation may lead to improved pupil-staff relationships and increase opportunities for pupils to develop their personal, social and communication skills.
- Encouraging pupils' participation may ensure that services and schools are more effective in meeting the needs of pupils.
- Recent Ofsted findings for our LA stated that improving the engagement and participation of children and young people was an area which required development.

What will my participation as a co-researcher involve?

At the start of the project, the school SENDCo and I will meet to jointly agree the nature of the project. I anticipate this would involve:

1. An individual meeting with myself to go through the research aims and requirements, to receive all information for you to provide informed consent.
2. An initial meeting with the co-researcher (school SENDCo). This will provide us with the opportunity to plan the research.
3. A period of action where we work together to increase practices which promote pupils' participation.
4. A review meeting to reflect on what has been learnt and decide next steps to inform practice.
5. Implementation of practice changes that have been agreed by the co-researcher.
6. A review meeting to reflect on changes and evaluate findings.

It is anticipated that this study will run throughout the summer and autumn term of 2022.

What are the benefits for me and my setting?

- Involvement in research which will aim to benefit children and the wider school community.
- Evidence of developing pupils' confidence and independence in expressing their views is criteria valued by Ofsted.
- An opportunity to reflect on practice with an outside researcher and be supported to implement positive changes in practice.
- Opportunities to develop a model of good practice for other settings within the authority.

Your participation in the study is optional. You can express interest to find out further information, with no obligation to participate.

If you are interested in finding out more about this research, please contact me on: K.E.smith2@newcastle.ac.uk

Appendix C Participation Information sheet and consent form for parents

Newcastle University
School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences

Researcher:	Katie Smith (Trainee Educational Psychologist)
University Contact Details	School of Education, Communication and Language. George VI Building, Queen Victoria Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, Ne17RU
Email	K.E.smith2@newcastle.ac.uk
Email of Supervisor	W.Barrow@newcastle.ac.uk

Research Details

Your child is invited to take part in an ongoing research study entitled: **How might educational staff promote participatory practices for pupils within one school setting.**

- Please read the following information carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing for your child to be in the study.
- The study is conducted by Katie Smith as part of her applied Educational Psychology Doctorate studies at Newcastle University and (co-researcher's name), at (Name of School).
- This research project is supervised by Wilma Barrow, Senior Lecturer Educational Psychology Joint Director of the Applied Educational Psychology Programme at Newcastle University. Her email address is: w.barrow@newcastle.ac.uk.
- For this phase of the research, we are exploring how we might promote participatory practices for children and young people within a school setting. This will focus on how professionals and pupils understand pupils' participation and how we might promote practices which develop pupils' voice and participation.
- Your child has been approached to take part in this research, as your child's school are seeking to improve participatory practices for their pupils.
- All participation is conditional on the parent providing consent for the research to take place. Contact details Researcher: Katie Smith (Trainee Educational Psychologist) University Contact Details School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences, King George VI Building, Queen Victoria Road,

Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU Email K.E.smith2@newcastle.ac.uk. Newcastle University School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences 135.

- The findings from this research will be used by the researcher to reflect on practice with hopes to improve participatory practices for pupils within your child's school.

Details of participation

- The aim of this research is to learn more about how schools might promote pupils' participation. This research does not aim to scrutinize individual professionals or agencies.
- Semi-structured interviews will be completed with pupils and focus groups will be completed with school staff to explore how schools might promote pupils' participation. Within the semi-structured interviews the research will explore whether pupils feel they have the space to express their views and whether they feel adults listen and respond to their views. It is also hoped that we might explore what pupils feel currently supports and/or hinders their participation within this school setting.
- Visual tools will be used to encourage pupils participation throughout the semi-structured interviews.
- If you agree for your child to be in this study, you will be asked to: provide permission for X; to sign a consent form to demonstrate your consent for your child to participate; and for your child to sign an assent form indicating they are happy to participate.
- We do not anticipate that the research will cause any distress to participants. However, the topics explored may be sensitive to some. Your child has the right to decline to answer any question or to cease the interview at any stage. If anything explored does impact your child, the researcher will signpost you to a relevant support agency.
- Even if you agree for your child to participate, you are free to withdraw your child from the semi-structured interview at any time for any reason without any negative consequences. Your child may also decline to answer any questions discussed or decline to take part even if parental consent has been provided.

Use of Data

- Your child's data will be managed under UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Only the minimum personally identifiable information will be used. This will include your child's name, signature on the assent form, contact details to arrange interviews (for example, their class teacher and year group). All of this information will be stored on a password-protected hard drive.

No one else will have access to this hard drive and interviews will be anonymised so this information cannot be linked back to specific pupils.

- You can find out more about how Newcastle University uses your information at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/data.protection/PrivacyNotice and/or by contacting Newcastle University's Data Protection Officer (Maureen Wilkinson, rec-man@ncl.ac.uk).
- This study has been reviewed and approved by the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences Ethics Committee at Newcastle University (Date of approval: 12 January 2021).
- Contact Detail**s**If you have any questions, requests, or concerns regarding this research, please contact me via email at K.E.smith2@newcastle.ac.uk.
- My supervisor can also be contacted at W.Barrow@newcastle.ac.uk.

Newcastle University
School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences

Declaration of Informed Consent

- I agree for my child to participate in this study, the purpose of which is to explore how a school setting might promote and facilitate pupils' participation.
- I declare that I have understood the nature and purpose of the research.
- I have read the participant information sheet and understand the information provided.
- I have been informed that my child may decline to answer any questions or withdraw from the study without penalty of any kind.
- I have been informed that all of my child's responses will be kept confidential and secure, and that my child will not be identified in any report or other publication resulting from this research.
- I have been informed that the researcher will answer any questions regarding the study and its procedures. The researcher's email is K.E.smith2@newcastle.ac.uk and they can be contacted at any time. The research supervisor can be contacted at W.Barrow@newcastle.ac.uk .
- I will be provided with a copy of this form for my records.

If you consent for your child to take part in the research project above, please tick the boxes and sign below.

1. I have read the information provided and I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐

2. I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time up until the research analysis process has begun without giving any reason (reference to rights can be made, if relevant). ☐

3. (If appropriate) I understand that the information collected about my child may be used to support other research in the future and may be shared anonymously in the form of a research paper with other researchers. ☐

4. I understand that my child's voice will be audio recorded. This data will be stored on a computer and password protected, and it will be deleted after it has been analysed. ☐

5. I agree for my child to take part in the above study. ☐

Child's name.....

Parent/carer signature..... Date.....

Print name……

Researcher Signature……Date……....

Any concerns about this study should be addressed to the School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences Ethics Committee, Newcastle University via email to ecls.researchteam@newcastle.ac.uk

Appendix D Participation Information sheet and consent form for school staff

Newcastle University
School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences

Researcher:	Katie Smith (Trainee Educational Psychologist)
University Contact Details	School of Education, Communication and Language. George VI Building, Queen Victoria Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, Ne17RU
Email	K.E.smith2@newcastle.ac.uk
Email of Supervisor	W.Barrow@newcastle.ac.uk

Research Details

- You are invited to take part in an ongoing research study entitled: **How might educational staff promote participatory practices for pupils within one school setting.**
- Please read the following information carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing for your child to be in the study.
- The study is conducted by Katie Smith as part of her applied Educational Psychology Doctorate studiesstudies at Newcastle University and (co-researcher's name), Headteacher at (Name of School).
- This research project is supervised by Wilma Barrow, Senior Lecturer Educational Psychology Joint Director of the Applied Educational Psychology Programme at Newcastle University. Her email address is: w.barrow@newcastle.ac.uk.
- For this phase of the research, we are exploring how we might promote participatory practices for children and young people within a school setting. This will focus on how professionals and pupils understand pupils' participation and how we might promote practices which develop pupils' voice and participation.
- You have been approached to take part in this research, as your school is seeking to improve participatory practices for their pupils.
- All participation is conditional on you providing consent for the research to take place. Contact details Researcher: Katie Smith (Trainee Educational Psychologist) University Contact Details School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences, King George VI Building, Queen Victoria Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU Email K.E.smith2@newcastle.ac.uk.

Newcastle University School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences 135.

- The findings from this research will be used by the researcher to reflect on practice with hopes to improve participatory practices for pupils within your child's school.

Details of participation

- If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to: to sign a consent form to demonstrate your consent to participate.
- We do not anticipate that the research will cause any distress to participants. However, the topics explored may be sensitive to some. You have the right to decline to answer any question or to cease your involvement at any stage of the focus group. If anything explored does impact you, the researcher will signpost you to a relevant support agency.
- The aim of this research is to learn more about how schools might promote pupils participation. This research does not aim to scrutinize individual professionals or agencies.
- You are free to decide whether to participate. Even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time for any reason without any negative consequences. You may also decline to answer any questions.

Use of Data

- Your data will be managed under UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Only the minimum personally identifiable information will be used. **This will include your name, signature on the consent form and contact details to arrange interviews. All of this information will be stored on a password-protected hard drive. No one else will have access to this hard drive and interviews will be anonymised so this information cannot be linked back to specific pupils.**
- You can find out more about how Newcastle University uses your information at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/data.protection/PrivacyNotice and/or by contacting Newcastle University's Data Protection Officer (Maureen Wilkinson, rec-man@ncl.ac.uk).
- This study has been reviewed and approved by the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences Ethics Committee at Newcastle University (Date of approval: 12 January 2021).

Contact Details

- If you have any questions, requests, or concerns regarding this research, please contact me via email at K.E.smith2@newcastle.ac.uk.
- My supervisor can also be contacted at W.Barrow@newcastle.ac.uk.

Newcastle University
School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences

Declaration of Informed Consent

- I agree to participate in this study, the purpose of which is to explore how a school setting might promote and facilitate pupils' participation.
- I declare that I have understood the nature and purpose of the research.
- I have read the participant information sheet and understand the information provided.
- I have been informed that I may decline to answer any questions or withdraw from the study without penalty of any kind.
- I have been informed that all my responses will be kept confidential and secure, and that I will not be identified in any report or other publication resulting from this research.
- I have been informed that the researcher will answer any questions regarding the study and its procedures. The researcher's email is K.E.smith2@newcastle.ac.uk and they can be contacted at any time. The research supervisor can be contacted at W.Barrow@newcastle.ac.uk .
- I will be provided with a copy of this form for my records.

Any concerns about this study should be addressed to the School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences Ethics Committee, Newcastle University via email to ecls.researchteam@newcastle.ac.uk

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Date Participant Name (please print) Participant Signature

I certify that I have presented the above information to the participant and secured his or her consent.

Date Signature of Researcher

Appendix E School Staff Debriefing Sheet

Newcastle University
School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences

Participant Debrief Sheet

Action Research: How might educational staff promote participatory practices for pupils within one school setting.

Thank you for taking part in this study. Your participation is valued highly.

The intention of the research is to explore how a school setting might promote meaningful participation for children and young people. It is hoped that the results of this research can contribute to improved practice for school staff and Educational Psychologists. We hope that you found the process interesting and have not been upset by any of the topics discussed.

If you would like further information or support regarding the topics discussed during this research, you can also contact the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) at your school.

As a reminder, your data will be kept secure and confidential. You may withdraw your data from this study at any time before the research is complete. If you would like to do this, please email the researcher. If you would like to speak with the researcher again, you can contact them at k.e.smith2@newcastle.ac.uk or the research supervisor at w.barrow@newcastle.ac.uk.

Thanks again for your participation and your time.

Yours sincerely

Katie Smith

Katie Smith

Trainee Educational Psychologist and Doctoral Student

Appendix F Parent/Carer Debriefing Sheet

Newcastle University
School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences

Participant Debrief Sheet

Action Research: How might educational staff promote participatory practices for pupils within one school setting.

Thank you for allowing your child to take part in this study. Your child's participation is valued highly.

The intention of the research is to explore how a school setting might promote meaningful participation for children and young people. It is hoped that the results of this research can contribute to improved practice for school staff and Educational Psychologists. We hope that you found the process interesting and have not been upset by any of the topics discussed.

If you would like further information or support regarding the topics discussed during this research, you can contact your child's class teacher or the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) at the school.

As a reminder, your data will be kept secure and confidential. You may withdraw your data from this study at any time before the research is complete. If you would like to do this, please email the researcher. If you would like to speak with the researcher again, you can contact them at k.e.smith2@newcastle.ac.uk or the research supervisor at w.barrow@newcastle.ac.uk.

Thanks again for your participation and your time.

Yours sincerely

Katie Smith

Katie Smith

Trainee Educational Psychologist and Doctoral Student

Appendix G Pupil Debriefing Sheet

Newcastle University
School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences

Action Research: How might educational staff promote participatory practices for pupils within one school setting.

Thank you for taking part in this study.

The purpose of the research was to explore how school staff might listen to the voices of pupils and encourage pupils to take part in key decisions.

We hope that you found the process interesting and have not been upset by any of the topics discussed.

If you would like further information or support regarding the topics discussed during this research, please discuss this with your class teacher.

As a reminder, your data will be kept secure and confidential. You may withdraw your data from this study at any time before the research is complete.

If you would like to do this, please ask your class teacher who will be able to contact me on: K.E.smith2@newcastle.ac.uk**.**

Thanks again for your time.

Yours sincerely

Katie Smith

Katie Smith

Trainee Educational Psychologist and Doctoral Student

Appendix H Overview of potential concepts for the semi-structured interview

This was the overview submitted for ethical approval.

I will adjust the questions to the participant's context. Participants will be given a copy of the final questions prior to the interview. Visual tools will be used to encourage pupil participation throughout the semi-structured interviews.

Part	Questions	
1	My name is Katie I will remind you of what we are doing today You can stop at any time Have you got any questions? Do you want to start the interview?	
2	What is school like for you? What do you like? What do you dislike?	
3.	Discussion about what 'pupil voice' and 'participation' means for the pupil. Helping questions: Do your views make a difference? Do you think adults listen to your views? Are they reflected in what happens at school? What helps you express yourself? How would you like it to be? What would make it better? What would you like to happen in the future? What would it be like in an ideal world?	
4.	Discussion about a time when the pupil felt they had space to express their views within school.	
5.	Discussion about a time when the pupil felt their views were listened to within school.	
6.	Discussion about a time when the pupil felt adults responded to their views within school.	
7.	Discussion about what the pupil felt supported their participation within school.	
8.	Discussion about what the pupil felt hindered their participation within school.	
9.	Discussion about what might help support the pupil's participation within the future (at school).	
10.	Is there something else you would like to say?	
End	End of interview	

Appendix I Participation Information sheet and consent form for parents for use of photos

Newcastle University
School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences

Researcher:	Katie Smith (Trainee Educational Psychologist)
University Contact Details	School of Education, Communication and Language. George VI Building, Queen Victoria Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, Ne17RU
Email	K.E.smith2@newcastle.ac.uk
Email of Supervisor	W.Barrow@newcastle.ac.uk

Your child has been invited to take part in an ongoing research study entitled: **How might educational staff promote participatory practices for pupils within one school setting.**

As part of this study, school staff may take photos of your child engaging in activities which promote their participation. Your child might then select the photos they would like to discuss in the interview. It is hoped that these photographs may create a more interactive experience for your child and promote their agency within the interviews.

These photographs would be taken by a staff member and on the school's iPad. I would not store these photos and they would only be seen by your child and their Teaching Assistant. These photos would not be taken outside of school and would be disposed of by school staff after the interview.

If you consent for photographs of your child to be used during the interviews, please tick the boxes and sign below.

6. I have read the information provided and I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐
7. I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time up until the research analysis process has begun without giving any reason (reference to rights can be made, if relevant). ☐

8. I agree for my child to take part in the above study. ☐

Child's name.....

Parent/carer signature..... Date.....

Print name……

Researcher Signature……Date……....

Any concerns about this study should be addressed to the School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences Ethics Committee, Newcastle University via email to ecls.researchteam@newcastle.ac.uk

Appendix J Pupil Information Sheet

Hello,

My name is Katie. I am a student at Newcastle University.

I am doing a research project about how school staff might listen to the voices of pupils.

I would like to find out more about how your school might listen to your voice and encourage your participation by asking you some questions about pupils' participation.

During the interview, I will use photographs and drawings to explore your views.

Your Teaching Assistant may take pictures of you engaging in activities which promote your voice. You might then select the photos you would like to discuss in the interview.

If you would like to find out more about this, I could tell you more about my research project and answer any questions you have. Tick the box below to show your choice.

☐ I want to find out more about Katie's project

☐ I do not want to find out more about Katie's project

When you find out more you could decide if you would like to take part in my research project or not.

Thank you for reading my letter.

Best wishes,

Katie

Newcastle University

School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences

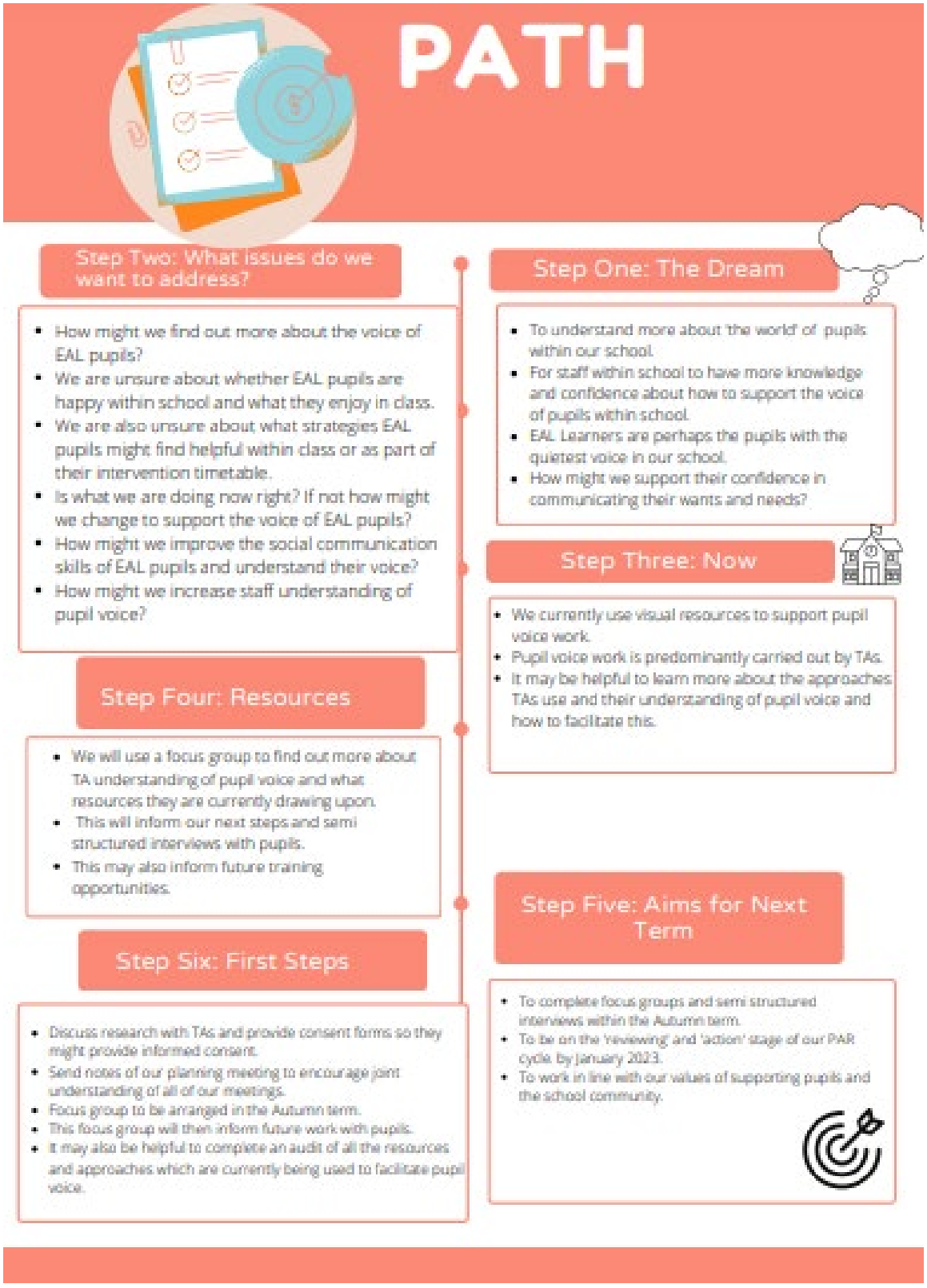
Appendix L Pupil Assent form

		Yes/No
1.	Have you read and understood the Information Sheet?	😊/☹
2.	Have you had the opportunity to ask questions about the study?	😊/☹
3.	Have all your questions been answered satisfactorily (if applicable)?	😊/☹
4.	Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason?	😊/☹
5.	Do you understand that the interview will be audio recorded?	😊/☹
6.	Do you know that if you tell me something that makes me worried you might be in danger, I will have to tell somebody else?	😊/☹
7.	Are you willing to participate in this research?	😊/☹

Name of child _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Name of Researcher_____ Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix M Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH) framework and notes from initial meeting with co-researcher



Appendix N Pupil interview schedule and sorting activity

There are no right or wrong answers

If you don't want to answer a question, just say "Pass" or "I'm not sure."

Part	Questions
1	• My name is Katie • I will remind you of what we are doing today • You can stop at any time (using a card to indicate if pupil would like to go back to class). • Have you got any questions? • Are you ready to start?
2	• Tell me a little about your school. • What do you like about your school? • Is there anything you don't like or would like to change?
3	Let's look at the photos you have chosen. • What are you doing? What is X doing? • Why do you think you and X were doing this? What was the point of it? • Have you done anything like this before? When? • How did you feel during this activity? What were you thinking? What were you saying? • Did you enjoy doing this? Why/why not?
4	I am interested in how adults listen to your views in school. • If you were to draw pupil voice what would this look like? • When are you able to share your views in school? Does that happen often in school? How often? • Do you think adults listen to your voice and views? If yes tell me about a time when adults listened to your views? If no: tell me about a time when you wanted to share your views • Do your views make a difference to what happens in school? If yes tell me when it has made a difference • What helps you to share your views with adults? • What would make it easier for you to share your views?
5.	Talking mat activity: Could you please sort each of these statements (visuals to be attached) into 'this is like me', 'this is like me sometimes and this is not like me'. • I like speaking my home language in school • I like speaking my home language at home • I like speaking English at school • I like speaking English at home

	• I like using visual resources (ie., posters or pictures) to support my learning in class • I understand what is happening in lessons • I get on well with my teaching assistant • I get on well with my teacher • I feel happy in school • I feel safe in school • I feel that adults in school listen to me and my views • I am understood by the adults around me • I feel safe to share my views with adults in school • My brother or sister helps me in school

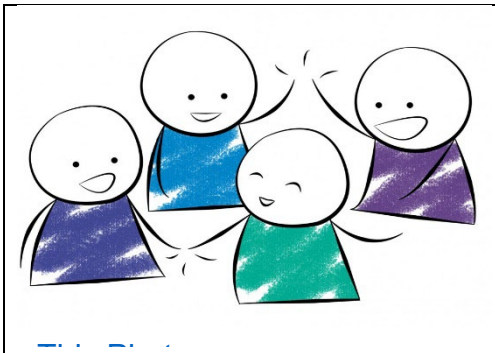
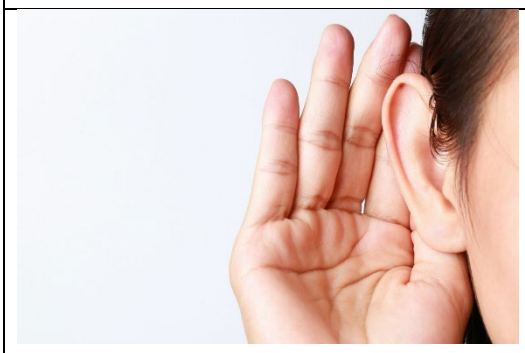
This is like me

This is like me sometimes

This is not like me

	I like speaking my home language in school
	I like speaking my home language at home
	I like speaking English at school
	I like speaking English at home

	I like using visual resources (ie., posters or pictures) to support my learning in class
	I understand what is happening in lessons
	I get on well with my teaching assistant
	I get on well with my teacher
	I feel happy in school

	I feel safe in school
	I feel that adults in school listen to me and my views
	I am understood by the adults around me
	I feel safe to share my views with adults in school
	My brother or sister helps me in school

Appendix O Focus group schedule

Stage:	Questions:
1**. Scene-setting and ground rules**	• Initial welcome. • Personal introduction. • Outline of the research topic and expected roles. • Reminder that there are no right or wrong answers, everyone's views are respected and of interest and that consent forms have been completed. • Reminder of the need to audio record. • Reminder that participants can stop at any time. • Reminder of pupil confidentiality. • Opportunities for questions. • Asking the group if they are ready to start.
2. Individual introductions	• Participants are asked to introduce themselves in turn by stating their name and year group they work with.
3. The Opening Topic	• Researcher starts off the general discussion by introducing the opening topic: • What resources or approaches do you use for exploring the voices of pupils? • How effective do you think these resources are? • What resources or approaches do you use to record the voices of EAL pupils? • How effective do you think these resources are? • What does pupil voice mean to you? • What is your understanding of EAL? **Scaling questions:** • How knowledgeable do you feel about promoting the voice of EAL pupils on a scale of 1-10, with 0 being 'least knowledgeable' and 10 being 'most knowledgeable'? • How confident do you feel about promoting the voice of EAL pupils on a scale of 1-10, with 0 being 'least confident' and 10 being 'most confident'?

4. Discussion	• Do you think the views of EAL pupils impact the work you do in school? • What does participation mean to you? • What do you think helps EAL pupils to participate in school? • What might hinder EAL pupil participation within school? Is this the same for all EAL pupils? How might this differ? • How would you like it to be? • What would make it better? • What would you like to happen in the future? • What would you like from any further training? • Is there something else you would like to say? Is there anything you feel we haven't covered, or you feel is important for this discussion?
4.1 Helping questions	• What does everyone else think? • How do other people feel? • Can you say a bit more about that? • Highlighting differences in views and encouraging the group to discuss and explain them. • Asking if anyone has a different view or experience. • Stress that disagreement or differences in views is both acceptable and wanted.
5. Ending the discussion	• Signal in advance that the focus group is coming to an end. • Review suggestions for future practice with the group. • Reaffirm confidentiality. • Let the participants know what will happen next and thank them for their contribution.

Appendix P Example of grounded theory (interviews)

Emerging categories: environment, play, dialogue and cultural understanding			
Data Extracts	Initial codes	Focused codes	Memo writing
"Yes [like speaking home language at school] because I have some friends who speak Portuguese with me" **"I feel good speaking Portuguese as she [friend in class] sometimes helps me to understand. It helps me to understand what is happening at break times and lunch time. It really helps me"** **"I like the teaching assistant, I sit next to her the most and she is more like my friend, and she really helps me when I struggle. When I came to school, I did not understand anything, and she really helped me to understand and feel ok when I was scared. She is a friend I can just talk to"** **"My teaching assistant [I feel I can share my views with]** **[I feel I can share my views because] they are always like having fun- like that outside [points to adult playing outside**	Having opportunities to speak Portuguese with friends supports language enjoyment Feeling good about speaking Portuguese in class and break times Understanding what is happening at break and lunch times Liking my TA Feeling emotionally connected to TA Supporting my understanding in class Acknowledging emotional impact of moving to a different language school Supporting safety needs Sharing my views with TA Listening means having fun Always having fun	**Language and expressing voice** **Relational TA practice** **Play**	This may highlight the importance of having same language peers within school. This also indicates the barriers of communicating wants and needs in a language you may be unfamiliar with. Same language peers provide support during lessons. However, pupil highlighted the importance of same language peers in helping pupil to understand what is happening during break and lunch times. Difference between listening and having influence. Pupils feel that adults listen to them, but pupils also feel they have limited influence in their school.

with other children during break time]. There are always like having fun with children like that adult who was dancing. That shows they know us and want to have fun with us" **"I go to kickboxing, wrestling. And..and everybody's from England there so. And you don't speak [my language] there, so I really, I really like to go home and speak my home language"**	Dancing adults shows they are listening to children Connecting with children Partaking in extracurricular activities Feeling different to peers valuing opportunities to speak home language at home	**Individuality**	The importance of environment and space in facilitating pupil participation. Adults appear to be directed by children and respond to their initiatives. This might reduce power imbalances between pupils and adults. Play also provides opportunities for shared joy between adults and children. The importance of having space to express yourself in your home language and the importance of having this protected time in the home environment. Feeling isolated or recognising differences between peers during extracurricular activities.

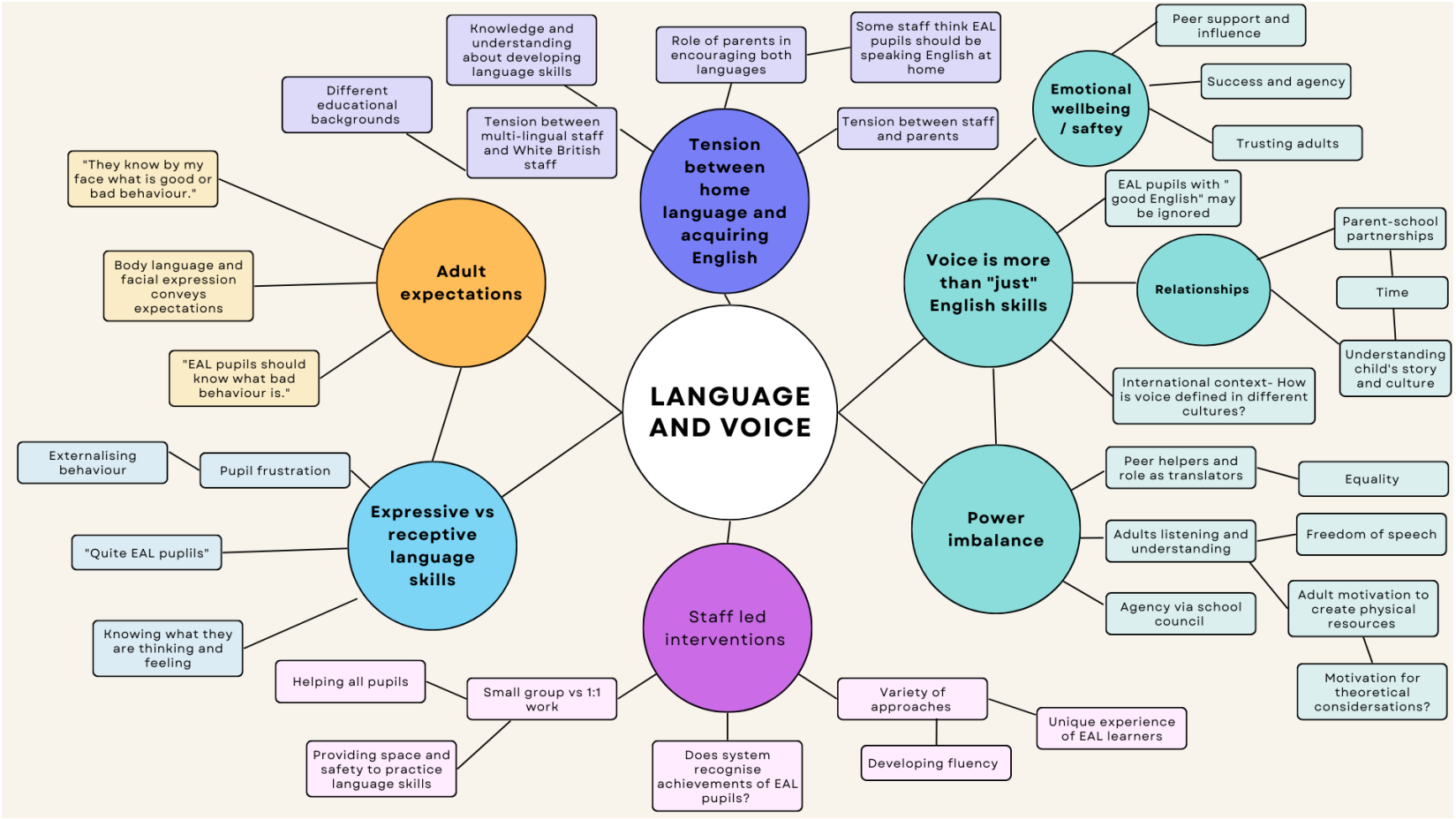
Appendix Q Example of grounded theory (focus group)

Emerging categories:			
Data Extracts	Initial codes	Focused codes	Memo writing
"Just, I mean we've got. We've got a girl in year six with only joined the school halfway through last year, couldn't speak any English were fortunately she had a friend, she made a friend straight away who spoke the same language and now she has somebody able to translate it makes a huge difference"	Highlighting experience of KS2 girl Acknowledging difficulty of joining halfway through Y6 Recognising the importance of peer support Recognising the importance of peers who speak same language	**Emotional wellbeing** **Safety**	Indicating the difficulty and empathy felt towards pupils who joined half way through Y6. Suggesting that it may be down to 'luck' when having a friend who also speaks the same language. School are not able to ensure that pupils has same language support.
"It reminds me of a little boy in nursery who in class he's so disruptive, just listens to nothing, but I can speak his language and anytime I go in he just stops" **"He knows I know his language and I can tell him correctly he shouldn't be doing that, and he follows it."**	Indicating that a disruptive child is one who 'listens to nothing'. Recognising the impact of speaking 'his language' Adhering to adult instructions in home language Understanding the child's home language Conveying the impact of home language on child's engagement	**Power imbalance** **Role of TAs**	Highlighting the importance of multi lingual TAs in creating spaces for pupils to understand and adhere to classroom instruction.

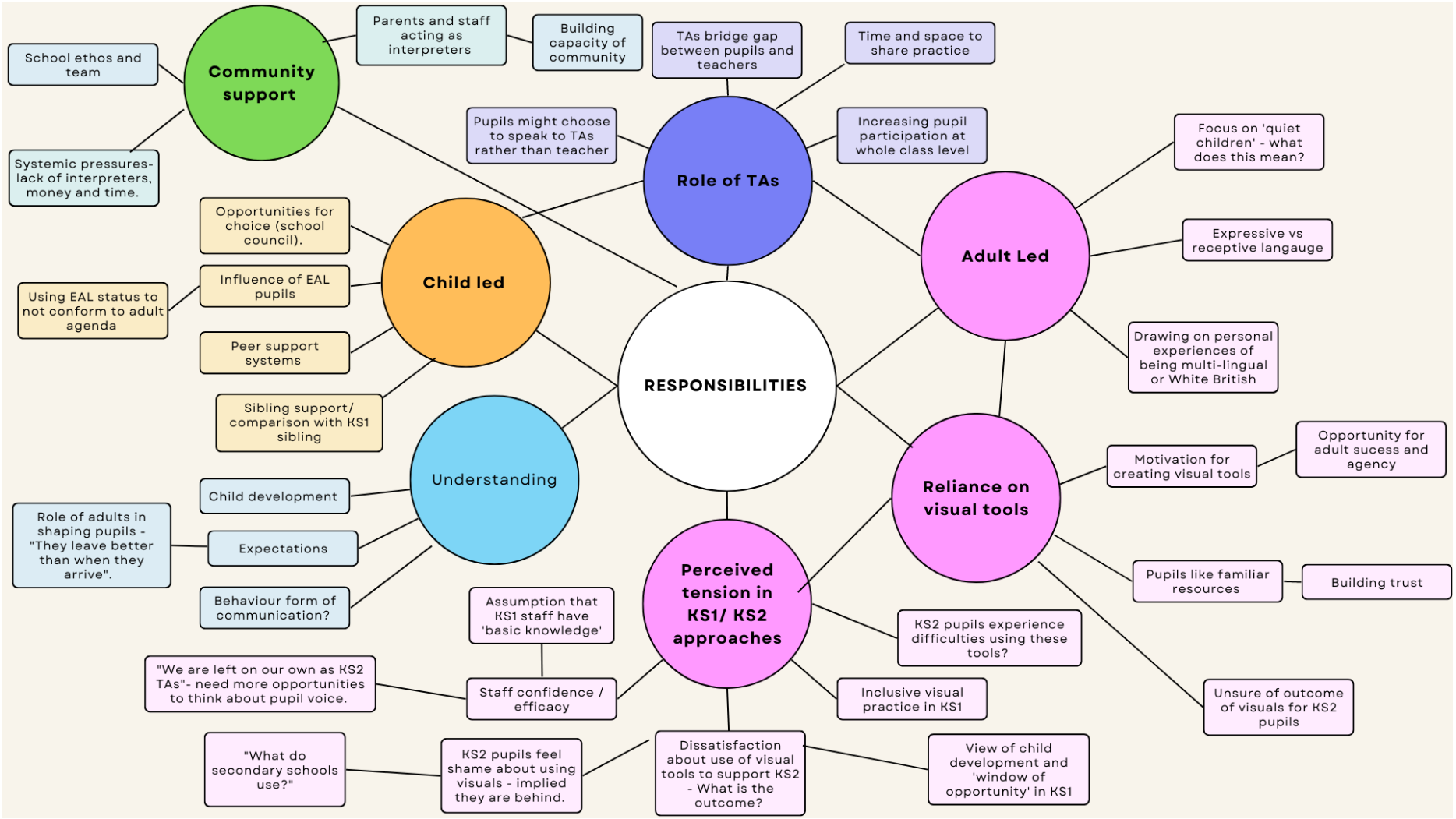
“We [KS1 TAs] try and use a lot of visual cues anyway. Don’t we?” **“There's quite a lot of visual clues and I would say there are a lot of visual supports in everything we do”** **“That is why it gets harder though, when you go to Y5 and Y6. All those things aren’t necessarily used with the older ones. Ah, it's really hard. It's like almost going back to being with younger ones”** **“I always find it when we get children coming in, even when they can speak English, but even more so when they can’t, it’s really difficult to make friendships immediately. Isn't it, if you're white British when you come in, I think it's a little bit easier since people language straight away to build friendships immediately when they come into a brand-new school. With some of the ones who can't”**	Indicating use of visual tools in KS1 Stating that visuals support all aspects learning Indicating visuals might not be used in KS2 Suggesting that using visuals is for younger children Appreciating difficulty making friends when in a new school Highlighting cultural and racial differences in making friends Indicating a racial difference/ barrier to overcome for EAL pupils Suggesting language is essential for building friendships immediately	**Visual tools** **Perceived tension between KS1/KS2** **Peer support**	This suggests that the use of visuals is an accepted norm in the classroom. Using these visuals would not single out a pupil as these are universal strategies applied across the classroom.

“I think they feel a little bit lost”	Claiming some new EAL pupils feel lost when arriving at school Indicating that making friends is harder for KS2 EAL pupils		

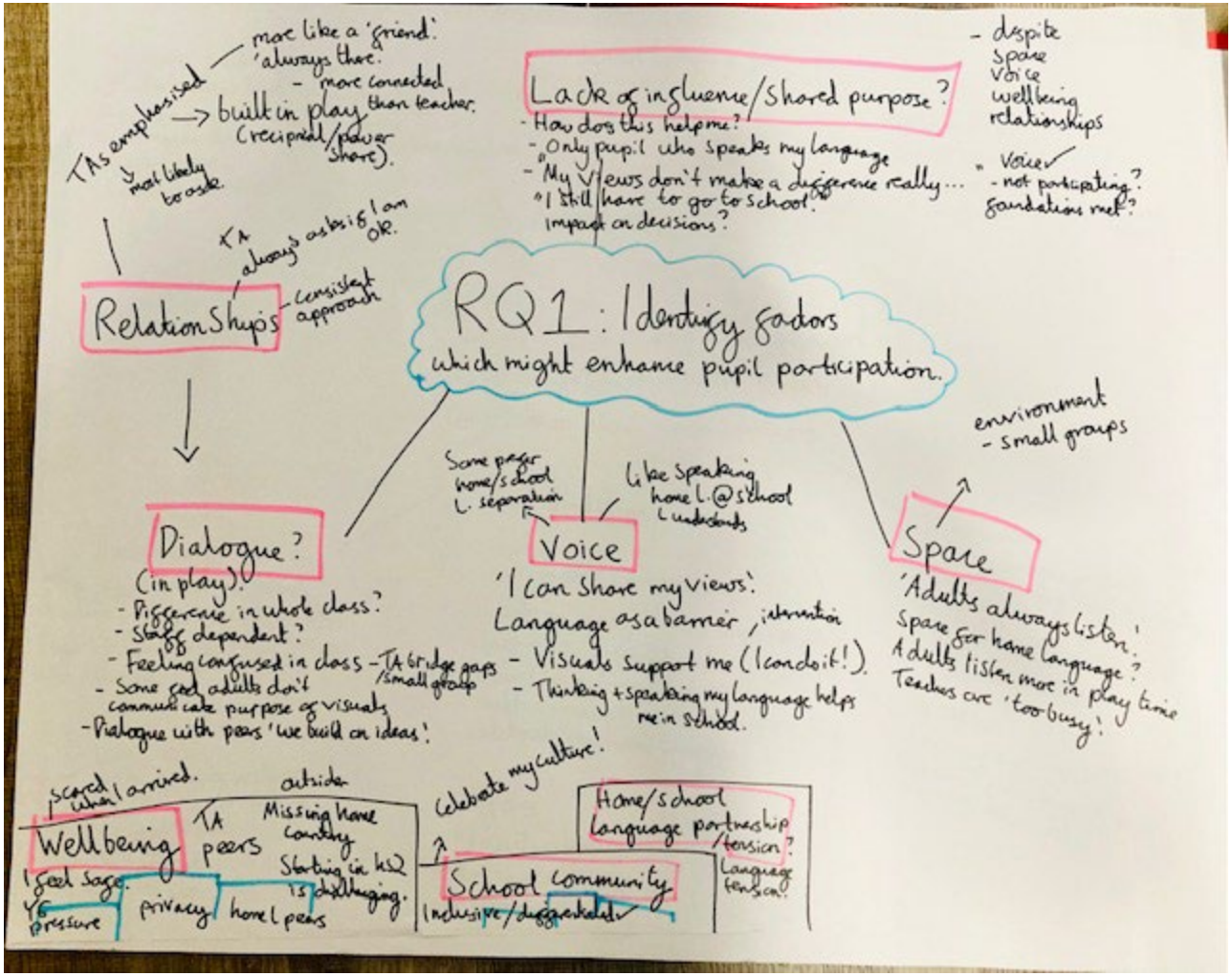
Appendix R Visual overview of categories which emerged from focus group



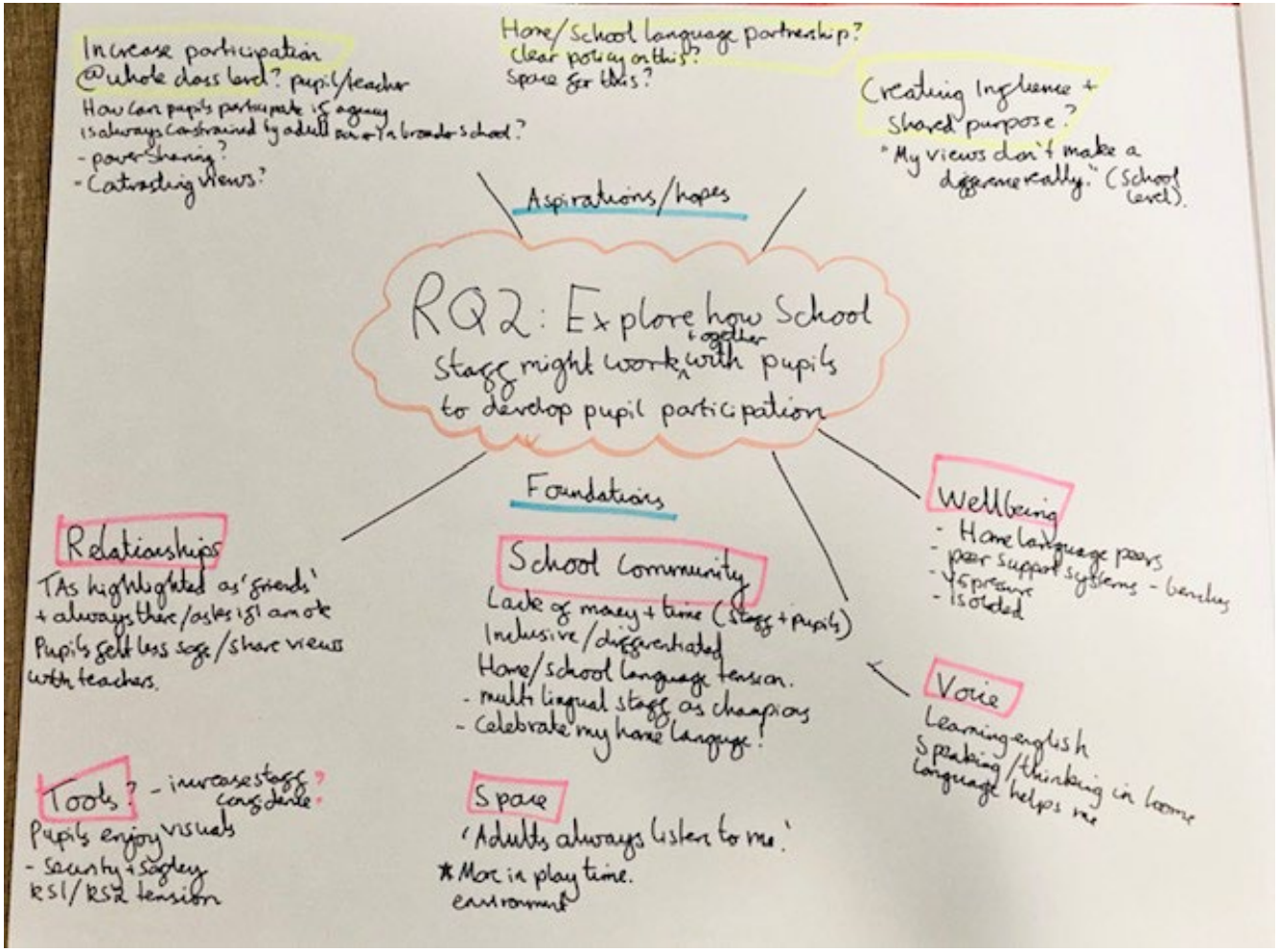
Appendix S Visual overview of categories which emerged from focus group



Appendix T Visual overview of categories from interviews and focus groups



Appendix U Visual overview of categories from interviews and focus groups



Appendix V: Reflective activity around ethnicity and language informed by the work Sanger and Sewell (2023) completed in research journal

How do I self-identify in terms of ethnicity?

White British, with an acknowledgement of European family routes (ie., great grandparents moving from Germany and France).

English speaking.

Parents attended university (first in the family) and have 'middle class jobs', despite experiencing a background of challenge and adverse social economic factors.

Emerging Terms

- White
- White British
- European
- Caucasian
- Middle class/ working class background?

Real world impact?

I have a position of privilege and power within a system which marginalises global majorities. This position has benefitted me in a multitude of ways. For example, I have not experienced frequent micro-aggressions related to my race, language or colour of my skin.

I have grown up in a society which prioritises 'whiteness' and has silenced and diminished the voice of global majorities (ie., through media representation, education through political discourses). As a result, I must remain critical of my own reflections and perspectives and challenge discourses which have shaped my childhood and upbringing.

How have others identified and constructed my ethnicity?

Middle class

Caucasian/ white

Not acknowledged

What is the real-world impact?

As a white person I am not often asked about my ethnicity or cultural heritage. This may reflect how society may view whiteness as the normal and all other skin colours as deviations (Eddo-Lodge, 2017). I wonder if this is also reflected in how our education system priorities the English language and has reduced funding and legislation which supports pupils learning English.

These experiences demonstrate the existence of structural racism. It is important that I reflect on what it means to be white, in power terms, and how this has shaped my own world view. For example, Eddo-Lodge (2017) speaks of a defensive stance, and one where white people do not listen and denial the existence of structural inequality.