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Findings

Immigrants in school

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How true is it that Indo-Pakistani school-children are disadvantaged by a specifically immigrant cultural deprivation? Our study of 81 white and Indo-Pakistani pupils' performance at the Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) suggests that the linguistic deprivation theory does not account for all of the facts. Internal policies of a school can also play a large part in shaping the success or failure of these pupils.

We looked at all the pupils taking CSE in 1973 in a secondary modern school with a high proportion of Asian pupils. This varied over a period of five years, from 19 per cent to 25 per cent. The school is within a local education authority with a good reputation for special arrangements for immigrant education. It also has a high entry for public examinations and a good tradition of "staying on." In all other respects it is a typical urban secondary modern school with an overwhelming "working class" intake (at least 90 per cent). We wanted to know if the pattern of achievement by the Indo-Pakistani group differed in any way from that of their white classmates.

If the common belief that immigrant pupils, including those who were born or have spent most of their lives in this country, suffer from a linguistic handicap, then one would expect them to do less well at school in those subjects which are heavily dependent on language, or are particularly "culture bound." We looked at this by arranging CSE subjects in order of their dependence on the use of language. This latter was defined in terms of the amount of written response and preparatory reading required for each subject. The subjects were then arranged in table form with the least

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linguistic at the top and the most linguistic and "culture bound" at the bottom (see table 1).

The linguistic deprivation theory would suggest that Asian pupils would (on average) do worse than white pupils, and, more particularly, that their failings would be more pronounced in the more linguistic subjects lower on the list. Performance was measured by CSE grades achieved (one to five), with those ungraded scoring six. Those not entered for the examination by the school also counted as six since they were judged unlikely to get a grade of five or higher. A mean grade in each subject was calculated for white and Asian pupils.

As a group, the Indo-Pakistani children did do less well than their white classmates. The difference in mean grades between the two groups ranged from 0.65 in history to 2.41 in woodwork. Mostly, the difference was around one grade. But, although they did less well than white pupils overall, the Indo-Pakistani children's order of success in the different subjects did not match the order of subjects ranked by degree of linguistic contents. There was, in fact, a negative correlation between the actual order of success of Asian pupils and the order predicated on the basis of a linguistic deprivation theory.

On the other hand, there was quite a close, positive, correlation between the order of success for white and Asian pupils. In fact, for girls alone, the correlation was closer than when boys and girls were taken together: a surprising result, as it is often assumed that the opportunities for Asian girls to acquire English are even more limited than for the boys. In general, these findings suggest that the educational problems of Asian pupils are not specifically immigrant ones, but the problems of white, working class pupils writ large. As has often been argued, working class children themselves can suffer linguistically in Britain's fundamentally middle class educational system.

To look more closely at the influence of the school on the success of Asian pupils in different subjects, we produced a second rank order of subjects based on their degree of "exclusivity" (see table 2). We took as our measure of overall exclusivity the proportion of white pupils excluded from an examination. Exclusivity varied widely between one subject and another, English and history departments pursuing a fairly egalitarian policy and mathematics and geography departments excluding many doubtful candidates.

If this "exclusivity" rank order is compared with the actual order of success of Asian pupils, it is clear that there is a close, positive, correlation. In other words, the best predictor of success or failure, in any particular subject for Indo-Pakistani pupils lies not in the linguistic content of the subject but the examination policy of the department concerned. This situation is worrying enough. But it is also true that, by the fourth year in which CSE exams are taken, many Asian pupils have already been relegated to the lower streams of the school

Table 1: Success rates in different subjects by Asian and by white pupils

predicted order on linguistic grounds	actual order for Asian pupils	actual order for white pupils
needlework	physics	physics
woodwork	needlework	English
metalwork	chemistry	needlework
art & design	history	history
mathematics	English	woodwork
chemistry	biology	art & design
physics	art & design	biology
biology	mathematics	metalwork
geography	metalwork	mathematics
history	geography	chemistry
English	woodwork	geography

Table 2: Success rate of Asian pupils with degree of exclusivity of subjects

subject	% excluded from examination	order of success for Asian pupils
needlework	0	physics
English	1.5	needlework
biology	11.6	chemistry
physics	12.0	history
history	12.8	English
art & design	20.5	biology
metalwork	22.2	art & design
woodwork	23.5	mathematics
chemistry	25.0	metalwork
mathematics	43.3	geography
geography	47.6	woodwork

where they will not even be entered for a CSE course.

These findings suggest that the answer to educational problems of Asian pupils at examination level might be found in the streaming or examination entrance policies of schools, not linguistic deprivation.

Labour ideology

The British electorate is generally thought to lack "ideology" in the sense that most voters have neither a consistent political position on a number of issues, nor a conception of politics as an integrated whole. Tory voters and Labour voters may often have more in common with each other, in their attitudes to such issues as immigration or the monarchy, than they do with the supporters of their own parties. But does the discovery that there is no strong pattern linking the attitudes of electors (see, for instance, Butler and Stokes, *Political Change in Britain*) necessarily mean they have no ideology? A study by Warren L. Mason of Labour voters suggests that this is not necessarily so (*Comparative Politics*, vol 6, No. 3, page 147).

Mason interviewed a sample of 438 voters who generally supported Labour. His approach to assessing political attitudes was based on respondents' attitudes to broad political "themes" rather than to a group of isolated political issues. The two themes taken, related to a common image of the Labour Party, were "management" and "disadvantage." In the first, the Labour Party is seen as the most effective agent for bringing about improvement for the nation