The Oppression of Children and Young People in Education Settings: A Foucauldian Discourse Analysis of Educational Psychologists' Constructions

by

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ABSTRACT

Educational psychologists are required to 'understand and challenge' oppressive practice and a growing body of research suggests that they perceive 'social justice' to be important to their role. However, previous findings indicate perceived barriers to inclusion, including the 'misuse of power' in education settings, and the pathologisation of children and young people. The current study presents a Foucauldian Discourse Analysis exploring how educational psychologists construe oppressive discourses used about children and young people in education settings, and their constructions of how they could work against these oppressive discourses. Transcripts from semi-structured interviews with seven qualified Educational Psychologists were analysed, surfacing discourses used about children and young people in schools, the possible construction/s, and implications for action. Through the analysis, discourses of 'othering', 'compliance', 'seen not heard', 'within-child' 'conformity' and 'innocence' were derived, linked to dominant discourses of 'deviancy' and perceived to locate difference internally. Constructions about how educational psychologists can work against oppressive discourses of children and young people, highlights 'direct' and 'indirect' approaches, emphasising the role of the 'critical friend' and participatory action research.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
BPS	British Psychological Society
COVID-19	Coronavirus-19
CYP	Children and Young People
DfE	Department for Education
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
EP	Educational Psychologist
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
ESN	Educationally Subnormal
FDA	Foucauldian Discourse Analysis
HCPC	Health & Care Professions Council
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer Plus
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PEP	Principal Educational Psychologist
PfA	Preparation for Adulthood
RSHE	Relationships, Sex and Health Education
SEND	Special educational needs and disability
TEP	Trainee Educational Psychologist
UK	United Kingdom

CHAPTER ONE

The following research was completed to fulfil volume one of a thesis for the Applied Educational and Child Psychology Doctorate at the University of Birmingham. The exploratory study analysed how educational psychologists' (EPs) construed oppressive discourses of children and young people (CYP) in educational settings, and their constructions of how they could work against these oppressive discourses. This chapter describes the background to the research, including personal and professional influences.

Background to Research

Researcher reflexivity and transparency are key principles of qualitative research. Central to this, is acknowledging personal and professional influences, and recognising how these might influence the research (Stainton & Willig, 2017). The following sections explore my personal and professional influences and how these may have informed the research topic and design.

Personal Influences

Early into the three-year doctoral study I recognised that I was particularly interested in issues of equity in education. During taught sessions, I was encouraged to consider issues of systemic oppression and bias and became aware of how my own experience influenced the lens through which I saw these. I identify as a white British, middle class, non-disabled, cis gender woman, descriptors that typically afford privilege in and access to most spaces, however, I have not always felt welcome within education. My maternal family were firmly working class and experienced periods of extreme hardship. They also had and continue to have strong links to Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities. Unlike my peers, I was not pushed by my school to pursue further education and wonder why my aspirations were not explored. In addition to this, I grew up in South-East London, an area known for its diversity. As an adolescent, I was aware of tensions within the community, including racism and classism and the threat of gentrification. I realise now, that my interest in issues of equity in education is linked to these early experiences.

Reflecting on my personal influences has felt uncomfortable. Whilst I acknowledge they are linked to my positionality as a researcher, key to reflexivity, I have felt concerned about overstating or understating my experience. I am aware that my personal characteristics afford me more privilege than others and have felt unsure about the value of my experiences in this topic. However, adhering to the qualitative and social constructionist stance of the research in which all experiences are valued, I acknowledge the importance of sharing my positionality (Griffin & Bengry-Howell, 2017; Stainton & Willig, 2017).

Professional Influences

Prior to starting the doctoral training, I worked in various roles in adult mental health services, many of which intersected the criminal justice system. I observed the impact of stigma and noticed how bias influenced policies and procedures. I saw how individuals struggling with mental health were othered and was particularly uncomfortable with the language used within professional meetings and across formal records. I wondered if the terms used distorted the facts and misrepresented the individual's experience, in doing so, limiting the support options available to them. Early into my first year of training as an educational psychologist, I observed similarly uncomfortable narratives and terms used about children and young people. For example, written records describing that a reception aged child had "assaulted staff members", despite communication and interaction needs, or imitating the accent of a child who had recently moved to the UK and labelling them with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) without appearing to consider language differences. However, I was encouraged and supported to challenge oppressive narratives and practices by tutors and supervisors. As I develop my understanding about equity in education and anti-oppressive practice, I have become interested in my colleagues' perception of this issue, and how they experience the positioning of CYP. I am hopeful that conducting research into this topic will develop my own knowledge and highlight examples of anti-oppressive practice.

Theoretical approach and methodology

This research was underpinned by social constructionism, positing that our knowledge of social objects is culturally specific, constructed between people, through interactions and social processes rather than an objective, observable truth (Burr, 2015; Frosh & Young, 2017; Gergen, 2022; Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2013). Integral to this, is language (Willig, 2013). According to social constructionism, it is through language that we structure and make sense of the social world and through which the world is constructed (Burr, 2015; Gergen, 2022; Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2013). The way language is used within interactions is known as 'discourse'. Social constructionists explain that we use language and linguistic skills within our discourses to shape our accounts. These discourses often have implications, for example, framing the individual in a preferred sense. In this way, discourse is considered to have performative functions (Burr, 2015; Wiggins & Potter, 2017). Therefore, the exploration and analysis of discourse will be key to the current research which is concerned with EPs constructions of oppressive discourses used about CYP in education settings.

Study Rationale

The aim of this research was to explore how EPs construe oppressive discourses used about CYP in educational settings and their constructions of how they could work against these. I was particularly interested in the terms used to build 'oppressive discourses', and how they influenced and/or were reinforced in education settings and society, such as through school policies and government guidance. Oppressive discourses are understood to be concepts, terms, and statements used contextually, often to the detriment of the subject, to maintain power structures.

The rationale of the current research stems from existing literature and professional practice guidelines emphasising the role of EPs in social justice and inclusive practice (British Psychological Society, 2022; Cumber, 2022; Schulze et al., 2019; Zaniolo, 2021). Understanding and challenging oppressive practice are core skills identified within the 'Competencies for Trainee Educational Psychologists' (British Psychological Society, 2022)

and 'Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics' (Health & Care Professions Council, 2016, 2024) displayed in Table 1. Psychologists are expected to "…be aware of the impact that…personal values, biases and beliefs may have on…service users" (Health & Care Professions Council, 2024, p. 1), and by the end of their training, Educational Psychologists are expected to "challenge views and actions judged potentially harmful to the child or young person" and "take appropriate professional action to redress power imbalances and to embed principles of anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice in all professional actions." (British Psychological Society, 2022, p. 19). Furthermore, a growing body of literature suggests that EPs are committed to inclusion and social justice, but recognise barriers to this, including austerity, a mismatched government agenda (Cumber, 2022; Schulze et al., 2019; Zaniolo, 2021) as well as schools "misuse of power" (Schulze et al., 2019; Zaniolo, 2021). Additionally, considerable evidence suggests that CYP's behaviour is pathologized (Caslin, 2019; Cole et al., 2013; Graham, 2006; Harwood & Allan, 2014; Pearson, 2016; Thomas & Glenny, 2000) and EPs report concern about feeding into unhelpful discourses about CYP through labelling and medicalised approaches (Wright, 2017; Zaniolo, 2021). For example, the classification of behaviour sitting outside 'social norms' as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) (Caslin, 2019). However, as far as I have been able to find, previous research has not explored the discourses CYP are subject to in education settings, and how EPs perceive these, despite recommendations that future studies should explore EPs experiences of social justice issues in education (Dyer, 2022). Surfacing the discourses at play in education settings may support EPs to recognise and challenge oppressive discourses, particularly relevant given the oppressive history of educational psychology practice, and role EPs arguably continue to have in inequity across education and inclusion.

The current research employed a flexible research design and semi-structured interviews to explore how EPs construe oppressive discourses used about CYP in educational settings and their constructions of how they could work against these oppressive discourses. The data was considered and analysed according to Foucauldian discourse

analysis (FDA); identifying possible objects and subjects employed in the discourse, their

genealogy and purpose.

Table 1

Trainee Educational Psychologist Competencies and Health & Care Professions codes of conduct related to recognising and challenging oppressive practice.

Competencies for Trainee Educational Psychologists	Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics
Relevant competencies	
Personal and professional values, ethics, and skills e. Challenge views and actions judged potentially harmful to the child or young person. g. Take appropriate action to address and resolve tensions where there is a conflict between personal and professional values and policy/cultural expectations for professional practice. i. Be able to recognise unethical or malpractice and follow the appropriate organisational policies and procedures to respond. Equality, diversity, and inclusion b. Demonstrate understanding and application of equality and diversity principles and actively promote inclusion and equity in their professional practice. d. Take appropriate professional action to redress power imbalances and to embed principles of anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice in all professional actions. f. Be aware of attitudes to impairment, disability, and neurodiversity and where relevant, redress influences which risk diminishing opportunities for all vulnerable children and young people including those with SEND and their families.	Challenge discrimination 1.5. You must treat people fairly and be aware of the potential impact that your personal values, biases and beliefs may have on the care, treatment or other services that you provide to service users and carers and in your interactions with colleagues. 1.6. You must take action to ensure that your personal values, biases and beliefs do not lead you to discriminate against service users, carers or colleagues. Your personal values, biases and beliefs must not detrimentally impact the care, treatment or other services that you provide. 1.7. You must raise concerns about colleagues if you think that they are treating people unfairly and/or their personal values, biases and beliefs have led them to discriminate against service users, carers and/or colleagues or they have detrimentally impacted the care, treatment or other services that they provide. This should be done following the relevant procedures within your practice and maintain the safety of all involved. Report concerns 7.4. You must make sure that the safety and well-being of service users always comes before any professional or other loyalties. 7.5. You must raise concerns regarding colleagues if you witness bullying, harassment or intimidation of a service user, their carer or another colleague. This should be done following the relevant procedures within your practice or organisation and maintaining the safety of all involved.
(British Psychological Society, 2022)	(Health & Care Professions Council, 2024)

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW PART ONE: A BRIEF GENEAOLOGY OF

EDUCATION IN ENGLAND

The aim of this research was to explore how EPs construed oppressive discourses used about CYP in educational settings and their constructions of how they could work against these oppressive discourses. Educational practices are strongly shaped by political and societal agendas, therefore, exploring the history of education is important in understanding the oppression and construction of CYP. However, the current research is particularly interested in the discourses within this history and the relationship between "knowledge, power and the human subject in modern society" (Crowley, 2009, p. 341). Therefore, inspired by Foucault (1926-1984), Part One of Chapter Two presents a brief 'genealogy' of education in England.

A genealogy is understood to focus on "the way in which power produces (and is produced by) bodies of knowledge (or discourses), including their alleged continuities and discontinuities" (Nola, 1998, p. 137). The current genealogy seeks to critically analyse educational structures, question assumptions and consider how historical discourses continue to constrain CYP today (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2017; Foucault, 1977b, 1978; Taylor, 2017). Mirroring his approach to analysis more broadly, Foucault did not describe a specific method for completing a genealogy, but did encourage transparency (Graham, 2005). I have attempted to provide this by describing the considerations and process, presented in Figure 1.

Throughout this research, terms such as gender, SEND, ethnicity and race are used, however I understand these to be social constructs and acknowledge that these terms contribute to the maintenance of power and oppression, but reflect contextually relevant discourses within education. The term 'minoritised ethnicity' is used to describe the experience of some communities within the UK, but I acknowledge that similarly the term 'global majority' is also appropriate.

Figure 1

Considerations and Process of Sourcing Literature

Literature Criteria

The literature contributing to this genealogy includes both published and unpublished academic papers to present a balanced account (Bennett & Jull, 2003; Halton, 2022; Pearson, 2016; Sangar, 2018) Furthermore, unpublished theses, and grey literature have been considered to avoid issues of publication bias (Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2013; Paez, 2017).

Initial Searches

As a trainee educational psychologist, working frequently with CYP from populations perceived to be 'vulnerable' to issues of inequity (Noltemeyer & Grapin, 2021) topics relating to SEND, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and gender were of particular interest to me, and therefore were a large focus within the genealogy. An initial online search for literature was conducted on the Google Scholar search platform and the University of Birmingham e-library using the terms 'History of education' and 'UK', and 'discourses of children and young people'.

Further Searches

Further searches were conducted to gain more insight into topics revealed through the initial search. I was particularly interested in literature related to historical oppressive discourses in education, and their possible impact on CYP in today's context.

Exploring power and how it is enacted is central to a Foucauldian genealogy, and therefore this chapter will proceed with an overview of Foucault's understanding of power.

Foucauldian Discourse Analysis and Power

FDA is concerned with power, and how discourses are used to reinforce or build this. Within FDA dominant discourses are perceived to promote versions of social reality which legitimate existing power and social structures (Willig, 2015). Moreover, this works reciprocally, wherein power, and social structures are designed to support, validate and reinforce dominant narratives. Foucault refers to this as 'power/knowledge', a term which recognises the impact of power on the content, and dissemination of knowledge (Foucault, 1980; Mills, 2004) Many dominant discourses have become entrenched in society and are now considered 'common-sense'. Parker emphasises that discourses facilitate and limit, enable and constrain what can be said by whom, where and when (Parker, 1992). Although,

through language 'counter-discourses' can emerge, creating alternative constructions of social reality (Willig, 2008) and the basis for resistance (Mills, 2004). Further, discourses adapt over time and are therefore considered to have a genealogy (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2017; Willig, 2013). Investigating the genealogy of a discourse is necessary to understand its purpose (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2017; Hall, 1992), and for "mapping the discursive environment that people inhabit" (Willig, 2015, p. 155).

A Brief Genealogy of Education in England

Early Education

Historians have traced schooling in England to as early as the Roman occupation in AD43 (Gillard, 2018). Initially only available to the most privileged (Lawson & Silver, 1973), education was afforded to a "tiny minority" of people for centuries, and was controlled by religious bodies, typically held within monasteries, cathedrals and in time, a small number of nunneries for the education of girls (Gillard, 2018; Orme, 2006). However, following the Norman Conquest in 1066, education began to move outside of religious settings and the homes of the privileged, and a "more public kind of education" was established (Orme, 2006, p. 48). Schools opened to the public, although were often inaccessible to families of low socio-economic status due to the associated costs of school clothes, equipment, and the potential loss of an income, and very few admitted girls (Jordan, 1991; Ogilvie, 1958; Orme, 2006).

Limited Education

Over the coming centuries, education in England was strongly shaped by the religious appetite of the time, following a cyclical pattern of the dissolution and reinstatement of religious schools according to aristocratic agenda (Gillard, 2018). This stayed much the same, until the start of the Industrial Revolution in the mid-eighteenth century (Gillard, 2018; Ogilvie, 1958). Experienced by the upper class as a technological evolution, freeing workers from the boundaries of labour, Findlay (2012, pp. 114–115) described that this "theory of freedom was illusory", noting that "a man compelled to leave his village and his home to

avoid starvation is not a free man: his actions are governed by the property-owning part of community at every turn". The loss of labouring and farming jobs in the countryside saw an influx of people into towns, too fast for infrastructure to keep up, including schools (Lawson & Silver, 1973).

Mass production and improved agriculture techniques amassed wealth for those with "land or capital or profession" (Benn & Chitty, 1997, p. 2), whilst workers were faced with low wages, slum housing, child labour, and high mortality rates (Lawson & Silver, 1973). Within the towns, incidents of antisocial behaviour and "child crime" increased, becoming a "major social phenomena" (Lawson & Silver, 1973, p. 227) and alongside this, concerns grew that the working class might follow the French, possibly leading to revolution (Ogilvie, 1958). Public figures debated solutions, including the role of mass education. Some felt that all children should be afforded an equal level of education (Benn & Chitty, 1997), some argued for distinct educational opportunities across the social classes, supporting individuals to develop skills for roles within their social class; "the poor to work intelligently and the middle classes to govern intelligently" (Lawson & Silver, 1973, p. 231). Central to this was "moral and religious education" which was hoped would "strengthen the social order" (Simon, 1960; W. B. Stephens, 1998, p. 14). Others, worried that educating and improving literacy among the working class would undermine the "natural and necessary ignorance of the poor" (Lawson & Silver, 1973, p. 235), enabling them to "read seditious pamphlets, vicious books and publications about Christianity", and rendering them "insolent to their superiors" (Hansard, 1807).

Expanded Education

In 1870, the foundation of a national system of education was established, incorporating state provided and maintained schools, although critics note that these continued to reinforce social class differences, routing well off students to grammar schools, and working-class pupils to vocational courses well into the mid 1900's (Benn & Chitty, 1997).

Whilst progress had been made, women and girls continued to face resistance in their pursuit of education. Before 1870, a small number of girls gained an elementary education at village church schools, and wealthy middle-class girls were routinely taught in "tiny private schools or by governesses" with a curriculum focused on achieving "feminine accomplishments" (Jordan, 1991, p. 440), but the majority of girls remained at home for domestic duties (Ollerenshaw, 1963) and working class girls were typically considered unfit for formalised education (Dyhouse, 1976). Following persistent pressure to extend the education offered to girls and women, colleges and settings permitted female students, and offered a curriculum closer to that provided to males. However, many authors note that this still centred on "making good wives and mothers" well into the 1900's (Dyhouse, 1976; Jordan, 1991, p. 441).

Between the 1960's and 80's, education became a major government priority, marked by concerns about international competition and comparison (Gillard, 2018). Some argued for 'streaming' within education; "training children to be competitive" and countering the "country's economic malaise" (Richard Lynn cited in Gillard, 2018). Senior members of the government publicly championed a separated education system, referring to concerns about over-education and a crashing labour market; some wanted "to ration the educational opportunities", and idealised earlier times, suggesting that "people must be educated once more to know their place" (Ranson, 1984, p. 241). Simultaneously, a growing debate was occurring about the issue of racism within education. The Rampton Report (1981) described that "racism, both intentional and unintentional" had a "direct and important bearing on" the 'underachievement' of West Indian children (Rampton, 1981, p. 12). Some researchers criticised the over-representation of West Indian children in 'schools for the educationally subnormal' (ESN), and discussed the negative long-term effects, including police involvement and unemployment (Coard, 1971a, 1971b; Tomlinson, 1981).

Although provision for children with SEND had existed, in some form since the 1700s, it was generally basic, focusing on the development of vocational skills, and could be harsh (Gillard, 2018). Children labelled as 'mentally defective' were often placed into

workhouses and infirmaries, and 'inclusive' practices were not incorporated into public agenda until the 1970/80s (Gillard, 2018).

However, within the public domain, politicians spoke of children with SEND as the "lowest achievers" and criticised the push for differentiation in schools, describing that this was "discouraging competitive achievement" (Knight, 1990, p. 176). Mirroring earlier discourses about children of low socio-economic status, rather than recognising the strengths and aspirations of CYP with SEND, critics discussed the importance of moral virtues instead and considered educational adaptions to be at the detriment of others (Gillard, 2018).

Over the next 20 or so years, political parties 'took on' education but were criticised for compounding social inequities across the system and "exacerbating rather than removing existing divisions" (Chitty, 1998, p. 54).

Summary

The presented genealogy explores the development of education in England, with focus on systemic influences and oppressive practices. During the period explored, progressive steps were taken, including the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), establishing fundamental protections for CYP within education and more broadly. However, some of the original motivations behind mass education were problematic, intended to control the working class, and divide students academically in the hopes of routing out the most 'competitive'.

Education Policy in the Current Context

Over the past decade the government has published a variety of educational policies and guidelines, likely influenced by contextually relevant factors such as global conflicts, the ongoing impact of the Coronavirus-19 pandemic (COVID-19) and international politics. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore all these factors and therefore, I have chosen to focus on recent government education publications.

British educational priorities in recent history include the commitment to "support the most marginalised", identified as children with disabilities, children affected by crisis, and 'hard-to-reach' girls through targeted support (Department for International Development, 2018, p. 25) and an emphasis on supporting the mental health and well-being of CYP and education staff (Department for Education & Public Health England, 2021), particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic which saw the national shutdown of schools in March 2020 (Institute for Government Analysis, 2022). However, some criticise the mental health focus, suggesting that it pathologizes 'worry' (Foulkes & Stringaris, 2023; Timimi & Timimi, 2022), moreover, research increasingly indicates that universal strategies, such as 'mindfulness' are ineffective and miss CYP's voice (Foulkes & Stapley, 2022).

Alongside this, the government has received criticism about their 'oversimplistic attendance campaign (Department for Education, 2024a; Jones, 2024; National Autistic Society, 2024) and their management of educational settings including the physical repair of buildings (National Audit Office, 2023).

The government continues to encourage schools to become multi-academy trusts (Department for Education, 2022a, 2022b) despite concerns about the variation in funding and fragmentation of the school system (West & Wolfe, 2019). Notwithstanding pledges to reduce inequities across education, and the 'Levelling Up' guidance (Department for Education, 2022c) findings indicate disparities across ethnicity, SEND, and socio-economic status continue (Mon-Williams et al., 2023; West & Wolfe, 2019). A 2022 report indicated that "there has been virtually no change in the 'disadvantage gap' in GCSE attainment over the past 20 years" (Farquharson et al., 2022).

Echoing earlier discourses about the importance of 'moral virtues', the government has issued further guidance about the statutory Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) curriculum content, enforcing age limits and discouraging schools from discussing gender identity to prevent children from being "exposed to disturbing content" (Rishi Sunak quoted in Evans, 2024).

Educational Psychology Context

Referred to as 'change agents', EPs are described as being in "unique position" to advocate for needs at the systemic and individual level in schools (Roffey, 2015), therefore, possibly offering a position to challenge oppressive discourses of CYP. However, the EP role has also received criticism for representing and perpetuating inequity in education, and many authors describe EP practices that maintain the oppression of CYP and families (Gould, 1996; Williams, 2020; Wright, 2017, 2020). Sewell (2016) referred to the risk of epistemological oppression in EP practice, influencing the construction of 'truths', often, framing the EP as an expert over CYP's experiences. Likewise, findings from a systematic literature review of research exploring EPs perceptions of social justice referred to oppressive practice, including devaluing CYP voice, perpetuating medicalised narratives, unethical assessment of CYP, and collusion and complicity with educational professionals and/or the government to achieve an agenda, ultimately 'disadvantaging' CYP (Hayes, 2023).

As reflexive practitioners, educational psychologists are often required to adapt their practice based on policy changes, social issues, and broader developments, including technology (Fallon et al., 2010). Like schools, educational psychology services were significantly affected by the 2008 financial crisis and subsequent change of government in 2010, with Local Authorities losing up to 27% of their funding between 2009/10 and 2014/15 (Jones et al., 2015). In response, many services adapted their models, moving to traded or hybrid structures (presented in Table 2) to support financing. This change represented a potential shift in the relationship dynamics between schools and EPs towards a more consumer-based model (Atfield et al., 2023; Lee & Woods, 2017). Findings from a study exploring the impact of the move to traded and/or hybrid models indicate that this supported EPs to offer a greater variety of approaches but also made it difficult for them to act as a 'critical friend' due to concerns about prioritising the customer relationship (Lee & Woods, 2017), therefore, potentially affecting EPs' ability to challenge oppressive narratives and practices.

The introduction of the Children and Families Act (2014), and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (Department for Education & Department of Health, 2015) had a significant impact for EPs, stretching the age of support available to CYP with SEND beyond the previous boundary of 19 years to 25 years and changing the 'statement' system to Education, Health and Care Plans. More specifically, these policies reflected discourses about CYP and SEND to which EPs were required to conform. The use of prescribed categories of need and responsibility to name discrete provision feeds into a medicalised model of disability, whilst compounding the EP's role as 'expert'. Moore, (2005, pp. 103–104) described that EP practice increasingly "seems to have become narrowly prescribed, overly concerned with questions of assessment and the resource worthiness of children".

Through these discourses, the EP role appears to be limited to that of a gatekeeper to provision, applying and reinforcing medicalised diagnostic criteria (Moore, 2005; Thorley Waters, 2014).

Table 2

Description of Educational Psychology Service Delivery Types.

Delivery Types	Description
Traded	Educational psychology 'time' is purchased by schools. This model allows schools to purchase packages of support at the beginning of an academic year or on a termly basis.
Non-traded	Educational psychology time is purchased by external organisations, such as The Clinical Commissioning Group. This means that educational psychology support is free at the point of service.
Hybrid	Educational psychology time can be purchased by schools and/or external organisations. For example, the Virtual School might fund specialist packages to support care experienced children in schools.

(Atfield et al., 2023; Hooper, 2023)

Summary

Mirroring earlier criticisms, educational policies in recent years have been accused of being ideologically driven, influenced by capitalism (explored further in Chapter Two, Part

Two) (Hoctor, 2023; Wilkins, 2017; Zajda, 2006). Whilst some consider the focus on mental

health of CYP to be supportive, others question the rhetoric used, suggesting it represents

an attempt to exert greater control over CYP under the guise of 'care' (Tait, 2001).

The presented genealogy offered an insight into historical and current oppression of

CYP in education, explored further through the role of the EP.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW PART TWO: DISCOURSES ABOUT CHILDREN

AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Part two of this chapter explores dominant discourses about CYP drawn from the genealogy presented in Chapter Two. The discourses drawn reflect my interpretation and are based on the oppressive discourses I perceive to be most salient. The implications of these discourses will be discussed, with particular focus on policy and practice within education. It begins with a definition of 'oppression'.

Oppression

The term 'oppression' implies the "unjust or cruel exercise of authority or power" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Constructions of oppression are built upon the balance of power and how this is enacted towards an individual or group of individuals (Thompson, 2022). Often, these constructions position individuals and/or specific groups as vulnerable to others. Within a school context, CYP could be considered at risk of oppression (Ball et al., 2011; Bernstein, 1975; Clark, 1998; Foucault, 1977a; Pearson, 2016). This is likely related to a combination of factors, including the hierarchal structure of school systems and student's role as 'learner', positioning adults as 'knowledgeable' (Bowe et al., 2014). Similarly, CYP could be considered to be vulnerable to oppression by EPs, whom may be thought to possess expert knowledge over the CYPs experience and represent a 'gate keeper' to provision and services (Moore, 2005; Sewell, 2016; Thorley Waters, 2014). That is to say that oppression occurs more broadly than the current study can explore, in fact, I understand oppression to occur within every interaction although the impact of this varies considerably.

For the purposes of the current research, the term 'oppression' will be employed as an umbrella term (Hayes, 2023). Rather than focusing on one 'ism' it is understood to encapsulate 'the complex, cumulative way in which effects of multiple forms of discrimination…combine, overlap, or intersect' through intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989; Hayes, 2023; Proctor et al., 2018). With this in mind, the following definition of oppression will be used:

"Inhuman or degrading treatment of individuals or groups; hardship and injustice brought about by the dominance of one group over another; the negative and demeaning exercise of power" (Thompson, 2016, p. 50)*.*

Identification of Discourses

A discourse is defined as "a system of statements which constructs an object" (Parker, 1992). Dominant discourses about CYP are drawn from the genealogy presented in Chapter Two. I acknowledge that my own interpretation and subjectivity are key to this process, and the discourses identified reflect my own understanding and biases. Furthermore, the discourses identified are Western constructions of CYP. These include discourses about childhood, adolescence, gender, learning and knowledge, SEND, ethnicity and race, behaviour, and capitalism. Discourses of socio-economic status and/or social class were recognised across most of the identified discourses, and therefore have not been explored as separate discourses.

Discourses of Childhood

Although discourses about childhood often relate to issues of age and maturity, many authors argue that constructions of childhood are socially and culturally based, rather than biological or developmental (Burman, 2017; Prout & James, 2015; Valentine, 2016; Woodhead, 2005). Westernised constructions of childhood have varied over time but are often based upon the role of adults. For example, a Dionysian construction conceptualises "children as wildness" (Ariès, 1962, p. 315), inherently sinful and in need of discipline (Biddle, 2017; Valentine, 2016). Whereas an Apollonian construction perceives children to be inherently innocent and vulnerable to corruption; "the child was good, and corrupt society corrupted him" (Lawson & Silver, 1973, p. 233). The role of the adult is central across both constructions; the child is positioned as requiring protection and/or guidance by the adult (Biddle, 2017). These constructions are evident within educational practices. Historically, physical punishment was a common feature of schooling; "pain and physical punishment…were regarded as indispensable for guiding the young to virtue" (Lawson &

Silver, 1973, p. 49). Troen (1985) connects these constructions to the development of state schools, designed because "the proper nurture of the young was essential to shaping society at large" (Troen, 1985, p. 429).

Discourses of Adolescence

The concept of 'adolescence' is a "20th century phenomenon" (Ayman-Nolley & Taira, 2000, p. 35), prior to this young people were categorised as either child or adult (Gillard, 2018). The term 'adolescence' as we know it, was introduced by Hall (1904), broadly defining the developmental period between 14-24 years of age, amid growing concern about the antisocial behaviour of young people during the Industrial Revolution in the US (Arnett, 2006; Sawyer et al., 2018). Scholars have linked adolescent antisocial behaviour during this time to socially contextual issues, including the lack of parental oversight due to unregulated work hours, deprivation and poor amenities (Cravens, 2006; Gillard, 2018).

However, some previous authors have suggested that constructions likely reflect the economic and labour demands of society and adapt to the ideological purpose of the time (Enright et al., 1987; Gillard, 2018). For example, during economic hardship, adolescents are portrayed as "immature, psychologically unstable, and in need of prolonged participation in the educational system", whereas during times of conflict, with increased demands on labour, adolescents are constructed as reliable, and mature (Enright et al., 1987).

Incorporating developmental psychology, sociology, and biological sciences, Hall (1904) explored the experience of adolescence, delving into issues including depressed moods, risk-taking and sensation seeking, susceptibility, peer relationships, and biological changes through a contextual lens (Arnett, 2006), remarking that "modern life is hard, in many respects increasingly so, especially on youth" (Hall quoted in Troen, 1985, p. 430).

Although Hall (1904) arguably demonstrated a nuanced understanding of the developmental and contextual factors influencing adolescents' behaviour, discourses of the time framed young people as dangerous and aggressive, giving rise to a theoretical understanding of adolescence as "dark and dim" (Ayman-Nolley & Taira, 2000, p. 35). In contrast, celebrated psychologists, including Piaget (1964/1967) and Vygotsky (1931/1986)

offered counter narratives, highlighting the inquisitiveness and creativity associated with adolescence. Moreover, Erikson (1968, p. 134) described adolescence as a "vital regenerator" during which social objects are assessed for their "regenerative significance". However, through these discourses, it could be argued that adolescents continue to be constructed in one of three ways; visionary, victim or victimiser (Adelson, 1964; S. Sawyer et al., 2018).

Discourses of Gender

The term gender is complex and subject to varying definitions. Understood by some to refer to 'biological sex', gender sometimes represents the categories of male, female, and intersex and is based upon physiological attributes (Wiseman & Davidson, 2012). However, others would consider the term gender to refer to identity, reflecting a fluid understanding unconcerned about firm categorisation. Nonetheless, CYP are typically subject to discourses of gender before they are even born, cemented further through the "diagnosis of sex" in utero (Black Delfin, 2022; Hoominfar, 2021, p. 646). Many authors suggest that from this point, the child is subject to gender constructions, reinforced following birth, through gender socialisation, employing cultural definitions of maleness and femaleness (Bem, 1983; Black Delfin, 2022; Leaper & Friedman, 2007).

Gender can be explored through its relational dichotomy; "masculinity can only exist through its opposition to femininity" (Francis, 1999, p. 300), understood by some to be a hierarchical relationship, wherein masculinity is considered superior and dominant to femininity (Connell, 2005). This gender dichotomy reinforces gender stereotyped positions and practices within childhood, with some behaviours categorised as feminine and others masculine (Brooker et al., 2014; Leaper, 1994; Maccoby, 1998). However, Butler (2002) notes that this perspective represents the dominant discourse, intwining concepts of sexuality and gender, presenting a heterosexual version of gender and gender stereotypes.

Within education, gender norms and socialization are often reinforced through the 'hidden curriculum' of the classroom and setting (Holford, 2020; Wienclaw, 2011). This is understood to be the standards of behaviour within a society and/or culture that are taught

through the school system. Wienclaw (2011) describes that these subtly reinforce behaviour and attitudes deemed appropriate by society, for example through play experiences in early years. Across a number of studies, findings suggest that educational staff may reinforce gender stereotypes through their interactions with CYP, the content of class activities and the physical arrangement of the play environment (Chapman, 2016; Lyttleton-Smith, 2015). Further, play among CYP is suggested to reflect the power dynamics of genders in society (Koch & Irby, 2005); with girls encouraged to engage in sociodramatic play of domestic situations and boys typically pushed toward cars, building toys, and sports equipment (Brooker et al., 2014; Leaper & Friedman, 2007).

Furthermore, CYP are subject to differing expectations based on their gender (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). A great deal of research suggests that girls are often constructed as being more sensible than boys and naturally talented across reading and writing, whilst boys are considered to need greater levels of teacher attention and are expected to achieve higher in maths and science (Browne, 2004; Chen & Rao, 2011; Francis, 1999; Shepardson & Pizzini, 1992; Tiedemann, 2000; Wienclaw, 2011), thought to contribute towards a self-fulfilling prophecy (Hyde & Kling, 2001; Jussim et al., 1996).

CYP constructed to sit outside of these conceptualisations of masculinity and femininity often experience intolerance. Wiseman & Davidson (2012), describe that society experience 'gender non-conformity' as difficult at least and offensive at worst. Within this context, 'gender non-conforming' individuals are often pathologized, labelled with mental health needs and/or medical conditions (Wiseman & Davidson, 2012).

Discourses of Learning and Knowledge

Philosophies of learning influence and inspire approaches, policies and procedures within the education system and therefore the construction of CYP. For example, rationalism, posits that 'foundational knowledge' exists inherently, representing a capacity and capability to know through reasoning (Magrini, 2010). Rationalist education asserts that essential concepts and skills within a culture should be taught to all to a certain standard, thereby promoting a centralised curriculum and the authority of teachers (Şahin, 2018). Whereas

empiricism imagines humans as 'blank slates', learning through experience, encouraging the

use of instrumentalist models, including coaching and supervised activities (Magrini, 2010).

The discourses within philosophies of learning are particularly relevant for CYP with SEND,

potentially framing them as lacking an inherent quality, similar to the medical model of

disability, or ascribing responsibility for their attainment to contextual factors, such as a lack

of effective experience and exposure.

Philosophies of learning also influence value judgements about education, for

example, what knowledge is valued in a 'comprehensive' curriculum. Pring (2010, p. 57)

questions who decides which aspects are included in a 'comprehensive' curriculum, noting

that in the current UK context, this is likely influenced by "what learning is required for

economic prosperity of the country". In his criticism, Pring (2010) questions the distinction

between 'academic' and 'vocational' pursuits and draws attention to the prioritisation of

'academic' knowledge over 'vocational', a narrative arguably used throughout the history of

schooling to promote social class divisions (Armstrong, 1998; Gillard, 2018).

Likewise, the balance between academic endeavours and 'personal development' in

the curriculum is contested (Leitch, 2012; Parker & Levinson, 2018) and senior members of

the government have criticised that "pupil-centred learning" is "dethroning" the teacher and

prioritising "empathy" skills (Michael Gove cited in Curtis, 2008; Gillard, 2018).

Alongside this, several researchers have associated personal development curricula

to state social control, describing that it represents the state's "attempt to socialise the

deviant" (Boler, 1999; Leitch, 2012, p. 102; Sarup, 1982). Perceptions about the place of

personal development within the curriculum offer conflicting constructions of education, and

therefore CYP. Framing education as an 'academic' pursuit, and expecting CYP to manage

and develop their social, emotional, and life skills independently, thereby characterising CYP

who struggle with these skills as 'different'. Or perceiving the personal development curricula

to be integral, therefore emphasising the adult's and possibly government's role in learning,

with possible implications of agendas; "knowledge is portrayed as a commodity, delivered by

teachers, grocery boys, as it were, of the curriculum, to children… lend[ing] a spurious authority to the concept of knowledge" (Armstrong, 1998, p. 75).

The discourses of learning and knowledge explored so far assume that formalised education, in some form is essential. Some researchers argue that this represents discourses of educational paternalism, ascribing to the following assumptions:

- Education is necessary

- Children are ignorant

- Children are unable to choose

- Children's consent to engage in education is irrelevant

(Nordenbo, 1986)

Paternalism is understood as "the interference with a person's liberty of action justified by reasons referring exclusively to the welfare, good, happiness, needs, interests or values of the person being coerced" (Dworkin, 1972, p. 65), Dworkin later added that this interference is "defended or motivated by the claim that the person interfered with will be better off or protected from harm" (Dworkin, 2014). Mcdonough & Taylor, (2021, p. 195) describe that CYP with SEND are particularly subject to paternalism through "practices that interfere with their freedom and agency ostensibly for their own benefit".

Within education, this may apply to paternalistic interventions and practices of discipline, including "restrictive behavioural programs and…the use of restraints and seclusion" (Giesinger, 2019; Mcdonough & Taylor, 2021, p. 196; Schouten, 2018). Some authors argue that treating "children as children for the purposes" of education is not presumptively wrong, but question the limits of this, asking, when do children become "adults toward whom it is presumptively wrong to act paternalistically?" (Giesinger, 2019; Schouten, 2018, pp. 336–337). Discourses underpinning paternalistic education could be argued to construct CYP as senseless and voiceless; unable to understand, act on, or advocate for their rights, conceptualising their consent as unnecessary and irrelevant. This may construct education staff as having knowledge unavailable to children and acting in CYP's best

interests. It also suggests that as adults, education staff have foresight into what CYP will need to learn and experience to be 'successful', and in doing so, directs education to meet this criterion, thereby potentially limiting the content, curriculum and experiences afforded to CYP.

Discourses of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Some authors suggest that many of the discourses applied to CYP, including those about SEND, ethnicity, and socio-economic status can be traced to the modern eugenics' movement in the late 19th Century (Coard, 1971a; Lowe, 1998). Coined by Galton (1883), eugenics represented Galton's desire for 'racial improvement', achieved through a scientific program of selective breeding and forced sterilisation (Kevles, 1999; Lowe, 1998). Gunter (2021) suggests that eugenicist values are embedded into the UK education system, disguised behind terms such as 'needs', 'diversity', and 'choice' This relates to an issue referred to as the 'dilemma of difference'; the choice between identifying CYPs differences to provide adaptive teaching at the risk of labelling and dividing them or emphasising "sameness" through a one size fits all approach to the curriculum (Terzi, 2005, p. 443). According to this narrative, 'inclusive policies' ultimately enact eugenicists' beliefs about who deserves an education and who does not (Gunter, 2021).

Eugenicist discourses about SEND employ a medical model of disability, conceptualising it to be biophysical in nature, existing within the body as an inherent failure or impairment (Runswick-Cole & Hodge, 2009). Disabled people are pathologized as abnormal and emphasis is placed on their 'inability' to engage in culturally valued activities rather than 'disabling' societal structures (Danforth, 2001; Retief & Letšosa, 2018). This model is underpinned by discourses about the cure, treatment and rehabilitation of disability; constructing CYP with SEND with a sense of tragedy, at the loss and cost to themselves and their family (Carlson, 2010). Furthermore, medicalised discourses promote an expert-model, of "doctor knows best" (Fulcher, 1989, p. 27), limiting the control disabled people have over their own bodies and care (Allan, 1995). Through these discourses, CYP with SEND are constructed to be inadequate and inferior to individuals without SEND. They are considered

burdensome to their families and society, representing a social, and economic cost, whilst their knowledge/experiences are devalued.

A study exploring perceptions of SEND among educational professionals concluded that staff may hold specific biases within constructions of SEND, for example, expressing greater reluctance about the inclusion of CYP with social and emotional needs in their classrooms (Avramidis et al., 2000). Armstrong (2014) suggests that the language of education policies encourages this bias, with repeated use of terms such as 'discipline and respect', 'disruption', 'poor behaviour', and 'authority', building an image of conformity and compliance and avoiding exploration of the underlying causes of behaviour, possibly further reinforced through pledges to "end the bias towards the inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream schools" (The Conservative Manifesto, 2010, p. 53).

Moreover, families of CYP demonstrating 'emotional and behavioural problems' experience significant 'stigma by association' (Heflinger et al., 2014). Potentially due to medicalised narratives and eugenicist discourses about the heritability of SEND and deviant behaviour.

Several authors argue that policies and acts relating to CYP with SEND, and disability more broadly are underpinned by capitalist priorities; focusing on the perceived contribution (or lack of) CYP with SEND can make to the economy and/or the cost of provision to support them (Lehane, 2017; Pluquailec & O'Connor, 2023). Through these discourses, CYP are reduced to their monetary worth.

Discourses of Ethnicity and Race

The term 'race' is widely used, although considered by some to be a social construct, employed to divide humans and uphold white supremacy (Witzig, 1996). Bryant et al. (2022) have linked the construct of race to oppressive practices within medicine, psychiatry, education, and social care, among other fields.

Within education, criticism has been drawn against the narrow school curriculum, often described as colonialist and a white-washed version of history (Begum & Saini, 2019; Howarth, 2004) that perpetuates structural inequality (Quyoum, 2020). As well as excluding

minoritised ethnicity figures and global majority histories from this, Western societies are often framed as the winners/saviours, thereby implicitly casting minority ethnicity communities as underdeveloped, powerless and/or villains (Parsons, 2020; Winter, 2018). Furthermore, the addition of 'British values' to the curriculum, employing notions of what it is to be British, is argued to present a colour-blind perspective, conflating Britishness with whiteness (Winter et al., 2022). Bhopal & Preston (2012) argue that this and the Prevent Strategy imply that some identities are a threat to the British way of life. Through these discourses, CYP of minoritised ethnicities are constructed to be disruptive to British norms, unwilling to conform and are imagined to be the very opposite of British values; democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance.

CYP of minoritised ethnicities are overrepresented among exclusion rates (Department for Education, 2019, 2024b). Discourses about the 'challenging behaviour' of minoritised ethnicity CYP are thought to contribute to disparities in exclusions, framing their behaviour as aggressive and violent (Demie, 2019). The behaviour of minoritised ethnicity CYP is often viewed more harshly than white CYP, constructing them as dangerous and volatile, associated with concepts of hyper-masculinity (Connolly, 1998; Howarth, 2004). Black CYP are particularly vulnerable to adultification in education, a growing body of research indicates that school staff perceive Black girls to be less innocent and to require less nurture, protection and support than white CYP (Epstein et al., 2017). Dumas & Derrick Nelson (2016) link the adultification of Black CYP to slavery practices wherein infant children were 'put to work' and punished for exhibiting childlike behaviours.

Several studies indicate a culture of blame related to exclusions, positioning CYP of minoritised ethnicity, their family and community at fault for their exclusion (Blyth & Milner, 1996; Howarth et al., 2004). Howarth, (2004, p. 360) notes that historically, individual factors, including "disruptive children, bad parents or racist teachers" have been blamed for exclusion disparities, thereby maintaining inequities in the education system and wider agenda more broadly.

Discourses of Behaviour

Ball et al., (2011, p. 99) describe behaviour as "one of the major discourses of schooling", inextricably linked to public perception and government agenda. Drawing upon discourses about childhood, and philosophies of knowledge, Laws & Davies (2000) consider discourses of behaviour within education to represent constructions about what it is to be a student rather than child, wherein CYP are reduced to their ability to learn and demonstrate learning behaviour, rather than a holistic view of them.

The term 'poor behaviour', used across education policy, reflects behaviour considered 'improper' (Priyadharshini, 2011), and can be linked to earlier discourses about moral values and social order. This discourse limits the CYP as being either a 'good' or 'naughty' child, and therefore could be argued to limit the possibilities of action for CYP (Priyadharshini, 2011).

Within education, the expression/presentation of emotion is often labelled as 'poor behaviour' (Parker & Levinson, 2018; Wright, 2009). Further, 'emotionality' is often associated with mental health, therefore linking mental health and behaviour (Parker & Levinson, 2018). Government policy about supporting mental health needs in schools has been criticised for presenting a deficit model, emphasising the role of punitive measures through 'zero-tolerance' approaches including behaviour management systems, detentions, suspensions and exclusions to "identify and cure" pupils (Ball et al., 2011; Parker & Levinson, 2018, p. 876; E. Taylor et al., 2018). Punitive approaches have been found to exacerbate racial, social, and gender disparities (Jones et al., 2023; Lodi et al., 2022), and critics describe that they place too much responsibility on staff to manage CYP's behaviour, disempowering CYP in the process (Wright, 2009). Drawing on Foucault's (1977a) work, Wright (2009) links punitive approaches to notions of normalisation, wherein individuals perceived to be outside the norm, or 'region of tolerance' are encouraged to conform through 'normalising' processes (Wright, 2009).

Discourses of Capitalism

Similarly, discourses of capitalism may influence educational practices, idealising the 'norm', conflating success with economic potential, whilst also pathologizing children for marketing purposes (Finn & Nybell, 2001; Hill et al., 2009). Education in the UK is understood by some to be firmly underpinned by capitalist ideals, strengthened by the marketisation of education through the 'free-schools agenda' (Hoctor, 2023; Wilkins, 2017). Hill et al., (2009, p. 79) describe how the mechanisms of schooling, including divisionary tactics such as subject setting, exclusion, and a standardised national curriculum heavily influenced by capitalism reinforce social class disparities, limit learning and reject individual needs, concluding that "education prepares and cultivates future workers to become both useful and productive and obedient and docile".

Bialostok & Kamberelis (2010) explored the influence of discourses of capitalism in a first-grade classroom, suggesting that the teacher's commitment to 'new capitalism' influenced their teaching style, encouraging risk-taking behaviour among the students through the language and terms used. Bialostok & Kamberelis (2010) described that 'new capitalism' developed during a time of financial insecurity and flux and is therefore entrenched in risk-taking behaviour. They suggested that similar constructions were evident in the first-grade classroom, in which young children were praised for trying new skills with little structure through the lens of empowerment. However, some social science researchers consider narratives of risk-taking in adolescence to be a product of discourses of capitalism, describing that this represents the marketisation of CYP (Nxumalo, 2019; S. Stephens, 2021). In their introduction to a collection of papers exploring this topic, Finn & Nybell, (2001, p. 140) criticised the pathologisation of childhood and adolescence, describing that behaviours such as "stubbornness and 'laziness' to sadness and sexual interest" are constructed as "symptoms" to be fixed through services, often with financial implications.

Chapter Two Summary

The brief genealogy of education in England suggests that from the earliest times, schooling may have been used to maintain power hierarchies, preparing the children of

those in power to one day rule. This mirrors issues within education and society today, with concerns about 'elitism' and private school over-representation among leadership in Britain suggesting that the purpose of education may still be to maintain power structures (Friedman & Reeves, 2020; Gamsu, 2016; Gaztambide-Fernández, 2011; Green & Kynaston, 2019; Reeves et al., 2017; The Sutton Trust, 2019).

Across the genealogy, the following discourses were identified; childhood, adolescence, gender, learning and knowledge, SEND, ethnicity and race, behaviour, and capitalism.

Whilst a small number of studies indicate that many EPs consider issues of social justice to be integral to their practice (Cumber, 2022; Schulze et al., 2019; Zaniolo, 2021), as far as I have been able to find, few studies explore EPs constructions of oppressive discourses used about CYP in educational settings and their constructions of how they could work against these oppressive discourses. Furthermore, I acknowledge that social justice and oppression may not be perceived as integral to all EPs, and therefore the oppression of CYP is likely to be construed differently among the EP community.

This thesis aims to explore this issue further through the following research questions:

1. How do EPs construe oppressive discourses used about CYP in educational settings?

2. How are the CYP positioned in these discourses?

3. What are the goals and impact of these discourses?

4. How do EPs construe they could work against oppressive discourses of CYP?

These research questions are understood through a Foucauldian lens, which is uninterested in 'intentionality' and more concerned about 'function'. In exploring the 'goals and impact' of the discourses, I am hoping to understand the "function the statement performs" (Graham, 2000, p. 9).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This research aimed to explore how EPs construed oppressive discourses used about CYP in educational settings and their constructions of how they work against these oppressive discourses. The study employed a qualitative design and used semi-structured interviews to explore EPs' insights. The interviews were transcribed, and the data was analysed using a six-stage adapted version of Willig's (2015) Foucauldian Discourse Analysis.

Research Orientation

A research project is underpinned by its philosophical orientation, providing the framework by which all research decisions are made and embodying assumptions about social objects and social reality (ontology), as well as how we come to know information about these things (epistemology) (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012).

Ontology, Epistemology, and Methodology

Described as the 'reality status' (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012, p. 4), ontology refers to the nature of things and influences how researchers conceptualise and study social objects (Delanty & Strydom, 2003; Saunders et al., 2019). This branch of philosophy is concerned with explaining social facts, relationships, and processes (Tollefsen, 2014) and often revolves around the existence of abstract constructs versus physical objects. Epistemology refers to the assumptions made about knowledge and the most effective methods for gathering it (Saunders et al., 2019). Described as a 'how' question, methodology is concerned with how a piece of research should be undertaken (Grix, 2019; Leshem & Trafford, 2007). The methodology is underpinned by the epistemological approach but often fits into one of three possible camps: positivist, post-positivist and interpretivist (presented in Table 3). Grix (2019) considers these positions on a continuum, noting that broadly speaking, the scale moves from approaches that attempt to explain social reality, to those seeking to interpret and understand it.

Table 3

Research orientations and their philosophical assumptions.

	Description	*Ontology*	*Epistemology*	*Methodology*
Positivism	Positivist methodologies strive for objectivity and replicability, the data collection methods are usually quantitative, and ultimate aim is to explain a behaviour (Grix, 2019).	Universalism: One true reality exists externally from the human experience.	Truths are discoverable and can be uncovered through objective scientific methods.	Observations, experimentation.
Post-positivism	Post-positivist methodologies assume that social truths can be observed, and causal explanations drawn but acknowledge the role of interpretation in this, seeking both to understand and explain the social world (Clarke et al., 2015; Grix, 2019).	Reality exists but direct access is not possible.	Truths may be observable but require interpretation.	Quantitative and qualitative methods.
Interpretivism	Interpretivist methodologies strive for reflexivity and depth. Data collection methods tend to be qualitative, and the aim is to uncover subjective meaning (Grix, 2019).	There is no one true external reality, instead there are multiple versions. Reality is socially constructed.	Truths are subjective and are influenced by experiences.	Qualitative methods such as interviews, focus groups.

Note. 1 Based on Clarke et al., 2015; Saunders et al., 2019.

The current research adopted an interpretivist research stance, acknowledging that there are multiple social realities, influenced by experience. 'Interpretivism' is an umbrella term for a range of approaches including feminism, hermeneutics, phenomenology and social constructionism (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This study considered the experience of oppressive discourses and accepted that 'oppression' is experienced and understood differently by individuals. The participants' social realities were assumed to be socially constructed through interactions and language. Therefore, this research was influenced by social constructionism.

Social Constructionism

According to social constructionism, social reality is constructed between people, through interactions and social processes (Willig, 2013). Integral to this, is language. It is through language that we structure and make sense of the social world, construct versions of social reality and achieve social objectives (Willig, 2013). Although we share language and culture with others, there are countless alternative ways of constructing social objects, and our constructions may differ. Further, language can represent a form of action with practical consequences. Burr (2015) argues that our constructions of the world influence our action, entertaining some options, whilst excluding others. For example, if we understand homelessness to be a 'social and economic' issue rather than 'individual failure', we may be more likely to support homeless charities. Burr (2015) notes that this also means that constructions are "bound up with power relations", based upon perceived power roles (Burr, 2015, p. 5). These dictate what is socially acceptable for different people to do, and how they might treat others.

Discourse

The act of using language is referred to as "discourse" (Burr, 2015; Edwards, 1997). Although definitions differ slightly according to the epistemological stance adopted, broadly speaking the term has been defined as "a system of statements which constructs an object" (Parker, 1992). Discourse is generally considered all forms of spoken and written

communication but can also include symbolism, imagery, and visuals (Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2013; Parker, 1992). For example, within the current research, the physical environments and architecture of educational settings may represent a method of oppression.

Types of discourse analysis

Discourse analysis is a broad term covering many different analytic principles and practices (Edley, 2001; Wetherell, 2001) (displayed in Table 4). Fundamentally, discourse analysis assumes that discourse is action-orientated (it has a goal) and represents subjectivity and power relations, therefore understanding the social world and the self can only be achieved through language (Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2013). Discourse analysts consider the social context to be key in understanding the action orientation of language (Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2013; Willig, 2013).

Discourse analysis is often separated into two camps; discursive psychology and Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA) (Burr, 2015; Graham, 2005; Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2013; Willig, 2013). Although there are major differences between discursive psychology and FDA, both approaches are interested in the "relationship of language to other social processes, and of how language works within power relations" (Taylor, 2004, p. 436).

Discursive psychology focuses on the situated use of discourse, often exploring the words, and structural and linguistic features of text or speech (Graham, 2005; Grix, 2019; Parker, 1992) and how discourse practices are used to legitimise personal stakes. Within this, the performative qualities of discourse and how these are used to achieve social goals (the action orientation of talk) are of particular interest (Burr, 2015; Pomerantz, 2008; Willig, 2013). Discursive psychology is interested in power relations, but considers these within interactions, therefore taking a micro social constructionist stance (Burr, 2015), whereas FDA is concerned with the broader ideological and power effects of discourse (Burr, 2015).

Table 4

Common discourse analysis approaches and their basic assumptions

Assumptions	Type of Discourse Analysis			
	Conversation analysis	**Discursive psychology**	**Critical discourse analysis**	**Foucauldian discourse analysis**
Analysis level	Micro-analysis	Micro-analysis	Option for micro and/or macro analysis (Burr, 2015).	Macro-analysis
Discipline	Sociology, Linguistics and Ethnomethodology (Pomerantz, 2008; Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2017).	Social Psychology and Linguistic Philosophy (Pomerantz, 2008).	Critical Social Theory and Critical Linguistics (Pomerantz, 2008).	Poststructuralism (Pomerantz, 2008).
Principles	Three fundamental theoretical assumptions: 1. Talk is a form of action. 2. Action is structurally organised. 3. Talk creates and maintains intersubjectivity (Heritage, 1984). Involves the analysis of specific and observable phenomena occurring within interactions (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2017).	Primarily concerned about the action orientation of language. Exploring how discourse practices are used to persuade, justify, and excuse actions (Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2013).	Considers the relationship between language and power, thereby exposing inequalities (Burr, 2015). Analysts can identify the ideologies and power relations existing within and reproduced or resisted through discourse.	Concerned with how discourse constructs the social world. It is interested in discursive resources; how discourse limits and opens possibilities to people (Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2013).

Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

Influenced by the work of Michel Foucault, FDA considers all forms of communication, including text, images, videos, buildings, and clothes (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2017; Burr, 2015; Denzin, 1995; Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2013). Foucault defined discourse as more than "groups of signs" "but as practices that systematically form the object of which they speak" (Foucault, 1972, p. 49). Taking this perspective, discourse is understood to be "something that produces something else" and similar to an utterance, or concept, cannot be "analysed in isolation" (Mills, 2004, p. 15). The current research aligns well with this, adopting a macro stance, interested in the function of the discourse rather than units of language. Specifically, I am interested in how CYP are 'formed' through practices and language. Hall, (1992) described that within FDA, discourses are a set of statements that represent a particular type of knowledge of a topic at a particular historical moment. The statements within a discourse "fit together" (Hall, 1992, p. 201) through a systematicity of ideas (Mills, 2004) and support a "strategy…a common institutional…or political drift or pattern" (Cousins & Hussain, 1984, pp. 84–85). Foucault referred to these statements as a "discursive formation" (Foucault, 1972, p. 38). Generally, discursive formations are used to maintain or build a discourse about a topic, constructing the topic in a specific way, and limiting alternative constructions.

Foucauldian Discourse Analysis and Truth

Like social constructionism, FDA is not concerned with uncovering a single universal truth, and further, does not place significant emphasis on uncovering personal truths (Foucault, 1981). FDA is more concerned with the purpose of social truths, and how they come to be "made…repeated, renewed and displaced" (Foucault, 1981, p. 70). Of particular interest are the "rules that govern the possibility of true and false statements" (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2017, p. 115) as well as the labour exercised to exclude certain knowledge from that accepted as true (Mills, 2004).

Foucauldian discourse analysts assume that knowledge is produced through language, developed through practice (Hall, 1992). 'Discursive practice' is defined as the "practice of producing meaning" (Hall, 1992, p. 201) and refers to any process through which knowledge is formed or reinforced. An example of this is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2

An Example of How Discursive Practices Apply to Medicalised Constructions of Disability
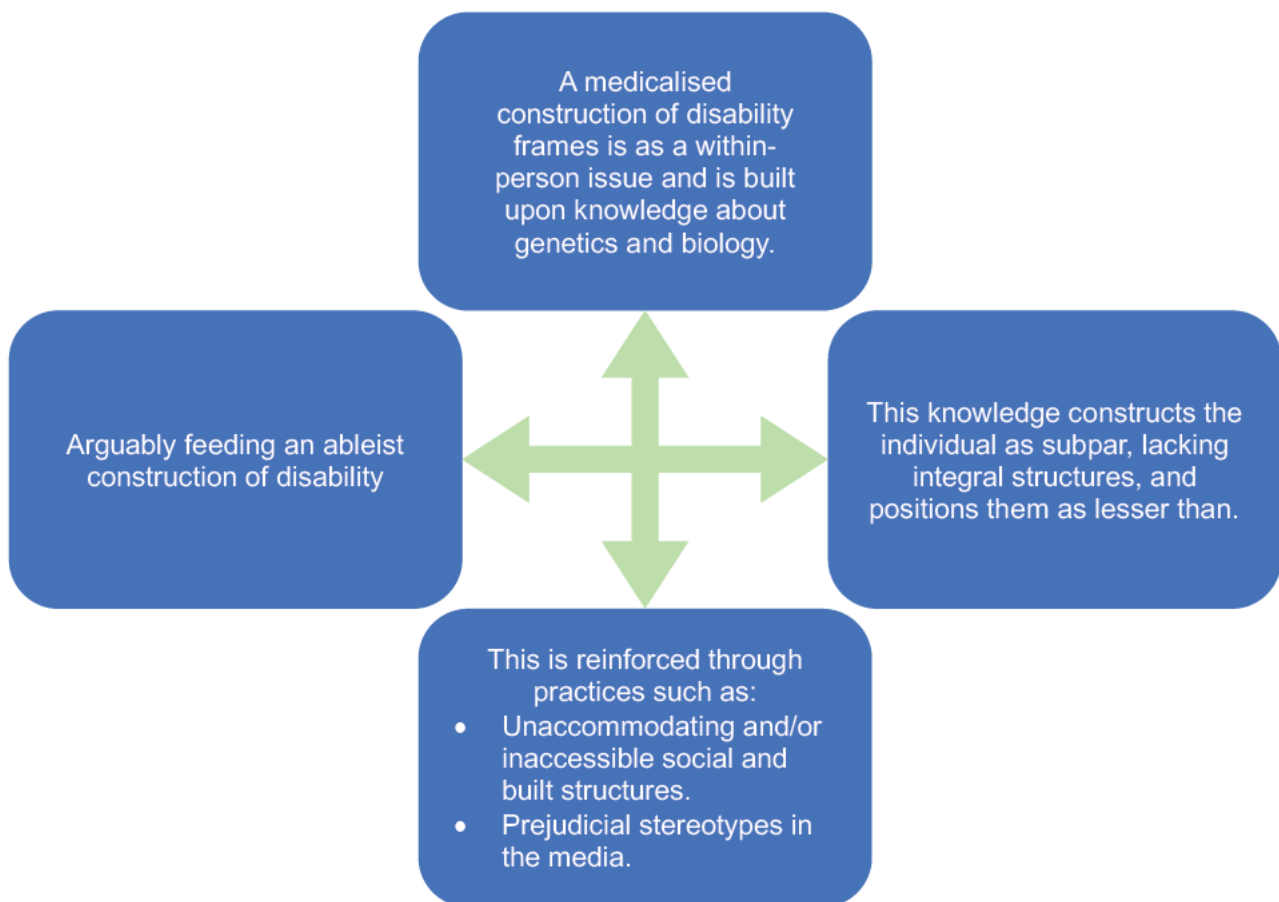
Foucauldian Discourse Analysis and Objects

Objects are central to Foucault's understanding of discourse. According to Foucault, discourses "systematically form the object of which they speak" (Foucault, 1972, p. 49). Throughout communication, objects are "organised and reconstituted...through particular ways of speaking" (Parker, 1994, p. 98) and "once an object has been elaborated in a discourse it is difficult *not* to refer to it as if it were real" (Parker, 1992, p. 5). An application of this is demonstrated in Figure 3. Through a system of statements, objects can be identified, and therefore the selection of statements is integral to FDA (Parker, 1994).

Figure 3

An exploration of 'objects' within discourses about the National Health Service.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the public were encouraged to 'thank the NHS', and it is often described as 'in crisis' or 'broken' (Wickens & Brown, 2023). Through FDA, these statements could be referring to the following objects:

'The NHS':
provides free at the point of service health care in the UK.

'Thank':
A social norm, act of politeness, often applause.

'Crisis':
A state of turmoil, with health (including mental health) and financial implications.

'Broken':
Something damaged, in disrepair.

Foucauldian Discourse Analysis and Subjects

Foucault used the term "connaissance" to describe "the relation of the subject to the object" (Foucault, 1972, p. 15). Once objects have been identified, the statements can be further explored for the subjects which they refer to. Importantly, objects can also be viewed as subjects (Parker, 1994). Applying to the example above, Figure 4 presents an exploration of the possible 'subjects' in discourses about the NHS.

Figure 4

An exploration of 'subjects' within discourses about the National Health Service.
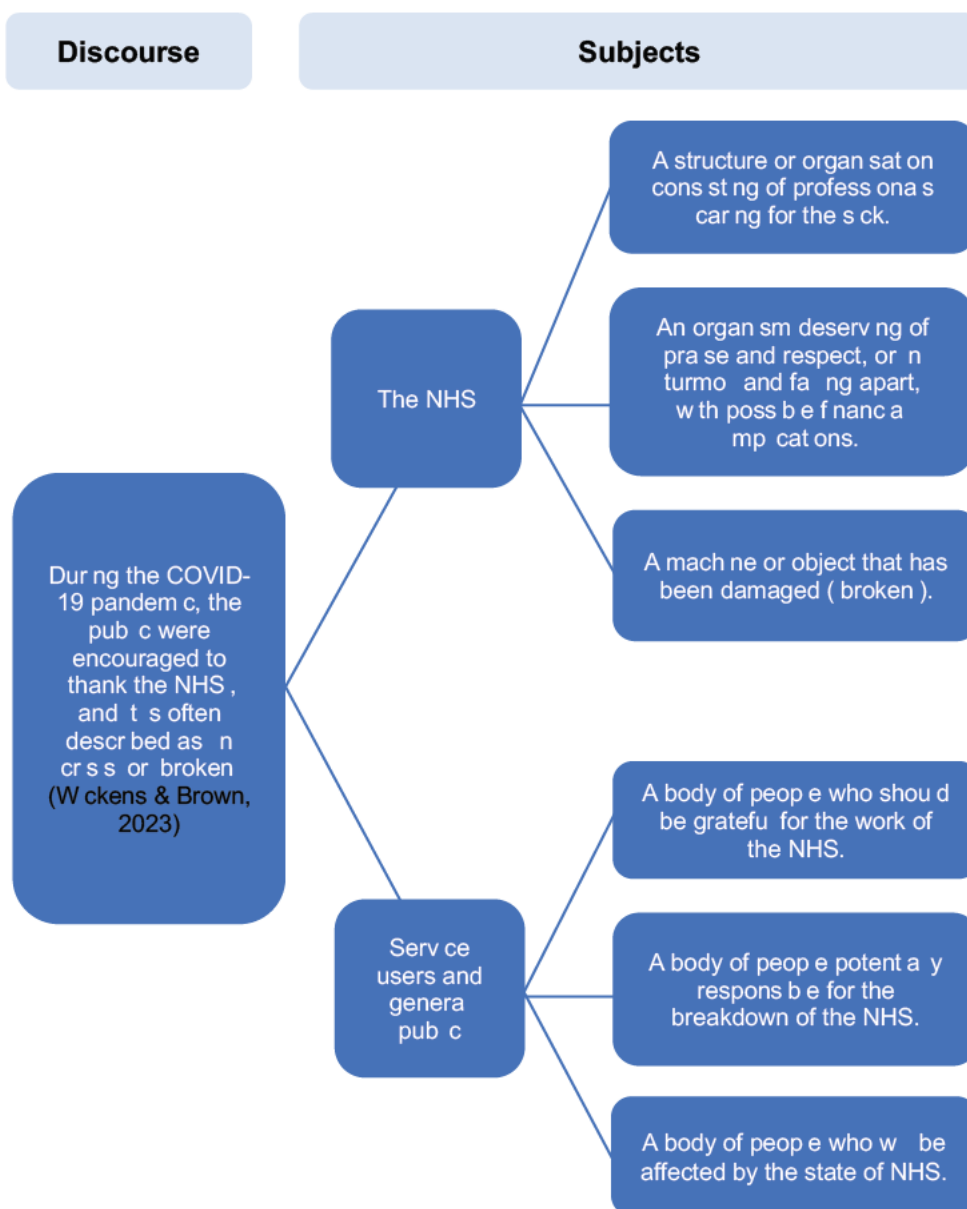
The subjects referred to within a set of statements are positioned in certain ways according to the discourses employed. For example, 'thank the NHS' positions the NHS as a helpful, selfless body or organism, deserving of respect and applause. Whereas describing the NHS as 'in crisis' or 'broken' positions it as falling apart, not fit for purpose with consequences for professionals and service users alike. Further, subject positioning has practical implications, influencing what can be said by whom, where and when (Parker, 1992). The subject positions within a discourse are contextually bound and typically indicate societal perspectives. Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, (2017, p. 111) explained; "That subjects occupy 'positions' within discourse means we can only write, speak or think about a social object or practice in specific ways within a given historical period".

Foucauldian Discourse Analysis Rationale

The current research aimed to explore how EPs construed oppressive discourses used about CYP in educational settings and the resultant constructions and positioning. I was interested in the origins of these discourses; how they are "made…repeated, renewed and displaced" (Foucault, 1981, p. 70) and their connection to existing power and social structures (Willig, 2015), particularly institutional practices. The discourses of interest were acknowledged to be bound up in history and sensitive to temporal variability (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2017) and this was considered vital in understanding their purpose and use. For these reasons, FDA was an appropriate approach to adopt.

Objects and Subjects of interest

Within the current research the object of interest was 'oppression', a term which was understood to relate to power and how it is enacted. Adhering to social constructionism, 'oppression' was accepted to be experienced and understood differently by individuals. The subjects of interest included CYP, education staff, and EPs. I was specifically interested in exploring oppressive discourses about CYP, but anticipated that within this, educational staff and EPs were also subjects, vulnerable to positioning. For example, EPs may have

described that oppressive language was used in their presence and in doing so position themselves as passive.

Challenges of Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

Even among social constructionist researchers, FDA is sometimes criticised for its flexibility (Graham, 2005; Taylor, 2014). Rather than a firm set of methodological principles to follow (Burr, 2015), FDA researchers describe resources to employ, and to some, this diminishes the rigour of the approach. However, FDA was understood to encourage the researcher to "dissect, disrupt and render the familiar strange" by "interrogating" discourses (Graham, 2005, p. 4).

Criticism has also been levelled against Foucault's narrow conception of power (Mills, 2004). Although Foucault refers to counter-discourses which can challenge existing knowledge and therefore power relations, theorists argue that this does not represent how change actually occurs, particularly, if discourses are as dominant as Foucault conceptualises (Mills, 2004). However, Foucault considers resistance to be entailed with power; "where there is power, there is resistance" (Foucault, 1978, p. 95; Mills, 2004) and seems to leave the understanding of this to the reader (Hartman, 2003). Among feminist theorists, this understanding has been celebrated for allowing a broader perspective than oppressor-victim models (Mills, 2004). I understood this in a literal way; wherever there is power, there is also resistance (Hartman, 2003; Taylor, 2017), but accept that Foucault's description contains few details about how resistance occurs (McWhorter, 1999).

This links to a further challenge of FDA; its limited view of human behaviour. Researchers describe that FDA, and discursive approaches more generally are based on 'person-less' explanations which reduce the human's role/action/choice in their behaviour (Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2013; Taylor, 2017). Critics question the passive constructions and positioning of people within discourses in FDA, which either limit or entirely remove the possibility of personal agency (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2017; Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2013; Taylor, 2017). Moreover, within Foucault's

conceptualisation, resistance is reactionary to power, therefore further minimising agency (Hartman, 2003; Taylor, 2017).

As its author, Foucault's own experiences and identity likely influenced FDA. It is important to acknowledge that this may result in a particular view of discourse, power, knowledge and subjectivity. For example, as a white male, Foucault's understanding of race and power may not reflect that of people of minoritized ethnicities (Taylor, 2017).

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODS

This research explored how EPs construed oppressive discourses used about CYP in educational settings and their constructions of how they could work against these oppressive discourses. The study employed a flexible qualitative design and data was collected through semi-structured interviews with seven educational psychologists. The data was analysed using an adapted six-stage version of Willig's (2015) Foucauldian Discourse Analysis, incorporating principles of Parker's (1992) 20 step process. This chapter describes the research design and ethical considerations.

Research Questions

The current research sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How do EPs construe oppressive discourses used about CYP in educational settings?

2. How are the CYP positioned in these discourses?

3. What are the goals and impact of these discourses?

4. How do EPs construe they could work against oppressive discourses of CYP?

These research questions reflect the principles of FDA, emphasising the function of the discourse rather than intention (Graham, 2000).

Research Design

This research was underpinned by an abductive logic of inquiry; emphasising the researchers continuous learning about the research topic and questions across the "life-span" of the project (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012, p. 34). Therefore, a research design "open-ended and flexible enough to facilitate the emergence of new, unanticipated, categories of meaning and experience" was used (Willig, 2013, p. 23). Flexible research designs are widely considered appropriate for qualitative research and allow the researcher to respond reflexively to contextual considerations such as access to participants, follow new lines of inquiry and adapt interview schedules accordingly (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012).

Research Methods

Whilst planning this research, qualitative methods, conforming to the flexible

research design were considered, including focus groups, semi-structured interviews and

observational and/or naturalistic methods, such as ethnography (Arribas-Ayllon &

Walkerdine, 2017; Willig, 2013). Table 5 presents a comparison of these methods.

Table 5

Comparison of Qualitative Methods of Data Gathering

Method	Description	Strengths	Limitation/s
Focus groups	Usually 8 or so participants brought together to discuss a topic, facilitated and/or moderated by the researcher (Thomas, 2022).	• Produce rich data • Can surface contradictions between discourses/participants.	• May not be appropriate for the exploration of sensitive topics (Sim & Waterfield, 2019; Wellings et al., 2000; Willig, 2013). • Prone to social desirability effects.
Semi-structured interviews	An interview (usually between the researcher and participant) which is based on a loose structure or schedule but can be explored flexibly (in any order and extend onto other topics) (Thomas, 2022).	• Allows the researcher to adapt questions based on contextual factors (Braun & Clarke, 2013), thereby responding reflexively to the participants and suitable to a flexible design. • Support and active role in the research; the flexible structure of semi-structured interviews supports the co-construction of meaning and understanding between the researcher and participant, considered important for FDA (Braun & Clarke, 2013).	• Relevance for FDA has been questioned; rather than exploring discourses used in the relevant context, the data may be more representative of how participants navigate their 'stake' in interviews (Willig, 2013)
Ethnography	A type of participant observation, in which the researcher immerses themselves in the field of interest	• Offers a more contextually relevant viewpoint than other methods.	• Can be impractical due to issues of access.

to better understand subjects and ensure that they are accurately represented (Atkinson, 1989; Edley & Wetherell, 1997).	• Support and active role in the research.

Due to concerns about how the topic of interest would be navigated in a group context, and potential impact of social desirability effects, focus groups were deemed unsuitable. Whilst the value of ethnography was recognised, it was deemed inappropriate for the current research due to the practicalities involved of gaining permission and consent from Educational Psychology services, headteachers/executive principals, and parents/carers to observe professional meetings in which CYP were discussed.

Often used by discourse analysts to encourage informal and free-flowing conversation (Willig, 2013, 2015), and support the researcher to explore emerging lines of enquiry (Grix, 2019), semi-structured interviews were perceived to be the most appropriate method for gathering data relating to the research questions. Further, I hoped to address some of the limitations associated with semi-structured interviews, such as participants 'stake' in interviews by acknowledging my own role as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) and emphasising that the interviews represented a 'learning experience' for me to develop my anti-oppressive practice (Cohn, 2006; Driori & Landau, 2011; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012), therefore, potentially reducing concerns about discussing sensitive topics and supporting participants to reflect openly about their experiences without fear of 'getting it wrong'.

Recruitment and Sampling

The number of participants was guided by 'information power' a strategy used to estimate the appropriate number of participants for qualitative research (Malterud et al., 2016). 'Information power' considers the study aims, sample specificity, use of established theory, quality of dialogue, and analysis strategy. An illustration of how the information power for this study was calculated is shown in Figure 5.

Participants were recruited through simultaneous purposive, and convenience sampling (process illustrated in Figure 6). Purposive sampling refers to sampling from a selected group and within this study, EPs were the group of interest. Convenience sampling refers to recruiting participants in any way convenient to the researcher (Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2013), in this case by email.

Figure 5
Process for Determining Information Power

Previous studies exploring similar topics with EP participants recruited between nine to 16 participants (Cumber, 2022; Schulze et al., 2019; Zaniolo, 2021). For example, Schulze et al. (2019) used semi-structured interviews to explore perceptions of social justice among nine EP participants. Thereby initially indicating that a sample of nine to sixteen participants was appropriate.

However, authors suggest that research employing methods of discourse analysis require smaller samples (Malterud et al., 2016). An existing study, underpinned by FDA, explored the constructions of 'boys' behaviour' with seven participants (Pearson, 2016). Likewise, using FDA Halton (2022) conducted semi-structured interviews with five educational professionals to explore constructions CYP at risk of exclusion.

Therefore a sample of six to eight participants was considered appropriate.

Figure 6
Process of Email Recruitment in the Current Study

Recruitment emails (Appendix 1), with an attached information sheet (Appendix 2) were distributed to PEPs from services across the UK. PEPs were asked to share the recruitment email with the EPs within their service. EPs interested in participating were asked to contact me for further information.

EPs interested in participating were emailed the consent form (Appendix 3) and demographic questionnaire (Appendix 4). They were asked to complete these documents in their preferred way (digitally or printing and scanning) and return this to me by email.

Participants who provided consent were recruited for the research until a maximum of 8 participants were recruited in a one-month time frame.

Principal Educational Psychologists' (PEP) contact details were provided by academic contacts (university course lead) or were sourced from Local Authority Educational Psychology Service websites. This process positioned the PEPs as gatekeepers, from whom access was required and relied upon (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). It is likely that some PEPs did not share the recruitment email with EPs in their service, therefore limiting the reach of this method. Alternative recruitment methods were considered, including the use of social media (twitter or EP Net) but approaching PEPs by email was considered the most comprehensive.

Further, as a TEP, I was ascribed greater power and access to EP participants than other researchers might be. EPs are familiar with research projects and are often asked to participate to fulfil TEP assignments and although I was external to the services recruited from, I was likely to be perceived as belonging 'within' the EP profession, thereby appealing to participants sense of colleagueship (Driori & Landau, 2011; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). Moreover, findings from a previous study indicate that participants can feel more comfortable discussing sensitive topics with someone with whom they share social characteristics (Sawyer et al., 1995).

Participant Criteria

Participants were educational psychologists currently working in the UK, registered with the HCPC (Health and Care Professions Council). There were no further inclusion or exclusion criteria.

Participant characteristics

A total of seven participants were recruited from services across the UK. Participant characteristics are displayed in Table 6.

Data Generation

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data about the participant's constructions of the oppression of CYP. Participants were given an option between in-person or online meetings.

Table 6

Characteristics of Participants

Participant	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Years of experience in EP role	Service Type	Local Authority type
A	35 - 44	Female	White British	5 - 10	Semi-traded	City
B	35 - 44	Female	White British	10 - 15	Traded	City
C	55 - 64	Male	White	10 - 15	Traded	City
D	25 - 34	Man	White British	1 - 3	Traded	City
E	45 - 54	Female	White	1 - 3	Semi-traded	City
F	25 - 34	Male	Mixed (Asian/white)	1 - 3	Semi-traded	City
G	25 - 34	Female	Other White	5 - 10	Semi-traded	City

Note. 2 Participants were asked to define their gender and ethnicity independently, without the use of pre-determined categories and therefore there is some variation in the descriptors used.

Ultimately, all seven interviews were held virtually on Microsoft Teams to meet the timeline for data collection and the transcripts were recorded with the consent of participants. EPs are familiar with working online and meeting virtually, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, and therefore this was deemed an acceptable method, and supported the recruitment of participant's nationally (Cumber, 2022; Salmons, 2021). Findings from a recent study suggest that sharing interview questions with participants in advance improves participant engagement, reflexivity and reduces interview anxiety (Haukås & Tishakov, 2024). Prior to meeting, the participants received an outline of the interview schedule (Appendix 5). At the start of the interviews, the participants were asked to verbally re-confirm their consent to participate. The interviews lasted around an hour, with some lasting up to 70 minutes.

Interview Design

The interview schedule consisted of ten questions seeking to explore the research questions of this study (Appendix 6). The research questions were adapted from a previous FDA exploring constructions of mental health and shame among CYP and school staff (Sangar, 2018).

Generally open questions were used to encourage rich responses, and closed questions were followed up with a request for further detail (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Holstein & Gubrium, 1995; Smith & Osborn, 2015). Table 7 displays an overview of the interview schedule. Although the questions were arranged in a logical order, the participants were free to move between them flexibly (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995; Willig, 2013).

Adhering to the principles of FDA, I attempted to demonstrate an openness to learning and revise thinking during the interviews (Willig, 2013). For example, whilst exploring concerns about the adultification of CYP, Participant C discussed their perception of the preparation for adulthood (PfA) initiative, which they described, offered a limited view of CYP, based largely on their employability. I had previously considered PfA to be unproblematic, and in the main, supportive of CYPs development, but following Participant C's insight, I considered the possibility that the PfA initiative could be construed as being underpinned by capitalist ideals, with oppressive consequences for CYP.

Table 7

Overview of the Interview Schedule

Research Question	Interview Questions
How do EPs construe oppressive discourses used about CYP in educational settings?	In your role as an EP, have you experienced school staff talk about children and young oppressively? If so, how? Can you give examples?
How are the CYP positioned in these discourses?	What picture/s does this build of the young person?
What are the goals and impact of these discourses?	Is there any influence on the practices and policies in place in education settings? Where do you think these discourses (this language) come from? What is the source? What might be the goal of these discourses? What is the impact?
How do EPs construe they could work against oppressive discourses of CYP?	Do you respond to oppressive discourses? If so, how? What are the barriers to responding? How would best practice look?

Further, whilst the interview schedule provided a general structure, I anticipated adaption and improvisation would be necessary (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). Participants were invited to ask clarifying questions throughout, and a definition of 'oppression' was provided if requested. Oppression was defined as "inhuman or degrading treatment of individuals or groups; hardship and injustice brought about by the dominance of one group over another; the negative and demeaning exercise of power" (Thompson, 2016, p. 50). This definition was selected because it was felt to encompass the complexities of power and control.

Piloting

A pilot study was completed to assess the interview schedule. The pilot participant was a qualified educational psychologist colleague from my placement educational psychology service. I sent the recruitment email to the educational psychologists in my service and proceeded with the first person to confirm consent. This pilot study highlighted that the order of the interview schedule was acceptable, but the questions could be further refined for understanding and conciseness, as shown in Table 8.

Ethical Considerations

The current research complied with guidelines from the British Psychological Society (British Psychological Society, 2021) and the University of Birmingham Code of Practice for research (letter of ethical approval presented in Appendix 7).

Table 8

Example of Interview Question Refinement Following the Pilot Interview.

Original Interview Question	Refined Interview Question
What is your experience of oppressive constructions and discourses of children and young people in educational settings?	In your role as an EP, have you experienced school staff talk about children and young oppressively? If so, how?
What overall picture of the young person were they trying to build?	What picture/s does this build of the young person?

Within the semi-structured interviews, the participants were asked to consider oppressive discourses about CYP. This is a sensitive topic, which may have caused discomfort and distress, particularly when reflecting on their own response to oppressive practice. I tried to minimise negative effects by using a non-judgemental approach, engaging in rapport building where possible, and reinforcing that the purpose of the study was a 'learning experience', with no right or wrong answers (Halton, 2022; Sangar, 2018). I aimed to create a comfortable and conversational atmosphere (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995) and attempted to build rapport by drawing upon similar professional experiences. Occasionally, this extended to personal similarities, such as motivations for becoming an educational psychologist.

Reflexivity

As previously discussed, as a TEP, I may have been perceived to be part of the EP profession, potentially providing greater access to the EP participants. Although this may have supported recruitment, it may have limited responses and it was important to consider how researcher power and type of relationship (as a colleague) might affect the generation of data (Driori & Landau, 2011; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). Driori & Landau (2011) explain that the researcher must take many roles; "advocates, consultants, and researchers" and remain continuously aware of how to navigate these whilst collecting data (Driori & Landau, 2011, p. 25). This also relates to concerns explored earlier about the influence of participant 'stakes' in the interviews and led me to consider the 'presentation of self' (Goffman, 1959; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). As recommended, instead of adopting one approach to navigate the participant's possible response to and interpretation of me, I tried to react and adapt flexibly within the interviews (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). For example, I reciprocated the participant's tone and approach to speech, sometimes using more colloquial terms.

Reflections on the Research Design

During the initial planning of the research, categories of oppression were considered, and I wondered if participants should be asked to explicitly label observed oppression, for example terms such as racism, homophobia, sexism. However, this type of classification doesn't seem to conform with the social constructionist stance of FDA, in fact it could be argued to undermine it. Despite this, a growing body of research indicates that consciously naming and labelling oppression could be key in challenging it (Bornstein, 2018; Galloway et al., 2019; Howard, 2010; Legate, 2023; Mitton-Kukner et al., 2016) and authors suggest that "if you do not name that which has to be defeated, it will not be beaten" (Miller et al., 2004, p. 15). With this in mind, I did not explicitly ask participants to label the type of oppression encountered, but accepted and reciprocated oppression terminology when used by participants.

Prior to recruitment, I felt that securing participants from diverse areas of the UK was important, thereby possibly providing insight into oppression across socio-economic status and Local Authority type (rural, semi-rural, city). However, upon reflection, I recognised that selecting some voices over others would be a form of epistemological oppression and contradictory to FDA (Thorley Waters, 2014).

Further, I considered the inclusion of TEP participants. As students involved in a doctoral level course, TEPs are expected to develop their knowledge about issues across education and society, and therefore might have contributed nuanced perspectives and insights about the research topic. However, I was interested in the experience of oppressive discourses and responding to these in the context of working as a qualified EP (Cumber, 2022). Moreover, findings from a recent study suggest that that trainee psychologists have been over-represented across research exploring issues of social justice (Schulze, 2017). I also wondered about the ethical implications of including TEP participants, particularly due to issues of power. During the three years of study (in England), TEPs are expected to shadow qualified EPs, and in this position, are often observers rather than active participants. Whilst

this offers a position to observe oppressive discourses, it likely limits the possibility of action, and may be unfair to ask TEPs to reflect on their response.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using FDA. FDA does not follow a fixed process or system, Foucault preferred researchers to use it flexibly and contextually (Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2013; Mills, 2004). He compared his writing to "little tool boxes" and encouraged researchers to "use this sentence or that as a screwdriver or spanner to short-circuit, discredit or smash systems of power" (cited in Patton, 1979, p. 115). In the years since, authors have produced frameworks supporting researchers to use FDA, however, these are simplified and may not be adequate in isolation (Willig, 2013, 2015). Two of the most notable frameworks include Willig's (2015) six-step, and Parker's (1992) 20-step process (presented in Table 8). Willig (2015) offers a concise and accessible framework but acknowledges that it does not explore genealogy, governmentality and subjectification, advising researchers to seek guidance from relevant authors (Willig, 2013, 2015). Parker (1992) on the other hand provides an in-depth process, guiding the researcher through 20-steps in exhaustive detail.

Researchers are advised to take the "essence" of published frameworks, finding a process that works for their topic and personal preferences and strengths (Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2013, p. 483). For the current research, both Willig's (2015) and Parker's (1992) frameworks were used in conjunction to support a FDA. Willig's (2015) was used as an overall structure, replacing Step 6 'Contradictions' with 'Disciplinary Power'. Within this structure, Parker's (1992) 20 steps were applied where relevant. Table 9 presents an overview of this structure.

Table 9

Stages of Data Analysis

Analysis Method			
Willig's Analytic stage	**Willig's Key Questions**	**Parker's Key Questions**	**Process Undertaken**
1. Discursive constructions	• How are discursive objects constructed in the transcript? • What things are being discussed? • What type of object is being constructed? • How is the discursive object constructed through language?	• Which parts of the transcript are used/omitted and why? • What objects are used? • How are they constructed in the text? • What subjects appear in the text? • What terms are used about them?	Free-association was used to explore 'what the text is doing' and involves exploring the 'talk' as an object. Transcripts were searched for implicit and explicit references to the discursive object/s (oppression) and subjects (CYP, educational staff, educational psychologists). References were highlighted and the researcher made notes about identified discourses. Highlighted statements were grouped (an example of this is shown in Appendix 8), reviewed, and regrouped into categories of discourses (initial categories are presented in Appendix 9).
2. Discourses	• What are the differences between the constructions? • How are objects constructed compared to wider discourses?	• What are the connotations of the discourses/construction? • What are the similarities and differences? • What picture of the world is mapped through these discourses? • What is the genealogy of the discourses? • What does the selection of terms say about the researcher?	Notes were reviewed to consider the similarities (overlaps) and differences (contrasts) between constructs. The researcher also considered whether the identified discourses fit within wider discourses (for example about childhood, behaviour, diversity). Other relevant material (policies, guidance, campaigns etc.) was considered to elaborate the discourses generated, and the researcher identified institutions that were reinforced, attacked or subverted. The term used to describe the discourses was also considered and reflection given to how this related to the moral/political choices of the researcher.
3. Action orientation	• What is gained from constructing the objects	• Which categories of person gain and lose	The possible functions of the constructions were considered. The researcher considered what these constructions might achieve for the subject/speaker/participant.

	in this way at this point in the transcript? • What is its function and how does it relate to other constructions in the transcript?	from the employment of the discourse?	
4. Positionings	• How are the subjects positioned by the discursive constructs? • What positions are made available?	• What are the implied networks of relationships? • Who would want to promote or dissolve the discourse?	Notes were made about the subject positions and the subject relationships were mapped (mapping a picture of the world the discourses present).
5. Practice	• How do the discursive constructions and subject positions open and/or close opportunities for action? • What are the possibilities for action within the discourses? What can be said and done by the subjects positioned within them?	• What can be said or done by the subjects within these positions? • How do the discourses connect with others that sanction 'oppression'? • How do the discourses allow dominant groups to tell their narratives about the past to justify the present and prevent those who use subjugated discourses from making history?	Implications for action were considered and noted. The researcher considered what can be said from within the subject positions, how the discourses limited or opened up possibilities, and if they linked to other discourses sanctioning oppression.
Adapted Analytical Stage	**Adapted Question**		
6. Disciplinary Power	• What, if any, disciplinary powers are present within the discourses?		The researcher explored instruments of disciplinary power within the constructions of the objects and subject positions. These include techniques of surveillance and normalisation.

Assessing Quality in Qualitative Research

To assess the quality of this research, the 'Big-tent Criteria for Excellent Qualitive Research' (Tracy & Hinrichs, 2017) was used and is presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Evaluation of the Quality of the Current Research

Big-tent Criteria for 'Excellent' Qualitative Research		
Worthy Topic	The topic of the research is: • Relevant • Timely • Significant • Interesting	The topic of interest could be considered 'worthy'. It is relevant to EP practice, evidenced by its link to the HCPC and BPS competencies (presented in Table 1) relating to anti-oppressive practice. Within the past 5 or so years, issues of inequity have been of heightened interest due to disparities evidenced through the Coronavirus-19 pandemic and Black Lives Matter protests. This makes it a timely piece of research. It follows recent research exploring the role of EPs in social justice issues (Cumber, 2022; Schulze et al., 2019; Zaniolo, 2021), offering an important but different contribution to this area and could therefore be considered significant and interesting.
Rich Rigor	The study uses a sufficient, abundant, appropriate, and complex: • Set of theoretical constructs • Data and time in the field • Sample • Context • Data collection and analysis processes	This research was underpinned by social constructionism, influencing all aspects of the methods, data collection and analysis. EP participants from services around the UK were recruited through simultaneous purposive, and convenience sampling. Semi-structured interviews, considered appropriate for FDA due to the flexibility they provide, were used for data gathering purposes. Although the interviews were not audio recorded, transcripts were proofread and checked for accuracy against the researcher's notes. This was considered appropriate because the research was interested in the content of talk rather than the words, and structural and linguistic features of text or speech (L. J. Graham, 2005; Grix, 2019; I. Parker, 1992). The research attempted to provide a coherent Foucauldian Discourse Analysis of the topic, based upon the writing of Foucault (1926-1984) through an adapted analysis method presented in Table 8 and

		evidenced further in Appendix 10, providing transparency of this process.
Sincerity	The study is characterised by: • Self-reflexivity about subjective values, biases, and inclinations of the researcher • Transparency about the methods and challenges	I attempted to demonstrate sincerity throughout the research process and writing. Acknowledging my positionality (presented in the opening chapter) was integral to this process, and I have reflected (within this thesis and in supervision with my tutor and peers) about how my identity as a cis gender, white, female, who does not identify as having a disability, and previous educational and professional experiences have influenced my approach to this research and interpretation of the data (in Chapter One and the Conclusion).
Credibility	The research is marked by: • Thick description, concrete detail, explication of tacit knowledge and showing rather than telling • Triangulation or crystallization • Multivocality • Member reflections	Illustrative quotes are presented in the 'Analysis and Discussion' section, potentially providing evidence of credibility. Crystallisation, understood to be "the inclusion of multiple data points" (Tracy & Hinrichs, 2017, p. 6) is an integral part of FDA, achieved through the genealogical process and reference to artefacts, in this case, government policy. Likewise, multivocality is an important practice when completing an FDA, potentially surfacing similarities or contradictions within the discourses. Where relevant, I have noted individual participant's perspectives to provide a sense of multi-vocality. However, member reflections/checking were not deemed appropriate for this research (as explained in the 'Reflexivity as a Lone Researcher' section).
Resonance	The research influences, impacts, or moves particular readers or a variety of audiences through: • Aesthetic, evocative representation • Naturalistic generalizations • Transferable findings	This research was not concerned with measures of generalisability but sought to produce "historically and culturally situated knowledge" (Tracy & Hinrichs, 2017, p. 7). I hope that the findings will resonate with EPs and other educational professionals working with CYP. Describing my writing as evocative feels uncomfortable, but I hope that I have presented the findings in a thoughtful and impactful way, encouraging readers to reflect about the discourses they and those around them employ.
Significant Contribution	The research provides a significant contribution: • Conceptually/theoretically • Practically • Morally	As far as I have been able to find, this is the first use of FDA to explore EPs constructions of oppressive discourses used about CYP in education settings, it therefore represents a significant

	• Methodologically • Heuristically	contribution to the topic of social justice in education. Furthermore, this research may represent a significant heuristic and methodological contribution due to its relevance to a variety of audiences (including policy makers, educational professionals, social justice professionals), and its use of an adapted FDA framework.
Ethics	The research considers: • Procedural ethics (such as human subjects) • Situational and culturally specific ethics • Relational ethics • Exiting ethics (leaving the scene and sharing the research)	The current research adhered to guidelines from the British Psychological Society (British Psychological Society, 2021) and the University of Birmingham Code of Practice for research. Ethical approval was gained from the University of Birmingham's Ethical Board (letter of ethical approval presented in Appendix 7). Due to the challenging topic of interest, sensitivity was used within the semi-structured interviews to minimise negative effects. This included taking a non-judgemental approach, engaging in rapport building where possible, and reinforcing that the purpose of the study was a 'learning experience', with no right or wrong answers (Halton, 2022; Sangar, 2018).
Meaningful Coherence	The study: • Achieves what it purports to be about • Uses methods and procedures that fit its stated goals. • Meaningfully interconnects literature, research questions/ • foci, findings, and interpretations with each other	The aim of this research was to explore how EPs construe: a. oppressive discourses of CYP in educational settings, and, b. how EPs construe they could work against these oppressive discourses. This was achieved through the six-stage process (presented in Table 8), and the discourses were presented within the 'Analysis and Discussion' section. The methods and procedures utilised are underpinned by the philosophical stance adopted, and 'fit' together to provide a coherent process. Furthermore, the literature and data surfaced through the genealogy are interwoven throughout the research, particularly within the discussion of the discourses.

Note. 3 This framework is drawn from Tracy & Hinrichs (2017)

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION PART ONE

The following chapter presents the analysis of the transcripts and discussion, and sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How do EPs construe oppressive discourses used about CYP in educational settings?

2. How are the CYP positioned in these discourses?

3. What are the goals and impact of these discourses?

The final research question is explored in Part two of Chapter Five.

Mirroring the integrated nature of applied social research, the analysis and discussion sections have been combined to support the simultaneous interpretation and exploration of the data (Thomas, 2022).

The transcripts were analysed using FDA (based on stages presented in Table 9) and Figure 7 presents a summarised illustration of the process employed.

Figure 7

Summary of Data Analysis Process
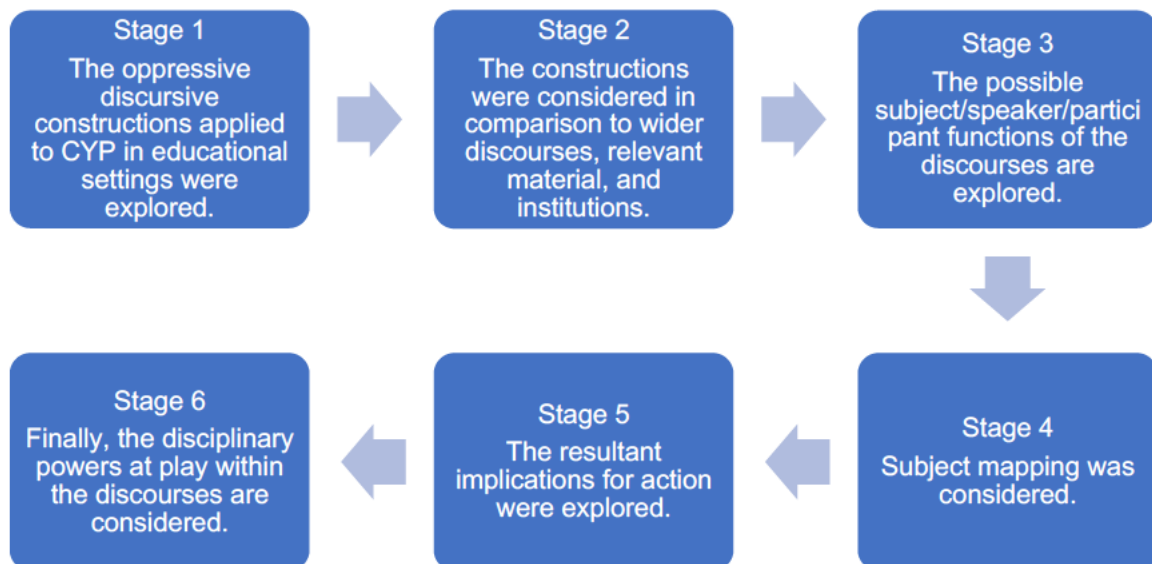
Note. 4 See Appendix 10 for an example of this process applied to a discourse.

During this process the transcripts were anonymised, reviewed and checked against written notes taken during the interviews. The anonymised transcripts were then uploaded to a secure online platform (LiGRE Software) for coding purposes (Blais, 2014). Subjects and the object of study 'oppression' were identified in each transcript, and initial terms such as "labelling", 'racism', and 'ableism' were used. Each transcript was then reviewed by looking at the initial 'object codes' and considering if they fit into broader discourses, for example 'biases'. The surfaced discourses from across the transcripts were considered and combined where relevant. Discourses were not discarded based on frequency, all surfaced discourses relating to oppression were included. Notes were made about each of the surfaced discourses, listing relevant participant quotes, similarities and differences between discourses, for example, if one reinforced or contradicted another. The discourses were combined further under broader headings such as 'othering'. This reflected the final collection of discourses and was not based on the frequency that participants referred to them, but their relevancy to the topic. For example, only one participant referred to the gendering of emotions, but this was still included. Further notes were made about the function of the discourses and constructions, how these positioned the subjects, and how they opened or closed possibilities for action. Links were also noted to 'disciplinary powers', particularly those explored in Chapter Two. These notes made the basis of the Analysis and Discussion chapter.

Constructions of the Oppression of Children and Young People

In exploring how they construed oppressive discourses used about CYP in educational settings, participants referred to oppressive constructions of CYP. An overall 'picture' of these constructions is presented in Figure 8 and each will be explored in the following section, with illustrative quotations.

Exploring oppressive constructions, and how they form and are formed in society may be uncomfortable to read. However, inspired by Foucault, I sought to "dissect, disrupt and render the familiar strange" by "interrogating" discourses (Graham, 2005, p. 4).

Figure 8

Constructions of Children and Young People

Furthermore, drawing on social research about white fragility, I acknowledge the importance of facing feelings of discomfort to support meaningful reflection and change (Applebaum, 2017; Ford et al., 2022).

Children and Young People are Othered

Across the interviews, all participants frequently referred to the 'othering' of CYP by educational staff. Othering is understood to describe "a process whereby individuals and groups are treated and marked as different and inferior from the dominant social group" (G. Griffin, 2017). Participants referred to discourses that othered CYP based on a variety of protected characteristics (discourses are presented in Figure 9) including ethnicity, culture, SEND status, socio-economic status, and gender.

Figure 9

Discourses of 'Othered'
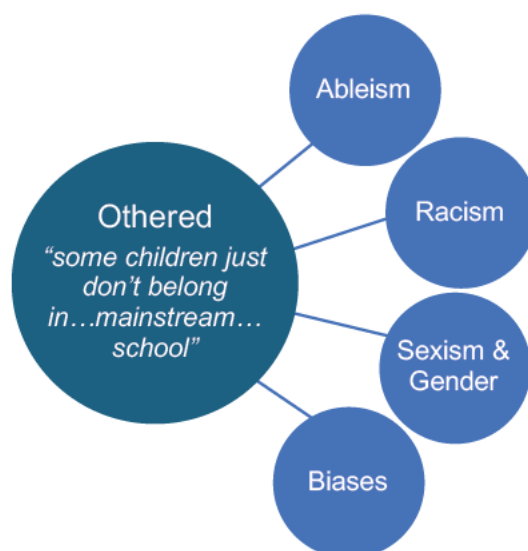
Discourses used to 'other' CYP often misrepresented their behaviour, distorting their intentions and characters. CYP of minoritized ethnicity were construed as being vilified for behaviours that may reflect cultural differences.

> *"And there's a misinterpretation of…whether people give eye contact or not. And often that's a cultural thing as well, and so behaviours are interpreted and expressed by adults in language that is oppressive because they're making judgements and saying, 'he is sneaky because he avoids eye contact, he's disrespectful because he's not giving eye contact, he's not listening because he's not giving eye contact'" (Participant E)*

Through this discourse, CYP of minoritised ethnicities were labelled *"aggressive or rude" (Participant G)* or were associated with anti-social behaviour.

> *"…and she just started being quite critical of the Gypsy Traveller community...And sort of…alluding to antisocial behaviour that had been happening. And… almost assigning that to that community." (Participant D)*

Furthermore, three participants described how CYP of minoritised ethnicities were sometimes inaccurately construed as having SEND, particularly English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners. Two participants linked issues of racism to the degree of familiarity schools and staff had with individuals of minoritised ethnicities.

Likewise, CYP with SEND were subject to discourses about their risk to the school community, described as *"choosing unsafe behaviours" (Participant E)* and representing

distraction and disruption to learning, a burden on staff time and school resources, and a risk to the physical safety of peers and staff;

> *"a head teacher who…really believed that inclusion…has gone too far. And that there are some children…who just don't belong in a mainstream primary school." (Participant C).*

> *"And some schools actively have a position where they don't want young people with additional needs in their school" (Participant E)*

This was especially strong for CYP with social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs. All of the participants reflected on how these discourses were reinforced through exclusionary education policies and practices at the government and setting level, including oppressive uniform policies which emphasise the desire for homogeny;

> *"It's this homogenised notion. Which is written in age-related expectations. It's written into the standardised tests that some EPs use. It's written into some people's uniform policies because 'my hair is too messy because it's too curly', you know. It's just homogenised" (Participant E)*

> *"I think one of the big problems that we have with the DfE [Department for Education] is that they say one thing, but they leave the door open for another. So the DfE is very good at trying to appear like they are protecting the rights of children and then still leaving schools ways to break those rights. So for example, the SEN code of practise and making reasonable adjustments and demanding that the schools need to make sure that barriers to learning are removed but at the same time we have the consultation process on Education, Health and Care Plans that allows schools to say, 'you know what, I don't fancy having that kid in my school, they can go somewhere else'. So…that on one side they are trying to uphold the right of children to be included in education but at the same time they're taking it away." (Participant G)*

Through these discourses, CYP with SEND are perceived to be 'outside' the school community, representing 'add ons' who require 'reasonable' adaptions, a term open to interpretation, potentially leading to tokenistic attempts.

The discourses identified by participants that are used within educational settings to 'other' CYP could be interpreted as representing racist and ableist perspectives, with possible connections to colonialism. Specifically, the discourses echo messages from the eugenics movement (explored in Discourses of SEND in Chapter Two), considered a tool for persevering colonialism (Turda & Balogun, 2023). Eugenicists believed that undesirable

traits, including 'feeblemindedness', 'pauperism', and criminality were hereditary, and linked

them to individuals with SEND and minoritised ethnicities within the UK, including Black, and

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller populations (Gillborn, 2010; Kevles, 1999; Turda & Balogun, 2023).

The discourses explored by participants, position the subjects as inferior and

deficient, and bound to behave in certain ways due to their 'bad genes' (Kevles, 1999),

thereby influenced by medicalised narratives of behaviour and limiting the possibility of

action for CYP due to their perceived inherent badness (Kevles, 1999; Macleod, 2006).

Selden (2000, p. 236) argues that these narratives "empower the already powerful while

disenfranchising those who had the least social purchase" and links this to Foucault's

(1977a) notion of normalisation; "…defining the Other as abnormal – mentally ill, delinquent

and criminal, hysterical etc. – and bringing the Other under the punitive and disciplining gaze

of power" (Foucault cited in Carlson & Apple, 1998, p. 12). Through this lens, the discourses

'othering' CYP, also position school staff as the 'norm' and therefore superior.

Participants E and G reflected upon the familiarity (or lack of) schools had with

minoritised ethnicity communities and SEND, suggesting that less familiar schools were

more likely to use oppressive practices underpinned by racism and/or ableism. This point

could be linked to philosophies of learning, based on an empiricist understanding; learning

occurs through experience. However, the requirement of direct experience for the

deployment of compassion is disturbing, and links to issues of empathy. Translated from

Theodor Lipps work on 'Einfühlung'; "feeling into", "empathy" (Montag et al., 2008, p. 1261),

Lipps described an 'inner imitation' which involved accessing and mirroring others' emotions

by referring to one's own (Lipps, 1960). However, Boler (1997) referred to this 'self-

projective' empathy, as passive, based on a 'consumptive' mode of identification with the

'other'. She argued that passive empathy reinforced power differentials; the empathiser as

emotion-giver, and the other as the sufferer, and was underpinned by the distinction between

these two positions; "a recognition that I am not you, and that empathy is possible only by

virtue of this distinction" (Boler, 1997, p. 256). Instead, Boler proposed 'testimonial reading',

sometimes referred to as transformative empathy, (Boler, 1997; Liu, 2023; Rodino-Colocino,

2018) incorporating self-reflective participation: the awareness of one's position of power by virtue of the safe distance of the reading, and an active reading practice that challenges one's own assumptions and world views (Boler, 1997). Through Boler's transformative empathy, school staff would be expected to actively learn about cultures and SEND outside their boundary of familiarity, and utilise critical self-reflection to empathise ethically, without the requirement of previous experience (Boler, 1997; Hemmings, 2012).

Children and Young People Must be Compliant

Alongside constructions that were perceived to misrepresent CYP of minoritised ethnicities and/or with SEND, CYP more broadly were perceived as being construed as dangerous (discourses presented in Figure 10). All but one of the participants reflected on a fear within schools about the menacing potential of CYP, relating this to the desire for control;

> "so much of it seems about control… and the idea that if it starts to slip, then there's going to be chaos, and teenagers are generally to be feared, I think, or any children that should be feared." (Participant F)

> "The immediate reaction is I'm going to get control here because again, maybe there's an element of fear, if I don't have control, what's it gonna lead to?" (Participant F)

> "there's this fear, we have to control them, otherwise…they're going to do…an uprising or something" (Participant E)

Figure 10
Discourses of 'CYP Must be Compliant'

This was understood to create compliance rather than cooperation. Participants used phrases such as *"zero tolerance policies" (Participant C), "crowd control" (Participant A),* and *"fall in line" (Participant D)* to describe this process and referred to oppressive practices employed to maintain control including constant *"monitoring"* through behavioural systems, and *"surveillance" (Participant E)* likened to prison, and *"adults shouting at children quite aggressively or looking to…shame them in certain ways within a classroom" (Participant F).* Shaming techniques included the use of visual reward charts, online platforms and other behavioural management systems;

> *"I can't imagine going to work and having my emotions and behaviour monitored and at the end of my working day, my manager deciding whether I've been a rainbow today or a cloud or a thunderstorm." (Participant A)*

> *"it's symptomatic of the punitive system that is in place in most secondary schools, which in itself is an incredibly oppressive system of children and doesn't work for so many. And yet it's employed so widely." (Participant D)*

Participant C seemed to suggest that often these systems were based on misunderstood behaviourist principles, leading to oversimplistic and ineffective monitoring processes;

> *"a sort of unreconstructed behaviourist model, where if you just get the…rebalance of sanctions and rewards right, that you kind of funnel them into this kind of way of behaving... But then the answer is to sort of…train them right like rats to behave in a certain way." (Participant C)*

And likely represented wider societal beliefs about discipline and punishment;

> *"That in particular I think, in Britain, but…in England, more so, there is this culture of punishment that runs through everything we do." (Participant F)*

> *"It's just…that reward, punishment duality and system that is so ingrained in us" (Participant D)*

Participant C reflected on the discourses of learning embedded within punitive systems;

> *"I had a…deputy head teacher saying that…his goal is that for teachers to…just to be able to teach…if we can get to the point where they can just teach and don't have to concentrate on behaviour at all...then that'll be the ideal thing in the school, and his answer to that was to get just to get the behaviour policy right, to get it…zero tolerance and to have it fully understood by everyone in the*

school…And…then it would get to this kind of like utopia, where the teachers are just teaching."
(Participant C)

This seemed to be underpinned by paternalistic education;

"the aim of the teachers is to focus on the learning and what the children really want is…also to be able to focus on…the learning, on the academics" (Participant C)

Emphasising that behaviourist systems were considered *"somehow better for them [CYP] as well" (Participant C).* Within this construction, CYP were perceived to be manipulative and eager to take advantage of lapses of control; *"Give them an inch and they'll take a mile" (Participant E).* Participant A construed that some actions, such as apologising to CYP, were considered signs of weakness by school staff and were avoided to maintain the adult's control. Participant A reflected on the message that this sent to CYP, and the potential impact on their future social experiences.

Through these discourses, CYP were constructed to be unwieldy and calculated, conforming to social rules only with a strict structure of control. This construction draws on a Dionysian conceptualisation of the child, being inherently sinful, saved only through emotional discipline in the form of shame and humiliation (Biddle, 2017; Boler, 1999; Valentine, 2016). Within this construction, school staff are positioned as saviours, guiding CYP towards civility, reinforcing CYP's position of inferiority and corruption. Similarities might be drawn between these discourses and the perceived threat that the working class represented during the Industrial Revolution (Ogilvie, 1958). Mirroring history, it could be argued that educational practices are used to limit and control this threat.

The nature of this construction is self-fulfilling. The methods of control used evidence the ongoing need for control; the surveilled child is one who must be surveilled.

Within this construction, CYP's actions are limited; they either comply, strengthening the effect of the rules, or disobey and become labelled the deviant, reinforcing the need for rules. The concept of deviancy; to be outside the normal, and a bad or undesirable state (Hacking, 1995; Snipstad, 2020), is in itself self-fulfilling; a deviant engages in behaviour considered outside the norms, arguably based on a low threshold of public tolerance,

leading to social segregation, creating a process of deviancy amplification (Scraton, 2008; Young. J., 1971).

Foucault discussed the use of surveillance to maintain authority in his writing about Panopticism (Foucault, 1977a). Based on Jeremy Bentham's architectural concept of the Panoptican, a central tower overlooking the cells within a prison (Bowring, 1843), Foucault described that "surveillance is permanent in its effects", "to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (Foucault, 1977a, p. 6). Applying this more broadly, Foucault described a panoptical society, in which every member is simultaneously oppressed and an agent of the oppressor (Foucault, 1977a; Sangar, 2018).

Children and Young People Should be Seen and not Heard

All of the participants reflected on the discourses about CYP being overly emotional, and the perception of emotion being a form of manipulation, devaluing their voice (presented in Figure 11). Through these discourses, CYP are constructed as objects to be *"seen not heard" (Participant A)*:

> *"They don't want kids to have feelings." (Participant E)*

> *"The narrative from school at that time was these boys are too emotional, getting too angry. They need to find ways around it." (Participant F)*

Figure 11

Discourses of 'CYP Should be Seen Not Heard'

CYP are imagined having the skills to cope with and control their emotions 'quietly' and those that do not, are thought to use emotions for manipulative purposes.

This construction of children could be perceived as being underpinned by a rationalist understanding of learning; that foundational knowledge exists inherently (Magrini, 2010), and essential concepts and skills should be taught to a certain standard (Şahin, 2018). Through this rationalist lens, CYP are expected to have some inherent knowledge about emotional regulation and expression, and those who struggle and need support beyond the 'standard', are considered deviant, rather than 'ill-equipped'. However, some participants perceived that opportunities to explore and develop CYP's emotional coping skills are limited, likely due to wider pressures;

> *"That's the difference, isn't it? Her head teacher isn't gonna be asking at the end of the term: How many children have you taught emotional regulation skills to? How cooperative are your class at working with one another? How empathic are the children in your class when they see someone are crying on the playground, they're not measuring those skills." (Participant A)*

Framing CYP's emotional expression as manipulation could be viewed as damaging to their credibility and undermining of their experience, representing a form of epistemological oppression (Carel & Kidd, 2014). Four participants reflected how this was used to maintain the authority's control by labelling any unfavourable views as 'emotional expressions' with manipulative intent. For example, students' concerns about racism were dismissed as *"a form of manipulation" (Participant D).* Within this construction, CYP are afforded very few options for action; they can express divergent views and risk them being labelled and dismissed as acts of manipulation, or they can supress their dissatisfaction with the system. Either way, the authority maintains its power and control. This could be argued to be an attempt to avoid reputational damage, in which 'racism' is distanced from the setting. Thereby "defusing and derailing" any further debate about racism (Andreouli et al., 2016, p. 181).

Participant E reflected on discourses about CYPs' manipulative use of emotional expression, including their lack of response;

"And so they say, well, we call them the little psychopath because they don't express anything" (Participant E).

A large volume of research indicates that silence is perceived negatively by teaching staff. Studies exploring perceptions of 'situational mutism' suggest that school staff perceive silence to be intentional controlling behaviour and manipulative (Cline & Baldwin, 2004; Dillon. Jacalyn. R., 2016; White et al., 2022; C. E. Williams et al., 2021). Applying these discourses, CYP may be expected to behave within certain boundaries; expressing their emotions at a perceived level of appropriateness, or risk being viewed negatively.

Participant E also reflected on the performative nature of schooling, which encourages CYP to stifle emotions and discourages meaningful engagement:

"You have to perform throughout the school day. Emotions are unacceptable" (Participant E)

In taking this view, CYP could be perceived to be dehumanised, stripped of natural emotional responses and expected to engage in school rituals and practises. Similarities can be drawn with the national stereotype of the 'British stiff upper lip', encouraging a mask of stoicism and restraint, perceived to demonstrate dignity and civility (Dorling, 2019). A stereotype historically encouraged within education, particularly public schools (Bhattacharya, 2023).

However, within this construction of CYP, a contradiction exists; CYP are expected to engage unemotionally in some school practices and emotionally in others. For example, demonstrating emotion when apologising to staff and peers:

"....we're forcing them to say sorry, in a few years' time, we'll be having the same consultation about that child saying, well, he hits someone, and he says sorry, but he doesn't mean it. I wonder why?" (Participant A)

Apologies are recognised to have and represent power (Bowe et al., 2014; Mathy, 2023; Opt, 2013). This is quantified by social factors, including a measure of "how serious a face-threatening act is" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 91) and the power differences between the social actors (Meyerhoff, 2011). As individuals imparting knowledge to CYP, teachers could be considered in a superior position (Bowe et al., 2014), and therefore have the most to lose within social interactions. For them, apologies might represent an outward

demonstration of this power difference in the form of respect (Bowe et al., 2014), made all the more real with a display of emotion.

Within the construction of CYP as being seen and not heard, there is a sense that staff lack understanding about the emotional needs of CYP, including contextual factors:

> *"Rather than perhaps considering this young person has had five bereavements in three years and has had no support, and all we're trying to do is squash down their feelings" (Participant E)*

CYP are constructed in a limited, unforgiving way, conforming to 'within-child' discourses, which places the cause of their behaviour internally.

Whilst all CYP were constructed as being seen and not heard, Participant E reflected on the very specific way this was employed with female students through *"gender politics" (Participant E)*, encouraging them to engage in performative acts for the benefit of others and to mask their emotions:

> *"...they're not free to express their actual feelings, you have to be cheerful" (Participant E)*

> *"Girls are told to smile. Girls are told to be quiet. Girls are told to…. There's a, a greater judgement on teenage girls who are loud and shouty and if there's any sort of hitting that happens, then I think there is on the boys" (Participant E)*

Boler (1999) referred to this phenomenon, describing "that emotions as a site of social control are mapped onto girls and boys in different ways" (p. 33), established and maintained through scientific and rational discourses. Boler argues that girls are taught "to take responsibility for all society's ills" through their perceived 'natural caring tendencies', and that unlike boys, their "emotional control is especially for the benefit of others" (Boler, 1999, p. 35). She explains that the purpose of this is to "maintain [girls'] subordinate status within patriarchal culture" (Boler, 1999, p. 32). Through this construction, female CYP are limited to conform to social norms of 'femininity', or step outside the boundaries and be labelled as either a deviant, or hysterical.

Extending on the 'seen and not heard' discourse further, Participant E reflected on CYP's absence from public spaces;

> *"I do not see children in public spaces without an adult…There was a young person … And he's 11,12, something like that….We know his house is unsafe, his house is cold, it's empty, his parent isn't there*

until half 10 at night. The kids on a one hour a day timetable. So he's like, on his own all day...And as soon as his mates finished school, he goes and hangs out with them and they hang out on the street because where else can you go? And he told me about having the police called on him because some random person saw five lads hanging about and decided that young people shouldn't exist in public spaces and the police came and made them go home. And he'd done nothing wrong." (Participant E)

Participant E seemed to refer to discourses about CYP's sense and status of belonging within public spaces, as though this was not possible without the company of an adult. This discourse implies that CYP are untrustworthy without adult supervision, aligning with research about concerns of unruly adolescents in public (Valentine, 1996). Valentine (1996, p. 205) describes that this reflects the perception that public spaces are "naturally or normally" for adults. When considered in combination with the discourse of 'seen and not heard', the effect is that CYP should not be seen (at least not in public without supervision) nor heard.
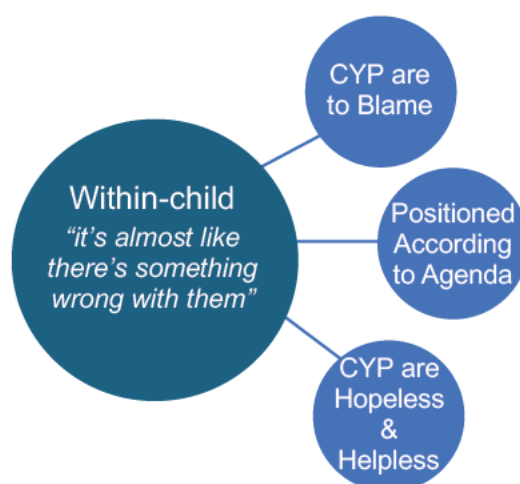
A Within-Child Perspective

All of the participants construed that educational staff seemed to perceive CYP through a 'within-child' lens, locating the source of the 'problem' within the child (presented in Figure 12).

"Yeah, it's just very negative it and it's almost like there's something wrong with them" (Participant B).

Figure 12
Discourses of 'Within-child'

70

Participants reflected that this perspective was sometimes used to define CYP as inherently wrong; *"he's a bad kid" (Participant E)*, *"You're either good, or bad and you get punished" (Participant F)* and connected it to the use of diagnostic terms, such as *"demand avoidance" (Participant E)* thereby reducing CYP to a *"set of symptoms" (Participant E)*.

All the participants perceived that this was further reinforced through medicalised SEND policies and statutory processes. Including the normalised use and discussion of diagnostic criteria for referral purposes and the process of identifying 'needs' whilst acquiring an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), likely linked to the scarcity of provision;

> *"filling out these forms to get a referral for a diagnosis, that whole diagnostic…procedure is incredibly within-child and decontextualized" (Participant E).*

> *You have to fit in this box to get that because resources are so… short." (Participant B)*

The use of within-child discourses was perceived to be a protective strategy and represent *"defensiveness" (Participant D),* supporting staff to attribute responsibility for CYPs presentation outside themselves; *"It was all his fault and not her fault" (Participant C).*

Furthermore, there was a sense of hopelessness;

> *"they've just kind of got no chance and they're gonna end up probably excluded and…I think then you get to these almost codes within the language about why certain things are being done." (Participant F)*

> *"they're quite defeatist. 'We've tried everything, but nothing works'" (Participant F)*

Through these within-child discourses, CYP are constructed as being inherently deficient and are ascribed responsibility for their experiences. This perspective diminishes the role of external factors, mirroring the medical model of disability, and could be perceived as representing a deterministic outlook, through which CYP are condemned to fail. Arguably, CYP are positioned as being 'hopeless' and 'helpless', powerless to their inherent deviancy despite the support offered in school. Thereby positioning education staff as 'helpers' working tirelessly, often without hope of success, to change the unchangeable. Due to the inherent nature of CYP's behaviour through this discourse, there is a sense of 'going through the motions' until the unavoidable occurs, a similar narrative sometimes perceived to

underlie school exclusions, particularly amongst CYP of minoritised ethnicities (Blyth &

Milner, 1996; Howarth et al., 2004).

Whilst external factors were perceived to be largely ignored, the discourses

employed seemed to suggest inheritably of difference. Four participants seemed to construe

that the CYPs' family were often implicated in the within-child discourses; *"I can almost hear*

sometimes 'it's that family'" (Participant B) and linked this to issues of intersectionality;

> *"There's a lot of assumptions made, isn't there about families, which again I think there's a[n]*
> *intersection between ethnicity and social class." (Participant A)*

This was perceived to be influenced by in group/out group behaviours and an us and

them mentality;

> *"It's that kind of systemic discrimination almost of the difference between, it's like an us and them. It's*
> *like…I'm more privileged almost. And therefore, you need my, you know…is it is it like a pity? I don't*
> *know whether it's a pity but it's almost like that. We know best….and therefore it's…They have to have*
> *things done to them because they're wrong or…their kind of system around them…is false. It needs to*
> *be fixed and…we're the ones that know it…I suppose it's about that power imbalance I guess.*
> *(Participant B)*
>
> *"there's an Us and Them, isn't there...That's underpinning it. I'm from this group. You're from that group.*
> *My group is acceptable. Your group is unacceptable. Which, you know, I think underpins a lot*
> *of…oppression." (Participant D).*

This suggests that the within-child discourses employed about CYP could be

underpinned by eugenicist principles based on perceptions of the heritability of SEND and

'deviant behaviour'. This could be argued to have significant implications for the options of

action afforded to CYP, not only rendering them victims to their biology, but also influencing

the provisions made available to them in schools. Many researchers emphasise the political

nature of resource allocation, suggesting that power relations between the funders and

recipients are pivotal (Agyemang, 2010; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Wildavsky, 1961). Within

education, the shift to decentralised financial control through the academisation agenda, and

increased focus on the performance of schools may influence resource allocation

(Agyemang, 2010; Gillard, 2018) and have significance to the within-child discourses.

Following the introduction of a national curriculum and key stage assessments in 1988, the government placed significant pressure on schools to perform, pledging to publish details of school's academic performance (Gillard, 2018). Gillard, (2018) described how this led many schools to decline places to CYP with SEND and focus provision on students working on the borderline of academic levels. This external pressure could be argued to represent the government's construction of education; a tool of capitalism (explored in Chapter Two), and of CYP with SEND; unable to contribute to the economy and incompatible with capitalist ideals (Chapman, 2023). Trickling down to educational staff, this could encourage within-child discourses, particularly when considering the allocation of resources.

The Conformity of Children and Young People
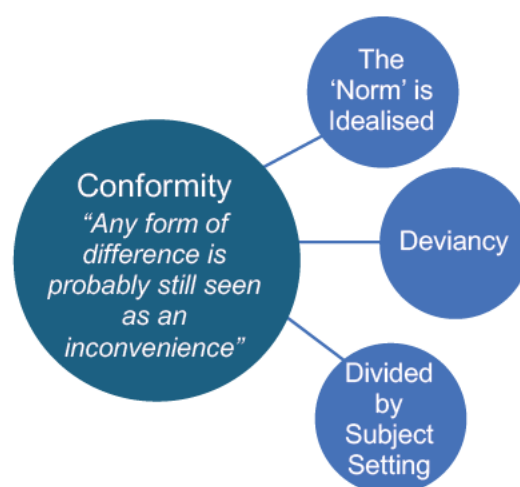
All participants perceived that CYP were the subject of discourses of conformity, based on social norms (presented in Figure 13).

Through this discourse, CYP's behaviour, learning, and identity might be critiqued and perceived to be intolerable;

"Any form of difference is probably still seen as an inconvenience." (Participant A)

Figure 13

Discourses of 'Conformity'

All participants seemed to allude to judgements about learning styles, referring to a *"one-size-fits-all approach to education" (Participant A),* structured by subject setting which prioritises academic achievement, and requires CYP *"to be able to sit at desks." (Participant A)* or risk being reprimanded;

> *"we're publicly shaming them for not being able to fit in with that ideal learner." (Participant A)*
> Or excluded;

> *"if you can't sit down, be quiet, learn in the way that we have deemed is the appropriate way to learn….*
> *Then you can't stay here" (Participant D)*

Through discourses of conformity, sameness is sought, constructing CYP outside social norms as undesirable, inadequate and burdensome. Two participants reflected how discourses of conformity towards CYP with SEND were often enacted through target setting;

> *"…actually a lot of the outcomes that are set by staff… like 'well it would be better if they didn't have*
> *attention deficit. It'd be better if they could just focus'. So, the target is to focus for an hour. It's like, well,*
> *that's not a thing, is it?" (Participant E)*

Targets were perceived as often being for the benefit of staff; *"There's a lot of outcomes that staff want… to meet their needs." (Participant E)* and/or based on normative assumptions; *"I want this autistic person to make better eye contact so that I can tell that they're listening" (Participant E).* Participants referred to the influence of government agendas in conformity-based target setting, insisting that CYP;

> *"can read by age 6 and…hit all these…national targets that we've created. You should be able to do.*
> *And if you can't do that, you're on a cloud and a thunderstorm. All you know, these good to be green*
> *systems where you're…always the one getting the red card." (Participant A)*

This discourse illustrates the 'dilemma of difference' issue, suggesting that the government (and therefore education staff) prioritise "sameness" and conformity, achieved through a one size fits all approach that does not support adaptive teaching and/or interventions (Terzi, 2005, p. 443). Aligning with recent research that suggests punitive approaches may exacerbate racial, social, and gender disparities (Jones et al., 2023; Lodi et al., 2022), under this approach, CYP with SEND may be more likely to 'fail', becoming the subject of punitive measures more frequently than those without SEND. Furthermore, some research suggests that prescribed monitoring and performance approaches may perpetuate

the "control agenda" (Wright, 2009, p. 283) and paradoxically disempower education staff, wherein, the more targets and higher the standards, the greater the level of regulation required for conformity (Didaskalou & Millward, 2007; Slee, 1998; Wright, 2009).

The discourse of conformity could be argued to be underpinned by paternalism (explored in Discourses of Learning and Knowledge in Chapter Two), encouraging a 'done to' approach rather than 'done with' (Pope et al., 2017). Mcdonough & Taylor (2021) suggest that paternalism is widely used to control and direct CYP with SEND, often framed as being in their best interests.

Whilst operators of paternalism in education may have well-meaning intentions (Mcdonough & Taylor, 2021), some researchers suggest that paternalistic education is underpinned by eugenicist principles (Baker, 2002). Referring to historic eugenicist practices, including the sterilisation and institutionalisation of 'deviant' individuals under the guise of care (Kevles, 1999), these researchers compare the structural practices used to enforce conformity in education, such as "the everyday dividing, sorting, and classifying practices of schooling" suggesting that they may represent modern eugenics (Baker, 2002, p. 663). Included within this, is the commonplace use of subject setting, understood by participants to reflect pressures upon schools to perform academically. Participant F perceived that subject setting has implications for minority groups, mirroring eugenicist principles;

> *"I think then you start to see these different intentions for what school is about for those people, like for some of the bottom set. If…we're saying that's representing the working class and also racialized groups quite often, it's managing their behaviour." (Participant F)*

Arguably this practice can also be linked to discourses of capitalism, wherein one's economic potential is valued above other qualities, and supports the development of an internationally competitive work force (Gillard, 2018; Hill et al., 2009). Several authors suggest that through subject setting and other processes of classification, CYP are construed as "friends and students of business" (Brooks, 2013, p. 321), representing a dangerous attitude valuing people in terms of their function (Fielding, 2007; Montgomery & Kehoe, 2010). Burch (2018, p. 94), discussed the influence of discourses of capitalism

across educational policy, including the SEND Code of Practice (Department for Education & Department of Health, 2015), suggesting it is "a tool of government, written to the demands of the economy rather than the unique needs, aspirations, and ambitions" of CYP with SEND. Through these discourses, CYP are objectified, viewed as their economic potential, like clay, they can be moulded to meet the needs of the economy, and therefore are beholden to education staff to teach them (Chapman, 2023; Patsarika, 2014). However, there could also be argued to be some power in this position. Representing the 'future', CYP are perceived to be key in economic and societal progress, therefore education staff may in fact be beholden to CYP.

Children and Young People are Innocent

All but one of the participants perceived that CYP are subject to discourses (presented in Figure 14) about their purity and innocence, framing them as vulnerable and in need of protection;

> *"children hold this position in society as being…they haven't committed any sins, they're neutral. We need to get rid of all harm. We need to protect them at any cost." (Participant F)*

Drawing on an Apollonian construction, within this discourse, CYP are perceived to be inherently good although vulnerable to corruption; *"People are out to brainwash them" (Participant F),* and their 'childlike qualities' are emphasised and treasured (Lawson & Silver, 1973, p. 233);

Figure 14

Discourses of 'CYP are Innocent'
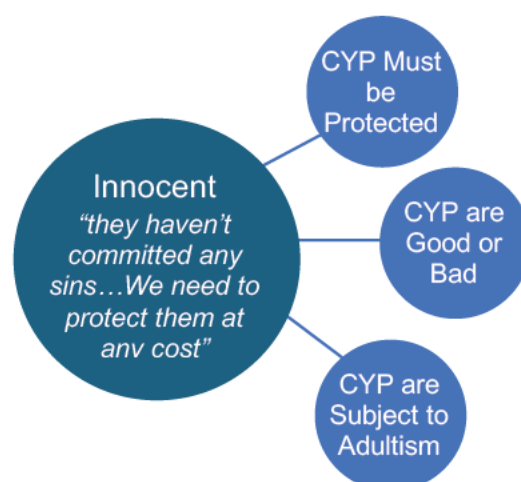
"This is my own views, I think it's pretty much on evidence, but one of the concepts that I think EPs, we come across a lot is childism and that idea of, you know, children need to be protected, children need to be cared for at all cost and sometimes that care and that protection verges into possessiveness and …significant imbalances in power" (Participant G)

Through an Apollonian discourse, CYP are potentially vulnerable to power imbalances, perhaps representing a form of paternalism wherein CYP are denied autonomy;

"We're kind of brought up to assume that adults always know better." (Participant C).

"And I think it goes back to what we were saying earlier about generally sort of like perception…of the role of the adults and the role of the child, you know. That it is just for the adult to kind of be in charge and tell the child what to do and tell them what they should be thinking and, yeah and not taking enough account of their, you know, things like their emotional life and…their voices and what they…want to do." (Participant C)

Within this discourse, punishment is used to protect CYP from 'corruption', although Participant F reflected on the performative application of this;

"At the same time, there's all this, this punishment and stuff that goes on, but a lot of the time it's done in the name of we need to protect them...Which is again, yeah like, interesting how children, young people get…placed and used but at different times in conversations. I think depending on the starting point, it's either this idea of innocence or other times it's discipline and we need to do this to make sure they've got whatever, but it can vary…It's used by different people at different times to pursue different agendas, I think." (Participant F)

"It'll be two different children, but presenting with sort of similar needs but sometimes the discourse is very different and I feel like I don't have the information to know why they're presenting one as being this…awful child, where nothing can be done and the other one is like they're throwing all kinds of resources thinking creatively. 'It's not their fault, it's other things'" (Participant F)

This represents a possible contradiction in the conceptualisation of childhood, arguably reflecting Apollonian discourses about some CYP, and Dionysian discourses, emphasising an inherent badness, about others based on the agenda at play. Participant F referred to the possible role of religion in this discourse, built on ideas of the innocence, sin and punishment of CYP. A number of researchers have suggested similar conclusions, noting that "religion remains in the language, practices, and routines of schooling but also in

conceptions of the 'child'" (Burke & Segall, 2011, p. 631). Furthermore, the implementation of schooling in England is understood by some to reflect Dionysian constructions of CYP, saving children from their inherent evil through the spread of Christian moral virtues (Fletcher, 1997). However, some authors discuss this in reverse, commenting on the influence of cultural norms of childhood, and punishment on religion (Abelow, 2011). Nonetheless, a discourse underpinned by Apollonian and Dionysian constructions potentially limits actions available to CYP. Those constructed under the Apollonian conceptualisation are framed as naïve, vulnerable, and incapable without adult input. 'Misbehaviour' is understood as corruption and sourced to external influences, perhaps until a certain threshold, where it becomes difficult to justify this construction, and a Dionysian one is adopted instead. Limiting CYP to being either 'good or bad'.

Discourses underpinned by Apollonian, Dionysian, and/or paternalistic principles could be perceived to emphasise concepts of 'Childhood', often focusing on CYPs age and inexperience. However, four participants also perceived that CYP are subject to adultification processes and practices including *"putting children in ties" (Participant E)* and prioritising efforts towards realising their *"economic potential" (Participant A).* Participants C and E reflected on adult-centric targets, which focused on progress towards 'adult' goals and the *"world of work" (Participant C and E)*;

> *"I get annoyed about is, you know, preparing for adulthood and where the kind of the one about employment occupation, things like that is, is, is just phrased as paid work. And this whole idea that, you know, that has to be the ultimate goal for…all of them." (Participant C)*

Linked to this, participants C and E reflected about a diminished sense of play in schools;

> *"'Cause if we add the notion that when you go to secondary school, you're not supposed to want to play anymore, you're supposed to not be silly. You're supposed to grow up. And actually, the kids want to play...and be silly because they are kids. And actually, I like playing and being silly because I'm a human. You know, and they're not in the world of work. You're in the world of work. These kids are in the world of school. And they're kids?" (Pt E)*

The role of play in schools was understood to reflect wider societal discourses and agendas;

"kind of in the…so it was 70s, I guess and early 80s when you know…teacher training colleges did a lot of stuff on pedagogy and thinking about different ways of, you know, what are the best ways for children to learn and all that stuff around play and…bringing play in and…there was a huge backlash against that…led by Margaret Thatcher in the 80s saying it was 'all much too political." (Participant C)

Further, these wider discourses were understood to possibly affect how playfulness was interpreted by education staff;

"Yeah, and…some of the things that are perceived as being cheeky or rude or defiant and things like that are playful things that…there kind of isn't room for in…these zero tolerance secondary school classrooms…For a relatively inexperienced teacher or a teacher who hasn't kind of got that training and understanding of how people work, it's very difficult to distinguish between something that's just playful and…could be sort of, you know, encouraged or used and something that might look very similar, but it kind of has a different basis and a different intent and a different kind of emotion behind it." (Participant C)

Through these discourses, CYP are constructed as having less need of play by a certain age or stage, reflecting an abrupt end to 'childhood'. Furthermore, the perception of play in education is perceived to have consequences for how staff interact with CYP, potentially leading to misinterpretations of 'playful' behaviour as 'misbehaviour'. This might be particularly relevant for CYP of minoritised ethnicity, who are particularly susceptible to adultification in education (Dumas & Derrick Nelson, 2016; Epstein et al., 2017).

Summary

Part One of Chapter Five explored the first three research questions, each of which will be summarised in the following paragraphs.

1. How do EPs construe oppressive discourses used about CYP in educational settings?

Participants seemed to construe that oppressive discourses were used about CYP in education settings, and these often centred around the 'othering' of CYP, the requirement for compliance, perceiving that CYP should be 'seen not heard', taking a 'within-child' stance, idealising conformity, and constructing CYP as 'innocent'.

2. How are the CYP positioned in these discourses?

Through these discourses, CYP were perceived to be positioned outside of the school and wider community. Participants seemed to construe that the discourses positioned CYP 'inferior' to staff, with their credibility and needs in question. In contrast, discourses of 'innocence' seemed to simultaneously position CYP as superior to staff due to their 'purity' and as inferior due to their need of protection and knowledge.

3. What are the goals and impact of these discourses?

The participants seemed to perceive that these discourses had exclusionary functions, for example building a 'them and us' narrative and/or serving to evidence that CYP were inappropriately placed in the setting, although this was understood to reflect wider government and societal agendas as well as pressures on education staff.

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION PART TWO

Part Two of Chapter Five presents the analysis of the transcripts, and discussion of the final research question:

4. How do EPs construe they could work against oppressive discourses of CYP?

The transcripts were analysed using FDA (based on stages presented in Table 9) and Figure 15 presents a summarised illustration of the process employed.

Figure 15

Summary of Data Analysis Process
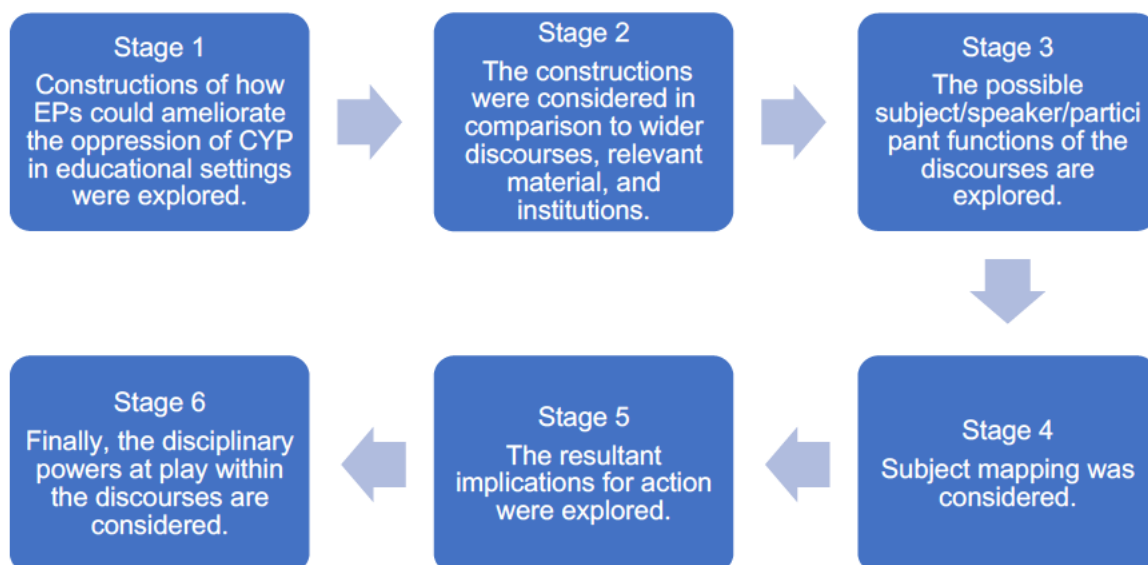
Constructions of Working Against Oppressive Discourses of CYP

All participants seemed to construe that working against oppressive discourses of CYP in educational settings was an essential aspect of the EP role;

> *"I think this should be the number one priority for all educational psychologists in terms of if…part of our work is not a working against oppressive practise, then what the hell are we doing?" (Participant G)*

Participants seemed to construe this through discourses of direct and indirect challenge, displayed in Figure 16. In discussing how they could work against oppressive discourses about CYP, participants often referred to a dichotomy of the ideal versus reality response.

Figure 16

Constructions of How EPs can Work Against Oppressive Discourses of Children and Young People Through 'Direct' and 'Indirect' Responses.

The ideal response was understood as a direct, immediate response, and reality was often constructed as a delayed, follow-up exploration;

> *"well…there's two answers, isn't it? There's the ideal and what actually happens, and my ideal self would almost…be going, but…it is sometimes shock of hearing it as well. So I'd say sometimes you kind of do…when something just comes and you're like, 'oh my goodness, OK, that's quite…'. But the SENCo can just talk, talk, talk, talk. So sometimes it's like, 'oh, my gosh, how do I address this? What's happened, like 2 minutes ago? And now we're over here'. So sometimes…my ideal self would like to really kind of go. 'Hang on. I really just want to take you back now'. But I suppose in practise, what I do is I always hold on to things that I don't like and then may sensitively address them. So I suppose if there is a narrative that's coming out particularly, I would then try to sensitively…go, 'Oh, but so when are you', you know, so I suppose I try and question them about the facts. So again, 'all this family's this, this family's not'…I might start to sort of question well, 'so tell me a bit about that…so…where's that come from?…When did that happen?'…so again I suppose I'd try to question around the facts of and try to make them reflect on actually how they're…constructing a situation. (Participant B)*

Although most participants seemed to express quite self-deprecating perceptions of their 'reality' response, they also perceived it to be important;

> *"Yeah, I mean, I suppose they're both important, aren't they? The reaction in the moment and then, the reaction later because also, you know… there's degrees of appropriate challenge in a moment as well in our role because, yeah, although, you want…to counter the…oppressive or problematic view that's being taken. You still need to maintain a relationship with that member of staff. And that school. In order*

to 1. like continue doing your job with them, but 2. also having potentially a larger, more productive impact by returning to it later." (Participant D)

Whilst exploring constructions of how they could work against oppressive discourses of CYP, participants reflected on perceived barriers presented in Figure 17.

Participants expressed that many of these barriers were linked to wider issues including structural oppression, government agenda, education funding cuts, and the medicalisation of SEND and emphasis of standardised assessment/ranking practices.

Participants also shared mobilising factors, such as values, guilt, knowledge of policy, rapport/trust with education staff, and support from their EP team including supervision opportunities.

Figure 17

Constructions of Barriers to Work Against Oppressive Discourses of Children and Young People

Direct Response: Naming Oppression

All participants seemed to perceive that direct response to the oppression of CYP was important but difficult, requiring high-level skills to label and name oppression towards CYP;

> *Frame…somehow managing to frame it like that in a moment …would be great. You know…that is maybe quite a tall order (Participant D)*

> *"How are you gonna address an issue if you're not actually talking directly about it?" (Participant D)*

> *"So it's almost naming it...I think in order to help and maybe that's actually about overcoming this, it is about that openness." (Participant B)*

Supporting this process, three participants reflected on the importance of knowing and understanding policy, and utilising this to respond to oppressive practice in the moment and directly;

> *"'Cause, I think another big one is…EPs need to know the legislation inside out and they need to be able to quote it and they need to be able to use it as a weapon, when it can be used as a weapon." (Participant G)*

> *"So again, it's like using that policy using that wider systemic thinking to sort of maybe challenge" (Participant B)*

A growing body of research indicates that naming and labelling oppression could be important in challenging oppressive practices (Bornstein, 2018; Galloway et al., 2019; Howard, 2010; Mitton-Kukner et al., 2016). Based on Shields (2018) work about 'transformative leadership in education', Bornstein, (2018, p. 6) wrote of the need to "challenge, analyze, and disrupt discourses and power relations" and "construct empowering and liberatory knowledge frameworks" in his role as principal in a 'White elementary school'. Concluding that failing to 'call out' oppressive discourses may lead to 'colourblind' approaches, thereby reinforcing white supremacy (Bornstein, 2018; Galloway et al., 2019).

Whilst this discourse could be argued to open opportunities for action; the naming, and challenging of oppression, it may also inadvertently shut some actions down. For example, subtle more nuanced forms of oppression, including microaggressions, and even

those baked into systems, such as biased recruitment may not be so easily called out due to a lack of 'visible evidence' (Sue et al., 2009), therefore, this direct approach may undermine attempts to challenge other types of less visible oppression.

Participants D and G seemed to perceive a difference in the urgency of responding to some oppressive practices compared to others, for example immediately challenging explicit racist remarks was understood to be a necessity;

> *"[Describing racism towards a Gypsy, Roma, Traveller CYP] There's only one time where, I think somebody was being actively prejudice against a group of people that I was in the vicinity of. Which, you know, perhaps requires more that upfront; 'You can't say that sort of reaction'" (Participant D)*

However, they discussed the contradictions inherent to this, noting that explicit oppression towards other groups was just as important to challenge;

> *"the thing is…you have to challenge it in a way that is non-confrontational in a way that is, you know, open and honest. But there needs to be…boundaries like nobody would be using racist slurs…in a professional meeting. So why do we put up with things like you know, or will say they can't be in this setting because…they have a disability or you know other…comments that are made quite often."*
> *(Participant G)*

Through this discourse, some types of 'oppression' might be recognised more often or considered worse than others. Specifically, participants seemed to perceive that racism induces action more effectively than ableism. A number of authors have drawn attention to this tension previously, noting that issues affecting disabled people took longer than racism "to reach the top of the legislative agenda in the UK" (Miller et al., 2004, p. 25). Even the term 'ableism' (and 'disablism') is understood to be a fairly recent development, introduced to provide the same type as recognition and visibility as other 'isms' (Harpur, 2009). Miller et al. (2004) suggest that the variation in response to racism versus ableism may be linked to medicalised narratives; which frame disability as something that can be cured, therefore reinforcing its construction as something unwanted, to be rid of.

Direct Response: Brave Spaces

Participant D seemed to construe a specific space in which EPs would have increased opportunities to work against oppressive discourses about CYP;

"Best practice would be addressing it in some form in the moment. In a non-confrontational way to support learning and development. Open and frank conversations with SENCos. In a space that felt comfortable to challenge." (Participant D)

Potentially giving a 'name' to this, Participant D referred to research about *"the need for brave spaces rather than safe spaces",* noting that these were important to challenge structural oppression;

"it's about people in privileged positions being able to sit with that discomfort…It's very difficult to create that kind of space well…A space where people are confident…to sit in discomfort and be brave about these things" (Participant D)

The concept of a 'brave space' originates from Arao & Clemens (2013) work about education and the classroom environment. Among other elements, a brave space was conceptualised a place of "owning intentions and impacts" and "challenge by choice", thereby supporting individuals to take accountability of their words and step in and out of challenging conversations (Arao & Clemens, 2013, Chapter 8). Although the concept of a 'brave space' employs discourses about being courageous, and taking a leap, they also provide a sense of distance. A 'brave space' could be perceived to be a space separate to the current, therefore allowing people to shift gears slightly, take on a renewed sense of assertiveness, even more powerful if the 'move' to the brave space is verbally acknowledged.

However, most participants seemed to vacillate between perceptions of direct challenge as powerful and impactful, and as a source of conflict;

"And I think…best practise to get to would be using that direct language that we were talking about. But that I don't know. I think that that's a challenging one. I think it's especially in…the situation if somebody says something, if you were to come out and say 'what you just said was racist', although it'd be great if we could get to a place where that would be OK and that could open up a frank conversation, I don't think that would go down well in the current climate… I don't know, helping people to get to a place to understand the structural oppressions that are at play within their settings…even those overt and…more sort of implicit ingrained structures and attitudes." (Participant D)

Through these discourses, all participants seemed to construe that directly challenging oppression was ineffectual without exploration of the structural oppression within schools.

Direct Response: Attack Doesn't Work

Whilst participants seemed to perceive that it was important to name oppression, some reflected that the approach used was important, emphasising personal development rather than personal attack;

> *"No, but shouting doesn't work. I'm not interested in someone shouting at me. If someone shouts at me, I'm just going to go 'OK, I'll…go away now and I'll maybe have a conversation when you're not shouting'. I'm not interested in you shouting. That's the last person I'm going to listen to." (Participant E)*

> *"'It's about calling them out'. Well, no, that sounds very kind of finger pointing. So it's not to call them out, but it's trying to make them reflect." (Participant B)*

Participants D and G reflected on the difficulty of being naturally conflict averse, something that Participant G considered to be common amongst EPs due to pressures to maintain relationships with schools in a consumer based model;

> *"I think EPs can sometimes be quite cowardly and I don't mean that in a bad way. I mean that because I think we are…made to feel like we need to protect the relationships with our schools at all cost…That can make us not want to challenge as much". (Participant G)*

> *"The tendency to not want to upset people as well, which I think is quite natural for lots of people and can often…lead to inaction in those situations because you don't want to make waves or you don't want to have confrontation. You know, because lots of…people, myself included, are quite…conflict averse so being conflict averse can be, you know, a barrier in that in those situations and...knowing… that so many people...find it difficult to take challenges and take sort of disagreement as well, not knowing where that's going to go." (Participant D)*

Through these discourses, participants D and G seemed to perceive that challenging oppression involves inherent risk, both personally and professionally, which can be mitigated through a considered approach. Although terms such as *"cowardly" (Participant G)* and *"conflict-averse" (Participant D)* were used, participants also seemed to frame this positively, referring to a 'solution-focused' approach, but suggested that EPs may need to act more assertively when navigating oppressive discourses towards CYP in education settings. Furthermore, participants referred to previous examples of oppression toward CYP, during which they hadn't acted, and seemed to describe a sense of regret. This seemed to be perceived to be a motivator, representing a source to draw upon to act assertively;

"And…myself included, mind you. No, we don't like conflict. Like we tend to be people that are very solution focused and you know, conflict is uncomfortable. Nobody likes calling people out. But I also think if we don't...One of the things that I always say when I supervise assistants, or I supervise trainees, I always say is if you are leaving a situation and you feel like you're going to be thinking about it if you don't do anything about it, then you have to do something about it" (Participant G)

Linked to this, all but one participants reflected on the importance of critical self-reflection and supervision although seemed to perceive that reflection opportunities were limited due to the high EP workload;

"Yeah, I…really wish I had more time to read things and look at research and, you know, actually think about, reflect properly on my practise and think…was that the best thing to do? Was that the best thing to use in that situation?" (Participant D)

"But how much time do we have to be reflexive?" (Participant E)

Within educational psychology, supervision is defined as "a psychological process that enables a focus on personal and professional development and that offers a confidential and reflective space for the educational psychologist to consider their work and the responses to it" (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010, p. 7). Among related findings, there is a considerable weight of evidence suggesting that supervision can support cultural consciousness through sharing and reflection about personal and professional influences (Margaret, 2013; Soni & Callicott, 2023). For example, transcultural supervision may increase cultural awareness and widen perspective taking (Soni et al., 2022), perhaps representing an opportunity to discuss oppressive discourses critically.

Indirect Response: Critical Friend

All but one of the participants seemed to construe an important role for EPs as a 'critical friend'. This is understood to describe "a trusted person who asks provocative questions, provides data to be examined through another lens, and offers critiques of a person's work as a friend" (Costa & Kallick, 1993, p. 50). The findings from several studies suggest that critical friends can support school leadership and improvement (Gurr & Huerta, 2013; Mckeown & Diboll, 2011), helping schools to experience transformational learning (Leppky, 2007). Participants seemed to perceive that the critical friend role could be used to

ask difficult questions, re-framing discourses and encouraging the staff member to consider alternative options for action;

> *"So, in the moment. I tried to unpick a little bit about what the situations were happening" (participant D)*

> *"I was working in a consultation with this teacher directly about this child and I did try to gently explore 'what would that have felt like for you to say sorry?'" (Participant A)*

As critical friends, participants construed that EPs could support education staff to recognise and acknowledge oppression;

> *"And I think the first stage of that would be getting people to notice." (Participant A),*

advocate for CYP and their families, and avoid collusion;

> *"I suppose equally again, deep down, about advocacy as well. So you know, if they're talking about a child in that particular way and I have a strong sense of…advocacy for that child. So actually…my role isn't to collude with you. Actually, my…role is to look at this in a very helicopter objective way. So on the one hand, I can hear you, but I may not, you know…I might not agree with you." (Participant B)*

Through these discourses the 'critical friend' role seemed to be constructed as a specific method for EPs to work against oppressive discourses of CYP. A mixture of 'critical' and 'friend', this role may support EPs to ask hard hitting questions, safely assured that the staff member perceives them to be an ally. Like the 'brave spaces' concept, the critical friend might be conceptualised as a concept to 'step into', a character separate from the EP, although likely representing their moral values. However, this position may limit the actions available to education staff, directing them towards actions deemed suitable by the EP. During interactions with a 'critical friend', staff may feel pressured to agree or conform with the EPs suggestions and efforts to counter or disagree may seem 'defensive', particularly due to the 'friend-colleague' dichotomy.

However, participants B and E offered a potential solution for this, referring to the importance of rapport and trust in this interaction;

> *"I think where movement has been seen has been where they have built up rapport, trust" (Participant B)*

Mirroring concerns shared about challenging the oppression of CYP directly, all but one of the participants seemed to perceive a tension between being a critical friend and the

consumer based traded models of many Educational Psychology Services (EPS), which revolve around the relationship between school and EP;

> *"That is definitely a barrier, isn't it? Of keeping that traded relationship. Whilst also being the critical friend and that's why I think sometimes you can sew subtle seeds in a consultation with the teacher. Or a quick conversation after an observation, but you can't really go much more into that and then I would follow it up with the SENCo. But then…it's a bit like, are we powerless to change a lot of this because of that? [traded model]" (Participant A)*

> *"And I know one of the things that came out from that which surprised me a little bit was people being worried about cancel culture, which I suppose would in our terms would be… the ending of a contract with us" (Participant A)*

This concern reflects the findings from a piece of research suggesting that although 'traded' models support EPs to offer a variety of approaches, they also complicate the critical friend role, making it difficult to ask challenging questions about school practices (Lee & Woods, 2017).

Indirect Response: Persuading Schools to Take a Different Approach

Five participants reflected on the possibility of working against oppressive discourses about CYP through collaborative, consultation-based approaches, but seemed to perceive that it was difficult to persuade schools to try these, over the traditional 'individual casework' model;

> *"You know, part of our role as EPs… not that I've engaged in this loads or had the opportunity, is like recognising the themes across...casework that you're doing in schools to see if there's particular needs within a school or a staff team. I mean…I've probably only done that two or three times in the whole time I've been training and now an EP." (Participant D)*

> *"At the start of this year there was different head of year, and another…boy got raised to me and I said I've already had a couple of boys from that year and she said yeah, there's a whole group of them and I kind of said well instead of me working my way through them individually, we could be trying to think about them as a group…it led to them just letting me do sort of what I wanted…with a group of them for a few sessions." (Participant F)*

Through these discourses, individual casework seemed to be constructed as generally 'outdated', short sighted and embodying a *"kind of very reactionary. Firefight"* (Participant B) approach.

Other systemic approaches to work against oppressive discourses of CYP included reviewing *"behaviour policy" (Participant C)* and *"training on emotion coaching" (Participant A).*

Although the majority of participants seemed to perceive that systemic approaches were essential in working against oppressive discourses, they described *"fixed" (Participant B)* systems, responding with *"huge resistance" (Participant E)* to suggestions of change;

> *"So again, sometimes oppression is about movement as well. It's like, actually, how much can you shape a system?" (Participant B)*

> *" I think you know it's going…into like a…big secondary school that's got a very strong head and sort of senior leadership team, especially if you're traded service which most of us are. You know…how do you resist that?...Can you? Can you resist it effectively on a sort of individual student level? Which is the way we're generally working" (Participant C)*

Participant F referred to organisational barriers perceived to limit the implementation of new approaches, including practical issues such as schools failing to respond to emails, difficulties booking spaces, and securing student attendance (in one case affected by student suspensions). Through these discourses, school systems might be constructed as being averse to change. Representing narrow and confined organisations, from which the EP is locked out of. Moreover, the barriers to change inherent within the system may represent a cause too large to influence, thereby encouraging compliance to the current procedures in place.

Four participants reflected on the wider discourses that control school systems, including 'national targets' and educational policies enforcing certain content/programmes, including 'Phonics' and how this often left *"school[s] not feeling that they've got permission to change" (Participant E).*

Indirect Response: The Educational Psychologist Voice

In reference to the wider societal discourses and government agenda influencing the oppression of CYP, Participant C spoke of using the EP voice to affect change;

> *"But then, politically, I suppose you know…through the AEP [Association of Educational Psychologists] and things like that. You know, doing campaigns at the national level" (Participant C)*

Likewise, several authors and researchers have drawn attention to the possible role of EPs in challenging wider discourses (Bird, 1999; Nastasi, 2008; Power, 2008), with direct 'calls for action' to "contribute to changes for the greater good" (López, 2022, p. 114). This literature describes that "educational psychology is inherently political" and encourages EPs to lobby and influence policy (Florance, 2022). Drawing on constructions of EPs as 'agents of change' (Roffey, 2015), these discourses frame EPs as being credible and critical, positioned just so to observe the interaction between society/government and school systems. However, Larsen (2014) notes the influence of wider discourses in educational psychology practice, often perceived to reinforce medicalised narratives and capitalist ideals, as explored in 'Educational Psychology Context' in Chapter Two.

Furthermore, as practitioners often working within Local Authority services, and/or fulfilling statutory work such as Education, Health, and Care Needs Assessments, the majority of EPs are in some ways 'directed' by the government (Lyonette et al., 2019). Yates & Hulusi, (2018, p. 302) discussed the tension inherent within this relationship, asking if EPs are "agents of the local authority or agents of co-construction?". Therefore, although EP's may be construed as being well positioned to observe and critique the interaction between government and schools, they could also be construed as having an obstructed viewpoint. Moreover, as 'agents of the local authority', the security in which EPs feel to campaign against government/societal agendas is questionable. However, previous research has discussed the role of social justice organisations, suggesting that these may offer impactful and practical approaches for EPs to engage in political level change processes (Schulze et al., 2019).

Indirect Response: Empowering Children and Young People

Participants A and F perceived that as subjects of oppressive discourses, CYP would have expertise into their own experiences, representing a source of knowledge and strength in efforts to work against oppressive practices and discourses. They reflected on the role of Participatory Action Research (PAR) in this;

> *"…like in my ideal world…blue sky thinking of like…participatory action research would be the ideal…way to, you know, gain more insight into this." (Participant A)*

PAR is understood to be a research methodology, emphasising the collaboration and participation of all stakeholders, embodying a democratic approach that challenges the "traditional hierarchies between researcher and those being researched" (Jacobs, 2016, p. 48). Participant F seemed to perceive that PAR offered an opportunity to gather CYP's voice about issues of oppression, as well as solutions, and avoid 'within-child' practices;

> *"The thing that I do believe in terms of like…what individuals can go through is come to see that it's not them, it's the things around them and know that they can kind of challenge them, which is the like philosophy behind participatory action research. And that's why I think, PAR…can be powerful and can challenge the narratives that they must feel themselves" (Participant F)*

> *"What I tried to emphasise is I want to understand what's going on for you in your days that's leading to this and what are the school systems in place that are not supporting you? Rather than…cause to start with, I was like, what do people do in these…I could do a CBT [cognitive behavioural therapy] type thing again for a few weeks…but I thought again, I don't want to move towards that, putting the onus on them." (Participant F)*

Further, PAR was perceived to offer opportunities for critical reflection, supporting CYP to question processes of normalisation such as the use of punitive measures;

> *"it's been really interesting to talk through it with them and get their perspective because they're raising about detention, and I'd say you do know… 'some schools don't have detention at all and have other policies'. And they were…'oh, yeah, there's that school sort of down the road, I think it's a private school and the longest detention you can get is an hour and a half'. And I was like, 'no, that's not what I mean here'…but they're so within that system that's been really challenging to change, but I think that that's one thing I'm trying to move towards in in general is… and use children, use young people, but to challenge those existing things." (Participant F)*

Through these discourses, PAR seemed to be constructed as an emancipatory tool, supporting the empowerment and engagement of CYP. Participant F reflected on the power of CYP's voice in this, which he perceived to be more impactful than the EP's alone;

> *"I think in some ways I could try and arrange a meeting with the deputy head and say why I disagree with the behaviour policy, but it's going to be a lot harder for her to change it if they're explaining what it does just on an emotive level…because they've also told me things like, 'on a on a Friday, I've been given detention for the following Monday. And I don't come to school on Monday' and then I was thinking like, ah…'cause they've got so many incentives, schools and it always changes within this sort of like market size competitive model where you've always got your exams and other things, but various things pop up and obviously like attendance is a real hot spot at the moment and is being treated way too simplistically. But then it was like, ah, well, if they're saying to you they're not attending because they're getting these detentions, so you're suddenly faced with a question of which thing are we gonna prioritise more here, which might force them to think a little bit more deeply." (Participant F)*

The discourses employed by Participant F including narratives about the 'perceived value of CYPs voice', attendance, government agenda, and capitalist ideals, seemed to frame PAR as an opportunity to utilise practices of normalisation to challenge structural oppression. Within this construction, CYPs insights could be applied to broader government discourses and priorities, such as the attendance drive, increasing the likelihood that the insights would be 'heard' and acted upon. This suggests that whilst PAR offers an opportunity for collaboration with CYP, it may also require the careful framing of these insights for change within oppressive systems.

Participant A spoke of PAR in reference to an *"ideal world"* and *"blue sky thinking" (Participant A)*, perhaps constructing it as outside the bounds of possibility within some services and/or for some EPs. This construction may have implications for action; reducing the likelihood that PAR is employed or even considered due to concerns about practicalities.

Summary

This chapter explored how participants construed oppressive discourses of CYP in education settings, and their constructions of how EPs could work against these.

Oppressive constructions of CYP seemed to focus on their 'deviancy from the norm' and locate the 'cause' of this internally. Even concepts of 'innocence' seemed to be built

upon discourses of an inherent goodness, susceptible to corruption. Within the school context, the purpose of locating the 'cause of deviancy' within the CYP could be to shift responsibility away from educational staff, therefore acting as a protective strategy. Furthermore, this 'within-child' discourse may reinforce wider discourses and power structures, influenced by capitalist ideals which focus on building 'compliant and conforming contributors'.

Constructions of how EPs can work against oppressive discourses of CYP employed discourses of an 'ideal' and 'reality' response, relating to the immediate and direct challenge of oppression versus a delayed, more subtle response. Through these discourses participants seemed to perceive an important role for EPs in working against oppressive discourses of CYP, although seemed to construe multiple barriers, including wider dominant discourses and practices of authority.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS

This chapter provides an overview of the research and key findings as well as implications for EP practice. Suggestions for future research are presented, and the strengths and limitations of the current study are considered. I close with a section about reflexivity, considering how the study has influenced me and my practice as a TEP.

Overview of Research and Key Findings

This research aimed to explore the following research questions:

1. How do EPs construe oppressive discourses used about CYP in educational settings?

2. How are the CYP positioned in these discourses?

3. What are the goals and impact of these discourses?

4. How do EPs construe they could work against oppressive discourses of CYP?

Chapter Two presented a brief genealogy of the history of education in England, from which dominant discourses of oppression, the object of study, were drawn. These discourses were considered in terms of their "knowledge, power and the human subject in modern society" (Crowley, 2009, p. 341). Building on this, this study explored EPs constructions of oppressive discourses used about CYP in education settings and the perceived purpose of these discourses, as well as constructions of how EPs can work against oppressive discourses of CYP.

Whilst the oppressive constructions of CYP seemed to be underpinned by 'within-child' discourses, often presenting medicalised narratives and reflecting principles of eugenics, there were contradictions within constructions. For example, CYP were subject to discourses of both 'childism' and 'adultification', sometimes within the same overarching construction. This may reflect that CYP are positioned through discourses by education staff to meet an agenda, as Participant F expressed;

> *"Which is…interesting how children young people get…placed and used but at different times in conversations. I think depending on the starting point…it's used by different people at different times to pursue different agendas, I think." (Participant F)*

The constructions explored had implications for action, particularly for CYP and education staff, arguably in most cases limiting for CYP. However, as Foucault notes; "where there is power, there is resistance" (Foucault, 1978, p. 95; Mills, 2004), an example of which could be the construction of CYP as 'economic potential', thereby subject to oppressive discourses about their worth, whilst also representing a future generational power, whom adults are likely to be reliant upon.

Mirroring findings from earlier studies (Cumber, 2022; Schulze et al., 2019; Zaniolo, 2021), participants seemed to perceive that EPs had a role in working against oppressive discourses of CYP, employing constructions of direct and indirect responses, including systemic approaches and Participatory Action Research (PAR). However, participants seemed to perceive that constructions were bound by the wider government discourses and agenda, referring to narrow educational policy, provision shortages, and complications of traded models.

Implications for Educational Psychology Practice

As institutions of authority, education settings may represent powerful locations of oppression, reinforcing constructions of conformity and compliance; "the ultimate aim of schools are widely recognized as social control" (Boler, 1999, p. 33). Often working within these settings, EPs are observers, contributors, and potentially challengers of the oppression of CYP; "our work involves us in the creation, use and manipulation of discourse" (Bozic et al., 1998, p. 65), therefore, representing a possible position of resistance. This is particularly important given the concerns many authors have raised about oppressive practice within educational psychology (Gould, 1996; Hayes, 2023; Moore, 2005; Sewell, 2016; Thorley Waters, 2014; Williams, 2020; Wright, 2017, 2020). The current research may support EPs to critically reflect upon discourses about CYP, employed in education settings and beyond, and consider their role in working against these. The research highlighted the following three areas specifically relevant to educational psychology practice:

1. The genealogy of discourses (the 'what and where' of discourses)

"Educational psychology could…benefit from more attention to deconstructing discourses about individuals, their abilities and motivation, and from more attention to cultural/historical practices that are part of educational psychology`s normalising gaze in education" (Bird, 1999, p. 21).

This research suggests that oppressive discourses of CYP echo and potentially maintain historically oppressive narratives, including that of colonialism, eugenics, and classism. However, through processes of normalisation and the control and reinforcement of accepted and dominant 'knowledge', the genealogy of these discourses is sometimes obscured (Hall, 1992). EP's could consider applying the first two research questions to their practice; How do EPs construe oppressive discourses used about CYP in educational settings? How are the CYP positioned in these discourses?

For example reflecting on the discourses being employed and how CYP are positioned through them. Drawing on principles of 'transformative leadership in education' (Shields, 2018), that emphasise the need to "challenge, analyze, and disrupt discourses and power relations" and "construct empowering and liberatory knowledge frameworks" (Bornstein, 2018, p. 6), recognising and naming this genealogy; to understand 'what' discourses are at play, and 'where' these are drawn from, may be important to disrupt oppressive constructions and procedures. Particularly in light of the historically oppressive role psychologists and EPs have sometimes represented (Coard, 1971a; Sewell, 2016; Thrift & Sugarman, 2019). Critical self-reflection through supervision may be an important step in this process, supporting EPs to identify influential aspects of their own identity, and highlight gaps in knowledge, potentially contributing to personal biases.

2. Critical reflection about discourses (the 'how' of discourses)

This research suggests that the discourses employed about CYP may be more representative of the education setting's and/or staff member's agenda rather than the CYP themselves. Aligning with Cousins & Hussain's (1984, pp. 84–85) interpretation that discourses support a "strategy…a common institutional…or political drift or pattern", it may be important for EPs to and consider the function of discourses and 'how' these

construct the CYP according to the agenda at play by applying the third research question; What are the goals and impact of these discourses? This may support EPs to act as 'Critical Friends', re-framing narratives and "making the power of language explicit" (Bozic et al., 1998, p. 71).

3. Challenging from inside an oppressive system

This research suggests that working against oppressive discourses of CYP is considered an important aspect of the EP role, however, this may be complicated by the inherent influence of government agenda. Balancing the position of 'agent of the local authority' and 'agent of co-construction' whilst challenging the oppression of CYP is complicated and difficult (Cumber, 2022; Yates & Hulusi, 2018; Zaniolo, 2021), but creative and flexible approaches, such as PAR may offer an opportunity to empower CYP and influence systemic practices including policies. Based on the findings from the current research, EP's could consider applying the final research question to support anti-oppressive practice; How do EPs construe they could work against oppressive discourses of CYP? Furthermore, EPs could consider if and how they are reinforcing heteronormative discourses and processes through their language, interactions, and practices, disrupting these where possible (Johnson, 2023). Expanding this further, EPs could consider exploring the use of oppressive discourses at the organisational level through interactive activities, designed to support attendees to consider the commonplace use of oppressive discourses (an example is presented in Appendix 11).

Future Research

Extending the current research, the perceptions of other 'subjects' could be explored such as education staff and/or CYP themselves. For example, future research could explore how education staff construe the oppression of CYP, or the discursive constructions employed by education staff, potentially offering further depth to the construction of CYP in education settings.

Whilst it was deemed inappropriate to include TEP participants in this sample, participants reflected upon experiences as TEPs, and seemed to perceive aspects of this

role, including inexperience, power imbalances as a 'student', and the general demands of the doctoral course may have influenced their experience of the oppression of CYP. These aspects could be explored in more depth to understand how they limit and open opportunities for action.

Finally, exploring the topic of this research through a lens of ethnography may provide further insight into how the oppression of CYP is enacted in education settings. For example, observing consultations between EPs and education staff may surface further discourses, and provide greater insight into how these discourses affect opportunities for action for CYP, staff, and EPs.

Strengths and Limitations

This research employed an interpretivist stance, assuming that experience cannot be unwound from interpretation, and recognising that a researcher's experiences shape the meaning-making process (Grossoehme, 2014; Phillips, 2023). When assessing the strengths and limitations of interpretative research, the 'trustworthiness' must be considered (Adler, 2022; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). Trustworthiness refers to the trust (sometimes termed 'rigor') in the researcher and research process and is achieved through transparency and reflexivity (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012).

Transparency

Whilst transparency was strived for, it may be harder to prove when employing FDA, particularly because of the flexible process of analysis, in which the research is encouraged to 'take the essence' of frameworks rather than stick strictly to them (Graham, 2005; Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2013). Despite this, I have attempted to demonstrate transparency throughout the research process, sharing my personal and professional influences, describing the philosophical, ontological and epistemological bases of the study, explaining my research decisions and reflections, and describing (Table 8) and evidencing (Appendix 10) the process of data analysis and therefore my sensemaking (Adler, 2022; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012).

Reflexivity as a Lone Researcher

The term 'lone researcher' implies that interpretations of the data were created entirely without input from participants, and whilst I undoubtedly had eventual oversight to how these were described, they were co-constructed within the interviews. The process of 'member checking' can be used to assess if participants feel that the researcher's analysis captures their experience, however Schwartz-Shea & Yanow (2012) suggest that it is inappropriate within social constructionist research because of the depth of analysis which focuses on surfacing 'structures' that participants may be unaware of. Therefore, member checking was not used in this research. However, during participant interviews I attempted to summarise points frequently, correcting these based on participants' responses, and tried to ensure that co-construction was balanced between researcher and participant at that stage.

Furthermore, Bright et al. (2023) describe a broader conceptualisation of 'reflexivity' based upon the writing of Foucault, which rather than "merely reducing researcher bias", recognises research as an opportunity for "self-representation". Whilst I was a 'lone researcher', I understood the importance of reflexivity, and have attempted to demonstrate this throughout, hopefully providing insight into how my own experiences may have influenced my interpretations.

Linked to this, the current study explores constructions of constructions; based on EPs interpretations of the discourses employed by education staff. This layered approach could be argued to obscure the viewpoint, possibly distorting the intentions and agendas of education staff. However, I sought to explore EP's experiences of oppressive discourses in education settings, to gain an understanding about the oppressions occurring and/or being noticed. Perceptions and interpretations were key to this, and the analysis and discussion is understood to be a reflection of this layered approach.

In my view, a limitation of the current research is the lack of exploration of how oppressive constructions of CYP possibly influence EP practice, specifically how constructions facilitate or limit this. For example, do discourses about the conformity of CYP limit EPs to 'medical model' approaches, such as the use of standardised assessments, and

what are the possible implications of this. Retrospectively, I suspect that this may have been

a skill beyond my capabilities at the time but would offer valuable insight.

Role of the Researcher

In exploring the role of the researcher, I have found it useful to consider prospective and retrospective reflexivity (Edge, 2011). Prospective reflexivity refers to the "effect of the whole-person-researcher on the research" (Attia & Edge, 2017, p. 35), and is understood to include researcher status, insider/outsider role, and researcher characteristics such as gender and ethnicity. Rather than 'contaminate the data', these aspects are understood to be a significant lens through which I approached the research and 'saw' the data. A possible example of this is the somewhat shallow exploration of how the surfaced discourses relate to CYP with physical disabilities, likely less salient to me due to my status as someone who does not identify as having a disability and a lack of experience working and interacting with people with physical disabilities. In fact, when Participant E referred to a school's reluctance to allow a student access to an 'accessible bathroom', I was surprised that this topic hadn't occurred to me previously and clumsily used the phrase "disabled toilet". Whilst I'm confident that many of the discourses do relate to constructions of CYP with physical disabilities, this was not explicitly explored.

As described in the opening chapter, although my identity affords me significant privileges, I have sometimes felt uncomfortable and unwelcome in education, and have suspected that my family and I were the subject of judgement by education professionals. I wonder if has made me significantly attuned to narratives of judgement about families and communities, and if this influenced my interpretation of the discourses, and the terminology used, for example, 'othering'. For me, this describes the feeling of being outside of the accepted, distanced from expectations or aspirations. However, personally, I sense some power in this terminology; the 'Other' represents a different perspective, approach, knowledge, and criticality of 'the norm'.

Retrospective reflexivity refers to "the effect of the research on the researcher" (Attia & Edge, 2017, p. 35), and is understood to describe the 'metaphorical sense of movement' (personal and professional) experienced whilst completing research. Linking to my earlier point, I have noticed that my practice as a TEP has 'moved' towards more inclusive

intentions, particularly in respect to CYP with physical disabilities. For example, demonstrating more curiosity about 'disabling barriers' within school environments and questioning paternalistic approaches to CYP with disabilities, that may inadvertently rob CYP of experiences and room to learn.

Personal Reflections

Completing an FDA has at times felt intensely complex and I have worried about failing to reach enough depth within the surfaced constructions. However, I feel as though I have benefited immensely from the process and feel it has influenced my world view. Although I was already prone to a social constructionist stance, through FDA I have developed a deep curiosity and criticality to the terms and 'sets of statements' employed during interactions. I find myself asking, 'how am I building the image of this child, and what is my underlying purpose?'. Rather than feeling a sense of despair at the power of discourse; understood to "systematically form the object of which they speak" (Foucault, 1972, p. 49), I find the idea that 'words create meaning' hopeful and perceive a space for resistance within this practice.

Although I acknowledge that as researcher, my interpretation was inextricably linked to the findings, I was occasionally surprised at the discourses surfacing within the interviews, particularly around the need to control CYP. However, to be clear, rather than disagreeing with these discourses, I felt that they put words to a phenomenon I had not been able to describe previously. Further, I could not help but feel a sense of hope and connectedness following the participant interviews, reassured and reminded that although this is a deeply challenging topic, many of my EP colleagues are committed to working against oppressive discourses of CYP.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Recruitment Email

Subject: Research exploring educational psychologists constructions of oppression in schools.
Dear _____

My name is Millie Hayes and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist at the University of Birmingham. I am conducting a research project for my thesis exploring educational psychologists' (EP) constructions of oppression in schools. I am focusing on how educational psychologists understand oppression, their experience of oppressive practices in schools, and their view of the EP role in this issue. Hopefully, this research will highlight best practice for responding to and challenging oppressive practice in schools.
I will be interviewing qualified EPs for this project and would appreciate your help in recruiting EPs from your service who might be interested in participating. Please could you circulate this email within your EP team?

Thank you very much for your time and help. If you have any queries, or wish to know more, please contact me or my supervisor using the details below.
Email:
Phone:
Research Supervisor: Katherine Callicott
email:

CONSTRUCTIONS OF OPPRESSION: INFORMATION SHEET

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

My name is Millie Hayes and I am a trainee educational psychologist studying at the University of Birmingham. I am conducting research to explore educational psychologists' experience of oppressive constructions of children and young people (CYP) in UK schools. My research supervisor is Dr Katherine Callicott (contact details shown below). This research has undergone ethical review by the University of Birmingham Humanities and Social Sciences Ethics Review Committee.

RESEARCH AIMS

I am interested in exploring EP experiences of oppression toward CYP in school. I am particularly interested in EPs understanding of oppression, thier experience of oppressive constructions of CYP, and how oppressive practice is navigated.

RATIONALE

During the COVID-19 pandemic, issues of systemic oppression were widely discussed, and discourses about social justice have continued in the aftermath. Research indicates that children experience oppression in school, but has not explored EPs experiences of this.

The current research may highlight issues of school based oppression across the UK, and strategies to respond to this in the EP role.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants will be qualified, HCPC registered EPs from around the UK.

YOUR INVOLVEMENT

Research overview:
- Consent form
- Demographics form
- 1 hour interview

After completing and returning the consent and demographics form, you will be contacted to arrange an interview. This can be held in person, in a location convenient to you, or virtually, depending on your preference. You will receive an interview schedule prior to the interview. The interview will involve an in-depth discussion about your role as an EP in schools, and experiences and insights about oppression towards CYP in educational settings. Interviews will be audio-recorded to ensure accuracy.

Version 2 - 29/09/2023

WHAT WILL THE FINDINGS BE USED FOR?

The findings will be written up into a thesis for fulfilment of an Applied Educational and Child Psychology Doctorate at the University of Birmingham. The thesis will be published, in full, online in the Univeristy e-theses database. Shorter papers summarising the research may be written for submission to a peer-reviewed journal for publication, and findings from the study may also be disseminated at professional conferences.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE DATA?

Immediately after your interview, the electronically audio-recorded data will be transferred from the devices to a password-protected folder on the University of Birmingham's secure electronic data storage systems, Bear Data Services. The files will be erased from the recording devices. Electronic transcripts and notes will be held in a password-protected folder on BEAR Data Services. Any written notes and forms will be scanned in and also stored on BEAR Data Services in a password protected folder. Original paper notes and forms will be shredded. In accordance with university research policy, data will be stored on BEAR Data Services for 10 years after completion of the project. A 10-year expiry date will be set for the electronic data stored on BEAR Data Services.

WHAT IF I CHANGE MY MIND?

You can withdraw from the research at any point until 14 days after the interview by contacting the researcher (see contact details below). If you choose to withdraw from the study during or immediately after the interview, the recording will be deleted from the recording devices immediately.

WILL IT BE CONFIDENTIAL?

Your information will be treated confidentially; your name, local authority, or any other identifying information **will not be included** in any report. Pseudonyms will be used throughout the transcript and research report. Every care will be taken to minimise the reporting of specific or unique case details that may reveal your identity. Please contact me if there is anything that you would like to be left out.

Version 2 – 29/09/2023

123

If, for any reason, I become seriously concerned about your own or others' safety and/or wellbeing, I have a responsibility to pass on this information to the university tutor or placement supervisor, in order to decide how to offer support. This would be fully discussed with you first.

HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE?

If you are interested in participating please complete and return the following documents to

- Short demographic form
- Consent form

WHERE CAN I SEEK FURTHER INFORMATION?

Please feel free to contact me with any quesitons you have. There will also be opportunities for questions and discussion after the interview. If you have any questions or concerns please use the following contacts:

Researcher: Millie Hayes

Research Supervisor: Dr Katherine Callicott

Appendix 3: Participant Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

Date:	Name:
Contact number:	

I _____ would like to take part in the study 'Educational Psychologists' Experiences of Oppressive Constructions of Children and Young People in Schools'. This study is being carried out by Millie Hayes Trainee Educational Psychologist as part of the Applied Educational and Child Psychology Doctorate at the University of Birmingham.

Please read the below consent form and complete t by crc ng the answer.

	Yes	No
I have read the nformat on sheet (Vers on 2 – 29/09/2023) and I understand what the project s about, what I wou d be expected to do and what wou d happen to the nformat on I g ve.	Y	N
I have had an opportun ty to ask any quest ons I have and I fee my quest ons have been answered.	Y	N
I conf rm that I am current y a fu y qua f ed, HCPC reg stered Educat ona Psycho og st pract s ng n the UK.	Y	N
I understand that the nterv ew w ast approx mate y one hour.	Y	N
I agree to be ng aud o recorded and I understand that the record ngs w on y be heard by M e and her research superv sors.	Y	N
Privacy: I understand that my vo ce w be recorded dur ng the nterv ew and M e may a so take some notes. I understand that the vo ce record ngs w be transcr bed. I know that ne ther my name, nor the name of the oca author ty, w be nc uded n these reports. I understand that bas c deta s about me (.e. sex, ethn c ty, age, serv ce type and years of exper ence) w be summar sed n the methodo ogy sect on and may be referred to n the d scuss on. I g ve perm ss on for my nterv ew record ng to be typed up w th a d fferent name and for th s to be used n the research. I agree to anonym sed quotes be ng used as part of the study.	Y	N
Right to withdraw: I understand that I am free to w thdraw from the study at any po nt w thout g v ng a reason, up unt 14 days after your nterv ew.	Y	N
Confidentiality: I understand that my v ews and dent ty w be kept conf dent a un ess I say anyth ng that suggests I or another are at r sk from harm, n wh ch case M e wou d seek gu dance from her research superv sor and fo ow the necessary safeguard ng procedures.	Y	N
Data storage: A hand-wr tten notes and aud o record ngs w be typed up us ng pseudo-names, the or g na record ngs and notes w be de eted or destroyed. The anonym sed transcr pts w on y be ava ab e to M e, her Un vers ty Superv sor and Un vers ty assessors. In adherence to the Data Protect on Act (2018), a e ectron c vers ons of anonymous documents w be stored on the Un vers ty of B rm ngham secure network for a per od of 10 years, after wh ch po nt, they w be destroyed.	Y	N
Data usage: I understand that the resu ts of th s study:	Y	N

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• W be used for M e s *Applied Educational and Child Psychology Doctoral thesis.* • May be wr tten up for profess ona journa s or shared at conferences for peop e work ng n/w th educat ona psycho ogy serv ces.		
Do you agree to take part n th s study?	**Y**	**N**

Interview Consent (to be completed on the day of the interview).

Consent w   be sought aga n at the start of the nterv ew. Th s w   e ther be wr tten (f the nterv ew s n-person), or d g ta (f t s conducted v rtua y). The researcher w   ask you to comp ete the re evant sect on conf rm ng your consent.

Face to face interview

Do you consent to take part in this study?

Yes   *No*

Name of participant (in block capitals):

Signature of participant:

Date:

Virtual interview

Do you consent to take part in this study? Please check the relevant box.

Yes   ☐   *No*   ☐

Name of participant (in block capitals):

Date:

I have explained the study to the above participant and they have agreed to take part.

Signature of researcher:

Date:

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Appendix 4: Participant Demographic Form

Educational Psychologists' Experiences of Oppressive Constructions of Children and Young People in Schools

<u>**Participant Demographic Form**</u>

Please complete the table below. This demographic data (excluding the Local Authority or Name of Service) will be reported in the thesis for the researchers Applied Educational and Child Psychology Doctorate. This information will be summarised in the methodology section and may be referred to in the discussion. The name of the Local Authority or Service **WILL NOT** be reported, this information is being collected purely for participant recruitment purposes.

Age P ease se ect a check box.	☐ 18 – 24 ☐ 25 – 34 ☐ 35 – 44 ☐ 45 – 54 ☐ 55 – 64 ☐ 65 +	
Gender:	**Ethnicity:**	
Years as an EP P ease se ect a check box.	☐1 – 3 ☐3 – 5 ☐5 – 10 ☐10 – 15 ☐15 – 20 ☐20+	
Local Authority or Name of Service:	**Service Type:** ☐ Traded ☐ Sem -traded ☐ Non-traded ☐ Pr vate ☐ Other, p ease exp a n:	**Local Authority Type:** ☐ C ty ☐ Sem -rura ☐ Rura ☐ Other, p ease exp a n:

I know that ne ther my name, nor the name of the oca author ty, w be nc uded n the thes s.

I consent for the bas c deta s about me (.e. age, gender, ethn c ty, years as an EP, serv ce type, and oca author ty type) to be nc uded n the thes s.

Date: **Participant Signature:**

Appendix 5: Participant Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule

Thank you for agree ng to part c pate n th s research project exp or ng Educat ona
Psycho og st s observat ons of oppress ve construct ons of ch dren and young peop e n UK
schoo s.

You have agreed to take part n a sem -structured nterv ew exp or ng th s top c. The p anned
nterv ew schedu e s shown be ow but w f ex b e and may not cover a the quest ons sted.

Observations
- In your ro e as an EP, have you exper enced schoo staff ta k about ch dren and
  young oppress ve y? If so, how?
- What p cture/s does th s bu d of the young person?

Wider context
- Is there any nf uence on the pract ces and po c es n p ace n educat on sett ngs?
- Where do you th nk these d scourses (th s anguage) come from? What s the
  source?
- What m ght be the goa of these d scourses?
- What s the mpact?

Responding
- Do you respond to oppress ve construct ons? If so, how?
- What are the barr ers to respond ng?
- How wou d best pract ce ook?

Version 2 – 29/09/2023

Appendix 6: Researcher Interview Schedule with Probes

Research Question	Interview Questions	Prompts
1. How do EPs construe oppressive discourses used about CYP in educational settings?	In your role as an EP, have you experienced school staff talk about children and young oppressively? If so, how? Can you give examples?	Definition of oppression: Thompson (2016, p. 50) defines oppression as "inhuman or degrading treatment of individuals or groups; hardship and injustice brought about by the dominance of one group over another; the negative and demeaning exercise of power". Language, phrases, actions towards/about children and young people and/or their families? Tell me more about that. Can you think of an occasion when this has happened?
2. How are the CYP positioned in these discourses? 3.	What picture/s does this build of the young person?	Were the school trying to achieve something? What overall picture of the young person were they trying to build? What do you mean by that? Do you mean that..
4. What are the goals and impact of these discourses? 5.	Is there any influence on the practices and policies in place in education settings? Where do you think these discourses (this language) come from? What is the source? What might be the goal of these discourses? What is the impact?	Across the systems - school, LA, government, media What contributes to oppressive constructions? Staff stress/pressure? Misunderstanding? Lack of training? What are the consequences of oppressive constructions?
6. How do EPs construe they could work against oppressive discourses of CYP?	Do you respond to oppressive constructions? If so, how? What are the barriers to responding? How would best practice look?	How does responding feel? Do you respond immediately? Do you share this information with anyone else in your service? What prevents you from responding? What are the consequences for you? What would make it easier to respond? How should EPs respond? What would this involve? What would this achieve?

Appendix 7: Letter of Ethical Approval

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Dear Katherine Callicott and Millie Hayes

RE EP experiences of oppressive CYP constructions

Application for Ethical Review ERN_1194-Oct2023

Thank you for your application for ethical review for the above project, which was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Committee.

On behalf of the Committee, I confirm that this study now has ethical approval.

Any adverse events occurring during the study should be promptly brought to the Committee's attention by the Principal Investigator and may necessitate further ethical review.

Please ensure that the relevant requirements within the University's Code of Practice for Research and the information and guidance provided on the University's ethics webpages (available at https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/accounting/Research-Support-Group/Research-Ethics/Links-and-Resources.aspx) are adhered to.

Please be aware that whilst Health and Safety (H&S) issues may be considered during the ethical review process, you are still required to follow the University's guidance on H&S and to ensure that H&S risk assessments have been carried out as appropriate. For further information about this, please contact your School H&S representative or the University's H&S Unit at healthandsafety@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

Kind regards,

The Co-Chairs of the Humanities and Social Sciences Committee

E-mail: ethics-queries@contacts.bham.ac.uk

Appendix 8: Analysis of Transcript Excerpt

Researcher	Yeah, yeah.
	Well as I see it. I was told this by the SENCo, who disagreed with what was going on. He ran off, but then they found out who it was and he immediately got, like, an hour detention. The SENCo then tried to explain. "Oh, he's got his plan. He's got these needs". He doesn't need to go to the detention, but then the the adult who it was and the head of year almost accepted, like oh, we didn't realise. But then doubled down on. "But he does need the detention. It will still help him".
Researcher	Uh. Yeah.
Participant F	So there's a lot of stuff like that. Secondary schools are particularly bad that I've seen on things like…
Researcher	Yep.
Participant F	Hair or certain racial groups and that becoming a massive issue. And again I think like.
Researcher	Yes.
Participant F	What I see what I've started to see in schools that have been working for a little bit longer is this divide between teachers of some who absolutely enforce these rules and others. If I'm like, they will look at me and say that "this is ridiculous", but often it will be staffed with more seniority that put these things in place.
Researcher	Yeah.
Participant F	I suppose their key key objective is enforcing these policies.
Researcher	Yes.
Participant F	And the idea that if it starts to slip, then there's going to be chaos, and teenagers are generally to be feared, I think, or any children that should be feared. And we've got to keep them under control.
Researcher	Yeah.

Participant F	But then I I suppose on a on a lower level I just see a lot of adults shouting at children quite aggressively or looking to sort of shame them in certain ways within a classroom, if they haven't been paying attention. It's not a and to me, so much of it seems, about control.
Researcher	Yeah.
Participant F	Rather than engaging them in your lesson or thinking about why they might be doing those things? The immediate reaction is I'm going to get control here because again, maybe there's an element of fear if I don't have control, what's it gonna lead to?
Researcher	Yeah.
Participant F	So yeah, I suppose that's a a starting point.
Researcher	That's all. I mean, all really interesting. You've said some things that other people have touched on, but you've said it in a really interesting way, which I really like. It's, I haven't people haven't brought in this element of the the adult having no choice before and like say, expressing that like, oh, I had to do it because I had no choice. I was. He pushed me to that boundary, which I think is really interesting because you've talked about almost not wanting the children to have choices. That's the way the kind of adults are. But then using that excuse for themselves, which was interesting.
Participant F	I've noticed more and more particularly, again, I find it strange from… I'll be working with somebody pretty senior or a head teacher, and they talk about these rules and I think it's interesting and in some ways they have a point. But they say things like. "We gave him his last chance before we finally excluded, and he did this and now we've got to", and I always think, well, you created that system. So you you literally you are the the one person who doesn't have to enforce it like you. You have chosen it.

: 10. Objects / 200. Mesosystem Supportive Approaches / 80. Participatory action research

: 10. Objects / 10. Perception of CYP / 60. Positioning of children to suit agenda

: 10. Objects / 70. Biases - SEND / 30. SEND harm the school community

: 10. Objects / 10. Perception of CYP / 10. Within-child

: 10. Objects / 100. Systemic Approaches that Maintain Oppression in Schools / 20. Punitive approach

: 20. Subjects / 30. CYP / 40. CYP with SEND

: 10. Objects / 60. Biases - Minoritised Ethnicity / 40. Hair discrimination

: 10. Objects / 180. Systemic Factors that Influence Response / 20. Ranking and assessment

: 20. Subjects / 30. CYP / 10. Child/children

: 10. Objects / 70. Biases - SEND / 90. Medical model

: 20. Subjects / 10. Educational Settings / 10. School/s

: 10. Objects / 100. Systemic Approaches that Maintain Oppression in Schools / 40. Non-inclusive policies

: 10. Objects / 200. Mesosystem Supportive Approaches / 10. Noticing Patterns

: 10. Objects / 20. Ideologies of Childhood / 10. Purity, innocence

: 10. Objects / 100. Systemic Approaches that Maintain Oppression in Schools / 70. Academic achievement

: 10. Objects / 60. Biases - Minoritised Ethnicity / 10. Racism

: 10. Objects / 100. Systemic Approaches that Maintain Oppression in Schools / 80. Subject setting

: 10. Objects / 40. Perception of families / 10. Parents are at fault

: 10. Objects / 10. Perception of CYP / 50. CYP outside social norms are dangerous

: 10. Objects / 100. Systemic Approaches that Maintain Oppression in Schools / 50. Exclusion

: 20. Subjects / 20. Other Educational Professionals / 10. Educational Psychologist/s

: 10. Objects / 170. EPS Factors that Influence Response / 10. Service model

: 20. Subjects / 40. Families / 20. Parent/s

: 10. Objects / 10. Perception of CYP / 30. CYP are feared, they must be monitored and controlled to ensure compliance.

: 10. Objects / 70. Biases - SEND / 40. Lack of understanding about SEND

: 10. Objects / 10. Perception of CYP / 20. The child is at fault, not the adult/system

: 20. Subjects / 50. External / 40. Society

: 20. Subjects / 10. Educational Settings / 60. School Staff

: 10. Objects / 160. Personal Factors that Influence Response / 140. EP Values

: 20. Subjects / 10. Educational Settings / 70. Senior leadership

: 10. Objects / 180. Systemic Factors that Influence Response / 60. Organisation

: 10. Objects / 170. EPS Factors that Influence Response / 20. EP Capacity, Workload, Stress

: 10. Objects / 40. Perception of families / 20. Judgement about single-parent families

: 10. Objects / 50. Biases and discrimination / 70. Intersectionality

: 20. Subjects / 40. Families / 30. Single parent/s

: 10. Objects / 100. Systemic Approaches that Maintain Oppression in Schools / 60. Non-inclusive curriculum

: 20. Subjects / 50. External / 110. Populations vulnerable to disadvantage

: 20. Subjects / 50. External / 20. Government

: 10. Objects / 110. Wider Influences of Oppressive Practices in Schools / 70. Media agendas

: 20. Subjects / 20. Other Educational Professionals / 40. Other professional/s

: 10. Objects / 50. Biases and discrimination / 30. Social class

: 10. Objects / 180. Systemic Factors that Influence Response / 70. Faceless

: 20. Subjects / 30. CYP / 50. CYP of minoritised ethnicity

: 10. Objects / 110. Wider Influences of Oppressive Practices in Schools / 100. Religion

: 20. Subjects / 30. CYP / 90. Working class CYP

: 20. Subjects / 10. Educational Settings / 80. SENCo/s

: 10. Objects / 10. Perception of CYP / 70. Shame

Appendix 9: Analysis Step 1 – Initial Categories

OBJECTS	
Oppression	
Perceptions of CYP CYP Manipulate and Lie • CYP are manipulative • CYP are not truthful CYP are dangerous and must be monitored, controlled, and comply. • CYP must be controlled • Must be monitored • CYP are to be feared • CYP must comply	• Within-child • The child is at fault, not the adult/system • CYP are dangerous and must be monitored, controlled, and must comply • Conformity to the norm • CYP outside of social norms are dangerous • Positioning of CYP to suit agenda • Shame • Hopeless, no chance • CYP voice is undervalued • Adultification • Emotions are unacceptable • CYP manipulate and lie • Treatment of CYP versus treatment of adults • CYP are nuisances • CYP's value
Ideologies of Childhood	• Childhood • Seen but not heard • CYP must be protected • Purity, innocence
CYPs Rights	• Dignity and respect • Child rights
Perception of Families	• Parents are at fault • Judgement about single-parent families • Othering, outside British social norms • Problem family
Biases and Discrimination	• Social class • Biased narratives • Comfortable expressing biases • Dehumanising CYP • Intersectionality • Disparity in exclusion demographics
Biases – Minoritised Ethnicities	• Racism • Familiarity • Interpretation of behaviour • Hair discrimination • Perceived to be SEND • Over-sexualisation and adultification • GRT and anti-social behaviour • Cultural awareness
Biases – SEND	• Ableist • SEND should not be in mainstream. • SEND harm the school community. • Lack of understanding about SEND • Familiarity with SEND • Equating SEND to anti-social behaviour.

	• Attitude towards behavioural needs (SEMH) • Low expectations of SEND • Medical model
Biases - Gender	• Gender identity • Women and girls
Qualities of Oppressive Systems Ethos • Espoused versus enacted	• Ethos • Short-term view • Inconsistency in implementation of policy • Intolerance of difference • Closing down concerns • Defensiveness
Systemic Approaches that Maintain Oppression in Schools	• Oppressive language/terms • Punitive approach • Reward/reprimand systems (inc behaviourism) • Non-inclusive policies • Exclusion • Non-inclusive curriculum • Academic achievement • Subject setting • Adult-centric design • Requirement of social mobility, knowledge of systems, advocacy
Wider Influences of Structural Oppression Paternalism • Superior, pity Power • When and where oppression is permitted Authoritative • Authority • Winning, overpowering	• Structural oppression • Authoritative • Power • Paternalism • Capitalist • Government agenda • Media agendas • Popular culture • Parenting • Religion
Factors Contributing to Oppression	• SEND statutory practices and policies • Unclear policies • School resources • Hierarchical structure • Teacher training • Compassion fatigue • Physical environment • EPs demands/practices
Individual in the System	• School staff have good intentions • Conflict between personal values and policy • Approach perceived as too soft
Response	
Types of Response	• Challenging oppression • Critical friend, questioning • Indirect challenging • Naming oppression • Relating through examples

	• Advocacy • No response
Perception of Response	• Collusion • Shame about response • Excuses • Attack/conflict doesn't work • Reflection, supervision • Ideal versus reality
Factors that Influence Response	• Shock • Confidence • Fear of getting it wrong, using wrong terms • Conflict averse, cowardly • Personal biases, blind spots • Lack of knowledge about oppression • Lack of experience, newly qualified, trainee • Unsure • EP values • Guilt as mobiliser • Knowledge of policy • Rapport and trust
EPS Factors that Influence Response	• Service model • EP capacity, workload, stress • Prioritising relationships • Support of team, colleagues, seniors, PEP • Individual versus consultation/systemic/group work
Systemic Factors that Influence Response	• Pressure impact inclusion • Ranking and assessment • Fixed systems • Resistance • Organisation • Faceless
Microsystem Supportive Approaches Systemic approach: • Group work	• Returning to topic • Supporting others to recognise oppressive practice • Person-centred, holistic view • Shared understanding, construction, approach • Collaboration • Modelling • Brave spaces • Prompt • Supporting self-efficacy, agency, autonomy
Mesosystem Supportive Approaches	• Noticing Patterns • Persuading schools to try a different approach • Reviewing policies • Inclusive policies • Nurturing approach • Normalising discussions about oppressive practice • Training • Participatory • Action Research • Wider efforts

| SUBJECTS	
Educational Setting	• School/s • Secondary school/s • Primary school/s • Specialist provision/s • Diverse school/s • School staff • Senior leadership • SENCo/s • Teacher/s • Inexperienced teacher/s • Teaching assistant/s • White staff member/s • Staff who menstruate
Other Educational Professionals	• Educational Psychologist/s • Trainee/s • Assistant/s • Other professional/s • Ofsted • SEND department
CYP	• Child/children • Teenage girl/s • Teenage boy/s • CYP with SEND • CYP of minoritized ethnicity • EAL CYP • GRT CYP • Immigrant CYP • Working class CYP • Gender non-conforming CYP • Neurotypical peers • Black boy/s
Families	• Family/families • Parent/s • Single parent/s • Minoritised ethnicity parent/s • GRT families
External	• United Nations Org • Government • Local Authority • Society • Police • Adults • Employed adult • White British • Minoritised ethnicities • Immigrant populations • Populations vulnerable to disadvantage • Disabled populations

Appendix 10: Example of Analysis Stages with Transcript

1. Discursive Constructions	Example from Transcript (Participant F)
The oppressive discursive constructions applied to CYP in educational settings are explored through free-association to understand 'what the text is doing'.	Rather than engaging them in your lesson or thinking about why they might be doing those things? The immediate reaction is I'm going to get control here because again, maybe there's an element of fear if I don't have control, what's it gonna lead to? Constructions: Lack of understanding about SEND, CYP are dangerous and must be controlled Subjects: CYP, Teachers (school staff)

2. Discourses	
The discursive constructions are considered in comparison to wider discourses, relevant material, and institutions.	Lack of understanding about SEND: Like medicalised discourses, representing SEND as deficit, links to SEND Code of practice (needs focused), link to the government. Like discourses of eugenics in which SEND were framed as dangerous.

3. Action Orientation	
The possible subject/speaker/participant functions of the discourses are explored.	Subjects: CYP, Teachers (school staff) Teachers justify control measures in place, and justify when they 'lose control', because CYP are inherently mischievous. Participant is able to demonstrate knowledge of SEND, and sense of understanding, empathy towards SEND CYP.

Stages 4, 5, and 6 are completed iteratively, moving back and forth to extend, revise, and contrast the interpreted constructions.	

4. Positionings	
Notes were made about the subject positions and the subject relationships were mapped (mapping a picture of the world the discourses present).	Subjects: CYP, Teachers (school staff) Teachers 'should be in control' of CYP -> CYP are inferior to Teachers However, Teachers 'fear' CYP, and therefore CYP have power over them. EP observes these positions and therefore is implicitly superior to both.

5. Practice	
Implications for action were considered, including what can be said, what actions are available, and if they linked to other discourses sanctioning oppression.	CYP must comply, if they don't, they are deviant, reinforcing the need for control. When they comply, this evidences that the control measures are effective. Teachers' fear of CYP grows with the more measures implemented, requiring the need for greater levels of control.

6. Disciplinary Power	
The disciplinary powers at play within the discourses were considered.	Punitive approaches involving surveillance, isolation, exclusion enacted by teachers, organised by senior staff (hierarchical). Generated by Educational policy about 'behaviour' published by the Government (/Department for Education) normalising discourses about dangerous CYP.

Appendix 11 – Interactive Activity Exploring Oppressive Discourses


1
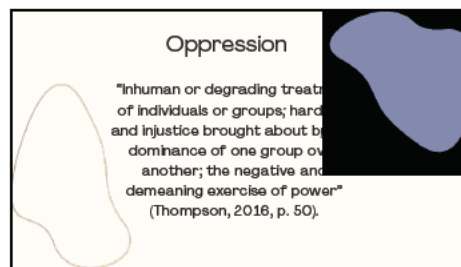
2

This is the definition of 'oppression' used in the current research.

3

Although this research explored oppression within educational settings, oppression occurs much more broadly and is understood to occur within every interaction.
It is important to acknowledge that we all oppress and this activity is simply an exercise to reflect on the discourses sometimes used in education.
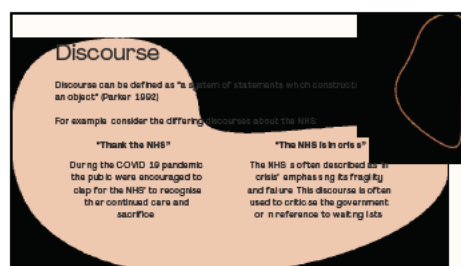

4

This slide could be supported by further/adapted examples of discourses.

5

It might be helpful to remind the attendees that this is not a criticism of education staff. It could be helpful to use the Educational Psychology example to support this, sharing that educational psychology has and continues to be oppressive in many ways including; expert model, unethical assessment, gate keeper to provision, traded model etc.
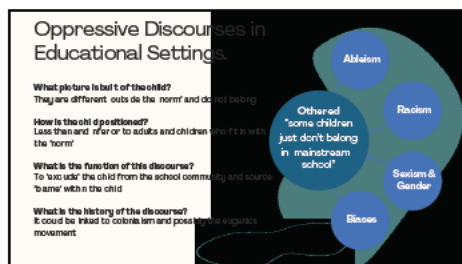
6

Use this as an example discourse analysis to show the attendees what they will be asked to do.
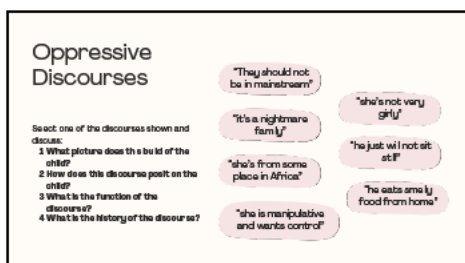
7

These statements are based on the researcher's own experiences and/or the participant interview transcripts. Ask the attendees to move into small groups and select one of the statements shown. Give them 5 minutes to discuss the statement before rejoining for a whole group discussion.
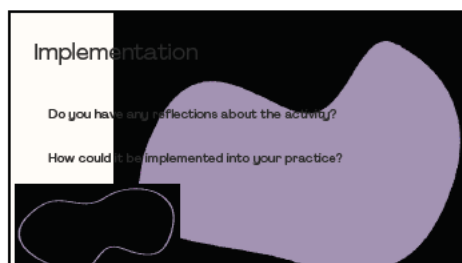
8

Encourage the attendees to reflect on the activity, some may feel that it was difficult and confrontational, if so, acknowledge this and encourage them to stick with it because discomfort is sometimes beneficial. Support the attendees to consider how this could be implemented. For example, are oppressive discourses perpetuated across written reports? How do they interact with parents/carers/families? Are there more opportunities for collaboration?