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ABSTRACT

The purpose of these working papers is to reflect the current activities of members of the Centre for Language in Education at the University of Southampton, England. They include: (1) "Inaugural Lecture: Is Language Education or Is Education Language?" (Christopher Brumfit); (2) "Teachers' Views of Language Knowledge" (Rosamond Mitchell and Janet Hooper); (3) "The Importance of Poetry in Children's Learning" (Michael Benton); (4) "English, Media and Information in the Post-Cox Era" (Andrew Hart); (5) "Representation of Black Experience in Literature for Young People" (Beverley Naidoo); (6) "Putting 'Language' Back in the Modern Languages Degree" (Clare Mar-Molinero and Patrick Stevenson); (7) "Television is Beautiful" (Peter Moran); (8) "Appropriate Help for Secondary School Students with Specific Learning Difficulties" (Virginia Kelly); (9) "Language Learning within Academic Constraints" (George M. Blue); and (10) "The World of John and Mary Smith: A Study of Quirk and Greenbaum's 'University Grammar of English'" (Kate Stephens). (NAV)

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CENTRE FOR LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

CLE
WORKING PAPERS

1

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PREFACE

The purpose of these working papers is to reflect the current activities of members of the Centre for Language in Education at the University of Southampton. They are not intended necessarily to be in polished or final form and comments on all these papers will be welcomed by their authors. This is intended to be the first of a series of papers reflecting current work and available for limited circulation.

The Centre was founded in 1986 in order to bring together members of the university and the wider community who are interested in language within the educational process. Inside the university, most members are drawn from the Faculties of Arts and Educational Studies, but teachers in schools and colleges outside the university, as well as ex-students and other colleagues from the wider community, are among the associate members.

'Language' is interpreted widely within the Centre and staff contribute to courses in Drama, Applied Linguistics, Literature, Media Studies, Research Methods, Critical Theory and various branches of Linguistics, as well as to courses in the teaching of French, German, Spanish, English and EFL/ESL, and direct teaching of these languages. Similarly, members are concerned with language at all levels of education and with its role in educational policy-making.

Activities of the Centre include regular short conferences and meetings on topics of current interest, seminars for associate members on literary and linguistic matters, and occasional social events. In addition, of course, members of the Centre run courses at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and supervise and conduct research as part of their normal university duties. These papers represent work from staff in the university, students or ex-students and other contributors to Centre activities.

This first collection opens with my inaugural lecture. As this was essentially a statement of a programme for a particular need and as the work of the Centre is beginning to fulfil that need, it seems appropriate to use it as an introduction.

C.J.B.
University of Southampton

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IS LANGUAGE EDUCATION? or IS EDUCATION LANGUAGE?

Christopher Brumfit

The title of this lecture reflects the description of the Chair to which I was appointed in 1984. There is not, to my knowledge, another Chair in the country which specifically concerns itself with the general field of Educational Studies combined with the particular field of Language. Part of my purpose today, then, is to outline a teaching and research programme, for the role of language in education has been rather less developed as an area than several others whose claim to consideration is no stronger than that of language or linguistics. At the same time, a lecture such as this can do no more than indicate briefly a selection of the major areas in which language has a role to play in education. The questions posed in the title can only be partially answered in any case, partly because they need more precise formulation if they are to address themselves to genuine research issues and partly because a great deal of research remains to be done before a clear picture of the role of language in education can be developed. This lecture will examine some problem areas, with the intention of clarifying the questions enough to suggest why answers cannot be easily given.

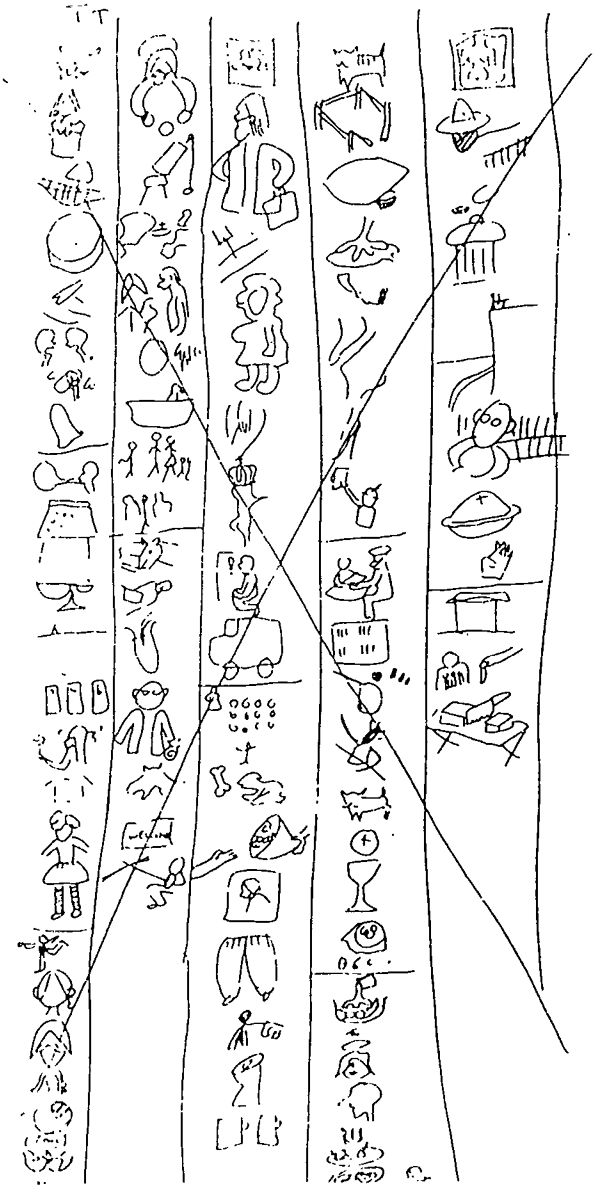
ACADEMIC STUDIES AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

'Language' and 'Education' share two disadvantages that many other areas of study avoid – they are both too familiar. We all use language – and many of us have strong views about it; we have all been educated – and we all have strong views about that. Expertise confronts experience and people must be bold to defend their own expertise against others' experience.

Yet language is full of puzzles that experience alone cannot solve – and one of the greatest of these is its relationship with the whole educational process. Indeed, the arrangement of an inaugural lecture itself seems to be a carefully erected memorial to the relationship between education and language. What, after all, could be more of a memorial to language than a lecture, a text of dead words written to be spoken as if living – and what could be more of a memorial to education than a ritual recitation by an elderly person in mediaeval dress intoned to a silent gathering of fellow-mourners? Typically, the inauguration of a new professor is celebrated in a rite of words; typically, too, for education, some would cynically say, they are words that cannot be interrupted or debated. Yet no one who has experienced education in any form will doubt the major role that language plays in the practice of educational institutions. The desirability of this can be disputed, but we must concede the fact.

Let me start with an example which does not reflect the major preoccupations of linguistics. Nonetheless, Figure 1 shows a text that typifies some of our problems. This is a written text, but its message is puzzling and opaque. It is a genuine piece of evidence – the notes of one of my previous MA students for her essay answer to an examination question, on the role of language in teacher education, as it happens. But what kind of language is this itself? How does a student arrive at such an independent and idiosyncratic piece of literacy? What is the relationship between this and the normal language (and the normal education) she has received? Discussion with the student reveals that she associates images she has sketched with concepts to be used in the essay, but the associations are unique to herself, depending on contingent events in her own personal history. Yet this private 'language' illustrates one aspect of normal language which is little discussed – the ways in which

Figure 1



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the concepts represented in language possess rich associations that are purely personal to individuals. Lurking behind the shared code of 'normal' language lies a second code of personal associations, like those illustrated here – only partially perceived, even by the writers or speakers themselves.

Much has been studied and written on the relationship between language and learning, but we need to remember that, for every generalisation we attempt to make, there will be thousands of individuals using language for their own purposes, with their own devices and methods, confounding our general and abstract pronouncements with their own precise and concrete instances. As in any exploration centred on human beings, the fact of self-consciousness destabilises the data and confuses the questioner. Certainty becomes the enemy of truth.

The risks that are being hinted at here can be more explicitly illustrated by considering the relationship between any descriptive discipline and a social and institutionalised practice, such as education. Education is specifically concerned with intervention by one part of society in the lives of others. Such intervention is meant to be positive rather than negative, and safeguards of various kinds are provided to ensure that unsatisfactory intervention is avoided. But the mechanisms for intervening and the mechanisms for safeguarding are themselves part of the process of education and have to be taken into account when the relationship between research and practice is examined.

Educational Studies concerns itself with endeavours to improve the quality of education provision in two related ways. First, the attempt to understand processes of education, in general and in particular, is needed in order to inform discussion of educational policy. When it works successfully, this activity should lead to more sensitive policy-making at local and national levels, and to improved methods of teaching particular areas of the curriculum. Second, the attempt to develop appropriate teaching procedures, through experimentation with new materials and techniques, leads simultaneously to criticism of current models of learning and teaching, and to greater support for the teaching profession in its task within the educational system. Thus, development, enquiry, improvement and critique operate simultaneously and interactively.

This is, of course, an idealised picture, though it is difficult to see how we can afford to be content with much less. And, indeed, it does seem to be a realisable ideal, as long as researchers, teachers, advisers, material writers and other practitioners can interchange roles, collaborate and have effective administrative support for such close relationships. At the same time though, we should not minimise the epistemological difficulties associated with achievement of such integration.

A rich and complex area of human activity, such as education, cannot be treated as if understanding and explanation suffice to cause desirable change. Indeed, the current state of British schools cannot be attributed in any simple way to a desire that they should be, even approximately, as they are. Yet the complex task of understanding any aspect of education can in principle be separated from the task of implementing change. What is crucial is the mediation process, by which understanding from a variety of relevant disciplines is integrated to the needs of particular teachers and administrators, in particular positions, in particular schools.

Some recent controversies in language teaching illustrate the problems which emerge. There is, for example, a strong research tradition in second language acquisition studies, which maintains that learners of foreign languages acquire them in predictable ways. Studies of learners in different sets of conditions have suggested that generalisations can be made about the order in which certain language forms tend to appear and such studies have resulted in substantial debate on their implications for linguistics and pedagogic practice (Davies, Criper and Howatt, 1984). But the usefulness of such studies can easily be exaggerated. Observations about the tendencies of learners can give us a general orientation for discussions of teaching; they cannot tell us how to teach specific groups of learners in any detail, because we have no way of knowing the relevance of such studies to particular learners until we know the conditions determining who is where on the scale of these tendencies – a collective tendency, however well attested, tells us nothing about the potential behaviour of an individual. Similarly, advocates of 'telling' pupils in English classes about (e.g.) the English writing system (Stubbs, 1986, 229) or of listing objectives for teaching English (HMI, 1984) are oversimplifying the effect of such apparent reliance on a transmission model of learning. Not only is the direct transmission model widely rejected, but the impact of desirable reforms on the teaching profession as an institution is lessened if they are presented without regard for the preconceptions of those who have to implement them. Because of this, it makes more sense to talk about the 'implications' of theory and research for practice than the 'applications'. Theory and research have to be digested by teachers and converted to something which works in their particular institutions and with the people who teach and study them. And this applies equally to other areas where language studies impinge on education. But to justify this argument it will be necessary to summarise current views on the nature of language.

THE NATURE OF LANGUAGE

'Language' has always been an object of interest to scholars outside linguistics itself. Literary theorists and literary critics, philosophers, psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists have all persistently concerned themselves with language. What is remarkable in the last twenty years has been the degree of consensus over the nature of language that has emerged in education from a diverse range of theoretical perspectives. While linguistics has in some traditions moved away from language located in the world towards increasingly abstract cognitive models, educational linguists and others concerned with areas traditionally regarded as applied linguistics have found themselves turning more towards the other language-interested disciplines. Indeed, it sometimes appears as if serious research into contextualised language activity is prevented from developing by the dominance of linguistic research concerned with idealisations which remove language from any systematic relationship with users or their purposes.

But other traditions within linguistics have fed the movement towards more socially sensitive language awareness. As descriptive linguists concern themselves with meaning and move into discourse analysis and pragmatics, so they intersect with the concerns of researchers from other disciplines. Attempts deriving from anthropology to analyse speech events in relation to factors such as participant roles, settings and topics (Hymes, 1967) have begun the systematisation of the interplay between language and social environment. At the same time, sociolinguistic studies have demonstrated the ways in which syntactic or phonological rules may be observably adjusted according to the status or social position of users (Labov, 1972).

These studies have been essentially descriptive in intention. Social psychologists, however, have provided the beginnings of accounts of the motivation of such systematic changes. Giles (1977) has suggested that there is a clear disposition to

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converge on the language of interlocutors where there is goodwill and to diverge where there is antagonism. A number of studies in areas of ethnic or cultural conflict (for example, Wales, Belgium and Canada) have shown that negative relations with outsiders cause speakers unconsciously to increase the dialect features of their locality away from the metropolitan mode to the local, while positive relations with outsiders promote a decrease of such localisation. Such evidence accords with Grice's conversational maxims (Grice, 1975), which are based on the view that a prime function of conversation is to maximise communication. To this end, features which might cause confusion in communication will be reduced wherever there is a desire for effective communication, but increased where the intention is to obscure rather than to clarify. There is evidence that children perceive language markers very early (Day, 1982, suggests that by the age of three they have clear in- and out-group perceptions based on the speech of those they hear), and Reid (1978) and Romaine (1984) produce data which indicates that adolescents have very definite ideas about the social significance of differing language forms. Thus, language behaviour combines perceptions of group membership and identity with judgements about the degree of communication to strive for.

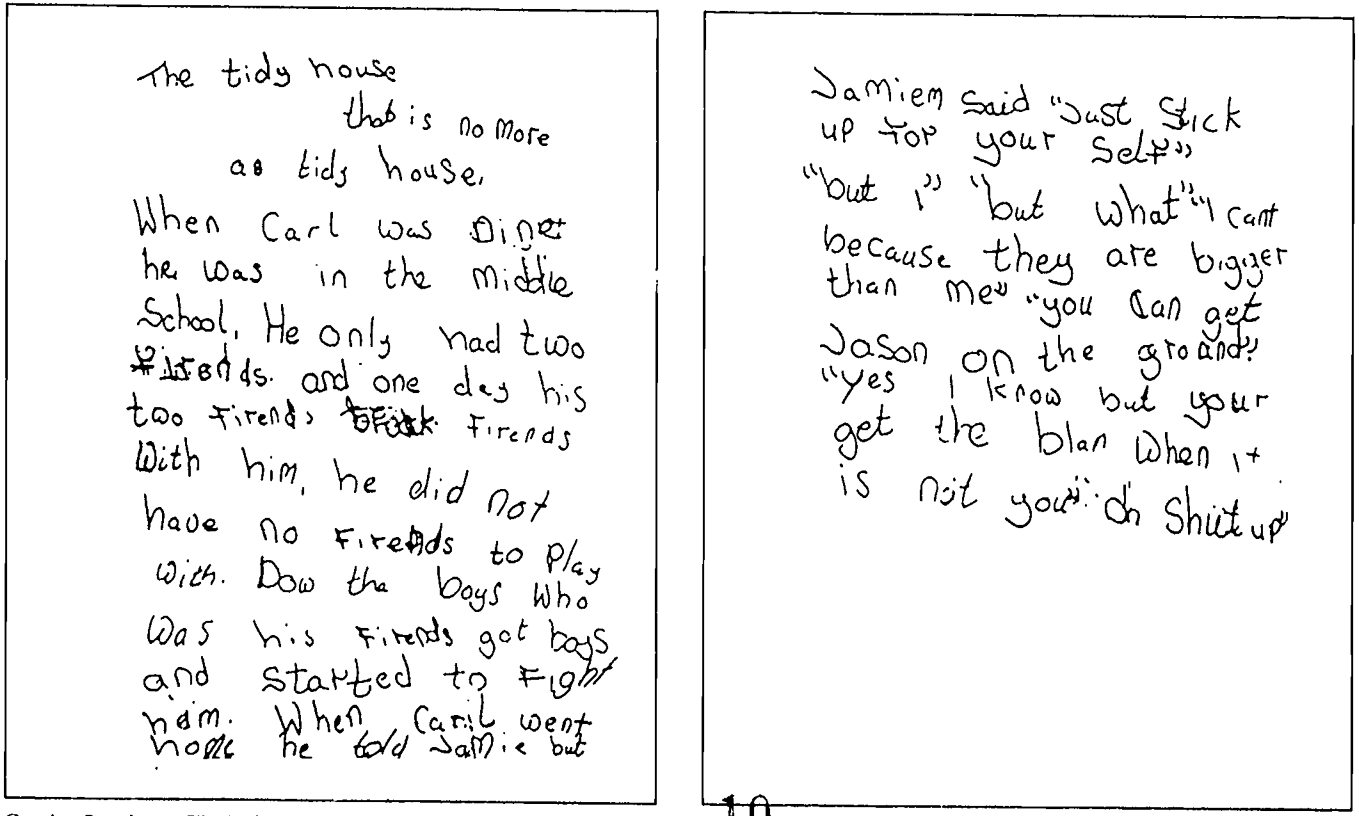
Such studies reinforce our awareness of the sensitivity and variability of language. The range of associations which may be acquired by any specific symbol available to us is immense and these associations may be private or public. All families have their own private associations, as well as a certain number of vocabulary items peculiar to themselves. These associations may become highly wrought artefacts and spill over into literature and the public domain, as with the juvenile writings of the Brontës or Isherwood's early fantasies. Equally, they may remain private and intensely local in range. But the potential scope for interaction between the private and the public is infinite. Every utterance has an internal and an external history, and the speaker or writer will only be aware of a small part of either of these. Because the overlap in experience of a particular language item or language event is incomplete for each speaker and listener, misunderstanding or legitimate alternative interpretation is constantly possible. And constellations of personal experience build up into ideologies, patterns of belief that underlie whole modes of human activity, binding the behaviour patterns of groups who identify themselves as cultures – physicists or stamp collectors, educationalists or readers of Kafka, Jehovah's Witnesses or structuralists, undertakers or DES officials or pastry cooks. There is no group too important or too trivial to bond linguistically and form a temporary culture, with its own characteristic linguistic forms and its own (for the moment) shared assumptions.

It is important to emphasize the variety (and the frequent superficiality) of our linguistic and cultural associations, because there is a strong tendency to see both language and culture as relatively solid and unnegotiable, and the relations between them as fixed. Yet education, above all other social forces, is concerned with establishing the mutability of culture and the languages that reflect and contribute to it. We have to operate within the linguistic system we receive, otherwise we shall not communicate. But we are never its prisoner and learning to transcend our current language to perceive and contribute to future communicative and conceptual capacities is the self-educational task for each of us. To make sense of this process, we have to try to locate language in some of its rich context.

LANGUAGE IN THE CLASSROOM

Let me try to illustrate this principle with a simple example. Steedman (1982) devotes a whole book to a remarkable analysis of a collaborative story produced by three eight-year-old primary school girls. The passage quoted (Figure 2) is, in fact, the sole

Figure 2



The tidy house
that is no more
a tidy house.
When Carl was Dine
he was in the middle
School. He only had two
friends. and one day his
two firends ~~took~~ firends
With him. he did not
have no firends to play
with. Dow the boys who
was his firends got boys
and started to fight
ham. When Caril went
home he told Jamie but

Jamiem said "Just stick
up for your self"
"but I" "but what" "I cant
because they are bigger
than me" "you can get
Jason on the ground"
"yes I know but your
get the blan when it
is not you" "oh Shut up"

Carolyn Steedman. The Tidy House (1982): 213–214. London: Virago.

interpolation by a fourth girl into the lengthy and eventually incomplete story. Steedman comments about this episode:

> When the girls worked together in writing, they operated by a model of social life that demonstrated to them more cohesion and co-operation between men. There were pressures on the boys to act aggressively and to display their conflict with each other, though the girls too were usually told to hit back. When Lisa, who joined the three writers of 'The Tidy House' after several days of diplomatic approaches, wrote a portion of the text, she had the character Jamie tell her nine-year-son Carl to fight back in the playground. This scene echoed many conversations with all the children throughout the year, in which they would patiently explain to me, yet again, that, whilst the school's most stringently enforced rule forbade fighting, they had been told by their parents to hit back ... The passage by Lisa mirrored her own very recent experience. She had had two close friends, Carla and Melissa. They had gone to nursery school together, walked back and forth together, sat together and played in the streets together through five long years. The arrival of Lindie in the Spring had destroyed the balance of this old friendship. Admitted back into the fold towards the end of the week, the constraints of the plot that Lisa was faced with and the gender of the child character she had to write about meant that there was no alternative but to write of herself as Carl, the boy (Steedman, 1982: 136–137).

The point is not whether this was in some sense a 'true' account of what motivated the writing, rather it is that some similar account to this had to be true. Writing of this kind is necessarily reflecting a complex of personal and conventional attributes, which must be recognised and responded to (but which may not be precisely identified) by any primary teacher or, indeed, in another sense, by any reader. For the writer, the conventions of school writing, of children's literature and of parental expectations all converge in this one short episode, in addition to the conventions demanded by the existing lengthy text which was already available. This was simultaneously a public and a private act, as imaginative writing often is. To assign it an exact role in the educational process would be like asking the exact role of each blade of grass in a lawn. Yet few people would wish to deny that the role of such writing in the process of personal development is important.

If we are to make sense of language use in education, then the interpretation of meaning is at least as important as the interpretation of form. Yet the interpretation of meaning will never be an objective activity, for meaning depends not only on the context and the conventions appropriately deployed to match the context, but also on the interpretations of those who read or listen and the intentions of those who speak. It is widely recognised that together we make our meanings, but less widely accepted that we cannot be fully aware of the meanings that we make. Language operates rather like action painters drawing their colours from a moving palette and spraying them back at it; we take our meanings from the language, but, by the time we are ready to return them, the language has subtly shifted. None of us speaks the same language twice, any more than we drive exactly the same route twice.

Such recognition of language as necessarily in flux, reflecting the movement and life of the minds that use it, enables us to see language activity in the education system as a process of working rather than a product of learning. Recent developments in second language acquisition research make it difficult to see even the learning of foreign languages as distinct from the process of language use – learning is using and using is learning (see, from different perspectives, Stevick, 1976; Krashen, 1981;

Brumfit, 1984). Of course, there are formal activities also associated with the learning – people learn vocabulary lists off by heart more than is commonly acknowledged – but these activities are preliminary to the language learning process itself, for only when the language items are fused into active meaning systems by the process of use is the language system developing for the learner's own purposes.

Learning new concepts and developing new capacities is thus frequently realised through the development of new language and the development of new language must be realised through the development of meaning. Other systems than language may, of course, perform similar functions, but, in literate societies especially, links between education and literacy are so close that language will remain the dominant code for the foreseeable future.

LANGUAGE POLICY

So far we have been concerned mainly with language in the general educational process. Some commentators, indeed, have come close to arguing that the general educational process is essentially a matter of playing the appropriate language games. Hirst, for example, associates the development of concepts with 'the symbols of our common languages' (Hirst, 1974: 83), so that education may become the interplay between the appropriate language forms that we are socialised to produce by schooling and the ideas that emerge from the context which language both creates and responds to.

Whatever position we take though, language is clearly important enough to require specific consideration. There is not time here to explore all the implications for a policy for language in education, but one major strand may be appropriately described.

Arising out of the awareness (discussed above) of language as variable and adaptable to users' needs has developed an increasing recognition of Britain as a multidialectal and multilingual society. A variety of forces have contributed to this, ranging from the concerns of those in the inner-cities to avoid alienation of minority groups by the pursuit of policies in language work which inadvertently reinforce racism, to the increasing sensitivity to language variation in mainstream discussion and the serious addressing of issues of language (and other) variation that emerges from the movement towards a common curriculum forced by comprehensivisation of secondary schools. Thus, it begins to make sense to demand certain minimum language 'rights' for all learners in state education. I have developed this theme elsewhere and will only refer to it in summary (for justification of these recommendations, see Brumfit, 1989).

A minimum requirement for all learners would be:

(i) development of mother tongue or dialect;

(ii) development of competence in a range of styles of English for educational, work-based, social and public life purposes;

(iii) development of knowledge of the nature of language in a multilingual society, including some basic acquaintances with at least two languages from the total range of languages available in education or in the local community;

(iv) development of a fairly extensive practical competence in at least one language other than their own.

This minimal set of requirements may look initially puzzling and over-ambitious – and, indeed, it is necessary to accept that each local authority and each school will have to determine its own priorities, within the scope of its own funding, for the first requirement particularly. Nonetheless, the case for all of these is very strong if linguistic resources are to be adequately exploited and learning adequately developed. Nor are the requirements very far from what is widely advocated elsewhere. The Swann Report on the education of ethnic minority children (Swann, 1985) expects schools to be as positive as possible towards the first; the second has been advocated by the last two Secretaries of State for Education and is accepted by most English teachers as one of their aims; parts of the third are currently being investigated by the Kingman Inquiry into the teaching of English, set up earlier this year by the Secretary of State; and the last has been incorporated into recent DES documentation on the core curriculum and into HMI recommendations on foreign languages.

But these initiatives have not been co-ordinated into a package that has overall coherence and there are major implications for teacher education. Many teachers will find themselves engaged in work with multilingual classes and an awareness of children's and adults' capacities to cope with language issues is a necessary prerequisite to successful teaching. Consider Figure 3.

This dialogue illustrates (in a fairly unsophisticated form) one teacher's attempt to come to grips with what is happening when a native speaker encounters a non-native speaker in school. Even at this level, conscious exploration of this data by the teacher is likely to sensitise her to many of the language processes that we take for granted in both children and adults. The trouble is that it is still rare for work like this to be carried out and far rarer for any more sophisticated analysis to be developed. Language, as distinct from Language Teaching, is still explicitly addressed only rarely in teacher education.

LANGUAGE IN TEACHER EDUCATION

The relatively weak position of language in teacher education is one result of the structure of teacher education in this country. The great expansion of the 1960s was accompanied by a certain amount of claim-staking by particular disciplines for a 'foundation' role in the training of teachers (Tibble, 1966; Hirst, 1983). Psychology, sociology, history and philosophy all established themselves in strong positions. It remains an arguable point whether education benefited from the fact that linguistics emerged as a fashionable subject just after the partition of the field. Perhaps language studies benefited, for there is a widespread dissatisfaction with the divide between disciplines and the practice of teaching (though the problem will be resolved more by giving reasonable time to the high-level training of teachers than by trying to reorganise the inadequate time currently available). Whatever the position, language activity is divided in teacher education across a range of possible courses, none of which has language as a prime focus and none of which is obliged to deal with language at all. Nor, indeed, can we say that teachers typically receive high level training in language work. A survey which I have just completed for the National Congress on Languages in Education, which involved sending a detailed questionnaire to nearly a hundred and fifty institutions concerned with teacher education in the United Kingdom, including all state training institutions, revealed, for universities that replied, the returns found in Figure 4. It is clear from these that we cannot by any means guarantee that all teachers will have any explicit awareness of the nature of the language that is so important in their classrooms. Nor do recent

Figure 3

Overheard in a Playground: A Conversation between Child A and Child B

Child B	Child A	What A is doing
	Have you got your strong shoes?	
I have got on my shoes.	*Yes, but your shoes. The shoes that don't let ... that don't get your feet wet.*	EXPLAINING the meaning of 'strong'. REPHRASING to make a phrase simpler.
My feet not wet.	*Do you like to jump in puddles?*	FINDING ALTERNATIVE ways of putting over her idea.
Puddles?	*Puddles – water on the floor.*	EXPLAINING 'puddles'.
No, I get wet. My feet wet.	*Your feet get wet? Not wet now? Have you got your ... plimsolls?*	MATCHING the 'telegraphese' of B – not wet now/ put plimsolls on.
Plimsolls?	*If your feet get wet, you put plimsolls on ... like in there – in the hall!*	
My feet?	*If your feet GET wet. Plimsolls on* (demonstrating wildly).	STRESSING WORDS. USING GESTURE.
I don't know.	*Ask Mrs. M.*	
Mrs. M.? Why?	*She's outside – the teacher outside.*	
What she say? (laughing)	*What WOULD she say* (correcting her).	CORRECTING her directly.
She tells the boys not fight.	*No, B. She tell the boys not TO fight*	JUDGING how much to correct – one thing at a time!

Hilary Hester. Learning from Children Learning. In: Christopher Brumfit, Rod Ellis and Josie Levine (Eds). English as a Second Language in the United Kingdom, 1985: 56. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Figure 4

'LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION' ON UNIVERSITY PGCE COURSES

(ALL STUDENTS)

University	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*	*11*	*12*	*13*	*14*	*15*	*16*
Compulsory Course/Hours	–	–	–	4–10	4–10	6	10	–	3	2	15	3½	20+	–	20+	–
Optional Course/Hours	20	–	10–20	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	10+	–	–
No. of Tutors	1	–	5	–	4	2	1	–	1	1	5	19	5	1	2	–
of which–																
No. of Full-Time Language in Education	–	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	1	1	3	–	1	–
No. with Qualification	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	1	–	2	1	2	–

surveys of the knowledge of language of undergraduates or teachers in training suggest that these figures conceal widespread understanding rather than ignorance (Bloor, 1986).

So much for the position in secondary university teacher training, where, if anywhere, the most academically sophisticated teachers should be found.

But there is another, perhaps slightly more contentious, dimension to this story, for language has customarily been the concern of English teachers. Curiously, English teachers do not automatically have any direct training in understanding of language at all. Some degree courses do include some work on language; many do not include anything on contemporary linguistics, sociolinguistics or psycholinguistics, to mention only three areas of direct relevance to the classroom. Nor, indeed, does 'linguistics' have a good name with English teachers (though to what extent that reflects an out-of-date model of what linguistics and especially applied linguistics is, to what extent it reflects the failures of undergraduate linguistics courses to convince students of the excitement and relevance of the discipline and to what extent it is simply fear of a scientific approach is difficult to determine – probably there are elements of all three). But the fact remains that the prime teachers of 'language' in our schools frequently, perhaps usually, have no specific knowledge of this field at all.

The difficulty is that this leaves a camouflaged trap. "We have qualified 'English' teachers – they are concerned with 'language' – therefore, we have qualified 'language' teachers" is the false syllogism. What we, in fact, have is an incapacity to provide sensitivity about language as a social instrument, except at an amateur level. I doubt whether this can be said about any other major area of the curriculum. Even one-year full-time courses are few and far between – and, of course, the weight of the profession lies heavily with those who are understandably committed to the three years of full-time literary study that has provided them with the academic basis for their English teaching. It is difficult to see how the necessary expertise for basic work in this area can be achieved by less than the equivalent of one year's full-time study.

Yet it is important to see that this is not a conflict between 'arid science and humane creativity', to quote one English teacher in a discussion group I was in at a recent conference. Language work in education has to recognise the potential impact of literature, the need to write for personal pleasure and language as a means of personal identity. Anyway, of course, 'humane creativity' can become arid in its own way, as Gorky observed:

> When he was away from a book, its influence remained with him. He saw reality through the dust of centuries and built up a barricade of book-lore to hold off disturbing thoughts (Maxim Gorky: The Life of Matvei Kozhemyakin, 1911).

To experience language without imaginative response is to impoverish it, but so too is to experience language without intellectual rigour. Language is, in fact, the cheapest scientific data available to schools – and pupils, in my experience, invariably enjoy thinking about it, as a socially significant system and as an abstract system alike.

We have tried to argue then that language is intimately bound up with the process of education, at all levels, and that teachers and administrators need to be sensitive to this and informed about the way language operates in society. We have also argued, in passing, that explicit language responsibilities require a policy for all learners about what they are entitled to expect – and that all teachers require some knowledge of language – and teachers of English particularly (though of other languages too) require specific work on language if they are not to mislead the public about their own expertise.

But I said at the beginning of this lecture that it was a programmatic lecture – what is the programme?

In the Department of Education, we have already begun to systemise slightly the work on language and communication in the initial training of teachers, though a one-year course with more than a term teaching in schools and many DES-required content commitments gives us little time to play with. We have also established a full-time Master's Field of Study in this area, which it is hoped should give us the solid basis from which to develop further courses (though new in-service funding arrangements make it difficult for such courses to have the impact they should have). The newly-formed Centre for Language in Education provides a structure through which the Faculty of Educational Studies can link with colleagues in schools and in other Faculties to consider the whole activity of communication in educational settings, including work in literature, drama and media studies, as well as in language. And it is hoped that examination of the results of the large survey referred to above will enable us to develop work to fill further gaps that are revealed.

The potential research programme could be much greater than that in teaching – but funding is almost impossible to obtain for classroom-based research that is not seen as central to the immediate policy purposes of government – and the questions I asked in the title of the lecture are fated to remain unanswered it seems. Language is, of course, much more than education; education is much more than language; yet neither can be extricated from the other, each entails the other. The research we pursue will explore the relationship between the two in normal classrooms. But it is likely to be on a smaller scale than desirable unless the funding situation changes.

In spite of funding problems, occasions such as this can, of course, create a false euphoria – and it seems sensible to conclude with two cautionary comments. The first is to note that this is not a new area and we cannot have the excitement of missionaries faced with a new civilisation to subvert and convert. Language work has always been pursued in education and the best practitioners have always thought hard about it. Nonetheless, Southampton has been the first university to recognise the need with a Chair – and it would be a pity for the academic opportunity to be wasted. The second point relates to our earlier discussion about English teachers. They have been rightly concerned about values in education, though they have been more limited in their interpretation of them than I would like. Nonetheless, we do have to ask what language work is for – and, when all the instrumental arguments have been laid aside, we do have to recognise that there is something fundamental about communication, whether oral or written, which is to do with our deepest impulses. Olive Schreiner, writing from South Africa over a hundred years ago, expresses this better than anyone else I have read:

> He read one page and turned over to the next; he read down that without changing his posture by an inch; he read the next and the next, kneeling up all the while, with the book in his hand and his lips parted.
>
> All he read he did not fully understand; the thoughts were new to him, but this was the fellow's startled joy in the book – the thoughts were his, they belonged to him. He had never thought them before, but they were his.

> He laughed silently and internally, with the still intensity of triumphant joy.
>
> So then all thinking creatures did not send up the one cry: 'As thou, dear Lord, has created things in the beginning, so are they now, so ought they to be, so will they be, world without end, and it doesn't concern us that they are. Amen.' There were men to whom not only kopjes and stones were calling out imperatively: 'What are we and how came we here? Understand us and know us' – but to whom even the old, old relations between man and man and the customs of the ages called, and could not be made still and forgotten.
>
> The boy's heavy body quivered with excitement. So he was not alone, not alone.
>
> (Olive Schreiner: The Story of an African Farm [Part One], 11, 1883)

Education needs language, so that we should not be alone.

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Note: I am most grateful to my former student (Figure 1), Virago (Figure 2 and the quotation on page 9), Modern English Publications and the British Council (Figure 3) for permission to reproduce material.

TEACHERS' VIEWS OF LANGUAGE KNOWLEDGE

Rosamond Mitchell and Janet Hooper

INTRODUCTION

This paper reports some preliminary findings from a research project conducted in Hampshire schools in Autumn 1988, in which primary and secondary school teachers with special responsibility for language teaching were interviewed to discover their views on the place of explicit knowledge about language (KAL) in the school language curriculum, and on possible rationales and strategies for developing such knowledge.

The project took its immediate stimulus from the publication of the Kingman Report (DES 1988a), which argued the case for such teaching at least partly on the grounds that children's language proficiency would thereby be improved. This connection between the development of children's explicit understanding of language as a system and that of their practical language skills is controversial, and disputed in much contemporary writing by English mother tongue specialists (e.g. Allen 1988, Barr 1988), as well as among some second language acquisition researchers (e.g. Krashen 1981). On the other hand, the 'Language Awareness' movement in British schools has, in the 1980s, been promoting the development of children's explicit language knowledge on other broader grounds and asserts its value regardless of any direct impact on language skills (Hawkins 1984, Donmall 1985).

However, the knowledge and beliefs of practising classroom teachers on the issue have been explored only to a very limited extent. Brumfit and Mitchell (forthcoming) and Dennison (1989) have explored the personal knowledge about language of student teachers, using a structured questionnaire first developed by Bloor for use with language undergraduate students (1986). Mitchell (1988) documented a continuing commitment to grammar explanations among MLs teachers in Scotland involved in communicative language teaching initiatives in the early 1980s. Chandler (1988) used a postal questionnaire among English teachers to investigate current 'grammar teaching' practices, finding that, while over 80% of his sample claimed to teach "some grammar", explicit knowledge of language appeared to be declining among English teachers themselves, with younger teachers appearing to have "little more than a fragmentary knowledge, even of traditional grammar" (p.22). Despite much polemic in teachers' journals (see review by Stephens 1989), little else is known about ordinary classroom practitioners' beliefs.

The study reported here was designed to explore teachers' knowledge and beliefs more fully, on the assumption that these are key factors which largely determine the manner and degree of implementation of any given language curriculum. The prospects for the proposed National Curriculum for English and Modern Languages (DES 1988b) and, in particular, for the implementation of Kingman-style language awareness work depend critically on a clear understanding of teachers' views.

The research strategy adopted was that of the semi-structed individual interview. An hour-long discussion covered teachers' overall aims in teaching language and the place within these of the development of explicit KAL; goals and strategies for teaching particular age groups were reviewed. Teachers' rationales for KAL were explored and, in particular, their perceptions of its relationship with the development of language proficiency. Further themes to emerge were teachers' own beliefs about the nature of language and continuities/discontinuities between the beliefs and practices of primary and secondary school teachers.

The sample of teachers interviewed was randomly selected, from primary, middle and 11/12–16 schools in the Southampton/Winchester area. In primary and middle schools, language consultants were interviewed; these are class teachers who have undertaken a specialist advisory role on language for their colleagues, but continue to teach the full primary curriculum to their own class. In secondary schools, Heads of English and of Modern Languages were interviewed; as far as practicable, these were chosen in pairs from individual schools, so that the issue of liaison across the 'subject' divide could be explored in more depth.

This paper reports on the views on the KAL issue of seven secondary school Heads of English and a similar number of Heads of Modern Languages, which have so far been analysed in detail. The views of the remaining secondary school teachers, as well as of the primary teachers, will be reported in full elsewhere.

THE ENGLISH TEACHERS

Background and Overall Aims

The English teachers interviewed were hardly aware of the 'Language Awareness' movement as such. If they had heard of it, it was as "something which has come down the Modern Languages side"; curriculum co-operation with Modern Languages staff for language awareness work was virtually non-existent. (Indeed, despite initiatives in several schools which had linked the English and Modern Languages departments together in new 'faculty' structures, little active curriculum co-operation of any kind between language departments was reported.)

The English teachers recalled little of value on language topics in their own initial professional training (with the exception of one, who vividly recalled discussions on class, accent and dialect under Harold Rosen's tutelage at the London Institution of Education). In one or two cases, further qualifications had been undertaken, but, overall, this group of teachers seemed to have little curiosity about language itself. While most seemed to be maintaining active personal interests as far as literature was concerned, few were doing any reading on language (one commented favourably on a recent book by David Crystal, another reported buying but not understanding some contemporary linguistics books).

These English teachers generally reported their over-riding aim as being to produce pupils who were effective communicators, orally and in writing; only one individual argued at this point that children should understand language as a system. The predominant strategic means reported for achieving this aim was the study of literature, though some were working through non-literary themes and projects with at least some age groups, using, for instance, ILEA-produced materials on topics such as "Myself" or "The Island" (a 'castaway' simulation).

In this overall framework of aims and means, the development of knowledge about language was generally seen as a secondary if not a marginal issue. It was noticeable that interview questions regarding the development of KAL were frequently reinterpreted and answered in terms of the development of children's practical language skills.

Conceptualisations of Knowledge about Language

Across all three teacher groups, there was considerable variation of views regarding the usefulness of developing pupils' explicit knowledge about language and the extent to which this should be done. However, throughout the extended discussions which took place on this topic, certain dimensions of language itself were given much more prominence than others. It appeared that there were some aspects of language which individual teachers were able/willing to discuss with a reasonable degree of fluency, whether favourably or unfavourably, while others were hardly mentioned. The topics which were given prominence in this way varied significantly between the different teacher groups, though there was a considerable degree of consistency within each group. Those topics which were prominent in the English teachers' interviews could be grouped under four headings: Syntax, Language Variation, the Writing System and Literary Analysis.

Syntax: This was, in fact, the dominant interpretation of 'knowledge about language' overall: the English teachers, like the others, constantly tended to redefine KAL in the narrow sense of syntactic knowledge and to express overall positive or negative attitudes accordingly. The construct of 'grammar' was, however, itself analysed as having a range of subcomponents. Thus, the traditional parts of speech were mentioned by all English teachers whose transcripts have been analysed. A clear majority reported that they taught all or some of these explicitly to their pupils, though a minority argued that this was not appropriate. Sentence and/or phrase structure was also mentioned by a clear majority, who all claimed to teach at least some aspects of this topic. Clause analysis was mentioned by a majority, mostly to be repudiated as a subject of study; only one teacher reported that this was taught. Otherwise, one teacher each reported the systematic teaching of English morphology (prefixes etc.) and of vocabulary.

Language Variation: Almost all teachers mentioned variation in styles and genres in the writing of English and perceived a need to discuss these explicitly with their pupils; as far as teaching was concerned, this was the most fully supported KAL topic. A clear majority also mentioned the related topic of 'awareness of audience', though neutrally as between speech and writing. These points were concretised by those teachers who claimed to teach particular types of writing (e.g. diaries, letters, autobiography). Lastly, almost all teachers mentioned variation between standard/non-standard English and their contexts of use, and most felt it right to heighten pupils' awareness of this issue, though with differing degrees of 'normative' emphasis.

The Writing System: Almost all teachers said they explicitly discussed and taught aspects of the punctuation system and paragraphing; a minority mentioned spelling 'rules' and claimed to teach them. One teacher explicitly discussed the alphabet and sound-letter relationships with his pupils.

Literary Analysis: A majority mentioned the traditional 'figures of speech' and claimed to teach these; a minority mentioned poetic forms such as rhyme and metre.

Other KAL topics to emerge, though each was mentioned by one or two teachers only (and not necessarily because they felt it appropriate to teach about them), were: language and the media; language families/the history of language; and "non-verbal aspects" – presumably paralinguistics.

It is arguable that these discussions about kinds of KAL which it was/was not appropriate for pupils to develop in school were tapping at a deeper level the teachers' own personal model of language and that the dimensions outlined above constitute the English teachers' own main ways of construing/conceptualising language itself. Certain features of this particular 'model of language' rate special comment. Firstly, the 'Syntax' and 'Literary Analysis' components are strikingly traditional and seem to have been affected very little by contemporary developments in linguistic and literary theory. Secondly, it is worth considering what is not included of the topics which figure prominently in the programmatic syllabuses of the Language Awareness movement or, indeed, of the Kingman Report: there is little developed analysis of the spoken language or ways of talking about it; there is no reference to the structure of text above the level of the sentence (apart from the traditional concept of 'paragraphing'); there is nothing at all on language acquisition/development. (This is not to assume that the teachers know nothing about these matters or do not think they are important, but somehow they were defined as 'not relevant' throughout an interview, which repeatedly presented opportunities to identify and give personal views about a range of KAL topics.) On the other hand, English teachers have clearly taken on board the non-traditional ideas of register and stylistic variation in written English and of dialectal variation in the spoken language (traceable presumably to the influence of English educationalists such as James Britton and of sociolinguists such as Labov and Trudgill). In this they contrast very clearly with their Modern Languages colleagues, as will be seen below.

Rationales for Developing Knowledge about Language

In discussing possible rationales for developing children's explicit knowledge about language within the school language curriculum, the English teachers (like all the rest) were preoccupied with its supposed relationship with the development of language proficiency. Generally speaking, when for the time being interpreting KAL in the narrow sense of syntactic knowledge, teachers felt it had a limited role in promoting practical language skills; a considerable number felt that the relationship was actually a negative one, with grammatical analysis getting in the way of skill development. A clear majority of the teachers argued that pupils differed in the extent to which their personal language skills could benefit from metastatement and analysis; the consensus view was that academically able pupils could indeed so benefit, but not the rest. However, when thinking about the 'language variation' dimension of KAL, teachers' views of the relationship with language proficiency development were much more positive and there was a widely held (though not unanimous) belief that explicit discussion of stylistic variation had a direct pay-off in improving children's writing skill.

When asked about other possible rationales for KAL (of kinds advanced within the Language Awareness movement, for example), the English teachers mostly had little to add; two explicitly said there was no other, while the rest advanced a variety of suggestions, on the whole tentatively (that it could help MLs learning or literary appreciation, providing intellectual discipline, was in itself pleasurable). Just one teacher presented a strong and well developed argument for the study of language as an abstract system, as (a) accessible to 90% of pupils and (b) empowering/liberating for the individual language user.

THE MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Awareness of 'Language Awareness'

It was clear from the sample of transcripts analysed so far that the Modern Language teachers possessed a degree of familiarity with the 'Language Awareness' concept, particularly arising in connection with the name of Eric Hawkins and his initiatives in this field (Hawkins 1984). In addition, the concept had been familiarised through the Hampshire Modern Languages Skills Development Programme (HMLSDP 1988). Under this scheme a range of French, German and Spanish materials are being piloted in Hampshire secondary schools, including an introductory half-term unit entitled "Language Matters", which falls under the umbrella of Language Awareness (and is taught through the medium of English). Typically then, questioned as to their familiarity with the concept, the MLs teachers interviewed cited topics characteristic of the Hampshire scheme, such as similarities and points of comparison between languages, language families, looking at pronunciation and at different alphabets and scripts, recognition of patterns in language and so on – or else cited Hawkins and, sometimes, the Cambridge University Press series of booklets "Awareness of Language". There was also some familiarity with the Language Awareness concept through new course materials such as "Arc-en-Ciel", which introduces discussion of points of language such as pronunciation, gender, appropriacy and so forth.

Significantly, however, this group of teachers all tended to see such Language Awareness teaching as a luxury, rather than part and parcel of their everyday teaching. It was generally regarded as an adjunct, usually a preliminary one, to the real business of teaching the language and, in the schools where it was practised, was viewed as a four-week or half-term introduction in the first year, rather than a continuing dimension to foreign language learning. Thus, topics dealt with systematically at this stage only rarely cropped up later in the school and then only on a very ad hoc basis. It was generally felt that, though interesting and valid in their own right, such consciousness-raising activities would have to cede precedence to the all-important business of learning to communicate in the target language.

Conceptualisations of Language

On the whole, it would be fair comment that, for the MLs Heads of Department, even more than for their English colleagues, knowledge about language tended to be equated with morpho-syntactic knowledge. In spite of their admitted familiarity with a broader spectrum of topics, as discussed under the 'Language Awareness' umbrella, and in spite of the interviewer's attempts to broaden the scope of the term, when questioned about the place of explicit talk about language in their classrooms, the teachers constantly returned to discussion of grammar. (Most commonly, this was in terms of parts of speech, sentence structure, verb tenses and gender.)

The MLs teachers were, however, somewhat on the defensive regarding their own state of knowledge about language; a question about teachers' own use of reference sources in this area was generally perceived as threatening, with one teacher commenting "a degree in linguistics wouldn't help me very much". Clearly, such knowledge as they did have owed little to their original degree and teacher training courses, where the component of language knowledge was generally deemed very slight (if not non-existent). The general background was a literature-based university degree in a modern language, followed by a PGCE where the main emphasis was on teaching methodology. On the whole, the state of the MLs teachers' knowledge about language was perceived to owe more to their later, personal professional development, to a limited extent through reading and, more significantly, through discussion with colleagues, the advisory service, in-service training and encounters with new materials and methodology. (There were regretful comments from teachers on the relative lack of intellectual challenge and stimulation to be found in schools: "Teaching 12–16 stultifies one's urge to know – it has stifled my natural curiosity" said one. "You don't get too far, you don't get too high" said another.)

The fact that questions probing the extent of teachers' own knowledge about language aroused a degree of suspicion and distrust perhaps itself suggests more regret than was overtly expressed and some perceived need of further knowledge.

MLs Rationales for Developing Explicit KAL

Unlike their more sceptical English mother tongue colleagues, the MLs teachers generally believed that a clear positive relationship existed between explicit knowledge about language and the development of practical language proficiency, as the following quotations make clear:

> "I have not thought it through, I just assumed intuitively that if you are aware of how something works that must help you actually do it and it does for lots of things."
>
> "Yes, knowledge about language gives the confidence to be able to manipulate it."
>
> "If they have knowledge, it will improve the range of their language and their ability to adapt language. People NOT aware of how language works may memorise a sentence and re-use it, but people WITH knowledge of how language works could take the sentence, adapt it and use it in another context."

The view is clearly expressed in the last of these quotations, that explicit knowledge about language is required to move beyond phrase-book learning to creative use of the target language (or, in other words, for the internalisation of a generative FL system). This view was generally advanced, despite running counter to much current second language acquisition theory; it closely paralleled the views of the sample of Scottish MLs teachers interviewed previously by Mitchell (1988).

In advancing this view, however, the MLs teachers tended consistently to close down their interpretation of KAL to embrace only (morpho) syntactic knowledge. This was clear from the exemplification consistently given, for the kind of ongoing 'talk about language' which it was felt appropriate to undertake with pupils in the 11–16 age bracket, after broader preliminaries had been completed. It emerged from the teachers' accounts of their day-to-day class teaching that such talk was typically limited to aspects of sentence structure, with verbs and tenses being much mentioned, together with topics like gender and adjectival agreement. Indeed, KAL was frequently translated into classroom teaching, in the form of an inductive approach to grammatical patterns.

As with the English teachers, there emerged a general feeling among the MLs teachers that the importance of developing explicit KAL varied substantially, according to the perceived ability of the pupil:

> "For some children, the less able, I don't think that explicit knowledge is something that will support them too much. But I think, for the brighter ones, it is again an additional tool. If you want really to grow and to go on to further work, then I think you must have a knowledge of it. I know there are some children for whom this is not appropriate."

Almost universally, then, it was felt that, for the 'less able' pupil, talking about language is mystifying and off-putting, and is, therefore, neither appropriate nor helpful. For such pupils, the best approach was seen to involve practising with and learning unanalysed chunks or patterns of language, and the analysis of language structure was viewed as best ignored, since such pupils were thought not to be capable of applying the knowledge to help them manipulate the language. Conversely, the more able the pupil, the more helpful, indeed necessary, talking about language was perceived.

Implicit in these views, of course, are worrying assumptions about the ultimate level of achievement in a foreign language which is seen as possible for the 'less able'. If explicit knowledge of syntax is essential for developing a generative target language competence – and yet some pupils are not capable of acquiring such knowledge – the expectation is created that the most such pupils can achieve (at least in school contexts) is an accumulation of global phrases. In this way, the MLs teachers' commitment to a particular view of KAL can be seen as actually limiting rather than enhancing pupils' ultimate target language proficiency.

As with English teachers, the MLs teachers' rationales for developing pupils' knowledge about language, other than the perceived positive relationship with FL achievement, were fragmentary and undeveloped. Suggestions made by individuals included: "... reduction of insularity", "enrichment of them as people ... and academic interest", "being more aware of other people, perhaps in their difficulties in expressing themselves in language". But such ideas were clearly marginal by comparison with the perceived link with language proficiency.

CONCLUSION

These two key groups of language curriculum specialists had entered teaching with little or no specialist training in language itself. The models of language they themselves controlled could thus be explained primarily as a combination of that transmitted in their own time as school pupils, plus newer ideas internalised during their active professional life via new curricula and materials, in-service activity and informal contacts of all kinds.

These processes evidently continue to operate somewhat differently in the English and MLs traditions. Both groups of teachers shared a strong tendency to equate KAL with morpho-syntactic knowledge of a traditional kind and centring on the written language system. However, attitudes towards the place of such knowledge in the curriculum differed significantly between the two groups. Generally speaking, the English teachers were sceptical of its value as far as developing practical language skills were concerned, for many pupils, and saw little other point in it. The MLs group, however, retained a surprisingly strong consensus that KAL in this narrow sense did contribute vitally to language learning, at least for some pupils.

On the other hand, the English teachers' view of language had other fairly well developed, non-traditional aspects, notably their concern with and ability to analyse language variation. This sociolinguistic dimension was largely absent from the MLs discussion, rather surprisingly, given the promotion of the concept of 'communicative competence' in relevant theoretical literature over the last decade at least (see e.g. Canale and Swain 1980).

Missing from the discussion of both groups, however, were some key topics in contemporary 'expert' models of language (the Kingman model, for example): notably, the structure of discourse beyond the level of the individual sentence, the spoken language in all its aspects and first/second language acquisition and development. Of course, this does not mean that these topics were not felt to be important by either group. It was clear from the rich accounts of everyday practice provided by all teachers that much classroom time is spent in practical activity devoted to elaborating pupils' ability to produce and evaluate long texts, and also that increasing importance is given in both English and Modern Languages to developing spoken language skills; both involve continuing discussion with pupils about their work, which must include metalinguistic feedback of rich and varied kinds. But somehow neither emerged as salient themes when teachers were asked to discuss in more general terms their own views on language and the kinds of explicit knowledge it is desirable for pupils to develop. Similarly, teachers' accounts of classroom practice gave insights into the implicit language learning theories to which they themselves adhere; it seems impossible that, in day-to-day classroom work, teachers are not regularly giving explicit advice to pupils accordingly on what constitutes, in their view, good language learning strategies. But again this area was not tapped in interview, despite repeated opportunities. On the evidence, it would seem that language teachers have not yet fully theorised these key aspects of their work or, at least, that they lack a technical language through which they can easily analyse and discuss them with their pupils (and with visiting researchers).

On the basis of the evidence presented here, it would seem that ordinary language teachers have a much more limited conscious commitment to the systematic development of their pupils' KAL than is envisaged in their different ways by either the Language Awareness movement or the Kingman report. Nonetheless, it is clear that consciousness-raising about aspects of language has some place in most language classrooms, though perhaps in differing degrees for different pupils. Just how this talk about language works out in practice and how it impinges on the developing models of language held by pupils cannot be known until documented through further studies involving the longitudinal observation of classroom interaction. But it seems likely that it will take more than the limited cascade training programme presently envisaged by DES in support of Kingman to 'normalise' on the Kingman model the variation in current teacher knowledge, beliefs and practice.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF POETRY IN CHILDREN'S LEARNING

Michael Benton

***Note:* This Paper was submitted as evidence to the Cox Committee on English in the National Curriculum and is quoted in their Report**

There is a two-fold problem in realising the power of poetry in children's learning: first, we must understand where that power lies and what poetry does better than any other form of language use; and, secondly, we must reappraise our methods of working with poems in school and, in particular, align them with what we have come to know about the nature of literary response and the relationship between literature and learning. Accordingly, the first part of this paper is about the uniqueness of poetry and the second about classroom methodology. Children's experiences of hearing, enacting, discussing and making poems permeate both.

(a) What Poetry Offers

A few years ago, the East Anglian poet Edward Storey took a class of primary school children to the local church to see what stories they could find, to implant a story by Charles Causley about other children and another church and, as it turned out, to make a narrative poem of his own to mark the occasion. Causley's well-known poem 'Mary, Mary Magdalene'(1) derives from the custom that the local children of Launceston in Cornwall have of throwing a pebble for luck onto the back of the granite figure of the saint which lies recumbent on the east wall of the church which bears her name. The ballad proceeds through a dialogue between a girl and the saint and describes six phases of a woman's life through its main turning-points and ceremonies – from baby, to schoolgirl, to lover, to bride, to widow and, finally, to mother – cleverly reversing the last two, so that the poem ends where it began and the cycle can start again.

When Edward Storey's class returned from exploring a wet and windy graveyard, they came with news of robbers' graves, a headstone about an Indian princess and the tiny graves of unknown children whose names had been partially obscured by moss. Back inside the church they talked of the stained-glass windows, the eagle-winged lectern and listened to Causley's poem. Someone must have noticed how the wish-bone vaulting in the church roof looked like the timbers of an upturned boat – and this became the image for a transformation as vivid as that at the start of Sendak's *Where the Wild Things are*. Here is Edward Storey's poem(2):

A SONG OF A CHURCH VISIT WITH CHILDREN

(for Class 4J, Doddinghurst C.E. School)

1. *We sat in an upturned boat*
beached on the shores of Spring
with flowers bright as Angel-fish
and light on the polished wing
    of a bird in a cage of colour
    where winds made the rain-bells ring.

2. *We sat where the timbers arched*
their wish-bone shapes above
a wooden spire for our keel
and the eagle for the dove
    in search of a singing rainbow
    with words as warm as love.

3. *We listened to a story*
older than ship or crown
of Mary, Mary Magdalene*
who threw a pebble down
    to grant each lucky child a wish
    in that distant, salty town.

4. *We listened to the weather*
outside our stranded ark
and heard a thousand voices
speaking from the dark
    and fading stones of history
    where the living seldom talk.

*Mary, Mary Magdalene is a reference to Charles Causley's poem of that title, which was read in the church.

5. *There were robbers' graves around us*
on which grass never grows
and a lost princess who slumbers
where no noisy ocean flows
  tugging at sea-weed bell-ropes
  when the March-wind blows.

6. *There were graves of unknown children*
names nibbled away by moss,
and a tree the shape of an anchor
and a man on the mast of a Cross
  who was killed one stormy Easter,
  stretched out like an albatross.

7. *We sat while the day turned over*
and the words spilt from each hand
and the fish went back to flowers
and the water turned to sand
  and our upturned boat became a church
  as we sailed back to land.

8. *But when these creaking timbers*
crack and fall to dust,
when the coloured port-holes crumble
and the cabin hinges rust,
  who will come here, I wonder,
  to listen and think of us?

Poems matter because they are a prime source of stories – and stories in verse hold listeners in the double spell of both the fiction and the form. Narrative, as we have learned from those who have developed the concept in literature and learning, notably Hardy (1975)(3) and Meek (1977(4), is a primary act of mind. The narrative imagination is our common human property; it is the way we make sense of experience – including the experience of going to the local church with your classmates and a visiting poet and becoming part of the process that blends the anecdotes, the chance comments and the histories inscribed in the stone book of the building into this well-wrought poem. This school visit, on a wet day, has evoked a very still poem: the children are sitting surrounded by stories – ones coloured in the church windows, implied in the icons and embedded in the architecture. They listen to Charles Causley's poem, to the voices of the past and the stories some of them have discovered on the grave stones – and, of course, to the Christian story reflected all around them – until, in the last two verses, the transformation is reversed, the boat becomes the church and the poem shifts from the secondary world back to the primary one. It leaves us with a question which both indicates the significance of such Wordsworthian 'spots of time' and also hints at more pervasive issues of how we continue to interpret our history and traditions. Poetry is unique able to embody the general within the particular, to diagnose the indwelling value within the external features. Class 4J and any other children listening to this poem are hearing the narrative imagination at work in ways that connect their own stories and experiences with our common human impulse to create secondary worlds of our own and to enjoy those made by others. Auden makes the point. Acknowledging his debt to Tolkien for the terms primary and secondary world, Auden says:

> Present in every human being are two desires, a desire to know the truth about the primary world, the given world outside ourselves, in which we are born, live, love, hate and die, and the desire to make new secondary worlds of our own or, if we cannot make them ourselves, to share in the secondary worlds of those who can(5).

Poetry educates the imagination by making us look afresh at the primary world through the power and vision of its secondary creations.

A second source of the power of poetry is more explicitly cultural. All societies have their storytellers, whether it is the elder in the tribe, the poet in the medieval court, the ballad-monger in nineteenth century London streets or a rabbit called Dandelion in *Watership Down*. Poems and stories establish and confirm the identity of a culture. This body of literature constantly renews itself; it is inclusive, invitational, organically growing from the city streets, as well as the country churchyard, permeated with its own literary history and influenced by television and other media. What matters is the continuity and our sense of being a part of it. What poetry offers – and what this poem exemplifies – is just this experience of belonging to a changing yet permanent culture. Thus, the customs and children's games from Launceston are shaped into a poem, which is read to children in another church at the other side of the country, which in turn becomes merged with the stories in Doddinghurst, which eventually lead to 'A Song of a Church Visit with Children', a poem to be shared with children everywhere. Many, no doubt, will hear the poem as part of similar visits to their own towns and villages; some already have. In such ways, poems are the cells of our living culture.

The power to poetry lies, too, in the realisation that, for writers and readers, it is both fun to make things with words and that, in so doing, language is in action in its most potent form. Auden, again, reminds us that "there is only one trait that is common to all poets without exception, a passionate love for their native tongue"(6). This innate love of language is there in children too – seen nowhere more clearly than in the accounts we have of how very young children gain mastery over words, playing with the sounds and rhythms of snatches of language, as Ruth Weir's *Language in the Crib*(7) shows. It is evident, too, in the work of the Opies and in the delight young children take in comic and nonsense verse where language draws attention to itself and the rhyming sounds and metrical patterns have the power to conjure the experience seemingly 'out of the air' rather than, as here, acting as agents to give shape to the event in the poet's mind. Paradoxically, a love of language for its own sake becomes a love of language for the sake of what it can do for us in helping us to represent and understand our experiences. For 4J to see their images, comments and anecdotes of this church visit fashioned into the pattern of a poem is to offer them, implicitly, knowledge of both the playfulness of language and its discipline.

So far I have argued that the power of poetry lies in our recognition of the importance of the narrative imagination, the need for cultural continuity and the development of linguistic mastery. These are features that poetry shares with many aspects of literary experience. We need to ask, therefore, what qualities are unique to poetry, what it can offer that other genres cannot. Again, I want to focus the argument by reference to Edward Storey's 'Song' and acknowledge that, although every poem is unique, all poems have some attributes in common.

The first of these features is the peculiar use of language. 'Song' has an almost Keatsian richness. The poem's extended church/boat metaphor is sustained by a collection of smaller images, which seem to grow out of each other as the poem proceeds. Auditory and visual images predominate: we are invited to sit and listen to the sounds of the wind, the stories, the voices of history, the 'noisy ocean' and the 'creaking timbers', and to mark the vivid colours of the windows, the structure of the roof, the shapes of the Christian symbols and the age of the stones. Storey evokes the interior of the church through these surreal effects in words that are sensory, precise and concrete, yet which are simultaneously looking outside themselves, creating the sense of significant memory, a fondly-recalled event, and that atmosphere of being in the presence of the living past that 'church-going' can bring. This contraplex, two-way movement operates everywhere in poems, most obviously as we read Verse 6:

There were graves of unknown children
names nibbled away by moss,
and a tree the shape of an anchor
and a man on the mast of a Cross
  who was killed one stormy Easter,
  stretched out like an albatross.

As soon as they are uttered, the words move inwards and act centripetally; they name, fix and bring into focus the images of children's graves partly covered in moss, the Easter story and the central icon of the Cross. But they also move outwards and act centrifugally; they evoke, generate and associate these images with our own experiences of children and churches, and with the biblical story and, perhaps, that of 'The Ancient Mariner'. Words working in this way are clearly offering a reading experience different from any other. They are not delimited to lexical definitions and referential meanings. These are words that are alive with a plurality of meanings from their contexts, their associations and their sensory qualities; they are alive with what Ted Hughes calls 'the goblin in a word'(8).

A further quality that poetry offers is that of form. All art involves the shaping of experience in a chosen medium. In language this formal ordering is both at its most subtle and its most overt in poetry. Here the forward movement of the poem is strongly felt through the optimistic, song-like, three-beat line, the 'continuo-effect' of rhyming every other line, and the running-on of lines within a verse as each one is built up to make a single sentence. Yet off-setting this momentum are the constant reminders of stillness at the start of each verse – 'We sat ...', 'We listened ...', 'There were ...' – each time followed by a particular word-picture which, while it catches the same sense of romance and wonder, is nonetheless enclosed as a separate painting in its stanza-frame. The tautness of this structure, the way words appear to drop into place with an inevitable appropriateness, and the heightening of experience that such patterning produces, all combine to give that sense of contained energy that any well-crafted poem possesses.

Thirdly, each new poem is a fresh look. Its focus is sharp and the clear eye of the poet makes us aware of some insight or idea, the ghost of some lost emotion or the significance of some detail – how the church becomes a 'stranded ark', maybe, or the implications of the question with which the poem ends. The details of the church and churchyard give an intricate texture to the poem and lend it its particular character. It is this skill of close observation that again is peculiar to poetry. "The essential quality of poetry", claimed D.H. Lawrence, "is that it makes a new effort of attention and 'discovers' a new world within the known world"(9). By attending to the stories that lie between people, the church/boat metaphor emerges, a new way of looking is created, and no church visit is quite the same again for those who read and reflect upon the poem.

Above all, perhaps, good poems are places where writers and readers exercise both an intelligence of thinking and an intelligence of feeling. 'Song' is not a direct recital of the poet's feeling, yet there is no doubting the inter-play of thought and emotion that permeates the poem. The mounting fascination as the church yields up its stories, the excitement of the histories in the stone all around and the feeling of closeness in the shared experience finally give way to the question in the last verse, with its speculations about Time and the individual's place within history. There is sadness, certainly, in the images of change and decay, but also the hint of that all but unconscious sense of the continuity of the species, of belonging with the living and the dead forever in Time. Poetry matters because feeling and thinking remain in close touch with each other. Thought may subdue feeling, feeling may overwhelm thought but, because of the concentration of language and the discipline of expression, feelings become *embodied* in verbal form, not merely indicated by verbal reference.

"The art of literature, vocal or written", as A.N. Whitehead says, "is to adjust the language so that it embodies what it indicates"(10). Together the qualities outlined above,

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uniquely blended in poems, are the reason why the child's awareness of what language is and does can potentially become deeper and more subtle through poetry than through any other form of language use.

(b) Poems in the Classroom

Writing a few years before I.A. Richards' celebrated work, George Sampson (1921) reminds the English teacher that:

> "If literature in schools is not a delight, if it is not, in all senses, a 're-creation', an experience in creative reception, it is a failure"(11).

Sadly, in subsequent years, the combined forces of the criticism industry and the examination system effectively snuffed out much of this delight. 'Practical criticism' became the method with sixth formers and undergraduates; comprehension exercises became the lot of school children. In the past decade, however, we have begun to learn how to honour George Sampson's principle and to give poetry back to its readers. Reader-response theory(12) and the particular influence of Louise Rosenblatt's(13) transactional theory have altered the climate of poetry teaching. The development of a methodology that is based upon informed concepts of *reading* and *response*, rather than upon conventional, narrowly-conceived ideas of *comprehension* and *criticism*, is now the priority. At the heart of contemporary thinking about classroom method is the uniqueness of the reading event. Comprehension can only develop and criticism can only be well founded if they are rooted in the processes of reading and responding.

Certain operational principles follow from this premise:

(i) Reading a poem is different from reading a story or any other text. Most poems children encounter are short; the words can be taken in within seconds. Re-readings of lines or verses, changes in pace or tone, sorting out complex syntax, savouring an image or a rhyme – all happen within a small compass and dictate a reading process that is more varied and unpredictable than any other. The meanings lie, as it were, in the spaces around the verses and between the words, as well as within the words themselves. These spaces are ones we inhabit mentally as we 'look at' the text from various viewpoints; rather as, when looking at a piece of sculpture, we often feel impelled to move around the object, thus tacitly acknowledging that the vantage points we adopt and the space in which the object is placed affect our perception and understanding. Granted we initially have to read a poem forwards; nonetheless, our ways-in to its meaning will be many and varied. Exposing children to a lot of poetry, so that they hear, read, write, speak, dramatise and illustrate poems as a regular part of their English lessons, is the essential means to give children a sense of themselves as readers of poems; it is the best way, too, to build reading confidence and create the taste for poetry which many young people seem to lack as they go through secondary school.

(ii) Poems are read with both ear and eye. The distinction here is not simply the functional one between speaking a poem aloud or reading it silently. There are aural and visual dimensions in all poetry reading. If we read well, we cannot stop ourselves sounding the words in the head. With younger children, the fun of rhyming sounds and strongly-marked rhythms is easy enough to encourage and there are many excellent ideas – for example, in *Exploring Poetry: 5–8* by Jan Balaam and Brian Merrick(14). As children get older, there is a danger that the visual dominates, that the poems stay print-bound on the page. Performances that lift the words off the page

– shared readings, choral speaking, taped radio programes, etc. – are both exacting disciplines in themselves and ways of keeping children alert to the 'auditory imagination' from which poems are created. Again, there are many sources of classroom activities to serve these ends(15) – and the more international character of poetry, in recent years, especially the spread of Afro-Caribbean poetry, has helped to remind us that the language of poetry combines the abstract art of the aural with the solid presence of the visual.

(iii) Giving children access to a wide variety of poetry experiences is essential. It has long been accepted practice that children's own writing should be interleaved with their reading of poetry. There are dangers of falling into habitual teaching patterns here(16), and 'creative writing' is both an uncomfortable phrase and an easy victim. Yet, in recent years, there have been many publications(17) which have shown how the disciplined, imaginative play of creative writing can produce remarkable results and develop children's command of language. Encouraging pupils to respond to poems in a variety of ways – live readings, tape-recordings, displays and so on – helps to demystify the experience; pupils should be offered the chance to experiment, to play with the words, sounds and shapes of poems, in the same way that they play with paints and materials in an art lesson.

As well as variety in activities, there should be a variety of voices. The resources are rich and it is relatively easy to give children a feel for the varieties of English in which poetry is expressed and a sense of the heritage of earlier centuries. Both the Bullock Report and the Kingman Report stress these points(18). The best work on poetry will look for opportunities to have poems by, say, Blake and Coleridge rubbing shoulders with ones by Roger McGough and Charles Causley. The best anthologies provide this. It is equally important that pupils experience oral and folk poetry, songs and poems from around the world. In the past decade, publishers have provided many more books by women poets: Fleur Adcock, U.A. Fanthorpe, Phoebe Hesketh, Elizabeth Jennings and others are now widely known. There has been a similar expansion in Afro-Caribbean poetry, with the work of James Berry, John Agard and Grace Nichols being especially prominent. Together with the appearance of many poets writing especially for children in an accessible, humorous, often idiomatic way – Michael Rosen, Roger McGough, Kit Wright, Gareth Owen and others – the variety of voices available to the poetry teacher is seemingly infinite. Through poetry, children have access to a society of clear, single voices and a range of feeling for which there is no substitute.

(iv) When it is appropriate to dwell on a poem for discussion or study, the key is to provide time and opportunity for individual reflection. Articulating and reflecting upon personal responses are fundamental to the reader's early apprehension of a poem. Jotting around a text or in a journal helps the reader in attending to his or her own responses. Many poems invite these procedures.

Phoebe Hesketh runs a writers' group in Lancashire which includes several teachers. Recently the group read and enjoyed this new poem (overleaf)(19). So have the secondary school pupils who have seen it. It is printed with the annotations of fourteen year-old Marian as she took her 'mental walk' around the poem(20). Read the poem aloud first and then follow Marian's thought-track.

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1st thought

during poem - gaes through
calours in his paintbox, explaining
them. 1st + 2nd lines
"talking with calours"
suggest an artist

2nd thought

2nd verse - shapes curved and
straight-edged. Like "square + hard
- very abrupt.
I think we're talking about
children

PAINT BOX

He tried to tell them what he felt,
could say it only in colours -
Sunday's white page shading to grey
of evening clocks and bells-in-the-rain.
Monday morning, bright yellow brass
of a cock crowing.
Story-time, purple.
Scarlet is shouting in the playground.

His world's a cocoon
round as an egg, an acorn
sprouting green.
The schoolroom square and hard,
his desk hard and square
facing the enemy blackboard.

"You must learn to read", they said
and gave him a painting-book alphabet.
Apple swelled beautifully red. Balloon
expanded in blue.
C was a cage for a bird,
his brush wavered through
painting himself
a small brown smudge inside.

Phoebe Hesketh

3rd thought

3rd verse
A for Apple
B for Balloon
C for Cage, etc.
Methodical
confusing?
"painting himself a
small brown smudge
is this suggesting that
he is doing self.
portrait or is he pain
ting a smudge for
himself?

4th thought (re-read)

- This is definitely a poem
for children, or maybe its
about children? I don't like how
it rhymes, uncanny. White Sunday
page to start gradually filling in

5th thought

re - 1st verse
colours mentioned
- white yellow
purple scarlet
2nd verse
green
3rd
red blue
brown

6th thought re-read

a slow child, trying to express
himself going on
journey to school,
He's inside himself
can't get out
"an egg, acorn"
scared of teacher
enemy blackboard
can't cope

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All the pupils made their jottings before sharing their impressions in groups. It is in this private talking to oneself and in the spaces behind public talk that poems are evoked. Discussion helps to test out views, modify ideas and prepare for a more considered statement, if one is required. Marian wrote about the poem at some length. Near the beginning she said:

> I must admit the first time I read the poem I was confused. Things didn't quite fall into place and I wasn't even certain I knew what it was about: other than observing lots of colours being mentioned, and linking that to the title. I decided it was the first verse which was throwing me, so I read it again,

Then she went on to talk about the details of the poem and ended with two accounts of the final lines, a literal-minded one and, as an after-thought, a reading that gives an insight into the whole poem.

> The 3rd verse quotes the teacher dictating 'You must!', which I do not feel is a very understanding attitude. The painting-book alphabet is very methodical. The apple and balloon when coloured, expand and swell, lovely words explaining them getting larger and almost coming alive: for C, the author used cage. I would have preferred to see a cow or a cat, something far simpler for a young child to understand. The closing sentence, 'a small brown smudge inside.' My first thoughts on this were that it was a sentence with two meanings I opted for, in my opinion the correct one after re-reading the line, what Hesketh was trying to conclude was that, although the child was able to develop his ideas in his head, when using colours all he could establish on paper was a brown smudge. I can imagine the frustration of knowing what balloons, apples and cages look like, but being unable to produce a portrait.
>
> An after-thought about the 3rd verse, after commenting on the use of cage for the letter C, being inappropriate is that Hesketh used a cage as another way of portraying the feeling of being enclosed and the boy being unable to show his feelings. Also the The boy being like a bird in a cage like the child in his classroom - there is no way out, no escape.

Poems need time. At first, they may be just a blur of words, as Marian indicated. Given careful phasing along the lines suggested above, so that readers take on responsibility for exploring and developing their responses, pupils have a much better chance of coming to own a poem. In doing so, of course, they are not only learning about poems, they are also learning about learning.

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To sum up, the starting-point is that poems must be experienced before than can be analysed(21). Properly handled, literary understanding and critical evaluation develop *as a result of* reflective reading and responding; the two 2Cs are part of the 2Rs and are stronger for being so. If they cease to be part of the whole reading/responding experience, then comprehension degenerates into inquisition, criticism into mechanical analysis, and a gap opens up between the reader and the poem, which reduces the latter to fodder for just another sort of textbook exercise. Poetry, as was said earlier, needs to be given back to readers. It is the job of our methodology to see that this happens. Only then can the importance of poetry in children's learning, outlined in this paper, be more fully realised.

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ENGLISH, MEDIA AND INFORMATION IN THE POST-COX ERA

Andrew Hart

The proposals of the Cox Committee for English: 5–16 (DES for HMSO, 1989) give the study of media a welcome prominence. As well as offering no less than six Statements of Attainment which refer explicitly to media work, they constantly suggest the use of media materials and invoke media education approaches as part of every English teacher's practice. At several notable points, they recognise that "the kinds of question that are routinely applied in media education can fruitfully be applied to literature" [7.23] and that "media education has often developed, in a very explicit way, concepts which are of general importance in English" [9.9].

What are these questions and concepts? The main concepts are helpfully listed by Cox as "selection (of information, viewpoint, etc.) editing, author, audience, medium, genre, stereotype, etc." [9.9]. The questions resolves themselves into "who is communicating with whom and why; how has the text been produced and transmitted; how does it convey its meaning?" [7.23]. (All of these would be very useful questions to address to the Cox proposals themselves!)

Teachers of the more specialised form of media education, usually known as media studies (recognised by Cox as having its own academic integrity as a timetabled subject outside the National Curriculum [9.4]), will be familiar with the questions and concepts listed in Cox. The approaches which they suggest to the study of texts already figure strongly in the current GCSE and A-Level Media Studies syllabi. What is new is the expectation of their normality and that they should begin as early as primary education. This is largely a result of the determined efforts of the British Film Institute (Bazalgette, 1989), whose attempts to define media education have positively influenced the Cox proposals:

> "*Media Education ... seeks to increase children's critical understanding of the media ... (It) aims to develop systematically children's critical and creative powers through analysis and production of media artefacts ... Media Education aims to create more active and critical media users, who will demand and could contribute to a greater range and diversity of media products.*" [9.6]

Media education from 5–16 is firmly located by Cox within "the exploration of contemporary culture" [9.4]. It is not surprising then to find that it is being offered an arranged marriage with information technology. Media education does, indeed, offer useful approaches to the study of new (as well as old) technologies. This conjunction is, therefore, promising, provided that we do not mistakenly identify information technology as limited to the use of computers. We need to focus on a range of technologies which are used to collect, organise, process and circulate information.

This discussion suggests some theoretical and practical approaches to teaching about the exchange of information through a media education perspective. It is based on my research into approaches to media education in a series of broadcast radio programmes for teachers (Hart and Cooper, 1990). In the space available here, it will only be possible to glance at one area of work. I have chosen to focus on news reporting, because of its familiarity for most English teachers, because of the availability of a wide range of teaching resources in this area and because it can provide a model for examining the fundamental questions about who? what? how? and why? raised by Cox.

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The circulation of information relies of 'facts' as its raw material. As social beings, we are surrounded by 'facts'. We receive them, seek them, exchange them, check them and act upon them. At the same time, we are all reporters and producers of 'facts'; we have all learned to handle large amounts of data in systematic ways. Yet we also rely on second-hand messages about the world beyond our social experience. These messages do not reach us innocently. The facts they report are not merely random fragments which we capture and store. They come in patterns which are largely defined and packaged for us by the mass media.

The media's criteria of newsworthiness operate together as a framework for what is reported. As a result, there are information gaps. Some events are under-reported because they do not fit into the framework. Sometimes the reasons are related to geography, sometimes to dominant cultural assumptions. Many stories never make the national headlines, while others are reported because the relevant sources are routinely monitored. As Hall explains:

> "*of the millions of events which occur every day in the world, only a tiny proportion ever become visible as 'potential news stories'; and, of this proportion, only a small fraction are actually produced as the days's news in the news media*" (Cohen and Young, 1981, p.234).

Who is communicating with whom and why?

There is a simple view which seeks to explain mass communication as the expression of powerful economic interests. Ideology is seen as the direct product of ownership and control. Ownership does, indeed, allow privileged access to the means of communication. Some readers of British newspapers expect their papers to represent particular political positions, while others are unaware of any position at all behind the stories they read. Few readers expect the sort of impartiality which broadcasters claim television and radio provide. The ideas expressed in particular newspapers are bound to relate to their basic economic interests.

Andrew Goodwin's *Battle of Osgrove* simulation (Goodwin, 1988) is a reworking of the 'Battle of Orgreave' in 1984 (Masterman, 1986). It explores how facts are adapted or discarded to suit the political persuasions of reporters, editors and the papers they work for. Sarah Hammett used the simulation with second-year sixth-form students doing A-Level Communication Studies at Totton College in Southampton. The lesson showed that students were able to use political positions as a filter for the stories they edited. The persuasions of the different papers showed through clearly. The students were also able to point to textual elements in other groups' reports which showed their political positions. They understood what they were supposed to be doing during the simulation, enjoyed doing it and responded well to the pressure of strict deadlines and new information feeds. It was a highly participatory and practical lesson, in which the students produced tightly written and carefully thought out material. Their comments on their own work and that of other groups showed a real understanding of the editorial processes, putting into practice concepts with which they were familiar from earlier in their course.

The lesson also raised a number of problems related to the simple facts versus opinions distinction. Simulations are always limited. They always over-simplify and exaggerate for the sake of clarity. They can never reproduce the real conditions in which reporting occurs. Students are not professional journalists and can only follow limited stereotyped models of how journalists think and work. There is a danger that this approach to facts can encourage cavalier decisions, which are even more irresponsible than the worst excesses of tabloid reporting. There is also a danger that reporting comes to be seen as a conspiracy to deceive.

But there is a more basic problem. The 'Osgrove' simulation allows students to make a naive distinction between an objective world of events in which things happen and a subjective world of interpretation through which events are filtered. In the lesson, one of the students contrasted "what actually happened" with "the imagination of the reporter". This dualism is based on a naive view of media. It suggests that political positions can somehow be side-lined so that they do not interfere with responsible reporting and that there is a possibility of unbiased reporting to which media should aspire. Some students claimed that they were "trying to make it ... as unbiased as possible". They did not recognise that media are always selective or that personal experience is an unreliable criterion of truth.

This example suggests that students may have a problem in understanding how the unstable data of personal experience are refracted rather than reflected by the media. The world which media create is selected, edited and represented by people according to professional codes, in specific forms, for particular audiences. What media education can do is to show how these processes work. Bias may be relatively easy to detect in written journalism, but selection occurs in every form of reportage.

There is a whole range of factors which affect the way the media report what is happening in the world and the opinions they express (like editorial policies, journalistic practices, legal constraints and government restrictions). It is not so easy to unravel how these different factors interact with each other. The relationship between media content and economic interests is complex, dynamic and constantly shifting. Two general factors are, however, clear:

- ★ *ownership of the British press is concentrated in the hands of a very few proprietors*
- ★ *newspapers are part of larger conglomerates or associations of companies with a wide range of other financial interests*

These features mean that newspapers are subject to the basic need to be profitable in the long term, like any other commercial enterprise. If they do not sell enough copies at the right price, they will not be financially viable. But does this mean that what they print is controlled, in the short term, by the same profit motives? Does *The Times Educational Supplement* bear the ideological imprint of Rupert Murdoch in the same way as *The Sun*? The fact that it does not is because there are limits to what readers will tolerate.

What all newspapers have in common is an interest in protecting their position in the market. As well as attempting to maximise sales, they also need stable conditions. Such large sums of money are involved in setting up and running a mass circulation national newspaper that it is very difficult to set up a new paper, especially when established ones use spoiling tactics to protect their own positions. Most new ventures have failed or been taken over. The left-of-centre *News on Sunday* folded after only a few issues in 1988 and Eddie Shah's SDP-supporting *Today* went right wing when it was relaunched by Rupert Murdoch's *News International* group.

Some owners are highly interventionist and may dictate their paper's editorial stance. They may also use them as vehicles to promote or protect their commercial interests. A notable example is the promotion of *Sky TV* by newspapers in Rupert Murdoch's *News International* group. At the same time, stories which could damage the other financial interests of a corporation are unlikely to be covered in related papers (Lonrho's *Observer* has provided several good examples of this).

The long-term economic goals of newspapers have to be translated into news stories through the organised process of news production. Journalists learn very quickly by experience to adapt their work to the requirements of their paper. The news values embedded in particular stories are partly a result of routine working practices and expectations.

How has the text been produced and transmitted?

Popular newspapers devote more of their space to photographs than they do to text. Some readers may well be able to recognise editorial angles in written texts, but may take photographs for granted. They may seem innocent, but are most suspect precisely at the point where they make their strongest claim to 'capture' or document rather than recreate reality. When words and pictures are combined as *news photographs* (often with accompanying captions), there is a powerful conjunction of two systems of selection. Roland Barthes argued that "pictures are more imperative than writing, they impose meaning at one stroke" (Barthes, 1972). But that meaning comes from a series of practical and professional actions at various stages of production. The decisions made (consciously or unconsciously) affect the final outcome at every level of the process. Stuart Hall (in Cohen and Young, 1981) offers a multi-level account of how it works. The first four levels of selection occur in the production of any still photograph. But, at the fifth level, the whole apparatus of news production becomes crucial, for here the routine practices, assumptions and professional judgements of designers and editors come into play.

1. *Technical:* constraints are imposed by the technical features of cameras and film (e.g. film speed, light levels, lens range).
2. *Formal:* codes derived from normal ways of seeing enable readers to recognise objects from their everyday world. These codes are basically rules of equivalence, which allow us to translate a two-dimensional image into a three-dimensional reality. They also involve translations of colour, size and contrast.
3. *Composition:* space within photographs is arranged according to artistic/photographic conventions. These determine how foreground and background, centre and margins interact, what different degrees of focus, different camera angles and size of shot mean.
4. *Expression:* gestures, expressions and relationships between elements within photographs are interpreted according to variable cultural codes.
5. *News Value:* people or places within photographs are recognised as particular ones already known to readers. A radical closing down of the range of possible meanings occurs at this level, because of the specific identifications made and their currency.
6. *Frame Manipulations:* the processes of cropping, retouching and enlarging all give emphasis to particular readings, which have a privileged status because of their news value.
7. *Page Integration:* codes of sequence and page layout place the photograph according to the relative importance assigned to the story it refers to.
8. *Anchorage:* captions and headlines are added, which finally 'fix' the dominant readings of the photograph.

Hall's scheme offers a powerful framework for tracking the different stages of selection and editing which news photographs go through. Once we accept that all media processes are inevitably selective, we can shift our focus towards *how* they select and *with what consequences.* A key concept here is *representation* and it is worth untangling some of its different senses. Richard Dyer has explained four of the main ones for us (Lusted and Drummond, 1985, pp.44–45):

1. *A selective* **representation** *of reality:*
   This is obvious in newspapers, where the form is completely different from the events reported, but less so in television serials, which often succeed in creating the illusion of a transparent window on a world which has a similar time-frame and rhythm to our own.
2. *A typical or* **representative** *version of reality:*
   Media often use stereotypes to typify particular social groups as a form of shorthand. How do the media represent, say, gender or race?
3. *The process of speaking on behalf of or as* **representative** *of a particular position:*
   Whose views are being put forward in particular messages; whose voices are being heard?
4. *The meanings which media messages* **represent** *for audiences:*
   What do readers bring to messages which affects how they interpret them? What actual sense is made when particular messages are understood?

All media *represent* the world in these ways. In reporting on the world, they make particular, recurrent senses of it and we can begin to unravel these senses by asking what kind of representation is being offered.

How does it convey its meaning?

The media select and process facts for us so systematically that they affect the way we interpret what they are saying and the meanings we construct. News reporting relies on a range of documentary devices to distinguish factual information from opinion. On television, features like Standard English, smart clothing and electronic office hardware are often used to suggest that we are in the presence of responsible and reliable reporting. According to this simple view, facts are things which have happened and fiction is something which has been made (up). Facts are "out there" waiting to be reported and reflected on. But this distinction is hard to sustain if we start asking some basic questions, such as: When does an event become a fact? Can facts exist in isolation? Do facts make sense without any context? Which facts have been selected? Which facts have been ignored? As one senior television executive reminds us: "Merely to recount the figures is to obscure the meaning" (Hargreaves, 1989, p.19).

Journalists are social beings, as well as professionals. They have their own views and values, which are reflected in what they write. They are also tuned in to dominant social values. They recognise a range of cultural and social norms which form a relatively stable consensus. At the level of *writing*, journalists are more concerned with the status of their stories amongst potential readers than with the views of proprietors or long-term corporate demands. They may exert relative autonomy in their writing, but they are working within a system which constrains them. The requirements of those who exercise and delegate power still dominate how they make sense of events and facts through words and pictures. Yet, in spite of all these constraints, some journalists and newspapers claim to be independent. This can be the case where editors and journalists are able to exert more control, as in the case of *The Independent*.

We have looked at how some of the technical features and conventions of specific media define their typical styles of presentation. All this may suggest a rather monolithic and manipulative system in which there is little freedom either for producers or consumers of information. What role then do audiences play in the cycle of media communication and how powerful are they?

The survival and success of the media depend ultimately on how effectively they can communicate with their readers and audiences. Newspapers like *The Daily Herald* disappeared because, in the end, they could not hold onto a big enough readership. *The Independent* has succeeded because it found a new and affluent readership. It relies on careful market research and communication with its readership to maintain its position. It was a carefully considered decision to include more comprehensive leisure and arts information than could be found in comparable papers. Its editor, Andreas Whittam Smith, maintains that such material has attracted a young and affluent readership, which is attractive to commercial advertisers. Finding out about readers' interests and needs is a vital method of keeping in touch with them and acts as a powerful influence on the paper's form and content.

If audiences become merely consumers, the danger is that the packages they buy do not give any health warnings about the ideas and values they contain. These values are not always obvious. They are not the result of a conspiracy to deceive for political or financial reasons. Reporting begins and ends with selection. The trouble with the media is that the selection is not arbitrary. It follows predictable patterns, which are based on the habits and interests of particular media. Selection cannot be avoided and is sometimes highly desirable. It is something we need to be wary of, but not cynical about. The media often present facts too neatly, so that the values and judgements they contain are not explicit. In trying to attract and satisfy audiences. simple story-forms have evolved as vehicles for information. This tendency to package information into stories is likely to increase.

Simon Bates' *Our Tune* on Radio 1 is an obvious example of this kind of development. Every weekday, for six or seven minutes, Simon Bates extemporises on a listener's letter. Each week he gets up to eight hundred of them from people willing to expose their personal stories anonymously to ten million listeners. He weaves the fragments of their lives into simple soap operettas. He dramatises a range of problems like alcoholism, bereavement, illegitimacy, homosexuality, chronic illness, drug abuse and death. It is a form of emotional massage which allows the release of sadness, resentment or joy in a pop song of their own choice. It is a form of entertainment packaged as a story for easy consumption. But exclusive concentration on personal experience across the media as a whole can mean that social contexts come to seem irrelevant. Individuals are seen in isolation, disconnected from social, political and economic causes and consequences. The problem is not that such stories are trivial, rather that they are personalised almost to the point of becoming meaningless. The consequence of allowing facts to be detached from their real contexts is that problems can be presented as insoluble and offered instead simply as material for audience consumption.

The 'bias against understanding' which Peter Jay and John Birt complained about in the mid-1970s in relation to television news was allegedly the result of a shallow treatment of issues and the separation of news from current affairs. Much of this has since been remedied by deeper news coverage (especially by ITN for Channel 4) and integration of News and Current Affairs departments (as now at the BBC under John Birt). But the problems of how information is processed, packaged and perceived are not confined to news and are not specific to television. They are common to all the mass media and raise the question of how well-informed British audiences and readers are. Both the quantity of information the media offer and the quality of understanding they promote are at issue. As one researcher has put it:

> *"One of the pre-conditions of effective citizenship ... is that you have access to all the information and the whole range of arguments that you need in order to make rational political decisions ... If you have an information system that is tipped towards entertainment and also tipped towards consumerism ... then you are distorting the information base of the society and you are encouraging people to think of themselves primarily as consumers rather than as citizens."* [Graham Murdock, Centre for Mass Communication Research, speaking on *Understanding the Media* [R4])

This distortion of society's information base offers a threat which is amply recognised by Cox. Media education is seen as a crucial element in providing strategic defences against it by "enlarg(ing) pupils' critical understanding of how messages are generated, conveyed and interpreted in different media" [9.2]. But it is also seen in a more positive and creative way as an aspect of personal and social development, since it deals with "fundamental aspects of language, interpretation and meaning" [9.9]. The notion of 'effective citizenship' put forward by Murdoch involves a high degree of autonomy and is rather different from the Government's own policies. Yet is is the ultimate aim of media education. It is now not only possible but necessary for English teachers (and any allies we can find) to work out what that means in practice.

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REPRESENTATIONS OF BLACK EXPERIENCE IN LITERATURE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Paper given at the Centre for Language in Education, University of Southampton, on 24th May 1988

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In her foreword to an American anthology of black literature for young people entitled LISTEN CHILDREN, Coretta Scott King, widow of Martin Luther King, makes a number of important points about the relationship between literature, culture and people:

> "Literature is a unique resource that articulates and preserves a people's culture. Often it was through literature that my generation grew in our understanding of the past, so that we could gain insights into present events and develop perspectives for the future. Children need and benefit from literary experiences that develop their awareness of themselves as individuals and as part of a cultural family. The literary heritage of a people also benefits those outside that family by developing their appreciation of important differences and similarities of experience. For, although literature can never replace actual human interaction, it can deepen the understanding that comes from sharing in the common struggle for human dignity and freedom."(1)

The theme that literature is not exclusive is again taken up in the introduction by the anthology's editor, Dorothy Strickland:

> "This book is for *all* children. Yes, it is a collection of stories and experiences by black writers addressed to black children who are learning about their heritage. But it is also a collection of writing for all children learning to value themselves. In the process of growing up, understanding yourself comes with reaching out to broaden your understanding of others."(ibid)

Comparing the choice of books in 1988 English GCSE syllabuses for the Southern Examining Group(2a) and the London and East Anglian Examining Group(3), I can't help feeling that this process is not widely understood. The number of works offered by black authors or about black experience seems to suggest rather that a criterion of proportional representation is at work, i.e. the fewer the black students in the local population, the fewer the books offered reflecting black experience. How otherwise can one account for the Southern Group offering only 4 out 121 books by black writers (little over 3%), while London and the East Anglian Group offered 13 out of 96 (13.5%)? When one adds the books by white writers reflecting something of black experience, the comparison still more or less holds – less than 6% of Southern region's books and up to 19% for London. Should we not deduce from the S.E.G. list that some form of cultural apartheid is at work?

A further feature which is thoroughly disturbing is the S.E.G.'s actual treatment in a 1988 specimen paper of Samuel Selvon's A BRIGHTER SUN(2b). Students are asked to comment on people in Trinidad in terms of "the customs of the different races, their attitude to life and work ...". Presumably students are meant to make generalisations on the basis of the behaviour and attributes of characters in the novel. What is this other than an invitation to stereotype? The specimen answer includes statements such as "Indians tend to be private, conservative, industrious, rustic. Negroes tend to be more easy-going and urbanised ...". Serious questions clearly need to be raised about the natureof the lenses through which readers are here being encouraged to view Selvon's text. My focus, however, in this paper will be primarily on the texts themselves.

Coretta King writes about the importance of a literary heritage. Although books may form only a small part of the cultural influences on children, they are, nevertheless, a significant reflection of the current values that adult society thinks appropriate to pass on to its young. Prime evidence of this role was revealed in the national furore over the little book JENNY LIVES WITH ERIC AND MARTIN(4). Now we have Section 28 to help prevent children who live in lesbian or homosexual households having their reality reflected in children's books.

What then is the nature of our children's library heritage here in Britain? A very different one from Coretta King's: with its strong focus on the struggles against slavery, colonialism, injustice and the oppression of black people; with its search for links between black culture in America and roots in Africa. Those of us who are descendants of Europe, on the other hand, are part of the society which initiated and perpetuated that slavery, colonialism, injustice and oppression of black people. I am a very direct example of this, my family having been part of the colonial arm which extended its gold-seeking fingers to the southern-most part of Africa.

A great deal of literature for young people written in the colonial era commonly drew on colonial imagery. Apart from the passing references to 'niggers' which one comes across in authors as august as C. Day Lewis and William Golding, Africa provided a great symbolic arena for imagery of darkness, fear and danger. Was it not the home of 'cannibals', 'primitives' and 'savages' – a testing ground for English courage and ingenuity? The French trenches of the First World War, the gas chambers of World War Two – these never caught the imagination of countless writers for children in the same way as Africa. We might ask ourselves why.

Images of black people, as represented by white writers in colonial times, fall into three main categories. Black people were depicted:

- as savages (e.g. W.E. Johns and Willard Price's ubiquitous 'baddies', usually counterpoised by a 'good black' acting as servant or guide to the white heroes);
- as comic buffoons (Lofting's Prince Bumpo and the King and Queen of Jolliginki);
- as faithful servants/slaves (Defoe's Man Friday, Joel Chandler Harris's original Uncle Remus, Willard Price's 'good blacks').

All three characterisations served a particular function – to dehumanise, to rationalise and justify the oppression of black people to each new generation of young readers. Whether the creators of these images were actually conscious or unconscious of the process is irrelevant. The effect remains the same – that of conveying a set of social perceptions and attitudes to a new generation.

It is interesting what Julius Lester has to say about Uncle Remus and the Brer Rabbit black American folk-tales which Joel Chandler Harris collected so conscientiously in the latter part of the nineteenth century:

> "It is questionable whether the tales would have been so popular if Harris had not created a character named Uncle Remus ... As a character, Uncle Remus represents the 'faithful darkie' who, in Harris's words, 'has nothing but pleasant memories of the discipline of slavery'. He identifies wholly with his white master and mistress, espouses their value system and is derisive of other blacks. There are no inaccuracies in Harris's characterisation of Uncle Remus.

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> Even the most cursory reading of the slave narratives collected by the Federal Writer's Project of the 1930s reveals that there were many slaves who fit the Uncle Remus mould.
>
> Uncle Remus became a stereotype and, therefore, negative – not because of inaccuracies in Harris's characterisation, but because he was used as a symbol of slavery and a retrospective justification for it. This reflected the times in which Uncle Remus tales appeared.(5)

Perhaps the archetypal tale within South African children's literature which offers endless examples of black people depicted in all three modes – savage, buffoon and faithful servant – is JOCK OF THE BUSHVELD by Sir Percy Fitzpatrick(6). Republished by Puffin Books in 1975, almost seventy years after the first publication in 1907, it is described as "a classic among animal stories and today it is as fresh and exciting as when it was first told". It is to be found in many school, public and, I am sure, private libraries. Does the book's dedication not suggest it will be a charming tale?:

> "... it is clear the duty, no less than the privilege, of the Mere Narrator to dedicate THE STORY OF JOCK to Those Keenest and Kindest Critics, Best of Friends and Most Delight of Comrades, THE LIKKLE PEOPLE."(ibid)

The book is largely devoted to the fiercely faithful 'character' of the dog Jock, while most of the black participants are shadowy figures who fetch and carry. The exception is 'Jim', portrayed by Fitzpatrick as Jock's "ally and companion". Indeed, he is the animal's counterpart:

> "His eyes glared like a wild beast's ..."
> "He was simply a great, passionate, fighting savage."(ibid)

To sketch briefly something of the book's background, I quote from a personal essay I wrote to accompany my short story *The Gun*, set in the same bushveld terrain:

> "To understand fully the racist perspective of this 'classic' tale, it is relevant to know that Fitzpatrick was a director of one of the most powerful mining companies that sprang up after the discovery of gold in the Transvaal. Indeed, he played a leading role in encouraging the British government to go to war in South Africa against the white Afrikaners, at the turn of the century. The aim was to ensure that the golden wealth was channelled into British hands.
>
> The raw gold had, of course, first to be channelled out of the earth by black hands. Millions of black men were to be forced, by a system of taxes and passes, to seek work below the earth, in sub-human conditions, as part of this process. Minimum expense, maximum profit. Millions of black families were to be broken. Millions of children were to see their fathers only once a year, at the end of their contracts. Millions of black people were to be arrested for offences under the 'pass' laws which controlled the flow of labour. Fitzpatrick played a direct part in establishing all this, stating that only the 'civilised' were entitled to rights. No wonder the black characters in his book are portrayed as uncivilised and animal-like. No need to be concerned about sending 'savages' into a living hell.(7)

It is in South African children's literature (marketed here, as well as in South Africa) that one can see most clearly the colonial predeliction for the humanisation of animals alongside the brutalisation of people.

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However, the post-war international struggles for colonial freedom, as well as the massive uprising of black people in the United States and the Civil Rights movement in the early 1960s, were the precursors of change. The late sixties saw the emergence of a new generation of children's writers breaking free from the colonial condition.

In the United States, Julius Lester's seminal work TO BE A SLAVE was first published in 1968(8). It was dedicated to his own slave ancestors. Significantly, his first books for children were, in fact, documentations of black history. BLACK FOLK-TALES followed in 1969, dedicated jointly to the great black American folklorist Zora Neale Hurston and to the politican Rap Brown(9). The dedication of LONG JOURNEY HOME in 1972 reads "For those who went before and Alice Walker"(10). Clearly and constantly, Lester was making connections between past and present. In his novel for young people, BASKETBALL GAME(11), the young central character desperately wants to defy the lessons of history passed on to him through parental warnings and to be able to make his own individual choices. The only son of the first black family to move into a white neighbourhood, he wants to respond sanely, rationally, to the white girl next door when she makes her overtures. Unfortunately, those who ignore history do so at their peril.

A writer of extraordinary imagination emerging in the early 1970s was Virginia Hamilton. A book like M.C. HIGGINS, THE GREAT(12), rooted in black people's experience, revealed – I am sure, for the first time in a work of children's literature – a great cultural richness and complexity of relationships tucked away under a slag heap of poverty on a desolate mountain in the Appalachians.

1973 saw the publication of THE FRIENDS – the first of Rosa Guy's wonderful trilogy – dedicated "To those who love, to those who want to love and to Walter"(13). Walter Rodney, radical Guyanese historian and author of HOW EUROPE UNDERDEVELOPED AFRICA(14), was to be murdered seven years later. Such a dedication reveals the seriousness with which an author such as Guy undertook writing for young people and the interweaving of politics and expression. Not for her the disingenuous charades of Fitzpatrick. With THE FRIENDS, EDITH JACKSON(15) and RUBY(16), Rosa Guy gives us access into the back streets of New York and the lives of three young women struggling to make sense of their relationships and environment. We are exposed to the tensions of immigrant life, as Phylissia and her West Indian family come up against hostility from black Americans. Racism not only sustains the hierarchy, but is a cancer, indiscriminate about whose hearts it will ravage. We are exposed to the tension between generations and to the wide gamut of human weakness and failing. But we are also exposed to the tentative yet persistent searchings of young people to make new beginnings and new connections. Years later, Rosa Guy continues to explore these themes – as in her fable MY LOVE, MY LOVE (1985)(17).

In 1976, Mildred Taylor broke new ground with the publication of ROLL OF THUNDER, HEAR MY CRY(18). Awarded the Newbery Medal for 1977, she spoke about her desire to present young readers with strong, positive images of black family life, even in the Depression of the thirties. She wanted to pay tribute to the courage of black people in overcoming hostile circumstances. There was no need for her to invent – her own family history provided her with her source material, as indicated by her dedication:

> "To the memory of my beloved father, who lived many adventures of the boy Stacey and who was in essence the man David."

The title of her sequel, LET THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN, speaks for itself, connecting once again present to past(19). It is only when set against the background of this rich body of black American literature that one can properly place in perspective two books by white Americans in the liberal tradition, both published in 1969, the year after Lester's TO BE A SLAVE. One is Theodore Taylor's THE CAY(20) and the other William Armstrong's SOUNDER(21). Both became best-sellers and the subject of films, yet seem to me to pale against these other works, suffering the limits of an essentially white-dominated perspective – THE CAY more obviously so than SOUNDER. They are, nevertheless, significant books in that they show white authors beginning to address the consequences of white racism. Theodore Taylor dedicated THE CAY:

> "To Dr. King's dream,which can only come true if the very young know and understand."(20)

A young white boy, Phillip, and an elderly black man, Timothy, are thrown together as survivors of a torpedo attack on a ship in the Caribbean of 1942. The boy's social lenses have been shaped by his mother's racist attitudes, but, having been blinded in the attack, he gradually learns to reperceive the black man. However, with his obvious nobility of spirit, Timothy comes too close to the portrayal of the faithful servant – and, indeed, the story ends with a fatal act of self-sacrifice. Writing about the story, based on a real account of a small boy seen drifting off into the darkness on a raft after the sinking of a Dutch ship in 1942, Taylor wrote:

> "I couldn't get it out of my mind. I wondered for ten years what had happened to this boy. I also wondered what might have happened had an adult been with him, a man of the sea, perhaps one with primal instinct.
>
> So the boy became Phillip Enright and the old man was Timothy. I blinded Phillip because I wanted him to live in a colourless world. It was not enough for him to leave the island with survival knowledge. Our country may be threatened with complete civil war over race relations. Only the new generations can straighten out this problem. So I wanted young readers to understand that colour is simply a matter of vision in its basic form."(ibid)

Apart from his questionable suggestion about Timothy's 'primal instincts', by setting the story in a sort of vacuum, Taylor seems to be implying that we can simply start afresh in black-white relations. The notion might be attractive to those white people who would prefer to throw a blanket over areas of history with which they are now uncomfortable. But black American authors have, in constrast, given us access to the past and its connections to the present. How can we begin anew without facing up to what has gone before?

William Armstrong's SOUNDER differs notably from THE CAY in that it is based on black experience, although it is a story filtered, I suspect, through the circumstances of its first telling. The author, who is white, records how he was told the tale by an elderly black school teacher who taught him to read fifty years earlier – at the kitchen table. They grey-haired teacher worked for the author's father after school and in the summer – and had a fount of stories from Aesop, Homer, the Old Testament and history. It was autobiographical and here I think the kitchen table is significant. The tale was one of victimisation of a black father, a family's stoic struggle for survival and a boy's relentless search for his father. It was a tale of gross racism and injustice, being told by a black man to a white child in a kitchen around 1920. Perhaps it is because the experience was so personal and painful to the teller and because anonymity could offer a certain distancing and universality that the central characters are referred to throughout as "the boy", "the mother", "the father". Only the dog, Sounder, has a personal name. It is a matter for speculation whether the same tale might have been told differently by the grey-haired teacher to a black child in 1920. What is more certain is that a black author re-telling the story in 1969 would have wanted to reflect not just features of stoic endurance but those of active resistance.

Moving on to British literature, it appears that developments in the States take a while to ricochet across the Atlantic. Our major breakthrough was in 1976 with the publication of Farrukh Dhondy's EAST END AT YOUR FEET(22), followed by COME TO MECCA in 1978(23). For the first time we were given access to young black characters in an English setting, where one felt that their consciousness had not been filtered through a white perspective. The stories covered a whole range of complex issues confronting young people, one of which was racism.

White writers for children in the mid-1970s were, however, also beginning to consider black experience. Bernard Ashley was one of the first to create a central black character, in 1974, in THE TROUBLE WITH DONOVAN CROFT(24). Donovan, the black child who is temporarily fostered by a white family while his mother returns to Jamaica to a dying parent, remains in a trauma and passive for almost the entire course of the book. The consciousness throughout is that of the white boy of the family who tangentally comes on the receiving end of the racism intended for Donovan. Ashley counters racist remarks within the book – for instance, through the white foster mother. However, the message coming across to young readers could well be simply one of white philanthropy.

In A KIND OF WILD JUSTICE(25), Ashley again was willing to expose rampant white racism, yet there are questions as to where the reader is placed by the author. The central character, Ronnie – who has the reader's sympathy as a victim of circumstance and a vicious gang – refers to Manjit, who shares his special reading lessons, in abusively racist language. At the end of the book, when Ronnie is at the beginning of some sort of reintegration of his social life, it is Manjit and her family who are left forever on the outside. Ashley might choose to argue that he was simply being realistic, but had a writer tackled the theme from a black perspective would we not have ended up with an intense sense of anger rather than resigned pessimism? How does it feel to a young black reader hearing what is going through Ronnie's mind and not to feel that there is any counter to it in the text? Are white and black readers not likely to have very different responses to such books in which black people just remain victims? Was Ashley perhaps only conceiving a white readership? Questions like these reveal how closely literature necessarily links into society. Fragmentation of a society will be reflected in its literature.

Jan Needle is a major white writer who, in 1978, decided to tackle racism head on in MY MATE SHOFIQ(26). The book caused considerable offense to the British Council of Pakistanis, who were appalled at the articulation of anti-Pakistani abuse. Much of it goes uncountered at the time – but, in the course of the novel, Bernard Kershaw, the white working-class boy, learns, as Farrukh Dhondy put it:

> "to unravel the skein of working-class prejudice about 'Pakis' through acquaintance with Shofiq's family and its problems." (CBB, June 1979)(27)

What, however, are readers to make of the racism as it occurs. Presumably, it will be highly offensive to some, while reinforcing the prejudices of others. One class of eleven-year-olds – many of them black – asked their teacher to stop reading. They knew him to be strongly anti-racist and felt sufficiently free to question him. In fact, he was reading the book quite intentionally to elicit their responses. When challenged, his solution was to explain the structure of the novel, summarising the rest of the story and reading extracts. In contrast, I have also heard accounts of the book read in largely white secondary classes where teachers have been dismayed at the level of racism unleashed during the earlier chapters. Would those students really 'unravel the skein' of their *past* responses as the novel progresses or is this expecting an unrealistically high level of sophistication? Some critics have also argued that Shofiq will merely be seen by many white readers as the exception – an individual who has proved himself to be OK on white terms. Nevertheless, I find the final comment of Dhondy's review on the book extremely interesting:

> "Its positive strength is that it doesn't see Asians as victims. Shofiq is probably the first book written for children in Britain which tackles race and refuses to fall into community relations bathos. It will probably be the last such book, because Needle has exhaustively assaulted the homilies. A black writer couldn't have tackled the same subject, nor should a black writer, West Indian or Asian attempt to. It is easier for Needle to enter the eye of that storm or even Bernard Kershaw." (CBB, June 1979)

Dhondy's reaction to Needle's subsequent collection of stories A SENSE OF SHAME(28) very much mirrored my own. I found it worrying that the slices of life, however much they revealed racism, were simply slices of white consciousness. Dhondy put it this way:

> "The stories are not about blacks, about women, about Asians, they are about the reactions – good, bad, piggist, natural, irrational, ironic – of the British white middle and working-class characters to them ... The problem with the form Needle has chosen is that it leaves the 'black' characters cocooned in mystery, whereas the tensions in the whites are explored with intimacy."(29)

There are a number of other white authors who should be mentioned, although I have not the space to be comprehensive. Marjorie Darke, an excellent storyteller, takes us back to some of the historical roots of black experience in Britain in her interconnected novels THE FIRST OF MIDNIGHT(30) and A LONG WAY TO GO(31). She is also noted for her strong female characters. Geraldine Kaye is an established writer who has moved from simply writing tales about children in other cultures to taking on more of a social and political dimension, as in COMFORT HERSELF(32) and A BREATH OF FRESH AIR(33). The latter involves Amy, a young girl in contemporary Bristol, who, by an imaginative device of the author, finds herself back in time, reliving the experiences of a recaptured runaway slave. Amy's father is black, her mother is white – and she is concerned with making connections between past and present. To understand her personal history she has to understand her society's history. The book raises interesting questions about a writer's access to the language and experience of other cultures. How does a writer from one cultural background get the language of others to sound right? It is certainly not impossible, but my feeling is that Kaye is at her weakest when recreating the black slaves.

Rhodri Jones has now written a number of books in which he attempts not only to address issues of racism but to have some of his characters speaking in Creole. I find, however, a certain narrow artifice in his character creation, which shows up clearly against a novel like BAD FRIDAY by the young black Birmingham writer Norman Smith(34). Smith's characters are full of the complexities of real human beings, their dialogue presenting a genuine challenge to readers not familiar with Creole. Similarly, the limits of Jones' characterisation can be compared with the vibrancy of black writer Millie Murray's slice-of-life renderings in her teenage novel KIESHA(35).

A black writer whose contribution should be mentioned is Rukshana Smith. SUMITRA'S STORY(36), in 1982, opened up the dilemma of a young Asian girl from Uganda, trying to carve out her own identity while caught between the traditional values of her parents and the often hostile new society. A year later Rukshana Smith attempted to enter the consciousness of a young girl artist of Jamaican parentage in RAINBOWS OF THE GUTTER(37), a novel directly concerned with the responses of young black people to racism in Britain. Her theme is powerful, but, written in the first person, the authenticity of her central character's language is at times problematic. She continues her focus on racism in SALT ON THE SNOW(38) – and there are other writers also with this concern. However, I feel we are still waiting for a British novel of equivalent stature to ROLL OF THUNDER, HEAR MY CRY.

A field in which black writers are making an increasing contribution to children's literature is poetry. Poets such as John Agard, Grace Nichols and James Berry are able to draw richly on childhood experiences in Caribbean cultures, although, as James Berry writes in an introduction to his poetry in WHEN I DANCE:

> "The poems reflect two cultures in texture of experience and voice. Sometimes the content is distinctly British, other times Caribbean – then, also, other times the experiences merge."(39)

Poetry has been an extremely important medium for the expression of black experience and one being used by young people themselves. From often very small beginnings in community presses, some of this poetry is at last beginning to find an outlet through main stream publishing. Black and community bookshops-cum-publishers – such as New Beacon Books, the Walter Rodney Bookshop (Bogle L'Ouverture Publications) and Centreprise in London – have been central to this development.

In putting together my anthology FREE AS I KNOW(40), one of my primary concerns was to give access to voices frequently ignored. My focus was on young people developing their own consciousness both of their societies and themselves. I deliberately sought to include little-known work by young writers. The book's title came from a line in a poem by Accabre Huntley, published when she was ten in her first collection AT SCHOOL TODAY:

I am black as I thought
My lids are as brown as I thought
My hair is curled as I thought
I am free as I know(41)

The poem mirrors an assured self-reflection, the complete antithesis of colonial caricature. In my own writing for young people, much of it located in South Africa, I am very conscious that I am a white writer attempting to convey something of black experience. I became involved in writing because of the extensive misrepresentation of apartheid in British children's books, as well as the stunted nature of children's literature in a South Africa dominated by racism, censorship and a white-oriented market. In CENSORING REALITY(42), I focussed on the portrayal of South Africa in non-fiction. However, it was my membership of an education group attached to the British Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa that launched me into writing fiction and JOURNEY TO JO'BURG(43). We felt an urgent need for literature which would be directly accessible to children and which would speak to their hearts. I volunteered to write a story. As a child, I had simply accepted the lenses most white adults passed on to me, distorting my vision of the reality all around. Racism segregates our lives, our experiences, our perceptions, our vision. Now I remain fuelled by anger at the distortion and am determined to use my imagination at least to challenge that segregation. I am conscious of using writing to explore what it means to be oppressed and to resist the oppression. It is a journey of exploration on which I want to take my young readers. We await, however, a body of children's literature written with the insider's eye, from the pens of black South Africans themselves. They are emerging – such as Es'kia Mphahlele's rich tale FATHER COME HOME(44) – but are difficult to get hold of in Britain. What we have to be wary of is the import of white angst for teenagers and "a rash of cute tales about little black boys"(45) for younger readers by white writers still locked into their sick society.

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PUTTING 'LANGUAGE' BACK IN THE MODERN LANGUAGES DEGREE

Clare Mar-Molinero and Patrick Stevenson

Introduction

The revolution and innovation of the past decade that have taken place in modern languages teaching of the 11–16 age group and which have resulted in thorough re-examination of the of the A-level syllabuses are only slowly making an impression on teaching methods and syllabus design in the university sector. In the polytechnic sector, significant changes and new courses have been introduced, which both build on the experience students will have had at school and respond more closely to their vocational expectations. The universities, however, have in the main been slow to change their traditional language programmes.

The authors of this paper share the conviction that the typical translation/prose-based programme plus unstructured conversation classes constitutes inappropriate methodology for foreign language teaching and has limited objectives. We recognise the constraints in the system that have produced and maintained this situation: non-language specialists being required to teach language classes; the courses then becoming entirely examination-led; these examinations reflecting a very limited view of language competence as the ability to translate difficult literary texts; the language courses being artificially isolated from other components of the degree course; and the stagnant job-market not allowing for any major change of staff to permit the introduction of new ideas and specialisms. However, despite these constraints, we have initiated moves to re-examine the language syllabuses at the university where we work, with the principal aims of improving the language teaching methodology, and of establishing clear aims and objectives for the language courses, which will both build realistically on students' previous experiences and plug gaps that will remain, and will also relate the language learning to other components of the courses and to future professional use of the language(1). The generalisations stated below about the type of student and type of existing course relate specifically to Southampton, but we are certain that this is not an unfamiliar picture in many other universities and that fundamental changes in language teaching in modern languages degrees are needed in many sister institutions. It is with this belief that we offer some preliminary suggestions and analysis, with the hope that colleagues with relevant experience will be interested in joining the discussion.

The Student

The modern languages student coming up to university with two languages studied at A-level (often together with English), having studied Latin at least to O-level, was a very different student to that which we find today. The student had a well-learnt grounding in basic traditional grammar in all the languages studied, had been well-trained in translation work, had read a good sample of significant literary texts in the target language and was (more or less) competent in writing short formal essays in the language on reasonably abstract subjects. Quite often the student had been fortunate enough to take part in an exchange visit to at least one of the countries whose language they were studying. But, on the whole, the oral competence of the students was not the most accomplished of their skills, reflecting the individual's experience and opportunities rather than general classroom practice.

We now observe a very different student, with many of the characteristics described above no longer applying. It is particularly evident that students do not any more start their university courses with a sound grasp of grammatical concepts and terminology (see Bloor 1986 a, b, c; Mar-Molinero 1987)(2). Many of the new A-level syllabuses allow the student the option of not studying any literary texts, concentrating instead on the history and politics of the relevant country. Whilst translation and essay-writing do still feature to some extent in the A-level examinations, they have been reduced considerably in the new GCSE syllabuses (and at some levels removed completely). The total commitment to communicative language teaching methodology which underlies the GCSE courses may well result in further changes in the A-level syllabuses. It certainly produces a very different type of language student: one who, on the whole, will be more competent in comprehension skills, more ready to try to communicate, less inhibited by the fear of inaccuracies, but also less practised in producing the written language. The emphasis on the functions of particular authentic – usually fairly informal – situations will equip the student with a very different range of vocabulary and idioms.

Apart from the shift in emphasis in the linguistic preparation of the modern language student, universities will have to cater also for those who are less well-equipped if they are to accept those students with only AS-level passes. This is just one example of the broadening experiences that university undergraduates will increasingly bring to a first year course. Access students and students from other countries in the European Community are further examples of students with varying backgrounds all expecting to study together.

We can expect too that the modern languages student, in common with all university students, has become far more demanding in terms of the perceived 'usefulness' of the degree's content. The extent to which the syllabus should respond to this attitude is controversial; the reality, however, is that market forces make some response necessary.

The Traditional Language Programme

Language teaching in universities suffers from the circular problem that the majority of those teaching it are not specialists and see these classes as only a necessary duty. Their methods and objectives tend, therefore, to reflect their own experiences as language learners at university. At its worst this produces an endless diet of literary translations and proses, although this may admittedly lead to a high degree of proficiency in dealing with such material. Essay writing in the foreign language is often considered an important intellectual activity for language students, but very little real linguistic preparation for this very difficult exercise is normally provided. The oral/aural practice of the foreign language is left largely to the native-speaking language assistants, who may or may not have any experience or skills as language teachers. The advent of language laboratories, videos and, recently, satellite TV has been a useful addition in this area, but too often these are under-used or used in an unguided way by lecturers and students alike.

It is notable that a recent programme to recruit new young academics, launched by the UFC in 1989, has allowed a significant number of modern languages departments to advertise for language specialists, and it will be very interesting to see (a) whether these specialists exist and (b) in what way this is changing the traditional language programmes.

Southampton has not been able to make such appointments to date and has had to count on the interests and limited expertise already available within its School of Modern Languages to re-examine and to re-design its language programmes. Most colleagues do accept a general need to change and to up-date language teaching methods. The proposals outlined below have been accepted in principle. The practical implementation, however, is only beginning and the risk must always exist that any changes will be merely cosmetic. It may prove difficult to persuade over-stretched colleagues to invest the necessary work for fundamental changes in methodology and objectives. In particular, the scarcity of appropriate materials is a problem and even the excellent broadcast material now available requires many hours of editing in order to produce useful classroom activities.

The Overall Aims and Objectives of the Language Component of the ML Degree

In Southampton's School of Modern Languages, three main languages are offered at single or combined honours level: French, German and Spanish. Portuguese is also available to honours level. German, Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch can all be taken as *ab initio* courses, which can be continued as part of an honours programme. This latter category of language provision has already benefitted greatly from the adoption of modern FL and EFL teaching methods and materials. It is in the area of the post-A-level courses that a thorough re-examination has been taking place.

Most single or combined honours language degrees at Southampton consist of four years study. The third year is spent in a country where one of languages studied is spoken. During this period abroad, the School of Modern Languages normally requires students to produce a 10,000-word dissertation in one of the languages they study. The majority of the language courses in each of the three remaining years are examined by course work and end of course examinations. In the language component, only the final year course work and examinations count towards the final degree mark.

With one or two exceptions, the pattern of language courses has, until recently, been very close to the traditional type described above, with a predominant emphasis on translation and the written language. Increasing use has been made of the language laboratory and videos, although largely by the language assistants. For some years the final year Spanish department students have been taught introductory interpreting skills. The examinations also largely reflect a fairly conventional approach, focusing mainly on translations, proses and essay writing. Dissatisfaction with this model has been felt by some staff for a while and ad hoc improvements have been experimented with. The outline syllabuses which we have recently drawn up and have had approved build on what we see as existing good practices, as well as making recommendations for innovations. Above all, there is a desire to give coherence across the School in all the language provision, wherever possible by agreeing common goals and common methodology.

To this end, a list of the overall objectives which the student should attain by the end of the degree course in the four main linguistic skills was agreed. It is accepted that teaching these skills in discrete categories is impossible and undesirable – but that, for the purposes of the overall goals, this is useful. These goals are:

ORAL SKILLS

— Near-native pronunciation and intonation.

— Fluency in the use of the colloquial language.

- Appropriateness and adequacy in formal and informal language of a public and private nature.

AURAL SKILLS

- Near-native command in informal (private and public) situations.
- High competence in formal situations.
- Ability to recognise and use the different strategies needed for different types of listening.

WRITING SKILLS

- Total competence in standard grammar.
- Awareness of appropriate registers.
- Ability to produce a range of written texts from the informal letter, to job application, to book review and even academic paper.

READING SKILLS

- Ability to read for information retrieval and/or summary with near-native speed.
- Ability to identify all different text types.
- Competence in dictionary skills.
- Confidence to read for pleasure.

The balance of the four language skills and of emphasis on informal or formal language will necessarily vary from year to year of the course. But the three taught years should be organised hierarchically to arrive at these overall goals. It was also felt that during the students' degree course there should be some general and language-specific introduction to language study skills and general language awareness. It was also hoped to introduce specialised language courses that could be taken as degree options in the second and final years on top of the basic compulsory language course.

With the agreement on the overall goals, syllabuses for the three taught courses have been drawn up. A separate language study skills course has been designed to complement the language work in the first year, whilst language awareness components are recommended as part of the final year language course in each specific language. Staffing limitations have meant that language options are so far only few, but the principle at least is accepted.

The following three course syllabuses are at different stages of implementation, but do now broadly form a common goal. Each one assumes three hours contact per week for the student, one of which will normally be with the language assistant.

The First Year Language Syllabus

As first year students have followed a variety of different A-level syllabuses, some with more emphasis on language than others, the main aim should be to make sure that by the end of the year all are familiar with the most important features of the contemporary foreign language and can understand and use it with reasonable confidence. More specifically, they should by then be able to:

- read a longish text (e.g. from a 'serious' newspaper) without translating as they go along and without looking up all unknown words;
- understand the FL spoken (at least in certain contexts) at natural speed;

— write texts in the FL that are reasonably clear, accurate and authentic-sounding;
— speak the FL fairly fluently in informal situations.

Throughout the first term, in addition to classes in the respective languages, all first year language students will have a series of *Language Study Skills* lectures. The object of these lectures is to help them develop the essential skills that are needed to study *any* language. Topics include: grammatical terms and sentence analysis, vocabulary building, using dictionaries, composition, summary writing, punctuation and using language learning technology (language lab, computer, video, etc.).

The Second Year Language Syllabus

The principal aim of the second year language course should be to prepare students linguistically for the year abroad. The language course should include materials which act as background information about the countries where the students will be living, as well as the situations they will find themselves in when abroad.

In the receptive skills of listening and reading, the objective should be to give the students as wide a range as possible of language situations, registers and varieties.

In the case of the spoken language, students need to be presented with and made aware of the wide variety of different accents and dialects – both geographical and social – that they might encounter. It will be necessary to build up and maintain as much recorded material on audio and video cassette as possible. Students will need to concentrate on day-to-day routine situations, but exposure to formal speech, such as lectures (which might be given by the language assistants), will also be important.

Reading material will need to include a wide range of materials of a very immediate and practical nature, such as banking forms, menus, newspapers of all sorts, accommodation contracts and university prospectuses. The aim should be, therefore, to cover many written registers in order to familiarise students with what they are likely to encounter. At the same time, it is essential to be aware of the problems and characteristics of more formal written language which the students will be encountering in other parts of their degree course (literary texts, historical texts, criticism, etc.).

The productive skills can be developed focusing not only on everyday use for when the students are abroad, but also on preparation for writing the dissertation.

In oral classes students should be encouraged not only to practise fluent informal language use, but also to prepare for more formal situations, such as conducting interviews or giving mini-classes. Simulation exercises, including interviews, should be developed for this, with the video camera and tape recorder being used.

Written work will need to range from the very practical, such as letter-writing and filling in forms, to the skills needed for academic writing.

The Fourth Year Language Syllabus

The final year language course tends to be the course which is most strongly led by assessment requirements. To some extent these requirements must reflect national standards and patterns and, therefore, radical changes need to be phased in with wide consensus.

The overall aim of the course is to bring together the threads of the past three years' language study and to provide the student with a high standard of linguistic competence across a wide range of language activities. This will involve both reinforcing the level attained from residence abroad and further stretching the students. It is important to realise the need to be flexible and adaptable to the experience the students bring to the final year. Whilst all four basic language skills should be covered equally, listening comprehension, in particular, may well be found to be stronger if the group consists largely of students who have spent the majority of their third year in the country of the target language. The course should include the following components to at least some extent:

- — Translation work (both ways), which should contain translation critique, as well as allow the opportunity for regular grammar review.
- — A language awareness component, which would to some extent overlap with translation critique, teaching students to analyse the linguistic components of a text, including syntactic and semantic characteristics and, particularly, register awareness. This would also allow for some introductory work on language for specific purposes, with examples of such registers as legal language, business language, medical language, media language, etc. being covered.
- — Listening comprehension work, which would range from the formal lectures given by native speakers to extensive use of audio, video and satellite material. Much of this work could be followed by the student in well-planned self-directed study.
- — Introduction to interpreting.
- — Written and oral productive skills would, of course, be covered in some or all of the above components, but should also include a certain amount of short essay writing on carefully guided topics or oral presentations on formal topics.

An emphasis on translation skills would remain, but would shift from being that of preparing students for a prose or unseen in the final exams to that of preparation, in part, for the Institute of Linguists' new Diploma in Translation, thus satisfying student demands for more vocationally-focused language learning. This will be further helped by language awareness work and discussion of specialised registers.

Conclusion

It is really too early to know how radical a change in language teaching habits all staff will be able and prepared to make. The implementation of these proposals is still, therefore, patchy. Clearly the success of any change cannot easily be assessed at such a preliminary stage. Success, in fact, may be judged at present as much in terms of persuading colleagues of the need for change and of the types of changes rather than whether Southampton's School of Modern Languages is over-subscribed and is producing competent well-trained linguists after four years of study. The infrastructure in terms of language resources and technology has certainly improved and many more staff are willing to learn to use these. More importantly, perhaps, the students too are far keener now to spend time in the university's Language Resources Centre. Even amongst the students though there can be mistrust of non-traditional communicative language teaching methods. Many lament the lack of translation work, particularly in the first year. This, in part, reflects the transition we are experiencing before the genuine GCSE-taught students arrive. It remains essential to explain to students and staff alike the rationale behind the teaching methods, as well as the goals being aimed at during each stage. It also remains essential to convince colleagues that, as posts do become available, language specialists are as important to a department's profile as any other expert when priorities are being discussed.

Notes

1. The proposals described in this paper were formulated after lengthy discussion by the School of Modern Languages' Language Teaching Forum. We are grateful to our co-members of this Forum, Drs. Rodney Ball, John Crosbie and Mike Rogers, for their ideas and suggestions.
2. It is not the purpose of this paper to discuss the reasons for the change of emphasis from grammar-based teaching nor the often heated arguments over whether grammar should be taught and how it might be taught. These discussions have been widely aired in the literature and in public debate in recent years, and the recent preparations for the introduction of the National Curriculum in Britain have brought these to the fore once more. They are issues, however, of which all language teachers must clearly be aware.

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TELEVISION IS BEAUTIFUL

Peter Moran

Television continues to get a bad press. Its harmful effects on the impressionable young, with aggression and violence constantly referred to as the harmful end results of television viewing, are frequently paraded before the reader in the popular daily newspapers. The case is argued very persuasively and strikes a sympathetic ear with many people. However, as I have discovered for myself, the picture is not as black as it is painted. In the course of conducting some research into children's ideas of beauty, I found that television can provide them with quite profound experiences of the beautiful.

Let me explain. My research was intended to investigate children's ideas of beauty. I wanted to find out what children of different ages considered to be beautiful and to see if there was any pattern or sense of development in their ideas. To this end, I questioned one thousand five hundred children between six and sixteen years, living in six counties of Southern England, all attending state schools and residing in rural, urban, coastal and inner city areas. It is not my intention to deal with the results of this investigation here. That will be the subject of another and more substantial article. However, it quickly became apparent during the collection of children's responses that television was a medium or catalyst in their perception of beauty and this is what I think is worth reporting on here. I must stress that I was not looking for television's influence on children's ideas of beauty when I embarked on the research; rather, the role of television in these matters was mentioned by some of the children when questioned.

It became obvious during the investigation that television provided some of the children with memorable experiences, which they responded to and recalled as being beautiful. Carol, aged seven, thought that the most beautiful thing she had ever seen was:

> "the London Symphony playing 'Meditation'. I was sitting in front of the telly waiting for it to start. When it did, it was so lovely I got Mum to buy me the 'Wonderful World of Violin', because it was on that record. I think it is the nicest piece of music, because it was so quiet and sweet. The lead violinist was unbelievable. They also played 'Devil's Laughter' by Paganini, which is so fast you would think they would speed it up with special effects. I also got that too."

Children of all ages in the sample provided examples of beautiful experiences provided by television. I will give some examples from different age groups. Samuel, aged eight, said:

> "The beautifullest thing I have seen is a volcano on TV, because of its beautiful colours, the lovely orange, yellow and red colour and the big explosion."

Nine-year-old Stephen chose:

> "The Palace in India, because, when I saw it on television, it was colourful, very interesting, very artistic."

Another Stephen said:

> "The most beautiful thing I've ever seen was a TV programme called Holiday '88. They were out on a boat and were looking at the coral and the yellow and black striped fish."

Eleven-year-old Joanne chose a very popular topic, which enthralled children of every age – birth:

> "On television I saw the actual birth of a baby boy. I thought it was a beautiful sight, the sight of new life being born. When I saw it, I was very happy."

Other children described similar scenes from television of the birth of babies and foals. For example, sixteen-year-old Sue said:

> "On television once I saw a mare giving birth to a foal. As the foal tried to stand up, it wavered, unsteady and the mother gently supported it with her nose. She licked it clean and the picture of her exploring her new-born infant was beautiful."

Similarly, a fifteen-year-old girl said:

> "The most beautiful thing I've ever seen was a television programme where they showed a baby being born and after it did the joy on the mother's face and the relief that the baby was healthy. It showed it all on the mother's face."

Travel programmes provided other children with lasting impressions. Denise, aged twelve, chose:

> "... a programme on Mexico. I liked the clothing they wear. The women wear long dresses. They have got all sorts of patterns on them. The men usually wear black trousers with a few studs down the side."

A fourteen-year-old boy said the most beautiful thing he had ever seen was:

> "On TV I saw the earth from outer space with the stars round it."

This is just a small selection from the many examples of descriptions of events which children consider to be beautiful and which are provided by television viewing. Other television-inspired choices included customised cars and vans:

> "The thing what I saw on telly. It is an old Dodge van that a man painted and he put pictures on it. He put two armchairs in it." (Stephen, aged eight)

Stage settings:

> "The most beautiful thing I have ever seen is Michael Jackson's stage setting on television, because everything was dark except for the stage, with different kinds of coloured lights changing all the time – and, when they came out, there was a spotlight for each person." (Nicholas, aged fourteen)

Ballet:

> "The most beautiful thing is the ballet on telly, its title is Coppelia ... I've got the record of it. I think it is beautiful. Soon I am going to see it in London." (Jane, aged nine)

Gymnasts:

> "The most beautiful thing I ever saw is when we saw the girls do gymnastics. I watch them on television on a Saturday. The way they bend, they bend so easily. They're so light on their feet. Their feet they're always pointed." (Michelle, aged ten)

All these examples came quite spontaneously from the children and they all result from watching television. It can be seen that television viewing provides opportunities for aesthetic responding. From the few examples which I have quoted, children can be seen responding to beauty in form (gymnasts), colour (volcano) and rhythm (orchestra). These are the qualities which have traditionally made up, as Rothenstein writes, "the syntax and grammar of art". Television also extends the range of visual experiences for children, so that, although they cannot visit India or Australia, they can appreciate the beauty of the Taj Mahal or the coral reef or other natural phenomena like the volcano. The objects, events and situations of beauty which they choose are often described with a sense of wonder, grandeur and pure enjoyment. This is exemplified in the accounts of birth seen on television. This is an event which makes an obvious impact upon the children. There is an emotional involvement apparent which ensures that this experience, like so many others, is individual and memorable. Moreover, it is like all aesthetic responses; it is enjoyed for its own sake. As Shakespeare wrote in 'The Rape of Lucretia':

"Beauty itself does of itself persuade
The eyes of men without an orator".

I have attempted in this article to place before the reader some examples of children's perceptions of beauty deriving from objects, events and situations seen by them on television. I have suggested that in this way television provides children with a greater variety of opportunities for responding aesthetically than might otherwise be possible in their lives. In a small way the evidence presented here may be thought to counterbalance some of the claims made about the negative effects of television viewing.

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APPROPRIATE HELP FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Virginia Kelly

CONTEXT

The Learning Disabilities Clinic is based in the Southampton University School of Education and run in conjunction with Southampton's special educational services department. Students come from local secondary schools, referred by the Schools Psychological Service for help with specific learning difficulties.

There are currently fifteen students, aged between twelve and seventeen. Typically, students come for two one-hour individual lessons a week, and the two LDC teachers work closely with Southampton's Reading Advisory teachers and school staff. Teaching is done at the School of Education, but LDC teachers make frequent consultative visits to the students' schools.

Most students are still having severe reading difficulty at the time of referral and their spelling ranges from the creative to the chaotic. All lack confidence for literacy-based tasks and many are distressed about their inability to cope with school.

In the lifetime of the LDC, there have been five teachers, as well as our original director. All have contributed to the LDC's philosophy and techniques. And, of course, we draw on a wide community of researchers and practitioners, to whom we are grateful.

WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT?

Help is given in five inter-related areas:

- Reading
- Spelling
- Development of oral skills
- Support for work in school subjects
- Counselling in managing the literacy handicap

These elements must be blended together for clients whose ages, backgrounds, strengths, weak points and aspirations vary widely. We must try to make our work effective on an average of two hours a week of individual teaching time, plus a bit of extra time for contact with school staff. There is no 'programme' into which everyone can be slotted which will do this job! Instead, a way of working and a range of resources are combined in an effort to remediate weak spelling and reading skills and, at the same time, to help our students work as nearly as possible on a par with the rest of their school group.

Key elements in the LDC's approach are:

- a teaching technique known as 'scaffolding';
- focus on curriculum, with the other strands twined around this wherever possible;
- training the student to use existing skills efficiently;
- use of supporting devices, such as tape recorders or microcomputers, to facilitate curricular access;
- a structured approach to spelling;
- co-ordination of other sources of possible support, such as school and parents.

The essence of our work is that these elements are strongly woven together, with the student being encouraged to take an active part in defining which are most useful to him. In this way, students not only improve individual literacy skills, they also practise a way of working which will gradually lead to independence. The LDC teacher must pick from a wide knowledge of possible resources and help each student organise this selection into an individual support pattern.

To give some insight into how this works, each of the key elements will be discussed in turn.

SCAFFOLDING

Scaffolding is a partnership approach to teaching, in which teacher and learner undertake a task together several times and in several situations (Wood et al, 1976; Greenfield, 1984; Moore, 1988). From the beginning, the whole of a real task is done together. At first the teacher does most of the planning and executes the more difficult parts of the operation, with the learner helping. As they go along, the teacher explains not only *what* they are doing, but also *why*. In the course of several examples, the elements of the activity are revealed by the discussion. Explanation includes making explicit the possible choices there are and why a particular course of action is chosen rather than some other. The learner practises by gradually taking over more and more of the task, helped as necessary by comments from the teacher which emphasize reasoning wherever possible.

The first important idea is that the behaviour of the teacher is modelled not only at the level of what the learner can see, but by revealing the thinking behind it. The second is that, as the learner gains knowledge and confidence, the amount of 'scaffold' or support is reduced to match his new expertise. But, because of the partnership, the task is always completed successfully.

The scaffolding idea is useful across almost all our teaching, but particularly for complex tasks such as reading and writing of extended pieces. The learner is gradually invited to take over the role of 'teacher' and lead the discussion of choices and reasons for decision. The process is one of continual refinement of reasoning through use and increasing independence for the learner.

FOCUS ON THE CURRICULUM

By uniting scaffolding support with a focus on the student's curriculum problems, we encourage active involvement by the student and hence carry-over from work at the LDC into school. In general, our students arrive hating the fact that they still need extra help with reading and spelling. They want to get on with their subjects 'like everybody else'. If we can show them that the work they do at the LDC is designed to help them accomplish the subject-teachers' tasks rather than to give them 'extra English', we become allies in a common struggle. This approach also facilitates links between the LDC and school staff, establishing a common ground of subject work in which we both wish to help the student succeed*.

Students are asked to reflect, with their LDC teacher's help, on just what their classroom problems are. This taps a valuable source of expertise about the problems and also explicitly involves the student in seeking solutions. A list of commonly used types of support is available for use with schools and students (see Appendix 1).

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*For a few students this approach is inappropriate; their distress in school is too great to allow fruitful work to be done on anything connected with school. For these students some other 'way in' must be found; often it is in learning to use the computer. Later we will move back towards school.

There are several broad categories of help:

- Help with mastering vocabulary (meanings, reading and writing)
- Help with completing work by by-passing weak reading and/or writing skills
- Training in using aids (word processing, tape recorders and scribes), which the student can later use in school
- Training in study skills

It is usually the help in completing work which looms largest in the student's list of needs. Six or eight subjects are all covering new ground; they are also introducing new techniques of work sheets, text reading, note taking, summarising and writing up. Our students desperately need help in coping efficiently. Otherwise, in a losing battle to keep up with reading and written work, the meaning of what they are doing at school is largely lost and they fall further behind.

We try not to duplicate what is being taught in school, but to help the student learn to take advantage of what the school lessons offer. There are two differing ways to do this, which are complementary in practice. The first is to help students use the skills they have more efficiently and the second is to by-pass a weakness, at least temporarily, to allow the student to get on with the rest of his learning.

USING SKILLS EFFICIENTLY

Students practising the higher skills of finding the main points of text, note taking and summarising before they have solved the problems of decoding may seem illogical. For our students who are still having decoding problems at twelve or over, it is a strategy to recommend. These students will probably always have some difficulty with decoding. What they need are *efficiency* aids, which will allow them to put their limited (inaccurate, subject to getting stuck, or very slow) decoding skills to the best possible use.

The logic of this comes from two directions. Getting an overall view of the text or the task will give context, in which individual words are more meaningful and usually more easily read. And looking from the other end, if reading and note taking are difficult, material needs to be efficiently processed the first time through. These students cannot afford to read casually, make lengthy notes and reorganise them later. Finding main points and sub-headings must be done as they go.

Efficiency – getting the most back for the work you put in – appeals to our students, most of whom feel overburdened with work! The word has more appeal than 'study skills' and covers conventional study skills in their broadest sense. Techniques for analysing and organising work, such as scanning and essay planning, are taught within a framework that makes it clear when to use them. The idea is always to stress the aim, as well as the technique, to help the student learn how to approach large tasks in structured ways and to teach explicitly how to put limited decoding skills to the best possible use.

An illustration is what we call our 'Psyche it out' approach. This can be applied to most reading tasks, including worksheets, and involves finding out as much as *possible before* reading any words, then looking for key words, main headings and topic sentences. Layout, variations in typeface, boxes, numbering, illustrations and punctuation all provide clues to analysing the sheet and the tasks it is setting.

LEARNING DISABILITIES CLINIC,
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, SOUTHAMPTON UNIVERSITY

SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS

N.B. This list is not intended to be exclusive, but to suggest ideas.
Additional suggestions are most welcome.

Vocabulary Consolidation

- Reading and spelling key words
- Refining meanings
- Lists for revision

Projects/Course Work

- Planning longer work
- Organisation
- Study skills
- Tape recording source material
- Scribing

Practising Techniques

- Laying out work correctly
- Writing up experiments
- Producing and labelling diagrams
- Planning written (dictated) answers
- Using a tape recorder for notes
- Dictating longer answers
- Others (as required)

Tape Recording

- Notes (for revision)
- Summaries
- Dictations
- Worksheets
- Booklets, key chapters, etc. (for use in class or for homework)
- Test papers (to use with a Walkman)

Scribing for Dictation

- Essays
- Homework
- Answers to worksheet questions
- Sections of project work

Students practise with the LDC teacher on work assigned from school. Reading help is given as needed, to enable the student to follow through to the end of the worksheet, and all the ways the cues can be used are made explicit. After several examples, the students each draw up their own 'Attack Plan' and are encouraged to use it, to explain how it works on specific examples and to modify it with experience. Appendix 2 is a sophisticated example for worksheets from an able third year student.

There are a number of good guides to study skills now on the market which offer advice on reading styles for different tasks, note making, time management and organisation, and tasks from school provide constant material for practise. The teacher needs to help the student see not only how but when to apply these techniques and how to break apparently amorphous, global tasks, such as 'read this for homework', into manageable sections which they know how to approach.

The types of text analysis and reconstruction suggested by Lunzer and Gardner in their *Learning from the Written Word* (1984) are extremely useful in helping students learn about reading for information. Passages are chosen to relate to school topics and are not simplified. The text is sent home with a tape beforehand or read together. The LDC teacher must initially be the discussion partner which the work requires to ensure the reasoning emerges explicitly, but this fits easily with our emphasis on students practising the role of teacher.

Activities for this work include labelling parts of the text, reassembling segmented text and re-presenting the context as notes, tables or diagrams. Many of our students find the emphasis on visual presentation – for instance, as flow diagrams – a great aid to understanding. Activities can be shared by students who do not meet by asking one to analyse a text and provide a task – such as finishing a table of the stages in a process – for another. They look forward to marking the finished work and the criticisms of the way the task was set that usually come with it are often enlightening!

The experience and explicit discussion of the common patterns behind different types of writing which arises from this work is helpful next time the student must read for himself. It also provides an explicit model for their own writing.

For writing tasks, planning techniques, diagrams and paradigm answers, all offer preparatory support where the production of words will be laborious. Joint work with the teacher on real activities from school is used to help the student realise how structured approaches work and that they really do promote efficiency. Training in judging the appropriate style and length for written assignments is a vital aspect.

USING SUPPORTING DEVICES

Besides helping students use their own skills efficiently, direct help with reading or writing is necessary where this will allow the student access to a more complex task which depends on it. The most common aids we use are tape recorders, teaching the student to dictate to a scribe and a microcomputer; other useful strategies include photo-enlarging, preparation of text (e.g. by selective highlighting) and duplicated notes.

I have mentioned already the constant struggle for many to keep up with work in subjects. But our view must be more long-term than just finishing particular pieces of work; we wish to provide help which moves the student towards independence and, ideally, improves his literacy skills as well. An extension of the idea of scaffolding works here. Strategies such as using tape recorders and dictating to a scribe can be looked at as part of the temporary scaffold of support the teacher erects to help the learner. Within this framework, such aids can be seen as tools, to be used in a planning progression towards independence, rather than as 'giving in' or 'opting out'.

To make this idea work, we find it critical to remember to be consistently explicit with the student. As much as possible of the task must be turned over to him and both teacher and student must be clear about where and what the support is. This in turn helps student and teacher define the next step in the progression towards independence as the learner's skill increases. Work submitted to school is always annotated to show the support which has been given.

In the best case, use of a support device leads to access to work, which in turn feeds back into improved literacy. For example, in school, a teacher may have planned to extend and consolidate concepts and vocabulary by assigning a background article to read for homework and then conducting a class discussion. Our student would find the text very difficult to read, but, given a tape recording and a copy of the text the night before, he could become familiar with the reading, perhaps highlight the important points and be ready to join in the discussion. What he learns from the discussion will, in turn, support the student next time he tries to read material on the topic and, eventually, the taped support may become redundant.

Similarly, handwriting and spelling are only two of many skills involved in producing an essay; planning, composing and revising the content and phraseology can all be practised by a very poor speller if he is given the use of a competent scribe. When work is scribed on a word processor, students gain from watching the developing text and can often revise work themselves. Monitoring of LDC students using this type of support indicates that gains in vocabulary use, reading fluency and composition skills often release sufficient time and instill sufficient confidence for the student gradually to undertake the original writing.

Tape recorders, especially small ones with ear-phones, have many applications. Many students find it useful to record notes or classroom dictations; these may be kept on tape or transcribed later. Students who can copy accurately but cannot read back their own writing may have their notebooks and lists of key words read onto tape for revision. Taped exam papers used with a personal stereo can be a life saver for readers who otherwise get stuck. For really poor writers, many teachers will accept at least occasional tape recorded essays.

Dictating, whether to a tape recorder or to a scribe, is a specialised technique and requires training for the student. So does using a tape effectively in conjunction with a printed text – providing this training, during LDC lessons, helps to minimise any potential disruption to school classrooms when the student begins to use a tape recorder there. The use of tape or scribe will make the student 'different' and could require adjustments to classroom routine and the teacher's method of marking in some cases. However, many students and teachers find that, for seriously handicapped readers and writers, the benefits far outweigh the problems. Above all, they enable the student to be learning in his subjects, along with his peers, not falling still further behind because of one particular skill deficit.

Where tapes and/or a scribe need to be used extensively, there can be problems in organising sufficient help. Reading onto tape and taking dictation are both time consuming and it is rare that sufficient help is easily available. However, parents and even other students may be able to help.

Using a Microcomputer

A high quality IBM microcomputer is extensively used by both teachers and students at the LDC, primarily as a word processor and simple data handler. Ease of correction and revision and the production of neat finished copy are important benefits of word processing. Neat print-out allows work done by one student to be read by others. Ease of use, an uncluttered screen display and good colours are important in selecting a suitable program. Typing may be shared by teacher and student, and a student can edit a piece which was originally dictated.

Keyboard skills are not a problem for most students. We insist on use of both hands, beginning in a standard typing position and then using whatever finger feels comfortable. Several students spell noticeably better when word processing than when writing. They give variations of two reasons: 1) "My fingers get used to where the letters are". 2) "On the screen I can see if it's wrong, so I try to fix it". Some students find the reverse, however; if handwriting is an important part of learning words for them, they may find the shift to typing disruptive. We never insist in these cases and would use the word processor only for scribing.

For scribing, the word processor offers the advantage of an easily shared view of the screen. The student can watch the developing text and read back bits which are under consideration. Sharing the writing task between teacher and student – having a student edit a piece which he has originally dictated, typing alternate paragraphs or having the teacher take over when a student has begun to tire – provides steps towards independence. When these pieces are printed, there is no trace of who did what, so a careful note is kept of the type of co-operation on each piece. Again, work submitted to school is always annotated to show what support has been given.

With the word processor *Mind Reader*, after the first three letters of a word are typed, a list of up to five possible words appears; typing the number of any word inserts the whole word into the text. Increased writing speed and discriminating reading of similar words are the usual benefits for the student.

The program is no help where there is a mistake in the first three letters of a word or where the student is not attentive to the lists as they appear on the screen. Like any device, this one does not do the thinking for the student; it is useful partly because learning to use the aid involves thinking about language.

For students for whom typing provides a significant advantage over handwriting and where technical support is available, very small lap-top computers may provide a really useful support. These have a small viewing screen, but provide a basic word processing facility which can be used in any classroom or at home. The text can then be sent to a full-size computer for final editing.

Other Supportive Aids

Tape recording, scribing and microcomputers are major support aids which require considerable investment of time for effective use. Other aids may be less comprehensive, but highly effective in particular circumstances. For instance, enlarging texts on a good photocopier can make a significant difference to readability for some students and also allow for highlighting or otherwise marking key passages. Photocopying onto tinted paper may also be helpful. With training, students can learn to be responsible themselves for initiating and collecting such material.

Note taking is often a particular problem. Provision of typed notes or a carbon or photocopy of notes made by another student with neat writing will give the student an accurate record.

For some students the colour of the background makes a significant difference when reading. For instance, they can read from a green chalkboard, but not a blackboard. An acetate overlay, usually in a pale colour, may make reading from books easier. Experimentation will be necessary to find what suits each individual; the important effect seems to be in cutting down the glaring difference between foreground text and background. For these students photocopying text onto tinted paper may be helpful.

Spelling aids of various sorts are available, including microchip word finders and specialised dictionaries. The latter include dictionaries organised by sound and ones in which wrong but phonetically correct spellings are listed, together with the real spelling. Lists of key subject words used as bookmarks are not less useful for being an old and cheap remedy.

Important clues about what techniques will help students will arise from an inquiring attitude by both teacher and student as to what – exactly – makes any particular classroom activity difficult. Global activities need to be broken down into more specific parts. If Geography homework is a problem, which part? Finding the assignment? Reading the worksheet? Planning the answers? and so on. Students themselves often know or can discover by reflection just where the difficulty lies; the art of discovery is in learning to ask the right questions.

SPELLING

A structured spelling programme, based on rules and consistent multi-sensory practice, is essential for most students with specific learning difficulties. Within this strand of our work we also include the inter-related, although not identical, strategies which support analysis of unknown words in reading.

Whether continuing or initiating such a programme, we stress strengths, helping the student see what he *can* do, as well as define what he needs to work on. A string of letters that appears bizarre if pronounced may, nevertheless, be the right length for the word that was intended; it may even have ascenders and descenders in about the right places. This may mean there is a visual memory in there struggling to get out. Other students make reasonable phonic approximations, but have poor memory for the look of words and need help in learning to consider and choose between possible alternative structures. Most students desperately need to see that they are doing something *right* if they are to persevere.

Emphasis is put on helping each student find a way of approaching and learning words which work for him. The teachers must be systematic, but not inflexible, choosing from a wide knowledge of language rules and multi-sensory practice methods to find an effective mix which takes account of each student's particular strengths and weaknesses. Plastic letters, simultaneous oral spelling, cursive handwriting, packs of practice cards for letter groups, word games and specialised dictionaries may all play a part. Always there will be strong links with speaking and listening, and an emphasis on reasoning and making choices.

Some strategies for spelling and word study which might be confusing for younger pupils are appropriate to our students. For example, the concept of a root word and its derivatives becomes widely useful with their expanded vocabularies. Many of the more difficult spelling decisions are illuminated by considering root words. Consider *decide* and *beside*. The 's or c?' decision is not based on sound, but on their place in two very different groupings:

side	*decide*
inside	decided
beside	deciding
outside	decisive

... and so on. Two further examples are words where the spelling of a longer derivative helps with the root (as in *sign* and *signal, insignia* and *designation*) and the vexed problem of '*-ents* or *-ence*?', which is solved by knowing that -ents is a plural. We study endings particularly, using many forms of practice to help the student learn to spot them quickly. This includes endings added to endings, as in the progression:

nation
national
nationalise
nationalisation

Root words still have to be learned, but they in turn unlock large groups of other words.

Most of these more complex spelling patterns are absorbed by good readers in the course of their reading and used even where they could not make the rule explicit. Bringing them to the attention of our students is the spelling equivalent of teaching higher order reading skills – unlocking a wide range of mature words and providing a new approach, which in turn may bring fresh insights to bear on the original difficulty.

Active links are made between spelling work and words needed for school. The new subject-specific vocabulary with which secondary students must cope provides many opportunities for practising clear pronunciation, dividing words into syllables, looking for letter groups and finding variations on a root word. Time spent this way does double duty by helping with mastery of words for school subjects, as well as spelling rules, and this provides motivation for students.

The LDC students are jointly compiling a computer file of the words they need for topics in each subject. Students cull the words from their exercise books, supplemented by the memory of what went on in class and the LDC's collection of reference books. Selecting important words for each topic is a useful study skill in itself and the scaffolding technique is used to move the student towards independence: a long time is spent choosing, discussing, clarifying and typing words in the early stages; then we work towards a state where students can compile their own lists and type them into the computer themselves.

The finished lists can be sorted and printed out in several forms by the computer. They are used for reading practice, kept in exercise books for spelling references and form useful revision aids, which evoke memories of the lesson in which the words occurred. We are in our third year of word collection and comparing lists on the same topic from different students, schools and years is becoming a stimulating topic for oral work.

PROVIDING CO-ORDINATION

Even a brief outline of some strands of our work raises the twin questions: How can we keep track of what is going on? and How can we co-ordinate what we do with the other possible helpers involved with our student?

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The main answer to record-keeping is an individual notebook for each student containing a note for everything under the day's date. Both the student and teacher write in it. It is used, for example, as a note pad in word study, for dictation and handwriting, for running records of reading behaviour (Clay, 1985) and to keep notes of consultations with parents and schools. Word processed work is photocopied and filed in it. At the back are check-lists of sounds, spelling rules, reading activities, etc. – and these are filled in and dated as they are covered. All together the notebook forms an evocative, cumulative record of all our activity, including our feelings about it, which is accessible to the student and teacher at any time. At least once every half term we go over it together, making lists of what we have worked on and what we plan to do in the next phase. These lists then form the basis of any written reports and these too are always read through with the student before they are sent.

Key people among the many who may be involved in helping our students are parents, the school special needs co-ordinator, school subject teachers and the educational psychologist. Reports go to all of these several times a year, but we encourage as many informal contacts as possible along the way. Information sheets (often written at least partly by students), open house events and visits all play a part. A particularly successful method of exchanging information has been the development of student panel discussions. These began four years ago with a group of students showing techniques and resources which they found helpful to interested PGCE candidates. Panels now occur about four times a year for a variety of groups, including teachers in training, Masters Degree candidates interested in reading and trainee educational psychologists.

The panel discussions have proved so stimulating that a group of students and trainee educational psychologists embarked last year on making a video along a similar theme. The greatest value of this was in the making, but a usable product – twenty minutes on 'Living with Dyslexia' – is now available for sharing.

Parents play a vital role in supporting these students and we try to be as accessible as possible to them and also to make our approach and resources freely available to them. Where we are seeing a student only twice a week, practice at home and in school, as well as at the LDC, is essential. The kind of help parents can give (and students can accept) varies. During one week, help we knew about included providing transport to lessons, tape recording school notebooks, typing out vocabulary lists, being interviewed, sharing reading, taking dictation of homework essays, reading out spelling words, playing spelling and reading games, listening while students give practice talks and encouraging resistance to teasing. On the direct teaching side, schemes such as 'Pause, Prompt and Praise' (Merrett) for training reading helpers are of great value, because they offer easily appreciated structural guidelines which keep the essence of the help along the right lines.

The lynch-pin of co-ordination of our work with school is the Special Needs Co-ordinator, now found in all Southampton secondary schools. This is usually the person who can make it possible for our student to exercise in school what is learned with us, smoothing the path to photocopiers, word processor, extra library time or whatever and helping to find scribes and readers when these are necessary. It is frequently possible to share the work on a spelling programme between LDC and school, and here the co-ordinator is vital.

Subject teachers within schools give us valuable information about the demands on skills within their subjects and the response of our students in class. Frequently they can identify key areas where support would enable students to cope – and they are often very receptive to suggestions. The interchange of ideas and information between LDC teachers and teachers in schools is a useful form of in-service training for us all.

A CLOSING WORD

No single paper can cover everything we do. In selecting what to present here, I have tried to concentrate on the organising principles of our way of working and on those aspects of particular practice which derive from our focus on secondary school students.

Support services which involve students leaving their classrooms are now controversial. However, the expertise to help our students does not exist in all – or even most – secondary schools and is efficiently provided by a specialist team. By focusing on the student's curriculum, stressing close co-operation with school and making students active agents in developing their own strategies with LDC help, we seek the best of both worlds.

In addition, our students – many of whom feel they fail in school – gain confidence from working in a prestigious academic community. They profit from meeting others with similar problems and comparing solutions. And their presence in the university provides a focus for disseminating information about specific learning difficulties to teachers, teachers in training and research workers.

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LANGUAGE LEARNING WITHIN ACADEMIC CONSTRAINTS

George M. Blue

INTRODUCTION

There is a much quoted body of research that purports to show that language teaching makes little or no difference to the learning process and that students in higher education will make just as much progress in language by working at their subjects as by attending language classes (e.g. Upshur, 1968; Mason, 1971). This is, incidentally, a view held by a number of colleagues in different subject areas and possibly even by a number of EAP specialists themselves. It is, of course, generally believed that language learning probably takes place when there is 'a rich linguistic environment for the intuitive heuristics that the normal human automatically possesses' (Chomsky, 1968, p.690) or that acquisition takes place when learners receive appropriate input, as Krashen has put it (e.g. 1982, p.21). But the suggestion that teachers can best direct their efforts towards managing the linguistic environment or providing appropriate input seems to undermine the teaching role that many would intuitively consider to be valuable. Perhaps more importantly, it would also appear to undermine the role of conscious language learning at a sophisticated level, which studies such as Naiman et al (1978) have shown to be so important.

Even if the speaking and listening skills can best be developed by suitable exposure to and practise in using the language (for a large number of learners at least), it is hard to believe that this automatically applies to reading and still less to writing. In fact, learning to write is one of the areas where self-directed language learning seems to face a considerable challenge and it is an area where many EAP tutors feel that they have a lot to offer and where their teaching skills can be put to very good use. Moreover, there is a substantial body of research that supports this view (see discussion in Ellis, 1986, p.224–229).

As I have considered this vexed question over the last few years, my own observation has been that, whilst students following our pre-sessional course (twenty-eight contact hours a week) often make a great deal of progress in a fairly short length of time, this rate of language improvement does not normally continue through the rest of the academic year, when they are no longer receiving language teaching on anything like the same scale. Sometimes it is even a question of damage limitation – making sure that students whose spouses arrive at the end of the pre-sessional course do not lose too much of what they have learnt. Whereas the pre-sessional course can help students to develop their overall language proficiency, making progress on a number of fronts simultaneously, in-sessional courses (one to five hours maximum per week) must have much more modest aims and can generally only hope to develop one or two skill areas. Moreover, they can only hope to do even this if students are motivated, attend regularly and do the work set in between classes. Given a reasonable amount of effort on the part of students though, even mixed ability classes, with as many aims as there are students in the group, can hope to have some success in a number of precise areas and particularly in developing study skills, academic writing style, etc.

Partly because of my personal commitment to self-directed language learning, but partly also because of an awareness of the limitations of in-sessional classes, I have tended to think that students who continue to make significant progress during the year would be those who engage in some independent language learning. However, whilst this seems very likely, it remains unproven.

Perhaps an even more important factor in facilitating continued language improvement during the academic year though is the degree of integration or acculturation which takes place. It seems very reasonable to suppose that students who use English all the time and who are assimulated into the community of native speakers will continue to make considerable progress. There is, of course, some evidence of this from other sources (e.g. Schumann, 1978). However, I do not know of very much research relating to how the use of English in international EFL and ESL communities might facilitate further language improvement. A number of very firm friendships are formed during pre-sessional courses and to a lesser extent later on, often between people of very different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. And these friendship are often very important to overseas students, many of whom, I suspect, may make very few English friends and may never see the inside of a British home. This is borne out by Geoghegan's survey of overseas students at the University of Cambridge: "For many students, the foreign population, whether native or non-native speakers of English, was their 'lifeline', providing social equilibrium in their lives ... In the overseas group, my informants seemed, for the most part, to find what they felt was missing in the host population: warm, supportive, tolerant attitudes (partly, of course, because these students were going through similar experiences) and the possibility of open and unrestricted human relations ..." (Geoghegan, 1983, p.216).

Some very useful research into the factors affecting the performance of students on our pre-sessional course has been done by Wright (1988). Her paper summarises some of her findings, dealing with the role of factors such as age, motivation, previous language learning experience, cultural background, feelings experienced and problems encountered upon arrival in Britain, and attitudes to the pre-sessional course. This paper will look at a number of similar factors, but at a later stage in the academic year. The questions which it would seem useful to address are: Do students make significant progress in their language during the normal academic year or is such progress limited to the pre-sessional period? If they do continue to make progress, what are the factors which influence this? And how important is it to continue to make progress in language anyway? Perhaps there is a stage where study skills are more important than language proficiency.

This paper then reports on a research project which attempts to discover students' attitudes to continued language learning and to the importance of language learning and cultural adaptation as part of the overall experience of studying in Britain. A questionnaire survey was undertaken to try and develop a profile of overseas and EEC students who had either attended the University of Southampton's pre-sessional course in 1988 or registered for in-sessional classes during 1988–89 or both. One hundred and ten copies of a ten-page questionnaire, modelled to some extent on the approach outlined in Geoghegan's (1983) study, were distributed as follows:

Pre-sessional only	24
Pre-sessional and in-sessional	20
In-sessional only	66

After two reminders, ninety-six completed questionnaires (or 87.3%) were returned. Unfortunately, four of these arrived too late to be included in the analysis of results.

Before looking at the results of the questionnaires, I would like to urge two notes of caution. Firstly, the number of respondents is relatively small and it would be dangerous to make too many sweeping generalisations on the basis of such a small

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survey. This is particularly true when we come to look at sub-groups of respondents (e.g. all the Middle Eastern students, all the undergraduates, etc.). Moreover, the respondents are to some extent self-selecting and their answers may not be typical of those who chose not to respond for one reason or another. Secondly, this is a questionnaire study and people do not always answer questionnaires with 100% accuracy. I know of at least three respondents who indicated their sex wrongly and, whilst I have been reasonably sure of my ground in making corrections here, I have not generally been able to correct other responses which may give a false impression. Huff (1973) tells the story of how a judge in India once told an eager young British civil servant: "When you are a bit older, you will not quote Indian statistics with that assurance ... what you must never forget is that every one of those figures comes in the first instance from the *chowky dar* [village watchman], who just puts down what he damn pleases" (p.72). I fear I may have a number of village watchmen among my respondents!

A very large number of findings have emerged from this study and there is great scope for showing the degree of association between different factors. In the space available though, it will be necessary to be fairly selective. The four areas that I shall concentrate on are: general background, language learning (past and present), life in the UK and, finally, the area of academic studies. I shall endeavour to show the degree of association between various factors where this is appropriate, although the connections are not always as clear-cut as might have been hoped. For the purposes of this paper, I shall look particularly at how different national groupings have answered the various questions. However, there are potentially many other interesting groupings of students and we could equally well have looked at the responses of students grouped according to age, subject of study or a number of other factors.

GENERAL BACKGROUND

First of all then, we look at general background and it seems convenient for this to divide the respondents into four groups (Table 1). Students have been grouped according to their country of origin, as coming from Europe and Latin America, South Asia and Africa, East and South East Asia, and the Middle East. Although there is great cultural diversity within some of these groups, there is at least a certain similarity of linguistic background. The European and Latin American group is somewhat larger than the others, but all four groups are large enough to make some degree of generalisation possible.

The age of the students varies considerably from region to region (Table 2) and it seems reasonable to suppose that this may affect both acculturation and language learning. The youngest group are the Europeans and Latin Americans, with 54.1% of them being 25 or under and 91.9% being 30 or under. Next come the Middle Eastern group, with 71.4% being 30 or under. The group from East and South East Asia are somewhat older, with only 16.7% being 25 or under and 50% being 30 or under. By far the oldest group though are those from the Indian sub-continent and Africa, with only 23.5% being 30 or under and 76.5% being over 30.

We come now to look at the marital status of the various groups (Table 3) and, as might be expected, find that this ties in with age to a considerable extent: the older students tending to be married and the younger ones tending to be single. Thus, the European, Latin America and Middle Eastern students are predominantly single, whilst the East and South East Asians and the South Asians and Africans are mostly married. It might be reasonable to assume that the European, Latin American and

Table 1: **GEOGRAPHICAL/CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS OF STUDENTS**

GROUP 1		GROUP 2		GROUP 3		GROUP 4	
Europe and Latin America		**South Asia and Africa**		**East and South East Asia**		**Middle East**	
France	(10)	Bangladesh	(4)	China	(7)	Bahrain	(1)
Germany	(8)	Pakistan	(7)	Hong Kong	(4)	Egypt	(1)
Greece	(3)	Sri Lanka	(1)	Indonesia	(6)	Iran	(1)
Hungary	(1)	Ethiopia	(3)	Japan	(2)	Jordan	(1)
Italy	(1)	Nigeria	(1)	Malaysia	(1)	Libya	(1)
Netherlands	(1)	Tanzania	(1)	Singapore	(1)	Palestine	(1)
Norway	(1)			Taiwan	(1)	Saudi Arabia	(4)
Portugal	(1)			Thailand	(2)	Turkey	(4)
Spain	(4)						
Sweden	(2)						
Cyprus	(2)						
Bolivia	(1)						
Brazil	(1)						
Colombia	(1)						
TOTAL: 37		TOTAL: 17		TOTAL: 24		TOTAL: 14	

Table 2: **AGE OF STUDENTS**

	‹25	26–30	31–40	41–50
Europe/Latin America	54.1%	37.8%	8.1%	0%
South Asia/Africa	5.9%	17.6%	70.6%	5.9%
East and South East Asia	16.7%	33.3%	50.0%	0%
Middle East	35.7%	35.7%	21.4%	7.1%
TOTAL	32.6%	32.6%	32.6%	2.2%

Table 3: **MARITAL STATUS**

	Single	Married Accompanied	Married Unaccompanied
Europe/Latin America	81.1%	10.8%	8.1%
South Asia/Africa	29.4%	29.4%	41.2%
East and South East Asia	25.0%	29.2%	45.8%
Middle East	71.4%	7.1%	21.4%
TOTAL	55.4%	18.5%	26.1%

Middle Eastern students, being mostly single and generally younger, will be better able to integrate with the British student body and will not be weighed down by the preoccupations of family life. Nearly 30% of respondents from East and South East Asia and from South Asia are accompanied by spouses and in many cases also by children. This does, of course, bring certain benefits, as some of them were keen to point out:

> "I do not feel homesick. I need not to cook food." (Bangladesh)
>
> "I have to give time to my kid and my wife. On the other hand, I get cooked food and washed clothes." (Pakistan)
>
> "It would be very difficult to have an ideal performance without my wife in the UK." (Brazil)

However, it also causes a number of problems, which we need to be aware of:

> "I can't avoid speaking Chinese/Japanese/Portugese."
>
> "Accommodation, especially for the people who coming not in beginning of term." (Indonesia)
>
> "Because my wife does not speak English, I have to be with her in every case, i.e. shopping, health centre appointment for her or children, etc." (Libya)

Generally speaking, the respondents seemed to think that the advantages of having their spouse (and family) here outweighed the disadvantages. This was particularly true of the South Asians, Latin Americans and Europeans, though, of course, only a small percentage of Europeans were married. A very large number of unaccompanied students mentioned the problem of loneliness and homesickness – and some were very conscious that their separation was for at least a year and, in some cases, considerably longer. A few did recognise the benefits that the separation could bring though:

> "That causes me homesick sometime, but I can study freely." (Thailand)
>
> "Sometimes I feel homesick, but, since I have many friends in here, I can reduce my homesick." (Indonesia)

LANGUAGE LEARNING

We shall look first of all at the language learning background of the students prior to their arrival in Southampton. One of the surprising findings was the fact that over half of the respondents claimed to have had an English-medium education. The question was phrased quite clearly: "Before you came to Southampton were there any stages of your education which took place *through* the medium of English (i.e. studying most or all subjects using the English language)?" The results are reported in Table 4. 45.8% of the East and South East Asians claimed to have received some of their education through the medium of English, whilst all of the South Asians and Africans in this group had had an English-medium education of one sort or another. These results correspond quite closely with what might have been expected. Just under half of the Middle Eastern students claimed to have had their tertiary education in English and, whilst the question of what exactly is meant by English-medium education in the context of some Middle Eastern universities certainly needs addressing, this response is probably not surprising. None of the Latin Americans claimed to have been educated through the medium of English. The really surprising result though was in the group of European students, whom one would not normally have expected to have received an English-medium education. Yet over 35% claimed to have been educated in English. It would seem that either there are some inaccuracies here or the approach of 1992 has been making itself felt in the European school system to a greater extent than in the British system.

Table 4: **ENGLISH-MEDIUM EDUCATION**

	% who received EME	Primary	Secondary	University College	Other
European Latin America	35.1%	10.8% mean 4.0 years	24.3% mean 4.8 years	16.2% mean 2.4 years	5.4%
South Asia Africa	100.0%	23.5% mean 3.3 years	76.5% mean 5.7 years	94.1% mean 4.6 years	11.8%
East and South East Asia	45.8%	8.3% length unknown	16.7% mean 5.5 years	45.8% mean 2.1 years	4.2%
Middle East	50.0%	0%	14.3% mean 3.5 years	42.9% mean 3.7 years	0%
TOTAL	52.2%	10.9%	30.4%	42.4%	5.4%

We come now to consider the study of English as a subject. As Table 5 shows, nearly 80% of respondents had learnt English at secondary school, while over 60% had either started or, more commonly, continued their English language learning at university. Of course, the number of hours per week devoted to learning English may have been very small, as some respondents were anxious to point out. It is also worth mentioning that some 40% of East and South East Asian and Middle Eastern students had not learnt English at school, which may mean that they have spent rather less time overall learning English than some of their colleagues.

Table 5: **WHERE WAS ENGLISH LEARNT?**

	Primary	Secondary	University College	Lang. School (own country)	Lang. School Course (UK)	Other
Europe Latin America	21.6%	89.2%	35.1%	27.0%	16.2%	5.4%
South Asia Africa	35.3%	100.0%	94.1%	5.9%	29.4%	0%
East and South East Asia	20.8	62.5	79.2	41.7	20.8	0
Middle East	14.3	57.1	64.3%	28.6%	50.0%	14.3
TOTAL	22.8%	79.3	62.0%	27.2%	25.0	4.3

Table 6 shows that the mean length of time spent studying English ranges from 5:11 years (Middle Eastern group) to 14:0 years (South Asians and Africans). However, this conceals an individual range from just a few months to thirty years. It is perhaps surprising that a student could have spent as long as thirty years studying English, but this figure was given by two respondents. At the lower end of the scale, four students had studied English for one year or less (one from Latin America, one from Indonesia and two from the Middle East) and a further seven had only been learning the language for between 1:1 and 3:0 years (two from Latin America, one from Indonesia, one from China and three from the Middle East). Unless such study is very intensive, which in most cases it does not appear to have been, we might well wonder whether this is an adequate preparation for advanced study through the medium of English. In this context it is perhaps worth noting that, whereas 45.5% of respondents from the Middle East and all three of the Latin American students had studied English for three years or less, none of the South Asian or African students had less than six years of English study behind them.

Despite the fact that some of the respondents had already been learning English for a very long time, they still either felt the need or had been advised or required to attend language courses. Table 7 shows which language learning options had been taken advantage of.

European and Latin American students had predominantly followed in-sessional courses, but not the pre-sessional course. There were more students from this group who claimed to have done some individual language learning, though the mean weekly length of time spent on it (3.4 hours) was lower than for any of the other groups. Only a very small percentage joined the Students' Union conversation scheme.

Nearly two-thirds of the South Asian and African students had attended the pre-sessional course, with slightly more opting for the eight-week than for the four-week course. Over half had followed in-sessional courses, but the majority of these had only followed one course and in quite a number of cases it was a course run as part of their MSc. Only about a third claimed to have done any individual language learning and only one member of this group had joined the conversation scheme. As English is a second language for nearly all of them and as all of them had already had at least part of their previous education in English, it is perhaps not surprising that many had done no more than was required of them either by their sponsors or by their departments. It may be that, in many cases, the real need was for developing study skills rather than language improvement.

The East and South East Asians are quite a mixed group in terms of their previous language learning background. While a few have learnt English as a second language, for the majority it is very definitely a foreign language – and over 25% have studied the language for five years or less. Surprisingly, fewer than half of this group followed the pre-sessional course and most of these only attended for four weeks. On the other hand, 75% attended in-sessional courses and this was the only group where a substantial number (41.7%) took part in the conversation scheme, indicating a certain desire to integrate with British students.

The Middle Eastern group had the highest percentage (71.4%) attending the pre-sessional course, mostly for eight weeks, and the lowest number (50%) attending in-sessional classes. Over half claimed to do some individual language learning and one enterprising respondent considered that he spent thirty hours a week on this activity, which cannot leave much time for anything else! This accounts for the very

Table 6: **NUMBER OF YEARS SPENT LEARNING ENGLISH**

	‹5 years	5:1–10 years	›10 years	Mean
Europe/Latin America	22.9%	60.0%	17.1%	7: 8 years
South Asia/Africa	0%	40.0%	60.0%	14: 0 years
East and South East Asia	27.3%	54.5%	18.2%	8: 5 years
Middle East	54.5%	27.3%	18.2%	5:11 years
TOTAL	24.1%	50.6%	25.3%	—

Table 7: **LANGUAGE LEARNING IN SOUTHAMPTON**

		Europe/ Latin America	South Asia/ Africa	East and South East Asia	Middle East
Pre-Sessional Course	8 weeks	0%	35.3%	16.7%	50.0%
	4 weeks	13.5%	29.4%	29.2%	21.4%
	TOTAL	13.5%	64.7%	45.8%	71.4%
In-Sessional Classes	1 course	40.5%	41.2%	33.3%	7.1%
	2 courses	29.7%	11.8%	37.5%	35.7%
	3 courses	18.9%	0%	4.2%	7.1%
	TOTAL	91.9%	52.9%	75.0%	50.0%
Individual Language Learning		62.2%	35.3%	45.8%	57.1%
Mean No. of Hours/Weeks		3.4	4.9	6.0	7.2
Conversation Scheme		5.4%	5.9%	41.7%	7.1%

high mean number of hours for this group. The mean for the other Middle Eastern respondents is only 3.9 hours per week.

Students were asked how the various language learning activities had helped them and, from the responses, it was possible to work out which activities had helped in the most ways (Table 8). In-sessional language classes seem to have helped in the least ways, partly presumably because they only aim to help in a small number of precise areas, but perhaps partly also because the students have so many other demands on their time that they cannot afford to devote enough time and effort to this kind of activity at this stage in the academic year. One European student commented that the levels in the in-sessional classes were not sufficiently diversified and clearly felt that he personally would benefit from more advanced classes. It is, however, very difficult to avoid mixed ability grouping for in-sessional courses. Overall, there is very little difference between the number of ways in which the pre-sessional course and individual language learning had helped. European and Latin American

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students had found individual language learning to be more useful, which is not surprising, particularly as so few of them had attended the pre-sessional course. On the other hand, the South Asians and Africans, most of whom had not done any individual language learning, had a clear preference for the pre-sessional course. It would seem, from these responses, that the most effective language support an institution could offer would be a pre-sessional course, a limited number of in-sessional courses and a great deal of support during the year for students involved in individual language learning. This gives an added justification to what I have advocated elsewhere, but for different reasons (Blue 1981).

Table 8: **MEAN NUMBER OF WAYS IN WHICH VARIOUS LANGUAGE LEARNING ACTIVITIES HAVE HELPED**

	Pre-Sessional Course	**In-Sessional Classes**	**Individual Language Learning**
Europe/Latin America	3.8	2.2	4.8
South Asia/Africa	5.3	2.3	4.5
East and South East Asia	5.3	2.9	5.4
Middle East	3.8	3.0	3.5
TOTAL	4.7	2.4	4.6

In terms of specific skills, the pre-sessional course helped most in the area of everyday listening, followed by writing for academic purposes, everyday speaking, listening for academic purposes and study skills. In-sessional courses were most helpful in developing academic writing skills, then everyday listening, everyday speaking, listening for academic purposes and everyday writing. Individual language learning had been found most helpful in developing everyday listening skills, followed by everyday speaking, listening and reading for academic purposes and everyday reading. Interestingly then, language classes would appear to be more useful for developing skills, whilst individual learning is perceived to be more suited to developing reading strategies and to learning language through reading. Overall though, students were most conscious of their improvement in everyday listening, followed by speaking in everyday contexts and listening for academic purposes.

LIFE IN THE U.K.

One aim of this study was to discover how students spent their time and consequently how much exposure to English they received and how much time they spent in productive language use. They were asked how much time they had spent on a number of different activities both on the previous day and on a typical day. The reason for including the previous day was that it was felt that the answers to the question about a typical day would then be more firmly rooted in reality.

Table 9 shows the length of time typically spent listening to the radio, watching television, etc. Overall, 35.2% of respondents spent one hour or less per day receiving language input in this way, whilst slightly over half spent one to three hours. The South Asians and Africans spent the least time listening to the media, while the East and South East Asians spent the most. Respondents spent rather less time reading for pleasure or for general information (Table 10), 70.1% spending one hour or less per day on this. Once again, the East and South East Asians spent rather more time than the others reading for pleasure, whereas the South Asians and Africans spent rather less. It would be interesting to compare these figures with those for British students. They are certainly very low compared with the British population as a whole.

Table 9: **TIME SPENT LISTENING TO THE RADIO, WATCHING TV, ETC. – TYPICAL DAY**

	Mean (hours)	<1 hour	1.1–3 hours	3.1–5 hours	>5 hours
Europe/Latin America	1.9	43.2%	45.9%	8.1%	2.7%
South Asia/Africa	1.4	40.0%	60.0%	0%	0%
East and South East Asia	2.3	21.7%	65.2%	8.7%	4.3%
Middle East	2.1	30.8%	46.2%	23.1%	0%

Table 10: **TIME SPENT READING FOR PLEASURE – TYPICAL DAY**

	Mean (hours)	<1 hour	1.1–3 hours	3.1–5 hours	>5 hours
Europe/Latin America	0.8	74.3%	25.7%	—	—
South Asia/Africa	0.7	73.3%	26.7%	—	—
East and South East Asia	1.3	65.2%	30.4%	4.3%	—
Middle East	0.9	64.3%	35.7%	—	—

When we come to look at reading connected with students' academic studies (Table 11), a very different picture emerges. The mean number of hours spent by all respondents in this activity was 5.0, but there was a considerable variation from the Middle Eastern mean of 3.9 hours to the South Asian and African mean of 8.3 hours per day. Indeed, 25% of South Asians and Africans claimed that they spent over ten hours per day reading for their academic studies, while a small number from each of the other groups spent one hour or less.

Table 11: **TIME SPENT READING FOR ACADEMIC STUDIES – TYPICAL DAY**

	Mean (hours)	<1 hour	1.1–3 hours	3.1–5 hours	>5 hours
Europe/Latin America	4.2	5.7%	42.9%	25.7%	25.7%
South Asia/Africa	8.3	0%	6.3%	18.8%	75.0%
East and South East Asia	4.4	4.3%	26.1%	39.1%	30.4%
Middle East	3.9	14.3%	28.6%	28.6%	28.6%

Another aim of the study was to try and discover something about the social framework within which overseas and EEC students operated and a number of questions were designed to elicit this information. Table 12 shows how much time respondents thought they spent speaking English with people from the UK on a typical day. Although a number of students have clearly integrated very well into the host community, it is a cause of some concern that 43.4% considered that they spent one hour or less per day speaking English with British people, especially as some said that they spent no time at all or a mere five to ten minutes in this kind of professional or social interaction. Contrary to expectations, they generally spent rather less time speaking English with other non-native speakers (Table 13), 62.2% considering that they spent one hour or less per day using English in this way. However, the majority of students did not seem to spend a disproportionate amount of time speaking their native language (Table 14). Three of the four groups spent less time speaking their own language than speaking English with British people and only the East and South East Asians spent more time speaking their native language, which may be partly explained by the fact that nearly 30% of them had their spouses and, in some cases, their children with them.

Table 12: **TIME SPENT SPEAKING ENGLISH WITH PEOPLE FROM THE U.K. – TYPICAL DAY**

	Mean (hours)	‹1 hour	1.1–3 hours	3.1–5 hours	›5 hours
Europe/Latin America	2.2	37.1%	48.6%	2.9%	11.4%
South Asia/Africa	2.1	56.3%	25.0%	12.5%	6.3%
East and South East Asia	2.5	47.6%	33.3%	9.5%	9.5%
Middle East	2.7	36.4%	45.5%	—	18.2%

Table 13: **TIME SPENT SPEAKING ENGLISH WITH OTHER NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS – TYPICAL DAY**

	Mean (hours)	‹1 hour	1.1–3 hours	3.1–5 hours	›5 hours
Europe/Latin America	1.4	54.5%	36.4%	9.1%	—
South Asia/Africa	1.2	75.0%	18.8%	—	6.3%
East and South East Asia	1.4	52.4%	42.9%	4.8%	–
Middle East	1.2	83.3%	8.3%	—	8.3%

Table 14: **TIME SPENT SPEAKING NATIVE LANGUAGE – TYPICAL DAY**

	Mean (hours)	‹1 hour	1.1–3 hours	3.1–5 hours	›5 hours
Europe/Latin America	2.0	54.5%	24.2%	12.1%	9.1%
South Asia/Africa	2.0	57.1%	28.6%	–	14.3%
East and South East Asia	3.5	36.4%	27.3%	13.6%	22.7%
Middle East	1.9	33.3%	50.0%	16.7%	–

If we add together the mean amounts of time spent by the East and South East Asian group in various speaking activities, listening to the media and reading for pleasure, we arrive at a total of eleven nours per day. This creates a slightly false impression, since some of the activities may have been taking place concurrently. Nevertheless, we are left with a picture of the East and South East Asians as a very sociable group, making a great deal of use of language. However, they do not begin to compare with one Pakistani student, who claimed that he spent two hours a day watching television, listening to the radio, etc., two hours a day reading for pleasure or for general information, eight to ten hours a day reading for his academic studies, twelve hours a day speaking with people from the UK, eight hours a day speaking English with other non-native speakers and twelve hours a day speaking his native language – a total of forty-four to forty-six hours a day. Even allowing for some overlap of activities occurring simultaneously, one wonders whether there can have been any time left for sleep!

In order to approach the question of social integration in a different way, the questionnaire asked what proportion of students' friends in Southampton came from the UK (Table 15) and what was the nationality and native language of their three best friends in Southampton (Table 16). In every group there were some individuals who had more than 50% of their friends from the UK, but only among the Europeans and Latin Americans was this a common phenomenon. It is sad to report that half of the South Asians and Africans, perhaps largely because of their age, felt that they had no British friends at all, although they had clearly forged some close friendships with other overseas students of different language backgrounds. The Middle Eastern students and the East and South Asians had established nearly half of their friendships among other speakers of their own language, but overall they had managed to maintain a spread of British and international friends.

Table 15: **PROPORTION OF FRIENDS FROM THE U.K.**

	None	<30%	31–50%	51–70%	>70%	All
Europe/Latin America	—	36.1%	22.2%	27.8%	13.9%	—
South Asia/Africa	50.0%	37.5%	6.3%	—	—	6.3%
East and South East Asia	12.5%	41.7%	29.2%	8.3%	8.3%	—
Middle East	7.1%	57.1%	7.1%	14.3%	14.3%	—
TOTAL	13.3%	41.1%	18.9%	15.6%	10.0%	1.1%

Table 16: **NATIVE LANGUAGE OF THREE BEST FRIENDS IN SOUTHAMPTON**

	Same as Respondent's Native Language	Another Foreign Language	English
Europe/Latin America	29.5%	30.5%	40.0%
South Asia/Africa	37.0%	43.5%	19.6%
East and South East Asia	46.8%	35.5%	17.7%
Middle East	47.4%	34.2%	18.4%
TOTAL	37.8%	34.7%	27.5%

It was hypothesized that there might be a relationship between the amount of time spent using English in academic and social interaction and the improvement which students felt they had made in English. They were, therefore, asked how much they thought their language had improved since the beginning of the academic year (Table 17). Overall, 67.0% felt that their English had improved 'quite a lot' and most progress was noticed in the oral/aural skills. However, whereas 89.2% of Europeans felt that their English had improved a great deal or quite a lot, as many as 35.3% of South Asians and Africans felt that they had only improved a little or that they had not made any progress at all. This seems to correspond quite closely to the percentage of British friends and the amount of time spent speaking English with people from the UK.

Table 17: **IMPROVEMENT IN ENGLISH SINCE OCTOBER**

	A great deal	Quite a lot	A little	None at all
Europe/Latin America	18.9%	70.3%	10.8%	—
South Asia/Africa	17.6%	47.1%	23.5%	11.8%
East and South East Asia	8.7%	69.6%	21.7%	—
Middle East	7.1%	78.6%	14.3%	—

Students were asked what factors had help them to improve their English (Table 18) and what had prevented them from improving as much as they would have liked (Table 19). Whilst formal language learning was not discounted, listening to native speakers was generally considered to be the most effective aid to language improvement. On the negative side, too much work for the main course of study was considered to be the main impediment to continued language learning and this was cited by twice as many respondents as not making friends with native speakers.

Table 18: **FACTORS THAT HAVE HELPED LANGUAGE IMPROVEMENT**

1. Talking to native speakers	(78)
2. Listening to the radio, watching TV, etc.	(68)
3. Attending lectures, seminars, etc. in department	(61)
4. Attending in-sessional English classes	(38)
5. Individual language learning	(33)
6. Talking to other non-native speakers	(32)
7. Their own positive attitudes	(30)
8. Sympathetic staff in University department	(29)

Table 19: **FACTORS THAT HAVE HINDERED LANGUAGE IMPROVEMENT**

1. Too much work for the main course of study	(58)
2. Not making friends with native speakers	(29)
3. Sickness	(4)

ACADEMIC STUDIES

Students were asked in which department they were studying and at what level. Overall, 42.4% were in the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science, with a further 20.7% in the Faculty of Science. The remainder were scattered across the Faculties of Arts, Law, Social Sciences, Mathematics, Educational Studies and Medicine. 52.2% were following a taught Master's course and 25.6% were registered for a research degree. The remainder were undergraduates, visiting European students, visiting staff and postgraduate visitors not registered for a degree. These figures are quite normal for the University of Southampton, although they feature a recent increase in the number of visiting and exchange students from Europe, mostly here under ERASMUS and similar schemes.

The questionnaire asked how students felt about their ability to cope with the language demands of various academic activities (Table 20). By the middle of the academic year, they felt most confident about their ability to understand textbooks and journals, followed by their ability to understand lectures. Interestingly, they were still relatively unsure about their ability to read at an adequate speed and to take notes from lectures. They generally felt far less confident about their productive skills and cited participating in seminars and writing essays, reports, thesis, etc. as the two areas where they were least sure of their ability. However, writing original material was considered by the majority of respondents to be 'very important', while participating in seminars was generally only considered to be 'quite important'. This would seem then to confirm the view commonly held that writing should be the major focus for in-sessional courses and individual support at this stage in the academic year. This overall pattern, incidentally, corresponds very closely with Geoghegan's findings (1983, p.132–136).

Table 20: **PRESENT ABILITY TO COPE WITH LANGUAGE DEMANDS OF VARIOUS ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES**

	Confident	OK	Unsure
Understanding lectures	45	41	4
Taking notes from lectures	29	43	16
Participating in seminars	16	44	30
Discussing with supervisor in individual supervisions	31	42	14
Understanding textbooks and journals	58	30	1
Reading at adequate speed	25	40	20
Making adequate notes on reading	32	50	6
Understanding instructions for practical work	32	40	7
Writing essays, reports, etc.	19	48	22

Taking the questionnaires as a whole, one gains the impression that most of these overseas and EEC students work extremely hard. Indeed, their academic studies seem to dominate their lives in a way which would not be true for most British students. This leads, in some cases, to a certain degree of social isolation and yet most respondents seemed to feel that almost any amount of sacrifice would be worthwhile if it enabled them to succeed in their studies. Of course, the average age of these students is considerably higher than for British students and many of them are in mid-career and feel the pressure to succeed very intensely. Failure, in some cases, could cause great difficulty and loss of face on their return to their home country. One Pakistani student explained his problems as follows:

> "When overseas students come to UK, they are all the time worried about their academic course ... But, due to language problem, it becomes difficult for them to understand such vast subjects from a different area within minimum available time. So they are all the time worried and tense, due to which they are unable to spend a comfortable life in UK."

On the other hand, many other students are very confident about their studies and are obviously enjoying academic life to the full, especially when they are also well integrated socially.

CONCLUSION

It is very difficult to draw any useful conclusions from a study that has touched on so many different areas. One of the more striking facts to emerge was the great diversity of responses, indicating an enormous variety of different experiences. The degree of integration varies very considerably and this has been seen to correspond fairly closely to improvement perceived in oral/aural skills, although improvement in writing skills can be seen to be more closely linked to formal study (in-sessional and pre-sessional courses). Generally, there is a desire for more contact with native speakers of English and it is probably true to say that, for most overseas and EEC students, studying in the UK would be a more enriching and positive experience in every way if there were more social and academic contacts with native speakers. The fact that such a high percentage of students took the time to respond to a fairly daunting questionnaire attests to the interest that the project aroused. It is my hope that the information gleaned and continued discussion of the issues will actually help to improve the quality of students' total experience of studying in the UK.

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THE WORLD OF JOHN AND MARY SMITH: A STUDY OF QUIRK AND GREENBAUM'S 'UNIVERSITY GRAMMAR OF ENGLISH'

Kate Stephens

There is a pardox in the attempt to isolate the forms of language from the meanings they are used to convey. When samples of language are taken out of context and held up, for the purpose of examining their shape, separately from their semantic context, new meanings are created, to which the reader cannot help but respond. Thus, from 'the cat sat on the mat' to 'amo, amas, amat, amamus, amatis, amant', from 'la plume de ma tante' to 'colourless green ideas sleep furiously', those interested in the structure of language have created new semantic worlds in the minds of their readers.

This is a study of one such world, which we owe to Randolph Quirk and Sidney Greenbaum and which is to be found by the responsive reader within the pages of the uninvitingly titled *University Grammar of English*. Suspend only for a moment your interest in 'adjuncts' and 'disjuncts', in 'pro-forms' and 'cleft sentences', and you will be rewarded with a journey into the world of John and Mary Smith and their friends.

In what follows I present, first, an interpretive reading of this world and, second, some complementary 'hard' evidence concerning certain of its quantifiable features. I then make some brief comparisons between UGE and the more recent books on grammar by Huddlestone (1984) and Halliday (1985), as well as *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* by Quirk el al (1985). Appended is a complete list of all references to John and Mary, in the order in which they appear in UGE.

A READER'S RESPONSE

The world of John and Mary is at once both banal and sinister. The constant reworking of grammatical paradigms results in an appearance of unreal syntagmatic relations (as Halliday, 1985, points out). The result is a repetitive text with a certain obsessive compulsive quality. This is what gives the genre its peculiar life – a fact which generations of chanting school children have often recognised and imaginatively exploited. But, whilst much of the quality is attributable to the medium itself, much also is due to the semantic connotations of the particular language samples chosen by the authors.

It is for its portrayal of male-female difference and male-female relations that the world of John and Mary is most fascinating. Horizons are contrasted thus:

wine, wood, cream cheese ...
He likes music, chess, literature, history, skiing ...
lakes, games, long walks ...

the wine(s)
He likes the music
the countryside of France
the lake

Venetian glass
Mrs. Nelson adores the glass of Venice
*glass of Venice
the glass from Venice
glass from Venice (p.71)

Well-worn stereotypes are invoked:

He gave the car a wash
He washed the car
He gave the girl a doll
The girl was given a doll

She made a cake
She made him a cake
She made him a good husband
(him into a good husband)
She made a good wife
She made him a good wife (p.371)

And a disturbing and sometimes sinister picture of female objectification and passivity is repeatedly presented:

He looked at the girl

The girl at whom he looked/(who[m]) he looked at
to whom he came/(who[m]) he came to

He stood looked nervously at the girl
nervously near the girl
*watched nervously the girl

The girl was looked at
watched
*stood near (p.350)

He arranged for Mary to come at once
He telephoned John for Mary to come at once
He arranged with John for Mary to come at once
He had Bob teach Mary
He let Bob teach Mary
He made Bob teach Mary
I watched Bob teach Mary
I watched Bob teaching Mary (p.365/6)

The girl is Mary Smith
The girl is pretty
The girl was standing in the corner
You waved to the girl when you entered
The pretty girl!
... standing in the corner
... in the corner
... who became angry
... because you waved to her
... when you entered
... is Mary Smith

The pretty girl standing in the corner ... is ...
The pretty girl standing in the corner ... are ...

He frightened the pretty girl standing in the corner
*He frightened the pretty lampshade in the corner

The pretty girl
Some pretty college girls

The girl in the corner
The girl standing in the corner
The girl who stood in the corner

Come and meet my beautiful wife

Mary Smith, who is in the corner, wants to meet you

The pretty girl, who is a typist, is Mary Smith (p.375/6)

Some paintings of Brown's
Brown's paintings of his daughter
Brown's paintings of his daughter
The painting of Brown is as skilful as that of Gainsborough
Brown's deft painting of his daughter is a delight to watch
Brown's deftly painting of his daughter is a delight to watch
I dislike Brown's painting his daughter
I dislike Brown painting his daughter
I watched Brown painting his daughter
Brown deftly painting his daughter is a delight to watch
Painting his daughter, Brown noticed that his hand was shaking
Brown painting his daughter that day I decided to go for a walk
The man painting the girl is Brown
The silently painting man is Brown
He is painting his daughter (p.391)

This is one rare description of an active female:

She puts the tablecloth straight
She put it straight
She put straight the tablecloth
*She put straight it

She put the tablecloth out
She put it out
She put out the tablecloth
*She put out it

She quickly put the tablecloth straight
*She put quickly the tablecloth straight
*She put the tablecloth quickly straight

She quickly put the tablecloth out
*She put quickly the tablecloth out
*She put quickly the tablecloth out

He pushed the door wide open
She didn't wash the shirts as clean as Mary did (p.369)

I ask the reader to judge for *themself what images are created, what emotions aroused, by the authors' choice of 'smoothed the tablecloth' or by the juxtaposition of 'lampshade' with 'pretty girl' or the reworking of Brown's relationship to his daughter in the act of painting her. Most striking is the consistent tendency to cast females in passive and objectified roles, with males either pulling the strings ('John intended that Mary ...') or looking on, in a voyeuristic mode, at a girl standing in a corner. Indeed, the frequent repetition of this type of relation and the infrequent representation of females who do things together amount to an unconscious insistence on certain sex stereotypes.

The world of John and Mary has an identifiable character. It is a world of fixed role relations, of academic success and failure, of intelligence and foolishness, of books and letters, and leaving notes and giving presents. It is a world of girls who are pretty or not pretty and where it is worth stating that their intelligence is respected. It is a world of men who play football, drive cars and attend meetings – men more active and finely drawn than their female counterparts, but hardly themselves divergent in tastes and interests.

Janet and John's banality occasionally switches to Mills and Boon:

> He looked about him
> Have you any money on you?
> She had her fiance beside her
> They placed their papers in front of them
>
> She was beside herself with rage
>
> She felt within herself the stirring limbs of the unborn child
> Holding a yellow bathrobe around herself, she walked towards him
>
> (p.104)

John is a character if contradictions. Despite a nature apparently more expansive and assured than that of Mary, he seems to be haunted by fear. These are our first meetings with him:

> John carefully searched the room
> John is searching the room
> John knew the answer
> John searched the room slowly
> John searched the room noisily
> John searched the room without delay
> John knew the answer (ch.2)

Does the insecurity of constant comparison with other characters lurk beneath apparent worldly success? Here is how he matches up to Bob:

> John is more stupid than Bob
> John is less stupid than Bob (ch.5)
> – John greatly admires Bob and so does Mary (ch.8)
> John was the winner in 1971 and Bob was the winner in 1972 (ch.9)
> John upset a large and beautiful vase. It fell and hurt Bob.
> John drives a car. Bob doesn't.
> John can drive a car. I think Bob can too.
> John drives a car. So does Bob.
> John swims a lot. Does Bob do that? (ch.10)

But, although John seems to have been judged stupid as a child, he was later 'taken for a linguist' and 'became the genius of the family'. At least Mary considered him so (ch.4). Is there a suggested relation between implied author and narrative voice in the occasional references to linguists and linguistics? (In chapter 12 we learn that John is interested in English grammar.)

John plays football, drives a car, swims, sings and plays the guitar, travels internationally and puts his career before his family. Once he found and sold a valuable stamp, and once he upset a large and beautiful vase – hardly interesting material for character analysis, but what are we to make of the puzzled room searching at which we first spy him? And what of 'Play on my side; Mary' (ch.7)?

If John is economically drawn, Mary is even more so. She is demure. Her interests are stereotypical and her role domestically circumscribed. Although considered intelligent and the possessor of books, no reference is made to any kind of worldly success. She bakes a cake. She puts the kettle on. She leaves a note. She (is it Mary?) smoothes a tablecloth. She sings. She listens to music. And she stands in a corner being looked at. It is only in the context of such passivity and objectification that it becomes possible to say:

> She has a very interesting mind
> Her mind interests me very much (p.396)

A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

For the sceptical, 'hard-nosed', scientifically-minded reader, clearly the above selective interpretation will not be enough. In this section I shall present some quantitative evidence which suggests that there is something a little skewed about the world which Quirk and Greenbaum portray. The doubtful reader is free to interrogate the data appended to this report for *theirself. The analysis presented below, however, supports two conclusions. Firstly, in comparison to males, females are under-represented in the ratio of approximately 1:2. Females are mentioned about half as often as males. Secondly, employing the distinction between stative and dynamic verbs, female under-representation is even more dramatic. Females seem to appear as the subject of dynamic verbs less than half as often as males.

Points 1 and 2 below refer to the first of these conclusions, points 3 and 4 to the second.

1. Number of references to Mary compared to number of references to John for chapters 2 to 7 inclusive:

Mary: 37 (31.1% of total)   John: 82

Mary is mentioned about half as often as is John.

2. Number of references to females compared to number of references to males for chapters 7 and 13:

Females:		Males:	
chapter 7	– 39 (29.8%)	chapter 7	– 92
chapter 13	– 42 (32.3%)	chapter 13	– 88
Total	– 81 (31%)	Total	– 180

Taking all references to females and males, the former are mentioned about half as often as the latter. The John and Mary story seems to be a reflection of a general situation.

3. Quirk and Greenbaum characterise nouns as naturally 'stative' and verbs as naturally 'dynamic' (p.21). Exceptionally, a verb may be stative and this is marked grammatically by its inability to take progressive forms. Dynamic verbs include all verbs describing actions, while stative verbs refer to objectified states or relations. The grammatical subjects of stative verbs are not the authors of action, but the possessors or receivers of perceptions, cognitions or relations.

Taking only active declarative sentences and subordinate clauses in which the subjects are either male or female and comparing the type of verb acting as the main verb of the relevant sentence or clause, we get the following picture:

Chapter 7:

female subject		male subject	
stative verb	9	stative verb	18
dynamic verb	12	dynamic verb	50

stative verbs:
with female subject 33.3%

dynamic verbs:
with female subject 19.4%

Chapter 13:

female subject		male subject	
stative verb	14	stative verb	12
dynamic verb	3	dynamic verb	14

stative verbs:
with female subject 53.8%

dynamic verbs:
with female subject 17.6%

Whereas female are somewhat better represented than 1:2 in relation to stative verbs, this is matched by an even poorer showing as subjects of dynamic verbs. The 1:2 ratio, poor though it is, seems to conceal a tendency to further under-represent females as the subject of dynamic verbs.

4. Looking particularly at the references to John and Mary, the same pattern of under-representation seems to occur. Below is a complete list of predicates with dynamic verbs, for which Mary and John form the subjects:

[Where a grammatical form is re-worked or elaborated with the addition of further information, I have included the predicate only once, as long as it refers to roughly the same action.]

MARY
... arrived on Tuesday
... told John that she would look after herself
... told John that she would look after him
... is dusting the furniture
... might go with them by bus
... has washed the dishes
... has dried them up
... has put them in the cupboard
... must have been doing her homework
... intends to take the children to the beach
... spoke
... will enter the competition

JOHN
... searched the room
... may sit by this fountain
... will hurry along this path
... must read from that blackboard
... will stare at that girl
... will sing
... tells me that he hasn't seen Mary since Monday
... asked his wife to put the kettle on ...
... waited a while ...
... told Mary that she should wait
... went straight to the bank
... has hurt himself
... mustn't deceive (himself)
... has cut his finger

... used to listen to records most of the time
... told my father
... said ('You are wrong John')
... placed a vase on the table
.. washed the shirts
... blamed John for the damage
... helped John to carry the bag
TOTAL: 19

... behaves as politely as Bob
... opened the letter
... opened the door
... hurt his foot
... is coming too
... will speak to the boss today
... (did) not send the letter
... phoned Mary
... may not have been protesting
... returned the book
... returned the money
... plays the guitar
... gave it away
... would take them by car
... didn't waste his time ...
... studied hard
... sleeps on the couch
... should clean the shed
... must have been playing football
... will meet my family
... may be questioning our motives ...
... could have been watching television
... has recently become a very hard-working student
... answered rudely
... found and sold a valuable stamp
... played football
... complained to Mary and Peter
... (is) going to Paris
... didn't go to the show
... intend to resign
... was taking a shower
... upset a large beautiful vase
... finished our work
... drives a car
... paid for the tickets
... buys his drinks at ...
... swims a lot
... told me ...
... put his career before his family
... has visited New York
... went to Mexico
... saw Mary home
... put the car into the garage
... cannot do it
... denied having stolen the money
... began to write a letter
... convinced me that he was right
... showed me that he was honest
... mentioned to me that ...
... will write a poem
TOTAL: 64

Mary is the subject of 22.9% of the above dynamic verbs.

Summary of Data

Clearly, female referents are under-represented. For the three samplings of the data examined, females represent roughly one third of each total. The figures are:

chs. 2–7 (all John and Mary)	31.1%
ch. 7 (all male and female)	29.8%
ch. 13 (all male and female)	32.3%

The pattern seems to be a fairly consistent one, corroborating the impression that the female presence is less significant than the male in the world which Quirk and Greenbaum portray.

There is also evidence to support the view that females are not only portrayed less frequently than males, but that there is a difference in the manner of their portrayal. Taking the above figures as the standard for comparison, it seems that proportionately females are portrayed even less frequently as the subjects of dynamic verbs. The comparable figures are:

all chs. (Mary vs. John only)	22.9%
ch. 7 (female vs. male)	19.4%
ch. 13 (female vs. male)	17.6%

It is the discrepancy between these two sets of figures which reflects the stereotypical sex differences noted in the first part of this paper.

COMPARISON WITH OTHER TEXTS

It is a popular belief that much has changed for women in the years since UGE was published. It is, therefore, worth asking how the world of John and Mary compares with other recent examples of this genre? A preliminary examination of Huddleston's *Introduction to the Grammar of English* (1984) and of Halliday's *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (1985) suggests a number of points of similarity and difference. In the former the stereotypes of UGE seem to remain:

> Unfortunately, my uncle was using an electric drill at that very moment (p.177)
>
> Liz prepared the food and Ed bought the wine, but neither received any thanks (p.384)
>
> She was wearing a beautifully-tailored ankle-length gown of cream silk which I had never seen before (p.398)
>
> He was enormously wealthy and an obvious target for kidnappers (p.385)

But does one detect here an attempt at dramatic interest, an absence of that deadpan loaded neurtrality which one might regard as the hallmark of the world of John and Mary? Only a detailed analysis of the text could answer this question.

Quite different material is presented by Halliday. His is a world of rhyme, folk-wisdom and zany childhood nonsense. His re-workings of paradigms, using the elements 'duke', 'aunt' and 'teapot', and 'queen', 'uncle' and 'hatstand', create strikingly different syntagms from those encountered in UGE. We are now in the world of Alice and goonish things, like going backwards to bed. One has the impression here of a writer who likes words and a bit of fun and who, if he cannot hope to comprehensively represent a language, at least has created something not unpleasant to encounter in its own right. A reading of sex stereotypes in this text would have to take into account the distancing humour which the author brings to his selection of language samples.

Quirk and Greenbaum's more recent volume, *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*, is based on various corpora of recorded English usage. My first impression was that, in the intervening years, great changes had been made, for, in place of the objectified females of UGE, we find the following:

> She is a most efficient publisher (p.466)
> She is keen on fishing (p.508)
> He cooked dinner for her (p.697)
> Jane will make a good doctor (p.738)
> The candidate is a fine teracher, a broadcaster of some experience and a respected drama critic. In addition, she has written a successful novel. (p.632)

And is this a narrative sequel to the domestic world of UGE?

> Is Mary at home perhaps?
> by any chance?
> If Mary is (perhaps) at liberty, I could see her for a moment?
> Mary is not free for a moment, by any chance?
> Is Mary at home I wonder?
> would you happen to know?
> Mary is not free for a moment, I suppose? (p.620)

The above extract notwithstanding, Mary herself has disappeared into the background, along with John. And in place of the Peter, Bob, Harry and Tom, who were significant if minor figures in UGE, we have instead Mortimer, Magda, Kirov, Della and Lucille.

My first impression on reading CGEL was that the faults of UGE had been over-corrected, to the point of parody. Females seemed to have an exaggeratedly high profile. However, quantitative analysis suggests that this interpretation may be wrong. From analysis of a randomly chosen sequence of twenty pages (pages 625 to 644 inclusive), it seems that numerically there is little indication of change. The figures are:

Number of references:
females 34 males 61
overall proportion of females: 35.5%

A detailed analysis would be required to discover how extensive the apparent differences really are.

The method by which grammars of a language are related to the actual language which they seek to represent is a matter on which I am not well-informed. However, some process of selection must inevitably be involved. And it seems that a biassed selection has been made in at least one of the corpora which has informed the compilation of UGEL. From an examination of the sex of speakers whose speech was recorded for *A Corpus of English Usage* (1980, p.26–31), it seems that females are again under-represented in the familiar 1:2 proportion. Out of 147 samples of spoken English, only 47 speakers are female, that is 32%. This might mean that women's speech has been recorded less frequently than men's or it might reflect the feminist claim that women in fact – and contrary to popular belief – speak less than men (e.g. Spender, 1980). Either way, there is an interesting situation to look at.

CONCLUSION

Should a grammar book seek to faithfully represent a language both in its forms and its semantic content? Whatever the ambition of its creators, probably neither is possible. A selection of words will always be just that – a selection. And, if the selector does not consciously choose the semantic content and connotations of these words, then it seems reasonable to suppose that they will reflect some particular bent of the writer's own unconscious or the collective unconscious of the society to which they belong. The world of John and Mary, as well as those glimpsed in the other texts referred to, are cultural products with describable features. Whether other such 'worlds' share the particular biasses of UGE, only detailed empirical investigation can answer.

Cameron (1985) has successfully dismantled the mechanistic determinism which underlies some of the feminist views about language expressed by Spender (1980). Language is not, in any essential sense, an instrument of male power; it is a symbolic system into which we all enter and in terms of which we both receive and create our identities. Nevertheless, it is often the experience of women to feel marginalised by certain ways in which words are used. Aside from a number of other difficulties which the reading UGE presents, it is my belief, supported by a combination of qualitative and quantitative evidence, that the samples of language selected for study present a distorted picture of women's place in the world. The writers would no doubt claim not to have intended this, but I don't think they can claim not to have done it.

[*Quirk and Greenbaum use a preceding asterisk to indicate an unacceptable structure.]

APPENDIX: JOHN AND MARY – THE FULL STORY

Here is what I hope is a comprehensive compilation of the references to John and Mary in the order in which they appear in the original text.

CHAPTER 2

John carefully searched the room
John is searching the room
John knew the answer
John searched the room slowly
John searched the room noisily
John searched the room without delay
John knew the answer
John heard the explosion from his office when he was locking the door
Mary wanted to be a student at that university
John very carefully searched the room
John may sit by this fountain
John will hurry along this path
John must read from that blackboard
John will stare at that girl
John searched the big room and the small one
Mary is in London and John is there too
John searched the big room very carefully and the small one less so
Mary is in London

Mary is there
Where is Mary?
Did John search the room?
John did not search the room

CHAPTER 3

John will sing
Will John sing?
John sang
Did John sing?
John will sing!
John did sing!
John lived in Paris for ten years
Did you know that John has painted a portrait of Mary?
When I met him, John had lived in Paris for ten years
John tells me that he hasn't seen Mary since Monday
John would make a mess of it

CHAPTER 4

John asked his wife to put on the kettle while he looked in the paper to see what was on the radio
John became a business man
Mary considered John a genius
John was taken for a linguist
John became the genius of the family
Mary considered John the genius of the family
John was taken for the genius of the family
John is the captain of the team
John waited a while, but eventually he went home
John told Mary that she should wait for him
When John arrived, he went straight to the bank
He hoped the passenger would be Mary and, indeed, it was she
John has hurt himself
Mary intended to remind herself
Mary told John that she would look after herself
Mary told John that she would look after him
You, John and I mustn't deceive ourselves
You and John mustn't deceive yourselves
John likes Mary
Mary likes John
John and Mary like each other
John has cut his finger; apparently there was broken glass on his desk
Mary's book
Her book
The book is Mary's
the book is hers
Mary has broken her leg
This girl is Mary
That girl is Mary
This is Mary
That is Mary
I prefer John's car to his employer's one
I prefer John's car to that of his employer

CHAPTER 5
John is more stupid than Bob
John is less stupid than Bob is
John is as stupid as Bob
John behaves as politely as Bob
John is the stupider of the two boys
Of the two boys, John behaves the more politely
John is the most stupid of the three boys
Of the three boys, John behaves the most politely
John is the more stupid boy
John is the most stupid boy
John is very English
John is more English than the English
John is the elder
He liked Mary considerably
He liked Mary to a considerable extent
He spoke to John sharply
He spoke to John in a sharp manner

CHAPTER 6
All the students except John passed the test
All the students had a good time but John

CHAPTER 7
Mary is in the house
Mary is kind
Mary is a nurse
John opened the letter
John opened the door
Tom and Mary are now ready
John hurt his foot
John and Beatrice hurt their feet
John, I want you
Young John
John is coming too
John isn't coming either
John didn't see anyone
John will speak to the boss today
Will John speak to the boss today?
Did John not send the letter?
Didn't John send it?
He likes Mary
John was late
Was John late?
Mary, play on my side
Play on my side, Mary
Mary play on my side
John and his ideas!

CHAPTER 8
John greatly admires Bob and so does Mary
It was when we were in Paris that I first saw John
John writes more clearly than his brother does

John only phoned Mary today
John also phoned Mary today
Only John phoned Mary today
John phoned Mary today only
John may not even have been protesting
It was only John who protested
It was also John who protested
It was not just that John protested, it was merely that he was rude
Wuen John learned what happened, he blew up
I met John on a bus
I saw John on a bus
Fortunately, John returned the book yesterday
Wisely, John returned the book yesterday
Surprisingly, John returned the money
Rightly, John returned the money
John was right to return the money

CHAPTER 9

Mary is dusting the furniture because Alice won't
John plays the guitar and his sister plays the piano
John plays the guitar; his sister, moreover, plays the piano
Although Mary wanted it, John gave it away
Although she was very tired, Mary stayed the whole evening
He said that John would take them by car but that they might be late
John might take them by car, Mary might go with them by bus or I might order a taxi for them
They disliked John – and that's not surprising
John is poor, but he is happy
John didn't waste his time in the week before the exam, but studied hard every evening
Either John sleeps on the couch or you must book a hotel room for him
Mary has washed the dishes, Mary has dried them and Mary has put them in the cupboard
John should clean the shed and Peter should mow the lawn
John must have been playing football and Mary must have been doing her homework
Yesterday John was given a railway set and Sue a doll
His suggestions made John happy, but Mary angry
John was the winner in 1971 and Bob in 1972
John will meet my family tonight and again tomorrow
John may be questioning our motives, but Peter hasn't
John could have been watching television, but wasn't
John likes Mary and Peter hates Mary
John has recently become a very hard-working student and his brother always was
Unfortunately, John is not at home and Sally is too busy to see you
If John is a member, then we should call on him and ask him to take us along
This afternoon Mary intends to take the children to the beach, but I am going to wash my car
Mary is perhaps inside the supermarket and John outside
Mary spoke and John answered rudely
John likes Mary and Peter likes Susan
John found and sold a valuable stamp
Peter and John played football

Peter and John were there
Her idea and John's
We thanked John, Peter and Robert
They will employ John, Peter and Robert
John complained to Mary and Peter
John and Mary have a cold
John and Mary make a pleasant couple
John and Mary have each won a prize
John, Peter and Robert play football, basketball and baseball respectively
John and Peter are going to Paris and Amersterdam respectively
John, as much as his brothers, was responsible for the loss
John didn't go to the show, which is a pity
We – that is to say, John and I – intend to resign
Your friend John, I saw him here last night
'John and Mary' is a co-ordinated noun phrase

CHAPTER 10

John's previous wife died last year
John was taking a shower
Mary has several close friends
As for John, he is always surrounded by friends
Even John was there
John will even sing a song if you ask him
John upset a large beautiful vase
John and Mary stole a toy from my son
John and I have finished our work
You and John seem to be finished
We saw John at eight on Monday evening
John drives a car
John can drive a car
Mary's in Chicago
Mary will enter the competition
John has a cold
John feels much better
John paid for the tickets tonight
John buys his drinks at the local supermarket
John swims a lot
John is a coward
John wanted to pay for the tickets
Bob and John were at the meeting
Mary used to listen to records most of the time
Sally was a more hard-working student than Mary was
John was the victim of a confidence trick
Mary told my father
John told me what you did
John put his career before his family

CHAPTER 11

I like John and John likes me
I like John because John likes me
John has visited New York
Because John is working, he …
For John to carry the parcels was a …

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John, then in New York, was …
Rather than John do it, I prefer to give the job to Mary
I'm sure that John is coming
John visited London in order that he could see his MP
John, soon to become a father, went to Mexico
John, feeling considerable anxiety, went to Mexico
John, told of his good fortune, went to Mexico
John, sad at the news, went to Mexico
Soon to become a father, John went to Mexico
John went to Mexico, feeling considerable anxiety
John has more new clothes than I have
'You are wrong, John' said Mary
He did not say that Mary was pretty
He said that Mary was not pretty
He didn't think that Mary was pretty
He thought that Mary was not pretty

CHAPTER 12

John was a doctor
John became healthier
John was the doctor that I mentioned
He was angry with Mary for getting married
John in interested in English grammar
English grammar interests John
He saw Mary home
John put the car into the garage
Mary placed a vase on the table
John could see Paul in the mirror
John could see himself in the mirror
Jahn cannot do it
John resembles his father
John longed to do homework
John denied having stolen the money
John began to write a letter
Everyone expected that Mary would marry John
John thought that Mary was exceptionally clever
Mary was thought exceptionally clever
John believed that the stranger was a policeman
John intended that Mary should sing an aria
Mary was intended to sing an aria
John wanted Mary to play the piano
He arranged for Mary to come at once
He telephoned John for Mary to come at once
He arranged with John for Mary to come at once
He had made Bob teach Mary
He had let Bob teach Mary
I watched Bob teaching Mary
I consider that John is a good driver
I consider John to be a good driver
I consider John a good driver
She didn't wash the shirts as clean as Mary did
They thought John the leader

They thought John a fool
They elected John the chairman
They appointed John the ambassador to Peru
They made John a useful mechanic
I paid John the money
She blamed John for the damage
She blamed the damage on John
Mary realised that she was being made fun of
John convinced me that he was right
John showed me that he was honest
John mentioned to me that they were sick
They persuaded John that he should see me
John was persuaded to see me
Mary helped John to carry the bag
He wanted Mary to teach Bob
He wanted Bob to be taught by Mary
He persuaded Bob to be taught by Mary

CHAPTER 13

The girl is Mary Smith
The pretty girl standing in the corner who became angry because you waved to her when you entered is Mary Smith
Mary Smith, who is in the corner, wants to meet you
The pretty girl, who is a typist, is Mary Smith
Then he met Mary, who invited him to a party
Here is John Smith, who I mentioned the other day
The man for John to consult is Wilson
The appeal for John to join ...
Any attempt for John to leave ...
A man like John would never do that
The present for John cost a great deal
The present is for John
The man for the job is John
John's hope of winning a prize
John's hope of Mary's winning a prize
John's hope of Mary's arrival
John will write a poem for you

CHAPTER 14

I thought John worked hard
It wasn't Jim, but John who ...
It was John who wore his best suit to the dance last night
It was John that he gave the book to
What John did to his suit was to ruin it

APPENDIX II

John's at home tonight
John's here now
John and Mary went
Really! John and Mary?

APPENDIX III

John, do you know Mary's address?
You should have asked Mary who left yesterday
John has gone already?

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