Changes in Educational Ideology in the South African Context and the Effects on Classroom Practice

Rosemary Wildsmith-Cromarty

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1. Introduction

> *What is happening in English language classrooms in black primary schools in South Africa today? Is it different to what was happening ten, twenty or even thirty years ago? Has there been any sign of change, and, if so, what has the response been?*

The above questions are central to any discussion on change in educational ideology and the subsequent effects on classroom practice in the South African context. This paper addresses the issue of the dialogic interplay between educational ideology on the one hand, and classroom practice on the other — whether, and in which ways the one "mirrors" the other, and the reasons for resistance to change. Although it is recognised that recent thinking in both educational and academic circles is along multilingual / multicultural lines, and that other South African languages are to be actively promoted in South African educational institutions, the focus of the present paper is on the English language classroom, as this has been the main focus of the research reported on in this paper. Furthermore, it is the field of English language teaching, on an international scale, which has tended to reflect ideological (and the concomitant methodological) change to the greatest degree over the past two decades.

The ideological "change" being referred to in this paper is the move from an authoritarian, prescriptive, top-down approach to education, to a more democratic, partici-

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patory, bottom-up perspective. The former ideological perspective was embodied in both "colonial" and "Bantu" education, whereas the latter has been reflected throughout the resistance movement, culminating in *Peoples' Education for Peoples' Power* and the new ANC "language in education" proposals.

2. Two Ideological perspectives: Consensus vs Conflict

Kallaway[2] and Christie[3] use the terms "consensus" vs "conflict" to describe the different ideological perspectives inherent in the history of education in South Africa. The former approach serves to maintain the status quo, where the state's right to control is naturalised and where it is perceived as being "the neutral representative of the collective will of all the individual members of society."[4] The promotion of individual rights and needs are emphasised so that schooling is perceived to be working towards the "national good" (*sic*). Policy decisions are made and implemented at the macro-level, in a top-down approach which does not invite negotiation or feedback. Innovations are often "teacher-proof" in order to reduce resistance, and learners are regarded as passive recipients of information. It has been argued that educational institutions such as schools are primary agents of social control, as they attempt to socialise people into accepting the status quo as legitimate. In the South African context, for example, the mission schools of the colonial era, and the schools created under the apartheid regime (Bantu Education) both represented the *consensus* approach. With reference to the latter, the state sought to reproduce the dominant ideology of Christian National Education (C.N.E.), which stressed obedience to the state and conformity. This extended to pre-service and in-service teacher training where *Fundamental Pedagogics* (based on C.N.E.) and *Didactics* were emphasized. Both subjects emphasized rigid control of both teacher and pupils, thereby giving rise to a restrictive type of pedagogy.

In contrast, the *conflict* approach holds that the state is "essentially an expression of the interests of specific groups of society" and is thus open to challenge by other inter-

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[2] P. Kallaway. "Education and the State: From Mass Education to Bantu Education to People's Education: Some Preliminary Notes." In Young, D. and Burns, R., eds., *Education at the Crossroads* (Cape Town: School of Education, University of Cape Town, 1987), 29.

[3] P. Christie. *The Right to Learn* (Johannesburg: Sached Trust / Ravan Press, 1985).

[4] P. Kallaway "Education and the State: From Mass Education to Bantu Education to People's Education: Some Preliminary Notes." In Young, D. and Burns, R., 29.

est groups.[5] The ideology of the state becomes "institutionalized," thereby creating conflicts with the ideologies of other sub-groups in the system, an example of this being the movement *People's Education for People's Power* which became very visible during the mid-eighties. In a *conflict* approach, educational innovation from the bottom-up is seen as having an influence on change in the wider society, as teachers become "catalysers" or promoters of change, while their learners are perceived as actively constructing and processing knowledge, instead of passively receiving it. Throughout the history of the resistance movement, this approach has been evident in terms of its challenge to the status quo.

In 1954, the African National Congress organised the "Resist Apartheid Campaign," which led to massive school boycotts and marked the formation of the ANC's "Freedom Charter." During this time, the African Education Movement was formed to give alternative education for pupils in the form of a network of "cultural clubs," the aims of which were to use songs, stories and games to teach basic maths, history, geography and general knowledge.[6] Their significance lay in the attempt to offer a different kind of education in terms of aims, methods and general approach — a type of *collective learning*, which was to reappear three decades later in the form of *People's Education for People's Power*.

The Soweto uprisings in 1976 led to a reaction from the government in power at the time in the form of the De Lange Commission of Inquiry into education in 1981, the major recommendations of which were, however, largely ignored. Dissatisfaction with apartheid education thus continued until a new wave of resistance erupted in the townships in 1984. This period also marked the formation of the Education Charter, which demanded total *transformation* of the education system. It was clear that teachers and other educationalists were questioning the relevance of the schooling system, "their authoritarianism, and the limited influence teachers have had as professionals on major decisions on the form and content of education."[7] Furthermore, the black community itself was "no longer prepared to accept, without protest, inferior, segregated, discriminatory education systems being imposed upon them."

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[5] Ibid..

[6] P. Christie *The Right to Learn* (Johannesburg: Sached Trust / Ravan Press, 1985), 55.

[7] K. B. Hartshorne. "The State of Education in South Africa — Some Indicators," *South African Journal of Science*. 81 (1985), 148-151.

School boycotts were resumed during this period and student leaders once again organized alternative education programmes at schools by way of talks, discussions and debates, in order to raise awareness in the community of issues and topics not normally discussed in government-controlled schools. In this context, students were able to openly criticise and challenge teachers who, under the normal system, were figures of unchallengeable authority. These events finally led to the formation of the movement *People's Education for People's Power* which was further strengthened through various organizations and conferences such as the Soweto Parents' Crisis Committee and the National Education Consultative Conference (1985). The National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) was formed out of these and given responsibility for initiating reform in the syllabuses and materials used in schools.

Hartshorne, cited in Kallaway,[8] outlines the essential features of People's Education (PE), drawn from various NECC congresses during 1985/6, particularly the Second National Consultative Conference. The broad goals of PE, according to Hartshorne, were to achieve a single, free, non-discriminatory, compulsory and democratic education system organised in such a way as to allow active participation by students, parents, teachers and workers in the initiation and management of PE. The values to be promoted would be "democracy, non-racialism, collective work and active participation."[9] The educational objectives, to be achieved through the stimulation of creative and critical thought and analysis, were "the elimination of illiteracy, ignorance, capitalist norms of competition, individualism, stunted intellectual development and exploitation"[10] and to equip and train "all sectors of our people to participate actively and creatively in the struggle to attain People's Power." In sum, PE was education that liberates and empowers, part of a "long-term, mass-based undertaking by a whole society to transform itself."[11] This transformative function underlies the ideological basis and aims of PE, whose specific proposals for method, content and language competence are predicated on an understanding of education as *process* rather than as *product*, thereby implying a more "democratic" type of pedagogy.

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[8] Kallaway, ibid...

[9] National Education Crisis Committee, "People's English for People's Power: draft proposals." Press Release, *The Star*. 27 Nov. 1986, 24.

[10] Ibid..

3. Changing ideologies in English teaching and literacy: Ball's model

In order to better understand the ideological switch described above, and in order to place it in a broader perspective, a more recent model, depicting changing ideologies in English teaching and literacy in particular, is presented in this paper, i.e. that of Ball et al.[12] As their model involves *two* axes, it could be seen as an elaboration of the *consensus / conflict* dichotomy. Ball et al. identify four basic *movements* or *trends* in English teaching which embody different forms of literacy. These versions of English are "political" in different ways and are involved in or related to the social reproduction of inequality and political hegemony in different ways (74). They thus perceive literacy, and, in particular, English, as an object of struggle, with competing interest groups struggling to meet their respective interests. In relation to this struggle, Ball et al relate these various "forms of English" within a single model based on a two-by-two matrix.

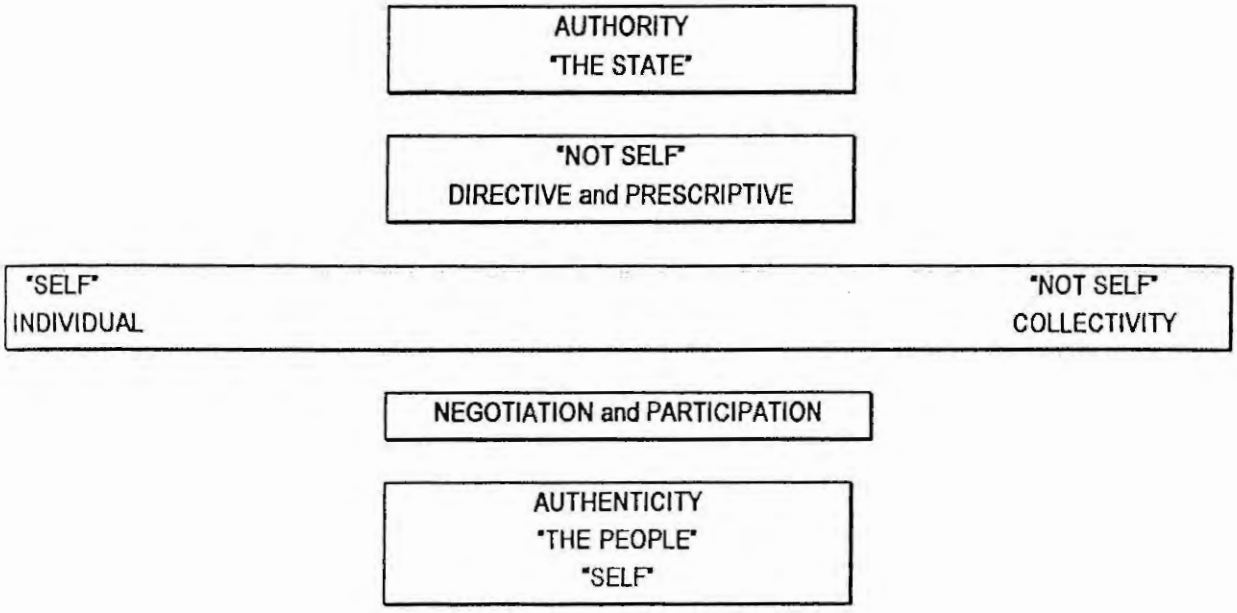

Figure 1.[13]

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[11] M. Gardiner. "Liberating Language-People's English for the Future." in *People's Education — A Collection of Articles*, 56-62 (Bellville, South Africa: University of the Western Cape, Centre for Adult and Continuing Education, 1987), 5.

[12] S. Ball, A. Kenny and D. Gardiner. "Literacy, Politics and the Teaching of English." in Goodson, I. and Medway, P., *Bringing English to Order* (London: The Falmer Press, 1990).

[13] After Ball et al.,75.

The lateral dimension moves from a focus on the *individual* on the left, where his material / personal / psychological needs are paramount, to a focus on society, or the *collective*, on the right, where the needs of the individual are subordinated to the interests of the group. The vertical dimension cross-cuts and modifies the lateral, dealing, as it does, with relationships between *authorities* and the people, rather than between *people* as individuals (as does the lateral):

> It extends from an emphasis on authoritative, directive and prescriptive forms, relationships and modes of activity, at the top, to an emphasis on negotiation, local and authentic knowledge and participative modes of activity, at the bottom. Social activity and control may be initiated from either direction, i.e. top-down, where needs (individual or communal) *and* the solution to needs are defined by *the state*, or bottom-up where needs (individual or communal) *and* the solution to needs are defined locally, at the grassroots, and in relation to perceptions of immediate experience. (77)

Fig. 1 thus depicts the *consensus* vs *conflict* dichotomy in the movement along the *vertical* dimension, from top to bottom, i.e. from the prescriptive, authoritarian structures of the state which *impose* policy on individuals and on society (*Authority*), to the bottom-up, participatory negotiations among individuals and various collectives (interest groupings) (*Authenticity*) which make known their needs to, and bring pressure to bear on the State. An interesting question at this point is whether the new ANC proposals, born out of the struggle and *People's Education for People's Power* movement, can retain their *Authenticity* in the long-term, given that the ANC is now the government in power.

With reference to the *teaching* of English, Ball et al suggest that the four major versions of English which they identify in their paper can be mapped directly onto the above model, thereby enabling the different forms of literacy to be identified with different kinds of relationships between "the subject" (English) and the state, and between the citizen (student) and the state (Fig 2). For the purposes of this paper, Ball et al.'s model effectively captures the movement among the various ideological perspectives in relation to English teaching. The model, however, has its limitations, the most noticeable being that it does not include the more recent *genre* approach to English language teaching. This approach follows on from the *critical literacy perspective* and emphasises the different uses of language in different contexts, and the principles by which one defines what a text means. However, in fairness to Ball et al, this more recent perspective only became manifest subsequent to the publication of their paper and has only recently become visible in South African academic circles. The most "progressive" form of ELT in South Africa at

present is *empowerment* in the form of *critical literacy*, so for the purposes of the present paper, the *genre approach* will not be addressed.

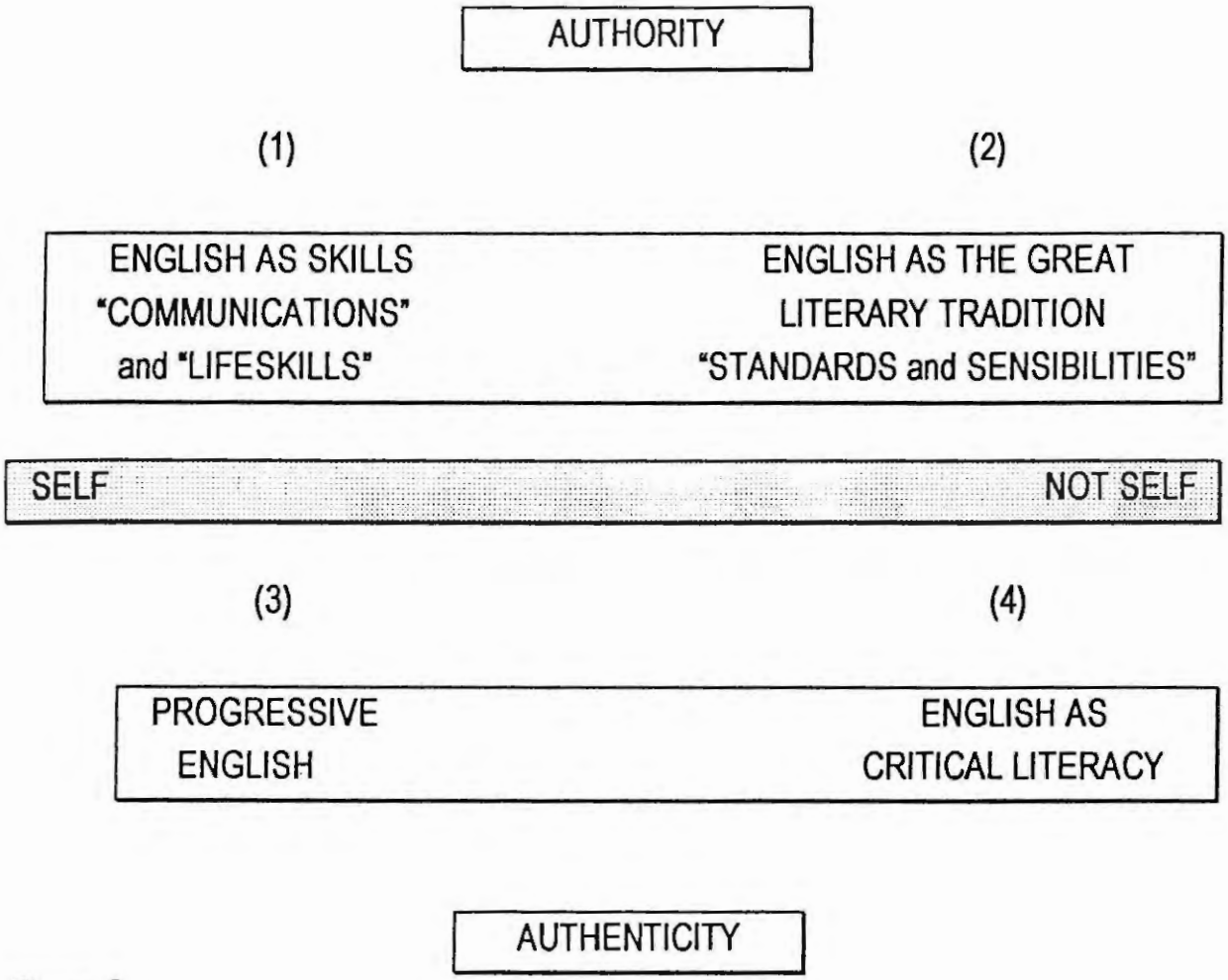

Figure 2.

Sector **(1)**: *English as Skills* emphasizes the *instrumental* nature of the skills and competencies to be acquired by the *individual* on a *competitive* basis, in order to fulfil the requirements of the economy and the market, and therefore of the state. The curriculum becomes "carefully pre-specified in terms of grade-criteria, assessment items and levels of achievement . . . failure is turned back upon the student and identified in terms of individual inadequacies." [14]

Various teaching *approaches* and *methodologies* have been employed in English *second* language teaching in order to impart these skills, ranging from *Grammar-Trans-*

[14] Ball et al., 77.

lation, through the *Direct Method* and *Audio-lingualism* to more recent *functional* and *communicative approaches*. However, the main emphasis is on the *acquisition of skills*, the attendant pedagogy resting on "a strongly behaviourist notion of motivation by reward. There is little room here for the consideration of feelings or emotions."[15]

Sector (2) emphasizes the *collective* as represented by society in the form of a *literary tradition*, which is seen as a "shared culture" or *common heritage* to be proud of, the values of which should be adhered to in order to maintain a healthy, and stable, society.

> The authority of the text is paramount . . . the tradition unassailable. The questions of what is culture, what is history are closed. The matter of what is recognised as literature is simply regarded as obvious. . . . This is the literacy of morality: English teaches the inevitability of the state . . . the demarcation of power. It is here that we place grammar teaching with its concern for a fixed, standard English.[16]

It should be noted that sectors (1) and (2) fall on the side of the lateral dimension that represents *Authority*. They thus stress *compliance* with the *status quo*.

By contrast, Sector (3) stresses the *individual* from a *humanistic* perspective i.e. the focus is on *individualised* learning and teaching — on "individual creativity and self-expression"[17] — so that each individual may realize his/her full potential. Self-discovery and personal growth are thus emphasized, as are the expression of feelings and individual responses.

> Participation and interaction are encouraged and diversity celebrated, as in the use of multi-cultural literature. The children are encouraged to explore their own agendas and concerns and to share these with the teachers. This is the literacy of personal discovery.[18]

Finally, Sector (4) stresses the *empowerment of the collective* in terms of the development of a critical consciousness: "radical" English, English which addresses social issues and confronts inequalities. For Ball et al.:

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[15] .Ibid..

[16] Ibid., 78-79.

[17] Ball et al., 79.

[18] Ibid., 80.

> The stance is oppositional . . . collective aspirations and criticisms become a basis for action. Campaigns and struggles within the community become vehicles for learning social and literacy skills. Children are taught how to "read the world," to question the grounds and origins of knowledge . . . the emphasis is upon shared experience and collective struggle: the state is challenged.[19]

Sectors (3) and (4) fall into the *Authenticity* dimension of the model, which represents *challenge* to the status quo.

In considering the history of English language teaching in black South African schools, the emphasis has been on English as skills learning and English as a literary tradition. The *instrumental* relevance of English for non-native English speakers in South Africa has been emphasised, as well as the importance of English literature. The problem with this perspective is the question of its relevance for those students of English who are *not* native English speakers. Furthermore, these "types of English" give rise to a very restrictive type of pedagogy which will be considered in more detail further on in this paper.

In contrast, Progressive English and English as Critical Literacy embody the challenge to the status quo of the People's Education movement. These forms of English demand a totally different type of pedagogy — one which focuses on the *processes of learning* rather than on the *products of teaching*. In the rest of this paper, we will consider what the state-of-the-art of English language teaching is, in black schools, and whether an alternative form of pedagogy, in keeping with the ideological stance of the People's Education movement, has been able to take hold.

4. Transmission vs. Generative Teaching

In pedagogic terms, the *consensus / conflict* ideological dimension may be seen to translate into a *transmission* vs. *generative* teaching dichotomy, i.e. a bi-polar construct based on Dewey's classic distinction[20] between traditional vs progressive views of education, which included different characterisations of the nature of knowledge and of instruction. In the traditional view, knowledge is seen as an objective, well-defined body of information, detached from human subjectivity and to be transmitted intact by the *teacher* in the role of *expert*. In relation to English teaching specifically, the two forms of English

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[19] Ibid..

[20] J. Dewey. *Experience and Education* (New York: Collier Books, 1938).

identified by Ball et al. as *English as Skills* and *The Great Literary Tradition*, which fall into the *Authority* dimension, would probably encourage this type of pedagogy, i.e. transmission mode, with a great deal of rote-memorisation for the learning of vocabulary and grammar — what Paolo Freire termed "banking education."[21] Teacher talk would dominate, and the most common interaction would be the IRF pattern (Initiation-Response-Feedback),[22] which allows no pupil initiative and very little peer-sharing. Even where the content of the lesson invited interpretation and discussion, as in the case of literature, transmission teaching would predominate with teacher control of both content, materials and interaction. This type of pedagogy would naturally be more evident in the non-native English speaking classroom where the language is unfamiliar to both teacher and pupils. The South African literature identifies this type of teaching as an "authoritarian-dependency" tradition[23] or the "rote-rhythm method."[24] This is the traditional pedagogy that has been operative in South African black schools since 1953, and which still exists today.

The progressive perspective, on the other hand, views knowledge as emerging from a process of interpretation and clarification of meanings — the equivalent of Freire's "problem-solving approach" to education, designed to lead to "conscientization" and, ultimately, social transformation. Thus meanings are multiple and varied, and need to be negotiated in the mutual construction of knowledge. The teacher's role is to provide the impetus for interpretation and critical thinking, in addition to *mediating* and *facilitating* this *process*. In relation to English teaching, Ball et al.'s *Progressive English* and *English as Critical Literacy* belong to this perspective. Learner contributions would be more valued here, thus allowing the learner time for sustained and unrestricted speech. This type of pedagogy, variously termed "interpretation"[25] or "generative"[26] teaching, allows: "the student freedom [to] use language in exploratory ways in informal, peer group controlled situations, wherein pupils themselves authorise the forms of language and what counts as

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[21] P. Freire. *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972).

[22] J. Sinclair and R. M. Coulthard. *Towards an Analysis of Discourse* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975).

[23] D. Young, ed., *Language: Planning and Medium in Education*. Proceedings of the Fifth Annual SAALA Conference (Cape Town: Language Education Unit, Univeristy of Cape Town and SAALA, 1987).

[24] C. A. Macdonald. *Crossing the Threshold into Standard Three*. Main Report of the Threshold Project (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1990).

[25] D. Barnes. *From Communication to Curriculum* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976).

valuable . . . knowledge in curricula terms." [27] This perspective represents the move towards alternative education in South Africa as reflected in the People's Education movement.

This fairly simplistic *traditional* vs *progressive* dichotomy is extended by Beeby in his model of the stages in the growth of a primary school system.[28] Beeby outlines the four broad stages as follows:

Stage 1: Dame School. Teachers are ill-educated and untrained. This stage is characterised by unorganized, relatively meaningless symbols. There is very narrow subject content with the focus on the three R's. Standards are low and memorisation is all-important.

Stage 2: Formalism. Teachers are ill-educated but trained. This stage is highly organised but symbols still have limited meaning. Teaching method and syllabus are rigid with the emphasis on the three R's. There is one textbook, external examinations and an emphasis on inspection. Discipline is tight and external with memorisation being heavily stressed. The pupils' emotional life is largely ignored.

Stage 3: Transition. Teachers are better-educated and trained. There are roughly the same goals as stage 2, but more efficiently achieved. There is more emphasis on *meaning*, but teaching is still rather thin and formal. The syllabus and textbook are less restrictive, but teachers hesitate to use greater freedom, as the final leaving examination restricts experimentation. There is still little in the classroom to cater for the emotional and creative life of the child.

Stage 4: Meaning. Meaning and understanding are stressed, and there is a somewhat wider curriculum and a variety of content and methods with individual differences being catered for. Methods used focus on activity, problem-solving and creativity, with in-

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[26] C. A. Macdonald. "Cultural Views of Learning and their Influence on Teaching Styles." Paper presented at a conference on "The Primary School curriculum in a changing South Africa: Language, Learning and Problem-solving." Johannesburg: Johannesburg College of Education. October 1987.

[27] Young, 171.

[28] C. E. Beeby. "The stages of Growth in Educational Systems." *World Bank Symposium on The Quality of Education and Economic Development.* (World Bank Publication, 1986), 37-44.

ternal tests. Discipline is relaxed and positive, and there is an emotional and aesthetic life as well as closer relations with the community.[29]

If Beeby's stages were applied to education at primary school level in South Africa (although they are applicable to both secondary and tertiary levels as well), it would appear that, in general, educational practice in black primary schools, and also in a number of secondary schools, still lies at stage 2 — *Formalism* — especially in the area of *English* teaching. Various South African studies have found that the predominant pedagogy was transmission teaching with a strong emphasis on rote-memorisation.[30] Young found that teachers "enjoyed" talking for much of the lesson, in the belief that teacher-talk ensured the flow of knowledge, thus ensuring discipline.[31] Both Macdonald[32] and Wildsmith[33] found that questions tended to be of the "closed" variety and of a fact-seeking nature. This encouraged the ritual of the "guessing game" where pupils guess what's in the teacher's head, instead of exploring what is in their *own* heads.

A prominent feature of the South African version of transmission teaching is the chorusing/chanting behaviour of pupils in response to cues from the teacher which are of two main types: the first involves the use of a set of yes/no questions or the use of a tag such as "O.K.?" or "ne?" with a rising pitch requiring a generally affirmative response from the pupils, as the following excerpt shows:[34]

Excerpt 1

T: Now, class, I want to ask you a question and I want you to think, ne?
Ps: Yes.

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[29] Ibid., 38.

[30] J. K. Chick and M. Claude. *The Valley Trust English Language Project: Research in Progress.* Proceedings of the Fourth National Conference of the Southern African Applied Linguistics Association (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand and SAALA, 1985). J. K. Chick. "Safe Talk: Collusion in Apartheid Education." Paper presented at SAALA '91 (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, 1991). Young (1987). Macdonald (1990). R. Wildsmith. "A Study of Teacher Attitudes as Related to Teacher Practices at Primary School Level in South Africa." PhD Thesis. Institute of Education, University of London, 1992.

[31] Young,op cit..

[32] Macdonald, op. cit..

[33] R. Wildsmith. *A Study of Teacher Attitudes as Related to Teacher Practices at Primary School Level in South Africa.* Unpublished PhD Thesis. Institute of Education, University of London (1992).

[34] Ibid..

T: Right! When you walk around... here... or you are in the veld... do you know what a veld is?

Ps: Yes.

T: Right. You are in the veld, or you are in a forest... what do you always see? If you walk in the veld... um... Do you see flowers?

Ps: Yes.

Both Macdonald[35] and Chick[36] identify this cue as an attention-getting signal confirming participation rather than a genuine request on the part of the teacher to gauge the level of understanding in her pupils. Macdonald makes the point that the teacher's intention is to ensure that: "children's responses correspond closely with what the teacher said. Evidence of independent thought would be sufficient to startle her."[37] The second kind of cue involves the use of a rising tone on the end of accented syllables which normally requires completion, with predictable information, by the pupils, as in the following excerpts:[38]

Excerpt 2

T: The silly girl laughed. Read the sentence class.
Ps:(Chorus) The silly girl laughed.
T: Again!
Ps: The silly girl laughed.
T: Now, we have added this word silly to the sentence. That word silly describes what a kind of a girl is this. This is a... {silly girl}.
Ps: (Chorus) {Silly girl}.

Excerpt 3

T: Now this man here is playing a tune from a.... {pipe}.
Ps:(Chorus)... {pipe}.
T: He's playing a...{tune}... from a pipe.
Ps: (Chorus) {tune}.

These lessons are typical of many others observed by Wildsmith and other researchers in relation to the state-of-the-art of both English, and other subject teaching in black classrooms. It would appear that checking of pupils' understanding of concepts and content remains at a superficial level only, and that using language for *thinking* (as mentioned by the teacher herself in the first of the above excerpts) is virtually non-existent. A

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[35] Macdonald,op. cit..
[36] Chick, op. cit..
[37] Macdonald, 83-84.
[38] Wildsmith, op. cit..

number of reasons have been put forward by South African researchers to explain this phenomenon. Chick[39] blames the erstwhile apartheid regime for the provision of inferior education, which has left teachers inadequately prepared, both linguistically and professionally, for teaching large classes of underprepared children through the medium of a second language. He thus regards the above phenomenon as "collusive" behaviour on the part of both teachers and pupils "to hide their poor command of English; obscure their inadequate understanding of academic content, and maintain a facade of effective learning taking place." (18)

In her investigation into the use of English as a second language and as a medium of instruction in black primary schools, Macdonald noted that this "chanting cycle" allows pupils to "disengage their attention" so that very little learning takes place at all and that its most worrying aspect is "its capacity to mask the absence of comprehension."[40]

Since the mid-eighties, there has been a proliferation of non-government organisations (NGOs) offering professional and academic upgrading programmes for in-service teachers. This has been in tandem with the demand for greater equality of education by the People's movement, in an attempt to uplift and empower the people by introducing new ideas and teaching methods and upgrading the qualifications of teachers. Their goal is Beeby's fourth stage — *Meaning* — but they have probably only begun to reach his third stage — *Transition* — in the institutions where they have influence. More recent thinking by ANC commissioned working groups for curriculum and policy development reveals an emphasis on encouraging independent, active and creative learners through the building of cognitive and linguistic skills *across languages* by moving from the language strengths that learners already bring with them to the classroom. This implies *bilingual/multilingual models* for the South African classroom — a perspective which harnesses the multiplicity and diversity of linguistic skill across learners and languages. This is a "generative" perspective on education, implying a pedagogy involving active exploration of concepts and ideas through language, where the contributions of *all* learners are valued and every group member is regarded as responsible for the learning process. The teacher's role "is to make this possible."[41] The question remains: *How adequately prepared are teachers for their new roles ?*

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[39] Chick, op. cit.

[40] Macdonald, op. cit.

[41] NECC Press Release 1986/7, 38.

5. Teacher resistance to new roles

Although the shift in educational ideology promises a more democratic type of pedagogy, a great deal of *teacher resistance* to the latter has been reported in various South African studies. Taitz noted teachers' dependence on tutors and materials,[42] their resistance to innovative teaching methods and very little *transfer of training* to the classroom setting. Teachers often insist on improving their own abilities and qualifications (linguistic and educational) first, before embarking upon learning more innovative teaching methods. For example, in relation to a new course initiative in rural schools run by the English Language Teaching Information Centre (ELTIC), teachers were given the choice as to the components they wished to prioritize. The unanimous choice was a Language course in the first year, followed by Classroom Management and, finally, Language Across the Curriculum for the second and third years respectively. After the end of the first year, attendance dropped dramatically. Lennard,[43] in her capacity as moderator for the COTE course organised for overseas teachers of English by the Royal Society of Arts (RSA), found that during her lesson observations of English language teachers in Soweto primary schools, teachers appeared to pay mere "lip-service" to the communicative principles underlying many activities. When questioned about the activities used in the lessons, teachers did not relate what they had been doing in the class to any particular pedagogic goal although they had been exposed to the principles underlying these activities during their course. It appeared that no transfer had been made from the course to the classroom.

Part of the reason for the lack of transfer of learning described above, could be the *withdrawal* of teachers from their own learning / teaching environments in order to attend various in-service courses. School-based or school-focused INSET seems to be more effective in the long term as teachers are exposed to new approaches and methods and see them successfully working with their own pupils in their own school setting. Projects that have had some success in this regard include the English Language Educational Trust (ELET), which runs the RSA teacher education courses in Natal, and the MOLTENO project which operates nation-wide. Both projects are aimed at *primary* school teachers (the latter at *early* primary), and include course attendance, annual workshops and confer-

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[42] L. Taitz. "Towards a Curriculum for In-service English Teacher Development Projects." Colloquium on INSET. Eighth Annual SAALA Conference. Durban: University of Natal, July 1989.

[43] R. Lennard. *Moderator's Report on the Preliminary Certificate for Overseas Teachers of English* (Johannesburg: RSA Examination Board and Sached Trust, 1988).

ences, and follow-up in the schools themselves. Teachers are able to become monitors and tutors, which provides incentive on the professional level. However, despite all the efforts put into teacher development by these projects, studies show that teacher resistance to alternative pedagogic practices still persists. Linington and Stoll[44] researched the Molteno Project in terms of the degree to which its stated aims for English Language Teaching at primary level matched pedagogic practices in the classroom. For their research context they chose six "rural" schools in KaNgwane, which were using Molteno's Bridge plus one programme (an English course for beginners on school entry). In order to assess the match, they used an adapted version of the COLT (Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching) originally developed by Allen, Frohlich and Spada (1983) in order to evaluate the instructional differences between various second language programmes in Canada.[45]

In general, the Project's main aim has been to establish an alternative curriculum which will encourage the development of independent, critical thinkers and learners. The Project thus adopted what has been termed a "*functional-communicative*" approach including the development of cognitive academic language skills — an approach in keeping with the generative perspective on education already discussed above. Linington and Stoll focused on the Project's stated "eclectic" approach to methodology, based on a learner-centred, small group approach mixed with structured teacher input and whole class activities. They found that the predominant interaction pattern in the classes observed was teacher to student transmission (57%) with a high proportion of sustained speech on the part of the teacher, whilst demonstrations, where two students would role-play in front of the whole class, was second (19%). Individual work was next (8%), with pair and group work at the bottom (4% and 3%). In addition, information requested or given was predictable and pseudo (teachers/students knew the answers) showing "a lack of spontaneity and negotiated meaning."[46] Teachers' questions were "closed," so that there was little opportunity for student initiative. The students themselves felt that the pace of the lessons was slow and that they wished for greater participation through pair work. There also appeared to be misunderstanding amongst the teachers as to what constituted pair work: "the videos

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[44] V. Linington and B. B. Stoll. "GATEWAY: A Research Study into one of the most Successful English Language Teaching Programmes — The Molteno Project." Dissertation, Department of Applied English Language Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1994.

[45] P. Allen, M. Frohlich and N. Spada. "The communicative orientation of language teaching: an observation scheme." Paper presented at TESOL 1983, Toronto (1983).

[46] Linington and Stoll, op. cit., 37.

and interviews indicated that pair work often took the form of demonstrations."[47] These findings were very similar to those of Lennard who perceived only a superficial attempt on the part of teachers to teach "communicatively."[48] It would appear that more generative, exploratory, student-centred learning might be seen as risky by teachers in this situation.

The question remains: Is this merely a period of transition through which teachers have to pass, before they begin to abandon traditional, outdated practices and adopt more innovative ones? If so, is there any way in which to hasten the transition towards an alternative pedagogy? Perhaps one way would be to focus on teachers' attitudes towards and perceptions of the language learning / teaching process in order to raise awareness of how these attitudes and perceptions affect teaching practices. Wildsmith[49] conducted a comparative study of teacher attitudes as related to practices with primary school teachers in Soweto based on the following hypotheses:

1) that teachers' views of knowledge and learning determine what happens in class and what becomes available to be learned

2) that the attitudes and perceptions of teachers teaching in a formal school setting would be far less communicatively-oriented than those teaching on projects, by virtue of their exposure to different ideologies, which, in turn, would affect their pedagogy in the classroom.

3) that, given a different teaching context and exposure to a more generative perspective on education, and hence to a different type of language teaching pedagogy, a teacher would gradually begin to change his/her attitudes towards her role and task, which would then be reflected in his/her classroom practice.

The results of the study tended to support these hypotheses. In general, a fairly consistent relationship between attitudes and practices was revealed, especially for teachers exposed to Project intervention. These teachers exhibited a more flexible, sensitive, communicative teaching style in the classroom. By contrast, the school teachers, who held more "traditional" attitudes related to a transmission mode of teaching, exhibited a highly controlling, more inflexible teaching style. However, one of the school teachers was also involved in Project teaching extra-murally and was therefore being exposed to a more

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[47] Ibid., 36.

[48] Lennard, op. cit.

[49] Wildsmith, op. cit.

generative type of pedagogy. The results of the study showed that this teacher's *attitude* had begun to change, but that the concomitant change in practice was not comparable to that in attitude. Although this teacher's pedagogy was, of necessity, more communicative because of the ideological stance of the Project, she still tended to pay mere lip-service to it. However, she did use far more initiative in her teaching than the other school teacher, and was beginning to question and reflect on her own practices by the end of the research study.

It would thus appear that educational ideology is definitely reflected in classroom practice if it becomes deeply entrenched over a long period of time and continuously reinforced through teacher training programmes, such as the ideology of Christian National Education (CNE) and Bantu Education under the Apartheid regime, both of which contributed to, and reinforced, transmission teaching. With a shift in ideological perspective, however, as was seen in the resistance movement in South Africa, intensive intervention such as that carried out by various non-governmental projects, and even a change of teaching context might be necessary before this change becomes manifest in a teacher's classroom practices.

It would also appear that a teacher's practices could begin to change if the teacher engaged in self-reflection. The focus on critical appraisal of one's own teaching practices in a continuous cycle of action research has been put forward by a number of researchers recently, including Easen,[50] Doff,[51] Wildsmith,[52] Richards and Lockhart.[53] Easen proposes that one of the possible causes for teacher resistance to innovation is what he terms a teacher's own "theory of action" which results from erstwhile teacher training and experience in the classroom.[54] This "theory of action" is what is threatened by any proposal for curriculum innovation, for if a teacher's "theories" or beliefs are deeply engrained, they might be very resistant to change. He thus suggests critically examining these theories from time to time, as confronting ourselves is often a prerequisite for making changes elsewhere. Wildsmith describes a cycle of "self-reflective attitude awareness activities" [55]

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[50] P. Easen. *Making School-centered Inset Work* (London: Open University and Croom Helm, 1985).
[51] A. Doff. *Teaching English* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
[52] Wildsmith, op. cit..
[53] J. C. Richards and C. Lockhart. *Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
[54] Easen, op. cit..
[55] Wildsmith, op. cit..

in order to raise a teacher's consciousness regarding her own attitudes and beliefs and the ways in which they might affect her practices in the classroom. Doff integrates this type of activity into his training course for teachers and teacher trainers.[56] It thus seems that consciousness-raising may be *part of* the answer to getting around teacher resistance to innovation, as the call for an alternative approach to education in South Africa which focuses on the *process* of learning necessitates a fundamental change in the attitudes and perceptions of teachers towards education in general, towards their role and task, and towards their pupils. This is the challenge facing teachers in South Africa today. The challenge facing teacher *educators* is to facilitate this process.

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[56] Doff, op. cit.

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