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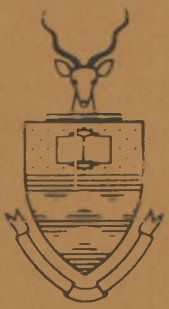
PERSPECTIVES IN EDUCATION



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DISCUSSION

EDUCATION AND CHANGE : A CRITIQUE

Shirley Pendlebury

In his article (1) "Education and Change" Clive Nettleton argues that the notion of autonomy provides the crucial criterion for distinguishing educative from non-educative schooling. Briefly, his argument is this: Education necessarily involves change but change is not sufficient as a criterion for education, since related notions such as schooling, training and indoctrination are also necessarily linked to change. Nettleton distinguishes between two kinds of change, adaptive change and autonomous change. On his view schooling for adaptive change aims at developing individuals with an ability to adapt, without questioning, to social and technological change; whereas schooling for autonomous change aims at developing individuals who are capable of making judgements about the value of change and acting in terms of such judgements. It is argued further that while the notion of morality is absent from schooling for adaptive change, it is a necessary part of schooling for autonomous change.

It is my intention in this paper (a) to consider in some detail what is encompassed in the notion of autonomy as Nettleton uses it, particularly in respect of the relationship between autonomy and the notion of morality; and (b) to challenge the claim that 'educative schooling is as fundamental a need for people as the need for food and water.'

(a) Three brief quotations from Nettleton's article indicate what he has in mind when he refers to autonomy:

"Opposed to the adaptive change view is one which places an emphasis on learning which is aimed at enabling people to make judgements about the value of change and to take action in terms of those judgements." (2)

"The aim of education on the autonomous change view is to produce individuals who are able to think clearly about what changes are needed and to make informed and rational judgements about courses of action to be pursued." (3)

"Change for the autonomous individual comes as a result of a rational choice about what ought to be done." (4)

Clearly on this view autonomy encompasses both self-mastery (ie the propensity to conform one's behaviour to one's decision about what to do) and independence of judgement.(5) What is not clear is where the notion of morality fits in. Phrases like 'a rational choice about what ought to be done' suggest that the connection between autonomy and morality is one of logical necessity. But this is not the case. Personal autonomy is not in itself a guarantee that an individual will make moral judgements and act accordingly. A murderer, for instance, may have a great deal of personal autonomy in so far as he acts in accordance with his own (independent) judgements, but we would not be inclined to call either his actions or his judgements moral. Nettleton argues that the overcoming of those limitations (ie limited resources, limited information, limited intelligence, limited rationality, and limited sympathies) which perpetuate the human predicament depends on people acting autonomously. But surely it depends on more than this. So long as autonomous action occurs without the guidance of moral concerns, it seems likely that the human predicament will continue to be perpetuated rather than alleviated. I want to suggest that the top dogs in Mr Nettleton's hierarchy - ie those responsible for the direction and control of change - are autonomous to a very large degree and that the change they initiate might well be the result of a rational choice about what ought to be done. However, as their exercise of autonomy is untempered by any concern for moral issues, what ought to be done is seen in the light of what ought to be done to further their own interests rather than the interests of others. That there are top dogs who act with a good deal of personal autonomy would seem to indicate that the development of such autonomy can and does occur within the adaptive schooling model.

Since Nettleton elects autonomous action as a candidate for the alleviation of the human predicament, he obviously is concerned with moral issues (despite his apparent misconception about the logical relationship between autonomy and morality). Let us suppose then that by autonomy he means moral autonomy and by autonomous action, morally autonomous action. Two assumptions underlying his claim that educative schooling enables people to participate in and control change are (i) that people are able to make decisions and judgements of this sort and (ii) that they ought to do so. On what grounds are these assumptions made?

Whether or not people are able to make judgements of the sort Nettleton has in mind would seem to depend on what is involved in making such judgements. Kurt Baier's analysis of independent moral judgement (6) is pertinent in this regard. He distinguishes between independent moral judgement and the level of mastery which an individual has of the forms of argument involved in moral judgements. Independence in moral judgements presupposes a certain level of mastery of the forms of moral argument. As an indication of the complexity of moral reasoning Baier lists four types of moral propostion and indicates the way in which those we make at one level require for their substantiation others from the next and higher level.

"Propositions of type (i) are those employed in answers to questions of whether or not it would be morally wrong for a given person to do a certain thing here and now..... Propositions of type (ii) are those employed in answers to the more general question whether certain types of act, such as killing someone or not supporting someone, are morally wrong for anyone, or for certain classes of people (soldiers, husbands, mothers), and that always, or in certain circumstances (war, when penniless, etc). In arriving at judgements of type (i) one has to use judgements of type (ii) ... Propositions of type (iii) are used to state what he takes to be the most general moral principles, such as justics and benevolence, or what he takes to be the supreme principle of morality, such as the Golden Rule, or the Principle of Utility, or the Categorical Imperative. They are employed in testing the soundness of judgements of type (ii) ..... Propositions of type (iv) are statements about the nature, function, and rationale of the institution of morality. They are used to explain and justify a person's reliance on the general moral principles or the supreme moral principle he in fact relies on."

There can be no doubt that a person who has not mastered at least the first two levels of moral argument cannot be said

to have independence of moral judgement. But is a mastery of the first two levels sufficient for independence of moral judgement? I think that we might grant that a person who knows and obeys the Ten Commandments, for instance, (but is not in any way concerned or able to justify them) has a limited degree of moral awareness, but to grant such a person independence of moral judgement (even to a limited degree) seems highly questionable. In any case, action in accordance with the first two levels of moral proposition is in no way contradictory to the aims of the adaptive change view of schooling; on this view people are trained to act on the basis of rules, and it is the rules involved in type (ii) propositions which provide the basis for judgements in terms of type (i) propositions. It would seem then that an ability to make the kind of judgements Nettleton has in mind presupposes a mastery of type (iii) and, perhaps, type (iv) propositions.

Moral issues aside, the claim that 'change for the autonomous individual comes as a result of a rational choice about what ought to be done' appears to rest on the assumption that what a person intends in pursuing a particular course of action is inevitably realised in the consequence of that course of action. But the link between intentions and consequences just isn't that strong or that reliable. The number of variables which could affect the outcome of a person's actions is too numerous to allow us to claim complete certainty in respect of consequences. Decisions to initiate change must inevitably involve a degree of risk, no matter how rational those decisions are. But even if we were to grant individuals complete control over the consequences of their actions, the consequences of any major social change are an altogether different kettle of fish. If it is true that people's concepts are formed within a particular way of life, then it is absurd to expect a change to a new way of life to be completely rational and controllable. There must come a point at which travellers heading for a new way of life have to leap blindly towards it. The leap may be guided by the ability to make rational and moral judgements, but since the guides themselves are influenced by the old way of life they are not infallible.

(b) Nettleton claims (7) that 'educative schooling is as fundamental a need for people as the need for food and water.' Now on the face of it, this seems to be a very odd claim indeed. In what way could education (or educative schooling) be as fundamental a need for people as their need for food and water? All living creatures need sustenance to live and it might seem quite in order to say that people, as

living creatures, also need sustenance. The trouble is that people have values, and it makes nonsense to ascribe to them needs without taking into consideration their values. Certainly under normal circumstances people do need to eat because they want to stay alive. But people go on hunger strikes, and commit suicide, and go on crash diets, and when they do these things food is just what they do not need.(8)

So much for the need for sustenance. What about the need for education? There are two ways in which I want to tackle Nettleton's claim. The first seems to lead inevitably to a rejection of that claim, while the second accepts the claim but with some modification.

When speaking of people's needs it is not enough to refer to a background of facts; what people value has also to be taken into account. But do people who have not been educated value education? That they might value schooling as a means to some end (e.g. a job, the respect of the community and so on) is not in question. If we accept the claim (either on R.S. Peters's view (9) or in terms of Van Straaten's meta theory (10)) that education is the initiation into worthwhile activities, then it would seem to be logically impossible for people to value education without first being at least partially educated.

But perhaps another way of looking at things might do more justice to the thrust of Nettleton's claim about education being a fundamental need for people. This way of looking at things involves taking note of the criteria by which we distinguish people from other living creatures. Although physical appearance comes into it, the notion of rationality is crucial to this distinction. Part of what it is to be a person is to engage in mental activity; and since education is necessarily linked to the development of understanding and reason, it is after all not so odd to see it as a fundamental need for people. It is a need for them in so far as it contributes to their fulfilment as people (i.e. as rational beings). That this way of looking at things ignores the notion of values in defining needs seems to indicate that Nettleton is making the notion of needs do too much work in his claim.

Note and References

(1) Clive Nettleton "Education and Change" in Perspectives in Education Vol 1 No 3 August 1976

(2) Ibid p 162

(3) Ibid p 162

(4) Ibid p 163

(5) Kurt Baier "Moral Autonomy as an Aim of Moral Education" in Glen Langford and D J O'Connor (eds) New Essays in the Philosophy of Education Routledge London 1973

(6) Ibid p

(7) Op cit p 166

(8) I am indebted to Tessa Phillips for discussing the notion of needs with me

(9) R S Peters (ed) The Philosophy of Education Oxford (1973)

(10) Zak van Straaten "A New Meta-theory of Education" in Perspectives in Education Vol 1 No 3 August 1976

RELATIVISM IN EDUCATION

Draw Archibald

Introduction

This paper is an initial response to Zak van Straaten's fascinating outline of "A New Meta-Theory of Education" in the August issue of this journal.

This is no "reply" (in fact some may question whether it is "discussion"); paradigms are after all incommensurable, at any rate the major ones, and presumably much everyday "talking past each other" entails the same incommensurability of standards or viewpoints.

It falls into two unequal parts of which the second and shorter is the more important. Busy readers are therefore referred to it.

PART ONE

Malays give the name "Tupai" to both the local squirrel (a rodent) and what we call the "tree shrew", on the reasonable grounds of their close similarity in habitat and appearance: both are small tree-dwellers with reddish fur and long bushy tails. However, biologists place them not only in different genera and families, but in different mammalian orders. The tree-shrew is assigned to the primates (along with man, and the bushbabies and their relatives studied by our colleague Professor Doyle) on the grounds of presumed descent as evidenced by skull structure (especially a bony ridge round the eyes, associated with the stereoscopic vision characteristic of the monkeys and man) and by the first beginnings of a grasping paw. The squirrel represents a genus (Sciurus) found in large numbers in almost all parts of the world, whereas the tree shrew occurs only in tropical south-east Asia, and even there is very rare. Size of population is a commonly used criterion of evolutionary success, but in the perspective of evolution the tree-shrew is the most primitive surviving primate, and thus, <u>for biologists</u>. significant out of proportion to its numbers.

A democracy of instances is in general to be deprecated. Biology is our superordinate discipline (and like ours a far from exact science). Its important message for us is not

the survival of the fittest but the fact that new things emerge: photosynthesis, colour vision and the ideas of Karl Popper. Also the string quartet and warm-bloodedness: remember that the range of all snakes is restricted both north and south by the limits of permanently frozen subsoil. Change occurs, and since (one assumes) it is not instantaneous and total it must start somewhere, with a seminal minority of instances. The frequency of occurrence of individuals believing (until I met Mark Orkin I might have said "knowing") the world to be round has for long periods (and perhaps intermittently) been very low.

The tree-shrew is clearly a vestigial or residual phenomenon, but a seminal one could justifiably claim at least as much more scientific attention than its mere number of cases would warrant. In any perspective of change a contemporary minority may represent a future majority or totality. Given the fact of accelerating social change hitherto and the hypothesis of its future persistence, it seems likely that somewhere among today's "deviants" there are phenomena that are neither random nor residual but seminal in that they embody future trends. It seems worthwhile to attempt to identify them: to "choose the winners" - or identify the "leaven in the lump" (I Corinthians 5:6).

It is the major finding of social science to date that man has deceived himself as to the extent of unconscious and "irrational" influences upon his behaviour. Consider the classical study by Lazarsfeld and his associates of a U.S. presidential election campaign. An outstanding finding was the very small number of individuals in the electorate who "conformed to the standard stereotype of the dispassionate, rational democratic voter". (1) They were designated "The real doubters - the open-minded voters who make a sincere attempt to weigh the issue and the candidates dispassionately for the good of the country as a whole." (2) As the investigators remark, they "exist mainly in deferential propaganda, in textbooks on civics, in the movies, and in the minds of some political idealists. In real life, they are few indeed." (3) But they exist, at least according to Lazarsfeld.

The following two statements occur in Evans-Pritchard's well-known account of faith in witch-doctors among the Azande (they are separated in the text):

> "All their beliefs hang together ... In this web of belief every strand depends upon every other strand, and a Zande cannot get out of its meshes because it is

the only world he knows ... It is the very texture of his thought and he cannot think that his thought is wrong"; (4)

"they cannot reason outside, or against their beliefs, because they have no other idiom in which to express their thoughts". (5)

They accord fairly closely with Kuhn's account of "normal" scientists working in - or "under" - a paradigm. I betray throughout a strong interest in Zak's (6) use of this concept ("paradigm") and in the difficult question of the extent to which he can be said to be (or want to be) faithful to Kuhn in this respect. Meanwhile I shall try to convince you that the above two statements cannot be true.

A large number of conceptual dissections of the world is possible, and our choice of categories (classes - each entailing a rule for discriminating) is dictated by noncognitive or extracognitive considerations. Assumptions, needs, wishes, prejudices, values and purposes of all kinds influence our categories and (where this occurs) their selection. The manipulation of categories, in turn, is often invoked in deliberate attempts to manipulate behaviour. Thus the terms "bargain", "cheap" and "super quality" are repeatedly extended by advertisers in efforts, by manipulating symbols, to influence behaviour.

The present writer finds that he consistently defines the class "fresh orange juice" more narrowly than do cafe proprietors. Classification of the South African Progressive Party as "ultra left" cannot be called false - but it is not the only way of viewing the matter. Alternative dissections of the class "motorbikes" could have as focus power, safety/reliability, appearance, or brand (as associated with one or more of the above). One's focal discrimination will influence one's answer to the question:

"What kind of motorbike do you want?" A perfectly legitimate answer would be: "A red one".

The plaque left on the Moon by the first men to land there (in July 1969) bore a legend that was rather revealing of our focal categories. It read:

"We came in peace for all mankind"

This would probably not be reassuring to a hypothetically

peaceful folk (the Martians, say) (sic) assuming they could decipher it.

Taking peaceful intentions for granted, they might ask themselves: "Why say it?" or, alternatively (lacking the concept): "In what other way might they have come?"

Similarly, protestations of honesty, sincerity or kind intentions are often disquieting. To mention honour is to suggest its opposite. The inscription on the moon plaque may not be "false" but, like many other classifications, it reflects values and interests. A popular newspaper can do a Prince Consort an ill turn by simply raising the question of certain categories of behaviour in his connection, for example in the headline:

"THERE IS **NO TRUTH** IN THE RUMOUR that Prince Philip was involved with a call-girl." As is all too well known, many politicians believe that any publicity is good publicity since whether positive or negative it keeps their names before the public, i.e., claims a share or slice of attention, that ever-scarce commodity.

While we're at it I cannot resist adding some further examples, with a local reference this time, from an old article of mine. (7) An official of the South Africa Foundation once indignantly rejected the suggestion that his organization was "racist":

> "This is utter nonsense," he said, "we have many Afrikaans-speaking members."

which is fair enough, I suppose. It's an axiom that many groups view the members of all others as human in no more than an attenuated sense (more precisely that they lack the concept "human"); it is also common to define outgroups as part of the scenery. One of Gary Player's obiter dicta comes to mind (this one on the radio), that began:

> "I and my three million fellow South Africans"

As I was sitting in the Cape Town 'Gardens' a while back (presumably only our overseas readers will need to be informed that this is a park) I overheard an Afrikaans-speaking teacher telling his class that this was where the Dutch East India Company's gardener had lived in Van Riebeek's time. "This gardener's wife," he went on, was "the first woman to give birth to a child in this country." ("die eerste vrou wat in hierdie land geboorte aan 'n kind

gegee het.") Guess what colour the teacher was. As a final, rather different example of the scenery theme I recall the days not long gone when Indians attending schools where the medium of instruction was English were puzzled to read in the prescribed history text-book that their ancestors landed at Algoa Bay in 1820; however, they soon learnt to use the index under 'the Indian problem'.

His heavy stress on the commitment or allegiance of scientists to a ruling paradigm confronts Kuhn with the problem of accounting for paradigm change. His solution is the controversial "conversion experience" whose logical complementarity to "commitment" mirrors that of "revolution" to "normal science". In what is probably his best-known passage he describes "the transfer of allegiance from paradigm to paradigm" as a "conversion experience" in which "neither proof nor error is at issue". (8) A decision to embrace a new paradigm "can only be made on faith". (9) Recently, under heavy fire, he has retreated somewhat on the "conversion experience". (10) He is rather equivocal here, perhaps unintentionally; it is clear that he insists on retaining both scientific progress and "commitment": in the same volume he suggests (11) that it is "the abandonment of critical discourse that marks the transition to a science." His efforts to have it both ways place him in what to many observers seems a logically untenable position; however, he shows a high tolerance of such positions (for which I have recently come to admire him rather more than I did.) Nonetheless "the present writer" views with dismay Kuhn's growing influence in sociology and is unable to share the gratitude for his "sociological approach to the research process" expressed by a representative colleague, the editor of a book of readings published this year under the wistful title Sociology of Science (12). Kuhn is not in my field; I am however qualified to comment on his influence on sociologists. If there are noncognitive reasons for his great popularity among sociologists it would seem profitable to seek them in continuing doubts about our scientific status and/or autonomy within science. We may plausibly attribute to sociologists a desire to emphasize the importance of their discipline; insofar as this is perceived as dependent upon autonomy we may further assume a desire to demonstrate or justify the latter. In fact many sociologists have long believed, firstly, that the autonomy of their discipline is desirable and secondly that recognition of this autonomy depends largely upon our producing specifically "sociological" explanations of social

phenomena, for example by the identification of social determinants of belief and action.

It would be prudent to recognise the possibility - to put it no higher - that the desire for autonomy has strengthened the holistic, functionalist and "sociologistic" tradition in sociology (from Durkheim to Parsons) and given sociologistic theories an advantage over their rivals irrespective of their cognitive merits. Kuhn's thesis certainly accords with the sociologistic trend. He now holds more than ever that the appropriate analytical unit in the study of science is the group rather than the individual, and that it is through the competition of groups, not of theories or individuals, that science advances. Communities are the units that produce and validate scientific knowledge.

All I wish to say here is that the sociologistic position is only one of those to be found within sociology. In fact there is an individualistic groundswell on the way.

Unlike Durkheim we have no need to persuade the French higher education authorities to recognize our independence.

PART TWO

The Templars had twenty-two Grand-masters of whom over half died in battle. The order was charged with pride, immorality and impiety, and even with betraying Frederick II and St. Louis to the infidel (in 1229 and 1250 respectively) but never, from the beginning to the end of the order's two hundred years of history, was a Templar accused of cowardice before the enemy.

Studying the history of the custom of seppuku (vulgarly "hara-kiri") that is, suicide by self-disembowelment, one discovers that some samurai came to consider it an appropriate gesture of bravado or defiance to draw out part of the entrails and leave them hanging from the wound. (13)

Unfortunately I cannot now develop any further the many lines of thought provoked by Zak's paper. Meanwhile I offer for consideration the following suggestions:

That a culture-studying culture is rather special; consequently that in connection with the fourth paragraph of part one the chap to watch is Lazarsfeld himself. How does he vote? (And I don't mean for which candidate.)

That sociology is the elucidator of the alternatives of the makers of history. (14) That education can and should lead people out of received culture before returning them to it with an enhanced capacity to entertain alternatives both cognitive and normative.

That we should therefore fortify them in the comtemplation of contingency. This means an enhanced respect for past suffering. We should cherish the past: it's the only one we have. (We have any number of futures.)

Footnotes

(1) Lazarsfeld (see References below) pg 99
(2) ibid pg 100
(3) ibid pg 100
(4) Evans-Pritchard pg 194
(5) ibid pg 334
(6) Please will strangers permit this familiarity in the interests of brevity, yes, but not solely of this.
(7) Archibald (1969) pgs 422-423
(8) Kuhn pg 151
(9) ibid ph 158
(10) Kuhn in Lakatos & Musgrave (eds) pgs 231-278, especially sections 5 & 6
(11) Kuhn in Lakatos & Musgrave (eds) pgs 1-24
(12) Barnes pg 62
(13) Varley pg 35
(14) See my carefully-titled paper "Truth the Great Red Herring"

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THROUGH THINKING THE UNTHINKABLE MAY BE THOUGHT

Paul Beard

Van Straaten's belief in a Meta-theory of education (1) reminds me of the parable told by Wisdom. Briefly, two explorers come upon a clearing in the jungle which was overgrown with weeds and flowers. One explorer says "Some gardener must tend this plot." nowever the other disagrees saying "There is no gardener." So they settle down to watch, but no gardener is seen by either. "But perhaps he is an invisible gardener." They set up traps to reveal the gardener, but no intruder appears. Yet still the believer is not convinced. "But there is a gardener, invisible, intangible, insensible to electric shocks, a gardener who comes secretly to look after the garden which he loves." The Sceptic despairs. "But what remains of your original assertion? Just how does what you call an invisible, eternally elusive gardener differ from an imaginary gardener or even from no gardener at all?"

In this parable we can see how what starts as an assertion, that something exists, may be reduced step by step to an altogether different status. The Sceptic is suggesting that the Believer's initial statement had been so eroded by qualification that it was no longer an assertion at all. What I am suggesting is that Van Straaten's belief in a meta-Theory, part of which is a two stage theory of paradigms, (he is ambiguous here, see his note three) subsequently leads to a series of ad hoc second order beliefs which add to his original assertion, but do not necessarily validate it.

It may be however that we both have different 'bliks' (a term used by Hare) about the world. It was Hume who taught us that our total interaction with the world depends upon our 'blik' with the world and that such differences between 'bliks' cannot be settled by observations of what happens in the world. That was why, having doubted the ordinary man's 'blik' and showing no proof could be given to make us adopt any particular 'blik' he turned to backgammon to take his mind off the problem. Van Straaten could of course take up bingo.

My criticisms will focus on part (a) of van Straatens' 'blik' and his statement concerning paradigms.

His first interpretation is that "Education is a multi dimensional, polymorphous process which consists in the transmission and acquisition of an inter-animated set of paradigm imbedded theories" - Wonderful stuff! - Somehow from this he extracts a two stage distinction, Major and Minor paradigms "The distinction is one of scope." Surely it is more than this? The "'Major' paradigms determine the fields of information and the form and adequacy of the particular theories (the Minor paradigm) which occur within the scope of their frameworks." Such thinking may be termed the 'hippopotamus technique' after the habit they have of quickly rotating their tails while defecating thereby producing a "multi dimensional... transmission."

Like Popper, I suppose Van Straaten admits that at any moment we are prisoners caught in the framework of our theories. If we try we can break out of our framework, it will be a better and roomier one from which we can break out again. Similar no doubt to a tube of toothpaste upon which Van Straaten has stepped, it becomes free from its original polluting container and finds the limits of another one. The possibility of breaking through a paradigm of thought into a roomier one inheres in the recongition that there maybe some transcendent or meta-theoretical position from which these assumptions may, like any other taken-for-granted thoughts, become problematics rather than givens. The question of how transcendence can be attained has still to be answered. Let me take this further. The most interesting thing about a conundrum is that its recognition is only available from a perspective which transcends the spawning paradigm, and once seen a metamorphosis takes place and we have a paradox. Like the belief in progress which characterizes normal science, the conundrum, symptomatic of extraordinary science (Major Paradigm) can be identified only through hindsight. It is then only form the point of view of a roomier - transcendent - theory that conundrums can be distinguished from ordinary puzzles. Yet by the time this perspective is attained the conundrum will have dissolved into paradox. So while normal science (Minor Paradigm) may be described as a puzzle solving enterprise, extraordinary science (Major Paradigm) cannot be viewed as a direct, logical outcome of a puzzle solving activity. In essence the attempt to solve puzzles can <u>never</u> logically entail the creation of a bigger, roomier or transcendent meta-theoretical position. To assume this is as bizzare as an escaping French Legionnaire in the Sahara who solves the problem of his thirst by drinking cold beers at each mirage.

To remain at the 'Meta stage' a while longer. If we focus on science and we devise a scientific language 'L' which contains among other terms 'blik' then in Van Straaten's terms construct a 'Meta-L' and define 'reference' in such a way that "blik" refers to 'bliks'. Now if different scientific theories 'Ta' and 'Tb' are associated with different formal languages 'Li' and 'Lii' as they must be if words have different meaning in 'Ta' and 'Tb' then they will be associated with different Meta-languages 'Meta-Li' and 'Meta-Lii'. In 'Meta-Li' we can say that "blik" refers to 'blik', meaning that "blik" in the sense of 'Ta' refers to 'bliks' in the sense of 'Ta', and in 'Meta-Lii' we can say that "blik" refers to 'bliks' meaning that "blik" in the sense of 'Tb' refers to 'bliks' in the sense of 'Tb'; but there is no Meta-Language in which we can even express the statement that "blik" refers to the same entities in 'Ta' and 'Tb' - or at least no prescription for constructing such a Meta-language. In short "blik" is theory dependent as well as the semantic notions of reference and truth.

I therefore view with extreme scepticism Van Straaten's assertions about a Meta-theory which is supposed to embrace a number of theories.

I am also worried by his reliance upon the notion of paradigms. To explain this I will briefly pose two perspectives which suggest the problematic nature of the term.

A mono-paradigmatic theory implies paradigms are not discipline wide but sub-disciplinary. Their span is likely to be coterminous with that of specialities; conversely specialities will be paradigm-bonded social systems. They are psychologically exclusive, socially monopolistic, historically discrete, and are logically and epistemologically incompatible, incommensurable, and non-cumulative.

Alternatively a poly-paradigmatic model implies paradigms are complementary and lacking in individual self sufficiency, thereby taking a stand against Kuhn, whose model suffers from the fallacy of misplaced discreteness. Information and recognition flow between specialities as well as within them, both at a disciplinary and a cross disciplinary level. The interdependence of functionally distinct structures creates what Durkheim called 'organic solidarity' in addition to the 'mechanical solidarity' within the speciality. In Polanyi's terms we have overlapping neighbourhoods.

Within both mono and poly paradigmatic theories it is possible to speak of degrees of maturity or degrees of paradigmaticness which would involve a drastic modification of the very concept of paradigm.

Such diffuseness as neighbourhoods, the levels of speciality, or degrees of maturity and specificity, can in no way substantiate the 'a priori' use of paradigms by Van Straaten to construct a Meta-theory "the generality..(of which).. allows us to claim merits." It is the generality of such a theory which disallows the validity of cognitive belief.

As I understand it van Straaten's meta-theory, which I have argued against, seem to subscribe to a holistic model based on some form of consensus. He further assumes that education is the transmission of paradigms, and I have tried to show how problematic such a foundation can become. I feel that none of his assertions, even the 'transparent' one that education is the acquisition of an ideology, warrent a revolution (or paradigm shift), of seismic proportions.

Reference

(1) Van Straaten, Z. "A New Meta-Theory of Education" in Perspectives in Education Vol 1 No 3 August 1976

INDOCTRINATION : SILENCE IMPLIES CONSENT

Franz Auerbach

I have been very interested in the indoctrination-by-omission debate in the pages of this journal, particularly since I investigated the topic of prejudice in Transvaal history textbooks and syllabuses in a thesis which earned me a measure of notoriety.

At that time, I found that the omission of important relevant facts in textbooks was a major flaw in a number of topics in many textbooks. (A key item was failure to explain differing systems of land tenure as a factor in causing the disputes on the Eastern frontier.)

Ever since then I have been concerned about how we might ensure that history textbooks should contribute less than they do to one-sided pictures of the past carried in the minds of thousands of South Africans, pictures which influence them in their views and attitudes towards fellow South Africans from whom they differ in language, race and/or religion.

It seems incredible that while meetings of minds between textbook writers of different countries have been going on in Europe and elsewhere since 1921 - with a brief interruption in the decade preceding 1945 - such meetings to discuss divergent interpretations do not take place between English- and Afrikaans-speaking South African writers of textbooks, nor between Black and White teachers and lecturers. If, as is happening, writers from Poland and West Germany can meet to discuss their common past, why is this not done in our country among the various groups?

As Professor Boyce stated in an article "Education or Indoctrination?" in the September issue of the Transvaal Educational News:

> the interpretations given in many South African history books are based on the pioneers in South African historiography like Theal and Cory ... Traditional errors are thus perpetuated and gain authority by mere repetition.

Many university teachers seem to feel that nothing can be done in this field because all interpretations are

subjective, and because school textbooks do not matter much anyway ... Yet the majority of South Africans neither attend university nor, if they do, study history there. So if they see only school textbooks in the subject, they may not, for example, have heard anything to counter the empty land myth, since many of their teachers may have the same stereotypes in their minds as the stereotypes in the books from which they teach ...

* * * * * * * * *

During September I was privileged to attend a discussion on indoctrination among members of the Faculty of Education, a discussion preceded by 'inputs' presented by Professor Boyce, Mr Z van Straaten and myself.

Professor Boyce gave a variety of examples from his wide and deep historical knowledge. I confined myself to the subject of Youth Preparedness and veld schools. In the latter, thousands of children are being taught effectively not only veldcraft and stalking, but also to fear communism, the butterfly symbol, the peace sign, teachers who question textbooks, and a variety of other 'evils'.

What disturbed me was that neither Professor Boyce nor I seemed to make much impact on those present, judging from subsequent discussion in the group. While I believe that what is being taught in some veld schools is likely to intensify the dangers of inter-group conflict in South Africa, especially since it is taught to White pupils only, the whole topic seemed to arouse little more than mild amusement in the groves of academe ...

I am aware that English-language institutions and organisations in our country suffer from a feeling of impotence. Many have warned and opposed for a generation, with little noticeable effect. This may lead to a feeling that speaking out on some forms of indoctrination to which thousands of schoolchildren may be exposed, e.g. in veld schools, is not worthwhile, because little change is likely as a result of such speaking out. Or, possibly, that this is not a matter that ought to concern university teachers.

I disagree on both counts.

First, the authorities are sensitive to criticism in this field, but too many people are afraid to voice it, and some voice it politely in communications to the authorities which, because they are private, can safely be brushed aside.

Therefore, some investigation - to substantiate what I briefly indicated that morning - and subsequent exposure, would at any rate make the general public more aware of what is going on. It could, indeed do more. The Transvaal Teachers' Association, in representations it has made on the subject, was told that there had been so few complaints.

Second, allow me to quote from the second Chancellor's Lecture given at this university by Professor Birley in 1965:

> It is certainly not the business of a university to become a kind of unofficial political opposition. But this does not mean that it should ignore what happens in the world outside it. The fate of the German universities in the 1930's should be a warning to us. They believed that, as long as they preserved the right of free research and free teaching within their own walls, they need not concern themselves with what was happening in their country.

One is tempted to quote more. But the central point, to me, is that the Faculty of Education of the University should be concerned with what is happening to Education in South Africa, not only with what is happening within the walls of the University.

In his inaugural address (1), Professor Hunter made powerful suggestions about the extent of that concern for Education. I would argue that to say nothing about the growing militarisation of White youth, and its increasing diet of fear and suspicion of all manner of outside influences, is to remain silent where one ought to speak out. In this field, as elsewhere, silence implies consent. Are our university colleagues ready to voice their concern?

Reference

(1) Hunter, A.P. "The study of education: priorities in the South African context" Inaugural Lecture 21 September 1976.

HISTORY IN BLACK HIGH SCHOOLS

Wendy Carstens

In the 1974 NSC (National Senior Certificate) history examination about 74% of Black candidates failed, about 26% passed. How can results like this be accounted for?

This was one of the questions in a survey administered in 1975 to ascertain teacher attitudes to the NSC history syllabus. A questionnaire was sent to teachers of Black pupils doing NSC history. The majority of the 27 who replied were males, under forty (Black and White) who had a BA and a teaching certificate and who claimed to enjoy studying and teaching history.

In the questionnaire each section of the syllabus had to be rated for its popularity on a 1-5 scale. The results were tabulated and the order of popularity calculated. The following overall pattern emerged: certain European history sections were clear favourites, and certain South African sections were not at all popular.

Table of Sections in Order of Popularity

(The most popular sections are at the top of the table, the least popular at the bottom. South African history sections are underlined.)

1 The old order and the Napoleonic period.
2 The rise of national states in Europe.
3 Relations between the British Government and the Boer Republics.
4 From Versailles to the Second World War. The New World 1945
5 Immigration and expansion in South Africa. The Republic's neighbours. Imperialism and relations between the great powers.
6 Democratic development in Britain. Non-Europeans in South Africa.
7 Political history in South Africa after 1910.
8 The evolution of our form of government.

The old order, the Napoleonic period, and the rise of national states were generally liked because they were felt to be relevant and were free of intense emotional involvement. In addition, the wealth of

material available and the charisma of certain personalities was appreciated.

> 'Those ringed steal the show because of their relevance to our particular situation.'
>
> 'The old order in Europe, for instance, for obvious reasons (although our pupils have to be coaxed to see the relevance.)'
>
> 'Unifications - because they show how through nationalism unity of people can be achieved.'

In South African history:

> 'The struggles of the Boer Republics is a good lesson to developing Bantu national so-called states.'

Reasons for dislikes fell into four categories: topics were thought to be either too complicated, or dull, or irrelevant, or distasteful. The last two are the most disturbing reasons. Many mentioned the distastefulness of South African history:

> 'I find teaching South African history most hurting. Even where I think I like a topic it is always going against my convictions and most of all it is not true. South African history is about Whites only. Blacks only appear as stutterers or underdogs and one must needs be Black in order to appreciate this fully.'
>
> 'South African history as it is presented is very distasteful to me. I hate telling the pupils that their forefathers were thieves and dishonest because I know that this is not true. It is written by White writers who express a White point of view.'
>
> 'The history of the Bantu and Indians is calculated to impress on a Black child a sense of inferiority.'
>
> 'There is a bias in textbooks, sentimentality, etc. particularly in dealing with South African history.'

In the NSC history examination 5 questions had to be answered, two from the European history section, and two from South African history section, and one further question from either section. Teachers had to teach South African history so that pupils could pass the examination. It has been noted in the past that one of

the reasons for poor results in the external examination is that candidates have frequently refused to answer the section on South African history.

If the responses which were elicited by my survey are indicative of widely-held attitudes it is clear that there is deep resentment against doctrines which try to perpetuate the notion that Blacks are inferior. One wonders what the effect of this resentment is on pupils and, ultimately, what longterm effects it might have.

The situation calls for a reconsideration of the teaching of South African history in South African schools, so that it becomes relevant to all South Africans. At the moment the presentation of South African history is out of phase with new moods, such as that of Black Consciousness. It also appears to be dangerous. Perhaps it has been a factor too in the explosive violence that has recently been experienced in Black schools. This violence reveals frustration.

Reform of syllabus content is unlikely, alone, to counteract the feeling of alienation expressed during my survey. What is needed is a wider presentation of South African history that takes cognisance of developments in the writing of South African history over the past ten years. Such reform could be achieved only were representatives of all groups to play an active role in compiling history syllabi, textbooks, examinations, and so on.

If properly presented, such history could play a dynamic role in the education of children. It cannot, and should not, hide the injustices to the dignity of people that have occurred in the past, but it can create a better understanding of the motives and fears that caused such actions.

ARTICLES

EVALUATION AND DISTANCE LEARNING SYSTEMS (1)

Robin Lee

My paper has five parts. In the first part, I tell a cautionary tale of a certain prince who was faced with a decision and did not adequately organise his evaluative research. In Part Two, I will attempt definitions of "evaluation" and "distance learning systems", and place the connection between the two in the general context of curriculum design, development and evaluation. From then on, we can become more practical, under the general heading of how to do your own evaluation. In the third part I set out a chronological scheme for introducing and practising systematic evaluation in a distance teaching department. In Part Four, I distinguish several areas of interest about which evaluative data might be collected and acted upon in the normal course of departmental activities, and comment upon the methodologies that might be used to collect this data. And finally, in the fifth part, I return to the crucial question that beset our prince - how to relate the findings of our evaluative research to the crucial field of decision-making and action.

Part One : A cautionary tale

Once upon a time there lived a Danish prince with a problem. He could not quite define this problem, though he suspected that his mother and uncle had a hand in it. He had a strong feeling that something was rotten in the system - but what? Then the evidence began to come in, and he could begin to

evaluate the situation. Three field workers working at night, reported on strange happenings - subjectively, of course, and their data had to be treated with caution as they had an interest in the interpretation. Above all, their evidence could not be quantified. The prince could only confirm their field observations with his own - and, as he neglected to use an approved observational matrix to record this experience, and completely neglected opportunities for video taping for later replay, his own data remained open to criticism.

This was not good enough. The prince decided to implement two reputable methodologies. The first was drawn from the field of ethnomethodology, and involved immersion of the observer into the tribe, in this case by the adoption of a ritual pattern of behaviour (madness) which would give the prince opportunities for the collection of data that would not usually come his way. The second methodology was the familiar experimental design. Having formulated his hypothesis, the prince devised a control group/experimental group situation, in which the subject would be confronted with a phenomenon to which his reaction was hypothesised. Certain players were engaged to create the experimental situation. All variables except that of the subject's previous experience could be controlled, and the difference measured between his behavioural response and that of the control, composed of a random group of courtiers. At last - quantifiable data.

In this summary we need not go into the nature of the problem. Suffice it to say that both methodologies yielded evidence that action was required. And it is at this point that the prince really failed. First, he decided to convey his evaluative data to one of those involved (the Queen) in the form of a private confrontation. Of course, his evidence was immediately rejected, and the confrontation situation only served to harden attitudes on both sides. The project team had violent disputes with the evaluator, and eventually it became necessary to dismiss the Director (King), his chief policy advisor (Polonius), the trainee manager (Laertes) and the evaluator himself. A completely new Director had to be brought in from Norway to restart the project on a different basis.

I have told this tale to stress 3 important ideas about evaluation:

(i) evaluation is an activity we are engaged in continuously, and educational evaluation is only the

application of this activity to a certain area of life;

(ii) however, once we set about an evaluation, we soon realise that certain data is more reliable and more valid than other data, and that this is closely related to the methods used to collect the data;

(iii) and finally, that evaluative data is only worth collecting if it assists decision-making; and, as the decision-maker usually is (and should be) someone other than the evaluator (look at Hamlet's problems in filling both roles), it becomes crucially important just how we mediate our evaluative results to decision-makers.

These three groups of ideas run through this paper.

Part Two : Definitions of evaluation and distance learning systems

First, what do we mean by "evaluation"? At the moment, educational evaluation involves the systematic collection of information about educational programmes for the purpose of improving those programmes. By "programme" I mean anything from a single sequence of lessons up to the entire teaching activity of a Department.

Then, what is a distance learning system? Like most educational systems, it consists of 3 elements - the teacher (or, in this case, the group producing learning materials), the student, and the method or methods used to establish communication between teacher and student. The "distance" element means that there cannot be regular, face-to-face contact between teacher and student. This may be because of physical separation, difficult working conditions, or social or political separation. An element of "system" will be necessary to organize and direct the communication and will involve the distribution of materials, the "back-up" activities at the student's end (study centres, summer courses, etc.) and feedback from student to teacher.

There is obviously a particular relevance of evaluation to a distance learning system. Because of the distance involved, the usual personal feedback of the classroom situation is absent. Thus, in an already highly formalised system the collection of data has to be formal, too. In the normal course of operation of the Department, information will be collected - mainly assessment of student performance and,

perhaps, information on general patterns of misunderstanding and error. There may also be information spontaneously offered by students concerning the course, but this has to be seen as unrepresentative. But a reliable evaluation will usually entail a set of activities which are not routinely undertaken by the teaching staff of a language department and which may not initially fall within the usual range of their skills: because, in evaluating, they have systematically to collect and provide the evidence on which decisions can be taken about the feasibility, effectiveness and educational value of the courses they offer and the system through which they are offered. (2) As Naomi McIntosh of the Open University has observed, such evaluations can concentrate on at least 4 levels : evaluation of the need or demand for the course, evaluation of the effectiveness of the whole course, evaluation of smaller blocks or units within the course and evaluation of one or more media components of the course. (3) In each case, the aim would be to collect and provide evidence for decisions.

Part Three : Sequence of evaluation

This is where we become more practical. Let us assume a Department which is interested in establishing useful and reliable methods of evaluation of its distance teaching curricula. How, in sequence, could this Department go about its task? There are 4 stages:

(i) it would be necessary to undertake some basic research into evaluation itself, in order to become familiar with the "state of the art" and with the variety of methods and approaches which might be adopted. This background information could be provided by consultation with people already working in the area of evaluation, perhaps on a commission basis. It would be more permanently useful, however, if certain members of the teaching staff of the Department undertook this research, either in addition to or in place of the subject-based research expected of them;

(ii) once the Department has an overview of the aims and methods of evaluative research, the staff could plan an initial piece of evaluation. Whatever they decided to evaluate, a viable plan would have three elements: (a) it should be directed at evaluating an important aspect of the Department's activities; (b) the plan should be feasible to carry out, given the resources the Department could devote to the

task; and (c) there should be a commitment to take appropriate action, along lines indicated by the findings of the evaluation;

(iii) once the plan has been approved, the evaluation should be carried out, preferably by members of the Department acting as a team. The information is assembled and, perhaps, recommendations put forward;

(iv) finally, the findings of the evaluation are presented, first to the whole Department and then to the executive or decision-making group within the Department. At this point, the decisions indicated by the evaluation are placed in a wider context which may include academic policy guidelines, staffing limitations or financial controls. The executives in the Department must, obviously, weigh all these factors when deciding which of the findings of the evaluation can be acted on.

These steps - background research, planning, implementation, decision and action - are all essential components of a successful evaluation. The whole programme can break down on inadequate work in any one area; but, in my experience, the area of most likely failure is that of ensuring that appropriate action is taken.

Part Four : Areas of interest and appropriate methodologies

In this section, I have tried to strike a balance between just making lists of areas of interest and methodologies and providing insight into why the areas are of interest and how the methodologies work. You will realise that this is the crucial "operational area" of evaluation and cannot, in practice, be gone through quite as quickly as this. I distinguish 5 areas of interest with their appropriate methodologies:

1. The inherent quality of the learning materials provided: These are mentioned first as they carry the burden of the teaching. In evaluating materials, one would consider matters such as coverage of syllabus, clarity of objectives, styles of teaching, use of exercises, clarity of instructions to students, appearance and effectiveness in teaching the content covered. Two main methodologies could be followed in evaluating the quality of the materials:

(a) educational effectiveness could be measured by student

achievement tests, covering all the main teaching aims of the unit or course and administered in an acceptable pre-test/post-test design;

(b) inherent quality: could be assessed according to agreed categories by an expert or panel of experts. The University of Sussex has developed a successful scheme for such an analysis of curriculum materials, and there are several others available.

2. Student progress through the course: the aim here is to evaluate the process of learning, and would concentrate on the sequence and pacing of units, estimates of time a student can spend on a course in relation to course content and time available, estimates of the difficulty of components of the course, and indications whether more or less time is needed. In short, one would aim to decide whether the course can be done in the time specified, and to produce a guide to the required rate of study.

The appropriate methodology would involve setting up a sample of students who fill in and return progress and difficulty sheets, the data from which is compared to their (or an equivalent group's) real progress.

3. Student attitude: there are three main reasons for evaluating student attitude. The students are the recipients of the course and if they do not like it, there is obviously a failing in the course. But research shows a link between favourable attitude and good motivation and favourable attitude and good achievement. The appropriate methodology would involve the development and administration of a reliable attitude questionnaire covering important components of the course, a method of consideration of the results of this, and established steps for action.

4. Administrative and delivery systems: in a distance learning system these play a large part; from planning of the production of courses, writing, production itself, delivery to students, receipt of work, integration of media to "turn-around-time" in marking. You know better than I that this is where the system often rubs the student most. The methodology would involve identifying areas, and applying techniques adapted from organization and methods to trouble-shoot these.

5. Student achievement: traditionally, this is the evaluative touchstone - percentage pass or fail. Meaningfulness in this area depends on the final test, so

that could be evaluated in form and content. But there are other areas such as relative progress on tests during the year by groups of students, patterns of error which reveal weaknesses within a general course, and above all, failures and drop outs. Why? The basic approach here is the keeping of systematic records, producing a regular pattern of analysis according to the information needed and presentation of the results.

Part Five : Relation between evaluative research and decision-making

Until recently, efforts in evaluation concentrated on the need for it and how to do it. Thus, an avalanche of data became available. Now the crucial question is, rather, how to use the information collected by evaluative research and how to get decisions based on it. There is perennial complaint from evaluators: if you can't count it, it doesn't count; and if you can count it, it isn't it! On the other hand, planners complain that data reaches them in so tentative a form that they don't know what to do with it:

> The following data should be used extremely carefully. The reader should not extrapolate the findings of this study to any other setting, at any other time or in any other way. These data are based on a limited sample, possibly not representing the total population involved. (4)

The essential conflict is between a researcher committed to a social research methodology and a practising professional wanting to get things done. But there are ways of dealing with this:

(a) a prior agreement between evaluator and user on kind of information wanted, and degree of reliability;

(b) a structure of decision-taking commitment;

(c) a clear agreement on the times at which evidence is needed for decisions;

(d) an agreed form of presentation, preferably not the lengthy formal evaluation report;

(e) the degree of understanding of and commitment to evaluation in the organisation as a whole.

This last point is the one worth stressing. No evaluation can be fruitful if it is seen as simply critical, and external to the teaching and learning aims of the Department. These words should be imprinted on all evaluation designs:

The purpose of evaluation is not to prove but to improve. (5)

Notes and references

(1) Based on a paper delivered to the Department of English, University of South Africa, 17 June 1976.

(2) This definition of evaluation is adapted from Keith Cooper "Curriculum evaluation - definition and boundaries" in Tawney, D. (ed) Curriculum evaluation today: trends and implications. London 1976.

(3) McIntosh, Naomi : "Evaluation of multi-media educational systems - some problems", British Journal of Educational Technology. Vol 5, No 3, October 1974, pp 43-59.

(4) Goolar, Dennis: "A pragmatic examination of the use of research and evaluation data in decision making", paper presented at the International Conference on Evaluation and Research in educational television and radio, The Open University, April 1976.

(5) Educational Evaluation and Decision making. F. E. Peacock Publishers, Hasca, Illinois, 1971.

STUDENT EVALUATION OF TEACHERS : THE EFFECT OF ATTITUDE SIMILARITY

Christopher Orpen

The theory of social comparison processes (1) suggests that persons are attracted to each other on the basis of similarity in opinions, attitudes, and emotional states. Reinforcement theory has also been used to account for the consistent finding that attraction is positively related to the number of expressed attitudes and opinions of others that are similar to one's own (2). The argument is that confirmation of a belief, support of one's actions, etc. are rewarding events, since they provide information as to how effectively one is interpreting and coping with reality. On the basis of these theories it is to be expected that attitude similarity with a teacher will influence the evaluative responses of pupils to that teacher. More specifically, it can be predicted that an attitudinally similar teacher will be regarded by pupils as not only more attractive as a person but also as more competent than an attitudinally dissimilar teacher.

An opportunity to test this prediction arose during the course of a recent longitudinal study on occupational choice among high school pupils. As part of the larger study, 40 pupils in a particular class (average age, 16.7 years) were given a fourteen-item opinion scale in which they indicated their feelings about such controversial issues as smoking, obedience to authority, women in to-day's society, and war. A week later 21 of the pupils received individualized booklets containing the same scale with responses that agreed with those of the particular pupils on either .14 (two out of fourteen) or .86 (twelve out of fourteen) of the total number of issues (items), using the so-called 'constant discrepancy' technique for manipulating degree of similarity-dissimilarity. The pupils were told that the responses to the scale were those of a fictitious teacher. They were asked to examine the booklet in an effort to find out as much as they could about the teacher, and then to express their opinion of the teacher on five 7-point scales, indicating the degree to which they felt the teacher in question would (i) be open-minded rather than close-minded (ii) make oneself feel relaxed rather than nervous, (iii) be liked rather than disliked as a person by oneself, (iv) be desirable rather than undesirable as an instructor, and (v)

be a competent rather than an incompetent teacher. A series of one-way analyses of variance were performed on the ratings given by the pupils to the similar and dissimilar teachers. The similar teachers were rated by the pupils as significantly more open-minded ($p < .05$), more able to make one feel relaxed ($p < .05$), more likeable ($p < .01$) and more desirable as an instructor ($p < .05$). However, the difference between the ratings of the similar and dissimilar teachers on competance was insignificant ($p > .05$). This suggests that while the personal feelings of pupils towards a teacher are influenced by perceived similarity versus perceived dissimilarity of attitudes, this variable does not interfere with judgements of teaching ability, at least as far as the present sample is concerned.

In order to check on whether this finding would be replicated when pupils evaluate their 'real life' teacher, a second study was carried out (again, as part of the larger study) in which the pupils' class teacher completed the fourteen-item opinion scale. The responses of the teacher were then analysed to determine the degree of similarity or dissimilarity between his attitudes and those of the remaining 19 of the pupils in the class. Since it was impossible in this real situation to find extremely 'different' or 'similar' pupils, similarity of attitude was assumed to exist if the individual pupil agreed with the teacher on nine or more of the items in the opinion scale; dissimilarity, if agreement was reached on six or fewer of the items. In terms of these criteria, of the 19 pupils, six were classified as similar to the teacher, and seven as dissimilar. As in the first study the pupils were asked to examine the booklet containing the teacher's responses and then to indicate their opinion of him on the same five 7-point scales used in the first study. However, in this study, they were told that the responses to the scale were those of their class teacher.

Compared to the dissimilar pupils, the similar pupils felt their teacher was significantly more open-minded ($p < .05$), significantly more able to put them at ease ($p < .05$), and significantly more likeable ($p < .01$). On the other hand, they did not rate the teacher as either significantly more desirable as an instructor ($p > .05$) nor as significantly more competent ($p > .05$) than the dissimilar pupils.

Taken together these two findings offer fairly strong evidence that the perceived attitude similarity-dissimilarity between pupil and teacher affects pupils' feelings of attraction toward the teacher, but not their judgements of

the teacher's competence or ability as a teacher. Provided the results can be confirmed with larger samples they suggest that teachers may be personally liked or disliked by their pupils (because they are felt to hold similar or dissimilar attitudes to the pupils) without necessarily affecting the ratings they receive for effectiveness. A comforting thought for those of us who like to believe that although we may be unpopular among students, we are still very good teachers!

References

(1) Festinger, L. "A Theory of Social Comparison Processes" in Human Relations, 1954, 1, 117-140.

(2) Byrne, D. "Attitudes and Attraction" in L. Berkowitz (Ed.). Advances in Experimental Social Psychology. Vol.4. New York: Academic Press, 1969, pp.38-89.

TEACHERS' OPINIONS CONCERNING THE ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL PRACTICAL WORK IN SCIENCE

Paddy Lynch & Mario Collusi (1) & (2)

There is no strong tradition of practical examination for the sciences in South African schools. Until about a decade ago, there was virtually no examining or moderation of school practical work prescribed by any of the various examining bodies. Since then, the Natal Education Department and the OFS Department of Education have introduced systems of external moderation and control of practical marks (awarded by teachers) which contribute to the final result of the candidate. Details of these systems will be given later in this article.

The information was obtained from a questionnaire distributed by the Human Sciences Research Council during the latter half of October 1974. The address list covering 804 schools for White pupils in South Africa and South West Africa included all schools with secondary classes (ie standard six and higher.) Six hundred and thirty two envelopes containing 2061 completed questionnaires were received in reply, representing a response rate from about 75% of schools and about 65% of all high school science teachers.

The details of the sample are summarised in Table 1. A full account of the survey and the methodology employed is available elsewhere.

1 The extent to which teachers favour Practical Examinations

Are teachers in favour of practical examinations in this country? What reasons do they give for their views? Table 2 gives a general summary of their responses:

Table 1 - Distribution of returns of completed questionnaires from teachers

A	B		C	D	E	F
Region	Number of schools with secondary classes		Estimated number of teachers of science +++	Number of envelopes returned +	Approximate percentage return by schools (D as % of B)	Number of completed questionnaires
Cape and S.W.A.	State	301)	-	190	56	533
	State-aided	3)342				
	Private	38)				
Natal	State	54)	427	60	71	216
	State-aided	24) 84				
	Private	6)				
O.F.S.	State	92)	292	76	77	187
	State-aided	7) 99				
	Private	0)				
Transvaal	State	219)	900 (State schools only)	193	69	756
	State-aided	5)279				
	Private	55)				
Other ++	-		-	113	-	369
Total	State	666)	-	632	78	2 061
	State-aided	39)804				
	Private	99)				

Notes:

\+ Due to an oversight in the distribution stage, almost the only means of identifying the source of the completed questionnaires was the postmark on the returned envelope. It seems reasonable to assume that schools would have sent all completed questionnaires in one envelope (except for a few very large schools). Six hundred and thirty two envelopes would then represent returns from about 600 or 75 per cent of the schools.

++ Envelopes listed in this group had indistinguishable postmarks or none at all. Data from these completed questionnaires was used in the discussion of the national situation, but omitted in making inter-provincial comparisons.

+++ No information was available from the Cape Province, and that from the Transvaal did not include private schools. If the 369 'Other' replies are distributed proportionally amongst the four provinces, and added to the respective returns from each province, it becomes possible to obtain an estimate of the percentage of teachers in the O.F.S. and in Natal which replied. These figures are 78 per cent and 61 per cent respectively, and provide a basis for thinking that the overall response rate of teachers (as distinct from schools), was in excess of sixty per cent.

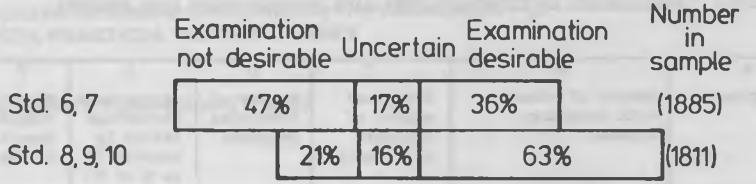

Table 2 TEACHERS' OPINIONS CONCERNING THE DESIRABILITY OF FINAL END-OF-YEAR PRACTICAL EXAMINATIONS FOR THE SCIENCES

Most teachers took advantage of the opportunity provided to explain why they favoured practical examinations or not. Their comments provided a basis for understanding the large difference between opinions for the lower as compared to the upper high school level.

At the standard six and seven level, the dominant objection to any form of final practical examination lay in the problems of organisation. Large classes and a lack of apparatus present considerable difficulties, and they would necessitate the administering of practical examinations in several sessions. Problems of examination 'security' would then arise as well. It was also strongly felt that pupils at this stage are too immature and inexperienced to handle apparatus with confidence, that many younger teenagers are inherently clumsy, that they lack the ability to grasp the significance of many experiments. A shortage of equipment and time during the year often prevents enough practical work being done to warrant any kind of examination of a practical nature. Furthermore, many teachers considered that laboratory work at this level should be used to facilitate understanding, to promote interest and make the subject enjoyable; the introduction of laboratory examinations would only defuse the interest and deaden the spirit of the pupils. Some teachers felt that any form of external control of practical work would lead to a 'drill' kind of preparation and stifle the spirit of inquiry essential to investigatory experimental work. Others expressed the opinion that any form of assessment of practical work should be left to the teachers and carried out throughout the year but there were no suggestions as to how this might be done. In the Orange Free State, pupils

at this level are obliged to take physical science, regardless of interest or ability. A practical examination for indifferent pupils would serve no purpose.

The following points were advanced in favour of practical examinations at the standard six and seven level. They are given in approximate order of frequency of mention by teachers.

(a) Pupils would be compelled to treat any kind of practical work in class with proper seriousness (about 200 teachers made this point).

(b) Pupils must learn certain basic skills and techniques at the secondary level; examination pressures would compel them to master them.

(c) Any means of encouraging practical work in schools would deepen the insight of pupils and enhance their grasp of fundamental ideas.

(d) Science is a subject which integrates practical work with theory, and it should be taught and assessed in such a way that this is apparent (the implication being - only by having practical examinations would practical work be done).

(e) Pupils would develop a greater interest in the subject (implication as above).

(f) Laboratory work enhances self-confidence of pupils.

(g) A fairly large number of teachers in Natal commented that practical examinations in the lower secondary standards would prepare pupils for the external control of practical work which is carried out for standard ten classes.

Teachers were significantly more in favour of practical examinations for the standard 8, 9 and 10 level. Reasons given included the following, in order of priority:

(a) Pupils would be obliged to take laboratory practicals more seriously: at present, laboratory periods often serve merely to provide light relief from "theory". (Recorded between 200 and 250 times).

(b) Since science is of itself a discipline embracing both theory and practical work, the introduction of

practical examinations would ensure a more balanced evaluation of pupil ability. (Recorded between 200 and 250 times).

(c) More practical work would develop insight and understanding of the subject as well as promoting self-confidence in pupils. (Recorded between 200 and 250 times).

(d) Organisational problems are fewer than for the lower classes, as numbers are generally smaller, pupils are more mature and able to handle apparatus. Furthermore, in many cases they have been able to choose their science subject, and are therefore more likely to have a personal interest in it.

(e) Pupils should acquire basic laboratory skills which will serve them in good stead at university.

(f) There is a considerable amount of practical prescribed or suggested in the syllabus. Pupils should be able to show something for their efforts during the year in the form of marks contributing to their overall result.

(g) The existing standard nine and ten course content lends itself to related practical examinations much more than the lower standards.

2 Objections to Practical Examinations

Objections to practical examinations at the highest level in the schools included the problems of organising such examinations ("an enormous task" commented one teacher) and the lack of apparatus and facilities (particularly in the Cape Province). A frequent complaint was lack of time for adequate preparation for any form of practical examination during the year on account of the length of the syllabus and onerous duties. Some teachers recommended examination by continuous assessment with marks allotted to the final result. Others remarked that even for the pupils in Phase IV (i.e. Std. 8, 9, 10), practical work should be a feature to be enjoyed, providing stimulation, provoking interest and fostering understanding: examinations of a practical nature would largely nullify these objectives, by introducing a note of interrogation, and even dread and fear for some. Several teachers in each province commented that practical work could never be examined externally in an objective manner; so many variables would enter such an

assessment that standardisation would be virtually impossible. Another interesting remark came from a teacher who explained that in many cases group (or individual) experimental work needs to be assisted by the teacher. When wisely imparted, such advice makes practical work very meaningful, but virtually impossible to assess by anyone. Some teachers in Natal and the Orange Free State objected to the existing system of control on the grounds that it is too stereotyped in character. One teacher remarked that external moderation should be used to check the work of pupils rather than serve as an opportunity for 'inspection' of the science-teacher staff.

Teachers' opinions on practical examinations were further analysed for possible differences according to subject (physical science and biology), language medium of the school, and finally, whether the Education Department concerned already used some form of external moderation or not. The following differences were of interest.

(a) Teachers in Afrikaans-medium schools were less in favour of practical examinations than their counterparts in English-medium schools. (73% of "E" teachers favoured practical examinations, only 57% of "A"). This difference was consistent regardless of subject (biology or physical science), or Province (whether giving some form of external control already or not). Perhaps this observation can be accounted for by the fact that the Afrikaans group favour 'lecture demonstrations' and 'set experiments' while the English group favour 'individual/group work' much more, only the latter lends itself to practical examinations.

(b) At the standard 8, 9 and 10 level, biologists favoured practical examinations more than physical scientists (whether for English- or Afrikaans-medium schools). Probably one cause of the difference is the relative ease with which practicals of an observational nature (e.g. identification of specimens, slides, etc.) can be arranged, compared with the complexity of much apparatus for physical science.

(c) It is noticeable that teachers in the Natal and Orange Free State were consistently more in favour of some form of practical examination than those in the Cape and the Transvaal. It would seem to indicate that the systems already operating in those Provinces have made a favourable impression on the teachers. The difference is particularly noticeable for the higher senior

classes. In both Natal and the Orange Free State, over 80% of the teachers favoured the practice of an external practical examination, whereas in the Transvaal and the Cape only 65% and 43% respectively, held a similar opinion. At the standard six and seven level, more Natal and Orange Free State teachers favoured practical examinations than opposed them (46% versus 40%) whereas in the other two Provinces, the bias was distinctly towards opposition (one out of three teachers favoured such examinations, whereas half thought them undesirable).

3 The control of Practical Work at a Provincial level

It would be appropriate here to examine the system of control of practical work which was in operation in the two smaller Provinces at the time of the survey. Neither department actually conducted an external examination as such: the work done by the 'examiners' (i.e. inspectors of education, assisted by other competent people such as training college lecturers) was regarded as a moderation by the Department of Education of the cummulative practical record mark kept by the teachers during the last two years of schooling. The list giving teachers' assessments of pupils was submitted to the 'examiners' who would then select some candidates at random to carry out one or two experiments selected by the moderating team. The choice of experiments was limited to the list of compulsory experiments prescribed in the syllabus. Where the teachers' marks seemed to be reasonable, no alteration was made to the mark list. Otherwise the 'examiners' would make some adjustment, and in extreme cases where school record marks appeared to be quite unrealistic, might even insist that every candidate at the school be examined by the team. In both cases, the marks for practical work counted for 50 out of a total of 300 awarded for the matriculation subject.

In this regard we quote here Mr J B Olmesdahl (3), an inspector of education in Natal Education Department:

"Baie leerlinge en leerkragte beskou die kontrole toetse as 'n praktiese eksamen. Die toets behels presies wat dit voorgee om te wees naamlik:

- 'n kontrole of die leerling die voorgeskrewe praktiese werk gedoen het;
- of die leerling verstaan wat hy gedoen het;
- of die leerling die tegniek en vaardigheid met apparaat bemeester het; en

- of die skool se punte realisties is".

Olmesdahl went on further to comment on the effects of the introduction of prescribed practical work with control tests.

"Die praktiese werk wat tans in skole in Natal in Natuur-en Skeikunde gedoen word, is van 'n besondere hoë standaard. Dit was egter nie altyd die geval nie soos sal blyk uit die volgende:

- Aanvanklik moes die meeste leerlinge gehelp work om die regte apparaat te kies vir bepaalde eksperimente. Vandag kom hierdie verskynsel baie selde voor.

- Aan die begin (1965-1966) het dit dikwels gebeur dat leerlinge sekere resultate van eksperimente van buite geleer het. Vandag gebeur dit nooit nie en die leerlinge besef dat die eindresultaat in 'n groot mate afhang van die akkuraatheid van die meetinstrument en dat die eindresultaat nie so belangrik is nie.

- Baie leerlinge het aan die begin moeite gehad om meetinstrumente te lees. Gevalle het voorgekom waar leerlinge die verkeerde punt van 'n termometer in die water hou en pragtige lesings verkry!

- Ander leerlinge het termometers as roerders gebruik en alhoewel al die kwik uit die termometer op die boom van die fles gelê het, is goeie lesings geneem.

- Stroombane in elektrisiteit het aanvanklik baie probleme gelewer. Vandag is 'n leerling verheug as hy 'n eksperiment oor elektrisiteit kry".

The education authorities in Natal and the Orange Free State might well draw further satisfaction from the fact that four out of five of their science teachers are in favour of continued external control of practical work. In the other two Provinces, more than half of the teachers would like to have some form of external examination for practical work.

What is being planned in this regard in the Cape and the Transvaal? In the Cape Province, some form of assessment of practical work in standards eight and nine is already being done.

A practical work book in which at least twelve from a list of prescribed experiments have been recorded and systematically marked during the year will count for 50 marks. Another 50 marks are awarded for other work (i.e. written tests, exercises, etc.) to make a total of 100 marks for a year mark. The final written examination counts for 200 marks, and success in the subject is then judged by the performance out of a total of three hundred marks. Continuous practical assessment thus accounts for one sixth of the total possible mark which may be attained by a candidate when considering promotion. This arrangement applies to both biology and physical science at both higher and standard grades. But for both subjects, no account of practical work is taken during standard ten, the year in which pupils sit for the Senior Certificate examinations.

At the time of writing, nothing definite has been decided for the Transvaal, but consideration is being given to the matter.

4 The means of assessment: Teachers' attitudes

Further information about teachers' attitudes to practical examinations came from the answers to the questions concerning the kind of practical assessment that is favoured. The results are summarized in Table 3.

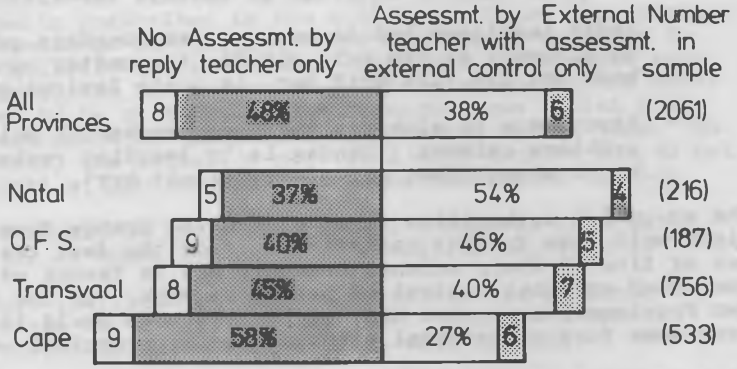

Table 3 MEANS OF ASSESSMENT OF PRACTICAL WORK FAVOURED BY TEACHERS

It is indeed noteworthy that teachers in the Natal and the Orange Free State are more inclined to agree with the system of external control than those of the Cape and Transvaal which at present have no such system in operation. In the Cape Province, two out of three teachers would not favour any form of external control at all. The results in Table 3 confirm the expressed desirability of practical examinations.

Most teachers who recognise the need for some form of practical assessment would prefer to allot considerably more marks to practical work than is at present done in Natal and the Orange Free State. At least half of them would prefer the portion of marks to be about 25% of the total, and another quarter would like to see practical work counting for a third or more of the marks (Table 4).

	About 50%	About 33%	About 25%	About 10%	Number in sample
All Provinces	5	21%	58%	16%	(1561)

Table 4 TEACHERS' OPINIONS ABOUT THE PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL MARKS IN THE SCIENCES TO BE AWARDED TO PRACTICAL WORK

Several commented additionally, that since so much practical work is prescribed in the syllabuses and actually done in the schools, pupils deserve the chance to show something for their efforts in terms of a contribution towards their final mark.

Some further information on practical examinations came from the pupils who were asked to indicate whether they had ever had any practical tests set by their own teachers, quite apart from any which may be provided by the Education Department. Replies were divided into those from physical science pupils and from biology (Table 5).

	Never	About once a year	Several times annually	Number in sample
Physical Science students	54%	25%	21%	(798)
Biology students	41%	29%	30%	(1377)

Table 5 PUPILS' IMPRESSIONS OF THE RELATIVE FREQUENCY OF PRACTICAL TESTS ADMINISTERED BY TEACHERS IN addition TO ANY WHICH MIGHT BE SET BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS

5 Discussion

It has already been remarked that practical tests of an observation-identification type are relatively easier to arrange than most of those for physical science. This would account to some extent for the greater use of such tests amongst biology teachers. About half of the pupils never have any kind of practical assessment at all; and another quarter have them only about once a year. This should not be taken to mean that in all these cases practical work does not form an integral part of the learning process together with explanations and written exercises. There are obviously many demonstrations (and experiments) which can be used to give greater meaning to an explanation, to make it more real and interesting to pupils but which could hardly form the subject of an examination.

There is always a danger that practical examinations reduce to tests of techniques and skills. It is quite another thing to arrange a practical test that requires insight and imagination on the part of the pupil. It should be noted that for most of the pupils, development of laboratory skills, per se, would serve no purpose for their post-school careers. The control tests applied by the examining team in Natal place considerable stress on questions asked of pupils during the experiments. Such questions are designed to test their understanding of the apparatus and its functioning, precautions to be taken and the probable accuracy of the answers. Insight is not overlooked in this scheme of things.

About 86% of all the teachers in the survey were in favour of assessment of practical work by teachers whether with or without the assistance of external control. Education authorities in the two Provinces without any form of external moderation of practical work should seriously consider the question of introducing some form of practical assessment, particularly if it would actively involve the teachers concerned. In recent years there has been much said about the serious condition of the teaching profession in South Africa. The remarks made by Kerr with regard to using teachers to assess school practical work, might well be applicable here:

> "The granting of more responsibility would be welcomed by many (teachers) as recognition of their professional standards and status. If they were trusted, a high measure of integrity would emerge. The profession needs more autonomy of this kind". (4)

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THE MYTH OF LANGUAGE CORRECTION

Paul Beard

Consider the following dialogue (1).

> "When I use a word", Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone "it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less".
>
> "The question is", said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things".
>
> "The question is", said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master - that's all".

The question is, is the grammatical structure of any particular language, structure-dependent in a broadly Chomskyan sense (2) or can it be that there is an independence - a divorce - of syntactic structure and semantics (3). The suggestion being that any search for a semantically based definition of 'grammaticalness' is futile.

One only has to bear witness to the innovations since Fodor (4) to realize that the latter position above is absurd no matter how strongly one may feel that it ought to be so. The question now posed is whether a generative grammar has any methodology beyond the decision to exploit intuitions of grammaticality to the full. To begin with this strategy depends upon the successful exploitation of the Saussurian paradox. In brief, Saussure argued (5)

that the linguist must concentrate upon the social aspect of language (6) 'Langue' which is conceived as so general that it is in the possession of every speaker. It follows that one can investigate 'Langue' by asking anyone about it, even oneself, which is what Chomsky proceeded to do. On the other hand the individual details of 'Parole' can be ascertained only through a survey in the midst of the population. The Saussurian paradox, then is that the social aspect of language can be studied through intuitions of any one individual, while the individual aspect can be studied only be sampling the behaviour of an entire population.

It is unfortunate that the proliferation of intuitive data has not been accompanied by a methodological concern for the reduction of error, or a search for intersubjective agreement (7). Originally, Chomsky hoped that the area of agreement on judgements of grammaticality would be so large that the disputed areas could easily be resolved by following a general pattern (8). But this has not worked out in practice. The search for critical arguments has driven 'linguists' to use examples which command no agreement at all (9). Linguists continue to use uncheckable (10) examples and defend them by asserting that they are discussing dialect. Perhaps the most alarming symptom of this 'retreat' into the theorist's introspections is that it is no longer considered right to doubt such data, though in passing one can cite Carden (11) as one who is investigating the nature of syntactic dialects.

Current difficulties in achieving intersubjective agreement require that attention be paid at least to (a) methodology; (b) variations; (c) assumptions, so that an elimination process can begin. It is commonplace that languages vary - point (b) - both from one user to another and from one use to another - not however to the absurd degree illustrated in the quotation above - but it is very difficult to find any adequate formal description of such variation, or anything more than a speculative discussion of its significance. Most writers have recognized the differences in dialect and have been prepared to recognize them by allowing each dialect its own grammar and vocabulary. Confusion begins when one tries to represent those linguistic variations commonly thought of as matters of tone, style, subject matter and so on. I do not propose to attempt any elaborate summary or assessment of the various theories which have been put forward, but it will be useful to state a general position with respect to one or two of them before developing my main argument.

The feature a layman would probably find most puzzling in linguistic treatments of language variations is that they hardly mention differences in semantics. To the layman diatypic variations represent in the last resort variations of meaning, in the broadest sense - people say different things because they have different things to say. The linguist tends to assume that if he has made an adequate distributional statement and an adequate contextual statement he has said all he can say about meaning as well (12).

Until quite 'recently' linguistics had no formal machinary for talking about meaning. The Research Unit at Cambridge (13) has devised methods which enable computers to make non-literal translations. Work has been done in scale and category grammar on the semantic significance of grammatical choices. A semantic component has been put forward for transformational grammar which explains disambiguation, analyticity, contradiction and certain types of paraphrase. A theory in terms of primitive semantic relations has been put forward by Lyons. But is remains true that linguistics, a science which on the whole is trivial if it is not concerned with meaning, becomes more and more systematic and scientific the further away from meaning it gets. It seems at times as if there are legions of phoneticians and grammarians to every semanticist; numbers which are in direct proportion to the degree of development and in inverse proportion, with few exceptions, to the eventual usefulness of the respective disciplines.

The practical importance of this can be seen when we consider some recent work by the Sociologist Basil Bernstein (14) on the effect of language variety on the development of the individual (15). The crux of the matter is that Bernstein makes a number of hypotheses which are essentially linguistic, and which are linguistically questionable; unfortunately to date contemporary linguistics does not seem to possess the machinary to put these hypotheses to the test (16).

Bernstein associates the linguistic concept of language variety with the sociological concept of role. Individuals, he suggests, come to learn their roles through the process of communication. A role from this perspective is a constellation of shared learned meanings, through which the individual is able to enter into consistent and recognized forms of interaction with others. The consequences of specific speech forms or codes will transform the environs into a matrix of particular meanings which becomes part of

psychic reality through acts of speech (17). As a person learns to subordinate his behaviour to a linguistic code, which is the expression of a role, different orders of relation are made available to him (18).

Bernstein distinguishes two types of code, elaborated, and restricted, and claims that they can be distinguished in formal terms by the possibility of predicting for any one speaker which syntactic elements will be used to organize meaning across a representative range of speech. In the case of an elaborated code, the speaker will select from a relatively extensive range of alternatives, and the probability of predicting the organizing elements is considerably reduced. In the case of a restricted code the number of alternatives is often severely limited and the probability of predicting elements is greatly increased. This formulation has considerable intuitive appeal, but it seems to be quite impossible to reduce to strict operational and linguistic terms. No doubt it is to the disadvantage of linguistics that it can neither define the term 'meaning' not the term 'syntactic element' so that they have the required properties. But it is not clear that Bernstein is any better. To avoid circularity, the least he must do is to provide formal definitions of a syntactic element, meaning, and the process by which the syntactic element organizes meaning. In other words, as Alice would have it, he would have to produce or adopt a linguistic theory.

The sociological description of these codes is much more satisfactory than the linguistic. The most general condition for the emergence of restricted codes - writes Bernstein (19) - is a social relationship based on a common, extensive set of closely shared identifications and expectations self consciously held by the members. The speech is here refracted through a common cultural identity which reduces the need to verbalize intent so that it becomes explicit. How things are said, rather than what things are said, becomes important. In certain areas meanings will be highly condensed. The speech in these social relations is likely to be fast and fluent, articulatory clues are reduced; some meanings are likely to be dislocated and local - the unique meaning of the individual is likely to be implicit. It should be noted that it is almost impossible to translate the descriptive statements made here about language into the formal terminology of any school of linguistics. What for example can linguistics make of the statement 'meanings will be highly condensed'.

An elaborated code, on the other hand, is likely to arise

in a social relationship which raises the tensions in its members to select from their linguistic resources a verbal arrangement which closely fits specific referents. This situation will arise where the intent of the other person cannot be taken for granted, with the consequence that meanings will have to be expanded and raised to the level of verbal explicitness. The preparation and delivery of relatively explicit meaning is the major function of this code. The code will facilitate the verbal transmission and elaboration of the individual's unique experience. The condition of the listener, unlike that in the case of the restricted code, will not be taken for granted, as the speaker is likely to modify his speech in the light of the special conditions and attributes of the listener. If a restricted code facilitates the construction and exchange of communalized symbols, then an elaborated code facilitates the verbal construction and exchange of individualized personalized symbols.

It becomes obvious that there is a close relationship between these two codes and the stylistic categories of Joos (20). In fact the restricted code seems to correspond roughly with Joos's 'casual' style, along with certain features of his 'intimate' style; and elaborated code looks like a conflation of his 'consultative' and his 'formal' styles. In purely linguistic terms Joos is probably the better observer; and Bernstein would have gained greatly if he had kept the distinction within the elaborated code, between the consultative style of intelligent conversation, and the formal style of a lecture or book. The point is, that the sharp linguistic divisions, if they fall anywhere, fall between intimate and casual, and between consultative and formal; that is to say they fall within the two codes and not between them. Certainly one would expect this to be so if lexical and syntactic predicability are made criteria. But Bernstein goes considerably beyond Joos when he speaks of the likely human consequences of these codes; and at this stage he drops the doubtful linguistic characterization of the codes and speaks entirely of meaning. The restricted code, he suggests, is available to every child for imitation, since every speaker uses it; the speech model is universalistic. But meanings in such a code are implicit and less conventional through language; he calls them particularistic. Meanings in an elaborated code are made explicit and conventionalized through language; he calls them universalistic (21). But users of the elaborated code are 'rare', to be found mainly in the "decision making" areas of society i.e. high on Joos's 'responsibility' scale; the speech models are particularistic.

There is, however, one possible situation which may cause great difficulty in learning; (22) it may happen that the speech model is particularistic, and the meanings are also particularistic, in this case the child, learning a language, may be limited to 'restricted code', and have access to no other; and this is thought by Bernstein to be relevant to the problem of educability in developed or emergent industrialized societies. One might argue that these points can be put both more clearly and more soundly in Joos's terms. Casual style is the style of the limited social group, and found throughout society; so all children have the opportunity of learning some version of it. In it, much is unsaid; the meanings which can be taken for granted within that social group are never expressed, and may never come into awareness. Consultative and formal styles express more; but not every child has the chance to acquire them. Casual styles can be limited to a restricted group; some children are limited to the style of such a group, and never get the chance to acquire another; they therefore never feel it possible to express certain things which are characteristically expressed in consultative styles, and this may impair their ability to understand what is said in school.

Put in this way, it is difficult or impossible to disagree with Bernstein's view, which squares with the common experience of English teachers. Children from homes where conversation is restricted in subject matter and variety, and where discipline is enforced, uncomplicated and often implemented by non-verbal methods, find in school difficulties from which children with a wider conversational experience are free (23). Here we have a valuable and insightful observation of the effects of linguistic variety, which is immediately convincing at the level of common sense - unfortunately the theoretical disaster is not resolved. There are serious theoretical difficulties in the neo-Firthian approach to classifying the registers, or diatypic varieties of language. But at least the classification is a possible one to carry out on the grounds that are given. Bernstein's syntactic and lexical criteria do not appear to be adequate to provide a linguistic classification of the type that, on sociological grounds, he requires. The reason for this is that the essential feature of restricted code, which gives it its sociological significance, is condensation of meaning (24); and this belongs to the deep structure of language. The features that Bernstein is attempting to measure necessarily belong to the surface structure of language, and their relation to deep structure is likely to be irregular and indirect.

It is in fact fairly clear that the important differences between Bernstein's codes are differences in meaning; and that what is lacking to make this theory a testable one is an operationally adequate theory of meaning - one which Alice is seeking. However the importance of Bernstein's view is in drawing attention to the real human significance of language variation. His thesis gives the question of language variety its proper place in sociological, psychological and educational theory, and stops it from becoming the private game of the linguist. If it is in any sense true that the social structure generates distinct linguistic forms or codes, and these codes essentially transmit the culture and constrain behaviour, then it becomes a central concern of linguistic theory to explain how this can be done. For the teacher, however, what seems to be of central everyday concern is the significance of variation and grammatical correctness - for it is his concern not only to explain the regularities of what people say, as best he can, but also to indicate what they ought to say. The myth of correctness is one which dominates the educational system as it dominates the thinking of most educated men about language. It seems almost impossible to discuss questions of language save in terms from the myth itself, or from a reaction against it.

What the myth asserts is that certain linguistic expressions are grammatical, or correct, and others - which may well be in frequent use among native speakers - are ungrammatical, or wrong. If a native speaker, child or adult, uses an expression which is wrong, it is always legitimate, though it may not always be tactful to correct him. A probable reason, according to the myth, for incorrectness, is that the speaker is careless; and a careless expression, even if it has become customary, remains careless. There is, in fact, good English and bad. A distinction obscurely related to this is between expressions which are clear, or precise, and those which are unclear, or imprecise.

In all these cases it is the role of the teacher to take sides. He is there to inculcate the good usages and to expel the bad ones; and his ideal pupil will have only good usages and no bad ones. But when we ask what determines the place of a linguistic expression in the good class or the bad, the only answer is 'usage'. What we are actually doing is to correct usage by reference to usage; or to put it more precisely, to correct one person's usage by reference to an idealized version of another's. Yet the basis of the idealization is quite unclear.

Linguists of the forties and fifties, recognizing that the 'real' language to be investigated was the spoken language, and that the spoken language diverges very widely from ideal grammatical prescription, tended to drop the concept of correctness altogether - a thing that the teacher cannot do. These linguists took the position that if a linguistic item occured in one's textual records, it had to be accounted for; if it did not occur, it did not have to be accounted for; the question of correctness did not arise, and in this framework hardly made sense. Some linguists went beyond this, and set up a new normative principle, in opposition to the myth of correctness which amounted to the suggestion that whatever the native speaker says is correct - the latter part of the argument presented in the initial quotation on page one. Now there is no more justification within linguistics as such for telling people to change their language. All linguistics does, that is any way relevant to this question, is to demolish some of the arguments for the correctness of particular forms, or the superiority as media for argument or analysis of particular languages or dialects. Neither at this nor at any other period did linguistics manage to disprove or invalidate the belief in correctness as such. It merely failed to explain this belief as a phenomenon, and it failed to do this because linguists were trying to restrict their attention to the facts of language and ignore people's beliefs about it. Ultimately there are certain beliefs about language which are important facts of language as well. But the belief in correctness is only in part a linguistic phenomenon. Linguistic analysis is needed to explain just what correctness is. Sociological analysis is needed to show why people, especially teachers, care so much about it.

Possibly the most illuminating approach to the concept of correctness is by considering the possible kinds of mistake. Even in its most positivist phase, linguistics has always recognized the possibility of making mistakes in language. One class of speakers who characteristically make mistakes are foreign language learners. If we hear a man, whose native language is Afrikaans, say "The mans hits the ball" (25) we do not count this as correct merely because it is on record. We say that there are certain potential correct forms; "The man hits the ball"; "The men hit the ball" - and the speaker has made a grammatical error; failing to make the verb agree with the subject in number, which leaves it unclear which of these correct forms he means. Nobody doubts the right of the teacher to correct it. But the assumption that some forms are mistaken entails that some forms are right and therefore that there are certain

grammatical rules.

Further we recognize the possibility of native speakers making mistakes. Consider the case of a pupil who stammers and says "I h-h-h-hit the ball". The simplest manner to account for this is to say that the pupil has produced a sentence "I hit the ball" stammering upon the 'h'. This, in a sense, corresponds to the way we understand him, and to what we suppose him to have said. It is clearly absurd to suggest that we recognize this sentence unamended, as an ordinary sentence of English, merely because it has been said, or is on record. If a sentence like this were the norm, we would not recognize the stammer and we should fail to account in our theory of language for the fact that speakers of English can recognize a stammer when they hear one. In the same way if we hear the sentence "Er - I - you can't say that" we again suppose the speaker has made a mistake and then corrected himself, we don't suppose that he has devised a new or novel way of saying 'us' 'we', - or 'I and you' 'can't say that'.

We have then to recognize two types of mistake.

a) There is the mistake the foreign learner makes because he doesn't know the language, in other words, he does not know what forms are correct, and

b) The mistake a native speaker makes because all human performances contain errors, inaccuracies, hesitations and so on; though the native speaker always can correct his mistake.

We can call the first type 'competence errors' and the second type 'performance errors'. Positively it amounts to setting up a two stage theory of language (26). Stage one grammar or the theory of competence, accounts for an idealized form of linguistic behaviour, speaking a language without mistakes. Stage two theory of performance, accounts for hesitation, stumbling, change of mind in the middle of a sentence and so on, and all the mistakes that stem from these. We can account for linguistic behaviour as a whole much more economically with this two stage approach than with a single stage one. Indeed, a single stage theory would not work at all. But once we have made this distinction it follows that competence mistakes are made only by foreign learners and very young children. Native speakers practically never make competence mistakes after the age of six or seven (27). The is an extremely important fact about native language learning. Children of

school age and above have perfect mastery of the grammar and pronunciation of their language - their native or 'family' language. All they have left to acquire is an extensive vocabulary.

Though a linguistic analysis readily establishes the usefulness of the concept of correctness, it also suggests quite strongly that there will be nothing in a child's language which a teacher needs to correct. Yet teachers do correct children's language with some persistence and enthusiasm; and a large proportion of the community expect them to do this. Moreover, individual members of the community have strong emotions about this process; they feel strongly that it ought to be carried out, and will protest if it is not. Whatever the linguistic status of the corrections being made, the social phenomenon of correction itself is an important one, and requires some kind of sociological explanation. There seem to be two kinds of correction involved. The first is correction from the child's dialect to the teacher's dialect. Although every child of seven or more will have mastered the grammar and pronounciation of his own dialect, he will not necessarily have mastered that of his teacher. Often that of the teacher has high social esteem, and that of the child, possibly, low esteem. At one time, standard English in received pronunciation had high social esteem, and town dialects, low. Nowadays it is possibly the dialects of certain immigrants which are held in lowest social esteem. When the child's dialect is held in low social esteem, the teacher will usually try to change it, thus turning the native language learning situation into a quite different foreign language learning situation.

It is perhaps unfortunate that this type of situation is rarely perceived as an attempt to teach a foreign dialect to a child. What teachers often do is to deny the status of a dialect to the dialect the child has already, and conceive of their task as that of improving the English of a child who speaks a poor or irregular version of their own dialect. There is no structural, or internal linguistic justification for these judgements; except that any language appears devoid of structure to those who do not speak it. The only objective deficiencies of these dialects with respect to standard English are in vocabulary; and fresh vocabulary can readily be borrowed into any dialect from another dialect or an alien language. However limited and restricted their actual use is, all dialects of all languages appear to be potentially capable of expressing any idea, or distinction, that can be expressed in any

dialect of any language.

What requires sociological explanation is the intense hostility felt by speakers of socially esteemed dialects like standard English with received pronounciation for dialectal forms from poorly esteemed dialects. One can suggest that such adverse judgement is a projection onto the language of class antagonism; and that hostility of this kind is bound to be prevelant among teachers, with a class dialect - perceived as knowing how to speak properly - as one of the labels of class membership.

This cannot be a complete explanation. One must consider the authority relationships of teacher and pupil, (28) and in the ways these are reflected in the use of language (29). In order to do this we must consider the second type of correction which teachers engage in, and which arouses almost as much emotion as the first. Languages are not monolithic; speakers sometimes speak formally, and sometimes informally, sometimes technically and sometimes non-technically, and so on; and the language they use reflects these aspects of use. One could in fact speak of many varieties of language - the usual word is 'registers' - used on different occasions. The child comes to school knowing his language structurally but not yet capable of manipulating the whole range of registers that he needs; and the teacher has to help him to learn this.

Register differences reflect all kinds of social situation: in particular, they reflect authority relationships. A teacher expects a child to use different forms of language with him, from the forms the child uses with his peers. An example may be that the teacher often expects to be addressed as 'Sir'. If the child were to address him as 'Friend' or 'Chum', this would normally be interpreted as a denial, probably a conscious and deliberate denial, of the authority relationship; and the teacher's correction of it could not be separated from his correction of the child's general social behaviour. In other words much native language linguistic instruction is instruction in linguistic norms or etiquette - when it is proper to use certain expressions and when it is improper.

To sum up what I am saying; it seems as if we must recognize four types of basic error in language which a child can commit and a teacher may want to correct. The first two are types a linguist can characterize and native language teachers spend very little time and emotion on correcting them. They are errors of competence, based on inadequate

knowledge of the language, and errors of performance, which are common to all users and depend to a considerable extent on immediate psychological factors. The other two require both linguistic and sociological analysis: they are possession of the 'wrong' dialect and failure to use the linguistic expressions marking various registers of the language in socially acceptable ways. Teachers often spend a great deal of time correcting these.

The analysis has now become a little complicated. At the sociological level of analysis we must observe that authority relationships and class relationships interact. In sum, the working class is in a relationship of subordination to the middle and upper class; and in any individual class relationship there is a faint suggestion of an authority relationship, and vice versa. At the linguistic level of analysis, somewhat oversimplified, the situation appears to be this. In informal speech, working class and middle and upper class speakers have distinct dialects. Formal speech for middle and upper class speakers is much the same as informal speech, save that it lacks certain forms marked as colloquial, contains certain forms marked as formal, and is more careful - that is to say, has fewer performance errors. But working class people tend to use middle class dialect, or the best approximation to it that they can manage, as a formal register. Their own dialect is denied at this level.

The effect of this is that an equation is built up, in the minds of many speakers, between an absence of performance errors - i.e., in one sense grammatical correctness - and the adoption of middle class dialect; and this goes so far that the notion of speaking 'correct' low status dialects seems almost a contradiction in terms. This I suggest is the real origin of the view that socially disapproved dialects are 'careless' compared with socially approved ones. Of course they are, if you compare the formal register of the socially approved dialect with the only available register - the informal one - of the socially disapproved one. The equation of 'correctness' with middle class dialect is reinforced by the dominance of written language in schools, since the formal register is for most purposes the only one socially permissible in the written mode. What this means is that the middle class child and the working class child have a rather different native language learning problem. It comes out most sharply when they are learning to write. The middle class child is learning two things when he learns to write: the technique of representing his speech by visual symbols, and the

technique of avoiding performance errors in this mode. The working class child is learning three things: the first two and the dialect of the middle class child, which will of course be described to him as 'correct' English, with the implication that his own speech is incorrect. The working class child, or child with lower socio-economic status, is forced to learn a new dialect in order to acquire the culture that the school represents; and if education is completely successful, and the new culture is successfully internalized, the new dialect will extend to informal contexts as well as formal ones, and the student will be linguistically disclassed.

Perhaps this takes us full circle and we should ask again, as we begin, "Which is to be master?"

Footnotes and References

(1) Carroll L. "Through the Looking-glass (and what Alice found there)" in The Works of Lewis Carroll London Hamlyn 1965.

(2) Chomsky N. Reflections on Language London Smith 1976. Chomsky has since changed his stand made in 1957 - Ref (3).

(3) Chomsky N. Syntactic Structure The Hague Mouton 1957.

(4) Katz J.J. and Fodor J.A. "The Structure of a semantic theory" Language 39. 1963 see also:

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(5) De Saussure F. Course in General Linguistics New York Phil Lib. 1959.

(6) Exploited to the full by Bernstein B. and developed later in this paper.

See:

Bernstein B. Class Codes and Control Vols I, II, III Routledge and Kegan Paul 1971 1973 1975.

For an alternative 'route' see Peirce C.S. The

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(8) Chomsky N. Aspects of a Theory of Syntax M I T Press 1965.

(9) Chomsky N. "Remarks on Nominalization" in Rosenbaum P. and Jacobs R. (eds) Readings in Transformational Grammar Holt Rinehart and Winston 1970.

(10) The most stimulating work here seems to be emerging from the experiments administered by Roger Brown at M I T.

(11) Carden G. "A note on conflicting idiolects" Linguistics Inquiry 1 1970.

(12) Hayakawa S.I. Language Thought and Action London Allen and Unwin 6th Impress 1973. also

Terwillinger R.F. Meaning and Mind Oxford Univ Press 1968.

(13) Although this should be obvious, I am referring to the Research unit at Cambridge in England.

(14) Bernstein B. Op.cit.

(15) For an alternative to Bernstein - who develops from the Whorf-Sapir position - see the work of Labov.

Labov W. "Variation in Language" in Reed C. (ed) The Learning of Language Appleton-Century-Crofts 1971. "The Logic of Non Standard English" in Giglioli P. (ed) Language and Social Context Penguin 1972.

(16) So far the work in this area has been by researchers - mostly sociologists under the guidance of Bernstein B. - The combination of their efforts is published in the series "Primary socialization, Language and Education". Routledge and Kegan Paul. - Nine books have been published to date.

(17) For an interesting analysis of this aspect see Berger P. and Luckmann T. The Social Construction of Reality Allen Lane Press 1967 and a more 'pragmatic' example is found in the three volume work by Castaneda C.
- Volume I is not available in this country - The Teachings of Don Juan
Volume II A separate Reality Penguin 1973.
Volume III Journey to Ixtlan Penguin 1974

(18) See also:

Bowlby J. Attachment Vol I Pelican 1971.
" Child care and the Growth of Love Pelican 1970 edition.

Newson J. and E. Patterns of Infant Care Pelican 1971 edition.
" Four years Old in an Urban Community Pelican 1970.

(19) Bernstein B. Class Codes and Control Op.cit. what emerges from the first two paragraphs on page four of the text is that Bernstein has extended the concept of codes to ways of knowing and adapts Chomsky's - deep and surface structure theory.

(20) Obvious for those who are familiar with the argument of Joos M. The Five Clocks Harcourt Brace and World 1967.

(21) In Bernstein's terms Universalistic corresponds to deep structure and Particularistic corresponds to surface knowledge. For a more explicit explanation see "A brief account of the theory of Codes" in Social Relations and Language by Lee V. Open University Press 1973.

(22) Bernstein B. "Education cannot compensate for Society" in New Society 26 February 1970 pg. 344-7.

(23) For a discussion of this point in terms of effects see:

Luria A.R. and Yudovich F. Speech and the development of Mental Processes in the child Penguin 1971.

(24) Luria A.R. and Yudovich F. Ibid.

(25) I use English here but clearly such remarks could be directed at any language. - The sentence used is one which Chomsky uses with tedious regularity.

(26) This theory as any linguist knows is essentially Chomskyan.

(27) Lenneberg E.H. (ed) New Directions in the Study of Language M I T Press 1969.

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" Interpersonal Relations in Education Routledge and Kegan Paul 1972.
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(29) For the Sociologist:

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LINGUISTICALLY DISCLASSED OR SOCIO-LINGUISTICALLY ADEPT?

Toni Borowsky

Beard claims that children of school-going age have "perfect mastery" of the grammar of their "native or 'family' language". Those children, who are speakers of a non-standard dialect are forced to learn a new and foreign dialect at school "... in order to acquire the culture that the school represents."

It seems to me that one of the crucial points to be considered in the whole question of whether or not non-standard dialects ought to be corrected at school, concerns the acceptance of that very 'culture' Beard mentions. Perhaps the question should rather be 'Which is Master?' and not 'Which is to be Master?'

Our society, whether we approve or not, is socially stratified and our language reflects this fact, even reinforces it. All the members of a speech-community share a set of beliefs or attitudes toward the various forms of their language. Mastery of any dialect allows a person to be member of the social class with which it is identified, but it doesn't obligate him. The standard dialect is the one which is held in the most social esteem. One reads it in books, hears it on the radio or on television.

> "There are virtually no voices ... calling for newspapers and textbooks, to say nothing of carpenters manuals written in (non standard English)." (1)

No one has, as far as I know, ever suggested that the standard dialect should not be taught at all.

"One of the fundamental principles of sociolinguistic investigation" says Labov, is "There are no single-style speakers" (2). All speakers of language exhibit systematic variation in the different social situations in which they operate. As Beard points out this stylistic variation correlates to a large extent with the dialect differences between classes:

> "The same linguistic features are used to register

> style shifting and social stratification - functional varieties and cultural levels." (3)

Style-shifting is an important aspect of communication; a lack of sensitivity to it, or an inability to adjust one's language can be both socially and linguistically crippling. The socio-linguistic literature is littered with anecdotes illustrating this. Children are forced to conform linguistically, by their peer group, similarly adults often find it necessary to adjust their speech if the situation demands it.

Labov notes that children do not acquire the sociolinguistic norms of their speech community until fairly late in the language learning process.

> "Whereas the adult community shows almost complete agreement in responses to subjective reaction tests, adolescents are often quite sketchy in their perception of these value systems". (4)

Children do know that there is a difference between school language and home language but they don't know much about the social significance of the difference.

In fact Beard's claim that children have "perfect mastery" of their native language and "never make competence errors" after they are six or seven, seems to me to be false. Whether you allow competence to include the kind of knowledge Labov if referring to, and talk about communicative competence, or whether you define it in the narrow Chomskian sense, it is not true to say that children know their language by the time they get to school. Carol Chomsky has shown that children of five and above have not mastered many of the structures of their language and concluded that "active syntactic acquisition is taking place up to the age of nine and perhaps even beyond" (5). Dan Slobin (6) has shown that Russian 11-year olds haven't yet mastered the inflectional system of Russian. Martin, Williams et al (7) argue against the claim that 7 or 8-year olds have learned to use "the basic systems of speech". They claim that children do not have mastery of the different kinds of 'talk' that characterise adult language behaviour.

Surely then, the teaching of the standard dialect to non-standard speakers, is not to be viewed as teaching a foreign language, but rather as a part of the general broadening of the competence of the speaker.

All speakers should have the opportunity to broaden their range of styles or dialects. The school situation is a particular type of social situation, and therefore requires, as do all other types of social situation, the appropriate style - Standard English.

Non-standard English should be corrected in school because it is being used inappropriately.

> "Overt correction applied in the schoolroom is useful to the student in that it makes him aware of the distance between his speech and the standard language in grammar and pronounciation." (8)

The attitudes of society to the non-standard form should not be ignored. Assuring a child that his non-standard speech is as good as any-one else's - which is surely implicit in any policy of not-correcting -, is in view of the way our society operates, not only unrealistic, but in fact hypocritical in the extreme.

The school ought somehow to teach the socio-linguistic norms or at least try to speed up the natural learning process. Teachers should attempt to teach how society uses language without showing prejudice themselves. Labov notes, with reference to Beard's question about "the intense hostility felt by speakers of socially esteemed dialects ... for ... poorly esteemed dialects" that in America, school teachers are usually members of the most linguistically insecure group - the lower middle class - and therefore are prone to overreact to stigmatised forms. He suggests that this should be considered in the education programme. Whether this is true of South Africa, I don't know (9).

"If education is completely successful" the child should not be "linguistically disclassed" as Beard claims, he should be socio-linguistically adept.

References

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GRAMMATICALITY : CORRECTNESS OR APPROPRIATENESS?

Douglas Young

Beard's article conflates several interesting and provocative arguments in a way which perforce renders a short reply like this dangerously oversimplistic. I shall discuss some of his arguments separately, without attempting a synthesis.

(1) Beard highlights the linguists' dilemma of being unable to postulate and test a theory of meaning except by appeals to individual linguists' notions of grammaticality. He then goes on to equate grammaticality with correctness. I am not sure that the linguist is entirely happy with this equation. Surely the linguist, in attempting to specify conditions which make for the operation of the rule-governed structure of language, is unconcerned about whether the system of language works in real time? Correctness is a pragmatic issue, concerned with how well or badly people use the language for communication; grammaticality is an abstract, largely inaccessible concept. Judgements of what is correct in language use may well be governed by intuitions of grammaticality, but not necessarily so. Likewise, what the linguist may regard as grammatical is increasingly being questioned by congress audiences, who insist that such linguists specify a context of meaning and use for their often idiolectal data. As far as Beard's assertion that "it is no longer considered right to doubt such data" (i.e. linguists' examples of well-formed sentences - my gloss) is concerned, I think the reverse is the case - consider for example the growing interest amongst hard-line theoretical linguists in accounting for pragmatics in language, and the demand for explaining language in context. Correctness is a social, normative process, suggestive of learning and behavioural prescriptions which, as Beard suggests, are vested authoratively in language teachers and their teaching functions. The linguist is only concerned with explaining and describing grammaticality in abstract mentalistic terms. That the language teacher is assigned (inescapably it seems) a prescriptive role in language teaching in perhaps the fault of an authoritarian education tradition, which

thus leads to an overinsistence on norms and to the myth of 'standard language usage'. Language studies and perhaps linguistics, following this position, connote prescription rather than description - hence grammaticality is seen as synonymous with language correctness which in turn leads to a demand for language correction. If the language teacher could be seen as having a descriptive function - that is, he went only as far as specifying for his pupils the various conditions permitting language function in all its dialect, register and style variations, we would perhaps avoid the problem area Beard so strongly classifies. The learner could then function creatively within the conditions or restraints of language use thus specified.

(2) Beard does not make what I think is a necessarily crucial distinction between errors and mistakes. An utterance can be 'wrong' at at least two levels, as he suggests - at the level of linguistic competence and at the level of linguistic performance. Inadequacies in performance seem to me more likely to be mistakes, that is, careless random slips of pen or tongue, easily remedied on referral to author/speaker. But inadequacies in linguistic competence are more likely to be errors in the sense that they are systematic, deep-rooted evidence of incomplete linguistic competence. Errors, from the evidence of my own research, are likely to remain unremedied when referred back to their originator - they represent 'gaps' in the language acquisition process, which, unlike Beard I do not accept as having been completed at 'age six or seven'. The learner of his native language with demonstrable competence errors (e.g. inability to maintain tense consistency, poor discourse logic, poor thematic cohesion in texts or lack of syntactic flexibility) is in need of language correction, which must be based on some awareness of correctness, which is in turn, but not synonymously so, based on agreement amongst speakers of that language as to what is grammatical.

What many teachers seem to spend much time doing is correction of mistakes, following rather precious notions of what is 'good pronunciation' and 'good prose' style.

(3) It seems to me that the now-traditional competence-performance distinction, as cited by Beard, is an

inadequate framework within which to examine concepts such as grammaticality and 'correctness'. Perhaps the wider notion of communicative competence could be useful, in that it offers a framework wherein one attempts to link competence and performance by specifying conditions of what is an appropriate linguistic utterance in a specific context of meaning and use. What is communicatively competent is not necessarily grammatical. But it does have social, contextual meaning - thus, using Beard's example of Joos's style levels, we find one meaning realized at different levels of formality:

a. "Would you mind awfully passing me the bowl of sugar?"

(Highly formal, almost frozen).

b. "Please pass me the sugar". (Consultative)
or
c. "Have you finished with the sugar?" (to which there can only be 'yes' as an answer).

d. "Sugar please" (Casual)

e. "Er..... (with appropriate non-verbal signals)" (Intimate)

If language teachers could spend more time specifying the conditions under which sentences such as a - e might be appropriate, language teaching could be more socially relevant, less prescriptive. Appropriateness, in my view, if preferable to correctness.

THE REALITY OF LANGUAGE CORRECTION

Zak van Straaten

Mr Beard described a situation where the "myth of language correction" is used to justify the correction of "an expression which is wrong". By appeal to Professor Bernstein's work he isolates four kinds of linguistic error:

(1) competence errors

(2) performance errors

(3) dialect errors

(4) register errors

Mr Beard has therefore recalled to our attention a genuine problem. However he does not address the problem in his paper. He refers to Humpty Dumpty's linguistic prestidigitation with semantically displaced Alice at the commencement and conclusion of his paper. The intervening space is given to descriptions of anomalies like the apparent contradiction in the phrase " 'correct' low status dialect". But description is no substitute for theory. My complaint is twofold; (1) Mr Beard has described a situation and not attempted to analyse or solve the underlying problem; (2) He does not possess the concepts which are necessary to solve the problem.

In the space available to me I shall consider these two issues. The problem is easy to state. Why does anyone think he/she has the right to correct the four kinds of errors? A sketch of the solution of the problem looks like this. I need to introduce two concepts and one assumption. The two concepts are that of a "speech community" (a concept in the field of social theory) and a "meta-theory" (no introduction necessary).

Let me define a "speech community" in relation to an "observation sentence". A sentence is an "observation sentence" if all verdicts on it depend only on what is present to the senses and whatever is necessary to understand the sentence. An observation sentence is one on which all members of a linguistic community give the same

verdict when given the same sensory stimulation. The criterion of membership of the linguistic community is the ability to generate fluent dialogue. Of course our speech community uses other kinds of sentences as well, - analytic, interrogative, imperative, logically or contingently compound, and so on. The criterion of membership of a speech community is not absolute and admits degrees, so one man may belong to various speech communities, and one community's logical truth is another community's contingent regularity. (See Quine W.V. "Epistemology Naturalised" in Ontological Relativity and Other Essays p. 86 ff New York 1969).

With this concept in hand I can affirm the obvious, that each speech community reserves the right to correct the four kinds of error in any dialogue inside the speech community between members of the community (homogeneous correction). The assumption is that speech communities preserve their linguistic identity by enforcing the definitions given in their meta-language. This is a socio-linguistic imperative which preserves the level of fluency of dialogue in a community.

Suppose we consider a linguistic transaction between two members of two suitably different speech communities. Each member now proceeds as in homogeneous correction. The gain is the same, namely fluency of dialogue. Let me give an example from Bertrand Russell where an imaginary landlady says to Strawson, "I ain't never done no one no harm." In Strawson's meta-theory there is a sentence to the effect that "the negation of a negation is equivalent to the absence of negation". Applying this definition from the meta-theory he must suppose the landlady to have said there was one instant at which she harmed the whole human race, and being unwilling to accept this interpretation (using a theory of interpretation and truth predicate semantics) he must correct the landlady's error. Note that relative to Strawson's speech community the unfortunate woman's error is one of competence (relative to the meta-theory), performance ("ain't"), and dialect.

My way with the problem avoids claiming that you correct speakers because their choice of language is not suitable to the message they wish to convey, or that their expression is deficient in grammatical structure which you provide in your corrective task. However, my account is basic enough to imply that when correction is made of one linguistic code from another code one of these two claims may be true.

So in Humpty Dumpty's speech community we stand corrected, but in ours, and Alice's, we can rub his nose in meta-theory!

A REPLY TO COMMENTS

Paul Beard

It is I think apparent from the three responses that current linguistic debate is at times tentative, fragmentary and problematic. Furthermore, it seems from the replies by Borowsky and Young that I should have made my definitions far more explicit.

In the space allowed I will attempt to comment on what I consider to be the main observations of each respondent.

BOROWSKY

Borowsky has focused with accuracy upon my assumptions about mastery of a native language and the making of competence errors at an early age. But let me define 'Competence' - perhaps in the narrow Chomskyan sense, for it is here that we may fundamentally disagree. It is what people know how to say. The set of all expressions which they can produce or recognize, without departing from their language, and using some other language, or non linguistic sounds. Competence is infinite in this sense: the set of expressions which a man knows how to produce - supposing the appropriate situation should arise - is infinitely large.

Thus only in an ideal way is performance a direct reflection of competence and in actual fact, if Chomsky is correct it could not directly reflect competence.

Developing from this I would disagree with the conclusions Borowsky draws from her evidence "the teaching of the standard dialect to non-standard speakers is not to be viewed as a foreign language ..." It seems to me that it is precisely because we can view language learning in this way such developments as hypercorrection, as interpreted in formal educational systems, can be explained. The point is that teacher and child have regular rules of pronounciation, syntax etc but the teacher's rules distinguish Pronounciation 1 rules and the child's Pronounciation 2 rules. The teacher, believing himself to be correcting an isolated mispronounciation is in fact challenging a whole system of rules. If these are overthrown, the child has no guide to pronounciation, and has to formulate the best rules he can which often are wrong by any standards.

In this case the attempt to correct a child's English has succeeded only in turning the child into a foreigner who makes competence mistakes in his own language.

Taken to an extreme hypercorrection may produce the following conversation.

"Do you take sugar Mr Jones?"

"No Miss cos I thinks the suavosity of the sugar nullifies the flavosity of the tea which renders it wastly hobnoxious."

(note the intrusive 'h')

YOUNG

I am unaware of the equation referred to by Young that grammaticality = correctness. I thought my distinction was quite clear. He is of course right in stating that correctness is a pragmatic issue, but it is more than just this, as is grammaticality being seen by him as an inaccessible concept. It is no more inaccessible than any other abstraction.

Young draws into sharp focus (part 2) the mistake on my part in not making clear the 'crucial' distinction between error and mistake. I have attempted to illustrate the critical nature of these dimensions and have, I think, implied this throughout, but Young pounces on my oversight, namely the use of performance 'errors' instead of, as he suggests, 'mistakes'. The second criticism he makes here, which is the same as Borowsky, I accept fully.

Lastly Young again makes a good case for the inadequacy of an essentially Chomskyan framework. However one needs greater clarification of his 'innovation' before a meaningful response can be made.

VAN STRAATEN

Van Straaten has at last abandoned the 'Hippopotamus technique' (no introduction necessary) and adopted a 'Rhinoceros technique' thus we have a rapid accumulation of a strategically located pile.

He is unfortunately incorrect in thinking that the isolated errors were dependent on Bernstein. I was in fact 'appealing' (as Young perceived) to Chomsky, and used

Bernstein to illustrate more fully the social and pragmatic difficulties encountered in the classroom. However that is a minor issue, as is his insistance upon an apparent contradiction (" 'correct' low status dialect"). I may have made contradictions elsewhere but that was not one of them.

More directly I find Van Straaten's definition of a "speech community" in terms of an "observation sentence" startling. From a very exact and closed definition of an "observation sentence" he moves rather weakly, and with a paucity of logic, to a loose and fluid definition of a "speech community". "Membership of the linguistic community is the ability to generate fluent dialogue" and "Membership of a speech community is not absolute". There is of course a considerable difference between 'speech' and 'linguistic' though Van Straaten appears to use them synonymously.

If we now play along with him and somehow adopt the limited parameters of his thinking and affirm as he says "the obvious", that is, four kinds of error occur. We are once again halted by woolly pragmatism for I have at no time stated that the four errors are at the level of 'dialogue' and if Van Straaten is to be consistent (see errors 1-4) nor has he. As Young succinctly states grammaticality is "largely (an) inaccessible concept" - 'grammar' specifies linguistic competence and it is here that errors may occur. I am not operating, as Van Straaten seems to believe, at a surface structure level.

(In desperation now) I find the assumption he makes convincing, but given the foregoing looseness of definition and argument acceptance is difficult - as a result I am not sure whether Van Straaten is bent on entertainment or if he has in fact unearthed a real solution. Clearly his conclusion contains the seeds of a most original and thought provoking analysis.

Finally I would like to thank sincerely Toni Borowsky, Douglas Young and Zak van Straaten for their constructive and stimulating replies. Their thoughts and time are greatly appreciated.

NOTICES

EDITORIAL NOTICES

a) Dr Mervyn Skuy has resigned from the editorial committee of Perspectives in Education. We would like to express our appreciation to him for his contribution to the launching of this journal.

b) In this issue of the journal we have our first INTERCHANGE section. If you have any suggestions for topics which deserve this kind of treatment, or, more concretely, if you have or know of an article which might be suitable as a starting paper for an INTERCHANGE, please let the editorial committee know.

c) One function of the NOTICES section is to make available information about such events as conferences, lectures, seminars and so on, related to education. The Editor will welcome information about such events: either notices in advance or brief reports on the proceedings. Volume 2 Number 2 is due to be distributed on 16 May 1977.

d) We have had a number of requests for back issues (Volume 1 Nos 1 & 2) but we no longer have any. If you know of any copies which are not being used we would be most grateful if you could return them to the Editor. If we don't get enough we might have to reprint these issues which, apart from the trouble involved, will use up some of our budget for this year.

PROFESSOR RAYMOND TUNMER

Raymond Tunmer, who was the Director of Teacher-Training at the University of the Witwatersrand from 1972 to 1976, has been appointed Professor of Education at Rhodes University. We congratulate him on his appointment, and wish him every success.

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INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS

The Editor will welcome contributions in the form of comments on local events or issues, original articles, discussion of articles, reviews, items for the 'Notices' Section and so on.

It would be helpful if contributions were submitted according to the following specifications:

(i) the length should ordinarily be no longer than about 3 000 words;

(ii) the contribution should be typewritten on one side of A4 paper, double-spaced with good margins all round;

(iii) three copies should be provided, as well as an indication of length;

(iv) references and footnotes should be kept to a minimum but, if required, should appear at the end of the contribution.

Proofs will not be sent to authors for correction unless this is especially requested. Contributions for the Discussion section can be published anonymously provided that the contributor's name is submitted to the editorial committee. The Editor encourages the submission of short abstracts with articles longer than 2 000 words. The date by which contributions for the next issue must be with the Editor appears on the back cover.

All contributions should be sent in the first instance to the Editor:

Wally Morrow
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If you want any further information please get in touch with a member of the editorial committee:

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