

**A COMPARISON OF APPROACHES TO THE TEACHING OF
ENGLISH IN TWO SOCIOLINGUISTIC ENVIRONMENTS
(Jamaica and London, UK)**

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Dissertation submitted in part fulfilment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Education.

University of London: Institute of Education.

1998



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to my supervisors: Jane Miller, for her unfailing support and John Hardcastle for his encouragement. Thanks also to the teachers who made this work possible. And to my family on both sides of the Atlantic. The ties continue to bind.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate teachers' thinking and delivery of English to students who have a Jamaican Creole background, in two very different but historically related environments, namely Jamaica and London. The research base consists of 18 individual participants and one focus group from 4 schools in Jamaica, and 17 participants from 5 schools and one language centre in London. Using interviews, observations and historical inquiry, the study compares the views of teachers, in these two settings, about the aim and method of, and the influences on, their teaching of English.

The study draws on the principles of critical ethnography, to allow the investigation to get at the views and practices of the participants, and how they are constructed. An autobiographical chapter is introduced at the beginning to acknowledge the clear personal boundaries which inform the work and to make the researcher's position clear. Additionally, the result of the historical inquiry in the two settings is offered as part of the interpretative background, adding information about the participants, the situation from which they came, and the forces which have helped to form their professional beliefs.

An analysis of the data gathered in Jamaica and in London reveal that although the differences in the attitude to grammar were not a major distinction there are differences in the approach to teaching English. A number of correspondences are found in the aims and methods of teaching. Larger differences are revealed in attitudes towards English and towards schooling. The interpretation of the differences and similarities between the settings reveals that the construction of consent presented a useful way of understanding the classrooms. The importance of linguistic markers of agreement and of the psycho-cultural processes involved in the making of the teacher are foregrounded.

Conclusions drawn from this comparative study offer some insight into how we can better understand these two sets of language classrooms. These conclusions might be

particularly relevant to understanding the perceptions of parents and adult learners in the London setting who have a Caribbean background.

CONTENTS	Page No.
Acknowledgements	2
Abstract	3
Contents	5
List of Tables and Figures	7
Introduction	8
Chapter 1: The Autobiography of the Project	10
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature	18
2.1. The Sociolinguistic Background	
2.2. Research on the Jamaican Language in Jamaica	
2.3. Research on Jamaican Creole Speakers in London	
2.4. Language and Identity	
2.5. Language and Identity in Creole Settings	
2.6. Language, Power and Education in Creole Settings	
2.7. Conclusion	
Chapter 3: Research Methodology	45
3.1. Theoretical Underpinnings	
3.2. Research Design	
3.3. Gaining Access	
3.4. Data Analysis	
Chapter 4: Historical Inquiry: The Context of the Formation of the Teachers in Jamaica and London	71
4.1. An Overview of the Jamaican Education System	
4.2. An Overview of the English Education System	
4.3. Comparative Accounts	

Chapter 5:	Presentation of the Data (Jamaica)	105
5.1	The Path to Interpretation	
5.2	In the Field: Jamaican Story Events	
5.3	Analysing the Interviews: A Commentary on the Findings	
5.4	Analysing the Response Statements: The Language Environment	
5.5	Classrooms Observed	
5.6	An Approach to the Teaching of English (Jamaica)	
Chapter 6:	The London Data	158
6.1	In the Field: London Story Events	
6.2	Analysing the Interviews: A Commentary on the Findings	
6.3	The Response Statement: The Cultural Environment	
6.4	Schooling and Culture	
6.5	Classrooms Observed	
6.6	An Approach to the Teaching of English (London)	
Chapter 7:	Interpreting the Data	220
7.1	Review and Summary	
7.2	Differences and Correspondences	
7.3	Accounting for the Differences	
7.4	Language	
7.5	The Educational Culture of Society	
7.6	Conclusions/Implications/Further Inquiry	243
Appendix		251
Bibliography		300

List of Tables and Figures

Table 1: The aims of English teaching in Jamaica	113
Table 2: The methods used to teach English in Jamaica	121
Table 3: The influences on Jamaican teachers of English	126
Table 4: The aims of English teaching in London	163
Table 5: The methods used to teach English in London	170
Table 6: The influences on London teachers of English	184
Figure 1: Four orientations to the teaching of English	172

INTRODUCTION

This study is, first and foremost a study about teachers and secondly, about the classrooms they inhabit. It is an investigation into the ways teachers think about and deliver the subject English to students who have a Jamaican Creole background, in two very different but related environments, namely Jamaica and London (UK). The study compares teaching in these two sociolinguistic settings that are linked by historical forces. "Sociolinguistic" is here used in its broader sense as defined by Crystal (1985) and draws on the sociology of language (Chambers, 1995). The term refers to the fact that English has distinct relationships of use and is perceived differently, in societies, such as Jamaica and London. Each setting would be described differently, in terms of how English is perceived and how it is used by its speakers. The settings offered represent the span of my career in the teaching of English.

The research base consists of 18 individual participants and one focus group from 4 schools in Jamaica, and 17 participants from 5 schools and one language centre in London. Using different types of interviews, the study compares the views of teachers, about the aim and method of, and influences on, their teaching of English. The processes of classroom interaction are also observed, to serve as illuminations of the teachers' responses and as examples of what happens in some classrooms.

The study draws on the principles of critical ethnography, using different types of interviews, observations and field notes, to allow the investigation to get at the views and practices of the participants. An autobiographical chapter is introduced at the very beginning of this study, to acknowledge the clear personal boundaries which inform the work and to make clear my own position. Additionally, a historical account of education in the two settings is offered as part of the interpretative background. It is presented as a precursor to the analysis of the data, because such information tells us more about the actors, the situation from which they came, the forces which have helped to form their professional opinions: how,

in fact, they have come to mean.

The comparison in each case begins with the Jamaican data for a number of reasons. First, very little is known in London about teaching and teachers in Jamaica, even though children and parents from the Caribbean region have long been a part of the education system in England. Even less is known of the teaching of English in this post-colonial setting. The second reason, for beginning with the Jamaican data, is that it provides the reference point for my experience and my conclusions about teaching outside Jamaica. This is because of my work with children, parents and students of a Jamaican background in London.

An important part of the study is the explanation of the differences found in the settings, which will inform the implications and conclusions. The conclusions drawn from this comparative study should offer some insight into how we can better understand these two sets of classrooms, as well as charting some sources for future study.

CHAPTER ONE

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF THE PROJECT

There are a number of pathways which lead me to a project of this kind. They may be classified as personal, political or professional, depending on how one wishes to organise those strands which fuel the impulses for our actions. The strands are, of course, intertwined but for the purposes of introducing this research, I will attempt to separate them, to show how I came to focus on this area of work.

The Personal

The personal might be a useful starting point in that it can be seen as the foundation of our thinking. Grumet (1988) sees the autobiographical account as the first step in understanding the nature and depth of knowledge to be excavated. For her, such personal exploration is an essential kind of exploration, which recovers “the specificity and contradiction, evidence that education was a human project that we all actively sustain” (p.xv). The “specificity” of my project does begin with a personal history.

I had my first few years of elementary (all age) schooling in Jamaica before I migrated to England at the age of ten. The next thirty years were spent as a student, a worker or parent, directly involved in the English education system. Certainly my years as educator were spent mainly with issues of language education, as it affected the Black child in the school system, primarily children of Jamaican descent. In that time, I visited Jamaica on many occasions and made contact with teachers and some educators on a personal level. These were people who worked in the school system.

I was always aware of myself as a Jamaican but did not go back there to work, until January 1992. Not surprisingly, I was seen as English! Colleagues and my students at the University were interested in my experiences, very different from theirs, of living and working in London. Even my accent was commented on, but I was welcomed as someone who had a real contribution to make. It was these

experiences which posed the first direct questions for this research, to which I will return, later in this discussion.

The Political

My emphasis on the personal grounding in a project, as the best starting point, suggests that a vested interest in the outcome, makes some outcome likely! I say this as someone who has worked with Black parents in supplementary schools and campaigning organisations, most actively through the 1970s to the mid 1980s. The feeling, in those circumstances, was that those who had academic training or communication skills had to put them at the service of our embattled communities. My experience is of Black parents continually and sometimes publicly requiring that I take a position on the language question, in ways which they understood and of which they approved. I was not always able to oblige, having neither the time nor inclination to carry out the kind of research which would satisfy all their concerns. A particularly illustrative example of this related to the issue of Creole use in the classroom prompted by the publication, under the auspices of the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA, 1977), of what was called The Natty Dread ABC, an experimental attempt to “recover” reluctant readers. There was an outcry against the use of, what was seen as, an untried and untested practice. West Indian parents felt that because the book was published through a school I was associated with, I had a responsibility for its appearance and had to be held accountable for its misuse in schools. The fact that I was then engaged in other political projects at the time was beside the point. As a Jamaican professional working in South London, I had at all times to be at the service of their specific community agenda. My inclination at the time was to respect that agenda and respond to it whenever I could. The issue of Black parents response to non-traditional texts will be addressed later with the presentation of the London data in Chapter Six.

Other issues that came to the fore at the time included the role of Black Studies in the curriculum, the impact of Black teachers on Black children’s achievement, the institutionalising of the supplementary movement and other more pathological concerns relating to the continued mis-education of the Black child (Bryan et al,

1985). In my own specific case, my dilemma in 1982 was about whether to pursue further academic work in language education or continue preparation of a book on Black women's lives. I chose the latter because, at the time, it seemed the most urgent task. The response after publication proved that it was a worthwhile project which had to be done. Naturally, it led me through paths of experience, which might not have been available if I had acceded to other pressures. This does not mean that I neglected work in language education but what I did try to do, was translate what came out of my Master's work into practical material for curriculum development and curriculum management.

In returning to this area, I feel that I am again making a political decision about the direction my research should take. This is why it took me a year to decide, finally, what my main area of research in Jamaica should be. Traditionally, because of the complex language situation, language educators have been preoccupied with linguistics and sociolinguistics, with an emphasis on Creole research. My initial impulse was to follow in this field and to concentrate on language change through migration. Such a direction would seem to be rich, because it had been little explored. It also offered an opportunity for me to tap into personal resources as one who had also been through those changes during my childhood and in returning to Jamaica could observe some interesting comparisons between Jamaican Creole and its progeny in the diaspora!

I gradually decided to shift the emphasis, for reasons which relate back to discussions I had had in London with Black parents and educators, about how one should best maximise opportunities available to ensure the greatest benefit. I began to realise that a project which was wholly linguistic, in the way originally envisaged, might be of limited use to teachers in Jamaica, especially in an atmosphere where change was being sought to improve language teaching. Such a project would also seem to close off twenty years teaching and thinking experience in the London setting, without a sufficiently satisfying attempt to examine those experiences in a post-Thatcher, yet still Thatcherite environment. It would really

mean accepting hierarchical assumptions that the closer one was to theoretical linguistics, the more important the research might be. Preston (1989) disagrees with this view, setting out to show the increasing attention to sociolinguistics in Second Language Acquisition. Huebner (1990), too, refers to this preoccupation with purer forms of linguistic research, to the detriment of applied linguistics and language education. It was my consideration of the value of language education research to both environments, and of what I felt was the narrowness of the original formulation, which brought the two dimensions of the present project together.

The Professional

The greatest motivation for this project remains professional. My earliest involvement with language education in the Caribbean context was in 1969, during a final year dissertation at Crewe and Alsager Teachers' Training College. There my concern was with the problems Jamaican children faced on entry to the British education system, after coming from schools in the hills of Clarendon. At that time, people such as Jim Wight (1970) were beginning to notice that the Jamaican child had begun to fail abysmally in the British system. During the next five years I was confronted with some of those treated as failures in my work in the primary school. There my emphasis was on using positive and at the time, revolutionary images to neutralise negative stereotypes. My concern was with cultural forms of oppression rather than with linguistic or even sociolinguistic concerns. An interest in sociolinguistic matters came much later while working with adult students in a London community college. There the concern was with dealing with students' language identity, in the face of their own recognition that they needed to acquire Standard English (Bryan, 1982). Such a focus led to an emphasis on language awareness models of teaching, exemplified from 1985 by the Afro-Caribbean Language and Literacy Project. The late 1970s to the early 1980s was a time when the debate on the teaching of English to children of Jamaican descent was very intense, as witnessed by the discussions in *The English Magazine* during this period. It was also a productive period when solutions and approaches were being seriously considered.

It was at this time that I began to consider what developments might be coming from the Caribbean in particular, what the Jamaican dimension to this language experience might be. Some insights were offered. The first and earliest reference was to Craig (1967) who took a quasi-bilingual approach to Jamaican Creole speakers' acquisition of English, advocating, at the time, audio-lingual methods for English teaching. Carrington concentrated on the eastern Caribbean where Francophone creoles exert a considerable influence, and are more likely to be accepted as languages in states like St Lucia and Dominica where English is the official language. For Carrington, this meant an unequivocal bilingualism, in the sense that the acquisition of English was seen as the acquisition of another language. Neither Craig nor Carrington could, however, provide the total answers, because, as language educators in developing countries, they were primarily concerned with the specifics of the Caribbean. Forays from teachers from England added a little. Searle's (1973) The Forsaken Lover, for example, spoke as a White expatriate teacher, preoccupied with the consequences of Eurocentric literacy in revolutionary Grenada.

Clearly, most projects in this area have kept a specific focus with a specific and separate agenda. Jamaican language educators have attempted to look at Jamaican language education from the view point of Jamaica, where research has increasingly emphasised the bilingual nature of the language situation. British-based projects involving children from a Jamaican Creole language background have assumed a mother tongue focus, in keeping with an assumption that the United Kingdom has a dominant language which can be acquired or enhanced with minimal reference to other language backgrounds. There has been very little cross-fertilisation to see what comparisons can be made, what factors have formed the commonalities and differences in the approach to teaching children from what might be called a similar language background.

As mentioned before, different aspects of the project envisaged have been emphasised by different researchers. My project would acknowledge all these

influences. Craig concentrated on the Jamaica experience, primarily as a language educator who wanted to acknowledge the contribution of his colleagues in Creole Studies, such as Alleyne, Allsop, Hancock, Bailey and Cassidy (Craig, 1976). In Britain, Edwards (1979) investigated the issues in a British situation, where the Jamaican language was viewed in pathological terms. The goal of Edwards was similar to Craig in its attention to aspects of language education, in particular the development of bilingualism. Sutcliffe (1982) set out to describe the sociolinguistic context, at the same time as the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) was encouraging the kinds of surveys pioneered by Rosen and Burgess (1980), which would encourage a positive approach to language diversity. An inextricable link between questions of language and identity was recognised. Sebba (1986) provided one of the first linguistic descriptions of language change in the Jamaican community in London. Hewitt (1989) began the first tentative mapping of positions. On first reading, one was struck by just how hesitant Hewitt's interpretations were, coloured as they were by how painfully some of those perspectives were achieved and maintained.

The Genesis of the Questions

I have already stated a kind of motivation coming from my personal language history. I have also included a political motivation/impulse stemming from lessons absorbed from Black parents in community organisations. My professional experience is the mainspring, as it has always been in language education and often with a desire to learn from what was happening in the Caribbean. The possibility of pursuing this kind of work came into focus after a discussion with a group of teachers in Mona, Jamaica about grammar. It was particularly stark, because I had had a similar discussion with a group of pre-service teachers in the University of Greenwich, some nine months before. The difference in attitude to grammar was clear, with the Greenwich teachers being very conscious that our discussion was about ideology and being very hesitant about the formulations put forward. The Mona students saw the matter in teaching terms primarily and concentrated on methodology. All kinds of factors might have accounted for their different views. It could have been that my Mona students were long experienced teachers in school-

based teaching responding to a case study, while the Greenwich people were pre-service teachers going into post-compulsory education, taking part in a general discussion on a topic which had had much public attention. There could have been a race dimension, because the Greenwich group were all-White and the Mona group were all Jamaicans. A good researcher has to take account of all the variables! I could have dismissed the views of the Mona teachers as views coming from apolitical people, but Jamaica is a society where politics is a truly “lived” experience. Schools are often virtually closed during the election period, and not simply for voting purposes. People die because of the focus on intense political beliefs.

It was very possible that the teachers in Greenwich and Mona might teach students with similar language backgrounds and similar aspirations about what they wanted to achieve in English. However, the stated attitude to teaching them was very different. The Greenwich teachers felt that grammar was a loaded subject, linked with contentious ideas about Englishness, and that it had to be avoided in a multi-cultural context. The Jamaican teachers emphasised the importance of motivation in learning English and were more interested in the ways that could be found to engage the children. My aim, therefore, is to consider a number of closely related questions:

Are there key differences in the approach to the teaching of English in these two settings? What factors might account for any of the differences encountered? Are they symptomatic of much wider differences in the speakers’ relationship to the language itself? What are the factors which might have shaped those differences? What light might they show on developing pedagogy?

As a researcher must, I chose to focus on four areas which, I felt, could be examined to help answer these questions. They were, in the beginning **the sociolinguistic background; the attitude of students to their language; the preoccupations of teachers; and the positions taken by official policy makers.** In the process of the research the emphasis on the areas changed considerably. The

route for the change was, as before, a concern with the stakeholders' agenda. If this study was about the teachers' approaches, then the **formation** of the Jamaican and London teachers of English had to be the central concern. This was part of the reason also for the introduction of the historical inquiry, to help make sense of the teachers' responses. The case for the Jamaican teacher is particularly strong, as this work has never been done. Consequently, more has been offered here of what happens in that setting. It is, in fact, the starting point for the comparison. By exploring these possible differences, I hope to make available such insights acquired, insights that I wished I had, while teaching in London. If that seems too grand, I hope I will, at least, be able to say something meaningful to those same group of teachers in both Kingston and London.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The scope of the study requires that the Review of Literature draws from a range of sources, including the sociolinguistic background, and its attendant psychosociological ramifications in language attitudes, identity and ethnicity. This chapter also examines the public perception of both Creole and English; official attitudes to the two languages, especially in relation to language planning issues; and the operation of both languages in educational settings.

2.1 THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC BACKGROUND: How to characterise the language environment.

The sociolinguistic perspective is required to describe the language environment that Jamaican teachers operate in. An inquiry into how language features (and figures) in this society might not provide a full explanation of the phenomenon we encounter in classrooms but it must be seen as part of the cultural matrix which contributes to the formation of the teacher and the classroom she inhabits. As Taylor (1973) noted, all teachers, not least English teachers, take account, consciously and subconsciously, of the linguistic situation in which they operate. The central question has to be how to understand their perceptions; and how to characterise what is happening to the language in the society, in which they operate.

The first point to make about the sociolinguistic account is to say that the perspective has always been problematic and deeply contested because of two specific and related factors. In the first instance, creole languages are voices from poor and marginalised societies, all at one time dominated by European expansionism (Holm, 1988). This is a crucial first statement, because it is the basis on which all else is predicated. Second, the study of such stigmatised entities has consequently long remained in the margins, with the emphasis on the European

“superstrate” relationships, rather than their function and use in the indigenous communities. (Alleyne, 1971)

The fundamental question of genesis of Creole languages has still not been resolved. There have been the early monogenetic theories of the 1950s, followed by polygenetic re-formulations, to the present competing positions of substratist and universalist, which continue to be contested (Muysken & Smith, 1986; Holm, 1988). The present debate marks important differences in locating Creole genesis within particular approaches to language. The I-language perspective (see Cook in Brumfit, 1992) which underlies Bickerton’s Language Bioprogram, with its emphasis on innate capabilities (1) can be juxtaposed against an E-language perspective which foregrounds social and cultural factors in new language formation. Aetiological concerns are still a significant topic at The Society for Caribbean Linguistics (SCL) conferences.

Inevitably, the absence of an unequivocal and venerable tradition has had a profoundly negative effect on attitudes to these languages. As Alleyne (1994) has noted:

...creoles have been ranked with baby talk, child language, foreigner talk, and with other instances of nonnatural language that do not serve normal societal communicative needs nor the full cognitive needs of the human species. (Alleyne, 1994: 8)

In fact, the term “creole” has never been fully and formally defined (Carrington, 1987) (2) Consequently, the omission from, and commission to, the Creole pantheon has been substantial, with “post-creole”, “semi-creole”, “cline of creoleness” becoming part of the accepted and extending terminology (Holm, 1988; 1992; Schneider, 1990).

2.2 Research on the Jamaican Language in Jamaica

The research took root with the 1968 Creole conference at the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica (Dell Hymes, 1971). The first note sounded, in the introduction to those significant papers, attests to the low and problematic status of the languages of the region. However, the presence of such as Labov and Hymes at the conference suggests a general recognition of the wider significance of the social aspects of these linguistic descriptions, as they might eventually relate to the lives of poor and powerless people. The study of such language behaviour was only beginning to be seen as respectable, and so the conference sought to move Creole Linguistics from the margins to the centre of scholarship. Naturally, the shift brought with it the conflicting descriptions and statements surrounding the subject. There were, for example, some differences in the characterisation offered by Bailey, Alleyne and DeCamp. Bailey (1971) drew on theory and her own intuitions as a native speaker, in trying to define the boundaries of the indigenous language, suggesting that few people were actual speakers of Jamaica Creole (JC). Other examples of language use she placed on a continuum as “standard with incursions from the creole or creole with incursions from standard” (Bailey, 1971: 342)

Alleyne (1971) took a different position, resisting the use of the term creole, not just because of its pejorative undertones relating to “otherness” i.e. non-whiteness, but also because of the evidence of his research on language making. The notion of simplification is questioned: the link between language change, social integration and cultural contact is established; the African base of the New World languages is re-asserted for later confirmation (Alleyne, 1980).

DeCamp (1971b) took a more explicit sociolinguistic position, using the continuum as the explanatory model of Jamaican language use, introducing his own quaint, anachronistic terminology, which Alleyne (1980) was later to

characterise as “outmoded and inappropriate”:

Rather there is a linguistic continuum, a continuous spectrum of speech varieties ranging from the ‘bush talk’ or ‘broken language’ of Quashie to the educated standard of Philip Sherlock and Norman Manley.....Each Jamaican speaker commands a span of this continuum, the breadth of the span depending on the breadth of his social contacts (DeCamp, 1971b: 350)

With much zeal DeCamp characterises the language situation as post-creole with JC gradually merging with the standard in response to a changing social situation. The two conditions necessary for such “decreolisation” are that English must be the “dominant official language” and that the class boundaries must be sufficiently eroded to offer a level of social mobility, the pursuit of which would exert pressure on the creole. Holm (1988) notes that the introduction, by Stewart, of terms such as “basilect”, “mesolect” and “acrolect,” have added to the description of different points on the continuum.

Continuing research now takes issue with some of that characterisation (Winford, 1993). It is clear that JC has not withered away and so although the continuum concept continues to have a descriptive power, DeCamp’s (1971b) attempt to use it to suggest the direction of language change for Jamaica is not accepted, (Alleyne, 1980; 1989; Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985; Carrington, 1987; 1992). The greatest issue is usually taken with what seems to be the linearity and unidirectionality of DeCamp’s (1971b) continuum, which moves singly and inexorably to decreolisation. Of course, as indicated above, DeCamp does recognise a social continuum running parallel to the linguistic characterisation. Others would go further and add a cultural dimension to a description of the language situation in Jamaica. This has been Alleyne’s recurring theme (Alleyne, 1971; 1980; 1989; 1994). In his 1994 work Alleyne continues to maintain some distance from the commonly used concepts of “continuum” and “creole”, except as convenient and familiar labels for certain kinds of “poorly defined and described” linguistic representations. It is of interest to him, also, that so many resist using the term “Jamaican”, when “English” retains its currency, even though it could be said

that both languages have followed comparative evolutionary paths. For Alleyne, maintaining those differences confirms the notion of languages like Jamaican as corrupt and deviant, outside of the normal (European) development of language contact and change (Alleyne, 1994: 9). The ideological position becomes the determining factor, in assessing the status of a language.

Similarly Le Page & Tabouret-Keller (1985) and Carrington (1992) seek to thicken the description of a creole continuum by conceptualising a wider range of choices. For the former such a multi-dimensional model includes not only class, but also notions of culture, psychology and ideology reflecting the individual's active construction of his/her own perceived reality. It is therefore a model for explaining language choice, language loyalty and ethnic consciousness. Carrington (1992) tries to take the concept even further by linking such variegated language behaviour to theories of Universal Grammar and specifically to the idea of an environmental trigger shaping specific capabilities. His use of the term "Caribbean Sociolinguistics Complex" (CSC) refers to the, not as yet fully understood, competencies displayed by the variety of speech communities within the region:

The concept....does not preclude the acceptability and usefulness of the knowledge gained and the hypothesis created within the framework of discussions on continua, bilingualism, diglossia and multilingualism. It does not deny that sub-sectors of the Caribbean may have been correctly described by these approaches. (Carrington, 1992: 2)

Shields (1989), in her characterisation of the Jamaican language environment, takes issue with the unidirectionality of continuum theories, suggesting that the nativised English standard which is emerging is, in fact, taking on creole features. Shields' research, based on audiotapes of radio and television newscasts, print media reports and opinion columns, indicates that language choice is active with "bidirectional focussing". There are, consequently, two standards operating in the country, with one model taking the form of established English, while the other is developing new creolised structures. These competing standards reflect the sociolinguistic fact of changing attitudes to English at the level of popular use, and the loosening of

ties with mother tongue of the “mother country”. Creole is used unselfconsciously at all stages of Jamaican life while English is heard less frequently. Such a shift is not totally new in the cultural forum (cf Bennett’s playful mockery of English speech patterns in a number of her poems [Bryan, 1994]).

The thrust of this work by Shields suggests a breakdown of the local diglossic situation, where English was used in formal situations and the Creole reserved for informal use. This tendency is confirmed by her findings which show the increased exposure and validation of Jamaica Creole in the media, with the proliferation of accessible radio talk shows (Shields, 1992). Additionally, newscasts now routinely feature Creole speakers who have traditionally been silenced through paraphrase and summary. The conclusion of Shields’ work must be a refutation of DeCamp’s (1971b) prediction of the inevitable progress towards the adoption of English.

Pollard (1992; 1994) also refutes the unidirectionality of Creole. Her work on Dread Talk (DT) demonstrates the progress of Creole away from the seemingly esoteric language of an oppressed minority to language that has, in some ways, become “naturalised” in middle and working-class speech.

2.3 Research on Jamaican Creole Speakers in London

Terms such as “continuum” have been seen as more appropriate in a parallel attempt to characterise the language situation, as it relates to speakers with a JC background living in Britain. Little work has been done in this area, but such an absence can only be understood in the context of the historic relationship between Britain and her colonies. Her early, selective immigration policy with regard to the Caribbean resulted in the uneasy settlement of Jamaican communities at the end of the Second World war. Workers were invited to fill positions English workers could or would not fill. Jamaicans availed themselves of the opportunities offered,

but these economic avenues closed abruptly with the Commonwealth Immigration Acts of the early 1960s (Sivanandan, 1981). Sociological reports written in the 1950s and 1960s played down the issue of language, except as a small communication problem, because it was felt there, as it was in the Caribbean at the time, that Caribbean people spoke an imperfect kind of English (Patterson, 1965). Racism compounded the problems encountered (Coard, 1971; Humphry and John, 1971). Needless to say, linguistic inquiry into the background of such communities has been scarce or simply pathological, looking for the ways in which language background has featured in the matrix of underachievement factors. So much so, that Edwards (1979) was led to investigate the “language issue”, to undo several misconceptions on such matters as the non-standardness of JC and the related cognitive deficit of its speakers. In this piece of work, the continuum concept is applied, as is the notion of the pidgin-creole life cycle; and a description of “West Indian” Creole is offered. There is a sense that the struggles of earlier years, to deal with a hostile environment, remain extremely necessary (Bryan et al, 1985), as Dalphinis (1991) confirms, pointing to the worsening social, economic and political situation of West Indians in Britain through the 1980s and beyond.

More recent investigations have added to the characterisation of the linguistic environment in the United Kingdom as a whole. The dominant description is understood to be English as a Native Language (ENL) using the definition of Gorlach (1988), but such a label is problematic if it assumes that the voices in the street, the media, the schools and across political life confirm an undifferentiated mono-lingualism. Cheshire (1991) suggests a more complicated and diverse picture signalled earlier in Cheshire et al (1989). Here the evidence is presented of the varieties of languages which exist in London and beyond.

The language of the once-immigrant population has changed over time as part of a natural language contact process, and also as a result of the demographic changes instituted by immigration policies. Since the mid 1970s, the majority of children starting school have been British born rather than migrants. The speech of the

children of that Jamaican diaspora blends with the local languages of the English working class and newer immigrant populations. In numerical terms, Jamaica is the dominant Caribbean group and the language of its people remains the most influential on the British Creole landscape. The diversity that has emerged in the school has now been marked by Rosen and Burgess (1980), Edwards (1981;1986), Sutcliffe (1982; 1992), Dalphinis (1985), Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985), and Sebba (1986; 1993).

Although most of these studies focus on London communities, a number of them investigate language use in other Black communities. Edwards (1986) investigated the use of “Patois” in Dudley in the West Midlands. She found considerable variation, but also evidence of a high level of competence where there were strong peer-group influences. The evidence of a positive attitude towards the language was also noted by Edwards, and this feature was confirmed by Sutcliffe’s (1992) work, focusing on the same Black community. He refers to the language as British Jamaican Creole (BJC) and indicates that BJC remains strong in that Midland community. The language that Sutcliffe describes is one that has moved away, from the variety he identified as rural Jamaican speech, towards structures that are more urban. The changes in Jamaican Creole, as a result of migration, are here being noted.

Work in London began with a strong emphasis on the importance of valuing the language that children bring to school. Rosen and Burgess (1980) agree with the words of Bullock (1975):

No child should be expected to cast off the language and culture of the home as he crosses the school threshold. (Rosen and Burgess, 1980: 9)

Their investigation into the language background of 4,600 London school children makes a case, not just for the reality but also for the value of diversity. Their findings further unmask London’s multilingualism with the discovery of 55 languages and 24 overseas-based dialects located in the classrooms. They avoid

defining terms such as “dialects”, but make use of concepts such as “continuum”, suggesting a vitality and fluidity as the Creole and London continua collide. The question of the relationship between language, culture and identity is foregrounded in an examination of the choices offered by such heterogeneity. However, Edwards (1981) suggested that that methodological adjustments might have yielded an even higher level of multilingualism. Sutcliffe’s (1982) more informal work looked at that language and culture, and the significance of the choices made about language use. Dalphinis (1985) took an unequivocally substratist position, arguing for African continuities in Caribbean languages.

Le Page and Tabouret-Keller’s (1985) work is relevant here as the only text that looks at data from both the Caribbean and London. They took further the investigation of Rosen and Burgess’ “London Jamaican”. Although more clearly linguistic in orientation than Rosen and Burgess’ London survey, their conceptualisations of their foray into these communities introduce the two concepts of “focusing” and “diffusion”. They use the terms to explain how language change can be seen to operate: with “diffuse” communities allowing greater freedom and variation in language contact situations while “focused” contexts draw together, adhering to agreed norms. As these descriptions apply not only to the contexts, but also to linguistic systems, London Jamaican is considered in this light as a variety born out of the process of focusing.

Sebba (1986) begins to chart this process. He identified two varieties used by children of Jamaican descent, which he defined as Afro-Caribbean London English and the newly discovered London Jamaican. The former is described as approximating quite closely to the local Cockney English, but with distinct syntactic, lexical and phonetic features (eg. *se*) as significant examples of borrowing from JC. The second variety is London Jamaican, perceived here as a language of identity acquired in adolescence. Sebba (1993) took the investigation further in his attempt to trap what he had earlier described as London Jamaican. He questions the use of the term ‘continuum’ in a context where the same level of class differences do not

exist among potential JC speakers, looking instead at research which suggests code-switching and the mixing of varieties on an individual basis. He presents a description of the London Jamaican component of Black British speech, which draws on Le Page and Tabouret-Keller's (1985) twin notion of "diffusion" and "focusing". Focusing processes are now reflected in the adoption of JC, in the creation of London Jamaican by adolescents, both Black and White, Hewitt (1989). A form of Jamaican Creole has become the standard amongst young Londoners. Sebba concentrates on Black adolescents, foregrounding the social dimension of LJ as the norm and quotes one of his speakers who ascribes his linguistic behaviour to "chatting Patois" (Sebba, 1993: 48). The shift that they make towards the strong emphasis (focusing) on basilectal features of Creole, reinforces Le Page and Tabouret-Keller's (1985) "acts of identity".

The London English of Caribbean youths is also investigated, to discover its relationship to JC. Again, the questions of language and culture and identity seem almost inevitable, woven as they are into the structure of the language of Black youth. It can be said that the phenomenon of London Jamaican is, first and foremost, a social and cultural acquisition.

2.4 Language and Identity

The relationship between language and identity has been referred to in previous sections and its importance signalled. I want, therefore, in this section, to examine more closely the link between the two concepts, as they are presented in some of the literature. In this brief survey, I want to examine the different perspectives taken on the link, and to include phenomenological, literary, as well as post-modernist interpretations. It is to the phenomenological aspect that I will first turn, and perhaps begin with the words of Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985):

...we see speech acts as acts of projection: the speaker is projecting his inner universe, implicitly with the invitation to others to share it, at least insofar as they recognise his language

as an accurate symbolisation of the world and to share his attitude towards it. By verbalizing as he does, he is seeking to reinforce his models of the world, and hopes for acts of solidarity from those he wishes to identify. (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller, 1985: 181)

Here the speaker is presented as making a conscious decision to reveal an individual conception of self and include others in that construction. In this respect identity is linked to language as psychological reality. Bakhtin (1986), on the other hand, foregrounds language, the utterance, as active socially-located communication and would place equal emphasis on the responsiveness of the listener and thus the context in which the speech event takes place. Although having an emphasis on the phenomenology of language, Le Page & Tabouret-Keller (1985) seem also to concur with the notion in the Bakhtin essay, of language making being a shared, collective experience, an invitation to participate. Both also refer to the idea of language as being concerned with ownership and place considerable emphasis on the speaker setting the tone. There are differences, however, as Bakhtin's (1986) view of the "sharedness" is not just with the immediacy of the speech events. He suggests utterances and responses that have antecedents in history and also spaces in future communication. What is interesting, within the variegated situations under discussion, is Le Page and Tabouret-Keller's (1985) acknowledgement of agency and choice: the idea that in making language some aspect of self is consciously invested. Such a notion is enriched by including the Bakhtinian emphasis on the listener, and what is thus conveyed about the context and its potential influence on present and future speech events.

So two perspectives on language and identity are being offered: one foregrounds the individual, and the other the social elements of a shared collective experience. With these ideas in mind, we have to theorise what constitutes "identity": what are the aspects of inner or outer being vested in that term and manifested in language. How and why do we construct our world in the ways that we do? Do they depend on essentialist factors such as race and sex? (3) Are they political factors such as class? Or are they cultural? Or are they ethnic?

Ethnicity

In considering the individual perspective, we can perhaps return to Le Page and Tabouret-Keller's (1985) respondent's phrase here: "his [sic] inner universe", where identity is seen as the confirmation of self, a proclamation of the most profound kind of identification that could be described as a kind of ethnic positioning: asserting, affirming; inviting and bonding. The term, "ethnicity" is, therefore, very important to understand in relation to identity. Much of the work began with Fishman and so one of his definitions might be a useful reference point. Fishman (1977) saw ethnicity as having three dimensions delineated as paternity, patrimony and phenomenology. Paternity related to our heritage and sense of connectedness and continuity with events and contexts of the past. Patrimony was the legacy of collectivity defined by patterns of dress, music and pedagogy. Phenomenology is the connecting term, related to subjective attitudes, to the meaning people attach to paternity and patrimony.

The orientation here, to ethnicity, however, also expresses the idea of collective consciousness which can be related to race, culture and historical experience; related to but only mediated by them. Here ethnicity is primarily psychological, a phenomenon of the mind, internalised; a psychic reality but with its reference points in the material world of race, space (provenance), economics and culture. For Fishman (1977), however, language was a crucial aspect:

Language is the recorder of paternity, the expressor of patrimony and the carrier of phenomenology. Any vehicle carrying such precious freight must come to be viewed as equally precious in and of itself. (Fishman, 1977: 25)

Enninger (1991) in a "Focusschrift" in honour of Fishman:

No other signalling system has the design feature of displacement which permits, for example, reference to absent phenomena (such as the past) and the construction of abstract configurations such as cosmologies. No other signalling system has a combinatory mechanism that permits the production of indefinitely long texts which may be extensive reports of ethnicity or folk tales of ethnic origins. (Enniger, 1991: 24)

A strong case is being made for the central position of language as the conduit for revealing ethnicity/identity, a dialectic role considering the function of ethnic affiliations in communities, to ensure language maintenance.

Language is not, however, the only vehicle through which identity is expressed. Later discussion will suggest the voice might be simply “ancestral” (Morrison, 1989). Certainly other factors can be located as giving shape to delineations of self. Bisseret (1979) suggests social power, whether it be based on class or gender as the determinants of how her (French) subjects saw themselves.

Post-modernist theorising destabilises much of the traditional thinking on ethnicity, suggesting a more fragmented and unstable concept. Hall (1992) sees it as being tainted with a particularly backward form of “Englishness” and would therefore uncouple race and “the innocent notion of the essential black subject” from his reformulation of the “the new ethnicities”. It could then take into account the:

extraordinary diversity of subject positions, social experiences
and cultural identities which compose the category “black”.
(Hall, 1992: 254)

Scott’s (1993) polemic on American ethnic politics accords with this view, and privileges **shared** rather than individual differences in what she sees as the narrowly personalised politics of experience:

The alternative strategy - historicize the question of identity - is
to introduce an analysis of its production and thus an analysis of
constructions of and conflicts about power. (Scott, 1993: 16)

This would allow a recognition that identity is, first and foremost, socially constructed and therefore open to interrogation and redefinition. The raw material for such a re-interpretation might be a student such as this:

Home, my mother says, is in Jamaica but my father says that
home is where we are now. My brother Carlton says home is in
Africa. But he can’t say if he means in the past or in the future.
My sisters, they say they are English so that home is no
problem for them. How can they all say these different things?
(Garrison, 1979: 7)

The multiplicity of ethnicities offered in one family is explicable only through historical analysis of how economic and political factors have fashioned a fluctuating sense of belonging. Lest this subject becomes Scott's ahistorical victim, the important notion to introduce here, for me, is the idea of change, the analytical process by which historicized identity can be forged by the active agency of the subject.

An example of the attempt at this active interrogation might be Wills' (1990) interpretation of the construction of identity in African-American fiction. In the chapter "Histories, Communities and Sometimes Utopia", she refers to Selina's mother's question in Brown Girl, Brownstones: "But who put you so?" as an embodiment of the archetypal question which can trigger processes of retrieving history and reconstructing self.

The foregoing discussion of language, identity and ethnicity has a resonance for our consideration of the nature of language relations in Creole settings, and the effect of those relations on the formation of teacher identity and teacher motivations. It has helped to focus on different ways in which language has been considered to be part of the construction of identity.

2.5 Language and Identity in Creole Settings

In this section I want to link the general ideas, about the relationship between language and identity, discussed in the previous section, to the specifics of both the Caribbean and London setting, to show that the different perspectives are beginning to be discussed in theorising around Creole language issues. If we start with the Caribbean, we might begin with Morgan's (1994) introduction to the psychological and ideological complexity of Creole situations:

...these societies experience a perpetual contention involving issues of identity and ideology. That is to say, creole situations are by definition dialogic with their history and roles in the modern world. (Morgan, 1994: 1)

Unfortunately, much of the work has still to be theorised and Morgan, like Robertson (1992) and Alleyne (1994), takes to task researchers who have avoided the political dimension of language use in Creole societies.

The importance of the political dimension has long been evident. It was noted in DeCamp's statement from the Mona Conference of 1968 which indicated a dominant view of the language, at the time:

The creole is inseparably associated with poverty, ignorance and lack of moral character. (DeCamp, 1971a: 26)

Here is a recognition, at least, of some of the social implications of language use. Pollard's (1983) work on Dread Talk (DT) also takes on the socio-political issue, as well as addressing our immediate concern with language and identity in Creole settings. The language of the Rastafari movement from the 1970s is discussed in the framework of its evolution from an oppositional group who took, in particular, the lexicon of JC and re-made it for their own purposes in poetry, song and social commentary. There are echoes here of Morgan's (1994) notion of counterlanguage, which she outlined as the resistance theory of African-American English (AEE) born out of necessity to subvert slavery and oppression. The language of African-Americans, in the period of slavery and emancipation, had to be used to serve subversive functions, even as it was presented as the innocuous discourse of an amiable and grateful people. Such a tradition of verbal camouflage and subsumption of meanings is seen by Morgan as forming the basis of progressive rap today. DT shared some of these features in its creativity and was certainly, at one time, a more esoteric language of the poor and "downpressed". However, the language has now become an institutional part of society, accepted by many:

The language no longer walks hand in hand with the beard, the short drop strut and the sometimes visionary eyes of the traditional Rasta man. (Pollard, 1983: 56)

Nine years after this paper, Pollard could write of how Rasta vocabulary had become part of mesolectal Creole, a strong cultural determinant asserting a certain self-pride (Pollard, 1992). Language and identity are part, therefore, of a social reality.

Other cultural forms have also asserted the dominance of the Creole voice as a badge of identity. We can note the use of pun and creative wordplay in dance hall lyrics, at the basilectal end of the continuum (Cooper, 1993). Although dance hall is popular, the questioning and redefinition continues with the continuing debate about “slackness” and “cultural lyrics”, the latter being usually interpreted as Rasta philosophy. As it stands today, there is a resurgence of Rastafarian culture in Jamaica’s most popular and dynamic music form, which continues to have a large following world-wide. Additionally, there has been the development and spread of the genre known as “the roots play”. This is an highly stylised farce, made for primarily working-class audiences, using a self-confident Creole. These productions are commercially viable, even for rural Jamaica, because of their popularity in all regions.

Generally, the research noted earlier which concentrated on society, and the comments noted above, on ethnicity and identity, suggest that Jamaicans are beginning to identify very strongly with the language and see it as expressing their identity and sense of the self. In some senses it is the factor that supersedes race, culture and sometimes class. Yet the provenance of the language, in terms of African continuities, remains strong (Hall-Alleyne, 1989).

The strongest advocate of the African influence was, of course, Brathwaite (1984) who in seeking to capture the nature of that “submerged, surrealist experience and sensibility”, introduced the term “nation language”, to denote the dignity of an ancestral African voice. Here is a reminder of the Fishman sense of the phenomenological role of language, but it is echoed in particular and surprising forms by African-American writers:

We talk in English but think in African. We actually speak English with an African accent. (Morgan, 1994: 130)

It is an unusual approach and description of the meaning of language, but it finds its echo in Morrison’s (1989) explanation of her art, of how the special cultural remnants of the past anchors her writing:

To make the story appear oral, meandering, effortless, spoken...In the books I have written, the chorus has changed but there has always been a chorus.....it seems to me interesting to evaluate Black literature on what the writer does with the presence of the ancestor. (Morrison, 1989: 341).

The ancestor confronts us with the past: as history distilled.

There is a sense, in Jamaica, therefore, in which identity is strongly linked with the language, and its African-ness can be idealised or historically located. This can be noted in the lyrics of two culturally-inspired musicians in the country, namely Burning Spear and Garnett Silk. The meaning is metaphysical but its explanation is materially located. This can be illustrated in the view of Africa as a location which exists not only as the spiritual, mythic home, but also as a place for physical migration, and a tourist destination. Part of that "African-ness" is expressed in the privileging of the voice in a specific way which relates to orality, to performance and the strength of the oral tradition. Brathwaite testifies to this by reference to the poetry of Claude Mackay, Louise Bennett, Oku Onura, Michael Smith and Bongo Jerry, the sound poets. Roehler (1989) reminds us of this also in his introduction to Voiceprint, a major departure in poetry anthologies, which attempts to capture the voice in its manifold cadences.

In the London setting, as the earlier characterisation of the Creole continuities might suggest, assumptions and definitions about language and identity will be much more problematic. For many young Black people, the sense of place Garrison's (1979) respondent sought has still not been found: identity issues have not been resolved. Bryan (1982) described adult students who had had their earliest years of schooling in the Caribbean and who carried with them DeCamp's (1971a) characterisation of how JC was viewed: "bad talk". Some of their children would have internalised that stigmatised view. Scafe's (1989) students are ambivalent towards the language, and her descriptions of that classroom illuminate the weight of history that confronts second generation children, who often do not have the cultural resources to deal with the anger, embarrassment and pain engendered:

CLAUDIA: when I was at school, I used to feel bad, you know.
I wrote how I spoke and they made me go into tutorial classes.
(Scafe, 1989: 36)

Or this:

TINA: He should make it easy and say what he means...`boss
man move een...` I-N in I-N. (Scafe, 1989: 37)

The students are discussing Michael Smith's poem, "Mi Cyan Believe It", and their own knowledge and experience of the poet's language touch them in ways that are obviously uncomfortable. They might also have been affected by a phenomenon Fordham (1988) investigated, namely the factor she calls "racelessness" and its significance in the achievement of African-American high school students. The author found that the characteristics required for success in society contradicted identification and solidarity with Black culture.

Sebba's (1993) later interviews revealed a somewhat different picture of language use and suggested that JC remained, strong not as full separate language, but as structural support for London Jamaican. The use of pronounced basilectal features suggests the stubborn significance of the language to young Black Londoners, not so much as a reaffirmation of cultural roots in Africa, even though there is resurgence of this movement, but also as a badge of identity in a tough, urban, street-wise culture. Its spread to White adolescents (Hewitt, 1989) confirms the expansion of that meaning, in relation to language and ethnic identity. It also adds to the complexity of accommodation theory (Giles and Powesland, 1975): a set of ideas which attempts to explain the psycho-social impetus behind speech variation. The behaviour of these White adolescents hints at the range of factors which influence language choice and language shift, such as networks, status and social meaning (Appel and Muysken, 1987).

In such a milieu, White monolingual teachers, in London, need to tread very carefully, recognising that the classroom can be the site where many of those meanings are re-made.

2.6 Language, Power and Education in Creole Settings

We have so far looked at Creole in relation to society at the margins of discourse, and at its meaning for individuals in those social situations, relating to questions of identity and ethnicity. We need to now examine its role in institutional life which, in this instance, is the education system. This is the context where our teachers must struggle with the ideological and psychological baggage they, and their students, bring to school. Once we begin to discuss Creole within institutional contexts, we are inevitably forced to discuss its relation to the use of English, and to consider the role of English not only in Jamaica, but in other post-colonial settings as well. This survey of the literature, so far, suggests that the language situation in Jamaica cannot be easily characterised, as its operation is unique to the region. However, in relation to English, there is a more common notion of a power struggle, with a young country and language pitted against an increasingly moribund type of language.

2.6.1 Creole, Education and the Media

Even though we have characterised JC as vibrant language within the confines of a sociolinguistic milieu and within the consciousness of individual Jamaicans (Bryan, 1994), the fact that we cannot make the case for the institutional success of the vernacular language reveals the ambiguity which remains in language attitudes. Attempts to institutionalise JC as the medium of instruction have met with little success (Devonish, 1986). He acknowledges the negative view of the mother tongue and the problem of the power of English. He believes that the only route for change in the power relations is for the Creoles, of such countries as Jamaica and Guyana, to become the official languages in the region. This would allow monolingual Creole speakers to have access to the decision-making process. We might want to compare Nwemely's (1996) investigation of the more advanced stage of work done in the Eastern Caribbean to begin the standardisation process of an oral language. This is work which she sees as crucial to the development of teaching programmes in

Kweyol and their acceptance for use in London adult education. Yet even with this work in progress, there are no official language policies in the Eastern Caribbean, and in Jamaica the situation is even more complex, where attempts to consider an orthography for Creole have come to a halt. The problem is that the popular inclination is to reject the idea of Creole as the language of instruction. Therein lies a serious contradiction, where the public, political status of Creole is increasing while the quantum leap towards pedagogic respectability remains at best ambivalent. Some explanation of these attitudes will be discussed with the analysis of the Jamaican data in Chapter Five.

Much of this popular debate about the role of English and Creole in a language education programme has, for many years, been carried out in one of the local newspaper, The Gleaner. It is of considerable significance that this debate continues, in cycles year after year, with writers passionately re-visiting the issues, after a lull of a few months. If we look at this correspondence, we see a serious concern with a perceived crisis in English teaching and with the aspect of Creole in the classroom, reminiscent of Cameron's (1994) characterisation of "verbal hygiene". Yet, the normative stance is complex, because Creole has its place. It has its affective, symbolic role, but in the naked concern with power and prestige, English is the preferred language. A regular contributor to the newspaper, Chester Burgess, regards it as an "absurdity" that Creole should become the official language:

Let us leave Patois where it belongs and concern ourselves with the urgency of our declining capability in the official language of Jamaica which is English. (The Gleaner, 11/6/1987)

Quite often, a correspondent will castigate linguists and academics from the University for their support of Creole and their willingness to rush to its defence:

Today, instead of trying to build up from that broken English (of the slaves) to standard English, some of our academics, intellectuals and 'culture developers' are going down to the level of the broken language. (The Gleaner, 14/11/1989)

Such seemingly hostile positions can be changed, as we can see in Burgess' article four years later:

The relationship between patois and Standard English is not necessarily antagonistic and can indeed be complementary...Even the most cultured persons, even those who dream their dreams in Standard English, will occasionally find that to resort to patois is the best and perhaps the only medium for expressing a mood - be it jest or annoyance. (The Sunday Gleaner, 6/1/1991)

Similarly, John Hearne's elegant and sinewy prose was first put to the task of denigrating "a barefoot language" in this vein:

It is doubtful whether patois can handle anything as abstract as even multiplication and division...whether you speak Creole and patois and nothing else, you make the journey through life with a heavy burden on your back... (The Gleaner, 25/11/1990)

Reinforcing patois in the early classroom somehow makes the learning of Standard English easier in later life [is like saying] encouraging of bad table manners learned and used in the home would graduate children comfortably in the use of knife and fork... (The Gleaner, 9/12/1990)

The "conversion" came a matter of days later with the results of an assignment Hearne set his Communication students to:

turn a passage of English prose by an acknowledged 20th Century master into clear, economical and reasonably accurate patois. (The Gleaner, 14/12/1990).

Here, Hearne discovered the possibilities of Creole for transferring the richness of Edmund Wilson's "To the Finland Station" to its own "calloused" style.

The recognition of Creole's place in the classroom seems to be accepted by the newspaper itself in its editorial of 30th October 1989, where The Gleaner comes out in support of local English teachers' decision, wildly misunderstood, to ensure the validation of the language children brought to the school. The road to even such a qualified position has been strewn with many "Letters to the Editor", which continue to be written today, although some of the more recent contributions show vestiges of an advance in recent thinking about what constitutes a language:

When they go to school, they have a tough time learning Standard English, because it's not taught as a second language. (The Gleaner 5/9/1995)

What is being demonstrated is the continuing struggle for Creole to be accepted as of institutional legitimacy, in an arena in which English is contested: there is primacy of international communication over sociolinguistic identification. Part of the problem might be orthography, which has been on the agenda for some time (Craig, 1976; Devonish, 1986; Shields, 1989; Alleyne, 1994), with practical concerns about the economics of instrumentalisation, for example. Gonzalez (1993) identifies additional costs in any programme for developing a national language, in terms of the time and resources needed to “cognify” a language with no natural pathway to modernity and its economic attributes (i.e. traditions of research and scientific cultivation). Devonish (1996), however, examines a process of written Creole insertions in cultural communication, such as sign writing and poster making. This is taking place in Jamaica, in arenas outside the normal language planning debate.

2.6.2 English as an International Language

This insistence on English as the official language can be based on utilitarian and pragmatic principles (Carrington, 1988), and is located in the argument that it is possible to be bilingual without being bicultural. It is an argument which is seriously contested by those within the English as a Native Language (ENL) environment (see Cameron and Bourne, 1989), as well as language teachers in the ELT movement (Rogers, 1990; Abbott, 1990). Widdowson (1994) unmask some of the unctuous concern of native speakers by suggesting that they relinquish some of the hold they have on English and allow this world-wide community of users to define for themselves how they will fashion the language to represent their own reality. Such is the Jamaican predicament as discussed in Bryan (1994)

Tollefson (1991), however, goes further and attributes the obstacles presented to alternative national languages, in the language planning debate, to a sustained, political resistance. He adopts the historical-classical approach to language planning, which links the activity to political economy and therefore class-based considerations. Such an orientation takes seriously the “utilitarian” argument of English as an International Language, but seeks to locate it firmly within a range of historical, institutional and systemic considerations:

These include: the country's level of socioeconomic development; the political organization of decision making...and the role of the language in broader social policy. (Tollefson, 1991: 33)

2.6.3 The New Englishes

The situation which exists in the Caribbean with regard to English is not unique to the region. The cleavage to the imperial language remains a legacy of many colonial pasts. Gonzalez points to the accepted use of English as the language of advanced instruction, in Scandinavian countries, in comparison to the ambivalence evident in many newly independent nations. For Watson-Gegeo (1994) economics and politics dominate the language planning debate in Hawai'i. Hawai'i Creole English (HCE) is an important badge of ethnic identity in an island with a multiplicity of racial groups, living uneasily with each other. Historically, English has been used, through the English Standard school system, to ensure social stratification and even segregation of different groups in society. Although this system was abolished in 1960, a linguistic ambivalence, similar to that in Jamaica, remains. The school system still contributes to the negative attitude towards the vernacular. The emotional debate about the place of Creole and English in the classroom also had to be fought in the media, with Creole receiving support from linguists, teachers and community leaders. However, the development of "the new plantation" i.e. tourism, has ensured the continued demand for English. Consequently, Hawai'i's situation confirms the ubiquitous power of English.

2.6.4 English, Creole and the London Classroom

In the London environment, the function of English and the role of Creole have implications markedly different from those signified in post-colonial settings. In the first instance, we should note that English teaching in the London classroom takes on a number of perspectives which may, or may not, include an acknowledgement of Creole in their curricula. Cox (1989) brought together a number of models of English teaching that were confirmed by Protherough and Atkinson (1991). They

were: the personal growth model; the cross-curricular view; the adult needs for the world outside; the literature as heritage model and the cultural analysis model. Clearly, the functions and meaning of the language in this environment are more significant on a personal and political level. English is seen as doing more, signifying much more, than it might, for example, in a Jamaican classroom. And this is before we have begun to address the issues of race, culture and ethnicity in schools.

Because of these complex meanings in London classrooms, the question of Creole interaction with any of these models has been an uneasy struggle of shifting positions. Wight (1970) was perhaps one of the first to address the problem of Jamaican children entering the school system as migrants with language difficulties. Edwards (1979) had to explain the problem in terms which allowed policy makers to see their culpability in pathologising the children's experience. Some individual and official responses were to introduce an unconsidered token Creole in the classroom which, for some, had disastrous effects (Stone, 1981). Reports such as Rampton and Swann were meant to investigate the issue and make recommendations, which could make a difference to what was increasingly being recognised as structural racism. The former report, though interim in nature, acknowledged the systemic nature of the problem, but the latter's preoccupation with a narrow individualism meant that the dominance of English, and its ideological trappings, was not challenged. The focus shifted from society to the children, their parents and the minority languages they clung to.

Several attempts have been made to map the positions taken towards the use of Creole in the classroom. The Inner London Education Authority's (ILEA's) (1985) position statement on race helped to make distinctions that were not language teaching positions but which contextualised teaching approaches. Thus, a perspective which emphasised assimilation would have tried to adopt a policy where emphasis was on learning English to ensure integration into a British way of life. An approach which emphasised cultural diversity would, to some degree, recognise

Creole's linguistic integrity and promote it as cultural expression. The third perspective, the anti-racist position, emphasised social practice and the removal of institutional barriers. It would, therefore, lead to an examination of the function and power relations of both Creole and English in their operational settings.

Some of those positions and their rebuttal alternatives have been mapped by Hewitt (1989) and the underlying political motivations explored. The point is made, again, that the decision about the location of Creole in the curriculum is ultimately a political one. An additional emphasis, which might be more clearly delineated as an orientation rather than curriculum position, foregrounds the classroom and the multiplicities of histories suffusing the interactional space:

“Language is an arena rather than a subject”. (T. Burgess, 1988: 155) - an arena which brings the lived experience behind bilingual competence to the classroom, and asks for the excavation of the formation of those complex, ambiguous pasts.

Fundamental questions need posing freshly: about the place of culture and history in a theory of language and literature, about the historical construction of difference... (T. Burgess, 1988: 165)

2.7. CONCLUSION

In a review of literature, within such a wide field, it is necessary to foreground some of the features which are, clearly, most significant. Certainly, the research on Creole is important, and perhaps the most critical aspect is the recognition of JC as coming out of oppressed slave societies, with varieties of languages which continue to be stigmatised even in the research process itself. Nevertheless, some allegiance to JC has remained through the migration experience. This is because, as the foregoing review indicated, the mother tongue generally, and marginalised languages in particular, assert a certain sway over their users, providing the badge of identity. What is also significant for my research, is that the literature reveals that English has a similarly strong influence in a different domain. Its greatest influence is in the institutional life of Jamaica, namely in the education system. Its operation in the two settings and concomitant relationship with Creole speakers is a

part of this study. We now need to elaborate on the organisation of this research.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1. Bickerton's LBH places creolisation as child language acquisition (1st language acquisition with restricted input), and has wide acceptance (see Holm;1988). In fact, it might be said that the term "creole", strictly, can only be applied when child language operations are said to be involved in its genesis.
2. In this essay devoted to Bickerton's ideas, which dominated Creole Linguistics for a time, Carrington bemoans the fact that the study of pidgin and creole has become perhaps prematurely mainstream in linguistic theory. He feels that more descriptive work needed to be done.
3. Bisseret's definition is as good as any: "Essentialist ideology bases all social hierarchy on the transcendental principle of a natural biological order (which took over from a divine principle at the end of the eighteenth century). A difference in essence among human beings supposedly predetermines the diversity of psychic and mental phenomena ('intelligence', 'language', etc.) and thus the place of the individual in a social order considered as immutable". (Bisseret, 1979: 1f) (cf. "There are no guarantees in nature". Hall, 1992)

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The aim of the project was to investigate the differences in the approach to the teaching of English of two groups of teachers in two sociolinguistic environments, and to account for any differences encountered. The task finally was how to trap some answers and directions to the questions raised about how the teachers might differ. Inevitably, the range and scope of the questions made certain pathways immediately discernible, but following the spirit of the enterprise, other avenues became gradually more apparent. The multidisciplinary nature of the project, touching on sociolinguistics, anthropology, history and culture, meant that no single methodology would suffice: investigating and describing the language situation would not be enough. Neither would it be sufficient to carry out a schedule of questionnaires or individual interviews. Even the use of observations needed to be treated with some degree of circumspection. There was always the danger that they would be treated as evidence or proof of a particular position stated in an interview, without taking account of the many qualifications respondents use before offering an opinion. It became evident that triangulation had to be the mode of operation, where a number of different research techniques could be fashioned to meet the requirements of the project. The theoretical foundation for such a combination also had to be made, and this is what follows.

3.1. THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

It was still a long process to find the means of exploring and making sense of these differing pedagogic practices. At an earlier phase an attempt to provide a neat design led to the consideration of more seemingly objective and undoubtedly tidier methods such as Repertory Grid Technique (RGT). Repertory Grids derive from the use of Kelly's Construct Theory to uncover teacher's implicit beliefs. An individual is asked to connect and sort phrases or words related to the concept under investigation. The respondents' grouping of the constructs is used to form a

grid which can be manually or statistically linked to show the relationship between the ideas. Examples of RGT can be found in the studies of Olson and Munby described in Clark and Peterson's (1986) review of the literature on teachers' thought processes. Allen (1986) used these ideas effectively in her study of the link between andragogy and teaching methods. Accessible as this procedure seemed, this direction could not be sustained as the conceptualisation became more cultural, more diffuse and less susceptible to cognitive codification. Vestiges of construct theory-making can be seen, however, in the use of the Response Statements, introduced later, to trap the attitudes of teachers towards the vernacular language of Jamaica and, to a lesser extent, to allow some of the interviewees in the London setting to expand their views on race, culture and other critical issues relating to underachievement.

The matched guise procedure (Lambert, 1967) would also have been a possibility for use in investigating attitudes to language. This technique requires the use of bilingual speakers in tape recordings, to discover how listeners evaluate the same individual who is recorded using different languages. It is a procedure that can reveal the individual listener's attitude to language, but I was also interested in the speakers' and listeners' own use of language, and in probing that aspect to help characterise the language situation. Additionally, it seemed important to the type of research envisaged to include the participants in its construction, as the Response Statements managed to do.

Such a digression from a more quantitative paradigm was not totally new (Bryan et al, 1988), as embarking on research always brings to the fore questions of truthfulness and verifiability. The decisive issue was the nature of the project, which was suggesting a particular research paradigm to guide the work. The return to ethnography was inevitable, and the term has been chosen, out of the plethora of other related concepts such as:

qualitative, holistic, phenomenological, hypothesis-generating,
 participant-observational....longitudinal, humanistic,

naturalistic, field-based, interpretivistic, or hermeneutical...(Stotsky and Mall, 1991: 125)

3.1.1. The Importance of Ethnography

Ethnography seems to be the most theoretically grounded description, and critical ethnography was the stance adopted. What follows is a description of how that position evolved. Traditional ethnography is a concept that has its proponents, such as Hymes (1980), who worked to make the link with education and the classroom. He suggested three attributes of ethnographic research: it had to be comparative, systematic and open to interpretation. Certain other characteristics flow from this base-line description and are continuously referred to, and expanded on, in the literature in this area. If interpretation is a primary orientation then ethnographic inquiry must be dialectical, as the meanings inferred from the material change and are re-interpreted in the light of additional data. Hymes (1980) hints also at phenomenological kinship, as he tries to distance ethnography from the quantitative paradigm:

It is the nature of meanings to be subject to change, re-interpretation, re-creation. One has to think of people, not as vectors of age, sex, race, class, income and occupation alone, but also as beings making sense out of disparate experiences, using reason to maintain a sphere to integrity in an immediate world (Hymes, 1980: 94).

Hymes is some way from symbolic interactionism and the principle of working with the respondent's view of the world, allowing him/her to interpret the data. However, there is a sense of agency in Hymes' view that I would want to include in my definition towards critical ethnography, where meanings are, therefore, constructed not just by the researcher but also by the stakeholders themselves. It is a major task of the researcher to make the stakeholders' view explicit, at least to others in that setting.

Zaharlick and Green's (1991) definition of ethnography confirms the appropriateness of the concept, as they highlight what they see as its three primary characteristics.

First, cultural theory is central to ethnography, indicating that the investigation of “otherness” is not enough without a working frame, a definition orienting the researcher towards a particular view of the society. Such a theory might be marxist, feminist or post-modernist but it would still retain the essence of ethnography in taking the ordinary of life and re-interpreting it. Second, the culturally driven nature of ethnography ensures that a cross-cultural comparative perspective is foregrounded and therefore the cultural group being investigated is compared to similar groups in other societies. The third characteristic is inevitable in a culturally defined and comparative framework, namely its holistic nature referring to the contextual space delineated for the research, be it a lesson period, a classroom, a school, a group of teachers, or a linguistic environment.

Once the ethnographic frame has been accepted, other enriching conceptual structures present themselves as a natural part of the project: triangulation is not only inevitable, but organic. This means that the research techniques come naturally from the conceptual framework suggested. There is, for example, the use of narrative as a way of coming to know, which is manifested in the form of stories. Stories are holistic devices which take and restructure the everyday, providing order and meaning to personal accounts. Stories can come in the shortened form as explanation and illustrations, but they can also be presented in their compressed form as metaphor, providing the most condensed form of coming to know. By “coming to know”, I refer to the double uses to which narratology can be put: as a means not only of collecting, but also of analysing data. We draw information by inviting stories of experience with the types of questions asked and the framework laid down. We then use metaphors, these compressed stories, as the imaginative/symbolic template, the best organisational structure for managing the data. That is why it might be said that even more than with literature, the telling and the interpretation has to be part of the same event.

Connelly and Clandinin’s (1991) excellent review of the literature on narrative research points to its intellectual origins in literary theory but with support from

history as a shaper of experience, and psychology which at one time privileged the individual life history. They suggest that the resurgence of narratology has come with trans-disciplinary attention in fields such as sociology, education, anthropology and history. Newer sub-disciplines such as oral history, feminist studies and critical theory align themselves automatically in an orientation towards the personal, the individual and the voice. Consequently, an alternative definition of “truth” is offered in such notions as “apparency”, “verisimilitude” and “transferability” (p.134). The reformulation of the latter term is particularly interesting in its suggestion of ownership ie. can it apply to me? Is it meaningful to me? Is this language history mine? Can I own this narrative? By introducing these questions, ethnography is enriched, and the lurking stranger, the other, the omniscient observer who sometimes hovers over this kind of research, is banished. Once this happens, however, we, the researchers, have to make choices and take responsibility for the assignment of meaning.

Heap (1995) offers a rationale for abandoning the notion of sample, borrowed as it is from rational-scientific designs. He argues for a more logical and reasonable basis for our choice of research sites in “qualitative” inquiry:

...the concept of the sample is statistical....[based on mathematical reasoning]...Data for cultural science are chosen and examined for what they can be used to exemplify. (Heap, 1995: 285)

In statistical terms it would be beyond the scope of this project to provide a rationale as to why any two or even five schools were chosen in two such different settings. As I have indicated, autobiography and [now] history provide some of the rationale.

3.1.2 Some Historical Considerations

The other perspective that recurs throughout the theoretical discussion is the historical dimension. The importance of the curriculum history, the background to the teacher’s, story has been hinted at, in the **Autobiography of the Project**. The introduction suggested that my own personal history was a kind of metaphor itself



for many experiences straddling the Atlantic, a duality that has hardly been articulated in research terms. The closest to this kind of study is Nwemely (1996), which looked at French Creole language teaching in the Eastern Caribbean and the UK. For me, the historical dimension which was hinted at from the outset became more and more significant, once the project began to take shape, with the choice of the sample, namely the two environments of Jamaica and London. However, even if that personal history and experience was a rationale for embarking on this project, it would not be sufficient to sustain the comparative framework. The question might legitimately be asked: why study these situations? What do they have in common? These are questions of excavation and they echo the question which Selina's mother put to her: "Who put you so?". My question here is who put it so? What makes it possible, and indeed useful, to study settings which are thousands of miles apart with so many differences. The answer of course lies in the common history of these societies at particularly significant moments in time. It follows, therefore, that the history that still binds at a subterranean level will figure largely in an account of these teachers' views and the historical perspective will be as important as what the teachers actually say. The inclusion of this kind of inquiry thus became inevitable, but nevertheless its accommodation in the process has to be fully explained, and this is the justification that is made here.

In the first instance, it must be clear that interpretation and explanation are being emphasised in this type of study. Part of that explanation needs to be historical, allowing us to make connections with what has gone before, explaining the background by offering "thick descriptions" which are not just of the here and now. These descriptions make use of data from many different sources, confirming that our understanding of where teachers are presently situated comes not simply from what they say here and now but also from oral history, recorded stories, biographies, written reports, journal papers and official papers. In other words, all the sources one uses to interpret the past.

A second reason for the historical focus relates, very importantly, to the comparative

nature of the project. As was indicated earlier, a rationale for making the kind of a comparison this study is based on, is required. The links between these two societies over the centuries has to be shown. Additionally, the project can be enriched by a different type of comparison, which also forms part of the explanation. We can compare across time, to see how it was in another time and epoch, gaining insights as to how it became so. Here, those historical documents which are, often, not readily available (such as the Inspector's Reports described below) can offer some of the best primary data.

What ties historical inquiry most closely to the project is the attention to agency and lived experience, what Davis Jr (1991) refers to as "the telling of the stories of our curriculum practice" (p.85). The emphasis on the respondents' structuring of the experience, when the interviewee is given full rein, is similar to the way the historian tries to impose order and coherence on the experience of others (Carr, 1969). When we attach agency, it allows us to show several viewpoints: after all, agents' perceptions are not heterogeneous and there is a complex mixture "of assumptions, interests, ideals and implications which went into [their] making". (Carr, 1969: 4)

Finally, our focus on identity and how it is constructed needs historical attention, because, as Scott suggests, identity is historically conferred. It is not enough, therefore, to acknowledge the matrix of race, sex and class which configures in the delineation of self; we also need to stress the reasons why these factors have become important in either or both settings. My inclusion of language in the configuration means language has to be seen as another factor with historical implications, namely as a marginalised entity born out of specific historical circumstances, which have helped to shape its users' response to it.

I am saying therefore that history reinforces the holistic, ethnographic nature of the project: it underlines interpretation and allows useful comparisons across time as well as cultures; it pays attention to those in the field who must establish order on

events and experiences. Therefore, before the teachers give their views, tell their own stories, something of “the historical and sociocultural constraints” (Sandelowski, 1991), the forces that formed their opinions will be explored, using the variety of kinds of material available. These we have agreed include oral history, recorded stories, biographies, official reports and journals. It is possible, therefore, to include in this project an exploration of some of the written historical data of the last hundred years, supported by the testimonies of the players who have lived and worked in the system during that period.

Thirty one (31) Annual Reports of the Education Department, the central body in the administration of colonial elementary education will be examined. These inspectors reports are selected from the period 1900-1962, but the pre-war period is emphasised as their curriculum focus changed drastically after the war when the one-day inspection was abolished in 1950. The period chosen for the beginning of this analysis coincides with the birth of the teachers who were interviewed and the survey of the reports ends with the birth of independence. These yearly reports are supported by other official sources commissioned from time to time by a wary colonial power. I will also use some of the official documents produced in the post-Independence phase which indicate the changing face of the educational system.

In contrast to the written historical sources, there will be the oral testimonies of four elementary teachers, two women (Teachers A and B) and two men (Teachers C and D) who were born at the turn of the century. They truly epitomised the working of the education system in Jamaica and serve to give structure and coherence to official thinking as participants, experiencing the system as students and teachers.

Summary

In ranging so widely in the discussion of the theoretical framework, I am trying to delineate my own understanding/position of what would lead to the most feasible design and appropriate methods. In summary, I would say that my concerns are for a theory which foregrounds iteration, which is open to change-building, allowing

us to add to and develop what has gone before. This means that the approaches pursued will be influenced by whatever is revealed, as the data and the research process itself is continuously re-analysed, reviewed and re-evaluated. My definition of iteration allows the native view to help construct the inquiry and the analysis. Such an orientation might, however, be more than iterative and would be, to some extent, dialectical. What I am putting forward is a schema with the theoretical orientation towards grounded theory, which could best be described as critical ethnography (Anderson, 1989). Such a description must also include some attention to the formative, reproductive forces of history and culture, and to language as communication. Such are the demands of the project, and on the design.

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

A comparative study, in the first instance, validates ethnographic research, and its instrumentation is determined, in part, by its emphasis on agency and the need to include the participants in the evolving design of the study. As the design is ongoing and not complete until a substantial amount of the data have been collected, the descriptions have to include some of the implementation processes and events which made construction possible. So when I represent the research methods, the process of evolution has also to be described.

The recursive field-bound nature of the task is particularly evident with interviewing, the natural methodology of qualitative research. At one time the interview was devoted primarily to social survey research and psychological testing (Fontana and Frey, 1994), but the development of the unstructured interview has meant that this procedure is, perhaps, now the most useful instrument for gathering information in an interactive and meaningful way. Such a procedure allows for open-ended responses, feedback and interviewee participation in the next phase. It is perhaps the most well-grounded means of collecting narrative information.

Participant observation also fits very well with interviewing and is the other key technique of the ethnographic researcher. Brumfit and Mitchell (1992) underscore its importance, allowing the researcher to observe and to experience myriad language behaviours, and connect them with such issues as the teachers' professed attitudes and sociolinguistic background. Work in the related settings of African-American classrooms has also found kinship with ethnography, to introduce an important cultural dimension to the analysis of data. Foster (1992) reviews some of the research literature, to focus on the interactional style of Black teachers as an important factor in mediating classroom discourse for African-American children. She notes how these teachers can help to link the classroom discourse with communication patterns which are familiar to the students. The emphasis on language here is part of an on-going discussion (Britzman, 1986; Delpit, 1988) about communicating across cultures in classrooms where issues of power are enacted in terms of the powerful and the voiceless. Foster's submission reminds us that the minority voice is not just an abstract, political contention or simply a preoccupation of a particular kind of ethnographic research, but is an expressive cultural resource that has resonance in the child's acquisition of literacy: voice has relevance to pedagogy and how we understand cross-cultural classrooms.

3.2.1. PROCEDURES IN BOTH SETTINGS

THE PROCEDURE IN JAMAICA:

The Selected Schools

The Jamaican sample consisted of four schools chosen as schools representative of the Jamaican education system. Two were urban and two rural. The urban schools' intake reflected a middle to low range of common entrance placements. These placements reflect the results of the Common Entrance Examination (CEE) and they are published each year in one of the national newspapers, The Gleaner. It is a long-established tradition in Jamaica that the paper prints the names of all the children placed in a secondary high school and the name of the feeder school, whether it is a government primary school or a fee-paying preparatory school. The two urban

schools, featured in this study, enrol children who come from the poorer primary schools. The rural schools were within thirty miles of the capital and were schools which had been long established as high schools with a slightly broader mix of pupils.

School A[J]

This urban school in the capital of Kingston had been upgraded to a high school, which meant that the school now had children who had been successful in the Common Entrance Examinations (CEE) and there was, therefore, a greater preoccupation with the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), the organisation responsible for the regional qualification for high school leavers. According to the data on common entrance placements, less than twenty percent of the children admitted were from preparatory schools. All five teachers interviewed at this school were at the school before the change in status.

School B[J]

A second batch of interviews was carried out, in a slightly different way, at this older rural high school, situated some thirty miles from Kingston. The conditions initially were not conducive to an interview being tape recorded, so the first teacher was interviewed with notes taken. In the second instance, the two teachers who had agreed to be interviewed had the same periods free, so we agreed on a joint interview, as a departure from the established procedure. New questions were added to the original three, which were always asked, to probe some of the influences on their thinking.

School C[J]

A fourth set of interviews, a focus group, was carried out with a group of teachers in this rural high school in the Blue Mountains, just outside Kingston. One individual interview was also completed.

School D[J]

The teachers who were presented with the full range of questions and the Response Statements were at this Kingston secondary school. This was to be my central school

and the main source of my field notes. At the time of the interviews, the school had hopes of having its status changed from a secondary school with no grammar-type, common entrance stream to a comprehensive high school admitting the full range of pupils. However, this re-classification had not yet taken place. It was a huge double shift school of nearly 2,000 pupils with a school day which began at 7 a.m. and ended at 5 p.m. It was situated very far “below Crossroads”, which meant that it was characterised as a Downtown school for poor families. I hesitate to use such labels as “middle-class” and “working-class”, because it is difficult to ascertain how well they apply to communities where steady employment, other than some form of desultory self-employment, is virtually non-existent. In Jamaica, the term “middle class” is sometimes used for the privileged few; the dominant terminology is the more euphemistic, but urbanised, Uptown/Downtown. Crossroads is the Mason-Dixie line separating the two world views: attitudes, expectations, life styles and schooling. This is a school unlikely to have common entrance placements from private, fee-paying preparatory schools.

The bulk of the interviews in this school took place over a two-week period after a month in and out of the school. They lasted about forty-five minutes and were followed by a classroom observation. In several cases, I asked to return for a second interview or another observation, if I felt I had met someone who had much additionally to share. The second session usually lasted another two hours. The outcome was that I spent some time in and out of that school for more than a year.

The Teachers

The group interview consisted of 18 individuals and 1 focus group. The majority of those interviewed and observed individually were experienced teachers with over ten years classroom experience. The urban teachers came from all over Jamaica but the rural teachers were usually from the parish in which they taught. All but one were female. All of them had been through teachers college while 65% had gone on to acquire a first degree. While they might have had a training college qualification

in English, their first degree was usually in Humanities (History) or the Social Sciences. Personal details were not taken of the focus group interviewees but the data yielded provided useful triangulation of individual responses. The Jamaican teachers are identified by letter only in the presentation of the data i.e. Teacher A or TA.

The Questions

The main research instrument was the semi-structured interview in the first instance. There were core questions, which remained constant even as the direction and the depth of the schedule changed and became less structured. The three significant questions which were, initially, put to the teachers were:

1. **What was the aim of the English curriculum/Why teach English?**
2. **What kind of methods do you use?**
3. **What do you know of the Ministry's position on the teaching of English?**

The first question, which related to outcomes, follows Patton's (1990) label of the **opinion/values** question, while the second, on pedagogy, would fit his **experience/behaviour** category and the third his **knowledge** category. In the UK context, the question on the Ministry became a strong feelings-loaded question. This is significant as the historical context will reveal how central different types of institutional direction were, in teaching, in both environments.

These were not, of course, the only questions that were used, because the teachers started talking naturally about their training before these questions were put, suggesting some kind of source for their beliefs. Consequently, after two interviews, I took on their direction, and a biographical question or prompt was inserted near the beginning of the interview:

4. **Tell me something about how you came into teaching.**

This might be termed a routine **demographic/ background** question, but it proved useful in getting the teachers started. However before that, we discussed, what I would call the **framing issues**, which might come up before a central speech event of this kind is enacted: their feelings about the tape being used; their own research;

the further studies they might pursue; the class they had just taught; or my students whom they were supervising. Some of these discussions which set the tone of the interview were not included on tape.

The **knowledge** questions added were:

5. **What do you know of the teacher education world? How do they say English should be taught?**
6. **Is there any other group in society who have had something to say about the teaching of English?**

Two other questions in the **opinions/values** category were sometimes added:

8. **Is there any policy direction in your school about the use of Creole?**
9. **Have any policy constraints been put on you to prevent you teaching in the way you want to teach?**

Additionally, throughout the interviews I asked many follow-up questions, related to the answers given, as is inevitable in semi-structured interviewing.

The Response Statements

The purpose of this instrument in creative interviewing was to probe further a theme emerging from the earliest rounds of interviews. After the second batch of interviews, I felt that I could make use of the eight interviews I had conducted, so far, to introduce an element of dialoguing with the central group of teachers from Schools C[J] and, particularly, D[J]. The way I intended to do this was to include in my questions a number of quotations from the previous interviews, and allow the third and fourth groups to respond to them. The purpose of this strategy was to maintain a stakeholder's view of the analysis. These quotations focused on the language environment and would, consequently, give some information about how teachers saw that inter-relationship between language and society; about the linguistic struggle between Creole and English.

The Statements are presented here with their codes:

1J. *“People who speak English tend to be less violent.... It somehow injects a level of civility in the individual. Patois is very descriptive, very direct and so tends to bring out the emotions more forcefully”. (RS1J)*

2J. *“I love patois...it’s a nice language...it’s very expressive. It’s part of the culture. To me it comes naturally”. (RS2J)*

3J. *“There are some things that are said that cannot be expressed any other way”. (RS3J)*

4J. *“Many parents believe that English is for the school. They make no attempt to use it. If the child goes home and makes an effort to use it. ‘a skuul yu fi yuuz dat....muuv dat fram ya’....”. (RS4J)*

5J. *“The Principal encourages the use of English in the classroom....I also do the same”. (RS5J)*

6J. *“People look down on you if you speak Creole...If I go out there and start my dialect...they’ll only say... ‘oh they thought it was someone of class.’ You can put in a few words to pepper up your speech”. (RS6J)*

7J. *“Most children don’t communicate using Standard English so it’s a problem when they reach school”. (RS7J)*

The Unstructured Interview

The research began with a clear idea that what was needed was a native view of the process, as is necessary with ethnographic work. Any question asked of the classroom culture required an interpretation by the participants themselves. As Cameron (1992) indicates:

the question ‘what is going on here’ cannot be answered without reference to the agent’s own understanding of what she is doing. (Cameron, 1992:11).

The unstructured interview helped to facilitate this process, allowing me to gather more about the personal histories and language backgrounds of the teachers, directing me towards the source of some of their ideas on language. Eventually, when I re-interviewed a number of the teachers, I used more of these biographical questions as a starting point and added a different kind of question, usually based on

a statement in their previous interview, to move towards a language history of the interviewee.

To clarify, so far, I used four schools, based on a continuum of interview questions and procedures, which gradually became more personal, individual and biographic but with the core questions focused on the aim of the English curriculum; the methods the teachers used; their attitudes towards the vernacular and English; and the influences on their teaching.

The Observations

The observations which took place, primarily, in classrooms but also in tutorial and staff rooms, were originally meant to be a form of methodological triangulation. They were meant to illustrate the views of the teachers being interviewed, but the focus became sharper as the interviews progressed. The intention was to give special attention to the area of beliefs revealed, teaching methods and language attitudes. It was the language question which became the central sensitising concept (Patton, 1990) in the Jamaican setting, especially in the sociolinguistic sense related to the Response Statements above. So important did they seem that my later observations concentrated on the language position of the teachers in the classrooms. Three stances were outlined: **a) critical b) positive c) neutral (translating)**. Allowing the language aspects of the observations to move centre stage meant that the language behaviour of the children could also be given some attention in what was a teacher-based study.

THE PROCEDURE IN LONDON:

The Selected Schools (London)

Much more socio-economic data are available about London inner city schools than there are about the Jamaican system. In the last thirty years many studies have taken urban London schools as their research site (Douglas, 1964; Keddie, 1971). My research in London began after 60% of the Jamaican data were collected. The work

involved the use of the same kind of principles which guided the Jamaican investigation. As in Jamaica, there was one selected school where I spent the most concentrated time. It was chosen as one institution with a certain equivalence to the Kingston school (School D[J]) in terms of its relative position to other schools in the city. It was not one of the more favoured establishments, but it had what could be called a “working-class” intake, which meant some changing migration composition. So, slippery as this term is, it became even less meaningful when the number of schools was expanded to five as the nature of the study became less prescriptively organised, in terms of trying to find a representative sample, but perhaps more theoretically sound, in the sense that the focus turned to gaining the richest descriptions of the varying sites. With my orientation toward description and ethnography, therefore, it was more important to widen the number of sites and the number of respondents in the study.

School A[L]

This was the central school of this study. It had a long history in one of London’s troubled boroughs as a single-site institution, comprehensive by design and intent. The school had a similar alternative meeting site to the Kingston school, but it was used primarily, and perhaps significantly, by the two Black teachers who had taught in Jamaica. Much of the character of the school is revealed in the information given to visitors, and in the posters in the corridors and on the classroom walls. My request to include the school in my research led to the delivery of a substantial amount of material relating to the school. The information gave a breakdown of the background of the pupils:

- African (20.7%)
- Caribbean (24.7%)
- Asian (5.9%)
- Chinese/Vietnamese (10%)
- White/European (34%)

It also showed that 59.5% of the children expelled were of Caribbean origin. A 10-

page Bulletin was used to communicate with the staff; students had their own magazine which appeared intermittently.

School B[L]

This was a secondary Church of England school in North London with approximately a 40 % Caribbean population, and a Black Head of the English Department.

School C[L]

This was a relatively new school in north east London with an African-Caribbean population of 10%, which was over-represented in the exclusion list according to the teacher who was interviewed. Asian children were the predominant ethnic group. An Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) inspection was imminent.

School D[L]

This was a school in the White working-class heartland on the outer edge of east London. The school had recently scraped through an OFSTED inspection and this experience overshadowed the interview I had with four members of the English department. Away from the formal group interview, I was told by one teacher:

We're dealing with a White working-class area; parents are in a time warp and grow their children in racism. This clashes with the school which doesn't tolerate racism; it's an anti-racist establishment. You begin to question your level of tolerance for things we thought we'd dealt with. It's a real resurgence.

School E[L]

This institution had much in common with the central school (School A[L]) being an inner London school with a Black Head and a significant Caribbean population, which had undergone inner city change. It now included a wider number of ethnic groups, including a strong contingent of South East Asian children. The school was in the process of developing a cross-curricular language policy.

The Language Centre (The Language Achievement Project)

The Centre came out of a development of the section 11 funding, which had been instituted for the settlement of New Commonwealth immigrants. Each borough

could elect to use the funding in the manner it felt most appropriate. This centre in east London had elected to use the funds on research into the writing development of minority children. I interviewed the Co-ordinator.

The Teachers

The 17 London teachers were quite a mixture: six were Black, with all except one of Jamaican parentage; all except three were female. They were mostly experienced, with only two being recent graduates. It was noteworthy that the White teachers were not necessarily Londoners, even though they had been in the city for a long time. They came from Australia, Wales, Sheffield, Buckinghamshire and Leeds, to indicate the variety. When the data were analysed, the teachers were not identified according to race. This was a deliberate decision, as I felt that race might become the dominant construct, even though enough attention had not been devoted to the issue for it to form the central part of the study, where the central difference being investigated was two language settings. As **The Autobiography of the Project** suggested, I also had the sense that factors other than race must be important in a comparative study with mixed participants. I felt it was likely that Black and White teachers in London might have some similar views on English teaching to the extent that differences needed to be noted as significant. Chapters Five and Six comment on some of those instances. However, I felt it would be misleading to pursue a study predicated on differences based on race before all of the background had been fully described, in the way this study is in the process of doing. The London teachers are identified by number only in the presentation of the data, i.e. Teacher 2 or T2.

The Questions, Response Statements and Observations

The same structure, used in Jamaica, was followed in terms of the interviews and the observations. The core questions were asked, but the follow-up questions varied:

- 10. How/Do you take account of the fact that there might be children with different language backgrounds in your classroom?**

From the outset, there were many more unsolicited references in the London

interviews to government policy, and so many of the questions were related to this concern. An attempt was made to use the Response Statements but this came much later in the interviewing period, because it took some time before the key themes began to emerge and a very different orientation to surface. This meant that the Response Statements, as a form of early coding, were geared towards the most striking feature of the interviews. This was not simply an emphasis on the language environment but more widely, the mediation of schooling through race and culture.

The Statements are presented here with their codes:

(Creole use in the classroom)

1L." I remember I had to be quite protective of my Black students back in the early 80s because they used to get embarrassed when I introduced some Black writings in the classroom.....Now children are far more confident because they share each others' language so much, you wouldn't get the situation of everybody trying to hide under the desk when they see the piece of dialect". (RS1L)

(A rationale for some Black boys behaviour)

2L. "They're kicking against authority, specifically if children perceive that the structures of the school are racist and if the Black boys think that the Heads and Deputies are these White middle-class people who look down on them because they're Black...they're going to kick up". (RS2L)

(Underachievement)

3L."Afro-Caribbean underachievement is nothing to do with the inability in language....they might have fallen behind by the time they get to secondary school but there are social and economic reasons for this. The tendency was to try and cater to them by giving them less demanding texts. That's not solving the problem...that's inaccurate. There's something more radically wrong". (RS3L)

4L. (A different view)

“The kids who do least well are White working-class boys. Failure is about class and gender”. (RS4L)

5L. (On the National Curriculum)

“In some ways what’s happening now is quite good. You have to be more accountable. It can draw a department closer together”. (RS5L)

6L. (English professionalism)

Everybody thinks that they can teach English but English teaching has changed drastically....it’s not just about experience...you need the background of strategies which comes from training and keeping yourself abreast”. (RS6L)

The London interviews included a section on teaching in Jamaica, because, during the course of the interviews, I discovered that at least three of the teachers had taught in Jamaica.

The observations also followed the same procedure, but as they progressed classroom interaction between teacher and student, in cultural rather than linguistic terms, became a stark feature which had to be recorded. Language behaviour became relevant in the context, but could not be recorded in the manner determined by the Kingston data. Consequently, no attempt was made to categorise attitudes to Creole, as this was not the main issue in the classroom. More important were the underlying pressures in some of the classroom encounters featured in these London schools.

Data collection took place over two seven-week periods, during two consecutive summer terms. I visited 5 London schools and one language centre. Days rather than weeks were spent in one institution, but during the seven-week period I would visit the schools more than once to record and observe. The selected school (School A[L]) had the greatest number of visits during the two summers, but individual teachers kept in contact with me, after my return to Jamaica, sending me samples of

students' writing for research purposes, books for children in Jamaica and addresses for pen pals.

3.3. GAINING ACCESS

This might be the most opportune moment to consider the central question in ethnographic work, of gaining access to the field. It is a rich topic for examination because of the contrasts which presented themselves in the two sites. These differences reflect the views teachers had about themselves, their sense of security, and their attitude to research and to experts.

Jamaican Access

In the Jamaican setting it was remarkably easy to visit the schools and talk to the teachers. In most cases, a letter followed by a phone call was enough to gain entry to the schools; in one case the phone call proved sufficient. Such ease of access can be accounted for by reference to the history of Jamaican teachers' exposure to visitors. The schools are accustomed to official visits from such as inspectors, now education officers and sundry donor agencies bent on inquiry, and so the thought of a visitor who simply wanted to talk, to discuss their teaching with them was a refreshing change. Added to which, the UWI is well-respected as an institution which is known to carry out research of varying degrees of usefulness, but which is usually given the benefit of the doubt, as the leading academic institution in the region. What I am really saying is that my right of entry was never challenged, and this indicates something about the whole society's views on education, research and the so-called expert. The UWI is also a place where every teacher has either actually been, or where they intend/hope to go. I brought stories of their past lecturers or information about the programmes they wanted to take or notes on scarce literature books they needed for teaching or new ideas in the workshops which I ran. I was, to an extent, a resource person and also because of the honorific traditions of African diasporan societies, a visitor, someone who had to be fed: Christmas lunch, a beach picnic, ground provisions to take back to Kingston.

It is therefore difficult to categorise my role in the way suggested by R. Burgess (1984): participant as observer or observer as participant. In the kind of research where the researcher is the main instrument of collection roles shift, change and are re-made according to the agents active in the field and their own decisions, too, about how much they wish to include you in the discourse. Additionally, at my selected Kingston school, it was very helpful to have a respected and well-liked classroom teacher take responsibility for arranging my schedule, making sure I could talk to a number of teachers on one day.

London Access

Getting into the London schools was at first very different and more difficult. There was a stronger sense of a certain protocol which had to be observed. There was uncertainty about how another person might react, whether it was someone above or below in the hierarchy. This did not seem to be related to strong hierarchical tendencies necessarily, but more a distrust about being observed by the stranger from without. Such uneasiness seemed to stem from an overwhelming preoccupation with the government's intervention in the education system, and the introduction of the inspection exercise (OFSTED) to monitor the implementation of the National Curriculum.

I began with trying to follow the official route with letters to the heads of two schools, and these yielded some success. In my least successful instance, the process of trying to get a response became very time-consuming. I needed to find the Headteacher outside of meetings, so that he could find the Head of English, who could then discuss it with the staff, who then needed to contemplate whether it might infringe on some yet unnamed right. I could not imagine the statement made by an ordinary member of staff in my Kingston school being made here:

You don't have a problem. Let me know when you want to come in and I'll arrange it.

The net result was that I abandoned any attempt to include that particular London

school in my investigation. My more successful second school gave me an indication of the most expeditious route to take in order to gain access. It was not co-incidental that I had mentioned the name of a couple of teachers known to me at the school and had received a speedy response, offering the school as part of my research. There was, of course, the proviso, alerting me to the danger of wasting teachers' valuable time but I was made very welcome. I used this strategy in other schools I wanted to use: any direct approach to the Head had to include mention of someone in the school who might vouch for the integrity of my intentions. In the end, I would say, my contacts were made by networking: by calling first and foremost on teachers known to me, not to be interviewed but to suggest possible schools and the names of members of staff who might facilitate my investigation.

What we have here, in London, are very different perceptions of the value of research; what the university academic is about; and the possible implications of being observed. There is some suspicion and perhaps also some feeling of saturation with those who want to investigate, in a climate where teachers feel uneasy about what they are doing. In such a situation, the academic is peripheral, with nothing to offer, but with a lot of information over which they have no control. Achieving relevance and co-operation is a state that has, quite rightly, to be consciously worked on. That is why the notion of agency has to be important. I, as interviewer or observer, had to lay my own credentials on the line: as someone who had also been on the battlefield of inner city education, who knew of the struggles they faced and the issues they were grappling with. For some, the fact that I was living and working in Jamaica was the most significant fact, and I tapped into an almost palpable longing amongst some Jamaican teachers I met (some interviewed and others not), to return to their country of origin.

This description of how the investigation was constructed and implemented is already beginning to suggest differences in the orientations of the two settings.

3.4. DATA ANALYSIS

My procedure for data analysis was to follow the spirit of an ethnographic project, and to classify, rephrase and question as the research was progressing. The evidence of this can be seen in the re-formulation of the interview procedure and the re-orientation of the observations. More formally, the interview material was first treated as cross-case, open-ended survey data i.e. organised into categories based on the questions. For example, the frame/classification signalled through the question on “aims”, was divided into three categories as these were the range of responses given to this question in the Jamaican setting. Reading the London interviews led to the addition of another eight categories. The interviews were then read again to assess the frequency of a particular type of reference. It should also be noted that all instances of Creole speech are recorded using the Cassidy/Le Page orthography (Cassidy, 1971).

After this exercise was completed, the interviews were read again to identify some of the strategies which were used at the deeper metaphorical level. For this I paid particular attention to the in-depth interviews and the Response Statements, where teachers were sharing aspects of their early history and language biographies. Stories and analogies were simply listed; the **exemplary, illustrative, legitimated, explanatory** classification of Kelchtermans and Vandenberghe (1994) was attempted, but the difficulty and interpretative danger of classifying stories outside their discourse context was recognised, and so all the stories were treated as either illustrative or explanatory, while all other symbolic references were recorded on two large **cluster maps**, representing English and JC: rather in the way suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994). So, for example, one cluster of phrases might refer to the merchandising of English while another cluster might focus on the image of English as restriction. (The Appendix includes the transcripts of Teachers H and S in Jamaica and Teachers 13 and 14 in London)

As was indicated above the classroom observations were being analysed and re-

oriented as they were being recorded. The job of the analyst is to get inside the data, to become internal to it. With my understanding of these classrooms, I took the emerging themes of **teacher language, student language, teacher-student interaction and content of the lessons** as the four focal areas for final analysis and interpretation of the Jamaican data but modified the templates to handle the London data more appropriately.

Field notes can be the catch-all collection of information which is difficult to make meaningful. In line with the theoretical orientation of the project, I used the **critical incident** principle of observation to transform the Jamaican notes into story events which would add context (exemplification) to the settings. The London notes also relied on critical events analysis.

3.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has had to deal with the problem of how to capture those differences between the teachers in the two environments, in an inevitably multi-disciplinary study orientated towards critical ethnography and history, with a methodology that had to be comparative, cultural and holistic. It has had to show the evolving nature of much of the procedure. Key ideas have been introduced quite early, referring to agency and the reaction of these agents to social and historical forces. Methods such as interviewing, observation and historical inquiry which involve the respondents are suggested, and new ways of analysis are foregrounded. These techniques in analysis also focus on the respondents and the requirement of the researcher to give an account of their view of the world. With these procedures in place, we must now focus on the ongoing process of analysing the data, beginning with the results of the historical inquiry.

CHAPTER FOUR

Historical Inquiry: The Context of the Formation of the Teachers in Jamaica and London

The aim of the study was to examine and account for the differing approaches to the teaching of English in two sociolinguistic environments. As was indicated in Chapter Three, the two settings are very different, with very different histories, but they have been linked at particular moments. So before the detailed examination of what is happening in schools now, it is useful to place the two systems in their historical context. This history is offered, first and foremost, as a way of understanding what the teachers will be saying. It offers a description of the forces, events and practices which have helped to shape the classrooms and the teachers in both these settings.

4.1 AN OVERVIEW OF THE JAMAICAN EDUCATION CONTEXT

4.1.1 Elementary education

The bulk of Jamaica's population, the Black population, was educated through the elementary system. Education for ex-slaves, the labouring poor was extended in the period after Emancipation, with the aid of the Negro Education Grant from 1835 to 1845, under the aegis of the missionaries who had been vocal in the abolitionist movement. The local planter class was not prepared to devote taxes to a project such as Black education, for a class of people they saw as recalcitrant and feckless.

The management of elementary schools was in the hands of the local minister of religion and overseen by the inspector, the representative of the central government who was responsible for allocating the rather meagre additional government funds. Schools were organised into eight standards or classes: standards A and B were the junior grades, with 1 to 6 being for older students. They began with a very basic school fare consisting of reading, writing and arithmetic, heavily seasoned with the Christian values of obedience, prudence and industry (King, 1989). However, as the

emphasis was on a more productive, amenable workforce, a new subject, agricultural studies, was soon introduced, but the importance of the English language, in an almost metaphysical sense, was not over-looked:

To diffuse a grammatical knowledge of the English language, as the most important agent of civilisation, for the coloured population of the colonies (from Circular Despatch, Augier and Gordon, 1962: 182).

Here the English language is not being considered as a mere means of communication but as something invested with magical powers, able to re-form subject peoples into replicas of Englishmen and women of a particular class. Apart from this colonial objective, King (1995) suggests that Black working-class parents would have valued an emphasis on English because of the advancement that they expected would flow from a high level of literacy.

Part of the repercussions of the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865 was a general reappraisal of the effectiveness of the education system. Turner (1987) includes in that reappraisal the necessity to ensure that the labouring class remained industrious and orderly. Such goals were reflected in the Government Code of Regulations of 1867, introduced by the new governor, Sir John Peter Grant. The Code emphasised Christian values yet again, submission to higher authority by all in the system, and the central importance of the teacher as a role model in the community. Additionally, the institution of the system of payment-by-results, as part of the new regulations, helped to secure the position of English as the most important subject. It was allocated 42 % of the marks of the yearly inspection. The children were expected, at seven and under, to read simple sentences, write from dictation and identify the subject in simple sentences. A lot of the work in the schools was geared towards the tests and so most of what was done in English was memory work. However, the scores were directly translated into the pounds which were used to pay the teachers and run the school. Success at English had its monetary rewards in this period of payment-by-results.

As the Jamaican government became more financially and legally involved in

education, fees were abolished by the Elementary Education Law of 1892. This was a significant step in the Government's increasing financial control of education and a move that was encouraged by the church. There was even consideration given to the notion of compulsory schooling in response to huge complaints regarding juvenile disorder and fecklessness in the population. Nevertheless, the colonial government still maintained only negligible administrative control within the system, with responsibility for less than 5% of elementary schools: day-to-day control remained the business of the churches.

The Government did, at times, try and assert some policy control, through its Education Department. Literacy, for example, was strongly encouraged and the revised Code of 1900 listed high standards for the ideal 14 year school leaver which included: handling choice selections from Shakespeare, Tennyson etc; paraphrasing simple poetic passages; writing business letters; parsing and analysing complex sentences. In reality, much less was accepted as progress, and, as such, was sometimes rather poorly measured, with yardsticks such as being able to sign own name being used (King, 1989: 231). Even with only a 50% attendance, the system was sorely stretched, with the lower standards being crammed with children who were unable to progress through the grades.

Whatever criticisms might be made of the elementary schools, no one can doubt their central influence on the education of Jamaica's poor i.e. its Black majority population. For many, there were no other paths from poverty, even though the authorities saw the schools as nothing more than instruments for improving the efficiency of farm workers. King (1989) notes that, when the 1900 Code insisted on agriculture and manual training, as part of the vocationalising of a too-literary curriculum, many parents quietly withdrew their children from those classes. Education was for their children's betterment: it provided personal enrichment in all kinds of ways. They also wanted more "socially respectable occupations", which did not carry the stamp of the plantation and slavery. Teaching was the main option available and consequently, thousands of the brighter children took the Inspector-

supervised pupil-teacher examinations, which would allow them to remain in school as paid assistant teachers and from there to enter the training college, the tertiary institution of the poor.

4.1.2. Secondary Education

In the period of slavery, the wealthier planters sent their children to England to be educated or used the services of private tutors. Those less wealthy made use of the number of somewhat indifferent, and usually badly-run, private schools which sprang up intermittently. Additionally, in the seventeenth and eighteenth century a number of endowments had been added to this stock, to provide education to the poorer planters and other unfortunate White colonials. As a system, it also came under scrutiny after the Morant Bay Rebellion. The need was for a better kind of school to meet the rising expectations and demands of a middle class who could not afford to send their children to grammar schools in England or to local private schools. This middle class was needed to maintain stability in uncertain political times.

As with the elementary schools, the earliest secondary schools were set up by religious denominations for their children and protégés, but the State became more fully involved with the inception of the Jamaica Schools Commission in 1879, following the pattern of the English endowed schools. Its brief was to use the charitable trust funds and endowments, presently being wasted, to provide a better grade of secondary education, to meet the needs of the middle classes, the poorer Whites and, eventually, the brown-skinned Jamaican. There was also the promise, after 1892, of a few free scholarship places for the brightest from the elementary schools, which led to the entry of a few African-Jamaicans into this sector of the education system. In reality, most of the free places went to children already attending the junior departments of the secondary schools. The Commission remained in place until 1950, expanding in the number of schools it managed. However, it barely succeeded in maintaining its mission and social function which

was to provide a bridge for a few of the poorer classes to move through its gates (King, 1987).

The secondary schools had greater freedom than the elementary schools, without the yearly scrutiny of the Inspector. Their curriculum followed that of the traditional English grammar schools, with their emphasis on the classics, languages and a training for a few select professions. Students largely came from English-speaking homes, although they might have been exposed to Creole through nannies, or through the few poorer children who won a scholarship place. The classical curriculum seemed, to some, to be a largely esoteric training, preparing the graduates for jobs not available in the numbers required in Jamaica. School leavers would wait for the scarce and highly prized clerical, government job, rather than take up a post which might be available in an elementary school or in agriculture.

Although working with a good deal of autonomy, significant inspections were, occasionally, made of the schools' conditions and achievements. Piggott (1911) and Kandel (1943), for example, reflected continuing concerns with a too-literary curriculum and their isolation from the elementary sector. The Piggott Report pointed to the underachievement in terms of an overburdened curriculum, outdated methods and the undue emphasis on examinations as the core of the curriculum. The Kandel Commission, coming after the workers' uprising of 1938, provided even more harsh criticisms relating not only to the lack of a functional, gender-sensitive, Jamaica-oriented curriculum in these schools, but also to their social position, segregated from the institutions of mass education i.e. the elementary schools.

Then as now attention had to be focused on how to make the higher grade of education more widely available. Some movement began with the introduction of the Common Entrance Examination of 1958, but this "innovation" accommodated only 10% of the population. It certainly did not prevent the secondary system being viewed as the province of the middle and an increasingly, appreciative upper class.

Questions of colour, also, still remained with a majority of White and brown students and teachers in the secondary system (E. Miller, 1987). Prime Minister Manley's free education policy of the 1970s has shifted, but has not fundamentally altered, the fact that 75% of the population receive an education in the modern day equivalent of the elementary school system, which is seen as inferior to the best the country has to offer. Only the Reform of Secondary Education (ROSE) of 1991 has begun to address the problem. Following the UNESCO Report, the Review of Secondary Education in 1983, the new initiative promised to address the issues of equity and quality of educational provision for secondary-age children, with the implementation of a common curriculum for Grades 7-9.

4.1.3 Teachers Colleges

Part of the meaning of education to a society is embedded in the formation of its teachers. How that cadre of individuals who forge the culture are themselves forged by its larger frame is an important indicator of the value of the product. How is the English teacher made, and how does that formation impact on the culture of the classroom and the orientation towards schooling? In Jamaica, the majority of teachers were educated, in the first instance, through the training colleges which hold an influential place in the development of the teacher. In some ways, training colleges show a close kinship to the elementary schools; in other ways, they have a character that seems almost unique to their institutions. As the total institutions, described by Turner (1987), their job was to take the young pupil teacher and remake him or her into a willing and committed servant of her community. To this end the emphasis was on industry, morality and service. The principal and staff were role models in this endeavour, who supervised the passage from the stage of neophyte to that of the fully fledged teacher. It was conscious and unequivocal training, which meant that training college personnel became significant figures in the ideological disposition of the teachers. And something of the training college remained in the teacher's practice of teaching. They embraced the role of guide and initiator of the young into the business of school.

The reason for this seamless transition is, of course, historical. The teachers were the bright sons and daughters of slaves who formed the leadership of the peasant class in a society cut off from opportunity and a richer variety of aspirations. To become a teacher meant leaving a small district to become part of a greater force, participating in a greater mission to raise the mass of the people up from ignorance, and help in the development of the society. When the teachers completed their training, they inevitably returned to their communities to continue the work. Even if return was not possible, they went into other communities where they would be respected as the role models, referred to by their title as “Teacher...”, as the Doctor or the Pastor might be acknowledged by their professional title. Teaching carried status.

Mico College of Kingston was the first such training institution, founded in 1836 early in the formation of the elementary schools. Initially, it was a mixed institution but within five years it began to focus on the training of male teachers for the profession. The fact that it was a boarding facility was significant, as was the emphasis, in the training, on Christian principles. D’Oyley and Murray (1979) noted that Mico men were given a machete and hoe once a week, to remind them from whence they came and to where they would return. A number of other training colleges came into existence in the following decades. Significant among them were three institutions for women only: Bethlehem Teachers College, a Moravian initiative opened in 1861; Shortwood, a government college founded in 1885; and St Joseph’s College, a Roman Catholic endeavour, established in 1897. Turner points to the organisation of these institutions which emphasised their exclusiveness, their difference from the rest of society, and their mission to promote higher ethical standards and to be an influence for the greater good: the leadership class of the poor.

As in Britain, teachers of English, as such, did not exist, especially in the elementary schools. The language curriculum was broken down into reading, recitation, handwriting, English grammar and composition. In terms of the training, the colleges followed the curriculum prescribed for schools. In their first year the

teachers were expected to read approved books, learn 80 lines of poetry, write from dictation, prepare bills, learn the uses of punctuation, and analyse and parse sentences. By the third year their studies included the works of the traditional English canon of Shakespeare and Milton, and writing essays. In spite of this elevated fare, inspectors in the schools at the end of the nineteenth century complained about the inadequacy of the teachers in delivering this clutch of subjects.

4.1.4 The Inspector's Reports

The Inspectors' Reports were compiled by the Superintending Inspector of Schools who summarised the views of his team of field inspectors and assistants. There were usually seven or so inspectors who ran the Department. They were nearly always White males educated in England (Drayton, 1992), and appointed by Whitehall: men like Thomas Capper who spent nearly thirty years in the Department before he retired in 1909. They always had close links to the mother country, which they used as the point of reference, and where they often returned for additional training and exposure. If they were not from England, they would be American like Colonel George Hicks, who settled in Jamaica after the Civil War, and who became involved in the writing of primers at the turn of the century.

These one day inspections by the man, often on horseback, went on for over a hundred years, until 1950. The inspections included an examination of all areas of the school's organisation: accommodation and equipment; children's books and registers; and tests in curriculum areas. The visit became a focal point of life in many districts. It was the day when many who had never attended in the past, went to school, fully and properly dressed. Attention was paid to all who might give honour to the school, if chosen by the Inspector to read a passage, recite a gem or render a poem. The result of these visits form the basis of the reports and much of what they wrote was concerned with the "chief subjects" such as reading, recitation and composition. From the writings we can see their attitude to both Creole and English and the business of language teaching.

Attitude to English

If we take the attitude to English, we can see that they were concerned with imparting the imperial language and its preoccupations to colonial peoples. The language was seen as the native tongue of Jamaica and privileged even in its spoken form. Reports refer constantly to the inability of the children to “express themselves properly in their native tongue” (p.344: 1915). The report of 1912, for example asks that teachers pay special attention to the spoken language of the scholar, with regular drills on errors of grammar in everyday speech and for surveillance which should extend even to the playground. The difficulties that these Creole-speaking Jamaicans might have, however, were wearily acknowledged:

English is one of the great stumbling blocks in Jamaican elementary schools. (p486:1914)

because:

children do not look upon the school language as a means of self-expression. (p533:1915).

This, of course, led to a conclusion which still has currency today, namely that children will use the language of their speech in writing.

The teachers featured in the interviews, who were children at the time, confirmed the necessity of using English:

You couldn't go to your teacher and say 'Mi waa go outside'....
.. No. you had to say: 'Please allow me to go outside' or
'Please allow me to leave this class'. (Teacher A)

Dialect, whatever you call it, if you use that, that would always be corrected. (Teacher B)

They, however, remembered having more freedom in the playground but it had to be out of the earshot of the teacher:

Well you had your little time when you used to say 'no bada mi' and all that, but if teacher is anywhere and hears you, she's going to call you down for it, you know. And you have to correct yourself. (Teacher A)

The consequence for those who could not correct themselves was obvious:

Some kept quiet, others would use it; what really happened is that's the free way of expressing yourself so if you're told not

to do it, you draw in your shell...kind of hide in between, under the wings of others, you're talking and I don't talk. (Teacher B)

Attitude to Jamaican Creole

Clearly, the common attitude was of respect for what was deemed to be the proper language, and consequently JC had no place. The reports give no sense of the inspectors encountering anything which could be called a language. One should even note the words they gave to the Moyne Commissioners of “a degenerate form of English” (p.125), of the need for clear and connected speech. The inspectors speak of “coarse provincialisms”; “broken English”; “the vernacular”; “colloquialisms”; “forms of speech [from] the home and on the street” which have to be “assailed “ with vigour and the “strict adherence” to rules.

In this assault the inspectors were sometimes disappointed by the language behaviour of those who should have been at the front-line of the attack, the teachers themselves:

Even the teachers in some cases resort to common or incorrect forms when teaching and questioning their classes.” (p.68: 1917) “In visiting schools I have felt vexed to hear a teacher who ought to know better speak to the little children in the lower Standards in the same broken English they are familiar with in their homes. (p.343: 1916)

..it is feared that some teachers are prone to drop into the vernacular in attempting to make their meaning clear to their pupils. Such phrases as ‘Don’t it?’ are too frequently heard. (p.339: 1912)

Such Anglocentricism remained very constant until the sentiments such as those expressed in 1930 were recorded:

(It) cannot, however, be said that the curriculum has been designed in accordance with the needs of Jamaica..(It).has small connection with the realities of life in an agricultural country. (p.223: 1930).

In 1935, the Inspector regretted the practice of adopting, wholesale, the syllabuses designed for use in England, and by 1936, was coming towards the idea of the schools as cultural centres in the community, recognising that attractive classrooms

could bring people in and lead to greater utilisation. However, it was not until after the workers' uprising of 1938, during a period of some trenchant political questioning of accepted beliefs, that a more "Jamaicanised" curriculum came into being.

Methods of Teaching

In addition to the strictures on the proper teaching of the subjects which made up English, the inspectors commented on and suggested strategies to the readers of the reports, encouraging them to discuss these at association meetings. This, incidentally, suggests that teachers themselves were meant to be part of the audience of the reports. Occasional asides indicate that the inspector did not believe this audience was large but certainly, the first two decades of the century were the time of greatest focus on curriculum issues. Such interest would have been supported by the **Jamaican Journal of Education** which was published monthly from 1900 - 1910. From the beginning of the period under survey, the ideas put forward were relatively liberal. The 1900 Inspector's Report noted with approval the independence from primers and basal readers. Over the next few years, mention was made of the importance of reading to the development of the child, and the need to read for meaning rather than simply relying on memory and mechanical recitation. On a number of occasions, mention was also made of additional sources of reading material such as the newspaper, and the need to tackle current topics of the day.

The inspectors' comments also gave implicit indication of what they saw as the purpose of education. They supported practical activities such as the writing of business forms, household accounts and the development of a variety of letter formats, such as those to the collector of taxes or the doctor. They also encouraged the contextualising of reading and writing in the other secondary subjects. Nevertheless, grammar teaching was seen as important. They expected it to be related to the writing, especially allowing students to analyse their own work. Such activities, with parsing, were seen as crucial to good writing and essential in the

higher Standards:

Properly taught, it is a capital training of scholars to think.
(p.338: 1912)

Even so, by 1916 the word seemed to have reached the Inspector that “in some quarters” teaching grammar was not considered necessary. It was a state of affairs he did not feel Jamaica was ready to embrace. One of the teachers’ memories of the grammar classes of about that same year, suggests that they could leave a deep impression:

We did the parts of speech. We did parsing. I used to like...not parsing, I used to like analysis, to find out how the sentences are connected with each other, which is principal and which is subordinate and I used to like that a whole lot. I didn’t like parsing...I just didn’t like parsing. (Teacher B)

Whatever the strategy used, the emphasis was on standards: on strict adherence to correct speech, reading with feeling, on good continuous writing and on well organised oral compositions.

The other concern of the inspectors was the conduct of the teachers, whose fate rested on the rating received in their reports. The concern with the teachers’ inability to control the English language has already been noted. The inspectors intimated that this weakness was further reflected in the way the teachers taught language: poor enunciation in reading remained a continuing problem; composition was repeatedly “in want of proper tuition” (1917). Composition, generally, seemed to be one of the subjects that the inspectors found most frustrating and they linked the difficulty with it to the teachers’ reluctance to mark extended writing, reporting with irritation the discovery of mounds of uncorrected books. By 1924 there was a crackdown on those deemed most inefficient. This was the time that one of the teachers interviewed went to Shortwood Teachers College. She spoke of her training there:

We had story telling, lower division children. We had pictures...A lot of talking with the children, discussions, plenty discussions. (Teacher B),

suggesting a reasonably informed approach to the requirements of an infant curriculum.

In later years it seemed that the reports gave more attention to the curriculum of the teacher training colleges. A telling project of 1934 was instituted and soon abandoned:

In addition to the training of teachers, the college has given a course in domestic training to prospective domestic servants. (p.251: 1934).

The attempted combination of elementary school teachers' work with the training of maids reveals the perception of the place of these teachers. In 1935, the inspector voiced another concern: lamenting the fact that because the training college students were from elementary schools, time had to be spent on increasing their subject content rather than in necessary professional training. Perhaps, it was because of such scrutiny that, in 1938, it was decided that training college graduates should no longer become head teachers automatically: a probationary period was thus instituted. Interestingly, as 1938 was the year of the workers' uprising, the Inspector praises the teachers for their help in maintaining stability.

4.1.5 The Teachers' Lives

This is perhaps an opportune time to look more closely at the four elderly teachers interviewed. They were born in 1921 (Teacher A), 1905 (Teacher B), 1911 (Teacher C) and 1904 (Teacher D). Therefore, at least 3 of them were in the schools that the inspectors wrote about so prolifically in the second decade of the century.

All of the teachers came from poor, peasant backgrounds, with the most "elevated" perhaps being Teacher C whose father was headman on a 4000 acre property in central Jamaica. Inevitably, they went to elementary schools, but even that attendance was not an easy task to achieve. Both male teachers (C and D) had to move around the country to stay with a philanthropic teacher or relative, to get the boarding that would allow them to attend school. The reports noted that the best attendance was in the months after Christmas when gifts in the families ensured that there was clothing to wear to school. King (1989) suggests that the lack of rainfall

might have been another reason for good attendance. She notes that February, usually the driest month had the best attendance for the years 1900-1903. Teacher B who went to school in January 1912 remembered starting school when she was nearly 7, being able to read, having being taught by her father, a rather far-thinking farmer who believed in the education of girls.

These teachers' experiences reflected the kinds of activities of the reports:

We had grammar, we had composition, we had letter writing,.....We had a special English book, that's Nesfield grammar that we used to use in school and we had to learn it from cover to cover...grammar to kill! (Teacher A)

Teacher would set the writing on the board and you write from that or you had copy books with the writing set in the books and you, certain parts you trace over... in the other divisions, they had reproduction, a story would be read to you and then you put it back in your own words... It gave us a background, a foundation for composition afterwards. (Teacher B)

The outlook of these teachers gives a sense of people who felt that education was important and because of that they had an important role to play in their community.

For Teacher C, one of the reasons for that importance was the fact that class and colour divisions played such a major part in society, that the poor had to rely on the elementary schools: "Many brilliant people came out of the all-age schools". For him, such an occurrence was almost by default, because the education system was organised to make the students better at the jobs of "semi-slavery". Through his father's work as a headman on a plantation-type estate, he recognised that the people who lived there as squatters were expected to work on the property as housekeepers, cleaners and grass cutters, made slightly more efficient by schooling. Consequently, Teacher C praised the introduction of the Common Entrance Examination, for its amelioration of the worst excesses of the secondary education lottery.

The church also played an important role in all the teachers' lives. Teacher B acknowledged that her church connections helped her to secure one of her first

principalships. Teacher C remembered changing his denomination at twelve, when adopted by a teacher in another district. In Teacher D's case, it was a necessary, physical arrangement, because the school and the church were housed in the same building. On Friday, benches were turned around to accommodate the Sunday service, and then reorganised for school on Monday morning. Only the hymn board remained constant throughout the week.

Success at school was followed by the pupil-teacher examinations before entry to teachers college. The workload of these novice teachers was accepted by them, with little complaint. They were expected to take sole responsibility for a class, instead of simply helping the teacher. When they moved on to teacher training they spoke proudly of their experiences at Mico, for example: "I studied every subject, including Latin"; of taking their knowledge from Shortwood to the schoolrooms of the district they grew up in. The feeling of commitment was very strong:

It was a wonderful thing to be a teacher. In those days a teacher was a big man. (Teacher D)

I went on to teaching from the day I entered the schoolroom. I don't think I've left up to now. I still have the children around....teaching. (Teacher B)

It was noticeable that these teachers could, in their 70s and 90s, be found rooted back in their communities and still contributing to education.

4.1.6 The Jamaican Education System Today

A feature of the education system, since independence in 1962, has been the constant change in the structure and organisation of the institutions. Elementary education was reorganised as junior secondary schools in what was supposed to be the first step towards comprehensive schooling. However, according to Murray no proper training was given to primary school teachers, to enable them to do the job. Some elementary schools became all-age, while others became junior high or new secondary schools. The old, elite secondary schools were renamed secondary high

schools and an in-service programme for the University graduates, who traditionally taught in them, was instituted in the 1970s.

The profile of the Jamaican teacher, on the other hand, as E. Miller (1990) suggests, has remained unchanged since the beginning of public education. They have largely been the sons and daughters of small farmers, drawn from the ranks of the elementary and all-age schools but later coming from the high schools. Murray also notes the constancy in the way in which teaching has been used as the ladder of social mobility, resulting in a continuing flight from teaching into other professions, and a shortage of teachers in the schools.

The number of training colleges has increased and their curriculum has been subject to a number of revisions (Whyte, 1990). They have also extended their training programme to three years and the range of their offer as tertiary institutions. They have, to some extent, lost their place as the source of some of the brightest of the poor. Other avenues of social mobility now exist, and so the calibre of training college applicants has fallen. However, the introduction of the Reform of Secondary Education (ROSE) programme has begun to suggest new possibilities for equity within the system. The gradual implementation of a common curriculum at grades 7-9 has meant that secondary schools are again being reorganised, with the new designation of high schools or comprehensive high schools. The phased implementation of the new curriculum has allowed more teachers and educators to participate in the process.

The introduction of CXC has provided a Caribbean focus to the examination system, with an English syllabus which aims to be communicative, but which is tiered to reflect distinct class expectations of the likely candidates. The annual report of the Board has also replaced the inspector's report as a source of information about the children's performance in English and advice about the direction of the curriculum.

4.1.7 The Strands

Events presented and institutions described so far begin the process of revealing the major sources and strands of teachers' thinking about the education system. The strands might be that Jamaican teachers have a deep history and strong roots in the growth of Jamaican society; their ideological influence has been profound and although they might be expected to be conservative because of their religious origins, they have played a formidable role in the development of Jamaican society. These, however, are general points relating to the significance of all teachers and so we can say that the notion of the teacher of English as a distinct professional is not very strong (see Drayton, 1992: 209) and did not become so until the 1950s: historically, first and foremost our focus must be on teachers in general.

4.2. AN OVERVIEW OF THE ENGLISH EDUCATION SYSTEM

When examining the comparative and comparable context of the English teachers in London, it makes historical sense if we begin with post-war migration and the context of urban education. This is because Jamaican migration, in significant numbers, began in this period, and was to the urban centres where the children would have attended urban working-class schools. For the purposes of this study, the focus is on London.

Although the Black presence is well-documented before this period (Fryer, 1985) the 1950s and 1960s were the greatest periods of Jamaican migration into Britain's largely urban communities (Patterson, 1966). It was a time of reconstruction for an economy and infrastructure devastated by war, when immigration was a solution to labour shortage for the country and the promise of economic advancement for those who came. The Jamaican migrants, according to Davison (1962), were in almost equal numbers male and female; mostly young (between the ages of fifteen and thirty) and half with children. The majority had at least elementary level education, with work experience in a variety of areas and a definite destination for their home in Britain. They are epitomised by the author of the autobiographical account Jamaican Migrant (Collins, 1965) who stowed away, optimistically, to England as a

young man but was eventually defeated by its subtle racism.

4.2.1 Characterising The Urban Education System: Elementary Education

The characteristics discussed here refer in particular to the working-class areas of London, where Jamaican migration was strongest. They refer also to those aspects of the history that are relevant to the teaching of migrants. Consequently the focus will be on the inner-city schools of London and the genesis of the elementary schools.

The kind of education system the migrants found was one which had many features in common with the Jamaican system. In the structuring of the institutions, for example, the dual mode of education was a British prototype reflecting the class-bound nature of the education system, with one type of education available for the poor and another for the more wealthy. Some of the same philanthropists would have advocated schooling for the poor in both countries (D'Oyley and Murray, 1977). In 1833, two years before the Negro Education Grant in Jamaica, the first grant of public money was made for school buildings in England. It was a limited input but the thinking, then, was not of any kind of mass state intervention in education. The elementary schooling provision, thus established, was the province of the poorer classes while grammar and independent schools operating through endowments and grants, educated those who were better off. Additionally, there were also public schools, the training ground for the upper classes, carrying a social influence much greater than their size (Roach, 1991). One other difference between Jamaica and England was the change in thinking and the relatively early emphasis in England on a national system of free, basic education. Progress was very rapid after the first government grant. The Committee of Privy Council for Education was set up with Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth as its secretary in 1839. By 1856 the Education Department was established. Payment-by-results was introduced so that teachers were paid according to the children's attendance and the rate of their success in examinations. Part of the reason for the increase in state control was the recognition of the school's role in the pursuit of social order; part of the reason was the rise in

numbers of the urban poor; and part of the reason, too, was the demand from workers' associations for education as a preparation for social development and political power. Some kind of education was to be the goal for all so, for example, the landmark 1870 Education Act established School Boards with the power to levy rates to supplement a secular elementary provision, if the religious provision proved to be inadequate.

After the passing of the 1870 Act, and subsequent acts in 1876 and 1880, elementary education came under greater government organisation and control. Attendance at school became compulsory and the discredited system of payment-by-results was gradually abandoned. The schools were now run by the head teachers, inspectors, managers, Board members and increasingly Whitehall civil servants of the Education Department. School Boards in particular were immensely powerful and were instrumental in increasing the supply and quality of elementary education. However, they often consisted of individuals with no background in education necessarily and no sensitivity to educational issues. Such a combination sometimes led to friction over pay and conditions, as the teachers became more professional and assertive.

The elementary system was expanded with the institution of higher grade schools, specialising in vocational education. However, they received more support than similar Jamaican attempts to include practical subjects in the curriculum. Nevertheless, the difference in status between the elementary and the secondary school system was always maintained. It was a distinction that was contested and sometimes had to be clarified. One such means was through the 1902 Education Act. This legislation had to deal with the lack of opportunities at the upper level of the elementary school. The leading influence on the 1902 Act was Sir Robert Morant, as head of, what was now called, the Board of Education. He is recognised as a leading advocate for maintaining the differences between the two types of education. His philosophy was reflected in the differences in curricula he proposed for the two systems. The view was that secondary education trained the scholar around a literary

curriculum based on English, while elementary schools served the artisan. It was felt that the latter had no use for examinations and should, therefore, be obliged to leave school by fifteen. And so the parallel systems continued until the Hadow Report of 1926. This report ratified the idea of secondary education as a process following on from primary education, and, therefore, predominantly developmental in nature.

4.2.2 Secondary Education

In Victorian England, as in the newly emancipated society of Jamaica, secondary education was privileged education bought with money. Wardle (1976), however, suggests that that provision was of a questionable quality, especially the education offered in some of the public and grammar schools. Instead, private schools and home tutelage flourished as the demand for higher intellectual and moral standards grew. Reforms came with the institution of what was considered a more relevant curriculum, in a more moral tone. Changes in the structure of secondary education were also accompanied by an expansion in the intake. The idea was revived of using the grammar schools to provide some educational opportunity for the brighter child from the poorer classes. As in Jamaica, the scholarship ideal was universally supported. It became further entrenched with the passing of the Education Act of 1902. This legislation abolished the School Boards and gave powers to new education authorities to raise rates for the purposes of supplying education “other than elementary”. The state-maintained grammar school was born. With this Act, the grammar and the elementary schools were brought closer, in one ambit, with cross-over occurring through the scholarship system. The dominance of the grammar school tradition continued to be maintained by such as the “Free Place” regulation of 1907, and the establishment of a number of new grammar schools around the same time. The 1907 Act stipulated that eligibility for grant support rested on the provision of twenty-five percent of free, scholarship places. In spite of, or because of, the enthusiasm for the scholarship-driven model of co-existence between the different types of schools, there was great support, by influential educators such as Morant, for the continued division of schools into secondary and elementary “streams”. Stanley Baldwin, too, counselled against the provision of secondary

education for all kinds of children (Judge, 1984). These lines of demarcation, although they might be differently expressed, continue to be contested, even at the other end of the twentieth century (John: 1992).

The 1944 Education Act marked some of the fissure lines with the tripartite system. However, it brought the idea of secondary education for all, albeit with continuing demarcations based on class differences. Griffiths (1971) notes that it was a provision that combined the ideas of the Hadow, Spens and Norwood Reports. He also noted that the 1944 Act drew heavily on the Norwood Report, setting in place the well-known description of three types of secondary schools: grammar, technical and modern. A Ministry of Education, with national powers over local authorities, was created, and the all-age elementary school was replaced by the secondary modern. The latter was accepted as the place for general education, free from the pressures of examinations. Agitation against the three-tier system began almost immediately, with justifications of, and attacks on, the concept of the secondary modern and the inequity embedded in its structure. For parents, it would have seemed no different from the elementary school, in the meagre opportunities it offered for social mobility. Yet Griffiths says that even as many of the teachers in these schools tried to offer a wide and innovative curriculum, the discussion about the link between social class and educational inequity was beginning to be waged. This debate fuelled attempts to set up a more inclusive form of secondary education, mentioned rhetorically in the 1944 Act but missing in its implementation. The type of education beginning to be envisioned was the comprehensive system which had, as its ideal, provision of equality of opportunity for all. Its justification was the dissatisfaction of middle-class parents with selection; a recognition of the wastage of potential; and a realisation of the inadequacy of psychological tests in predicting intelligence.

Griffiths (1971) notes that, inevitably, comprehensive schools developed most quickly in the urban areas, because they were the areas which suffered most extensively from bomb damage during the war. In London and Coventry, Labour-

controlled councils soon began the process of “going comprehensive”. It was, however, largely an incremental programme. There were voluntary grammar schools that remained outside the control of the London County Council. However, the Authority set up its own grammar-type “county” schools, to work closely with those institutions which were not maintained, i.e., not a part of state provision. All other schools would be comprehensive, as the eleven plus selection test was gradually replaced by the Primary School Profile. So by 1967, when the two-year old Inner London Education Authority published its review of schools, they had 77 comprehensives in operation. They were of many different types: some had been grammar schools; others were new, large and shiny; others still were the amalgamation of old elementary schools carrying, perhaps, a dreary reputation. But they were all expected to offer to the students a broad-based education which included the highest public examinations. The NFER survey carried out in 1966 showed the diversity of the comprehensive system in London and also the problems they were already facing, in maintaining a spread of ability in areas where there was competition from grammar schools. Similarly, Griffiths cites several studies of London comprehensives which indicated the deleterious effects of streaming and the fact that middle-class children derived the greatest benefits from comprehensive education. Thirty years later, OFSTED statistics have added a race and gender dimension to that picture of underachievement (Gillborn and Gipps, 1996).

The presence of different migrant communities, at the same time as it was going through the process of comprehensive reorganisation, changed the composition of the urban London school. A range of literature at the time discussed the progress of settlement and accommodation to the British education system. Patterson (1963), for example, studied Lambeth which was one of the earliest areas of Jamaican settlement. McNeal (1971) noted that the so-called “immigrant schools” were stigmatised. From their entry into the British education system, Black people, including Jamaicans, have been part of the ongoing debate about the nature of the offer in primarily inner-city schools.

The urban school system has been a site of continuity and change and as Grace (1978) suggests, they mirror the social complexities of the communities in which they stand. One of the changes has been in the locality itself, and another change has been in the composition of the school. The inner-city areas of such as Notting Hill, Shepherds Bush, Battersea, Lambeth and Lewisham have lost the dominant profile as the home of first-generation Black settlers from the Caribbean. There are many new types of migrants fleeing persecution and national upheavals in their countries. Kenyan and Ugandan Asians, Vietnamese refugees, European migrants from Poland and Portugal, Turkish and Kurdish refugees are just a few of the diverse populations in London schools (John, 1992). Another change has been in the profile of the teachers, themselves, who have become more middle-class and cosmopolitan (see Grace, 1978; Protherough, 1991). One of the continuities has been the continuing concern with underachievement and inequality.

4.2.3. The Training of Teachers

Any consideration of the training of teachers must begin with the training of the elementary school teacher. There were similarities in the background of the teachers themselves in the two settings. The elementary school teachers of nineteenth century London came from backgrounds similar to their Jamaican counterpart in that they were children of the aspiring, literate and genteel poor i.e. the lower middle classes. In England much was made of the distinction between a “schoolmaster”, working in the grammar, public or independent schools and the “teacher” who, primarily, worked in the elementary school, or who was more akin to a proprietor in a small one-room business venture (Wardle, 1976). The latter group was less well regarded, as the secondary schoolmaster was often a graduate and was hardly thought to warrant training. As in Jamaica, the teachers of the poor increasingly came to be recognised as hardworking, and as having a central role to play in moral development at a particular level in society. In London it was the problem child of the urban poor. The religious purpose was clear, in the notion of a good teacher as a kind of secular priest. Grace (1978) refers to other Victorian educators’ belief that the urban elementary school was to be “a citadel” in the vast sprawling and

expanding slums of the period. The teachers were to be “the pioneer of civilisation”, with an unstated project to domesticate the unruly urban masses.

Jones (1990) excavates the past of the urban school teacher further and using a Foucauldian perspective examines how training colleges, following the philosophy of the times, became the means by which teachers became both subject and object of social re-formation. There is an echo in this account of the Turner (1987) perspective on Jamaican training institutions, suggesting that ideological training was the prime aim of the teachers’ colleges. The Jones (1990) account also has resonance in suggesting the antecedents of some of the teachers who became the archetypal London school teacher, and who expressed their sense of the contradictory dual processes operating in their lives. The Victorian elementary schools were tough, and often neither pupils nor parents responded to the moral curriculum. Jones (1990) asserts by reference to contemporary accounts:

It was from a mixture of fear, disgust, and anxiety, rather than love that the late-nineteenth century board school teacher approached a class of `scholars. (Jones, 1990: 70)

However, according to Grace, although the experience in the London slums shocked the teachers, it also educated and radicalised them. Additionally, the introduction of the pupil-teacher system, with its yearly examination scheme, produced an easily-understood system of progression. Its implementation signalled the beginning of a certified profession.

Even so, there were few substantial developments before 1840, although there were training centres and classes for those selected to be teachers (Dent, 1977). Kay-Shuttleworth tried to set up a State Normal School for the training of elementary school teachers, but this met with protests from both Anglicans and Nonconformists, each wary of the involvement of their rival. He went on to establish the Battersea Training College with charitable funds. Ironically, the College had a very strong religious ethos. Kay-Shuttleworth believed that the training should emphasise religious conviction, first and foremost, followed by industry in learning and a due

recognition of one's place in society. In that conviction, he differed, somewhat, from Coleridge of St Mark's College Chelsea who wanted to emphasise that teaching was a profession of the educated and cultured, as well as the virtuous. Nevertheless, Kay-Shuttleworth's views held sway, and his model of the small, homely and residential institution set the tone for training colleges, for many years to come. In this way, the training was similar to Jamaica, emphasising the holistic and ideological nature of the programme, which was to produce modest, humble servants of social policy.

There were, however, a few changes to this prototype that were set in motion. One change came through the recommendation of the Cross Commission of 1888 for the setting up of the day training departments by universities. The aim was to counteract criticisms of the colleges' narrow and backward focus. This was followed by initiatives to train the teachers in the secondary system. Nonetheless, the opening up of the universities was very significant, because, once access was established, it provided the opportunity for poorer scholars to get a university degree. Here again, the class prejudices of those who managed the system sought to keep elementary school matters, and personnel, away from the higher reaches of learning. This negative attitude towards teachers studying for degrees revealed the official inclination for teachers to remain the domestic, rather than the more independent academic. Such an orientation accords with Jones' (1990) picture of the urban teacher caught between society's wish for an agent of reform in terms of function, but expecting, nevertheless, that the agent would know, and remain in, his/her place. In the end, the training is set up to allow the teacher to manoeuvre the fine line between carrying out society's project with some semblance of leadership, while constraining the self in order not to rise above one's station.

Gradually, the training colleges began to change in character under the force of economic and social pressures. There were other proposals to better equip specialist teachers, which began quite early on with training for younger children in the 1850s. The reforms gathered pace with subject specialisms in the latter half of the nineteenth century. This increased the sense of the professionalism. More significant

in changing the face of the profession and training was the influence of the two world wars. The wars decimated the male population in the profession, and also led to far-reaching changes in the thinking about the education system. The McNair Report, dealing comprehensively with the training of teachers for the future, was published in 1944, a few months before the Education Act. The Report had to take account of matters such as the reform of secondary education and the definition of qualified teacher status. It had to prepare teachers for other changes, such as the growth of the school population through the raising of the school leaving age and the post-war baby boom. These developments brought greater pressures to bear on the training institutions. Combined with these demands were continuing criticisms about the nature of the content which went into the training of the teacher, i.e. questioning the relevance of the teacher trainer. It is the kind of criticism which continues today (Pimm and Selinger, 1995)

4.2.4. The Teaching Of English

As was the case in Jamaica, English did not exist as a subject in the elementary school system but was fragmented into nine separate subjects (Protherough & Atkinson, 1991). In the public schools, it was considered a subject inferior to Latin and Greek, and had to be strenuously promoted in order that it could be accepted as sufficiently rigorous and academic. In the nineteenth century, however, English was one of the main subjects in the grammar school, providing a substitute for the classics and with, initially, an emphasis on the language aspects rather than literature (T. Burgess, 1996). It gained political support from the adherents of the nineteenth century view that English was vested with the nobility of the country's imperial conquests: a symbol of national pride and culture.

However, even as the subject was beginning to be encouraged in schools, the discourse was also developing as to what constituted English (Ball, 1985). It was a debate in which inspectors and university professors had a prominent voice. Like the inspectors in Jamaica, the Government inspectors in England had an interest in methods of teaching in the elementary schools. Through their advice they

contributed to a delineation of the nature of English and English teaching. They often supported child-centred activities, such as expressive writing and the integration of grammar teaching into composition writing. T. Burgess (1996) links the emphasis on child-centred approaches with the emergence of child development as a subject of study. This was a part of the new discipline of educational studies, which emerged at the beginning of the century, with the establishment of teacher training programmes in university departments. Jamaican inspectors often travelled to England to extend their knowledge and experience, and could easily have been influenced by ideas there. Such influence did not extend to literature, which did not receive much attention in Jamaican schools. In England, however, there was support for a strong literature content in the secondary system, buoyed by a substantial tradition in the universities, the fervent support of purists such as Arnold, and by a strong interest in the developing canon of Shakespeare and the Romantic Poets. This inclination towards literature was institutionalised with the Newbolt Report of 1921.

The work of the Newbolt Committee was enormously influential in raising questions and setting a debate which has continued until today. The question of grammar is a case in point. The Report takes note of the decline in the teaching of the subject and its general unpopularity amongst teachers and pupils. It criticises the way grammar has been taught, but nevertheless asserts its importance in the school curriculum and recommends a method of teaching which includes: “elements of phonetics, analysis and a little parsing” (p.292). Much more centrally, the Report tackled the ongoing troublesome question of what constituted English, in an arena where the Classics had such a privileged position. It forcefully advocated the elevation of English, because it was an international language and an education based on English Language, and Literature would have a unifying tendency as :

the channel of formative culture for all English people, and the medium of the creative art by which all English writers of distinctionhave secured for us the power of realising some part of their own experience of life. (p.12)

The Committee acknowledged the importance of English in the life of the

elementary school, because of “evil habits of speech contracted in home and street”.

The task was:

..to teach all its pupils who speak a definite dialect or whose speech is disfigured by vulgarisms to speak Standard English, and to speak it clearly with expression.. (p.65)

However, even such a dogmatic position is modified by a more modern preoccupation:

children who speak a dialect, should as often happens become bilingual, speaking Standard English too. (p.67)

The Report is extremely wide-ranging, covering many of the areas which figure in this investigation, and managing to garner the disparate areas of interest into one school subject called English. Such coalescence defined the function of the subject, and Protherough and Atkinson (1991) cite three goals for English highlighted by the Committee: self-expression; moral and social improvement; and the development of mind and character. The demands of the subject in England were over-arching and far-reaching, much more than Jamaica’s limited and less culturally-driven goals.

There were other questions about the nature of the professional in the delivery of such central and weighty matters, in a time when neither the subject nor the profession was held in high regard. The Committee wanted to dispel the idea that English was easy and could be taught by anybody. It felt knowledge of the subject was very important, but only grudgingly acknowledged that some measure of training was required. More important to the Committee was the character and personality of the person responsible for what seemed like a spiritual mission, requiring:

sensitiveness to the aesthetic and emotional appeal of literature with a reverence for exact knowledge and an appreciation of the use of language as an instrument of exact thought. (Section 131: p.126)

Additionally, the question of the content of English was there on the Newbolt agenda, as it remains today in England, under continuing discussion. The Committee

was sure its content was not “the social problem” of History and Sociology but, more clearly, “the best thoughts” of the nation.

By the post-war years three dominant paradigms were established and available in conflicting operation: the child-centred progressive movement; the grammar tradition; and the literature-culture school of English teaching. The child-centred strand was most favoured coming from the old elementary tradition, but it drew on the new discipline of educational studies and put the learner at the centre. Within the grammar tradition T. Burgess (1996) reminds us that the language interests were divided into three sub-strands which had different kinds of impact on schools: applied linguistics, Firthian linguistics and structural linguistics. Also emerging, as the fourth paradigm, was the English-as-language perspective emphasising the child’s functional use of language to structure experience. Each of these suggests the aim, content, method and type of English teacher in operation. Ball offers a whole range of influences leading to a particular orientation. He suggests that these influences might vary depending on the teacher’s early experience, her University education or her teacher training.

The Bullock Report of 1975, with reference to Newbolt, acknowledged the political impetus behind reports into the state of English teaching. The 1975 report had a strong emphasis on reading and literacy as a response to the public outcry about falling standards. Bullock was able to show that the 1921 report had had to respond to similar public concerns about young employees who could barely read or write. It, too, considered approaches to teaching, and among the three outlined, one is very familiar. The personal growth orientation has already been discussed. The emphasis on the functional role of English is reminiscent also of the elementary school, but the idea of English as an instrument of social change is new.

The Bullock Report was the first of this kind of report to give serious attention to difference and language diversity in the classroom . It acknowledged the challenges

faced by the changing population in the school. It described some of the difficulties which might be experienced by “children from families of overseas origin”, amongst them Jamaican children. Although the main emphasis was on those born abroad, there was some recognition of the fact that many of the children had been born in England. It described some of the difficulties teachers and students might face in school situations where different languages are not recognised and attempted to point at the few examples of good practice it found, such as the use of multi-cultural material. It reaffirmed:

that in order to teach West Indian children effectively, teachers need to have an understanding of their dialect and culture.
(p.289)

The Report also advocated the development of language across the curriculum or cross-curricular initiatives which would be of benefit to all students.

The Kingman Report (1988) mirrored previous reports in English, in that it came out of a political debate about standards, about grammar and about how best to bring English teaching under greater control, to “settle an agenda”. The fervent debate within and, very strongly, outside the profession was noted. Kingman acknowledged the impressive work of Bullock and, at times, echoed the sentiments of Newbolt about the cultural inheritance:

It is possible that a generation of children may grow up deprived of their entitlement - an introduction to the powerful and splendid history of the best that has been thought and said in our language. (para 22)

However, the Report took a cautious line on the grammar debate:

Research evidence suggests that the old-fashioned formal teaching had a negligible, or, because it replaced some instruction and practice in composition, even a harmful, effect on the development of original writing. We do not recommend a return to that kind of grammar teaching. (para 27)

Instead, the Report opted for an approach based on Knowledge about Language, which allowed some attention to grammar but within a framework which allowed teachers reading the Report to insert a notion that that knowledge must include awareness of diversity.

By the time of Cox (1989) distinct views across the country had emerged about the role of English teaching. The Report put forward five generalised models of English: a personal growth view; a cross-curricular view; an adult needs view; a cultural heritage view; and a cultural analysis view. The “adult needs” view subsumes the emphasis on functionality; the “cultural heritage” and “cultural analysis” views would include references to literature, but from very different stances. The views are, in fact, an expansion of the approaches considered by Bullock, suggesting a consistency and even a clarifying of a number of positions on the nature of English teaching.

4.3 COMPARATIVE ACCOUNTS

It is immediately clear that there are a number of similarities between the education systems in the two environments. First, the class-bound nature of both systems is marked. In England, this was very strongly delineated in the difference between the two kinds of teachers and the differences, entrenched in law, relating to the different kinds of school. In Jamaica, the distinctions were based on notions not just of class but of colour which were, and still are, at the heart of the society. Such notions were rarely made explicit as class recognition and race labelling came in the genteel form of elementary/secondary schooling; the rich/poor man; the small man/the big man dichotomies (E. Miller, 1987: 140). However, the ideology behind these distinctions was still crudely effected in all manner of practices which are accepted as natural.

Another strand for comparison is the perception of the ruling elite that education has a central role to play in society. Such a perception of the teacher’s role and education’s role is not new. In England, there were strong and competing traditions and movements fuelling a demand for mass education. Significant among them was the idea of schooling as a means of social control. Education, from its inception, was seen as having a stabilising, conservative effect: encouraging duty, patience and diligence. In Jamaica, the inspector monitored the achievement of those goals and

was the main source of official prescription. The teacher, herself, was seen as the vanguard of that endeavour, ensuring its application.

There are commonalities also in the origins of both types of teachers. In both settings, they came from humble working-class backgrounds, groomed by the ruling elite for a specific purpose. The would-be managers in society were expected to come from the secondary system. In Jamaica, specifically, looking at the teachers' origins in the church-run elementary schools, we can see individuals who would have strived to pass the pupil-teacher examinations and to move thence to teachers' colleges, the only source of tertiary education available until very recently. That route has been operational for over a hundred years, unsubsidised by the planter class who had no interest in its quality or success.

The final common strand which emerges from this historical consideration is the view of English, its place and mode of delivery in both settings. Even though the sense of the teacher of English was not strong, the English language held a very powerful and influential place in both societies. The British objective, for Jamaica, which was supported by the inspectors, came out in the 1847 circular as a position accepted by all Imperial governments: to see the language of the Empire as the kind of cement needed to bind subject peoples to one common aim and destiny, namely the continuance of Empire. Such an objective, of course, included their own indigenous working class and was demonstrated in the wide and conflicting debate about the aim of English teaching, leading to four major reports in over nearly seventy years. Cameron and Bourne (1989) point to the missionary goal of English in their examination of the history of mass education in England. They cite the Newbolt Report, where a kind of egalitarianism is being advocated, in the form of a common tongue, to prevent worker/class disaffection. Such a preoccupation in Creole-speaking Jamaica would not necessarily have had the same outcome. Drayton notes the divisive effects of English proficiency in the Caribbean. It privileged the children of the secondary school system who came from homes where English was likely to be spoken. Graduates from these schools were also likely to get the better

jobs in premier institutions, like the civil service. Not least, the emphasis on English separated parents from children, as poor children who went into the secondary system became alienated from Creole speaking parents (Drayton, 1992: 207).

Such similarities are explicable in connection with the political and economic ties of history between the two societies. Often the ideas promulgated in England would be adjusted in Jamaica, or they might be tried out initially in Jamaica. However, because we are concerned with two very different settings, the inevitable differences emerge. Most significant is the difference in the status of the Jamaican teacher and her relationship to the community. As part of the fabric of that community, her ideological stance is quite complex. It could be said that the teachers formed the backbone of the society, and it was not a role they resisted, perhaps because of their position in the community, their strong allegiance to church and community organisations and most importantly, their class origins. They had a constituency with certain expectations.

The interpretations should not, however, be too simplistic. It has, for example, been noted by one inspector that the teachers' influence, in 1938, was strong in preventing greater anarchy at the time of the workers' uprising. Alternatively, however, the Moyne Commission of 1945 saw the spread of elementary education, propagated by these same teachers as a contributory factor in constructing an articulate public opinion and posture, able to communicate the workers' sense of grievance. Additionally, the Jamaican Union of Teachers (J.U.T.), founded in 1894, was in 1906, under the presidency of the Reverend G. L. Young, seeking greater linkages with the National Union of Teachers (N.U.T.), in England. This suggests some understanding of the beneficial nature of trade associations and some notion of international solidarity, however circumspectly expressed. Certainly the text of the 1906 conference address challenges colonial educational policy in a number of areas, such as payment by results, lack of autonomy, insufficient opportunities for career mobility, the unsatisfactory nature of the inspection system and the use of untrained labour through the pupil-teacher system.

A part of the reason for Jamaican teachers' pervasive role in the country has been the perception of the place of education in the development of the individual, the community and the nation. Goulbourne (1987) records that elementary education was grasped eagerly by girls as well as boys as a means of personal self-improvement, rather than simply practical training. The teaching profession, therefore, was seen as the catalyst for social mobility.

The historical context has been signalled in the earlier discussion of the ethnographic, comparative nature of the project. The foregoing "genealogy" of the teachers, and of their subject, is the first part of the analysis of the data, highlighting some interesting commonalities and differences in the two settings. The results of this historical inquiry also contribute significantly to the interpretative framework, showing how these common and contrasting forces have contributed to the formation of the teachers. The framework helps us to better understand them, and the contexts in which they operate. To apply that framework, it is necessary now to turn and examine some of the current views, attitudes, practices and conditions which exist in classrooms in these two settings.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA (Jamaica)

5.1 THE PATH TO INTERPRETATION

Using interviews and observational techniques, the aim of this study was to compare the approaches to teaching English in Jamaica to the approaches used in London schools, where many children of Jamaican origin receive their schooling; and to account for some of those differences.

For those working within the qualitative paradigm, data collection is followed by a process of analysis and interpretation, during which the researcher makes choices about the organisation and presentation of the data. Interpretation proceeds from such an analysis of the data into meaningful categories; inviting the researcher to pose, and to answer, the question, “What does this mean?”, and also to recognise that interpretation is embedded in the process from the outset. From the generation of the questions, to data collection, to coding of responses, the researcher starts to give meaning to the data, and the responses can be a complex connection between the process and the product of making meaning. In fact, we could go as far as to say that all qualitative work, especially critical ethnography, is about interpretation.

Atheide and Johnson (1994) believe “the social world is an interpreted world, not a literal world.” (p.489) which is understood by “interpretive communities” to be based on a truthful and accurate account of the subjects’ and the researcher’s representation of the researched setting. Such an orientation is moving towards the idea of the data as text and so, immediately, there is the problem of validity and its particularity to specific kinds of research. They suggest that pursuing ethnographic principles must include clearly delineated accounts of all constituent pieces,

whether they relate to the researcher herself, to context, to methodology, to setting or to the actors. Validity is underscored by making explicit the negative and positive interactions between these elements: the problems encountered; the facilitative advantage of tacit knowledge i.e. that empathetic understanding which makes one setting so much more or less accessible and (un)/ “knowable” to one researcher rather than another. A valid account makes the path to the understanding clear to readers who are not only concerned with what was observed, but also with how the observation was accomplished and interpreted. This, for me, is the basis of all research. To say it is perspectival is to acknowledge point of view, but the representation must also acknowledge whose points of view they are, and show the process by which they came to be put forward.

Denzin (1994) agrees that the process of telling is always accompanied by an “interpretive perspective”, of which there are a number:

Four major paradigms (positivist and postpositivist, constructivist, critical) and three major perspectives (feminist, ethnic models, cultural studies) now structure qualitative writing. (Denzin, 1994: 502)

Whichever the position adopted, essentially all texts will be infused with the class, gender, race and culture of the writer, but Denzin identifies a number of phases on the path towards the public display of the research: sense-making; representation; legitimation and desire.

A theory of interpretation

The orientation of the interpretation of this project has been woven into the fabric of the study: the construction of the project is part of its meaning. By setting the parameters of the project within my experience, I was situating the personal as a central experience, as the grounding for the research. All the foregoing foregrounds the role of the researcher and recognises his/her importance in the production of meaning. He/She represents the world of the research to the readers outside.

What is further being suggested throughout is that meaning is not static; it is subject to negotiation and change, through such procedures as the in-depth interview; it is conferred through experience within the context of a personal and public history of both interviewer and interviewee. Consequently the “personal” or the other half of the interaction is also important: i.e. the stakeholders. Interpretation relies on the personal, and that has been fashioned by a specific view of history and the wider cultural context. And if these views and contexts are constantly contested in terms of language, culture, identity or ethnicity, then the interpretations will also be open to these shifts. The researcher imbued with tacit knowledge negotiates these changes and guides the reader towards new meanings and new ways of knowing.

As was indicated in **The Autobiography of the Project**, my original orientation was to view specific teaching methods, especially the teaching of grammar, as of fundamental importance. This sprang from two very different responses from the two groups of teachers, early on, about its significance in their teaching practice. The findings from this investigation are presented below. In presenting them, and even in using the word “findings”, I am reminded of Richardson (1994), who confessed to having:

yawned my way through numerous supposedly exemplary qualitative studies. (Richardson, 1994: 516),

often because the writers allowed themselves to be constrained by a “mechanistic scientism” which produced staid, static writing. She argues for a view of the process which sees the writing, and the choices about the writing, as part of the inquiry. Certainly, the revisions I have made on this, and the two following chapters, have partly been about finding the appropriate voice. So the questions have been about the choices which can be made. Is the generation of the questions not a personal journey to the topic? Does the interview not involve personal choices about what is significant, which should be further explored? Are field notes not best seen as “scenes” and therefore narratives of a school’s life? These

kinds of questions re-orient the investigation and the writing-up into new directions. Richardson (1994) sees writing as a post-modern vehicle of inquiry, permitting change, revision in a shifting recreation of self, sites and subjects. Styles of writing, alternative formats and interpretative devices mentioned earlier are proposed. An example of her stories might be my **“Story Events”** of the following chapters; an example of her “narrative of the self” might be my **“Autobiography of the Project”** which tells the writer’s own story; examples of metaphors can also be found. More experimentally, she encourages drama, poetry and visual representations.

5.2. IN THE FIELD: JAMAICAN STORY EVENTS

The benign view of the researcher, prevalent in Jamaica, facilitated access to field insights at many different levels. The following set of story events will describe and illuminate the social and interactional context in which the selected Kingston school (D[J]) operates, and will also help to clarify the views and perspectives of the teachers. These events took place in a small ante room, for the vice-principals, where teachers come and go; where they sign on before beginning their shift. Colleagues who might otherwise only see each other in distant staff meetings pass through and catch up on the news. It is very much a place of respite, similar to any other “clocking-on” space for workers. Visitors to the school who prefer not to climb the stairs to the staff room often come to that room, as one of the few common spaces, with a chair where you can sit, knowing you will eventually meet whomsoever you came to see. The story events described highlight such matters as the economic background of the parents, which leads to migration if you are lucky or some small-scale hustling if you are not; the relationship between teachers, students and parents; and amongst students themselves: a society, which, in its immediate surroundings and its wider culture, has a violent and pervasive influence on the school.

The Incident Room

Event 1

A former student of the school in her early twenties comes back to visit her teachers. She is the daughter of a fisherman who used to sell fish not very far from the school. She now lives in Brooklyn, USA, where she has her own business. She reminisces about the times she spent outside the Principal's office. She asks a lot of questions in the manner of old girls about teachers who have left or retired. She gives the Vice Principal US\$40 and is hugged to death for her generosity.

Event 2

A parent comes in. She is of Indian descent, and looking old and haggard with a number of teeth missing. She is concerned about her daughter who has lost the gold earrings she was told not to wear to school. She conveys this indirectly, scolding the daughter, telling her she should not have worn them past the gate. All of this is done in front of the teachers in the Incident Room. As she leaves, she shows us the stoneware American eagle wall decoration she has made, sprayed with ducor paint in red, orange and purple. To us, in the Incident Room, she will sell it gladly for only J\$150 (3.50 pounds).

Event 3

News filters by midday of a fight on the compound. One boy has slapped a girl who has sent for her big brother and his gang. However, the boy also had reinforcements in the school. A fight with knives ensues but it is emphasised to me that it is the girl's family posse members who are cut. As I leave the school at 4:30 p.m., before the afternoon shift ends, there is a policeman, from the specially trained anti-crime task force, with an M16 rifle, who simply moves very politely from the doorway to let me pass.

Event 4

The discussions about the Christmas party began in the Incident Room. There is speculation about their "Pixie" presents. They explain that weeks before, the names of teachers go into a box and each teacher picks a colleague without

revealing whom they had chosen. Gifts are sent secretly and all is not revealed until the Christmas party. At the party itself, I spend some time at the head table with the Chair of the School Board, an entrepreneur of Chinese extraction who has made himself responsible for providing a Christmas dinner for the staff. They are very grateful because before Mr C-----, they had no dinner of consequence.

When sitting later with another group of teachers, I see the Principal dancing to a waltz being sung by an old boy and his band. Her partner is one of her young male teachers and there is general ribaldry all round, from the young male teachers, and there are gun salutes of the hand when the music changes to a more upbeat dance hall song. The Pixie presentation of gifts and revelations about the identity of the givers lead to much laughter and feigned expressions of surprise.

Event 5

The conversation begins after I enter, with remarks about the length of time since I had been in the school and enquiries about the last time I had been to “the country,” that is my home district. It is noticed that I had just had another haircut. The two senior teachers reminisce about the 60s and 70s, when they had short hair and very short skirts. This leads them to the earlier status of teachers:

Those days you could recognise a teacher by the way she spoke. There was none of these liberal ways, Teachers had to wear long sleeves.

Surprisingly, after all the agreement about the changing times, one concludes without contradiction:

Anyhow, I’m glad to see how we’ve changed...we’ve become much more developed.

The discussion which follows about the teaching and use of English has to be understood in the light of the social conditions and the psychology of the agents, hinted at in these vignettes of life in a downtown Jamaican school. Goulbourne (1988) refers to the complex composition of class divisions in terms of political economy: a society which has variously been described as an agrarian economy and a plantation society, but one which has historical links with Britain, although it

exists in close proximity to the United States of America. Migration, we know, has been one way in which poor Jamaicans, in rural and urban areas, have managed to escape delimiting circumstance, with always the hope of returning with money in hand (Foner, 1979; Senior, 1991). Those who do return can exhibit a brief and showy wealth, but this is usually only relative to the great poverty which surrounds them. The price paid for these meagre funds is very high. Migration has had an extremely deleterious effect on families and communities denuded of those most enterprising amongst them. Families are irrevocably torn apart, made dysfunctional and pathological by early and long separation. With the infusion of drugs and political violence, a debilitating scenario is set for urban disintegration.

The many in these poor communities who cannot emigrate will work in semi-employment (Levy, 1996). They hustle a living in higglering which involves some form of buying and selling. The easiest and cheapest venture to set up would be goods such as cigarettes and chewing gum on the side of the road. A more traditional form of higglering would be fruits and vegetables in the market. The most sophisticated form involves trips to Curacao, St Maarten or Miami for cheap clothes, usually made in China or India. Apart from higglering, there is the small return from cottage industry crafts such as dressmaking or woodworking. Others simply rely on the remittance cheques from relatives abroad in the UK, Canada and America. In this economically depressed situation, school is seen as an opportunity, a possible way out (E. Miller, 1990). And in the urban environment, where violence is endemic, school also provides a relatively safe haven away from the threat of guns, gangs and retribution from older relatives. Such a belief fosters a large part of a consent to schooling.

As was the case historically, the teachers are well-respected, even though they are badly paid and known to be the poorest professionals (Whyte, 1990). The community looks to them to mould their young people for the future. Perhaps, because of these circumstances, the teachers form a cohesive group of supportive workers who operate in a spirit of camaraderie. There are simple and traditional

pleasures which are juxtaposed against a tough and rugged background. Life is difficult, but the spirit of the exemplary life pervades. It is a continuation of the ethos of the elementary school, where part of the teacher's role was to serve her community and to strive to uplift its members, as this elderly school teacher notes:

I went on to teaching from the day I entered the schoolroom. I don't think I've left up to now. I still have the children around....teaching. (Teacher B)

5.3. ANALYSING THE INTERVIEWS: A COMMENTARY ON THE FINDINGS

The background orienting question revealed that the teachers had a variety of reasons for entering teaching, but common to the majority of them was a strong sense of family support. In several cases, parents or other members of the family were teachers and guided them towards the profession. In other cases, the respondents spoke of aspirations from childhood, seeing the role as an important one from an early age or fulfilling a desire to work with young people. In these latter cases, the teachers come from humble backgrounds of small farming, domestic work and carpentry. For these teachers going on to teachers college was a major aspiration:

I didn't think about the University when thinking about teaching. (Teacher S).

In many respects, the teachers are similar to those who began their teaching careers at the other end of the century. They have maintained their class position, viewing teaching as a career of substance, and receiving a lot of support from their community. The difference is that now these teachers are in the secondary system rather than the elementary school. This supports E. Miller's (1990) report of the changing composition of Jamaican high schools and their teachers. The Manley initiative of opening up of the high schools to poorer children has also meant that secondary school teaching has lost its status as a profession for the more middle-class person. It has also become feminised as women teachers now form a majority of the teaching population. Additionally, training college, rather than university graduates, now dominate.

5.3.1 The aim of English teaching

As indicated in Chapter Three, I will first examine the issues that emerge from the teachers' explicit statements, the implications of those and then go further to explore the implicit assumptions and beliefs which escape through the evocative devices they use. The response to the first question was very revealing as can be seen in Table 1:

Table 1: The aims of English teaching in Jamaica.

The question was: What do you think is the aim of English teaching	
Responses	Frequency
to pass examinations	11
to gain an international language	14
to learn a functional language "for life"	15

One aspect which is immediately noticeable, in this narrow set of responses from the teachers, is the strongly instrumental aim of English teaching. And this instrumentalism is made even more noticeable when we see the consistency of their responses in these narrow range of concerns.

English as a necessary burden

The exam orientation of the curriculum was recognised, even by those not directly involved in teaching for the Caribbean Examinations Council:

The children need to know English because it is the universal language. Most children don't use English with their peers but they need English for exams if they want to leave Jamaica. (TJ)

We teach English first and foremost so that the children can pass exams. We have to teach our people the universal language. We have been a colony of the British. The communication aspect comes after because we can

communicate without English (TE)

There was matter-of-fact appraisal of the exam-orientation by the teachers, but this emphasis was never fully supported, because it encouraged streaming, narrowed the options of the syllabus at Grade 10 (Year 4) and forced prescriptions about correctness in English. The images that the teachers used convey a sense of professionals unable to shed major constraints, which were never explicitly rejected. They talked of being “hampered” and “bogged down” by “the pressure” of the “constraints” and “limits” on what they taught. The consequence was that teaching meant “garnering them into this straight-laced English”. Before the examinations, they could be a bit more “flexible”, but as the hour approached, the students had to be “straightened up”. It is not a very big step to go on to refer to English teaching as a “prison” and “a burden”.

One of the few times that the CXC demands were supported was when it was seen to emphasise language development for life:

It seems to enfold the entire cross-section of areas they need to pick up, especially in later life. It's exam-oriented but built into the system you can still see areas that they need to know....the functional, the real world that we have out there.
(TL)

The sense of the “out there” encourages the perception of English as a commodity that you take from the class to the world outside the class:

For example, when they get into the workplace, they should be able to transfer and apply....sometimes I wonder....and they ask me this too....why do I have to learn how to summarise....when they speak to people out there, some of the criticism is...they can't transfer some of the information from a set of statistics.....things like that. I think that the CXC syllabus is geared towards developing an all-round...more than when I did English....they carry over every aspect of life with subjects from everyday life....reading between the lines.
(TH)

There is a strong related concern with a language curriculum which is:

a preparation for the total person, to take into whatever

sphere they're going to. (TK)

English is a tangible object to be carried out of the classroom:

to equip the student to handle him or herself in the world.
(TQ)

Here, however, there is a suggestion of a preparatory process going on, and so I have used the word "language" rather than English to describe the curriculum, because it can be argued that these teachers seem to be saying something about language which is coloured, but not totally obscured, by their view of English. The subject they teach is an important language but is not the only language.

English as a commodity in the market place

The merchandising metaphor of true instrumentalism is revealed when the teachers reflect on the value of English. The overwhelming belief is that English has no value except as an international language for business, and that it is not necessary for real communication:

Most children don't use English with their peers but they do need English for exams and if they want to leave Jamaica. The Jamaican language is only spoken in Jamaica. Officially we need another language, we need English (TJ)

English is just as important as Spanish, more so because it is the language of trade, exchange of programmes, information.
(TE)

When we think of the places where English is used...much more used than other languages. It's the language of business, the language of diplomats...the language of writing examinations. (TK)

[I].help students become more aware of the language in this age of rapid migration and integration of areas, it is a necessity to help in communication. Our language really is the Creole, patois. (TU)

The imagery clearly supports their expressed view of the role and purpose of English, referring to "the business of grammar", being necessary to "equip" students with "my tool" for "the world of work", "out there".

The emphasis on the utilitarian view of English has been discussed elsewhere (Bryan, 1994), where I have argued that these views are entirely realistic, seeing English as necessary if not intrinsically valuable. We might here seek to probe a little further and remind ourselves of the economic history of Jamaica, of its long tradition of migration, and its emphasis on education as a form of self-improvement. The teachers clearly feel that competence in the English language gives access to a wider world, and this is resonant with many other small island states' preoccupation with internationalism and migration. There is no doubt that these views are widely held, but Tollefson (1991) questions whether they are useful and in the long run beneficial as a rationale for the continued dominance of English. He would challenge the almost cynical expression of "...access to education, access to knowledge...access to the money market". However, these are very important words in this view of English, because they neatly encapsulate the crudest form of the pricing of English: doing well in English seems to mean becoming more competitive on the job market; and better jobs mean more money.

The aim of English teaching is, therefore, very narrow for these Jamaican teachers, focusing as it does on its value as a form of currency to an expected better life. Bearing in mind such a perspective, the question is not just what is, but also what people think is possible. We would have to ask: does English, in a small island state, a Creole-speaking environment, actually give that access? If it does, in what way? And do any other structures, such as class, support such access?

The beginning of an answer can be found in the historical inquiry, where English was invariably seen as an instrument necessary for the improvement of Jamaicans. In the elementary schools it formed the basis for assessment, as inspectors were required to give English a very heavy weighting, up to 42% of the marks from a school's tests. The system of payment by results was instituted in 1867, five years after its British counterpart. Its operation meant that a subject like English was literally a commodity, with achievement translated into money for the school: each mark gained was a pound for the school. The schools deemed worthy of aid

would be placed in the third, second or first class, based on the marks earned for each subject. To be placed in the first class, children had to score at least two thirds of the total marks for Reading and Writing from Dictation. The message was clear: success in English carried high material rewards for the school. The same ideological orientation to English was carried to the training colleges which reproduced much of the elementary school curriculum:

We had grammar, we had composition, we had letter writing,.....We had a special English book, that's Nesfield grammar that we used to use in school and we had to learn it from cover to cover...grammar to kill! (Teacher B)

Historically then, teachers were encouraged to see English as important, and it is the instrumentalist aspect that remains today. The question of whether the belief in English, for improvement and social mobility, was well-placed remains, because we can see from the inspector's and other official reports that entry into privileged occupations depended more on a class-derived secondary school education than performance in English: class and colour were primary factors in access. This teacher perhaps has a suspicion:

It seems the purpose is to get children to function in a formal way for the job market...especially those from the lower streams.....they would like to believe that they're not streaming but they really are. At the top level it's to pass exams.....That's my philosophy. (TF)

Jamaica's bilingualism

Linked with the emphasis on English as the international language, which is taught for that reason, is the idea of Jamaica as a bilingual country:

Basically, I think our country is a two-language country. We have the Creole and we have the Standard English. They know the Creole only...they're not able to speak well using the Jamaican Standard English and therefore should they go anywhere where they need to use it, they will be at a disadvantage. The aim is to prepare them, so that should the need arise for them to use it, they'll be comfortable to use it in any situation. They're able to use the Creole when the situation calls for it, so they'll be able to use the Standard when the situation calls for it. (TS)

In making this statement this teacher is showing that DeCamp's (1971b) prediction has not come true, with a resultant merger of Creole and English. There is less emphasis on the notion of the continuum. Rather, they allude to distinct grammars having emerged and the clear fact that Jamaica is a bilingual country provides a distinctive rationale for learning English:

But we don't live in a vacuum! What happen if you go to Cayman? What happen if you go to Barbados? (TH)

It's not our first language...and to be understood...in this whole global economy...(TV)

Some teachers offered a more tentative understanding of the dual-language environment:

We teach English to make the children more aware that there's another side to it, not just the way they speak.....an international side to it. I've found that since I've been here they don't know that...so my aim is to help them to become more conversant with it...to let them know that outside of where they live, there's another language. (TR)

It's (English), supposed to be native but because of the dialect...everybody seems to be speaking it. They tend to speak the patois more than the English we want them to talk. (TG)

Sometimes a child is a little shy and slow and they can't speak what you would call English...we allow them to talk and ask somebody to translate...or...you've said it this way, could you say it another way. It's (JC) their first language because it's the language they use at home and English to them is a foreign language. (TK)

Again the sense of English as a tangible object is strong, as its acquisition is about "handling both" and "not hiding from that". The sense of the duality is so strong that English can be referred to as something which can be "shed like a skin"....."a special coat". This seems like the defining metaphor in explaining the relationship between the teachers and English. It further distances the teachers from English, so that that language is nothing more than a useful commodity: English is separate and apart from them, a removable thing like a coat or dead skin. They are rejecting the concept of English being the language in which they define themselves and their identity. Here is the beginning of an understanding of the

ambivalence of the Response Statements to be discussed later.

Nevertheless, the attitude towards the dualism of the language situation seems to lack any pejorative overtone, with a quite uncritical recognition of differences and contrasts and the need to move between the two languages:

They say you practise what you preach...something like that. They're not accustomed to it. It's not like us who have learnt it, we can switch readily. I'm very good at writing it but I enjoy talking the Creole. They don't know how to speak it and they can't write it....I think the Creole is our mother tongue you know... I really do. (TU)

I'm a Creole speaker but I can divert. When I came here first I spoke perfect SE but over the years, I have had to divert. You can't be too perfect. They don't understand you. (TR)

Over fifty percent of the stories and illustrations found in these interviews relate to code switching. These narratives paint pictures of teachers springing to life, demonstrating real life situations in the classroom when they move into Creole:

They hear the teacher speaking it...It makes them more alert ...motivates them. (TJ)

Another tale from the classroom might not give such an enabling view:

When I'm teaching my class I say OK let us understand one thing, you must see the class from the perspective of an English student -patois is OK for the local situation, for when you're at home, a social occasion, social interaction informal. English is for interactional communication.....for the formal situation.(TE)

On the whole, however, the teachers are quite proud of their ability to code switch. It is a teaching strategy, but something that they see as necessary, which they enjoy doing and feel can motivate and enable students. Such a facility demonstrates the ability to read the situation and construct the appropriate grammar from the linguistic choices available. For LePage and Tabouret-Keller (1985) and Carrington (1992) they are sociolinguistic choices, but there are also political consequences and possibilities flowing from the active reconstruction and selection of the desired communication.

The attention in the teachers' stories to bilingualism demonstrates what they see as the urgent and continuing task of separating the two languages, but their anecdotes cannot prevent the tone of the mother tongue seeping out from the narratives:

One Grade 9 student wrote a business letter about the goat coming to her yard and she had planted nuf nuf vegetables and the goat mash down, nothing was left...everything mash down to the soil. It will take plenty, plenty work for a garden to grow back again. The content was there but she had not used standard English. (TF)

I would say to them if they're writing for a job...how would you write it? `Mi want a job. Gi mi a job?' There's certain situations...you would have to explain to them....you would probably go to the market and say `sel mi wan poun a dis... gi mi wan poun a dat'.....you would be understood and get through your business and in other situations that would not be the acceptable thing. It's all well and good to know that, to speak that but in other situations it would not be acceptable. You couldn't write that...in terms of the exam. We are exam-oriented. You can't run away from that. (TH)

Yet these two examples essentially amplify and exaggerate the problem, which perhaps stems from how the teachers have conceptualised it. Usually the error problems described do not refer to such huge differences in the tone of the utterances but have more to do with precise language structures used in writing and likely to be evaluated by national assessment:

..they're writing about the past with no 'ed.'. (TH)

Another teacher recognised the importance of not using "language as a barrier": allowing every voice to make itself heard; encouraging the shy to speak, and she linked this with her own personal experience:

I have a friend who always uses the English and when we get together and start to talk, we do not use the English so much and when he starts to talk we clam up, because they feel that he's above them....if I say something it'll register and they'll talk to me but if he says something it is as if nobody wants to attack what he says. (TL)

It is a recognition that the problems carry through outside the school, and that insights can be gained from the personal experiences of those who "clam up"

when confronted with “the English”. These are not new types of behaviour, as seen in the accounts of the elderly school teachers:

Some kept quiet, others would use it; what really happened is that’s the free way of expressing yourself so if you’re told not to do it, you draw in your shell...kind of hide in between, under the wings of others, you’re talking and I don’t talk.
(Teacher B)

These are invaluable insights for the teacher to bring to bear on her teaching of English in a Creole-speaking environment.

The nature and extent of these sometimes hesitant pronouncements on the nature of Creole and English will be more fully discussed later in the Response Statements, but what they provide at this point is the rationale for the pragmatic and limited aims that the teachers had for the English curriculum.

5.3.2 Teaching Methods

There is a certain logic and coherence to the teaching strategies favoured by the Jamaican teachers, as the purpose of learning English is seen as extremely functional and utilitarian.

Table 2: The methods used to teach English in Jamaica.

The question was : What methods do you use in your teaching?	
Responses	Frequency
contrasts	6
language awareness	3
correcting interference	7
ESL methodology	6
vocabulary building	1
communicative approaches	12

grammar	3
Creole use in the classroom	9
child centredness	11

As Jamaican children operate in a dual language environment, the teaching methods favoured are those most closely associated with English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching. In some cases, the teachers are explicit in their ESL orientation without spelling out the methods:

I think you should start teaching English the way they teach a foreign language, like Spanish.(TJ)

It's their first language and so sometimes I take a second language approach. Teaching Spanish has helped me to teach English. (TH)

There are certain areas where you have to use the technique of the foreign language, like teaching Spanish...(TK)

When, however, the methods are themselves made explicit, there is an overwhelming emphasis on the communicative approaches which support the English-for-life philosophy. This communicative approach allows the teacher to be more child-focused in considering the kinds of real-life situations the students might be interested in, and it also affords the teacher opportunities to practise the spoken English she would never otherwise get from the children:

Yes if you have the majority of your people speaking a dialect which runs the gamut of the language continuum, you cannot teach it as a first language. You need to take on board the.....like to see the students as independent learners, doing things for themselves. Then we have a lot of discussions. I run a lot of talk show type discussions, panel discussions. They do a lot of dramatic presentations, as well as group work, especially the remedial, well what is called remedial group. They're given a task and encouraged to be creative and natural. I use TV...get them to investigate and evaluate. (TF)

Consequently, role play, skits, panel discussions, open discussions and debates

figure extensively in the repertoire of the Jamaican teachers interviewed. Other more genuinely communicative operations, such as research and group work, are also advocated as effective teaching methods.

The reference, though, to teaching “concrete things” accords with the materialist preoccupation of the views on the purpose of teaching English:

Some writing, drawing. Some of them working on a scrap book ... communication areas...telegrams...filling in forms...writing letters...making postcards...research. I’m really enjoying it. (TS)

The objectifying of English is carried through in the suggestions for teaching, where, it is said, teachers should “give them situations” or consider “giving them personal research” so that they can “cover the syllabus” when they “do” English. In short “the children are so involved in Creole already that we need to carry over the English forcefully to them”. English is a tangible entity to be placed before the children. However, because the language is alien, the content is expected to be Caribbean:

In class, teacher speaks standard and expects children to speak Standard. Instructions are in Standard and so on...when you give them the dialect, I think they enjoy it. They hear the teacher speaking it. It makes them more alert...motivates them. Even those who sit at the back and say they dislike poetry. The moment they hear that it’s Louise Bennett, they say “Yeh, it’s dialect. Using dialect can be part of a the second language approach. Definitely of course. (TJ)

I don’t believe in teaching things that are not part of our culture.....the British culture, talking about snow etc., things that our students are not familiar with. I believe in using things that they see every day, that they use every day e.g. talk about the market, the bus situation out there.....things like that they have to deal with.....And based on what they know, correct any mistakes.....verb agreement, tense...things like that.....also increase their vocabulary. (TS)

Significantly, very few teachers mentioned the teaching of grammar and those who did either mentioned it obliquely, as in the reference above, or linked it with such

concepts as “the mechanics” “the basics” and “dotting every `t” and the clutch of clichés universally associated with little more than teaching the parts of speech. Only three teachers talked about grammar specifically as a focus of their teaching, and only one was explicit and adamant about the seriousness of its loss from the English curriculum:

English and Creole should be taught alongside each other. Put both sentences and look at alternatives. Our language, English, our first language should be taught, in terms of phonology, syntax whatever. Teach the grammar of English e.g. subject-verb agreement and knowledge. By lecturing or getting students involved through group work and individual work, produce paragraphs and structure them grammatically. (TW)

But even here there is a recognition of Creole as the two need to be taught alongside each other, in the mode of language awareness approaches, and this is in spite of the insistence, which seems quite personal, for English to be regarded as the mother tongue.

The following also hints at language awareness, not as a fully worked out method but as a way of motivating students:

When we read the literature like Miguel Street, I get a Trini friend to read a chapter to see the difference. The same with the way they speak in Westmoreland...Its different parts...I fit all this in around the syllabus which just says I must cover certain skills. (TF)

Of the teachers who did talk about grammar in their teaching, there seemed to be an emphasis on the communicative context which needed to be constructed so that appropriate structures might be encouraged. This lack of emphasis on grammar is important, because the original impetus for this project was to explore further the teachers' views on this aspect of their teaching. From these interviews it seems that their nonchalant attitude towards the topic denoted a lack of interest in it - certainly it did not hold the totemic position it might be said to have assumed in some English schools. Additionally, grammar was linked with a foreign language

methodology:

Because like sometimes I teach a verb how I teach a Spanish verb. They never saw any connection between “is” and “are” and “am”. In English they don’t teach...at least, I was not taught it like that...they don’t see that the verb is “to be”...it’s like “to run”...So as most of them have done Spanish to grade 9 and we go down “hablar” and they say “Oh...it’s ‘to be’, ‘I am’, ‘you are’ and so on.(TH)

This awareness of other languages, however, might primarily be a belief that Creole interferes with the learning of English or more aptly “spill[s] over” into English. This seems to be what is being said in this first example following, and even if the narrative loses itself in the explanation of the error, the respondent uses a wonderful analogy, in a style common to Jamaican teachers, to inform the children of how far they have to go to “cover the syllabus”:

..they’re writing something in the past tense without ‘ed.’. That’s the interference from Creole ‘Last week me did come’. The JC doesn’t carry the ‘ed.’ of the past and so that is why they write that way...I give them the analogy that we should be putting the icing on the cake, we still rubbing sugar and butter. (TH)

The second teacher has the same explanation but also a grudging admiration for what infuses the text:

It will spill over...you see that on the writing...the writing style...it influences the teaching. The children will say “Mis, im bruk im lip”...it rings true...when you try and translate...it breaks the whole excitement.(TP)

The teachers, here, are suggesting some exciting teaching methods:

The literature curriculum now, the books that are being used....again they are Caribbean based so it offers to them the kind of idea that they ought to understand the culture. They can relate to the situation. They can identify....create an identity and so a bridge is created for them. (TK)

I also believe in giving them personal research where they go out and do things on their own. My method of marking is also a little different from how the Reverend might do it because I get the students to mark their own work. Exchange...you might have missed some of my errors...they get some negative criticism. Do not get upset. Real life includes

negative things. I mark the final draft. So you don't get me going through putting the red ink everywhere. You're helping yourself. (TL)

These comments, with the addition of the use of portfolios, might be characterised as part of the child-centred approach to the teaching of English. They suggest that even though the language concerns were to the fore in the discussion of methods, the teachers were also concerned about the personal growth of the learners. Some of these examples show the influence of restructured training college and University programmes, and are some distance from the earlier assumption of a focus on grammar.

5.3.3. Influences on Teaching

Although a knowledge question, it was meant also to trap some of the teachers' underlying attitude to Government institutions, and the possible influence of these organisations on the teachers' practice. A follow-up question usually asked for any other influences on their teaching. The responses give some insight into the way in which forces outside of the classroom might affect the discourse within.

Table 3: The influences on Jamaican teachers of English

The questions were: What do you know of the Ministry's position? What other influences are there/have there been on your teaching?	
Responses	Frequency
Ministry of Education (positive, negative & neutral)	9 (neutral) 1 (positive)
national curriculum philosophy (ROSE Project)	9
teacher education	15
society (parents, media, academics)	3 (academics); 1 (drama-in-ed. group); 1 (common entrance exams); 1 (writers); 1 society); 1 (DJs); 1 (physical conditions)

Although there were few positive references to the work of the Ministry of Education, there were no negative responses to them either. The one relatively positive comment was made by a teacher who had the Ministry's representative, the education officer, in mind:

Based on the Principal's stance and the education officer's....They would believe in planning and they believe in it being student-centred....involved...not just the chalk and talk. (TK)

One rather blasé comment sounds universally familiar:

We've had the seminars upon seminars...all over the place. It adds up to the same thing....Communication skills and writing creatively and passing exams. (TP)

There is the sense of old ideas being recycled as new. On the whole, however, the teachers took a neutral position when expressing what they understood to be the philosophy of the Ministry of Education. They seemed unsure about whether the Ministry had any position on the teaching of English. There was even some confusion about whether the Reform of Secondary Education (ROSE) programme was part of the Ministry. There was clearly a lack of information, but a typical understanding might be this:

Eventually I think everybody will be on it but right now I think they are starting with some pilot schools. I don't know much about it. I got a copy of the curriculum for English. A group of women came to speak with us about some things, about the administrative side of it. They left the booklists for us to go through and see what the programme is, but they didn't go in depth. They came from the Ministry just to introduce the programme to us. (TH)

This response gives a good idea of how the Ministry works, and it is supported by the other teachers. There is unevenness in the contact with the government, depending on the stage of their involvement with the new curriculum, and the majority of this group of teachers had had little direct contact.

Although tentative in their knowledge of the ROSE programme, their conceptualisation of its philosophy had some accuracy. They used the kind of terminology that would describe the functional approach to language teaching

espoused by ROSE. They spoke of “communication” and “natural experiences”; “your experience along with the school life”; the use of “discussion” and “free expression”; and the emphasis on “mixed ability”. They noted the “downplaying” of literature; the concern that “teacher do less talking”; and the move towards “less of the grammar”, because children “have to go and find out”. In summary the teachers felt that what they knew of ROSE suggested that it was a more “organised, systematic approach”. There are references to culture:

They try and associate the language with our actual experiences, instead of the England English, Jamaican experiences...so instead of talking about snow, we talk about the Rasta man and his culture.....but most of it assumes that the children are already readers, which is far from it in the secondary system. (TU)

The collection of descriptions expresses much of what was outlined by ROSE policy statements but it is significant to note that this collection comes from many teachers and no one teacher showed or said that she fully understood what the new secondary curriculum was supposed to be about. There might be many reasons for this lack of a total picture, because the teachers responses did not indicate a simple lack of interest, but it seemed to be that they were waiting until such time as it was necessary to make contact. Certainly it was not a part of the education system which dominated their lives, and so it might be correct to say that the influence of the Ministry was benign rather than neutral. It will be necessary to return later to the lack of impact of Government policy on the consciousness of these teachers.

More significant in the lives of these teachers was their experience at training college. The historical inquiry of Chapter Four highlighted the role of the training colleges in the formation of teachers. This is supported by the fact that all, except three of the teachers interviewed individually, spoke of the influence of these institutions on their thinking and the way they taught.

They think the Creole should be taught alongside the standard and the children should be encouraged...I don't see anything wrong with it. (TG)

It was really good. The experience was very good as I lived on Campus. I would go home on Saturdays and go back on Mondays, and it was mostly girls. Miss M----- was the Principal then and she thought of us as being ladies. That had some influence on us. We were called “the Ladies of Shortwood. (TM)

The biographical interviews reveal more of how these institutions and significant individuals within them influenced the teachers. The stories are of an institution which could “make you or break you” which “drew a lot out of me”, “brought out something in me I didn’t know existed”. Yet, like the elderly schoolteachers who attended college during the inter-war years, these teachers were “sheltered” and remained highly motivated. They spoke of college trainers who were highly influential in their lives:

Mr S----- [the Principal] not only encourages you, but forces you to do your best; one thing he will tell you is that he doesn’t expect Cs; Cs are not acceptable and when you are going into exams you will hear him saying: ‘Oh, let this cup of failure pass from me’ and when exams are over you know you had better do your best because Mr S----- is coming out to ask why you got a C in a subject area and if you got 5 As and 2 Bs, he will ask you why you got Bs and didn’t continue with the As. You were motivated to work and when you did well you were praised, so it was like a family, not so much a school with teachers, but we were together like a family. (TS)

Another teacher was more ambivalent about the experience. Her story begins by showing some resentment about her treatment:

The high school from which I was coming, I was treated as a mature person; at ----- the lecturers some of them tend to want to treat you like kids. (TN)

But she rationalises the treatment:

And I guess maybe we were putting up a front as if we were too bright...it was all about values and attitudes and about the curriculum. (TN)

To end with an endorsement of the Principal:

He was very near to us and very warm. (TN)

The responses here are pivotal in understanding the nature of the Jamaican

schoolteacher and her interaction with children in the classroom. As Turner (1987) indicated in his discussion of Jamaican training colleges, the experience of those institutions is life-forming, but more than that the responses show a culture where ideological positions about the nature of schooling, the status of teachers and the place of achievement are routinely constructed. There is a sense of well-being, camaraderie and status in the job of the teacher, of whom much is expected, and even when the tutelage is challenged, it is a momentary action, as the trainee re-submits to the kind of guidance given:

He was very near to us and very warm. (TN)

It was the same kind of bonding spoken of by the elderly schoolteachers, attending these same colleges and it is the orientation to schooling which the teachers take to the classroom. It was also reproduced unselfconsciously in the selected school and reported in the **Story Events**. The kind of consensus prefigured here will be returned to as a theme emerging from the data.

The other influences mentioned by the teachers are wide ranging and could be divided into what might be positive or negative influences. The positive influences would be academics at the University who have contributed to the debate on language; and drama-in-education specialists who have presented new ideas for teaching. The negative influences would be the common entrance examination, which has stunted the children's writing abilities; and the society itself, which is making its usual demands of teachers:

Generally, society tends to complain about what goes on in school. They tend to compare us with Barbados. (TW)

...especially when the CXC results come out...I don't take any notice of them because speaking for myself, I do my best.....and some of the children are hard to learn. (TG)

However, society has a more pervasive effect, especially in the selected school:

The role of the teacher has been eroded by new models like the DJs. A lot of young people follow them. It's easier to follow them than what the teacher is saying. Perhaps if we could DJ in English we would have more success. ...Children's focus is totally different nowadays. Money takes

first place. They can sell drugs, DJ; it's a struggle indeed.
(TW)

These comments speak to the changing position of the teacher who was earlier exhibited as the bulwark of her community:

It was a wonderful thing to be a teacher. In those days a teacher was a big man. (Teacher D)

Alternative ways of operating are being forcefully put forward, and this relates as well to alternative examples and models of language behaviour: the DJ needs no English to achieve a substantial measure of improvement, and so the teacher has to compete for relevance. The teacher, and here the reference is to the teacher of English, is being challenged:

Society has affected us as teachers because getting students to write composition and such.....things that are happening around them.....the guns and.....is affecting their writing. That's all they see. That's all they know so they put it on paper....the gun shot and the kicks and the thomp...the rough aspects of life. It will spill over...you see that on the writing...writing style....it influences the teaching. (TP)

It is significant that parents are hardly mentioned here, as having an influence on the way the teachers taught, suggesting that the teachers do not feel that their work is being challenged from this quarter.

5.3.4. Creole in the School: Policy Restraints

Is there any policy direction in your school about the use of Creole?

Have any policy constraints been put on you to prevent you teaching in the way you want to teach?

These two questions were rarely used, because often the responses to the question on teaching methods provided answers to the question on policy constraints, especially in the London setting. Certainly, the Creole in the classroom issue was

more relevant to the Jamaican setting. As the Literature Review revealed, the place of Creole in the classroom is a hotly debated topic. The teachers recognised the students' attachment to their mother tongue but only offered qualified approval for its use in the classroom. In particular, they approved of its use in creative writing and literature:

The children will say 'Mis, im bruk im lip'....it rings true....when you try and translate, it breaks the whole excitement. These children have the knack to write vividly, dialect pieces. (TP)

However, they were concerned that too liberal a use would unintentionally affect the children's writing:

I tell them that in the short story...if they're writing like a little diary or conversation they can put it in. But I don't think they're at the level where they can differentiate....they can't handle that yet. (TH)

The worry is always about what will happen in the examinations if they "snap out again".

In the responses, the teachers are displaying their own preoccupations about the problem of English when it came too closely in contact with Creole. Yet, most embraced the use of Creole poetry, song, dance and story in the classroom content, to motivate the students. They are indicating the fine line in the pedagogy between second language approaches and the subtle differences in strategies they see needed for teaching English in a Creole-speaking environment.

5.4. ANALYSING THE RESPONSE STATEMENTS: THE LANGUAGE ENVIRONMENT

It is the preoccupation with the language environment that became very clear to me after a few interviews, which led to the development of the Response Statements. The Statements sought to draw from the teachers some of their perceptions of the language environment. Central to such a consideration is the teachers' attitude

towards Jamaican Creole, and something of this is revealed through the Response Statements and the language history/biographical interviews. The Statements mentioned above were recorded quite early on in the interview schedule, and the language interviews were conducted near the end of the period of the investigation.

The clearest thing to say about the teachers' attitude to JC, as is no doubt becoming clear already, is that it is contradictory, conflicting and shared by many of them. Without prompting they will talk about it in terms of love, wonder and occasionally embarrassment. Before considering that statement in more detail, it is worth noting that the majority of teachers agreed with all the Response Statements, even though two of them, such as 2 and 6, were clearly contradictory. This is not to indicate some lack of care or thought, but more accurately the contested nature of their identification with JC. It is thus possible to see Creole as your first language and still acknowledge that others might look down on those who spoke it. There is ambivalence about a language which is owned by the individual, but disowned by the social structures which control and decide the official discourse. This makes for equivocation, so it was noticeable that some teachers laughed, sometimes nervously, when questioned about their mother tongue.

5.4.1. Response Statement 1J: JC as a violent language

1J. "People who speak English tend to be less violent.... It somehow injects a level of civility in the individual. Patois is very descriptive, very direct and so tends to bring out the emotions more forcefully". (RS1J)

This was the Statement that caused the most consternation. The argument had been well established by an early respondent:

Patois is very descriptive, very direct. It tends to bring out the emotions very forcefully. This might be the chemistry of the individual. Patois developed as a means of combating the slavery system. It was born out of that forceful history and still carries that thrust. English is not as forceful for

expressing yourself. (TE)

They were more or less equally divided about this large claim:

....I do agree that people who speak English tend to be less violent. You see, I am of the impression that people who can express themselves in language they tend to be more forceful....there's this decorum about people who are good at English. They can tell you things that cut without being abusive. They're doing it in a subtler way. (TU)

But those who expressed disagreement did so in very strong terms relating to wider factors of socialisation:

In my forefathers' day, there were people who never spoke a scrap of English and they were very civil. It has to do with how one has been acculturised. It has nothing to do with the language...This is very shallow. (TV)

Another teacher, however, who agreed with the Statement, felt that teachers of English themselves were accorded more civility because of the way they spoke. She was clearly accepting Fairclough's (1989) notion of "the power behind discourse" accruing to its user, as part of a set of social practices, seemingly contradicting the earlier assertion of English as necessary solely for international communication. Another teacher makes a similar point as she ruminates on the meaning of the difference, but she also explains very clearly how linguistic prejudices might lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy:

Less violent yes....ahmm..not necessarily. It's just that they're probably better able to express themselves. People who don't know what to say will act...but to be less violent...I don't think so. What happens is that the dialect is associated with illiterate people and that's why some people don't want to use it...if you teach English, you belong to a cultured group...once you know the English. It means you have been schooled so you have more information, some more behaviour training so you can deal better with human beings. And another thing again, some people can also speak English and speak the dialect just as well. If you're going to separate and say these people only know dialect, it means they were not schooled so their behaviour pattern reflects the ugly part of life. They don't know how to say sorry, excuse me, whatever.....the first thing they do is to kick and box.....fighting for survival. (TP)

5.4.2. Response Statements 2J & 6J: JC as the mother tongue?

2J. “I love patois...it’s a nice language...it’s very expressive. It’s part of the culture. To me it comes naturally”. (RS2J)

6J. “People look down on you if you speak Creole...If I go out there and start my dialect...they’ll only say...’oh they thought it was someone of class. You can put in a few words to pepper up your speech”. (RS3J)

When the teachers responded to the second statement, much of their contradictory and ambivalent feelings about the language were revealed. Several of them laughed when asked the direct question of what was their mother tongue, after they had unhesitatingly explained that the children spoke Creole.

(Laughter)...Well I don’t know. It comes naturally... there is a time and place for everything...depends on the situation. (TQ)

When I’m out of a school situation, I naturally go back. There’s a place for each. It’s our first language; it’s what we first heard. (TX)

They went on to give personal language histories, which hinted at some past struggles:

...because of background...mine would be the English because that was what was spoken in my home...my family was very strong on that as teachers. (TG)

My first language is, I think, the Creole but not perhaps to the extent of theirs because when I was growing up my parents were always...I couldn’t really speak it to them. It wasn’t the accepted thing in my house...so I was really restricted with it. (TH)

To me it [Creole] doesn’t come natural. From my early days, schooldays, at University. I had people from England teaching me English! In the class it was nothing but...I couldn’t dare teach English in my day because I’m a Jamaican.....This is not my.....it’s not my joy. I have hardly any connection with the patois.....so the person here is a 16 year old teacher. (TP)

These comments echo what has been said before about the public role and identity

of teachers, as they reflect on their own class position, as workers one or two generations removed from the farm labourer. Included in those reflections also must be some notion of how language is inextricably linked with those questions of who we are and how we place ourselves. They recognise the consequences of accepting JC as their mother tongue, but these are affirmations that come from struggle, denial and change (Scott, 1993). The images reflect this as Creole was once a means of “combatting the slavery system” a part of the “Gordon Town man in his water boot”, the country man, the salt of the earth who is now associated with the dispossessed “fighting for survival”. From Response Statement 6J, status images abound of using English to “dress up”; to create “a barrier”, “a separate distance” as people who cannot “steer clear” of Creole; who “round up” rather than “broaden” the mouth; are “set apart” as we “look down” on what they use rather than “bend” and “get down to their level”. So it was, too, for the elderly schoolteachers who had their “little time” to prevent their being “called down” for using their first language in school:

Well you had your little time when you used to say ‘no bada mi’ and all that, but if teacher is anywhere and hears you, she’s going to call you down for it, you know. And you have to correct yourself. (Teacher A)

Later language biographies dwelt on the way one teacher, for example, felt her parents had been influenced by their own uneducated parents, to instil in her not just an awareness of correct English, but a fear of ever making a mistake. As English was a means to an end:

I couldn’t approach my mother and ask her a question just without even thinking. I remember sometimes before I go to her, I’m saying to myself...Is Can I? or May I? You want to say the right thing because then she would praise you...[she] had this idea of what her daughter was like....they encouraged reading, giving tasks during the holidays. She was the one, the disciplinarian. If we did anything, he would say “wait until your mother come”she was dominant and so it became natural to use certain things at school. Like I would never confuse ‘is’ and ‘are’.....But when my younger sister was born, she said that we changed her..all the shouting...this young miss was caused to lapse. When I look back now, I

realise the frustration, with six children.. After you comb this one hair you have to go with the other one.....She was not fulfilled. She was always cross. We get on now...she sees me, look at that, her worst-spoken daughter a teacher. (TH)

What is striking about this interview, is the extent to which this respondent equivocated about acknowledging JC as her mother tongue. Yet this account reveals so much about the mother and family relationships, coming in response to a very simple trigger. Deep emotions are stirred, of the linguistic boundaries laid down by the dominant mother in contrast to the affable father; yet the teacher empathises with the forces which made her mother behave in the way that she did.

In another interview a teacher includes the teacher-trainer who helped her to become bilingual, in her list of the three most significant people in her life, in the company of her mother and step-mother. As she recounts her story, there is a kind of symmetry in the way the lecturer becomes like the adopted mother guiding her towards the adopted tongue:

There are times when I really don't make the switch with the tenses, if I write I might not have so much problem as with the spoken language. I am not that comfortable with this. Maybe because of my home environment that I am from, it's not a practised thing....I speak Creole at home but not the basilect. Mrs C----- realised it and she pointed it out to me; she called me one day and said to me `O-----, you have the ability to be a honours student but there is one thing that may pull you away from it and that is your language' and she just pointed it out by talking to me and encouraged me, like when I made the mistake she would change it around and put it the better way, the right way of saying it and that was basically it for me; and knowing she believed that I had the potential to do it really encouraged me. (TS)

This teacher does accept her first language which remains part of her, but she wants to become bilingual for professional reasons, to be able to make the switch and so she submits to the guidance to be initiated in that language. It is a very personal relationship, and one we will see modelled in the classroom.

5.4.3. Response Statement 3J: JC as unique

3J. "There are some things that are said that cannot be expressed any other way". (RS3J)

The third Statement which was related to the second asked teachers to comment on the expressiveness of Creole. Positive responses prefigured the presentation of the Statements:

...even as teachers we are more comfortable with the Creole...to me it's a sweeter language...it expresses yourself just the way you want...the words are quite colourful. (TU)

Words such as "a sweeter language", or alluding to the "chemistry" of Creole and its ability to "pepper up" your speech, refer to the dynamism and vitality of the language. When they admit that some ideas are "wrapped" up in the language, they seem to be echoing the idea of the mother tongue as the carrier of much of our history and identity.

The Statements often allowed the teachers to code switch:

I tend to agree with this one...like when you say someone is "tegreg", people know exactly what you mean...is an outlandish person...."uol nyaaga"...(laughter) (TU)

In fact this was something that went on throughout the interviews, as teachers moved through, talking about the things their pupils said or the things they heard on the bus:

Take for instance the other day when they were writing about the impact of fashion on the crime situation and there was this paragraph I got, I had to laugh the way how it was developed...talking about the fashion as a rejection of the thinking of society.....therefore when the x-rated women come into contact with the virile men...then it's as Buju Banton say 'gyal mi hafi get yu badi'.....and the street talk had to come in...if it's not forthcoming the man will 'tek i'.....the ideas were clearly expressed and there was nothing I could do to change that. (TK)

What this revealed was their own ability to operate in a bilingual environment and even the necessity for them continually to shift along the continuum. This will be discussed more fully later, in the classrooms observed.

5.4.4. Response Statements 4J: Parents and English

4J. “Many parents believe that English is for the school. They make no attempt to use it. If the child goes home and makes an effort to use it. ‘a skuul yu fi yuuz dat....muuv dat fram ya’....”. (RS4J)

The nature and details of the teachers’ bilingual strategy were revealed in the reaction to Response Statement 4J. This statement was a powerful trigger in that it gave rich information about parents’ attitude to English, as seen by the teachers, children’s school behaviour, and also about how teachers and parents interacted in the school environment:

di bwai kum spiik-op, spiik-op pa mi...gwaan laik im beta dan mi’...but he’s practising what he has been taught!... ‘Tiicha mek im kip it a skuul.’...So when he goes home he’s afraid to open his mouth and say any English.....(TK)

....And that same parent will come to school and try to put on the English with all the mix-up and if the child make a mistake, they will want to correct the child...you see they’re in school now. (TL)

The stories from this area reveal the bilingualism as being limited, as many parents have access to only one kind of language. The illustrative example might seem a strange one, with a parent being so opposed to the child, “Tiicha di bwai kum spiik-op, spiik-op pa mi...”. Yet it signals the way “high school” education can sometimes divide families, and it also shows that parents support English in its place, at school.

In response to a question about how they, as teachers, speak to parents, there was a ready answer:

Quickly you do your best to create the identity...you realise that with some persons you have to get down to their level...go in and out to make sure they understand what is happening. Going in and out is the more you can communicate with them. If you don’t you’ll be talking and talking and they’re not understanding...and they’re not saying anything.

They feel set apart, especially if they have a problem at home. If you sit down there and attempt to use Standard English,

they will never open up. But if you register with the Creole and get down to their level...they'll tell you every single thing. (TL)

You can quickly identify...`Mada di bwai naa lern no wuk at aal, im naa du nuttn...yu waan kunk im inna im hed...(laughter)...lick im tiicha. (TK)

Some parents hate it...they think something funny has happened to them...that's true...English is for school...yu a pap stail pa mi...loaded language...it has a lot you know this dialect...yu tink yu beta da mi (laughter)...The parents definitely see it's for school. They probably won't even understand it. The children don't need it. That's why it's so hard to teach because by the time you've finished with the class, you're back to normal and you're back to square one. It's like you're wasting time, teaching what doesn't belong to them. They're glad to get through that door to shed it like a skin. (TP)

The usual pedagogic formulation of “English as a second/foreign language” hides what “shed like a skin” reveals. English is seen as something unwanted that the children slough off as they leave the school. Parents are seen, by some of the teachers, as compounding the problem but another saw them as helping teachers in their task to increase the use of English in schools:

It's funny., they don't believe English is just for the school alone. You can get a person who doesn't know an ounce of English who will say to their child `Gyal yu chat bad ii!. Yu a go skuul, yu kyaang spiik likl Inglish'. Many parents, even though they don't know the English would like to have the child speaking English. You'll find[it's] more the peer group saying that but the parents would love to hear their children speaking properly. (TU)

Such a description accords with the analysis coming out of the **Story Events**, where parents and communities support the project of the school, as they understand it. What might be being expressed amongst some of the other teachers are the notions of culture and status which so affected them in their personal histories. These notions are now infecting their relationship with parents, showing that none of these relations have been changed simply because they have been experienced. The teachers are not being socially transformed simply because they

went through some of the processes of alienation themselves in childhood and early education. It suggests that the experience has not been sufficiently integrated, or has been integrated differently, into their consciousness, perhaps because factors other than language are holding a greater sway, at this stage, in their relationship with parents.

5.4.5. Response Statements 5J & 7J: English in the school

5J. “The Principal encourages the use of English in the classroom....I also do the same”. (RS5J)

7J. “Most children don’t communicate using Standard English so it’s a problem when they reach school”. (RS6J)

Statements 5J and 7J relate to the attitude to English within the school institution and the overwhelming desire to bring the children within that speech community, even though the use of the two languages is inevitable in the school, as the classroom observations will show. The teachers, however, seem to feel that the only certainty is Creole:

What do they mean by the use of English? Standard English?
How many of us in Jamaica speak Standard English. (TV)

The first language was seen as part of the normal school discourse; English may or may not enter some classrooms:

The children who write the best papers are those who speak it at home....in their community....it’s a follow-up programme. The child who has dialect at home, dialect on the street..when they come to school, what happens? Dialect is introduced into the school by them. (TP)

It’s the DJ thing. There’s a breakdown of the uptown-downtown thing. Uptowners take on downtown ways and the language comes into school. The focus is totally different. (TW)

These comments show concern that English was so little used in schools, creating problems for its successful acquisition because of the children’s unfamiliarity with the language and their lack of inclination to make the all-important switch. Further analysis of this will underscore the problematic relationship between the teachers and the languages they, their children and their communities speak.

A number of points can be drawn from the analysis for emphasis. Bilingualism is recognised and embraced by the teachers who code switch in normal discourse and say that they use it as a teaching strategy. They all want their children to leave school able to do the same. This is because, as the earlier responses showed, they regard the acquisition of English as an important part of the schooling which prepares their students for the world outside their community and even Jamaica itself. The teachers do have conflicting views about their own language, because even though most accept Creole as their mother tongue, some of the images reveal that it continues to hold an unequal status, and is much more acceptable in school to the child than it is to the teacher. They display a high level of language awareness; describing language functions, domains and behaviour, entirely in accordance with speakers in bilingual situations.

5.5. CLASSROOMS OBSERVED

The classroom observations are presented here not as evidence of the veracity of the teachers' opinions and stories but more as illuminations of the teachers' beliefs discussed in the interviews, and as further insight into their language behaviour and pedagogy. Originally, they were envisaged as playing a minor part in the investigation, but gradually, as I became more involved in the classroom accounts, it became clear that, even in a teacher-based study, an understanding of their beliefs and practices required more attention being paid to the other participants in the discourse of the classroom, namely the students. It followed also that the teachers' concern with bilingualism and how that was realised in classroom interaction would provide a kind of protocol for the observations.

However, some further context needs to be provided to the Jamaican classroom before any further comments can be made. The **story events** mentioned earlier suggest the poverty of the economic landscape and the kinds of physical and

psychological trauma which might be present in such an environment. The physical environment of the more than 20 sessions observed in the school visited was probably the average for a secondary school but is still worth commenting on. There were still classrooms which were like a huge hall that had been divided up to make a number of individual classrooms. Sometimes the wall which divided the room was so flimsy that other teachers could be heard conducting their classes. In one case an art and craft class was continuing unsupervised, next to a CXC English class. The noise that came over the partition was very distracting.

Chairs, which were always in short supply, contributed to the noise, because every time a student moved, the metal foot would score the concrete floor. Many rooms existed without lights and in some there was no electricity, which considerably reduced the likelihood of AVA. Such an absence was compounded by the possibility of theft, which also meant that there were few pictures on the wall. This was noticeable in the library. When asked, the teacher-librarian said that only the diagrams she had made would stay on the wall. Even in the library there were few books and those that were there were old and not very inviting. Nevertheless, children used the library regularly for their projects. Prayers at the beginning or end of the class are a normal, though not obligatory practice in these Jamaican classrooms, as they are wherever teachers gather formally for training or meetings. So too is the courtesy of students: standing whenever a visitor enters the classroom and offering a chorus greeting.

Lesson 1

Mention of these facts is meant to convey the unprepossessing circumstances Jamaican teachers are used to working in and might be a fitting introduction to one class which was delivered in this library. In her interview, the teacher who had not long left teacher training college, emphasised communicative techniques, role play, activity-based learning in her teaching. She was delivering a class on proverbs to a group of Grade 8 students who were 12-14 years old when I joined them. They were given a slip of paper with a proverb, which they were to act out. She began by telling them to get into groups. They had worked in groups before

but, as is usual with this instruction, there was confusion:

“A wich grup mi iina?”

“Sidong said a mi”

“Kum dong yaso”

At all times the students used basilectal Creole while the teacher retained SE. The only time there was a slip was when she became angry with a student:

“Bwai liiv di ting aluon!”

The students spoke to her using a variety of language towards the basilect. They moved furthest away from the basilect when answering a direct question from the teacher. When acting out their proverbs, they invariably used Creole, except one character, who was playing the role of a teacher. On one occasion, the teacher asked them to translate a line of dialogue from one of the skits:

“Yu naa get no dina”/ You’re not having any dinner.

I felt this might have been for my benefit, but I thought it was interesting, because it was one of the few times English was used.

I sat with a group of four, who like the rest of the class, had real difficulties with proverbs they had not heard before and could not read. In watching this class, and interacting with this small group, I felt that many of the problems with English teaching in Jamaica had been highlighted. They will be discussed later.

Lesson 2

This class was similar to the one described above: a Grade 9 class conducted in the morning. In her interview the teacher had emphasised the importance of allowing students to speak freely in class and translate as necessary. The content of the lesson was also proverbs.

There were 22 children in the class with even gender distribution, but the boys sat on one side and girls on the other. Much of the teaching was centred on the blackboard, the teacher said there was a lack of paper and duplicating facilities.

T: We're going to do Proverbs....Have you heard the word before?

S: In the Bible, Miss.

T: What does it mean?

S: A wise saying (among replies).

T: It's figurative saying. It's not literal. It means something else. Can you give me an example?

S: High seat kill Miss Matty (Teacher puts this example on the board; more examples coming)

T: You know I don't take chorus answers. Please raise your hand.

S: Chikin meri, aak de nier.

(Laughter; T puts it on board; chorus of "Miss, Miss" as hands go up.)

S: Who laughs last, laughs the best.

(Many hands and cries of "Nuo man.....me Miss)

S: Beta liet dan neva.

(T puts this on board)

S: Kyaang ketch Kwaku, yu ketch im shut.

S: wan, wan kuoko ful baaskit.

T: Can you explain these?

S: "High seat...." means you want to live big Miss but you can't.

S: "Chicken merry, hawk de near " Sumtaim wen yu a tiif, poliis de near, Miss.

T: (rephrases) Some time you are stealing and the police might be near.

Somebody is on the floor, please give him a chance. Are you listening?

S: Yes, Miss wi can hear.

Teacher now moves on to English proverbs.

"Rome was not built in a day"

Hands go up to explain.

S: You can't do everything at once.

"Every cloud has a silver lining".

The class has some problems with this one.

"He bit the hand that fed him".

This is an easy one: *"Ungrateful Miss".*

“Don’t count your chickens...”

The children finish this one: *“...bifuor dem ach”*.

T. goes on to read stories which are explanations primarily. The “Rome wasn’t built...” proverb is explained with a story about John who worked hard to achieve his goals and became a store manager. It is an uplifting and motivational tale. The girls want to meet John!

T. read at least 5 such stories illustrating the sayings. The children are asked to write and explain 3 themselves, in a situation:

Opportunity knocks but once

Walls have ears

To close the stable door after the horse has bolted

T: While you’re doing that, kindly listen to your names

The teacher takes the register and the students begin to write. After a few moments, she says

T: One important point, please don’t fill up your essays with these proverbs now that we’ve talked about them.

She gives out the home work which is a couple of proverbs to develop stories around:

1. Set a thief to catch a thief
2. To jump out of the frying pan into the fire

She rounds off the lesson by asking students to read and explain the proverbs they were looking at.

T: Come Simone, the rest of us stop writing and listen.

Simone declines and another boy tries:

S: A gunman gets an opportunity to go to foreign to study. He turns it down. A week later he get shoot and die.

(Some laughter at “get shoot and die”)

Class is dismissed with home work

Lesson 3

It was interesting to note that before the class, when scolding a Grade 10 student,

the teacher adopts a tough street-wise persona to deal with a girl who left school early the previous Friday to buy shoes for a Saturday night dance:

“Aal huu av dem bizniz to du, shud go and du it...duont let mi stop dem”.

She walks away from some half-hearted apologies.

We move on to the class which is a Grade 11 class doing CXC and studying a Dennis Scott poem: “Grampa”. The classroom is one of those strange classrooms of Jamaica built by donor agents who clearly have no concept of how teaching takes place in Jamaica. It is largely concrete and has a sloping terraced effect like a lecture theatre. The teacher decided not to perform at the front, but to sit near the front and turn sideways to see the class. She checked that everybody had a copy of the poem. They did not and consequently were upbraided for their lack of preparation. She maintained the acrolect which suggested that she was not surprised at their state of readiness. She wanted to start the lesson:

“Can I get a volunteer to read for us? OK thank you.”

She continued to use the acrolect but switched when she wanted to make a point about the poem’s theme of old age:

“What she forgets comes back...Uol taim stuori kum bak agen”

However she did not want the students to follow her example, because when one student used “kids”, she chided her:

“You can’t use that in the exam...it’s American slang”

They accepted that:

“Children, Miss”,

But don’t always follow her strictures:

“She usually du tingz to occupy her time”

The students used Creole amongst themselves. One boy to himself used “dash dem weh” when referring to the flowers in the poem.

The teacher recognised that she was losing:

“I want you to express yourself but guess what, you’ll have to do it for the exam.”

The boy, who spoke Creole to himself before, offered it to the class in response to a question about old age. However, he seemed also to be playing to the gallery:

“Piirud wen yu naa fi wuk an dem tingz”

(The teachers’ later comment was that the boy used that language all the time, because he came from one of the depressed communities of Spanish Town and recognised no hierarchy in the school.)

In the class, she said to him:

“You could have put it another way”

He, however, did not seem to take the lack of English too seriously. This is illustrated when the teacher corrected a “children was” from the girl sitting next to him. His response was:

“What happen, yu kyaang speak English?” to much laughter.

The teacher ignored this and seemed to correct only when the language was part of the official discourse:

“We must respect each others’ views.....It doesn’t have to be a nice polished phrase like ‘comparing and contrasting’ or anything like that”

As she had suggested in her interview, CXC is uppermost in her mind.

Lesson 4

This is called a “remedial” Grade 8 (Year 2) class, in so far as all the children are very poor readers. Many of them are small in stature and look like primary schoolchildren in some of the more affluent areas of Kingston. The children have separate language and literature classes. This is a literature class and teacher wants to encourage them to respond and interpret a story. In this case the lesson is centred around a story called “The Blow”, which is a couple of hundred words long and presented to the children in the teacher’s handwriting on a sheet of paper. The story is about an unlucky gambler, on whom misfortune fell.

Teacher repeats the title “The Blow” and points to it, stuck on the board.

T: What does it mean?

S: Laik in a futbaal mach an im nock out

(The teacher translates: You got knocked out of the football match..yes)

S: Wistl bluow Mis

(T: blowing of a whistle)

S: Yu get a bluow in yu yai and yu kyaang si gud

The hands are shooting up very fast as the children call for the teacher’s attention.

T: OK OK...last one.

S: Im waif lef im

The children get so excited that the teacher has to stop the class to give them a quiet interlude when they close their eyes, listen to sounds and control their breathing. When they return to the lesson, the teacher directs them to read the story which is pinned on the board. The children begin to read in mincing exaggerated English tones. When they have finished, the teacher asks them about the meaning:

S: im neva rich

S: Im waan pie piis, piis

S: Im a go waanti

The teacher is overwhelmed and makes a momentary slip.

T: Huol aan!

She stops translating and clasps some of the enthusiastic hands joyfully to her bosom.

In the end the children have chorused from the board and discussed the tragedy until they can give summaries of the events. So when the teacher asks what “The Blow” meant, the answers come thick and fast:

S: Im laas im hous

S: Im laif mash op

Significant Moments from the Lessons

Observations of these varied sessions were most important as illustrations of the language behaviour of the teachers and their students. Certain aspects of the interactions became more noticeable, reinforcing the social and historical context provided in Chapter Four, supporting T. Burgess (1984):

Social practices are something into which individuals are socialised. Social practices, in turn, provide the means by which individual selves are produced. (T. Burgess, 1984: 62).

A dialectic process is here being described, in which the language background, professional training and social context provides a matrix of factors which produces the discourse observed in these classrooms. The teachers are formed in the historical process of the profession’s development, the development of their

language and the discourse practices under which they operate in schools. They, in turn, contribute to the practices, serving to give further meaning and substance to their continuation.

Teacher Language

In the sessions observed, the bilingual techniques of the teachers were noticeable; there was a good deal of translating taking place:

S: Laik in a futbaal mach an im nok out

(The teacher translates: You got knocked out of the football match..yes)

S: Wistl bluow Miss

(T: blowing of a whistle)

Or:

S: “Chicken merry...” Sumtaim wen yu a tief, poliis deh near, Miss.

T: (rephrases) Some time you are stealing and the police might be near.

The teachers conducted themselves in a Shields-like acrolect and modelled English for the students, as would be expected from their interviews. The acquisition of English was a primary goal and they believed that a certain type of discourse was necessary for the classroom. They reformulated the children’s language to a mode which they seemed to think was more acceptable for the classroom. That all the teachers assumed the stance of language arbiters might seem a pretty undifferentiated response to the children’s language, but a closer examination showed that there were nuances and distinctions which suggested a less unitary position. For example, only the CXC teacher consciously and repeatedly brought these matters of linguistic etiquette to the children’s attention, as might be expected in an examination class where the teacher felt the burden was to deliver a high level of English. Here there is less translation and more telling, suggesting recognition that, at this point, the classroom is about English competence rather than developing language or addressing any other expressive concerns:

You can’t use that in the exam...it’s American slang.

In this CXC class, the teacher has a pretty good understanding of the class and a pretty good relationship with them. In an effort to get them to come to class on time, she was able to play out a mock quarrel with them at the beginning of the class in a kind of game that they know well:

All who have dem bizniz to do, should go and do it...don't let
mi
stop them.

She knows that they will be attending the class and attend they did. All of this is part of the ritual they play out, just before the exams, but she was challenged, as one boy wanted to introduce a different discourse in the middle of her homily on correct English. He laughed and joked, refusing to use English to answer her questions:

Piirud wen yu naa fi wuk an dem tingz.

This is a dangerous moment sociolinguistically, but the teacher understands it, as she explained to me. He is a newcomer to the school, who is challenging the school authority rather than her personal project, and one of the best way to challenge that authority is through its discourse practices, which he does:

What happen, yu kyaang speak English?

This leads to much laughter, indicating that he knows what to use, but he is not prepared to use it. She also knows that the whole edifice of English is under threat from the assertion of Creole voices in the culture outside, so her response to him is simply to assert her bilingual formula:

You could have put it another way.

She understands at this time he will not be part of it and she makes no attempt to coerce him.

In another class, Lesson 1, the teacher had set up a session which was concerned with the students working in groups, naturally using their mother tongue, to produce skits. Here support was offered for Creole, in a space where we would expect the use of English to be strong. The teacher asked the children to translate a

line of important dialogue from the drama they were doing:

Yu naa get no dina/ You're not having any dinner.

This seemed to be for my benefit. The translation was going the other way and Creole was being offered as the norm which needed to be translated for the visitor, a seemingly monolingual English speaker. In the other lessons, no overt criticisms were made of Creole. In Lesson 2, for example, the children used Creole to give the examples, as this was the natural source of such cultural artefacts.

It should be noted that the teachers' hold on the acrolect was sometimes a little shaky as well:

I want you to express yourself but guess what, you have to do it [use English] for the exams.

Or when one teacher became so excited by her students' exuberance that she slipped back into her mother tongue in a perfectly natural and enthusiastic way:

Uol aan....uol aan.

Or when another gets angry, she reverts to the mother tongue:

Bwai liiv di ting aluon!

Students' Language

The children always used Creole amongst themselves, spontaneously and unself-consciously, and the teachers made no attempt to change that. However, in the formal, public discourse, they often attempted to use the acrolect and if they were unsuccessful, the teacher translated. The possibility here is that the intention is being signalled that the student wants to move into the realm of English and needs help. I am reminded here of Davis and Golden's (1994) observation of how bilingual teachers in African-American communities use the language they have in common with the children to move them into the second language of English. So several different kinds of language were operating in the classrooms at different times and in different ways. The students often indicated their awareness of the appropriate language, and when it was being attempted, by derisively marking any unsuccessful attempts by their peers to speak English:

A week later he get shoot and die.

This might seem superficially a harsh response, but the tone was always mocking, as though they were sharing a joke about an ill-fitting garment, occasionally worn but easily discarded. It can be seen as laughing at the practice as much as laughing at the speaker. The children did not seem too concerned about their lack of English, as the language served no purpose but to answer teacher's questions. In one class, The Blow (Lesson 4), they mimicked the teacher's English and she laughed with them. It is important that she does laugh with them, because she is acknowledging the contradictions of the project. In another her correction was accepted by the student who used "kids":

Children, Miss,

but later on in the class her strictures are forgotten:

She usually du tingz to occupy her time

So, the teacher is an imperfect arbiter. She moves in and out of the role; sometimes she takes it seriously; sometimes she does not. Because of her understanding of Hardcastle's (1992) "traditional and social practices present in the classrooms", she has the reference points to make the distinction.

Teacher-Student Interaction

My comment on this area follows from the last statement, because what seemed to be going on in these classrooms were joint endeavours. The relationships between teachers and students were, on the whole, respectful, suggesting shared understandings:

T: Somebody is on the floor, please give him a chance. Are you listening?

S: Yes, Miss we can hear

The students accepted the preoccupation with English, and the teachers accepted that some students could not, or did not, produce it. It is this assumption which allowed the task to be seen as a shared venture, disentangled from notions of individual failure. There seemed to be an atmosphere of trust, of going along with the teacher's project and giving her priorities the benefit of the doubt:

T: While you're doing that, kindly listen to your names

The teacher takes the register and the students begin to write.

After a few moments, she says:

T: One important point, please don't fill up your essays with these proverbs now that we've talked about them.

She is indicating that she knows that their involvement in this project might spoil other work they would do at a later date.

The classroom interaction could be seen on one level as being quite unsophisticated, with a lot of teacher questions which were knowledge-focused rather than expressive:

T: We're going to do Proverbs....Have you heard the word before?

S: In the Bible, Miss

T: What does it mean?

S: A wise saying (among replies)

T: It's figurative saying. It's not literal. It means something else. Can you give me an example?

However, this would be a very superficial reading. Teachers and students have been schooled in the same cultural practices, using a common discourse. All of them, as church-goers, would know the "proverbs" of the Bible, as well as the common examples from Jamaican folklore. They can move along together in their understanding and the students demonstrate that they have a lot to contribute. When they talk about wanting to meet John in Lesson 3, they are comfortably enough with the class to want to enter the imaginary worlds the teacher is creating..

The culture of the church helps to underscore how much the questioning was used as a motivational tool, because the inspirational flavour is clearly a favoured style. If we consider Lesson 2 on proverbs, the interaction ricochets back and forth. In the "remedial" class the teacher has to cool their fervour with a break and then later in the lesson she clasps the hands of those in front of her to her bosom, in joy at their contribution.

Content of Lessons

Grammar is not the primary concern or mode of teaching. The content of the classes has a Jamaican flavour: proverbs, stories, poems, and skits based on scenes from Jamaican life. Jamaican words, ideas and subjects are validated on the chalkboard. There is an attempt to motivate children in these distinctive and unique types of second-language classrooms, and the orientation towards the ROSE programme is clear.

What I want to draw attention to as most significant in this discussion of the lessons is the way in which the teachers produce a range of different interpretations to the project called learning English and manage to integrate it into the culture and understandings of the children. It supports the notion of consent to schooling, but we need, in the first instance, to examine more closely the concept of consent, which has been used a number of times. It is a word which has a history and pedigree in other places. Most notably, it is a term used by Gramsci in his contemplation, from prison, of the highly organised industrial society of early twentieth-century Italy. There it is used with hegemony to explain the way in which the ruling class in advanced capitalist societies organise to sustain dominance. Gramsci refers to the way intellectuals, as the “junior officers”, conspire in eliciting consent from the masses who succumb to the historical/traditional prestige manifested in those who seem most powerful. The term was engendered by J. Miller (1990) and transformed into the feminist motif of “seduction”, signifying the ways in which women willingly cede control of their lives to men and patriarchy, and more widely, the way dominated groups comply with the pervasive instruments and procedures of their own control. Central to J. Miller’s concern is the validation, the right-seeming approval, awarded the producers and procedures of consent in the private, sensual world of conquest and sexual contradiction. I want to apply that term of consent to the individual and social world of the classroom, the space where both entities intersect and agents act in and upon the common ground. I want to suggest that consent, no matter how achieved, is the first basis on which classroom discourse begins to operate. Without it, this joint understanding and belief that the agenda is

worthwhile, no “common knowledge” is available. I am also arguing that one of the ways in which that consent is manifested is in the markers of agreement exhibited in the language of the teacher and student, their common understandings of what language means, and their sense of support from the forces outside the classroom. As this data is presented here, an interpretation is beginning to be offered about how these teachers, through the language and culture, can be seen as making, as well as themselves being made by, the procedures of consent.

5.6. AN APPROACH TO ENGLISH TEACHING (Jamaica)

In summary, the data reveal some distinctive features to teaching English in Jamaica. One of these features is a kind of linguistic ambivalence. In the first instance, English has a primarily instrumental function in the classroom, where teachers unquestionably assume that it is a worthwhile aspiration for international communication. The imagery, and the language used generally, however, suggests that they also see it as something alien to them and their culture. Jamaican Creole is hesitantly accepted as the mother tongue but here, again, there are contradictory responses about Creole in relation to English.

A second important point about teaching in Jamaica is represented in the history where the teacher appears deeply rooted and nurtured in communities where they are held in relatively high regard. Both the students and the communities, especially the poorer communities, are committed to schooling. It is, therefore, possible for the two groups to see teaching as a joint project in which they are both engaged for success. The teacher’s job is to help them navigate their way through the system.

The style of teaching which most favours success in this joint endeavour is interactional, where children and teachers commit themselves to face-to-face and immediate personal contact. Language is the conduit for this exchange but the

communication in a bilingual environment involves code switching. The language situation is full of contradictory and ambivalent dimensions which the teachers sometimes share with students. Their common history and culture sustains the classroom encounters. The children “learn school” in its many facets. There is, consequently, some suspension of disbelief about the importance of learning a subject such as English. There is a consent from children and community to schooling.

Some of the ideological training for teachers in this project takes place within the training colleges, where there is a great emphasis on moral uplift and character-building which guided the nineteenth-century elementary schools: little has changed. In these “total institutions” the teachers-in-training are in contact with mentors who model the behaviour they are to produce; discourse practices for their professional life are constructed and learned, until they become common-sense, folkloric ways of operating in classrooms. In these situations, the influence of the state, in the form of the Ministry of Education, is weak.

In light of the foregoing, I now want to turn to the London setting, where children with a Jamaican Creole background are located, to see how teachers there approach the business of teaching English.

CHAPTER SIX

THE LONDON DATA

6.1. IN THE FIELD: LONDON STORY EVENTS

In this chapter, the data collected in the London schools will be presented and analysed. Different ways of operating led to different ways of capturing the data. For example, the quasi-staff room encountered during the time spent in the selected London school did not function in the same way as similarly designated space in Jamaica. Therefore, these snapshots do not come from one central vantage point but are scenes collected throughout the school and delineated as significant events by the researcher. Such delineation underscores the importance of tacit knowledge in the selection process of meaning-making, throughout a project drawing on ethnographic principles. The field notes presented here will attempt to capture some of these significant moments and insights.

The Staff Meeting

I understand that there are some difficulties as the acting Head of English had not received the post by the time of the interview. I am told that I can sit in on a staff meeting so I can tell the staff what I want to do. They listen and a couple volunteer to work with me. They then go on to discuss the new computers which they have obtained, their location and the courses they are to take. In fact, the meeting is to be turned into an informal computer workshop. Then they turn to the matters of the imminent OFSTED inspection and there is much talk of getting the papers in order. It was the year, 1994, when the National union of Teachers (NUT) was boycotting the Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs), the assessment instruments of the National Curriculum. This is when the teachers seem to become most defeated: like the walking wounded, stressed, bitter and resentful about the curriculum foisted on them.

The Writing's on the Wall

Emblematic of the school's direction and communication mode is the writing on the walls, exhorting good behaviour and signalling literate expectations. There is a mission statement:

The school aims to be an effective multi-racial school where people respect the cultures and rights of one another.

Another wall has "Targets for Pupils"; another has the best examination results for GCSE; they are primarily Vietnamese names. The "Sick Bay" has become the "School Health Room". There is a poster in the corridor indicating the range of languages spoken and the number of speakers:

Arabic (20); Portuguese (65); Bengali (40); Cantonese (58); French Creole (7); Patois (46); Tigringa (15); Yoruba(30).

All of this knowledge is being signalled as important for public consumption, as it might be for classroom discourse.

The Bookroom

This room is used, primarily by two of the Black teachers, for tutorials and language support. At any one time there are children from Eritrea, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Turkey, Jamaica, Ethiopia, Vietnam and Portugal in the room. They are all preparing for the GCSE English examinations. These two teachers have cajoled and exhorted the students to prepare: most seem quite unconcerned. I interview two boys and a girl who have arrived from Jamaica in the last two years. One of the boys and the girl say they miss Jamaica and prefer the kind of teaching they had there which they understood:

Being that I'm not here for that long..I've changed English teachers about three or four times. They teach so many different things I get confused. Yea it's harder in Jamaica like I said....They want you to pass.

When you get a D or a E they don't really say whether you fail an alla dat but in Jamaica when you get lower than C you have the teacher telling you: 'That's not good; you're to do better.' And all dat. Most of the teachers over here, I don't really hear them saying like: 'Next time do better. Try you

best because D's a fail an alla dat. In Jamaica, they tell you that D is nuffink, you have to get over C.

However, they also indicate that they see more opportunities for education and training in England, that they say they want to use:

..there are more opportunities here; it's just for you to take it.

However, both are part of the unconcerned majority who wander nonchalantly in and out of the bookroom. The other boy, who has no intention of going back to Jamaica, says he prefers this school, because they take time to help him learn:

You do it over a period of time...different, different subjects and you get used to it so when it comes to a test, might do well and all dat.

Observing him in class, I see a boy who is only a little more engaged.

Talking to the Head

During a meeting with the Black Head, we discuss some of his urgent concerns. One of them is the relationship with the parents of African-Caribbean boys who remain a hardcore residual problem in the school. The parents are referred to as "the lost generation" who, themselves, have had a raw deal from the education system. These parents have the educational aspirations but not the willingness to expend the effort to help their children. The children move further and further into underachievement, with poor role models and the influence of the media. They see others doing well outside the school in doubtful activities. Most people have given up on these children who are shunted from school to school, until they reach a school such as this which is prepared to shoulder its responsibilities and give excluded students another chance. From the staff meeting it would seem that the teachers have less sympathy for the "troublemakers".

New Directions

On one visit I meet an ex-student, an adult student, with whom I had worked on a Training Opportunities Programme (TOPs) course over ten years earlier. We are both surprised to see each other. She tells me about her course in the school's adult

section, on cake decorating. When she finds out that I live in Jamaica she tells me of her plans to send her child to Jamaica because of her despair about the failure of the school system for Black children.

Summary

The moments recorded here parallel the Jamaican story events in that they suggest a distilled version of some aspects of the school's life. There is a sense in which the direction of the education is most clearly revealed in literacy, in the written word on the school's wall. The best interpretation is that the public display of this school's aspirations is the maintenance of the best principles of past ILEA policy which stressed quality and equality, and which always advocated making the school's achievements visible to all who enter. Another interpretation might be that the displays provide an immediate buffer against the legalism which pervades the system. The dreaded OFSTED is part of that, and with the National Curriculum, seems to infect the teacher's life: it figures in all their conversations about teaching and affects all of their operations.

The school's composition is also significant here. The urban school earlier characterised by its working-class composition, and with a subsequent Caribbean population, is now more clearly seen as the repository of immigrant populations from Britain's past colonies, and foreign policy decisions and excursions. There is a range of language backgrounds in the school, with Jamaican Creole, here called patois, being one of the many varieties used in the school. The issues relating to how we value and use such diversity seem to have been settled. The school publicly celebrates these differences. There is some evidence of ethnic groups, such as the South East Asians, or West Africans, doing well within the system. However, Caribbean dissatisfaction is still present and parents are prepared to go to surprising lengths to remove their children from a system still failing them, a situation the Head acknowledges. The cause of some of that failure is encapsulated in some of those bookroom encounters with children who have not learnt school,

and who have not been inducted into the culture of school. These children remain on the periphery. The Jamaican children are baffled by some of the classroom practices and the school's way of operating. They seem to be asking for certain structures to be put in place to facilitate their journey through the system. Such an orientation is not surprising if we consider the approach to teaching in Jamaica, discussed in the previous chapter. Children coming from Jamaica are used to a particular approach, but the point that is being made here is that the children are not necessarily expecting the Jamaican approach but, as one of the boys indicate very approvingly, they want to be able to understand and accommodate to different practices.

6.2. ANALYSING THE INTERVIEWS: COMMENTARY ON THE FINDINGS

The background question revealed that the teachers came from a variety of backgrounds and often fell into teaching rather than focused on it as a clear and early goal. No one spoke of a family connection with teaching or being encouraged to become teachers by their family. Many of them had worked in other jobs and careers before they came into secondary teaching e.g. as a graduate trainee sales manager, a clerical officer, a homemaker, a primary school teacher and a community worker. All had a qualification in English through the BEd, BA or MA degree and anyone of them without the qualification in the subject, initially, became apologetic about it and explained how they set about getting it:

My own academic background is unusual in that my first degree is in History and Geography. I then studied a diploma in English Literature...part time in the evening. Took me five years.....I then did a Master's degree in Language and Literature in Education. (T17)

6.2.1. The aim of English teaching

As in Chapter Five, I will first examine the responses the teachers made to the interview questions, the implications of their statements and then I will consider

the evocative devices used to convey meaning.

Table 4: The aims of English teaching in London

The question was: Aims/Philosophy of English teaching	
Responses:	Frequency
functional literacy	8
aesthetic development/enjoyment	8
personal growth	5
a critique of society	6
bilingual competence	2
passing exams	3
to manage language across the curriculum	1
developing real writers	1
exposure to language and culture	1
developing oracy	1

A varied number of responses were offered to the question about the aim of English teaching. The two most often repeated aims were those referring to functional literacy and to the enjoyment of literature. The latter two of these aims we can see go back to the Newbolt Report, while the former can be traced to the central concerns of the elementary school. Personal growth was also mentioned a number of times. All show the continuities in teachers' thinking about their subject. Several aims were only mentioned by one person: oracy and developing real writers, reflecting more modern preoccupations.

English for functional literacy

This was an important category of responses, which was effortlessly spelt out by

the teachers:

Within the school the English Department is seen as teaching the skills they need in other areas like research skills, presentation skills, spelling, punctuation, grammar skills. I just think it's basically fundamental to not only school life, but life....we gotta teach those skills they're gonna need outside of school. (T13)

We're preparing people for society, for being able to cope with society. (T1)

English teaching, number one, then must be about enabling pupils to be literate so that they can go into the world of work, being able to read and write and also to be able to articulate ideas, so English teaching is partly then about teaching literacy skills.(T17)

The ease of response was accompanied by the images of the practical and the pragmatic aspects of usage: "getting through", "access", "competent", "main tool", "trade much more quickly" and "more spending power". The latter two images came from a teacher of Jamaican origin and were a stark reminder of other Jamaican teachers in another setting: English must, to some extent, prepare children for the world outside, where they have to "compete".

Occasionally, there was a nod to current nostrums:

At one level and this is the level the National Curriculum is trying to do....to be able effectively in speech and writing....for a variety of different purposes... you have to be able to speak and write to lots of different audiences. That's the standard thing they say isn't?. (T9)

Generally, this category of responses foregrounded the instrumental and the commodification of goals in English teaching but often the teachers made clear that this aim was only one of several which informed their practice.

Additionally, a number of the responses gave a critical edge to the unremitting functionalism, suggesting the wider social scope of this aim:

..it's the simple things but on another level, if you want to challenge the system.....if you have some kinda dealing with the police....need to write up a report...you need to write up

what happened, then I think it's helpful if you know how to do that....the language skills required to do that sort of thing. (T9)

In all of this my primary concern has been when I came into teaching just to waken them to language as a malleable thing that you can manipulate.....how to get their own way. (T10)

Significantly, there were very few references to examinations as centrally relevant to the aims. The functional seemed to be focusing on what was real and necessary. The most notable reference to examinations in this set of responses seemed to be more clearly an invective against SATs and all those associated with them:

Obviously, another function is you have to get them ready for exams....that's a necessity. I don't care about SATs....yes we've just had them and I hate them. Oh they're a good idea as long as they get their GCSEs. That's what matters in terms of exams.....that's the passport to further education if they need it. So we have to prepare them for exams, so we have to be aware of the requirements of the exam syllabuses. (T15)

English for personal growth

Some teachers expressed very strongly the idea of growth through English teaching:

Somewhere at the heart of it I would like my class to enjoy what they're doing, have an opportunity to do the things they enjoy..... Afro-Caribbean kids, Chinese kids or White kids, one of the things I want to encourage them to do is to write about themselves, their experiences..to talk about it, to write about it....anything they do will be all right with me. And I'll value it. (T15)

You're trying to teach the literature, to communicate and they can only do that in the language they know. You need to establish with them that you know something about their language and that you respect their language. (T5)

These teachers here seem to be saying that a lot of the child is invested in the language development which takes place in school and they, themselves, seem to be investing quite a lot of themselves into their orientation to this goal. The inclination is to reach out and take risks, reminding us of the Newbolt notion of the

English teacher carrying out a social mission through her teaching:

.....you have to be in touch with children's lives, to bring your curriculum to life. (T5)

It is worth noting that the teachers who spoke in these tones were the older, more experienced teachers who wanted to:

“fire up these kids” and “fire their enthusiasm”.

These older teachers offered more of their life histories and seemed most likely to have an affective response: to “hate” or be “totally depressed” by the current dispensation in the education system. Again echoing an enduring Newbolt ideal of the specialness of this schooling in the mother tongue, the effect of English teaching was to be mutually, psychologically real:

I think to be able to use language effectively, as well as enjoy it, as well as finding it as a solace.....something that gives you pleasure...somewhere where you can share other people's experiences. (T10)

English for enjoying literature

Linked very strongly to the personal is the notion of exposure to ideas, issues and models of literature as the central and core experience of English teaching. Bullock reported:

Much was claimed for it: it helps to shape the personality, refine the sensibility, sharpen the critical intelligence; that it is a powerful instrument for empathy, a medium through which the child can acquire values. (p.124)

The teachers in this investigation had an equally elevated view of what they saw as the core of English. When making this response, the teachers were unhesitating and unequivocal:

..to me the heart of good English teaching is the teaching of literature.(T17)

I think literature should be accessible to everyone. I think that through the literature you can actually encourage children to be proud and use their own languages as well as being able to learn Standard English which we have to learn for exams and for like general achievement in society. (T13)

And this focus elicited a personal response, reflected in the affective images and descriptions. They notice “the delight on their [the children’s] faces”, “enjoyment”, “freedom”, and “feelings and emotions”.

It was in this response, which was very personal, that some of the stories began to emerge:

When I first started, I thought students are not going to get through their GCSE grades. I thought teach them to write a letter...punctuation...functional. Now I think I’ve changed in that. I think that that’s still important but I think it’s more aesthetic now, in every subject. Now I think if they’re reading a book, I’ve achieved something.....seeing their reaction to literature, how they react to assignments. I think that’s what made me change my philosophy. (T12)

Several of the teachers admitted that the literature direction really began with them:

Poetry is a particular love of mine...if you’re not feeling particularly happy about something.....if you’re feeling angry get it down on paper. I told them I do that kind of thing and some time we look at what I’ve written. (T9)

I grew up in Northwold and there were no other foreign families in my area at all. I felt very displaced, I think. I used to read a lot.....keeps your imagination alive. That’s basically why I became an English teacher. Through reading. (T10)

Another teacher suggested that the literature emphasis was fuelled by the National Curriculum’s insistence on instituting a “canon” to pursue the delivery of the English curriculum. There was concern that this “respect and acknowledgement” for “high culture” might simply alienate pupils:

I think in a school like this, there is a high proportion of low ability children, that it becomes difficult, because you know that you have priorities to make sure that everybody achieves as high as possible which can make life very, very difficult at times, when you get a third of the class turned off, because it’s too hard as they believe it’s too hard or because they believe it doesn’t represent their culture. That’s basically for all kids....White working-class. (T2)

However, there was also some scepticism about such an old-fashioned goal and a questioning of the fusion between aims and the means:

But you're really concerned with writing process and language development. Literature is just one way of doing that but you could do that through using videos in your lesson or a particular theme. (T5)

English for critical literacy

This goal of English teaching was mentioned directly or indirectly as important by a number of the teachers. The emphasis was on encouraging children to become thinking and critical individuals, and was often linked with other aims. So, for example, they might say that they wanted the child to function effectively in society, but they also wanted him/her to be able to understand how that society works and what is being communicated:

We're preparing them for life in general to give them the tools to make sense of what they're told and what misinformation they're given from the media and from the government. And they need to make their way through the world and communication is the main tool and we have to give them these tools. (T15)

Alternatively, the teachers might say that enjoying literature is central to English but:

English teaching is also about developing pupils as critical thinkers through their language skills.....you're trying to get them to understand how to read a wide range of texts. (T17)

English for Bilingualism

This aim was only mentioned directly by two of the teachers and neither would probably be seen as traditional bilingual goals, even though they are both very valid. One of the references is from a teacher with TESOL training who, significantly, links bilingualism quite broadly with writing, seeing her tasks as equipping her students with this second language:

...when I'm teaching White working class children, using one, the wrong grammar, stroke tense, stroke everything else;

unable to express themselves in writing in a formal situation, I realise that the local vernacular that the child is familiar with takes priority over the written standard or received English they are expected to use in the classroom or use for exams.....once it's written down you have to be clear it's correct. (T7)

What I believe the teacher is expressing here is the idea of the mother tongue jostling with the second language of writing.

The other reference which included Jamaican and Caribbean children was more clearly a reference to register rather than language, especially within the context of the language situation in London:

...if you're a Black person, you know to talk to anybody at different kinds of levels and that's not saying that the code talking to the Principal is a higher kind of level but they're certain things for example a Black person when you're talking to another Black person...(T9)

Such scant attention to more traditional bilingual concerns is noteworthy when we consider the changing composition of the urban school and the increasing number of children from diverse language backgrounds who now make up the schools' population. The linguistic diversity evident in these schools will be discussed later, but enough has been said, so far, to indicate that these were multi-lingual environments where English operated alongside other languages outside, if not inside, the classroom. Yet,, bilingual competence hardly figured as a goal. One explanation might be that my framing questions, which mentioned my concern with children of Afro-Caribbean descent, meant that other language backgrounds were ignored. However, it is also worth noting that more attention was paid to language differences when responding to the question about teaching methods, when problems of coping with many voices in the classroom became significant. It would seem that diversity was a resource for teaching, rather than an aim of the language curriculum. These responses will be discussed later.

Summary

Accounts of the aims of the English curriculum were varied, and such variety has to be surprising in a system where a National Curriculum has been in existence for a number of years, promoting a more uniform view of English. A discussion will follow about this Government initiative but suffice to say at this point that although the teachers knew about the National Curriculum, they still held a range of opinions, in line with the divergence of views uncovered by Ball (1985), Cox (1989), and Protherough and Atkinson (1991) in earlier investigations. These investigations consistently emphasised literature and child-centredness or personal growth as the foci for English teachers. In this investigation the teachers were strongest in emphasising the three aims relating to functional literacy, enjoyment of literature and the encouragement of personal growth, but other goals which were more critical and cultural were also mentioned. The suggestion is that the views of this set of teachers were not unusual in their range or nature.

6.2.2 Teaching Methods

The teachers had a wide range of responses to the term “methodologies” and interpreted the word to mean any strategy, orientation or method used to pursue their aims.

Table 5: The methods used to teach English in London

The question was : What kind of methods do you use?	
Responses:	Frequency
ESOL	3
literature	11
traditional exercises	1
child-centred	9
language across the curriculum	4
grammar	2; 1 (punctuation as grammar)
language awareness	8

creative writing	1
teaching in mother tongue	1
writing protocols/genres	7
comprehension exercises	1
speaking and listening	2
media studies	3
multi-cultural literature	6
integration	1
English Centre strategies	1

There was not always a clear distinction made between the aim and mode of delivery. This is not unusual. For example, the Cox Report put forward five generalised models of English: a personal growth view; a cross-curricular view; an adult needs view; a cultural heritage view; and a cultural analysis view. The Report highlights the sense of a goal or aim when it refers to “the personal growth” view of English, but the emphasis seems to be on method when it takes “the cross-curricular” view of English. The cultural analysis view seems to subsume both aim and method. A similar subsumption takes place amongst some of these teachers under investigation. Consequently, if English had an aesthetic function related to the enjoyment of literature then the strategy might be to concentrate on reading and books, suggesting that what teachers say about how they teach English might also clarify what they see as English.

Ball’s (1985) survey of English teaching notes that a contemporary picture reveals a picture of a subject largely unchanged since its inception. Teachers consistently attach importance to the same range of strategies. The teachers of English in this study would also seem to follow that pattern, so even though there is a wide variety of responses, all would broadly fit into existing paradigms about the nature of English teaching and modes of delivery. So if we were to take one of the most recent discussions, Davis (1996), we will see that the broad divisions are between liberal humanist and radical/cultural theorist. And in delineating further, he reveals the same kind of paradigm with literature and personal growth on the

one hand, and politics, popular culture and acceptance for students' own language on the other. It is possible to question his divisions but certainly these are views which are all part of the debate about the nature, scope and delivery of English.

For my purposes I wanted to go further than Davis's (1996) large categories and so the responses will be divided into four distinct areas or orientations towards four types of methods: language, literature, cross-curricular and child-centred teaching. Each orientation shows a dominant strategy:

Figure 1: Four orientations to the teaching of English

<p>language awareness ESOL</p> <p>grammar</p> <p>mother tongue</p>	<p>language a/c the curriculum</p> <p>integration; writing protocols/genres</p> <p>speaking & listening</p>
<p>all literature media studies</p> <p>comprehension exercises</p> <p>multi-cultural literature</p>	<p>child-centred creative writing</p> <p>collaborative strategies</p> <p>English Magazine strategies</p>

The responses which I feel have some connection have been grouped together. In the literature domain, for example, is included those teaching methods which rely on some kind of "reading" of text, whether it is in relation to cultural diversity (multi-cultural literature) or whether it is in relation to alternative texts in different forms and contexts (media studies). The term "English Magazine strategies" refers to the ideas discussed in The English Magazine over the last two decades. It is meant to denote those set of practices which are, at the core, humanistic. By this, I mean that they focus on the concerns of the child, which might include respect for his/her language in the classroom; attention to personal development; and a privileging of experiential learning. Even when these strategies seem to be

coming close to something of Davis's (1996) radical/cultural theorist perspective, the child's viewpoint remains central.

Teaching English through literature

In the literature domain, there is an overwhelming emphasis on using literature as a teaching tool for many different purposes. For instance, it might be modelling:

I learnt to teach from a literature base and it's getting more and more difficult with the National Curriculum but I don't think pupils can write well unless they have literary models to write from. It's the sensible way to teach. (T15)

Another view of literature sees it as a quarry to be mined to fulfil targets about the conventions of language:

For example, if I want to teach speech marks, I could teach it while I'm actually reading the book...punctuation the same way through the book. (T8)

Or it might be issues:

It [my teaching] nearly always starts with literature and from there we might go to the more general....there are a lot of issues there that might come out....family breakdown, fear of responsibility, various things you might want to raise especially if some of the children share that awareness and those experiences. (T10)

Yet, this "hunt the issue" stance has its critics:

I don't like the situation which you tended to do where you choose an issue and then look for literature that goes with it. That annoys me.....I think literature is more important. I hate thinking we're doing schools so we must do this book. We want to do this book because it's good. (T15)

It is one of the recurring debates about literature and thematic approaches which was examined in the Bullock Report. The Report was concerned with the way teachers used literature in small samples simply to trigger discussions on the children's related personal experience, rather than engage with the text at an analytical level.

The issues debate has been very important in the introduction of "multi-cultural"

material into the literature programme and its ramifications can be seen in these teachers' perspectives. A young White teacher speaks in an eminently sensible way of the importance of such content while at the same time placing a huge burden on the literature teaching strategy:

I think from outside the school a lot of them are coming from strong home communities and maybe the English culture is not their main...they're not exposed to that all the time but I think it's important anyway to recognise your heritage and be proud and to give everybody...we use stories from different countries.....and the reason I do that is I want everybody to feel secure in a friendly, respectful environment and it makes you feel more at ease and able to achieve, if you feel respected, if you can identify yourself. (T13)

It was not always thus; an older Black teacher recounted his experiences two decades earlier when much of this work began. He confirmed the motivating power of multi-cultural literature:

I think it was a question of ability where for GCE people, they tended to use certain types of books called the classics, where the CSE people didn't. So you were covering the range of ability, hopefully, with those two exams and then under the CSE programme a lot of books that came in were Afro-Caribbean in origin. Some of them even made the GCE league as well and those were books that some teachers especially those who were Afro-Caribbean and some informed heads of Department would push , so it always depends on who the person was whether they were convinced that it was important to do this. (T8)

However, he adds a different perspective, suggesting the underlying disciplinary reason why Black texts were supported, as a way in which Black young people, who might be disruptive, could be kept occupied. At the same time, he also remembers the other subterranean move to get the texts recognised as good literature for their own sake:

I think the intention was largely to get pupils motivated....Now part of that was based on...because there are difficulties with children in terms of behaviour and in terms of performance. So I would say that the thing that pushed people in that direction was really the question about having difficulty with such people, so finding a way of controlling them rather than necessarily a question about

education... so whatever the reason, nevertheless, it was of a value, because at that time you had books like The New Shins and you had Black authors coming in, Rosa Guy and those became quite popular but then we did move from that to GCE. (T8)

Here the teacher is offering a critique of the debate about the place and significance of Black literature which has been going on for some time. The concern was with the trivial uses of Black texts, which did not provide opportunities for students to analyse the material, because the social agenda was paramount. The effect was to keep Black writing on the margins. This issue was explored in detail by Scafe (1989) who traced the discussion about the “sociologisation” of the literature amongst African and African-American writers and critics. A strong case was being made for a reading of the text within the context of its production, which acknowledges for example the linguistic struggles that contributed to the text’s creation and forms part of its meaning. The case is also being made for allowing that reading to be part of a critical analysis, which offers insights to the guardians of the traditional canon. This is an echo of Morrison’s (1989) plea to judge Black writing on the basis of what the artist does with “the presence of the voice”. Such exploration is the kind of literature teaching which might be tackled by the teachers who emphasise Cox’s cultural analysis view of English teaching.

The Black literature debate notwithstanding, the orientation towards using literature is very strong. The value of the strategy seems to be the range of objectives that literature in English teaching fulfils and its political impact: it can be seen to be doing many different things and called in to do battle for many different causes. The following comment, for example, suggested a whole different agenda related to the internal politics of the school, which was being constructed through the process of the interview:

I think the Asian sector tends to be neglected and we should have some more Asian literature in our stock cupboard. I think that came out in the OFSTED inspection. (T12)

There are however other more pedagogical critics of the emphasis on literature:

I think it's old-fashioned to be honest with you teaching English through literature. And there are so many areas that people have uncovered over the past few years...you have to do more than just read the book again, interrogating the text.....suppose the child doesn't like a book. He's stuck with that text for a whole term to the exclusion of all else. (T5)

The emphasis on literature also included the interpretation of literature as texts and was therefore widened into media studies, with the orientation towards critically examining the material:

....we're going to start developing media studies in September as if you like an alternative to literature so you could say as a department, we're recognising non-fiction, non-literary texts. English is looking at language and communication more generally. Literature is just one element of it and we need to be aware of it and the role it's playing in our lives. (T3)

What I did with the year 10 this year was soaps and one of the angles we took was an article we found in the newspaper that actually said the Australian soaps were quite racist...and the under-representation of any except the White characters basically. (T13)

Child-centredness as the base

The second orientation in the teaching methods was towards child centredness, which is used here to refer to a broad set of strategies that proclaimed to have the interests, knowledge and experience of the child as organising principles. It had a very high rating amongst the teachers and was adopted for a variety of reasons. It could be as a rationale for the whole business of teaching, an integration of philosophy and pedagogy:

....it's my belief that all pupils have an entitlement to the same kind of broad language experience, so even the pupils with reading difficulties can access quite difficult texts so that's why with our curriculum, for example, we look at the opening of Great Expectations with year 7 and then the more able, more confident readers may choose to read the whole text but then at least all of the pupils would then have some

understanding of that story because it's a good story and Dickens is part of the National Curriculum. (T17)

Or, it might be a reaction to the prescriptions of the National Curriculum:

They [the DFE] are focusing on science and technology and to me that's kinda moving away from growth of self, holistic kind of approaches.....what to me were excellent, which is starting from the child and moving on; if they're following what they're currently preaching, they'll be starting from a set of targets and moulding the child to reach those targets in an almost indiscriminate way. (T16)

It might only take the form of diagnostic, exploratory classroom procedure:

You see the class in front of you; you see what kind of students they're composed of; what their particular interests...if you get to know them initially, from that you can decide which approach is best. (T9)

Or, it might be a carefully worked out strategy of discovery learning:

A really good moment of this was when I was doing some poetry work for about half a term, and we'd been talking about writing poetry and I'd been fairly ruthless, crossing out. They'd bring me stuff and I would say, 'This is rubbish, get rid of that. Why is that line there? And even with lower school children and I would tell them that I'm going to be nasty about it. And we work until the kids....I say, 'Which is the worst line of this poem? This is the worst. How dare you bring me a poem with the worst line in it! Go and change it! And they like it, working on imagery in their own poetry. The next thing we did, I asked them to create an extension of a story. They had their own creative writing and one of them said, 'Hey Sir, all the things you do in poetry, you have to do in ordinary writing as well don't you?' and I thought 'Yes!'. (T15)

However, the orientation to child-centredness was most strongly revealed in the teachers' attitude towards the students' language:

If you can't value the language a child brings to school...and you say to them that's not what we want here then you can't go much further with 'em. I think that's where most teachers need to begin. (T5)

I know that in some classes students are not allowed to talk in their heritage language. But in here we, actually, like...sometimes that can be a part of the process of writing, in the end, in Standard English. That's fine in here. (T13)

Sometimes the child-centred ethos was only referred to obliquely as part of a discussion about some other strategy such as drama or the highly-rated group work: the kinds of activities which encouraged personal growth and interpersonal skills:

It's a way of utilising all the experiences of the child, the children in the classroom, so no child is made to feel that they have nothing to contribute. (T14)

A lot of people didn't want to do drama work with this class because when I came they were notorious. I didn't have them as their main teacher...I was a support teacher. They did oral work but they didn't do it well at all. They didn't listen to each other. (T5)

Cross-curricular strategies

This category included the range of strategies and techniques which suggested a broader view of English as "holistic" and recursive. There was also the link between English and all the other subjects of the school curriculum. The broader view of English can be illustrated in a wider approach to writing. This activity was seen by a number of the teachers as involving the teaching of genres, which took writing tasks into wider spheres of collaborative activity as the following **illustrative** story shows:

You would say `Right, we're going to be studying maybe detective stories or ghost stories, a particular genre and by the end of that unit you will be assessed as writers from the start. You'll be going through the whole process of drafting and re-drafting. And then it's going to be published because it's going on the computer, using your IT skills. You're going to bind the book, then you're going to put the blurb onto the back. You're going to give it a title and an ISBN number and it goes into the book box for a younger year group. Now that's what I mean that they're real writers. It's all right for them to go home and do a bit of homework, do their classwork, do another chapter but they have to be able to see it in a real way and get their writing into book boxes, into the

library, become part of everybody else's.' And I think that's English teaching at its best. (T5)

Clearly English teaching is powerful and it was seen that these links needed to be strengthened, throughout the school, with a language policy:

I think it tightens the liaison between the English Department and other departments and I think that is what needs to be there....a more structured programme. (T12)

which means:

getting departments to look at and examine the literature, the texts that they provide or they put in front of pupils, how pupils access that text. (T14)

Structure/Language Awareness

The fourth area included all those language-oriented strategies which in some way acknowledged that classroom teaching related to some aspects of language and which hinted, at the very least, at some language experience other than English. Grammar was not the focus; chief among the methods was language awareness which was mentioned almost as frequently as literature, as a way of delivering the aims of the English curriculum. This seemed to be related to a recognition of the number of languages found in these London classrooms, and was referred to in different ways:

We have so many different languages spoken in this school....40 odd. And its not an issue for the kid where English is not the first language; it's unusual when that is not the case. I don't know how many of our classes would be kids who speak English as their first language. We have so many Cantonese speakers or Portuguese speakers and Bengali speakers and patois or Creole are just more amongst that lot. I'm not sure that that is a particular issue. (T6)

[on using mother tongue]..It is a part of my philosophy, for example, when I was taking 7K I realised there were at least 8 or 9 children in there who spoke Portuguese and they weren't very familiar with English either. Then I found out that some of them could understand Spanish. So it just made my work of getting to know that class much easier, simply given the

little bit of Spanish that I've got. So what I say in English I also say in Spanish, so I'm constantly working to bring them to the same level or a similar level of what we're talking about or what we're doing. The discipline that I've actually asserted on myself is that we have to give respect to everyone in this class. I have a language that I can teach alternately to the English with which we are concerned. I tend to do that even.....somebody came to see me. I'm speaking to a child and I'll say, 'Will you translate that for your mother please?' or 'Will you tell your mother what I've just said.' I don't just speak at them. (T7)

Both of the speakers above are chronicling the immense diversity and the challenges which they face daily in their classrooms, when teaching English and handling difference. It was the kind of diversity investigated by Rosen and Burgess (1980) in London schools. With some teachers, it was handled simply with a nod to English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). This was noted amongst three teachers, only one of whom had had training in the area:

So my approach is very much ESOL-based, not just with the Asian children but with those coming from an African and a Caribbean background. (T12)

This was led, it seems, by a recognition of the needs of the children they taught, especially the newer arrivals:

It's very difficult because there are so many different languages in the school and it really depends on what their native language is and how you react to that. And so literacy in their own language has a massive impact on how quickly they pick up English. (T12)

Recognition of such a reality leads to the practice of some form of mother tongue teaching:

We try and get them to write in their heritage languages and.... translate...tantamount to their developing English because you know as you learn a new language you stop one so that both languages develop simultaneously. (T11)

The influence of Jamaican Creole was still felt in some areas:

I'm thinking that on the whole they don't have the vocabulary of the Jamaican language or the Antiguan language. They

don't have the vocabulary; they don't have quite a few of the grammatical features, but if I listen to my partner's mother speaking Jamaican, I will be hearing something quite different from a child in school trying to speak Jamaican. You could call it Black British English or any one of those others.....If they're not in the majority, the Jamaican culture is the dominant culture in terms of music and the...quite often the children will say they are Jamaican when in fact their connection isn't Jamaican at all. It has a status as well; it has a group identity which they....it has a status within the Caribbean islands, in terms of what it's offering and that's basically music. (T16)

Hewitt (1989) investigated the adoption of Creole by other adolescent groups and the teacher here is acknowledging its ascendancy. However, elsewhere Creole voices could not be heard:

One, an extreme instance...I wouldn't use it to judge all. The teacher was quite elderly and it was a school where they weren't used to students directly coming from anywhere, let alone [laughter]..It was one of the Grenadine islands, the teacher told me and this was when the child had been in the class eight weeks and the teacher thought he spoke Dutch....It was English actually, an English-related Creole but she just managed not to hear anything." (T16)

In relating all of this diversity, grammar was treated very cautiously by the teachers, with one suggesting that it was "received knowledge", that it should not be taught. It was only spontaneously addressed by two of the teachers and one of them was quite ironic in recalling earlier battles in the grammar debate, as he understood them at the time:

..language became watered down in terms of the rigour, what you expected of people...you no longer taught grammar. You almost had to be ashamed of teaching grammar and insisting that people wrote proper sentences. It was more the content that mattered...the skills. The question was, it was the ideas being expressed rather than technical accuracy. Obviously if that is the trend, you follow the trend...so in a sense the tendency now to return to technical accuracy in language is something that I welcome. (T8)

This personal biography conceals the cyclical story of continuing debates about the place of grammar teaching which, significantly, did not engage these teachers.

The greatest pursuit of a language focus was in language awareness. This was mentioned by those teachers who seemed to recognise linguistic diversity in their schools and classrooms. It would seem that language awareness was an alternative to grammar, a way of paying attention to language. Knowledge about language was a very important and enduring part of the Kingman Report. Some of the teachers here seemed to have adopted and expanded those ideas. The strategy seemed to have a dual purpose, in that it was seen as a way of teaching a wide range of English practice, while at the same time maintaining the children's self-esteem:

Caribbean languages should have a place in the curriculum, not in terms of studying them as such but in terms of valuing them and using them as a teaching resource.....If they understand what you mean by Standard English dialect and other dialects and languages...It's not just the way they speak which is being demeaned when the red marks go on the paper, but its actually being able to compare and say I understand why there's a red mark through that and I understand how to correct it. (T16)

The attention to language diversity as a teaching strategy included using regional dialects of English; promoting literature in dialect; using dialect in creative writing; writing personal language histories; developing dictionaries; encouraging choral readings; staging wor(l)d journeys through language and consciously teaching knowledge about the terminology. This latter category was an alternative way of teaching grammar and dealing with problems in writing, as one teacher admitted:

all we're trying to do there is to give pupils a flavour that there is a language terminology and we're more likely to teach those specific terms about language when they come up as part of language in use.(T17)

Summary

Teaching methods in the London setting seem to come from many different

sources: personal experience, political ideas and professional practice. It is immediately noticeable that there is a wide range of strategies that the teacher draws on, and that many of these ideas seem to be in opposition to each other. The focus on literature, for example, engaged a large number of teachers but there was little agreement about how to get the most from such an emphasis on the literary part of the English curriculum.

The child is held firmly in view when these strategies are being discussed and account is taken of their needs and language background. In some cases it is the over-riding principle and again we can see that such an orientation stems from the stated aims, so that a teacher who sees English as being primarily about personal growth will promote child-centred strategies. Nevertheless, some strategies are very firmly held, suggesting some personal investment not only in the goal of teaching, but also in the method. One teacher reflected on the way the grammar debate had reverted to a position which he had maintained for two decades. Another had permitted the use of heritage languages in a climate where such activities were not universally accepted (see Ts 8 & 13). Generally, it seems, however, that linguistic diversity was accepted as a feature of London classrooms which had to be accommodated in some way. Some teachers consciously adopted those approaches which would help them handle it as effectively as they could. It was mostly seen as something to be dealt with, which at its best was a benign influence on their classroom practice. There was only one reported example of a teacher who failed to notice it.

6.2.3 Influences On Their Teaching

This question assumed that, as was the case for Jamaica, these teachers are influenced by official policy in the form of a government department in education, and this was one way in which society had an impact on the classroom.

Table 6: The influences on London teachers of English

The questions were: What do you know of the Ministry's/ the Department's position? What of the teacher education world? Did any other group influence your teaching?	
Responses	Frequency
DFE (negative/positive)	21
teacher educators	4
parents	5
everybody	1
Prince Charles	1
employers	2
NATE	1
other teachers	1
self	1

The responses showed that the influence came in two very strong forms: namely the National Curriculum and the OFSTED inspection.

The Department For Education (DFE)

The National Curriculum loomed large in the consciousness of these teachers with only one new teacher saying that she had little knowledge of it: “awful...crazy idea...unbelievable really”. Another teacher said she tried to avoid hearing anything about the minutiae of government policy. For the others, however, there was an overwhelming sense of the pervading presence of the Department for Education, so it was rarely necessary to introduce the concept of governmental authority: the teachers brought it up and it was largely a very negative sense of its influence: “the short, sharp shock of education”.

Teachers spoke of a “hidden agenda”, a “concern about elitism, about power”; “increasingly prescriptive towards demanding a standard form”; “too complex, too many ambiguities”; “authoritarian”, “treating English as a kind of science”; “a

barrage...things thrown at the kids”; and of “beaten with a stick” in “a barbed attack on bilingual students”. The violent images suggest that the National Curriculum is a form of cruelty: such is the depth of some of the alienation.

Some of the arguments were the very reasoned concerns of aggrieved professionals:

If we had been consulted; if our views and opinions on education had been seriously taken into account in devising the National Curriculum. After all who are the experts in education, if not the people who are involved in it, teachers would have been willing to take part; teachers are very hardworking. What we've got is something most of us would've made a better job of, allied to a lot of paperwork and admin that people hate because so much of it is pointless. And going through these tests, which not only are they tests, but are so prescribed in the marking and all that paperwork that goes with them, just to tell you something I could've told you about a kid anyway. (T6).

These concerns about the way the National Curriculum had undermined the ability of teachers to make curriculum decisions were aired from the inception of the debate. Simons (1988) underscored the vibrant role teachers had played in curriculum development, in the past, and predicted continued demoralisation within the teaching profession as they moved from the centre to the periphery of educational innovation.

The sense of powerlessness is felt in some of the teachers' words. Many of them hated the prescription and the uniformity even for projects they would normally encourage:

They talk about being accountable but it's the prescription that bothers me. It's the fact that next term I have to do the languages project so that they get their bit of dialect. (T15)

However, the element of standardisation and equity is exactly what leads another teacher to give the curriculum qualified support:

..it can put a whole department together and you can maintain equal opportunities so that all students are getting the same

access, not just what each individual teacher wants to teach.
(T13)

Not all teachers are opposed to the National Curriculum, as the following extracts further show:

Because it's such an integral part of the English teaching, that's why I didn't question it and one can be creative with the National Curriculum.....Teachers have to be aware of where every child is at, at particular times, in Key Stage 1, 2, 3 or 4 and that's good. It makes teachers constantly assess and reassess, not only their teaching and learning, but what...how they teach. (T14)

People just can't go in there and teach what they want to teach every day. They know the HMI is coming....but how Romeo and Juliet is taught is still dependent to a certain extent on the teacher. (T9)

And when everybody was saying, 'Oh no this was just a lot of change', we were trying to be positive about it and saying 'Well what's the best thing about English that's been retained in the National Curriculum?'. (T5)

It is worth noting that these are three Black teachers and amongst this sample Black teachers gave the most consistent support to the National Curriculum, suggesting that it gave greater power to parents and forced teachers to provide more quality opportunities to Black children. One explanation of the position of these teachers can be found in **The Autobiography of the Project** where I discussed one group of parents' distrust of a set of perceived progressive ideas, related to the use of Creole in reading. There it was felt that the children were the subjects of untried and possibly unworkable pedagogical practices carried out by those whom, they felt, held no allegiance to them. Black teachers come from these communities and have to respond willingly or unwillingly to the concerns of their communities.

Clearly, the National Curriculum is not simply a case of teachers against government, as many factors govern the teachers' position. Many teachers, at the time these interviews were carried out, were against it and saw it as a threat to their

professionalism and a brake on their creativity. Other teachers saw it as introducing accountability into the profession and giving some power to parents. The reason why a larger proportion of Black teachers might have supported the National Curriculum is a point which will be discussed later.

The OFSTED inspection was dreaded by those who had experienced, or who were about to experience, it. The first comment always related to the amount of paperwork which was attendant on an inspection:

..they have very firmly laid down guidelines for how they will inspect, which HMIs in the past didn't have, so when they come in there's this huge great book over there which tells you what's going to happen, so when they come in you know what they're going to go about looking at, how they're going to go about looking at it, which is fair enough. It's better to know that but at the same time, one of the first things, something they need to see even before they come in, is mountains and mountains of paperwork, documentation: action plans, development plans, schemes of work; millions and millions of pieces of paper. All of that is very draining on people...we haven't been done yet. (T6)

This reference suggests the beginning of the mythology of circulated stories, heard many times, about the OFSTED inspection. The teachers who had just been inspected before my interview felt very bruised by the experience:

When you've sort of been put on a list as a cause for concern and you're dubbed a failing school...you had better get your act together, pretty damn quick (T1)

But although this school did get through the exercise, and one of the teachers showed her willingness to reflect:

I think it's something I've got to re-think and a lot of teachers my age have got to re-think,

there was still a sense in the interviews of teachers defensively providing the perennial explanation of school failure: the children were described as of low ability on at least 12 occasions during the interview. There were references to "low academic attainment", "low ability", "low achievers in GCSE", "not true mixed ability", "only ten percent band one children", and "poor families" from "the

council estate". What seemed to have happened is that the label of "a failing school" had been internalised by the teachers and placed firmly on to the children.

Other forces in the education system had much less influence on the teachers. They were, for example, quite neutral about the role of teacher education, seeing their influence as on the whole very specific and individual. Teaching practice, however, was seen, especially by the newer teachers, as a great influence, because it gave them access to more experienced teachers:

.....much more so than the new education department....taught me everything...like a role model. (T12)

Other teachers were also mentioned as an influence, in the form of teachers' professional organisations. The English Magazine, with its strong London base, was mentioned, not just as a journal with wide circulation, but more philosophically, as a synonym for certain progressive and child-centred positions which were now under threat. The National Association for the Teaching of English (NATE) was supported for its holistic approaches to language and its advocacy of a functional model of language.

Parents

Parents were perhaps seen as the next most influential group in society affecting how teachers teach. They had become powerful because of their introduction into the school system by the DFE:

... they always draw on the parents but I don't know which parents they're talking to but they always imply that they're backing their views. (T16)

We've got parents who see us, as y'know, who have quite a low opinion of teachers. We have pupils who are told, get that kind of message from home. (T17)

Consequently some teachers did not trust them:

..for most part they're poorly informed, as they don't read printed matter like TES. (T10)

Other teachers saw the contribution of parents as a benign influence, in some cases, and even a worthwhile contribution at other times :

It [the national curriculum] does give parental power: it does enable a parent to be able to say, these are my three areas, where is my child in relation to that? The local descriptors are helpful to parents.....I think assessment has made teachers more accountable and I don't think that's a bad thing. (T14)

I think there's been a shift in terms of recognising that the culture needs to be taught at home...there's also the push towards Saturday schools...We've encouraged parents to be involved in the schools..we've encouraged them to make tapes for us as such. (T16)

In this latter instance it is a case of Black parents becoming a resource in the school and helping the teacher in her delivery of the curriculum.

Other influences

The parent was the only significant recurring influence mentioned by the teachers. One other interesting influence suggested by a number of teachers was their own knowledge and experience:

It certainly came from my education in this country....and personally, as a Black individual, knowledge about my language and culture. And caring about the students I teach.(T9)

Employers, with Prince Charles, were seen as a negative influence merely concerned with prescriptions, yet one teacher presented a very reasoned argument for keeping them at a distance:

They're forever publishing reports saying school children don't have such good English as they used to have. They want people to have English of a particular type. What they want is for schools to train people for jobs they and their members have. But I don't think the school is there to train people for jobs.... it's there to educate people. Certainly if people are coming out of school unable to use English, well that is a concern,....We should be teaching them, to equip them to face the world, to think for themselves and to face the world. (T6)

A number of teachers felt the influences were too all-encompassing to mention, because everybody had a view on English.:

I think most people nowadays seem to think that they are experts don't they? I think it's become a political issue and it's so publicised by the newspapers that they feel they know.(T9)

It is a common sense notion of English, as a school subject, needing no expert knowledge before an individual can make judgements. What is being suggested here was prefigured in the Newbolt Commission.

Summary

When discussing influences, the teachers mentioned a number of factors in passing: the media, Prince Charles, other teachers, educators and their own experience. Parents had a significant effect. However, the DFE more than any other factor was seen by them as the major troubling influence on their thinking and on their practice, an impact which could be either positive or negative.

6.3.THE RESPONSE STATEMENTS: THE CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

This discussion parallels the discussion on language in the Jamaican setting but is significantly different from it. During the course of the interviews in Jamaica, it became clear, very early on, that the bilingual language situation, with its challenges and contradictions, was the major factor in the teacher's work. The direction of the investigation also had a central focus on language. However, as the London teachers began to speak about what they saw as the aims of English and the most effective approaches to teaching, it seemed that their reference point was not necessarily the language background of the child, even if the students themselves were recent arrivals from Jamaica. Their concerns were more varied and so a clear direction took some time to emerge. These concerns coalesced around a number of issues which form the Response Statements. They include but do not limit the scope of the discussion: changes in the approach to Creole in the classroom; black male behaviour; underachievement; class and gender; the role of

the English teacher and the National Curriculum. These seem largely political questions i.e. questions about institutional and public power relations, but the process of the analysis led to the conclusion that culture was also a very important factor in defining the texture of classroom discourse. This focus on the culture is in line with the understanding of the concept discussed in Chapter Three: of a bounded contextual space in which there are agents who act in, and upon, the situation to transform that space and the meanings taken from it.

6.3.1. Response Statement 1L: Creole in the classroom; diversity in the classroom

1L.” I remember I had to be quite protective of my Black students back in the early 80s because they used to get embarrassed when I introduced some Black writings in the classroom.....Now children are far more confident because they share each others’ language so much, you wouldn’t get the situation of everybody trying to hide under the desk when they see the piece of dialect.” (RS1L)

This first Response Statement suggested that Creole use was now less contested and had, in fact, been settled, with the arguments won. The true position was more problematic. In considering their attention to Creole in the classroom, the teachers’ practice was as almost as varied as Hewitt’s (1989) mapped positions, which charted the range of ways the language was being used in the classroom. He noted the political orientations, which informed the positions that educators took, about how Creole should be treated in the classroom. The “liberal-humanist” emphasised Creole as a community language and part of the likely “repertoire” of the children. The “socialist” position maintained that Creole, as the marginalised voice of the Black working class, should not be excluded from the classroom. The “conservative” voices eschewed notions of linguistic relativity, insisting that a non-standard language had no place in the classroom. The “black radical” position firmly supported Creole use. In developing these positions Hewitt also outlined the use of Creole in literature, history, creative writing, drama and as a way of expanding classroom discourse. In these responses, the teachers showed that in

many cases the discussion had moved since the earlier hesitant attempts at multiculturalism. The White teachers had several stories of the students' involvement, with a strong "liberal-humanist" stance:

I'd give him pre-warning and get him perhaps to read some of the stuff that he's an expert on and I'm not an expert on.
(T15)

The aims were noble at the time: "the image of Black people was increased in the eyes of the students"; there was "enrichment" and "engagement". However, the primary idea emerging from the teachers' texts was the notion of development in the thinking, and the practice, in the classroom. The dominant metaphor centred around images of "change", "the shift" and "the pendulum swings", suggesting a degree of movement, of instability in the whole concept of how Creole is used in the classroom.

The teachers reflected on the innocence of some of the early activities, and one story revealed the innocence of the approach and also the shift in the thinking:

I remember there was a time for me as a White middle-class teacher coming into London when suddenly you discovered ethnicity. Suddenly you were all the time getting children to write in dialect, read this in dialect for me and everything. And then you thought hang on a second...this is actually not necessary; it's not for the kids' benefit; it's for my benefit.
(T15)

Even as this teacher was questioning his motives, a critique was also emerging, querying for example the unchallenging nature of some of the "watered down" material:

In some cases the texts that were produced or the ones that we used were largely the ones that catered for the lower ability than for the top of the ability. I think of the rigour of some of the traditional texts. (T8)

Now the texts have changed and the teacher, as reported in Response Statement 1L, will expect her students to demonstrate increased confidence in manipulating the material. This, however, is not the full picture, as another teacher avoids using dialect in her classroom, because the composition of the school inhibits her:

Like the school in Sheffield where I taught about 50-70 percent of children in the classroom had Jamaican Creole as a background language or some had French Creole. There children would volunteer to use the language and it was a very, very positive thing there. Here I wouldn't do it. (T2)

But a Black teacher feels confident to use such material and to take chances in a way Teachers 2 and 15 would not, indicating the myriad ways in which teachers have to read classrooms and understand the culture they are working in:

So I'll read it and they'll giggle something chronic for two minutes and then they will listen to the whole story, for example The Thief in the Village by James Berry. I read the whole thing in dialect. After about two minutes of giggling and being embarrassed they were there listening to this and everybody in the room understood what the story was about, even though it was supposed that they wouldn't because it is in dialect...We worked on why it was different in terms of grammatical structures. We worked on what was the dialect and so forth. So from there I was able to look at poems from Lancashire, poems from Cockney and so forth....Children are easily adaptable and they love the opportunity to hear their mom's or dad's patois in their classroom. (T14)

There are other teachers who feel confident enough to use a wide variety of literature to create stable, homogeneous classrooms where children "feel secure in a friendly, respectful environment". Nevertheless, doubts are also raised about the intentions of the Conservative government in implementing a National Curriculum, where there are few Black texts and a renewed emphasis on spoken standard English:

The logic is very clear....they are consciously driving any use of dialect from the classroom.....driving out this other culture. I find it extremely worrying, because standard English is not the most common form of spoken English; it's the minority, it's the smallest in terms of what people actually speak. I mean dialect speakers don't come from far away... and it's the feeling you get that they're driving out that; they are driving out this other culture, driving out the politics, the politics of language but the rest of the country speak in dialect. I mean, even the dialect of London is really mild...it's only when you get to Buckinghamshire and further up. If you can't get towards standard English without making positive reference to the way you speak, quite honestly, I don't see any hope of

the majority of the country getting to it. (T16)

The teachers' words here reveal that the minor advance in the use of multi-cultural material, while initially seeming secure, is under threat, because the rationale for its inclusion in the curriculum is being questioned on all sides, with the likelihood of a regression back to monocultural classrooms. The debate about Creole is perhaps not as intense now as Hewitt suggested, but it has not been settled, and a lot of the practice is mediated by personal and political pressures.

6.3.2. Response Statements 2L, 3L & 4L: Black Male Behaviour/Underachievement/Race and Class

(A rationale for some Black boys' behaviour)

2L. "They're kicking against authority, specifically if children perceive that the structures of the school are racist and if the Black boys think that the Heads and Deputies are these white middle class people who look down on them because they're Black...they're going to kick up". (RS2L)

(Underachievement)

3L. "Afro-Caribbean underachievement is nothing to do with the inability in language....they might have fallen behind by the time they get to secondary school but there are social and economic reasons for this. The tendency was to try and cater to them by giving them less demanding texts. That's not solving the problem...that's inaccurate. There's something more radically wrong." (RS3L)

4L. (A different view)

"The kids who do least well are White working class boys. Failure is about class and gender". (RS4L)

These three statements appeared one after another and were linked by the

respondents even before they appeared as Response Statements. They were viewed as some of the most problematic areas for discussion, in that they reflected some of the most insoluble problems in urban schools. It is important to say from the outset that this was not the view of all teachers. One who immediately linked race to a question about accounting for a Jamaican Creole language background, denied its influence on her teaching:

What I take account of is how they perceive themselves in society. I'm aware of the Black perspective. I automatically assume that the native English speaking, the White children, that their sympathies will be with the Black children. And so far it's always worked because they're given the power, everyone in the class. It's not a sort of I'm White, you're Black thing. I just operate from a point of view of equality.
(T10)

Although addressed here unproblematically, language and race are linked in this respondent's mind. The race construct was addressed very early on as of central importance beyond language. It was seen as explicable by other factors such as a response to discrimination, as RS2L showed. Individuals react to racism. Discussion around this area soon led to the concept of underachievement and its more serious interrogation, linking it with factors other than race. RS3 suggests that there are "social and economic reasons" for underachievement, but these are not spelt out. The third in this group of Statements attributes failure to class and gender:

You'll find that White kids also fall behind and it's for the same reason. (T8)

Several of the teachers referred to the use of language by Black boys as a way of defining their difference: for example, to exclude White teachers from their particular version of the classroom discourse. One story recounted by a teacher tells how a group of boys used language to remind her that she was outside their world, but she ends her story with:

It's quite enjoyable for them to have the power for a change.

It is interesting to note how well the teacher recognises that language here is being used to construct alternative sites of power. There is also the suggestion that, in the

culture of the classroom, language can be used to construct working agreements.

Simply to consider race as a factor in classrooms did not mean that the assumption on which RS2L was based, of Black boys kicking against authority, was accepted: the whole notion of African-Caribbean underachievement was questioned:

I have lots of children in my year, bright Caribbean children who are achieving and achieving highly. So I worry about blanket statements that all African-Caribbean are underachieving and they're not! And my children that are experiencing the most problems are not educationally needy. They're bright Black boys. They don't have difficulties reading; they don't have difficulties in writing: that is not the issue. (T14)

Again, the explanation is placed elsewhere and takes a cultural direction:

They are being expelled. I'm not denying that but what I'm saying is that what a White person may classify as being rude or challenging behaviour or being disruptive, I don't always see it that way. I just feel that there is some parts of the black culture that is part of the culture and that when they push up their face, it don't necessarily mean that they're going to deck you. They're angry and that's the way they're expressing their anger which is not always the way a White person wants to see it.....all you can do is give them strategies, so they are aware of what they are doing and what other people might find acceptable not only in school, but in society. (T14)

There is cultural dissonance and here is a Black teacher who sees part of her role as initiating the children into a particular culture. So even though African-Caribbean underachievement is not accepted, a cultural rather than a socio-economic rationale is offered for it, if it does occur. Similarly, another teacher in rejecting the notion of Black underachievement, points to her area of concern:

They come from poor families; a lot of parents are unemployed and they're the ex-East London families, White working-class being decamped when the houses are knocked down. Achievement in education isn't.....parents really don't know how to support them... it's immediate gratification for a lot, not for everyone. The Black children in the school are the achievers. (T2)

This assertion was qualified in the point of view offered in RS4L, where class and gender provide the explanation but where the example:

The kids who achieve most consistently are Black, Asian and Chinese girls. (T2)

also suggests a cultural dimension, where not all girls succeed.

The teachers were resisting the idea of Black underachievement from all perspectives:

So from the little bit of research that we've done, we're beginning to see the pattern that all of these children evidence all the features that we've identified as being linked to Caribbean languages. All of those features are evidenced in all the children's writing. Our feeling is that in a sense we are all dialect users. The majority of children in this borough are dialect users of one kind or another. (T16)

Yet, there were allusions to the perception of Black boys as threatening from at least two teachers:

I think some people get really nervous about not being able to understand. And it can be abused. I think some teachers if they have a control head on [think] that might be the idea. (T13)

And in two of the schools the evidence was volunteered by the teachers that Black boys were excluded in proportions far greater than their numbers in the school. A possible explanation of the paradox was:

It's like there's two extremes. There are those at the top and then there are non-entries who don't get the chance to do English at all...of Afro-Caribbean descent...so there's a core of very, very motivated students. (T9)

Here is the beginning of two categories: those willing to be schooled and who achieve within the school system, with the support of teachers Black and White; and those unschooled for a variety of reasons. Here, these reasons are said to include class and a Black male persona displayed in language which teachers, largely, do not understand. With such a categorisation, one possible direction is being offered to add to the multiplicity of answers and the range of possibilities needed to explain underachievement. This is a direction already hinted at in the

Literature Review with reference to Fordham (1988), who pointed to a perceived link by African-American high school students between achievement and racelessness: doing well meant losing your culture and this was resisted by some students. The gendered basis of the distinction is strengthened by the perception that girls are more disposed towards achievement and identification with the dominant White culture. Similar work in Britain (Mac an Ghiall: 1996; Sewell:1997) has also suggested that the categories being hinted at here by the teachers are beginning to emerge in schools.

Summary

Underachievement was a major preoccupation of the teachers in these urban schools. Although encountering a large number of African-Caribbean children, there was resistance to labelling them as failures, suggesting a strong anti-racist stance. Again it was noticeable that the Black teachers were the most vigorous in adopting this stance. A number of different factors were offered as the explanation of underachievement: namely class, gender and cultural differences. Examination of those cultural differences showed that the classroom is not just the site for specific agents, constructed by factors outside. The classroom encounter also involves processes that require specific knowledge of discourse practices, to guide the behaviour and to contribute to the maintenance of that space within. For example, recognising how some Black boys use language to delineate identity, and yet remaining unthreatened by its display is an implication of this discussion. Of importance too, is an understanding of the meanings the boys attach to achievement. There are ways of seeing and knowing, which have to be acknowledged, and part of the teaching project is showing students alternative ways of seeing and understanding.

The teachers' evaluation of underachievement issues is significant, in light of recent work carried out through OFSTED (Gillborn & Gipps, 1996). Their review of research on underachievement in inner-city schools shows that:

The situation is too varied to talk of 'black under-

achievement' (Gillborn & Gipps, 1996: 28)

Gillborn and Gipps' review of quantitative data suggests that girls from different ethnic backgrounds are doing equally well, but African-Caribbean boys continue to do badly. Qualitative research sought to explain that situation suggesting that classroom interactions exist in a volatile mix of stereotypical expectations, misunderstandings and mis-communication. Such conclusions make Tomlinson (1983) quite current in her call for more research on:

..how current belief systems and historically residual theories which minority groups hold about one another can affect the educative process. (Tomlinson, 1983: 5)

The comments of the teachers in this investigation are, therefore, very perceptive in drawing on the many factors which are beginning to account for underachievement.

6.3.3. Response Statement 5L: The National Curriculum

5L. "In some ways what's happening now is quite good. You have to be more accountable. It can draw a department closer together". (RS5L)

Although the National Curriculum has already been discussed in terms of English teaching, a further dimension was drawn by several teachers about the use of the new curriculum to impose an ill-conceived uniformity on a diverse population. The debate in 1995, about a further narrowing of the requirements for English, was of great significance to teachers who inhabited unquestionably multi-lingual classrooms:

Again all the politics about standard English, again now.....
It's not just the writing of it but the speaking of it. That debate has not gone away. For some reason the government keeps slipping it in. (T5)

As the attempt was bound to fail, they saw it as really an attempt at:

creating a divided country where some people can do well and not others. (T11)

This is a very damning comment, but it suggests that conflict is not just a by-

product but an intention of the Revised Orders of 1995. None of the teachers supported the emphasis on linguistic uniformity, but the suggestion was that those in fear of their jobs go along with practices they know are unworkable:

We ask children to question texts; we ask children to question everything in society and yet adults don't always do that. (T14)

..when it comes to it, if I have to teach a unit of Dickens, I teach a unit of Dickens. (T15)

Teachers are, therefore, operating in classes where they are carrying out the work half-heartedly, without a sense of commitment and this, they feel, affects their teaching. In such a way the culture of schooling, those particular ways of seeing and knowing, is not only created, but also distorted, because of the lack of consensus about what should be taught.

6.3.4. Response Statement 6L: The teacher as English professional

6L. Everybody thinks that they can teach English but English teaching has changed drastically....it's not just about experience...you need the background of strategies which comes from training and keeping yourself abreast". (RS6L)

This Statement is linked to the last and is important in two ways. First, it compares with our discussions about how Jamaican teachers saw themselves and how they were viewed by the society historically. Second, it is relevant here because of the way in which the interviews, and especially the discussions around the National Curriculum, forced the teachers to consider who they were as teachers; how they should respond as professionals; and what that professionalism, which was now being threatened, actually meant. The Response Statement acknowledged that English had changed significantly over the years and that only with training and reflection could the teacher meet the challenges of the profession. Some teachers were quite satisfied with their practice, if they could be left alone:

I'm not the old fuddy duddy teacher...I used to be the bright

young thing at the front of the class. Now it seems everything is going backwards. It seems to me given a class, I sort of know what the kids need, what they haven't learn yet and what they need to go through. And suddenly I have a whole lot of pressures on me about what I should be doing and they interfere with what I want to do. And I find I'm always rushing to finish off something or fit something in. (T15)

Others felt there were gaps in what they did:

I mainly did my degree on like twentieth-century literature and I did this option on twentieth-century language, on language change, on racism and sexism in language and that sort of thing....I did Russian formalism and Marxism and all this business. Bakhtin. Yea, right. I did all the things I thought were radical and I had all the tutors who were like....I did some Chaucer. I like that, yea but I have this gap which I'm trying to address...(T13)

Others had already set out to address their perceived weaknesses:

You can easily come into teaching, do the same thing year out and year in. You can have an experience sixteen times, that's my philosophy. This has given me impetus in the way I teach. So it's really exciting for me. (T14)

I think it's really important that teachers don't become institutionalised. By that, I feel that it's very important that teachers don't stay in school for very long periods at a time. I think that five years is enough. After that they should get a job away from teaching. (T11)

The latter comment might seem extreme but most of the above is a denial of the Newbolt notion of the teacher of English as any literate person with a social purpose. It is also a rebuff of educational planners, and others in authority, who have felt that educational policy decisions could be made without the involvement of teachers. These teachers are prepared to assess the breadth of their knowledge and acknowledge what they feel they need, in the subject of English, to be better teachers of English. They refer to the importance of being properly qualified, so "a career move" out of Sociology required additional training for a fairly new graduate. Another, who started with an "unusual" background, went on to a diploma and MA in English. There is a strong core of professional pride, a sense that they know what they are talking about even if the government prefers not to consult them:

I've always taught a little Shakespeare. I've always...I object to certain writers being on the list and certain others who are equally valuable not being on the list. (T2)

They also recognise that some parents hold them in less than high esteem:

I think our status in society is very low. I think it's just above where a social worker is and I think we work very hard to earn respect....teachers are working sixty hours a week, every single week, thinking of innovative creative ways to keep their pupils interested, for their pupils to learn something so that they can pass their GCSE, their exams at the end of the day. And a sense that we're not really praised for what we do. (T17)

The English teachers present a profession which feels less than well regarded by those outside. And this compares with the strong sense of well-being exhibited by the Jamaican teachers. The comparison here will be extended to the next section and will have implications in 6.5. when London classrooms are observed.

6.4. SCHOOLING AND CULTURE: Jamaica and London

Although it was not part of the design of the project, I was able to interview three London teachers who had taught in Jamaica. This number is significant in such a small sample of teachers, underscoring the historical context of the linkages between the two settings that is an important part of this study. The additional data collected served to clarify the insights, regarding schooling as a cultural process, relating to their roles as teachers and their students' reception of those roles. The three London teachers who had taught in Jamaica used that background to explain and describe their thinking and practice at home. Two of them were equivocal about the experience of teaching in Jamaica. One found:

.....that the standard of work, the writing is very different..In some ways it can be quite mechanical I find. It seems that in some ways they've been taught set phrases...this is how you start off a letter.....this is what you put in. There's not much of the personal coming out and in terms of the mechanics of language.....much, much better.....And again I feel they've been taught; they've been drilled. (T9)

Another gave an **explanatory** story as a part of an autobiographical framing, but the structure and feel of the narrative suggests a vividly lived experience:

In Jamaica when I first met them, I couldn't quite get used to the streaming arrangements because they had streaming after the first year. And I had this group of Year 9 pupils....no Year 8 and when I first met them I asked them what was the title of your group and they said '8F'. And I said, 'What does that mean?' and they said, 'Low band Miss'. And I said, 'Excuse me, as far as I'm concerned, let's get this straight from the word go. There's no low band or upper band'. I said, 'Everybody has the chance in every class I teach...I don't teach down there. I teach up there and that's where you'll end up'. By the time I finished at that school, when my second in department came he couldn't believe what they were saying. He said, 'You weren't doing this when I was teaching you'.
(T5)

Even though the teacher expresses dissatisfaction with the schooling process she encountered, the narrative breathes a sense of fulfilment, of goals achieved with relative ease.

The third teacher had a much more positive initial impression:

I found it a reprieve the whole year in Jamaica.....I found the classroom less stressful even though the class size is bigger and I was teaching a subject I was rather rusty on...I couldn't believe that I could do almost anything I wanted.....Some of the methods I might try, the girls found them slightly unusual but having said that, they wouldn't say I don't want to do this. I found these pupils highly motivated and I think that without sounding disloyal to my own education system here, that is not always the case here for various reasons. (T17)

According to these teachers, there are differences in the two settings: in terms of the content of the curriculum; the organisation of the schools; and the attitude of the children towards school. The differences are manifested in the consent offered to the teacher to participate in a particular cultural process and to direct the discourse. This is the case even if the teacher is from another culture or from another race; it is possible for her to work within these classrooms. Consequently,

we see not just a set of practices, albeit very important practices forged by past experience, but we also see an acceptance of the teacher's obligation to manage the space.

6.5. CLASSROOMS OBSERVED

As the Jamaican classrooms focused on interaction and the content of the Response Statements so too will the London observations. What I want to look at are the kinds of discourses teachers and students create in classrooms where the focus is not so clearly on English, and where Creole is one of many languages available to the students. This is against a background of the Response Statements which focused on socio-cultural topics such as underachievement and the questioning of the role of the teacher within the context of the National Curriculum. It was not possible, or desirable, to remain with a straightforward language focus if this was not the only, or even the main, preoccupation of the teachers. The change in emphasis was an inevitable result of their responses. Nevertheless, it is important to re-state that these were a small number of lessons originally conceived as a means of illustrating the teachers' views about the methods, but which came to reveal much more. They are not meant to portray all of the types of classrooms found in the urban setting but more clearly to exemplify the range of lessons seen, similar to the kinds of lessons I have encountered in the past as teacher and trainer. This re-statement should bring to mind Denzin's (1994) discussion on legitimation and earlier discussions on the nature of validity in a study employing ethnographic principles. Nevertheless, **The Autobiography of the Project** offered the basis for a selection of data based on the tacit knowledge that these are illustrative examples of real London classrooms. A series of lessons are now described in some detail and moments will be taken from them for discussion.

Lesson 1

T. writes on the board as he explains what they will be doing:

(In a previous lesson, as it was the D-day anniversary; they had read a story about Joby, a boy in the Second World War. The story includes a daydream in the barber shop.)

1. Neat copy in folders of day dream story.
2. Start day dream writing if it hasn't been done.
3. Do a worksheet if the writing is too difficult.
4. Read a book, from the Book Box, if all the writing is finished.

As soon as the teacher completes the writing on the chalkboard, a number of steady conversations begin around me, about other matters:

"See Rockers on Channel Four last night."

"Oh yea, that wuz ruf."

"Did the bullet do it?"

"Who's the manager of Man United?"

.....

"I can't do this, Sir. Can I do it for homework?"

"I don't like this rubbish!"

T offers help:

Have you written the sentence about when you had a daydream? Go on to the next bit."

Two boys sit in their corner, using Portuguese to each other and oblivious to what is around them; two girls are doing the same.

The student again: *"Can I write in patois?"*

T: *"Yes it would be quite suitable to do so; it's your daydream."*

S: *"Gimme the bracelet!"*

"That's not Jamaican, that's English."

The writing part of the lesson is coming to an end and the teacher writes the homework on the board:

1. Finish work on "Daydreams."
2. Check carefully and copy for folder.
3. If finished, do reading.

A support teacher of Indian extraction comes into the room for the start of the Reading class. He brings in the Book Box. There is a range of material provided.

Included in the Box is the Heinemann Guided Readers, “reading material for all learners of English”: most of these are left in the Box after all the class has chosen a text. The same demanding student is observed sub-vocalising as he reads. He is still working on his piece of writing and using the helping paragraph the teacher has given him. He is easily distracted:

1. He mimics the African accent of another student
2. He teases other students
3. Clearly, within earshot, he mimics the voice of the Indian teacher and his pronounced squint: *“Is he looking at me or you?”*

He seems to find it highly amusing but upsets the teacher who begins a lot of “shushing” and “Stop talking!” to keep down the laughing. He attempts to take charge of the class by sending out three boys: One of them is a Vietnamese boy named Chen who gets very upset and departs into some sort of London Jamaican: *He’s mad yanou. He have a mash-op eye. He duon even know English.”*

The Black child does the same thing and quarrels with the teacher:

“Shut op styar! Taak tu im, styar, not just me.”

The lead teacher maintains an emphatic, clipped tone, in face of this raging language.

Lesson 2

This is an English-led Integrated Studies class with some Year 7 students. They are using the text **Billy Liar**. The class begins with a piece of unrelated dictation and the students are quite quiet. This lasts for about 5 minutes.

The teacher then questions: *Who took down most of the words? Who took some? Who had real difficulty?*

The children respond with a show of hands. They move onto filling in their **English Record Book**. They spend some 5-10 minutes filling these in. They also have a Reading Log to be used for assessment. The children are expected to write responses. The class then moves on to oral questions on the class reader Billy Liar, based on the sections they have read so far. They are primarily recall

questions:

T: *Why was Billy at home?*

They start to read around the class. The teacher has a strong personality and is very sharp with behaviour deemed inappropriate.

T: *Manuel, main yu bizniz. I didn't ask you, I asked Natasha.*

As Natasha reads, they come across a new word.

T: *Senile, now what does that mean? Look it up.*

After a pause one girl gives the correct meaning but offers a reason for her knowledge to the teacher.

S: *Only cos my mum calls the dog it.*

T: *Why?*

S: *Because he's old and thick!*

They continue to read **Billy Liar** using a Northern accent. They are directed to pick out the unusual Northern words. They start to throw them up:

Ss: *Well as like.....anyroad*

A Fire Drill brings the class to a swift end. After 20 minutes we return to the classroom but it is time to go home. The teacher dismisses the class and takes one child to the side, about some earlier misbehaviour.

T: *I don't like the company you're keeping. Need I say more?*

There is much shaking of head from the pupil. He has to do lines: "I attend school regularly; I get to lessons on time"

He sits down to do them, as the others are leaving.

During another lesson with the same teacher an Eritrean parent comes in bringing her child's swimming things with her. The teacher welcomes her, smiling and helpful. As the parent is leaving, the teacher asks her to speak to her son about his behaviour. The mother does not understand, so another member of the class is asked to translate.

Lesson 3

About half of this Year 9 class are seated when the class starts with a question from a student.

S: *Are we in groups today?*

T: *Yes...you're over here. Not you Leon, you're under my nose.*

The children come dribbling in.

T: *I think I should talk to Mr S----- about the time you get in....Time to settle down now.*

The teacher is moving around checking that they all have books in each group. The Cover teacher (CT) is trying to find a space with a group known to be the slowest.

CT: *It's easier for you to move that chair rather than for me to go round.*

S: *I'm sitting here*

The CT gives up and sits around the other side. Children are still dribbling in.

T: *Right, now I'm ready 9K. I've been ready since you walked in the room in dribs and drabs. Is there a reason for this?*

There is no response so she continues.

T: *So far the shared reading has been going quite well hasn't it? Last time I asked you to focus on the language the writer used. Look at the passage selected. Try and remember what you're doing with it....*

There's an altercation at the side of the room.

S1: *She's got my pen.*

S2: *No I haven't!*

The children settle down to read in their groups and write. They are reading The Village by the Sea by Anita Desai; Lord of the Flies by William Golding; Bridge to Terrabithia by Katherine Pete. In one child's book are the following instructions:

Comment on the following: descriptions - adjectives, length of sentences, feelings created, choice of words, meaning

T: *Let me remind you that I'm writing your reports.*

S3: (under her breath but loud enough for me to hear): *Big deal!*

S4 (Kadia, a girl who has recently come from Jamaica): *You know what I mean!.....I'm going to beat you up (to another boy).....I'm going to fall asleep in this lesson (to anybody it seems).*

The teacher is continuing from the front. She wants them to read and discuss the book in groups: examine a page of text; discuss the language feature. She reads a sentence but there were a number of interruptions. Door slams, but it is a teacher with a note about why two other children might be late: they were sent to the form

teacher.

Kadia now has to stand by the door; She cannot stop giggling, yawning noisily

Another girl comes in late; door slams.

T: You could be more careful

S: He kicked me, didn't he! What was I supposed to do then?

She moves to a seat as the teacher exhorts.

T: You've got to be able to apply yourself because the exams will require it. Those of you who are not taking it seriously, will suffer.....If you get to the end of chapter you should fill in your chapter summaries.

Throughout this the Cover Teacher does very little except support the lead teacher.

CT: If I have one pound for every interruption I'd be rich.

(Three children in this class are recent arrivals from Jamaica: two seemed to have settled reasonably well; one, Kadia, seemed to be totally unsettled.)

Lesson 4

Getting to this class begins with a dash from the Head of Year to her class. On the way she meets a parent who wants to explain that she took her child out of school, because she had to go to the dentist and wanted her daughter to accompany her.

When we enter the class is getting settled with a teacher on teaching practice (ST).

The Head of Year who is the lead teacher (LT) takes over.

LT: Right before you begin, you need to fill in the sheet honestly. Now 4 groups worked well and so that's a bonus of 10 points.

There is stir of commotion.

LT: Ok...so, can you quickly do it?

I sit with one group who are grading themselves on their group skills: on time; home work; contributes ideas; listens to others; encourages others. They have called themselves Cactus, because they liked the sound of the word. The group consisted of 2 girls and one boy. The girls worked at grading themselves and seemed to be very conservative in the marks they were awarding each other. The boy seemed less concerned; he did not pay much attention and turned to talk to another boy in another group. The girls showed me the poetry anthology they sometimes used, with a collection of poems on nature, feelings, mystery, ballads, news, and tragedy. The student teacher is giving the instructions.

ST: *What I want you to do today is to think about the plays (?) and break them down into 6 key moments. We're not doing drama with it it's a storyboard. You know what that is? What we'll do is a trial run. Basically, I want you to divide it up...so that with each of these you're going to draw a quick picture...a sketch. It doesn't have to be brilliantly artistic. These are used by advertisers and filmmakers to work out their sequences...it's what they actually frame...as camera shot.....it could be an everyday situation...making a cup of tea, getting dressed. I want you to divide that into 6.*

Some commotion as one boy knocks a drink on his group. The ST is still talking..

ST: *Right, I'm waiting, come on...will someone explain to me what I asked you to do...Did everyone hear that? In your groups, decide on an everyday situation. When you decided on it, think about how you can break it down to six key pictures. You have five minutes to do it.*

S (chorus): *Five minutes!*

Hubbub, as they start. The ST walks around; children go up to the lead teacher. I ask my group what they are going to do. The boy says he does not know. one of the girls says: *"Oh he never listens; we just tell him."*

S(girl): *What are we going to do? What situation? Going to bed? (to the boy) Can you draw it? First of all you're tired, wiping your eyes....taking your clothes off....having a wash....walking up the stairs.....Miss!*

ST: *Now, everyone swop around.....*

Hubbub

LT: *Bonus points of 10 to ----- twice now, they're the only group looking at Miss and listening.*

Quietness reigns.

ST: *I want you to tell me what's happening...going to bed....right having a wash..*

She takes from all groups and writes on the board.

ST: *Now what I want you to do is the same type of thing again but with captions this time. Wait a moment. Don't start yet. Listen so you know what you're doing. You can either with that caption sum up what's in that picture or it could be their thoughts. Remember it's not all their thoughts...it's what the camera can see...if you were a filmmaker. You might just have one character. Now does everyone know what they're doing? This group can you tell me what you're doing..*

She gives more instructions and encouragement until it is time for the groups to present what they have done. The lead teacher comments on their presentation and offers points for the best.

Lesson 5

The class was meant to come prepared for a debate on whether Romeo and Juliet were too young to be in love.

The teacher takes the register. A boy apologises for a previous absence.

T: *I'm sorry. You're supposed to provide me with a note.*

She returns to taking the register.

T: *OK. Richard, Harvey..... Now put up your hands if you have NOT done that homework 1,2,3,10,13. Right, put up your hands if you did. Just.....quickly. Thank you. You can all have commendations. The rest of you have detention for not taking it seriously. Why on earth would you take it upon yourself not to do it. We can't have our discussion now. I've got a tape here ready to tape you. Put up your hands if you have not got your plays with you, your texts. So you didn't intend to do any work this lesson? That is really shoddy and not only that, it's disappointing. The people who've done the work, you come out; I'll talk to you. the rest of you, get out your texts if you've got them. I've got some spare texts here and you will write, using any and all resources and I expect you to use quotations to back up your opinions. you watched a video on love stories, which should also fuel some of your ideas on this. Are there any questions before we go on? Is anyone here not clear about what they're supposed to be doing?*

S: *Me, Gary and ..[inaudible]*

Teacher: *OK, that was extra English; you'll do it without it...*

The teacher gives out the instructions for work and ends with:

T: *I'm going to write it on the board....*

The class breaks up into groups. They start to discuss some TV programmes.

When settled the teacher repeats.....

[A discussion ensues about the opening of Romeo and Juliet.]

S; *They can't agree...*

T: *Is it simply a case of not agreeing with each other. Isn't it worst than that?*

S: *They're at each other's throat. They don't agree about anything. They want to wipe each other's families out.*

T: *That's a little bit different from not agreeing isn't I? Coming to blows and murder. OK can we turn to the original question, why is it relevant that they should be in love?*

The students try to answer at once.

T: *Hold on.*

S: *One person from each family getting together and so the feud breaks then it wouldn't carry on in the future generations. When the rest dies those two would be*

in love and the feud would stop.

T: That's one possible scenario. In fact that's exactly what can't happen in the play because what do Romeo and Juliet do about their marriage?

S: Keep it a secret.

T: Right, to the extent that Juliet's father is intending what?

S: [inaudible]

T: So that scenario can't happen in the play.

The students contribute their views. They talk at once.

T: Please put up your hand. OK Anthony could you tell me why you think it's an important question....

Please listen, because some of the points you're making now could go into the answers you're writing..

They continue the discussion about whether Romeo and Juliet were really in love and then move on to a discussion of courtly love and how people fall in love.

T; OK, we'll stop it there because the type of things that you're saying could go into your argument. You have to either argue for them being too young or against.

S: Can we choose?

T: No, you can't. I want half the people here and the other half. I'll do the speech and then the first speaker will speak for the motion, the second person will speak against it and then the other person on your team will say their speech to support as well but will also reply to any points that come up..... I want you to argue very strongly for or against. And then what will happen is that the chair who will be one of you will summarise what was said. And then we'll have questions from the floor.....OK, you've got 15 minutes to work on that. And the people who've done

their speeches, who are perfectly happy with what they've done, can come and see me.

The researcher introduces herself and the students begin work on their own.

Significant Moments from the Lessons

I have suggested that individual stories, as they enter school, may be seen within the broader currents of social movements.....various cultural traditions and social practices present in classrooms are not frozen, but are continually being made and re-made, as part of a wider cultural process. (Hardcastle, 1992: 142)

Classroom participants, and the interactions they perform, come with a history and with the effects of society. What happens in the classroom is changed and re-formed through those same external forces. What goes on inside is inextricably bound with what is going on outside. This focus provides a framework for making some comments on these lessons

General Comments

As a general comment on these classes, it seemed that they were managed as much as taught with more managerial than interactional behaviour. Sometimes the instruction took the form of writing on the board, supporting an emphasis on literacy, as could be seen in Lesson 1, where some attempt was made to introduce and close the session.

1. Neat copy in folders of day dream story.
2. Start day dream writing if it hasn't been done.
3. Do a worksheet if the writing is too difficult.
4. Read a book, from the Book Box, if all the writing is finished.

The managerialism reached its most extreme form in the issuing of bonus points in Lesson 4:

LT: Bonus points of 10 to ----- twice now; they're the only group looking at Miss and listening.

At first glance the contents of the classes were topical, reflecting some of the

interests of Grade 7-9 children. There was also a large emphasis on literature and reading in many of the classes. Even if the material was not compelling, the teaching methods and strategies such as group work, reading logs, videos and debates were designed by the teachers, according to their interviews, to raise the level of interest. But the next section will show that the methods were not enough and that “broader currents” infuse the classroom space.

Teacher-Student Interaction

There are a number of significant moments in these lessons which are very instructive. The first relates to the boys’ eruption in the class, especially Chen in Lesson 1. In the first instance, it is a class that has been proceeding in a rocky way, as the type of class management strategy, a particular discourse, seemed not to be working. One boy was clearly very disruptive which seemed to stem from his own difficulties with literacy. He was not getting the kind of attention he was demanding, because the teacher seemed to have decided to withdraw from this student. There are a lot of worthwhile things which could be done in that lesson and the instructions suggest useful work previously. There are no constraints on the writing:

S: Can I write in patois?

T: Yes it would be quite suitable to do so; it’s your daydream.

The Book Box also offers a wide range of texts beyond the suggestions of the National Curriculum. Yet the class had not been engaged, with children going into their own interests and their own languages. It is significant that they do disengage from English in this way if we remember the Jamaican classrooms, but in that situation only one other language was used, and this was a language familiar to the teacher. When the lesson turns into a reading session proper, an eruption takes place and here JC plays a distinctive role. The boys adopt the “Jamaican” talk as a way of exhibiting bad behaviour:

S: Shut op styar! Taak tu im, styar, not just me.

This a good example of London Jamaican discussed earlier in Sebba’s (1994) work and the use of the marker to give the flavour rather than the substance of the

language. In this case the marker is an old one, rarely used, which underscores the linguistic load that this one word is carrying in this interaction. In this first example it is a Black boy who may or may not be from Jamaica. Hewitt (1989) had warned us that the actual country of origin did not matter, as LJ was common property as an adolescent language. What was more surprising was the behaviour of boys from ethnic backgrounds other than the Caribbean, in this case Chen who was a refugee from South East Asia:

S: He's mad yanou. He have a mash-op eye. He duon even know English.

This is a particularly apposite example of the argument being developed here. Chen understands that he is operating in a culture, the discourse of which he has had to learn. He knows which kind of language, which practices, will allow him to communicate the self he has internalised from the actions around him. Migrant communities interact with the host community and this child has found the way to express his difference through the appropriation of ways of speaking meant to connote defiance. Language is the weapon used to exclude the teacher and show him/her lack of respect. This encounter is made all the more ironic, because it is an Indian teacher, another migrant, who is involved. And one of Chen's charges, in LJ, is that the Indian teacher does not know English. Something is radically wrong (Response Statement 3L) and it is not a simple language deficit. What is clear is that there was no specific discourse acknowledged as appropriate for the teacher-student interaction.

Another moment, in another lesson, helps to reinforce the point that no workable discourse had been agreed, suggesting the lack of consent. Again it is a newcomer, but this is a Jamaican student, Kadia. The class has been very thoughtfully set up. There are reading groups which are familiar to the children and welcomed, with the activity proceeding well over some time:

S: Are we in groups today?

T: Yes...you're over here. Not you Leon, you're under my nose.

The teacher is in control, or aims to be, by forestalling trouble in the kind of

unproblematic way beloved of teachers. But the students are reading a range of texts mostly the works of writers recommended by the National Curriculum. They are presented to the students in a variety of ways which allow them to interrogate the texts. In this session they have moved on to considering the language features. Not everyone wants to do that, Kadia least of all:

T: Let me remind you that I'm writing your reports.

S3: (under her breath but loud enough for me to hear): Big deal!

S4 (Kadia, a girl who has recently come from Jamaica): You know what I mean!.....I'm going to beat you up (to another boy).....I'm going to fall asleep in this lesson (to anybody it seems).

Kadia is totally distracted. As a new student from Jamaica, it is very likely that she would have inhabited a classroom similar to one of those described in the previous chapter. Yet she arrives in these London classrooms and immediately becomes a focus for destabilising the lessons. How is that possible? What I am suggesting, and what I have been leading the discussion towards, is an awareness of the importance of consent and how that kind of notion helps classrooms to function. Whereas most of the class, who drift in, take on the tasks of the class, Kadia recognises that the discourse has not been settled: there is no agreement, because she can see that the interactions between teacher and student are unresolved. Like Chen, she brings an individual story from a different set of cultural practices, which have not yet been accommodated in the London school. She has, instead, worked out that consent is more problematically achieved and, in fact, does not have to be achieved.

In a different moment in another class, a teacher faced with the possibility of such a shift and the possibility of losing a temporary consent used an interactional communication style to achieve a better response. This moment appears in Lesson 5, where the plan had been to set up a debate around a theme in Romeo and Juliet, something the teacher had been looking forward to and had invited me to observe. Already, this is a contested text. The interviews had revealed that some teachers

did not believe that it was a suitable text for a Grade 8 class, so the text is already suffused with conflict and the teacher has battled with it to get some agreement from the students, using oral readings, discussions, comparisons with other related thematic texts and videos, and drawing on personal adolescent experiences. Yet, the lesson could not go according to plan, because the students had not done the required reading and preparation. The teacher, faced with this road block, takes a chance and decides to make a personal investment in the class:

T: Why on earth would you take it upon yourself not to do it. We can't have our discussion now. I've got a tape here ready to tape you. Put up your hands if you have not got your plays with you, your texts. So you didn't intend to do any work this lesson? That is really shoddy and not only that, it's disappointing. The people who've done the work, you come out; I'll talk to you. the rest of you, get out your texts if you've got them. I've got some spare texts here and you will write, using any and all resources, and I expect you to use quotations to back up your opinions. You watched a video on love stories, which should also fuel some of your ideas on this. Are there any questions before we go on? Is anyone here not clear about what they're supposed to be doing?

This verbal barrage to hold and motivate the students with a “teacherly” performance is just a start, because as soon as she has set up the class and they are to start their punishment work, she takes over and begins a discussion of the text drawing on their own experiences and feelings:

T: Why is it important that they should be in love?

Is it simply a case of them not agreeing with each other? Isn't it worse than that?

Please listen, because some of the points you're making now could go into your answers you're writing.

She continues to probe and does manage to revive some interest in the class. One student asks: “Can we choose?”, and the children return to the task, but it is only a step in the class and the teacher would need to work continuously to maintain and increase the agreement.

Even though the teachers revealed, in the interviews, a wide range of aims for the English curriculum and discussed a variety of teaching methods, the classroom observations showed that some of those ideas were very difficult to put into operation. The teachers attempted to manage, but sometimes were unable to corral, the classroom forces and direct the discourse. There was a casual, almost nonchalant resistance to some of their efforts. The conflict is there in the disagreement about what they were doing, and why they were doing it.

6.6. AN APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH (London)

The approach to English in these interviews and observations revealed that there was a wide range of aims, some of which had featured in the Newbolt Report. The most striking of these was the preoccupation with literature, even though it could be said that it was being put to some different purposes. Such a purpose might include the promotion of language diversity, which found no place in the 1921 report. Some of the other procedures used by the teachers in this investigation were also being discussed at that time. The Newbolt Report, for example, emphasised the use of oral work: discussion, debates, drama, debates and student presentations in the way teachers in this investigation support these strategies. The difference is that when these activities are presented today a rationale of child-centredness would be used to justify them, rather than a straightforward goal of proficiency in writing.

There was also a heavy emphasis on literature as both outcome and procedure. This conflation of aims and methods is not surprising to such as Davies (1996), who noted the tendency of teachers of English to subsume aims and means. Such an inclination might be related to another feature of the London teachers, which is the passionate nature of their beliefs. They are prepared to talk at length about what English means to them. For them, English is more than just the language and teaching English is not just about language. It is about growth, the children in particular but their own personal development as well. Although largely

untheorised, for most, literature is central to that experience of growth.

Training seemed to have had little collective influence on their ideas. More important were the individual teachers, and the kind of teaching they experienced. In terms of the latter, bilingual experience gave a stronger awareness of language background and language issues. The single strongest influence was the DFE, which seemed to hang over most of the teachers like a predatory pall.

With regard to the children, the importance of culture was noted and the residual problem of gender, especially as it affects second generation migrants and Black boys. Underachievement is an issue that is pertinent to boys' performance, referring now not just to Caribbean boys, but also to other later immigrants. Some teachers felt that there were cultural reasons for underachievement, which suggested that children did not always understand what schools were for. Other students had taken on some of the conflictual societal responses to school as a site, the existence of which can, and should be, contested. The teachers who had also taught in Jamaica noted that this was not their experience of Jamaican schools.

The preceding analysis has taken us some way towards understanding how some Jamaican and London teachers approach the teaching of English. The following chapter will go further in providing a meaning and significance to the data thus described.

CHAPTER SEVEN: INTERPRETING THE DATA

7.1: REVIEW AND SUMMARY

This investigation began with central questions that related to the teaching of English, triggered by a discussion about the place of grammar. The course of the investigation produced a shift in that focus as other factors became more critical. This chapter will attempt to interpret some of the core findings of the research presented in Chapters Five and Six. This interpretation is based on the premises discussed earlier on, in recognition of the personal and situated nature of such an inquiry, bounded by specific forces of history. By saying this, I am reiterating that the research was first of all possible because it was autobiographical. This means that a consideration of classrooms in London and Jamaica is part of my history. But the research can be further explained and justified by wider historical forces which are social, economic and cultural. To identify a personal element suggests, therefore, that tacit knowledge plays an important part in the interpretation. The contexts and communications described for interpretation are situations known and experienced by me. I have inhabited many of those classrooms and have engaged in those dialogues with teachers before. It is also important to note, as the section on **Gaining Access** (3.3) noted, that knowledge and insight came in different ways and must be slanted by the differing attitudes to the role of the university researcher and lecturer. It is a difference which has a direct bearing on how stakeholders present their point of view and how we interpret, as the later discussion will show. The job of researcher now is to adopt a different stance and to make those meanings available to a different audience, accepting that whatever is presented is an interpretation of the researcher's own perspective, as all texts betray the class, gender, race, ethnicity and culture of their creator.

I want to return now to the data to make some broad statements, and present a summary of some of the similarities and differences between these two environments, taken from the interviews, observations and the historical inquiry.

There are a relatively small, though significant, number of correspondences. The teachers come from similar backgrounds, with similar origins and function within their societies, being children of the aspiring poor groomed to tame the troublesome masses in both societies. The Jamaican teachers came from backgrounds that included small farming, teaching, carpentry and domestic work. The London teachers, on the other hand, spoke more of the jobs they took before coming into teaching: as trainee sales manager, community worker, clerical worker and home maker. And here is a significant difference in the early commitment the Jamaican teachers made to the profession. Both groups of teachers understood their role and the influence of society on what they attempted to do in the classroom, recognising that the role of educator was no longer solely theirs and that there was influence from disparate forces in the form of the media, parents and government. In the London context, the government was seen as part of the diminution of the status and professionalism of teachers.

7.2 DIFFERENCES AND CORRESPONDENCES

There is a measure of correspondence, also, in some aims and methods of teaching in both Jamaica and London. There is, for example, agreement, with differing emphasis, on the importance of English for functional literacy. The Jamaican teacher says English is:

to equip the student to handle him or herself in the world.
(TQ)

The London teacher says:

We're preparing people for society, for being able to cope
with society. (T1)

There is also a similarly low emphasis on grammar as a teaching tool, which was, significantly, my starting point for this investigation. It means, therefore, that the Jamaican teacher would say:

The moment they hear that it's Louise Bennett, they say
"Yeh, it's dialect. Using dialect can be part of a second
language approach. Definitely of course. (TJ)

The London teacher might, similarly, look for ways of using Creole in the classroom:

Caribbean languages should have a place in the curriculum, not in terms of studying them as such but in terms of valuing them and using them as a teaching resource. (T16)

This agreement amongst all the teachers comes from a strong sense of child-centredness: they are all doing work on behalf of the child. Broadly speaking, teachers in both settings have some pragmatic understanding of the significance of success in English, with the Jamaican teachers being more willing to voice their concern in those terms.

More noticeable, however, are the divergences reported in the views and practices of these teachers. In the area of the aims of the English curriculum, the Jamaican teachers clearly saw English as a commodity with a particular value attached to it, which required an effort even for them, as teachers, to learn. Because of this, they were ambivalent towards English, seeing it as having no expressive value, while at the same time vouching for its usefulness internationally. To facilitate the learning of English, the Jamaican teachers objectified the language, treating it as a tangible commodity, so that they could manipulate and use it for their own purposes:

Most children don't use English with their peers but they do need English for exams and if they want to leave Jamaica. The Jamaican language is only spoken in Jamaica. Officially we need another language, we need English. (TJ)

A utilitarian view was also reflected in the reports of the colonial inspectors whose pronouncements displayed no sense of a language other than English operating in a country which needed its civilising influence:

In visiting schools I have felt vexed to hear a teacher who ought to know better speak to the little children in the lower Standards in the same broken English they are familiar with in their homes. (343:16)

Historically, English had a deeper meaning in England, which was as a symbolic and ideological marker of national pride and culture. It is a meaning that was, to an extent, reflected in the London teachers' views where the main role of English was seen as a conduit of ideas, the key to personal growth, and the crucible of the

literature and culture:

It's a subject which I think is very special because I feel it's about the development of the whole child, because of language. We are defined by language. (T17)

In contrast to Jamaica, in London, English is seen as the same thing as language, with English embodying the educational worth of the child; the activities carried out in the English class are important. This emphasis was transferred to the teachers' own identification with the subject:

I would like my class to enjoy what they're doing, to get pleasures that you can from reading and writing. Those things are very pleasurable occupations. (T6)

They saw it as unique, a way in which they gave back something of themselves to the students.

.....you have to be in touch with children's lives, to bring your curriculum to life. (T5)

Consequently, their aims reflected ideas which were wider than, but inclusive of, the Department for Education (DFE) and the writers of the National Curriculum. They were, in fact, reflective of current approaches to language and literacy.

There are differences also in the methods suggested. The Jamaican teachers had a narrower range of strategies, and these were second language methods, that concentrated on the acquisition of literacy in a Creole-speaking environment. There was a clear emphasis on communicative language teaching. They brought their own personal language experience to bear, but this was primarily in order to accomplish the project of teaching English: to initiate the child into a foreign culture with foreign expectations which they needed to learn:

We teach English to make the children more aware that there's another side to it, not just the way they speak.....an international side to it. I've found that since I've been here they don't know that....so my aim is to help them to become more conversant with it...to let them know that outside of where they live, there's another language. (TR)

The observations showed the teachers involved in an interactional teaching mode and the children willingly participating in that project.

The London teachers, on the other hand, faced a much more problematic situation. There was a whole panoply of strategies, reflecting historical positions on the teaching of English. There was, for example, an emphasis on the use of literature, which was rarely mentioned by the Jamaican teachers:

..to me the heart of good English teaching is the teaching of literature. (T17)

These preoccupations were passionately discussed in the UK and shown to be compromised by the constraints of the National Curriculum:

They talk about being accountable but it's the prescription that bothers me. It's the fact that next term I have to do the languages project so that they get their bit of dialect. (T15)

Differences also came out in my field work. I have already referred to the difficulties in gaining access to the London schools, where I was treated with a certain amount of suspicion as the outsider. The problem was eased only when I was able to use my contacts with schools and specific individuals, that I had built up over years of contact in education. This contrasted with the Jamaica situation, where I had had little experience, after only two years in that setting. It seemed that the tradition of research and the role of the researcher were viewed there with less suspicion and I felt like an honoured guest rather than an intruder. In the selected school in Kingston (School D[J]), I was always invited to their functions and if I stayed away too long my absence was noted and commented on.

These comments, about the field work, are already foreshadowing the conclusions that can be drawn about the ethos of school, as seen in the **story events**, those narratives which reveal the culture of the school. The Incident Room, in Jamaica, gives the sense of a school which is cohesive, trying to function under difficult circumstances: parents visit and sell their wares; past students drop by and offer money to impecunious teachers; funding for basic social events relies on private sponsorship; but the teachers enjoy themselves in traditional rituals. Violence is never far from the door, nor is the police, but the teachers continue to include the

gun lyrics of the society in their social events, such as the Christmas party. They work with a lot of camaraderie and appear united for survival.

The London school similarly observed, to get a sense of its culture, appears altogether more systematically organised and yet more disparate. There is a greater attempt to lay out a philosophy and ethos for any visitor. For example, the school walls are used to display its language diversity and its exhortations towards better examination results. Yet, every conversation recorded in these events suggests a dissatisfaction with the project in hand: the teachers are deeply concerned at the staff meeting about the SATs and the impending OFSTED inspection; the Head is unhappy with the kinds of achievement he can obtain with the parental and community support he is getting; the children who have recently arrived from Jamaica are divided about the level of success they can achieve in these schools; and the parent is so alienated that she is contemplating sending her child to the Caribbean to complete his education. The cumulative effect of this catalogue is a culture of embattlement. Every group feels under threat but the significant difference is the seeming differentiation in the aspirations, in what they want to achieve and how they feel that it can be achieved. There is a lack of connectedness between each group. I am suggesting that these ways of operating are connected to what happens in the classroom; they carry through and help to form part of the framework for the teaching.

My observations in the classroom brought this underlying conflict to the fore, after a small number of observations, not more than about 4 or 5. They showed that a major difference in these classrooms was not simply about language and teaching methods. This discovery was a major departure for me. I had begun with a simple focus and a relatively straightforward view of the teaching, which rested on teaching approaches and awareness about how those approaches could be influenced by the sociolinguistic environments. The degree of emphasis on grammar was certainly the focus of that concern at the beginning of the study. However, the course of the investigation threw up the interesting differences and divergences outlined above.

What my investigation, eventually, revealed, as I have begun to intimate, was that there were other related forces operating and other factors holding sway in this defined space. These factors were as important as language and teaching methods. There was a whole range of problems thrown up by the way in which the classes were organised and the way in which the discourse was conducted. Interactions which in other settings showed the teacher-as-knowledge-keeper, teacher-as-motivator or teacher-as-director, now brought teacher-as-adversary directly into focus. The classes I observed in London largely exhibited a lack of agreement about what the school was about and what the teacher was doing in the classroom. It was not just a question of bad behaviour, although some of the moments described above showed children displaying conduct which would be deemed inappropriate in any classroom. It was more clearly a disjuncture between teachers' aims and students' expectations. Teachers were aware of this challenge to what they had to offer and counteracted it with an array of strategies and a heavy emphasis on class management. This level of conflict could be compared to the high level of consent which seemed to exist in the Jamaican classrooms.

7.3. ACCOUNTING FOR THE DIFFERENCES

It follows that the nature of the conflict and the consent need further examination. "Who put it so?" has been set as a central question in the investigation, signalling that an explanation has to be sufficiently illustrative to account for those correspondences and differences. As has been said, the interpretation offered is personal. Further, it is grounded in the history which led to the questions and the data that was generated, namely the interviews, stories, observations and histories which map the recurring themes. In the first instance, we have to consider my description of the classroom as a culture, a particular kind of space with its own participants and ways of meaning. Something of this perspective can be found in Edwards and Mercer (1987), who eschew the notions of classroom knowledge as transmission of knowledge or discovery learning. They refer instead to the work of Vygotsky and Bruner, and the development of "situated discourse", based on ground rules and

scaffolded by teachers, pursuing “common knowledge” with their students. My work suggests the importance of an earlier stage in the enactment of such a classroom discourse. In order for the process of acquiring common knowledge to take place, there need to be certain joint understandings of language and history implicitly in place. This means an inclination to accept the project itself as important and a willingness to embark on it. All who participate need to understand and submit to the process of governance through which it works and the changes which can be negotiated to allow it to operate in different ways. Most importantly, classroom discourse needs to operate, through its interactions, with a sense that the society accepts that culture and has some agreement about its function so when , for example, a teacher takes a stance on the teaching of English, she has some sense that what she is doing has some external confirmation. In other words, there must be a consent to schooling: a consent to be governed in the classroom, which facilitates the development of common understandings. However, the analysis of the interviews and the review of the classrooms reveal two types of classrooms, broadly indicating two orientations to the teaching of English, stemming from two views of schooling and two approaches to the classroom-as-culture. These orientations differ in how they suggest schooling is organised and received, and in how the consent to be governed is manifested. To understand these classrooms more clearly we need to examine the positions of consent and lack of consent (or conflict) in the setting of these language classrooms.

I am saying that the classrooms I observed and the teachers I interviewed seem to operate within two contrasting conceptions of classrooms: one predicated on the notion of homogeneity and the other on the notion of heterogeneity. Consent is more clearly manifested in the homogeneous classrooms of Jamaica; and conflict is more clearly manifested in the heterogeneous classrooms of London. What makes it possible to talk about two patterns of responses? We need to go back to the data: to examine more closely what the teachers say they are about; to what the teachers say they do; and to what actually transpires in these classrooms. We need to do so in order to find

the **markers of agreement**, ways of thinking and doing which indicate that there is more or less consent, that there is more or less homogeneity or heterogeneity.

7.4. LANGUAGE

Language is the first related concept which must be discussed, because it is the backbone of the study. Drawing on the Literature Review, the discussion there showed the importance of language in revealing and asserting identity, as individual and community. The Review also showed two differing orientations to language within the two settings. Within the homogeneous framework, language issues were contested but they seemed to be soluble. In Jamaica, two languages are recognised, as Shields (1989) indicated and the teachers confirmed:

Basically, I think our country is a two-language country. We have the Creole and we have the Standard English. They know the Creole only...they're not able to speak well using the Jamaican Standard English and therefore should they go anywhere where they need to use it, they will be at a disadvantage. The aim is to prepare so that should the need arise for them to use it, they'll be comfortable to use it in any situation. They're able to use the Creole when the situation calls for it, so they'll be able to use the Standard when the situation calls for it. (TS)

There has been a strong sense of the vernacular language as the stigmatised variety because of its genesis in slavery and association with the dispossessed of the New World:

We have been a colony of the British;...Patois developed as a means of combating the slavery system. (TE)

We have already discussed the importance of language and social power in the construction of identity, and indicated how active agents can re-construct the sense of self. So the sense of an inferior language which is "bad English" is being overcome in questioning and re-definition; the stigma has been rejected in the social and cultural practices of the people. Creole is more and

more being used as a self-confident expression of national identity in the media, for example, and as a part of the people's historic connection with the ancestral voice. The mother tongue roots the individual in a particular reality, which is categorised by Brathwaite (1984) and Pollard (1994), for example, as metaphysical in the sense of the historical, cultural, religious and even re-invented meanings the language carries. Brathwaite and Pollard designate a new sense of ownership which is conveyed through self-labelling: "nation language" and "Dread Talk" or even Alleyne's (1989) "Jamaican" replace the pejorative labels.

More concretely, institutional practices, in the school for example, can reinforce positive external behaviour. We have noted that there is ambiguity about Creole as the medium of instruction, at least in terms of the economic difficulties envisaged by instrumentalisation, but the language finds its way officially into the school through the literature and culture. It now forms a large part of the content of the school curriculum, whether it be through proverbs or dialect poetry, Caribbean stories or the emphasis on drama. It is an important start in the assertion of an independent identity and agreement.

More important, as a marker of agreement in the Jamaican school setting is that all the teachers speak the Creole language themselves. It is the main, underlying connection between the students and the teachers. Reference has already been made to the recent literature about how bilingual teachers, who know the child's mother tongue, can help the child to "learn school" (Davis and Golden, 1994). Joint patterns of communication and joint understandings about language help the child to accommodate to the culture of the classroom. As Foster (1992) has indicated voice is an expressive cultural resource in the child's acquisition of literacy. In the context of Jamaica, the teachers stressed the necessity to code switch and move between English and Creole. They used Creole in the interviews:

...like when you say someone is 'tegareg', people know exactly what you mean...is an outlandish person...`uol nyaaga'...(laughter) (TU)

to engage the students:

I would say to them if they're writing for a job...how would you write it? `Mi want a job. Gi mi a job?' There's certain situations...you would have to explain to them...you would probably go to the market and say `sel mi wan poun a dis... gi mi wan poun a dat'.....

and to upbraid them:

Bwai liiv di ting aluon!

The teachers can identify with the students, because they have also experienced the linguistic struggles that the children in the classroom face:

It's what I used until High School...at College Mrs _____ helped me to make the switch from Creole to Standard. (TS)

and in that sense there is commonality of understanding about the choices available to the student.

In this homogeneous framework, the role of English is clear and limited. English is the official language of the school and used only as the language for formal discourse, requiring no personal or cultural allegiance:

I have a bias. To me patois comes naturally. I have to learn English; it's a second language like Spanish. (TE)

It is as clear a view of the purpose of English as existed in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, when colonial inspectors set policy for the delivery of the subject. Teachers need to know how to use all kinds of languages well, in these classrooms, as a way of fostering consent among students they want to participate in the teaching and learning situation. They use English instrumentally to model how they expect that particular language to be used, cajoling an agreement:

When I'm teaching my class I say OK let us understand one thing, you must see the class from the perspective of an English student; patois is OK for the local situation, for when you're at home, a social occasion, social interaction informal. English is for interactional communication.....for the formal

situation.(TE)

but they also understand that some students need to be taught how to use it, based on their mother tongue.

Sometimes a child is a little shy and slow and they can't speak what you would call English...we allow them to talk and ask somebody to translate...or...you've said it this way, could you say it another way. It's (JC) their first language because it's the language they use at home and English to them is a foreign language. (TK)

It is important that the teacher works with the child, so the notion they give is always another way of saying, rather than a better way.

In the observations, for example, we saw teachers using the strategy of code-switching and translations to lead the children from the known to the unknown.

S: "Chicken merry, hawk de near " Sumtaim wen yu a tiif, poliis de near, Miss.

T: (rephrases) Some time you are stealing and the police might be near.

What she forgets comes back...Uol taim stuori kum bak agen".

This strategy was particularly evident in this lesson on Proverbs where the teacher moved from the very well-known idea of biblical proverbs, to Jamaican proverbs through to English examples, based on their own experiences and then to writing. The facility in moving between two languages is an important part of this mutual engagement, this initiation into the culture of the school. And, of course, all of this is only possible if there is agreement about what needs to be done and about how the language helps to get it done. Some of that co-operation can be seen in the children's language behaviour. They responded enthusiastically to questions:

S: Nuo man.....me Miss. Beta liet dan neva.,

to the extent where they gave chorus answers:

S: im neva rich.

S: Im waan pie piis, piis.

S: Im a go waanti.

In these three responses the third comment goes beyond an answer to the teacher to comment and commiserate on the predicament of the unfortunate gambler, and also to suggest a personal response. They are engaged. It is a lesson in English, but they and the teacher move from one language to the other. They read the English of the story on the chart but respond in their own language.

A related marker of agreement noted was in the students' language. I have already mentioned the fact that the students always used Creole amongst themselves, but they accepted the need to use English for the formal question and answer exchanges:

S: A gunman gets an opportunity to go to foreign to study.
He turns it down. A week later he get shoot and die.

unless the content was Jamaican:

S: Kyaang ketch Kwaku, yu ketch im shut.

S: Wan, wan kuoko ful baaskit.

I also observed the task-focused nature of some of their language.

A wich grup mi iina?

Sidong said a mi.

Kum dong yaso.

All of the above is not meant to intimate that there was only agreement; a number of references have been made earlier to the moments when consent was being challenged linguistically. There is the discussion about parents' view of English, which suggests that all do not agree with its use outside school:

They make no attempt to use it. If the child goes home and makes an effort to use it... 'a skuul yu fi yuuz dat... muuv dat fram ya' ... (TK)

There is the gentle teasing of the teacher and the adoption of the mincing tone of exaggerated English by the children in Lesson 4. There is the challenge of the outsider from Spanish Town in Lesson 3.

Nevertheless, in this context, we can say that the language issue is to a large extent resolved in the public domain. The discussion is more about what type of teaching methods will most successfully lead to bilingualism. What do the children need? What are the most culturally acceptable, and potentially successful, ways of promoting bilingualism? What I am thus describing is the way language is being used in the Jamaican setting, to foster consent in the classroom and in this way I am representing a homogeneous view of how the language is operating in that society, and on the schools.

7.4.1 The London Setting

In turning to the London setting, I want to see how that concept of consent is played out and whether it is less clearly manifested here, and the presence or absence of similar markers of agreement. Within the more heterogeneous framework of the London schools, the language issue becomes even wider and more complex. Although nominally an ENL environment, children come from many different language backgrounds:

We have so many different languages spoken in this school...40 odd. And it's not an issue for the kid where English is not the first language...it's unusual when that is not the case. I don't know how many of our classes would be kids who speak English as their first language. We have so many Cantonese speakers or Portuguese speakers and Bengali speakers and patois or Creole are just more amongst that lot. I'm not sure that that is a particular issue. (T6)

and for this teacher, the situation is unproblematic.

With regard to children of a Jamaican Creole background, the situation should also be unproblematic, because the children are now second and third generation speakers of a London variety of English. To a certain extent the contradictions of identity addressed, about home, by Garrison's (1979) youth and Scafe's (1989) students on literature, would seem to have been resolved. There is no evidence, from the observations, of the ambiguity felt by Garrison's youth about where he belonged. There is also no evidence of the confusion and bafflement felt by Scafe's students at the classroom exposure of Black texts they had not fully come

to terms with. Here the use of Creole remains a social and cultural acquisition for its natural speakers: Black adolescents, a well-defined, homogeneous group. Consequently, London Jamaican is primarily the language of the child alone, rather than something shared between teacher and student:

I remember there was a time for me as a White middle-class teacher coming into London when suddenly you discovered ethnicity. Suddenly you were all the time getting children to write in dialect, read this in dialect for me and everything. And then you thought hang on a second...this is actually not necessary; it's not for the kids' benefit; it's for my benefit. (T15)

This is an important difference between London and Jamaica. Language is not present in the classroom as something teachers use to make common understandings. In that sense the "otherness" of Creole has remained problematic.

In two main areas, questions remain unresolved around classroom issues and Creole. First, the imposition of the National Curriculum and a literary school-canon has over-privileged those texts which are monocultural and monolingual:

I find I have to teach Dickens with my year 8 and I have to teach The Lady of Shalott and The Ancient Mariner. You can make those things work. The Lady of Shalott goes down a bomb because it's pretty good....Suddenly a third of the damn curriculum is Shakespeare because of the SATs. (T15)

So some of the books I mentioned to you would no longer be taught and when you look for the equivalent books that will capture the imagination of some of the Afro-Caribbean kids, they are difficult to find. (T8)

Yet, the inclusion of Black texts still forms part of an oppositional discourse, where selection is not necessarily related to the value of the work. The position was first stated in the Seventies:

I think the intention was largely to get pupils motivated.....so I would say that the thing that really pushed people in that direction was really the question about having difficulty with such people so finding a way of controlling them, of containing them. (T8)

This is not a position I found widely expressed, in these terms, amongst teachers I talked to, but there is lack of agreement about the merit of the few texts which are included. One teacher demonstrates how she uses A Thief in the Village by James Berry:

I read the whole thing in dialect. After about two minutes of giggling and being embarrassed they were there listening to this and everybody in the room understood what the story was about, even though it was supposed that they wouldn't because it is in dialect...We worked on why it was different in terms of grammatical structures. We worked on what was the dialect and so forth. (T14)

While another, although not returning to the arguments of the Seventies, hints at a similar rationale:

We do a lot of stories from different cultures. So we have Chinese stories, Greek myths and some Caribbean stories. I'm quite worried about them because sometimes we use a story like A Thief in the Village. It's all right but I'm sure there are better things to use. It's like things done ten years ago. (T15)

Being ten years old is a strange charge against a book under the present dispensation of literature selection.

Second, the positions mapped by Hewitt (1989) and the data collected suggest that in language teaching the place of Creole has also not been fully resolved. While some teachers have no problem with its use, others who once used Creole no longer feel happy to do so:

Like the school in Sheffield where I taught about 50-70 percent of children in the classroom had Jamaican Creole as a background language or some had French Creole. There children would volunteer to use the language and it was a very, very positive thing there. Here I wouldn't do it. (T2)

Additionally, in a sociolinguistic sense, Creole is also seen by the students as the language of opposition, a discourse appropriated by adolescents to communicate resistance to particular classroom processes. Stark examples of this were seen in

the observations:

“He’s mad yanou. He have a mash-op eye. He duon even know English.”

The language is being used to signify a Black oppositional style rather than to affirm identity. There is no sense of a joint ownership of Creole, rather it is a weapon used to disturb accepted ways of meaning. Clearly, this is a very different meaning from Creole in Jamaica.

Now, the other language under discussion, English, also takes on a variety of meanings which have a personal and political significance beyond anything that could be said in Jamaica of English, the language of instruction. In the London classroom there would be an inverse relationship between those who were attached to Creole, or its variant , and those who used English, as it seems the teachers suspected:

I think some people get really nervous about not being able to understand. And it can be abused. I think some teachers if they have a control head on[think] that might be the idea.
(T13)

A loyalty to one would mean a disinclination to use the other; the use of Creole can be a threat to the teachers concerned about their authority. Add to this the teacher’s own commitment to her acculturised view of English:

I think to be able to use language effectively, as well as enjoy it, as well as finding it as a solace.....something that gives you pleasure...somewhere where you can share other people’s experiences. (T10)

and we see that there is the possibility of a multiplicity of cues. The child might ask: what is the appropriate language? What counts which is meaningful to me? In this way the language becomes a contended issue within the framework of a conflict model of the classroom culture. I am saying that this language situation is much more heterogeneous, and part of that heterogeneity leads to lack of consent, where we find fewer markers of agreement about how the classroom discourse is to be conducted. I am suggesting that the conditions which prevail in these classrooms make it difficult to achieve consent, but it is possible to see ways in

which teachers can operate, preparing the groundwork for joint understandings.

7.5. THE EDUCATIONAL CULTURE OF SOCIETY

The second concept to be discussed is the meaning of education to society, because, in this analysis, it has to be recognised as just as important as how the society views its language. Some understanding of how the society views education is revealed through the comments from the teachers about the influences on their teaching. Additionally, insights can be gained through the historical data and government reports and action.

The historical data indicate the forces, events and practices which have helped to shape the classrooms and the teachers. They tell how the education system grew up in both societies and the kind of support it drew from the church, the state and its users. The systems in both countries began with a lot of support from the church, and with a strong social role. The speed of legislation in England, with Acts in 1870, 1876 and 1880, indicates how quickly education became a national compulsory provision. In Jamaica too it was seen as important and access to it was a prized commodity. The inspectors' reports in Jamaica indicated something of this view of education, especially the importance of literacy for functioning effectively in society. Similarly, the interviews with the elderly school teachers, who recounted their experiences in getting some kind of education, indicate the premium placed on education by Jamaicans.

Government action also contributes to, and reveals, the culture. In Jamaica, the development of the ROSE curriculum is significant in showing the importance of education and indicating the involvement of teachers. In England, we can follow the passage of the 1988 Education Act and the implementation of the National Curriculum to better understand the educational culture. The teachers' responses to the central government's curriculum is instructive in revealing their perception of

the views of some significant contributors to the educational process. The teachers in the Jamaican sample had few negative responses to the Ministry and the National Curriculum. They knew something of the philosophy being developed and largely supported its direction. They certainly did not suggest that the new curriculum was an imposition. Many of the London teachers, on the other hand, felt left out of the decision-making process of their National Curriculum, indicating a distrust at its assault on their professionalism. These perceptions are important. What I am saying about the educational culture is that the reality is not simply what is. The meaning and significance the society gives to education is only partly, but very significantly, revealed in how the teachers imbibe the sense of their worth and their contribution to the process. This is also what I mean by educational culture: the meaning the teachers take from the wider society about the job of teaching English. The meanings they bring to the classroom and share with children also help to determine another part of the educational culture and it is this culture that is routinely created and re-created in English classes. Sometimes these understandings are based on consent; sometimes they are conflictual.

Jamaica is a country which views education as important for its development, at the level of individual, community and nation. This is reflected in the government's relationship with the schools and their teachers. The interviews revealed that the Ministry of Education is not seen as a baleful force hanging over the heads of teachers. From the slow, consultative pace of the implementation of the ROSE curriculum to all Grade 7-9 schools the Ministry has had considerable opportunity to interact with the teachers:

Eventually I think everybody will be on it but right now I think they are starting with some pilot schools. I don't know much about it. I got a copy of the curriculum for English. A group of women came to speak with us about some things about the administrative side of it. They left the booklists for us to go through and see what the programme is, but they didn't go in depth. They came from the Ministry just to introduce the programme to us. (TH)

At best, the ROSE curriculum is seen as contributing to the work of the schools:

Based on the Principal's stance and the education officer's....They would believe in planning and they believe in it being student-centred....involved...not just the chalk and talk. (TK)

at worst, it is seen as ineffective.

We've had the seminars upon seminars...all over the place. It adds up to the same thing....Communication skills and writing creatively and passing exams. (TP)

In effect, there is consensus about the role of education; both parties believe that they are engaged in a joint project.

In this analysis, parents should also be part of that project. In the Jamaican setting, they too believe in the value of education and its function in social mobility, which might explain why they figure so briefly in the teachers' discussion of influences. Historically, the parents refused to accept that their sons and daughters should become "drawers of water and hewers of wood", and have aspired to move them further and further from the plantation. It was they who supported the literary curriculum of the elementary school and resisted the vocational input of the revised programmes. Parents remain a link between home, school and community, as long as their consent is assured. The language discussion revealed that it could be given:

You can get a person who doesn't know an ounce of English who will say to their child 'Gyal yu chat bad ii!. Yu a go skuul, yu kyaang spiik likl English'. Many parents, even though they don't know the English would like to have the child speaking English. (TU)

But consent could also be withheld in this particular arena:

'Tiicha di bwai kum spiik-op, spiik-op pa mi...gwaan laik im beta dan mi' (TK)

Today, in some communities, as the **Story Events** showed, parents look to the school as the last refuge of beleaguered children and families battered down by the violence which surrounds them in the inner cities. By entering into that symbiotic relationship of mutual trust and benefits, the alliance between home and school is maintained, and this feeds into a culture for schooling. The project is worthwhile,

as both stakeholders share a similar understanding of it.

The London schools carried all of the factors included in the Jamaican system, but the possibilities for the relations between parents, teachers and the wider society were differently realised. My interpretation of the data suggested that the primary understanding of classroom-as-culture presupposed a recognition of particular ways of knowing which had to be possible for the classrooms to function. My analysis suggests the absence of those ways leads to the lack of consent to schooling. I have already examined the influences the Jamaican teachers described on their teaching, to get some idea about the educational culture of the society and how the teachers understand the project. In the London setting, the Conservative government's policy and action has been a large part of the conflict because of the tendency, the teachers said, to impose:

If we had been consulted; if our views and opinions on education had been seriously taken into account in devising the National Curriculum. After all who are the experts in education if not the people who are involved in it, teachers would have been willing to take part; teachers are very hardworking. (T6)

It worries me the people who put these things together because even the exams that we got, the questions...the SATs we got, you can imagine who they were aimed at; you can imagine what schools they were aimed at. (T13)

So, some teachers feel they, and their schools, are excluded from the National Curriculum, but this is not the complete picture. Other teachers contradicted this view of an unnecessary, imposed curriculum:

..we have a shared curriculum that we all do as a department, so people can't go off on a tangent like reading ghost stories for a term or it's sunny, we're going to do a poem about summer! Having said that, sometimes one should break the curriculum, things like when we had the South African election, it was right for the whole of that day that we had people writing poems about that and we did a display. Y'know sometimes good teaching is about being flexible as well. (T17)

Thus, we find the teachers divided amongst themselves about the aim and role of a

major participant, the central government, in the schooling process. The teachers have been marginalised in the Tory government's prosecution of national educational policy. They are expected to initiate change and development in school, but some teachers feel that they are not part of the conception of change. I am reminded of the remark of one of the London teachers interviewed:

We ask children to question texts; we ask children to question everything in society and yet adults don't always do that.
(T14)

The conflict underscored in this description of London education is seen here as an inevitable part of the making of teachers, and a contributory factor in the heterogeneous model of classrooms-as-culture:

You've got the government telling us to do one thing; you got the government putting teachers down.....you've got parents who see us as you know, who have quite a low opinion of teachers; we have pupils who get that kind of message from home. (T17)

Such conflict confirms the culture of discontent which has continually dogged the London schools, if we consider some of the issues which have emerged over the last hundred years: the inception of the elementary system; the debate about elementary and secondary schools; the history of the secondary modern school; the comprehensive system; and the debate about the teaching of English. Some of this history pervades the interviews of the London teachers, who portray a sense of working within classroom cultures that have been fashioned by larger forces, forces which are, to a great extent, clashing against each other. They respond to the conflicting tendencies in different ways:

...So basically what we got is that everybody is equal in here in the classroom. Things happen outside that confuse but in here we all respect each other. (T13)

This suggests that this teacher feels she has the situation under control, but the two teachers following feel that their situation is part of a much larger problem that has been compounded by government policy:

It is to do with the neighbourhood; it's to do with where we are. It's very much that we're in the middle of a council

estate. There's very high levels of unemployment; very high take up of free meals, over 50% of the children. (T2)

And since the law has changed about education boundaries, parents whose children are in band 1 tend to get them into B--- which has grammar schools; it's an outer London borough. This side.....doesn't really stand a chance. The really bright kids will go to grammar schools, technical high schools. They will be directed from the primary schools to do so as well, which is why with our present year 11 we have such a fair mix and then two years ago the law actually changed and since then.....bad. (T1)

These teachers do not feel as though they are in control, but that forces outside the school are pitted against them:

..it's also tied up with unemployment and what that does in terms of disaffection; and that does in terms of a sub-culture, a sub-culture of people who are unlikely to work and come from families who don't work. (T17)

In describing their teaching of English the conflicts were first related to class and the disjuncture between the pupils', teachers' and society's view of what the teaching was about. This was noted most clearly in the observations of the classrooms discussed above but also felt in the interviews:

I think most people nowadays seem to think that they are experts don't they? I think it's become a political issue and it's so publicised by the newspapers that they feel they know.(T9)

With migration there has been shifting of ground around the question of race not just in terms of identity, but also in terms of the relationship between race and other migratory patterns. Gender issues too have shifted, from what society and classrooms do to girls, to male underachievement, an issue which transcends race in urban education:

I mean the kids who fail most consistently in this school are White boys. The kids who achieve most consistently are Black, Asian and Chinese girls. (T2)

Underneath it all, achievement, because of its pervasive nature, has plagued this system. And this has been underachievement in terms of class, race and gender. The scale of concern suggests a core contradiction in the system which has been

difficult to redress.

Thus, for the teachers, other forces, apart from language, contribute to their teaching in the classroom. This is especially the case for London teachers. There are factors which they perceive, experience, and sometimes simply believe, are the conditions which can make their teaching effective.

7.6. CONCLUSIONS/IMPLICATIONS/FURTHER INQUIRY

The Autobiography of the Project began this investigation as a study in teaching methods, more particularly to do with grammar. It raised questions about the attitude towards grammar in the teaching of English. I wanted to find the answers to questions of effective teaching that might have relevance for the two environments/settings. This interpretation of the data has focused primarily on the concept of consent as a way of explaining, understanding and accounting for the differences between the two sets of classrooms. The interpretation was based on the views expressed by the teachers, the historical inquiry, the observations in classrooms and field notes. Emphasis was placed on the role of language and the educational culture in making and revealing that consent. What I now want to consider is the use of such conclusions in further understanding language classrooms and in further inquiry into those classrooms.

Further understanding of language classrooms

The conclusion of this study on methods makes clear that the debate about grammar is not a central issue for practising teachers. It is not stressed as an aim of English teaching or as a method for achieving expressed goals. It might be a factor in the background of their thinking but does not figure very largely in their consciousness. Grammar is more clearly a political issue and is more likely to feature in a government report rather than in the preoccupations of classroom teachers. Their concern with language is much more multi-faceted, stemming from their understandings of what obtains in the classrooms they inhabit. I am saying, therefore, that understanding classrooms involves going beyond any single issue,

especially one that does not come from the participants in the classroom themselves.

Nevertheless, an examination of methods in language teaching has also to go beyond an unproblematic emphasis on pedagogy. Certainly language, itself, is important, but the focus has to be on the language of all the participants, characterised in its wider social setting. This includes questions of identity for both teachers and students, referring to the personal meaning of the language which is the mother tongue: different languages carry different meanings which are forged through political and cultural processes. It follows, therefore, that the focus on language also has to be about how that language becomes significant, in terms of its history and origins: where it comes from; how it comes to be meaningful to its users. This naturally leads to a consideration of its social and cultural significance: its status to its users and factors leading to variations in style. Most important are its relations of power (hegemony) with other languages in the community. The implications are for language classrooms which require richer and deeper understandings of language as historically and socially constructed.

Such understandings about language are conveyed in the classroom by explicit and implicit markers of agreement in the discourse of classroom communication. Of crucial importance in this study has been the idea of common understandings, between teachers and students, engaged in joint classroom action. The communications that are being foregrounded here are those which are successful because they are based on common understandings about language. These kinds of understandings might come from the fact that teachers and students speak the same language and share a voice. They are, therefore, able to engage at many different levels: sharing personal experiences about such things as the value of the language, its use in different settings and its cultural forms. Such commonality is not always possible, but just as important as sharing the same language is the possibility, and need, for the children and teachers to share understandings about language use. Included in this would be the understanding of the differences between the

language of the school and the language of the home; the varieties which might be available to any one child outside school; the special meaning a particular language variety might have for him/her; and, most importantly, the value placed on a particular kind of language by the child's community. These understandings of the possibilities of bilingualism help to create the context or conditions for children to learn school.

Moreover, these common understandings foster homogeneity and form a central principle in the concept of consent. The idea of consent has significant explanatory power in accounting for the differences encountered in the classroom. It has been useful in an examination into how, and why, some classrooms work. It has revealed the way in which language in particular, and the experience of other societal factors, can be put to the service of effective pedagogy when teachers work to engage students in the joint project of schooling. The absence of consent also helped in giving one explanation for some of the underachievement encountered in London schools, indicating how conflicting discourses of institutions undermine the culture of the classroom and its goals. The concept can also function as the kind of goal teachers work towards as they attempt to build joint understandings.

Referring to consent reminds us that the classroom is a distinct and unique culture with its participants and set of discourse practices. It is a site where many meanings are made, where the participants bring their histories, which are changed and re-made by the impact of the wider culture outside. Focusing on the classroom as a bounded interactional space also reminds us of the importance of the agents, the teachers and the students, who together inhabit and help to define that context.

The study also indicated that we understand language classrooms better by understanding the teacher's thinking and how she has come to be. The language of the teacher is important: the language she speaks, which allows her to make

connections with her students; and her attitude towards the classroom varieties she encounters. However, factors other than language also have their influence on the classrooms and on how the teacher came to be. We need to pay attention to the history that accounts for the formation of the teacher, how she has come to understand her role in the classroom, her language autobiography and her professional history. Equally important in her thinking is the educational culture of the society, as it is perceived and experienced by the teacher: how she comes to know. This is part of her belief system: the meanings she takes from how the institutions and structures within her domain operate.

In summary, the language classroom is better understood as a diversified interactional space where consent to schooling needs to be secured for its effective operation. Communication within this culture requires complex negotiations which can be implicitly, or explicitly, understood by the significant agents involved. The language employed must figure as part of an agreed discourse of common understandings between teacher and students, as the project embarked on is subject to change and modification, based on the experiences that each group brings and those experiences which indirectly enter the classroom.

Further inquiry into language classrooms

This investigation has fundamentally been about a better understanding of classroom practices, about why certain activities have been conducted (and constructed) the way they are, and the agents who participate in their implementation. By its nature, the description of such classrooms has only just begun and, consequently, it has touched on a number of areas that need further study, to extend our understanding of these cultures. First, the notion of consent in language classrooms needs to be explored further, especially the way in which the teacher selectively, and systematically constructs a discourse sustained over time that can foster consent. I am suggesting a longitudinal study of the development process in the classroom, investigating the kinds of contexts teachers create which are effective and the effect of the teachers' attitudes to the language diversity encountered. This is especially relevant to the London classrooms. It would also be

relevant to consider urban school settings in other countries, with different histories, where Jamaican Creole is used as the language of first-generation migrants. One setting which immediately comes to mind is the Canadian-Jamaican community. In a country with a colonial past linked to Britain, there has been national debate on language policy which includes bilingual education in French, as well as concerns about new immigrant communities. Another setting would be the urban communities of such as New York where African-American English jostles with Jamaican Creole for recognition within the school system.

One other area which might be worthy of further inquiry in the London setting is the significance of race in delineating the views about English and the ability of Black teachers to construct consent in the classroom. All the possible differences which could have been posited were not pursued, but the possibilities exist for a fuller examination of the relevance of the communication patterns of Black teachers and their perceptions of the educational culture coming from their communities. Some preliminary work in America of African-American teachers has suggested the importance of voice in making that classroom culture more amenable to consent. An investigation of voice and the Black teacher in London would be interesting, especially when it is juxtaposed against the conclusion of a greater consent in Jamaica primarily based on language and the sense of community support for the linguistic aims of the teachers and the educational project itself.

In the Jamaican classroom investigations need to be carried out to further interrogate the notion of consent. It might have disadvantages in terms of maintaining a too-compliant stance in English classrooms, which, because of the nature of the subject taught in them, are required to be arenas of debate and questioning. What strategies must the teacher construct to deepen consent by sharing explicitly her implicit judgements and intuitions about language, in this case English, as socially and ideologically powerful? Further, this study focused on the homogeneity brought about by a common language and background. The

impact of class differences with a more socially differentiated population would be worthy of investigation, considering how language and other factors might be used to achieve agreement.

The implications that flow from the comparative nature of the study are enormous. For Jamaican educators, the London background provides a useful counterpoint to a very different system. The history presented was important here. It was significant in showing the linkages between the two countries. We see an education arena where two systems co-exist in a symbiotic relationship, with the procedures and practices in operation in one setting being imposed on the other. The description of how these practices came about are important in explaining certain attitudes. For example, one explanation of the instrumentalism of Jamaican teachers, when it comes to English, can be found in the historical role of the official language and examinations in the colonial system of education. This study could be useful to those teachers, because they can see how the education system in London has developed, and will recognise its particularity to those conditions in England. Such a reading will be a reminder and a spur to Jamaica, to continue to navigate its own indigenous way. The sociolinguistic background would also be important to Jamaican teachers, delineating the differences in the use of English. As Jamaican children hear little English the goal of competence has to be constantly evaluated. Any further inquiry into pedagogy would have to be in how we draw on other investigations to construct a model for teaching English in a Creole-speaking environment.

An important area for future work in both settings might be the students' views. As this was designed as a study of teachers' perceptions, the views of students received little attention except in relation to teachers delivering their lessons and the incidental interviews with students who had come out of the Jamaican education system to London. Yet, the exercise which yielded considerable insight into the meaning of the teachers' practice was the observations of the classrooms, precisely because both participants in the discourse were seen engaging in the

activity under discussion. This suggests that rich data and greater understanding can be found in returning to the part of the study first discussed in **The Autobiography of the Project**, namely the students' perspective. As was the case with my investigation, the factors for inquiry will vary according to the setting. Certainly, the language question of attitude and identity, as it affects the children in the classroom, has hardly been formally addressed by Jamaican educators and will need to be studied. And certainly, the problem of "racelessness" as it relates to language identity and achievement motivation has received insufficient attention in London schools.

Finally, **The Autobiography of the Project** made reference to work I had done with parents, adult students and the Black community of London. It suggested that these were the groups who might be served by increased understanding of their origins, histories and aspirations. The conclusions of the investigation might offer some insights that are relevant to these groups. Apart from the language teaching issues, the study might have something to offer, to London teachers, for understanding the background of Caribbean children, their parents, and their parents' aspirations and actions. It has highlighted the language situation and teaching background of Jamaica, showing the orientation of Jamaican adults who come into the London system as adult learners and parents. We now have an understanding of the kind of ideas and beliefs that inform their thinking on education. It is also useful for understanding the children who, from time to time, come into the London school system from Jamaica and continue to reinforce the historical linkages between the two settings.

In the foregoing, I have underlined some of the conclusions and implications of the study, considering its contribution to understanding some issues in cross-cultural classrooms. Apart from the key questions, the voices of the teachers, located within their historical and cultural context, have been an essential part of that understanding. This is in line with the task set at the beginning of the investigation, to clarify, explain and account. The questions posed relating to the

differences have yielded the kind of invaluable insights which I sought in my early experience of teaching in London. These insights are required to secure and strengthen our delivery of the socially and culturally complex practice of teaching English in many different settings.

Appendix

A sample of interviews from Teachers H and S in Jamaica and Teachers 13 and 14 in London They are comparable in age, with three to ten years teaching experience.

The Jamaican teachers did two interviews. The first tended to be more professional, dealing with the questions on the interview schedule. The second interview included more biographical information. The interviews in London usually combined elements of both.

Teacher H (Jamaica): The Professional Interview.

Interviewer: Tell me something about your educational background

Teacher: I went to teachers' college, did the 3 year Diploma course, specialising in English and Spanish. I went 82 and left 85. I've been teaching since. I taught in Ocho Rios, at Ocho Rios Secondary school for 3 years and I've been here at.....ever since. This is my sixth year.

Int: You also did a degree?

Teacher: Yes I did it in History and Social Science. I started it part-time and then I went on leave to finish.

Int: I've noticed that a lot of teachers do that! So why did you do a teachers' certificate rather than....did you have A levels?

Teacher: I had one A level

Int: Did you do a teaching diploma to matriculate for university?

Teacher: Not necessarily because I would probably have gone straight from there to University if that was my....because.. I worked 3...4 years out in the field before I went to University....in teaching.

Int: All right....why did you go to teacher training college.....rather than the banks or insurance...?

Teacher: None of those areas really fascinate me really even though I would leave now...I've got offers...I'm not particularly fond of that field....I'm still trying to find my niche....maybe I've found my niche.

Int: So why do those subjects at University rather than English?

Teacher: Because I wasn't fascinated by doing straight English...I thought it would be boring....I just never saw myself doing it at that level...English....and probably thinking of the future, what would I be doing with it if I didn't stay here.

Int: Another type of degree would be more flexible? Another different question...what grades do you teach now?

Teacher: Grades 9,10 & 11. None of the younger

Int; Is that out of choice?

Teacher: Not really. I use to teach grade 7&8 for Spanish but I've normally taught 10 & 11 for English...teaching the CXC syllabus. I'm just now getting into the grade 9.

Int: Is teaching the grade 9 very different?

Teacher: In some ways it is....I tend to do things like role play, interviews...but the Grades 10&11 is more exam-oriented.....which probably shouldn't be but because of the time constraints.. we're pushing them to copy topics encountered in the CXC syllabus. In Grade 9 the pressure is.... you're not supposed to really start the CXC from Grade 9....so I'm doing things like how to conduct an interview.... which I probably should do but don't do with grade 10.. I found that they hadn't covered some of things I expected them to cover...You should be reinforcing....

Int: Can I now ask you the big general question aboutwhat you think English teaching is about?

Teacher: Right now the aim is exam-oriented...the aim, it should have some function....for their life. For example, when they get into the workplace, they should be able to transfer and apply...sometimes I wonder....and they ask me this too...why do I have to learn how to summarise.....when you speak to people out there, some of the criticism is.....they can't transfer some of the information from a set of statistics...things like that. I think that the CXC syllabus is geared towards

developing an all-round...more than when I did English.....They carry over to every aspect of life with subjects from everyday life...reading between the lines.

Int: So you think the aim of the English curriculum is to equip them for

Teacher: For life, for life

Int: In the public and in the private

Teacher: Yes, but the only drawback is that.....in terms of....the school system is so exam-oriented...sometimes it limits us in terms of expanding some area, developing areas. I find that I can't do with my grade 11 things I do with my Grade 9 which would be beneficial to them, like a little role play or interview because of time constraints. Always pushing them with a mock exam, an assignment to be graded, it limits us...if we didn't have to do all of these things by a particular time we could do more.....bring in a speaker, take them on a field trip.

Int: What other drawbacks do you see in delivering the kind of curriculum you want?

Teacher: I was talking with a group Grade 11s yesterday. It's the interference with the Creole. For example, I feel at this stage I should be able to help them develop their style of writing but I'm hampered and bogged down with grammatical errors. At this stage I shouldn't be having to stop and correcting there/their. that kind of thing at this level.

Int: Do you think that's an interference thing?

Teacher: Well not that one but like as/has or is/his. At this stage I should be helping them with their style...how we could develop this story another way....? but instead I have to be correcting grammar.....they're writing something in the past tense with no "ed". That's the interference in the Jamaica Creole, "Last week me did come". The JC doesn't carry the "ed" of the past and so that is why they write that way.....I give them the analogy that we should be putting the icing on the cake, we still rubbing sugar and butter.

Int: That's the first time you mentioned Creole. Do you think it has any place in the classroom?

Teacher: Yes in terms of....you see what I tell them, there's no acceptable form of spelling system of Creole. The exam is not going to be accepted in Creole...it comes right back to the fact that we're exam-oriented. I tell them that in the short story.. if they're writing like a little diary or conversation they can put it in. But I don't think they're at the level where they can differentiate...they can't handle that yet. I can handle that because I can make the switch and the transfer easier but if we allow them too much freedom with it, it's going to carry over where it shouldn't.

Int: When you say you can handle it and you can make the switch, do you speak Creole?

Teacher: Of course

Int: So which do you think is your first language?

Teacher: My first language is, I think, the Creole but not perhaps to the extent of theirs because when I was growing up my parents were always...I couldn't really speak it to them. It wasn't the accepted thing in my house.....so I was really restricted with it.

Int: What about the students....what do you think is their first language?

Teacher: It's their first language and so sometimes I take a second language approach. Teaching Spanish has helped me to teach English.

Int: How?

Teacher: Because like sometimes I teach a verb how I teach a Spanish verb. They never saw any connection between "is" and "are" and "am". In English they don't teach....at least I was not taught it like that...they don't see that the verb is "to be" it's like "to run".... That is the verb "to be" so "I am" so I go down. So as most of them have done Spanish to grade 9....and we go down "hablar" and they say "Oh...it's 'to be', 'I am', 'you are'...and so on".

Int: So a second language methodology helps?

Teacher: Well, it has helped me because I can show in Spanish what they do. You would use "hablar" and then say "she hablar"....you would have to change it....They understand..

Int: Can you give me some more ideas about how you think English should be taught?

Teacher: How English should be taught...well a lot of situational approaches...give them situations. .for example you go to the bank because you want a cheque changed...do you say "change dis fi mi" ask them if they think he will be understood and they would because they don't see themselves and their parents and their peers getting along.....

Int: So why is it important to learn English?

Teacher: That's a good question. It comes right down to the fact that the Jamaican Creole is not standardised in terms of spelling and so. I would say to them if they're writing for a job....how would you write it? "Mi waant a jab. Gi mi a jab". There's certain situations..you would have to explain to them...you would probably go to the market and say "sel mi wan poun a dis" "gi mi wan poun a dat". You would be understood and you get through you business and in other situations, that would not be the acceptable thing. It's well and good to know that, to speak that but in other situations it would not be acceptable. You couldn't write that...in terms of the exam.. We're exam-oriented... You can't run away from that.

Int: When you say JC is not standardised, what do you mean by that?

Teacher: The spelling. Five or six people could come up with five or six spelling for "nuff".

Int: So if it was standardised, that's what we should teach?

Teacher: But we don't live in a vacuum! What happen if you go to Cayman? What happen if you go to Barbados?

Int: So it was a foolish idea!

Teacher: If it was standardised and accepted!

Int: Do you think all English teaching should be situational?

Teacher: Yes especially as how English for them is a second language. They think in the Creole.

Int: How do you know they think in Creole?

Teacher: Because their first natural response is going to be in Creole

Int: Do you know anything of the Govt's position on the teaching of English?

Teacher: I'm not sure that I'm clear... whether they view it as second language...no information.

Int: What of teacher educators...the Faculty of Education?

Teacher: No, I think I knew once

Int: You don't keep track...any other group?

Teacher: I know there's this debate with Mertel Thompson...about the Creole versus the Standard English.....I think I cut them out...people like Morris Cargill

Int: Do you think you have enough freedom?

Teacher: In a restricted way....the Principal encourages the speaking of English in the classroom. I do also same as I use to do in Spanish...I see myself as an example...some errors I would never make even at grade 3....because I was accustomed to speak.. at home...they would never write these if they were accustomed to speak.. at home.

Teacher H (Jamaica):The Biographical Interview.

Int: What do you know about the ROSE programme?

Teacher: All I know is that the ROSE programme is supposed to mean the Reform of Secondary education and is intended to eliminate the Common Entrance at Grade 6. There will be instead a common examination at Grade 9 in which all students should do the same curriculum up to grade 9 so we won't have an examination screening at grade 6..those who're eligible for secondary education, but all students go straight up to grade 9 and do a common examination there and then after that I suppose those who are proficient and able to continue will and I'm not sure what will happen to the rest of them!

Int: What about the ROSE curriculum?

Teacher: I'm not sure because they're phasing in subject areas but I don't think they've developed it for all the subject areas as yet but I know there's a curriculum for English and other core areas.

Int: Is your school involved in it?

Teacher: No, we can opt to go on. We're not one of the pilot schools but I think the Principal and staff agreed that we wanna go on it.

Int: Do you think there's a choice whether you go on it or not?

Teacher: Eventually, I think everybody will be on it but right now I think they are starting with some pilot schools. I don't know much about it. I got a copy of the curriculum for English. A group of women came to speak with us about some things, about the administrative side of it. They left the booklists for us to go through and see what the programme is, but they didn't go into depth. They came from the Ministry just to introduce the programme to us.

Int: Do you think I could get more information from other people in your department?

Teacher: Probably from their own personal reading, but there's nothing official that I can tell you about my school's involvement.

Int: Let us go to the tape that you did for me. I asked you what you felt was your first language and you said that to an extent you felt it was Creole but when you

were growing up, you really couldn't speak it to your parents. Tell me a bit more about your growing up, about the language that was used in your home and something about what you did in school.

Teacher: My parents were teachers and so it was their idea then in the 70s was that people didn't think of Creole as a separate language; it was something bad. I suppose this came from how they themselves were brought up. Their parents were perhaps not very educated and they probably thought that speaking proper English was a means to an end. It meant that they were cultured and so they passed it on to us. I couldn't approach my mother, ask her a question without even thinking. I remember sometimes before I go to her, I'm saying to myself.. trying to sort out in my mind whether I should say "Can I or May I." You wanted to say the right thing because then she would praise you. You had these ideas about what her children were like...their vocabulary was extensive in a sense and they would use words to us that they know we didn't know but just in an effort for us to find out. If you asked what something meant, they would say, "Go and look for it?", so they taught us to use the dictionary. I remember once they called my sister an imp and we didn't know the word and my sister went and looked it up and when she found it, she said to my mother, "If I had a daughter I wouldn't call her an imp". And my mother said to her, "I shouldn't have to call my daughter an imp." They encouraged reading, like in the summer holidays or wherever we went we had to write about it for them at home and so by the time we got back to school in September, if we got that to do we would have already mastered it at home.

Int: Was it your mother or your father? I notice you talk a lot about your mother.

Teacher: It was really both of them but mother's influence is kind of more. Fathers are there for certain things but things like how you speak, the mothers are really involved. My mother was the disciplinarian, so my father would refer us to her. If we did anything, if he saw us doing something, he would say, "Wait until you mother come". And report to her so she was really dominant...and so it became natural to use certain things at school.. and there were certain mistakes that I would never make. I would never confuse "is" for "are". The errors that I had were like "there" for "their" until I learnt them but my vocabulary was quite strong. I

remember learning some big words from primary school I had to look for them in the dictionary and I've not forgotten them.

Int: Did she use English all the time?

Teacher: Mostly, until in the later years...before then.....But when my younger sister was born, she said that we changed her...all that shouting....this young miss was caused to lapse..

Int: How many of you did she have?

Teacher: Six, three girls and three boys. By the time got to about fourth or fifth she started changing. The things that the smaller ones got away with, the way in which they spoke to them, we couldn't even think of doing it. I remember once I got a beating because somebody came to them and when the car stopped at the gate we all rushed to the gate and she came out and said, "Did somebody come to you". After the person left, she said. "Never you present yourselves like that; stay where you are and I will call you if I want you want to say hello". We couldn't just be there staring in the person's face and being in the conversation. Looking back now I can just imagine somebody coming to you and when you look you see 6 children!....so when somebody comes to her, she would call us to come and say hello and then the person might ask you a few questions about school and you would look at her before answering because you didn't want to say you're doing fine and your mother think otherwise!....so you would look at her first. When the person was through with you, you would go back to where you were.

Int: Do you think she was physically strict?

Teacher: Yes, she was very strict but when I look back now I realise the frustration with six children. We were like two years apart and it must have been difficult for her. If we were going somewhere, after you comb this one hair you would have to go with the other one, fix that one. She was a domestic person so she would be in the kitchen and I realise now that she was really working. She has mellowed and softened do much now that I realise that it was frustration. She had her dreams and aspirations that.. she was not fulfilled and they were both teachers so you can imagine what their salaries were like, and we all went to high school. and we ate well and kept well. So it must have been a great sacrifice on their part. I think now

on how... she was always cross and I understand more. I remember when I just learnt the words “include” and “exclude”. We were having ice cream and she said to me, “Share for everybody, including me,” If she had said, “Share for everybody”, I would know that I should share for her too, but because she said “including me”. I thought she wasn’t to get any and I shared for everybody else and none for her. It was then that she taught me the meaning of include and exclude.

Int: How do you talk to her now?

Teacher: Very good. We get on now. I don’t have to think before I speak with her anymore. Sometimes she calls me on the phone and I might say, “Hmm, what happen now?” and she might say, “Nothing, so I can’t call you!”. She sees me, look at that, her worst-spoken daughter, a teacher. So I know the concern’s still there but she can’t reprimand me anymore but every now and then she’ll comment on it. She thinks that this generation of teachers is a washout. She wouldn’t come to school dressed as I ‘m dressed now.

Int: Did she teach English?

Teacher: She taught at a primary school and so she did every thing but on Campus she did English and History.

Int: Is she still in teaching?

Teacher: Yes, she’s the Principal at Ocho Rios Primary school. Other people would have gone into the high school system but she stayed.

Int: When you’re talking to your friends, do you change your language at all.

Teacher: Yes, I sometimes shift. I shift in the classroom even though I am more careful there because I try to encourage them. I tell them that if they speak it, they’ll write it, because some of the errors that they make I know it’s because they don’t speak it and some of the errors I don’t make, I know it’s because I spoke it.

Int: What are you more comfortable with?

Teacher: Creole. There are some things that said that cannot be expressed any other way. They’re better said in Creole. Creole is more expressive.....they can only be in Creole. There’s the expression, “Yu fenneh...I don’t know how you put that in

English for somebody to know what you mean. My sister just came back from doing graduate work at Rutgers in New Jersey and there are a lot of international students from Russia, Spain, Chad etc. and she had this German girl in her class and she sometimes say to her “Yu gwaan, yu fenneh.” And she would say, “What’s fenneh?” Of course there is no way to define “fenneh” but she loved to say these things because they have no idea what she’s saying.

Int: What about talking to parents of students? How do you talk to them?

Teacher: It depends. If you realise that they’re struggling and if you realise that they’re more comfortable with Creole then use it. I had an example recently when somebody came in here and we were asking the person if the child had been registered and they interpreted registered to be a big word and she said, “Registered, I don’t know.” And then we said to her, “When you went to the office did someone write down the child’s name”. Then she said “yes” So we have to shift with them.

Int: Let me go back to when you might have started doing all this shifting!

Teacher: Probably in high school. In primary school my mother was there and so I was Mrs H----- child. But in high school you meet a whole new set of people. In those days there were a lot of expatriates in schools, so you really couldn’t speak Creole too deep, because they couldn’t understand you any way. because they’re not familiar with Creole. They were learning English themselves, those from Sri Lanka and India, so this sorta forced us to speak formal English.

Int: So you could say there was never a time when you spoke pure Creole?

Teacher: With friends, of course, but you never really found anybody really getting away with deep Creole. It was a mixture.

Int: Did you find Linguistics easy?

Teacher: Yes, it was my favourite subject. As a matter of fact I think I was one of the better ones in my group. People use to come and say, “Explain this for me, please,” I suppose I found it interesting; I understand the thing I can get it, that’s how I am I’m not the kind of person who can recall and bring things to mind or swot. I have to understand it.

Int: Did you do English at University?

Teacher: No I never did English at university.

Int: Suppose you had children yourself, would you put any restrictions on the way you spoke?

Teacher: Probably, but not hard and fast in terms of them can't express themselves in Creole, but I probably would correct them. I hate to hear a child speaking Creole. I guess it has to do with my upbringing. An older child can switch and I'm not repelled but a small child speaking Creole sounds awful to me. It's as if I can't communicate with such a child. I understand but I can't go any further.

Int: If you were teaching young children in a primary school, probably that's what you'd come across.

Teacher: I know that's what I'd come across. What I'd probably do is correct the child which I don't know if that's the correct thing to do; according to the linguist it's a language.

Int: I'm not sure that you're convinced about that!

Teacher: Yes, I'm convinced, especially because I teach English and I realise that I'm teaching a second language.

Teacher S (Jamaica): The Professional Interview.

High school graduate; worked before going to teacher training college; wanted to teach "from a child"; no financial resources; wants to continue in Education; study Literacy; Grade 7; primarily remedial work at the Kingston school

Teacher: My aim is to pass on skills to the students that they will be able to use later in life, not so much to prepare them for exams but prepare them for later life, so they'll be able to fill out forms..send telegrams...teach them about resource skills..etc The methodology that I use...that I find easy to work with is the one that deals with your experience. .the experiential approach.

Int: What you've said is about any language teacher. But what about English? Why English?

Teacher: Basically, I think our country is a two-language country. We have the Creole and we have the Standard English. They know the Creole only. .They're not able to speak well using the Jamaican Standard English and therefore should they go anywhere where they need to use it, they will be at a disadvantage. The aim is to prepare them so that should the need arise for them to use it, they will be comfortable to use it in any situation. They're able to use the Creole when the situation calls for it, so they'll be able to use the Standard when the situation calls for it

Int: Give me some example of the experiential approach to this teaching.

Teacher: I don't believe in teaching things that are not a part of our culture. .the British culture, talking about snow etc, things that our students are not familiar with. I believe in using things that they see every day, that they use every day e.g. talk about the market, the bus situation out here.....things that they have to deal with...And based on what they know, start having a discussion...and out of the discussion, find out... correct any mistakes ...verb agreement, tense. .things like that...also increase the vocabulary

Int: One, do you think it's important to correct their spoken language and two is grammar teaching important?

Teacher: I don't believe in coming in and teaching grammar just like that but I do believe in correcting the spoken language, sometimes giving them a chance to correct themselves....they know some of it but they use some Creole as well

Int: When you say that which do you think is their mother tongue?

Teacher: The Creole

Int: Which is yours?

Teacher:(Laughter).....(inaudible)...it's what I was used to until High School.....at college Mrs C.....helped me to make the switch from Creole to Standard

Int: Do you know any thing of the Ministry's.....

Teacher:What we were taught in college and coming out here not even a year and being introduced to the ROSE programme.. I'm still trying to make sense of it..I had a hard time with it. Also when I came not even their name some of them could write so it was very hard for me to stick to the programme. So I was there trying to my own thing until I could introduce the ROSE programme

Int: You're saying you think the Ministry has something to do with the program? What do you think are the features of the Rose programme?

Teacher: I think it's a good programme but I'm wondering if it caters for everyone's needs. .with my class for example I couldn't start out with it. For the below average who don't even know the letters of the alphabet, it's not catering to their needs. And I'm wandering about the literature.....some form of Shakespeare the simple version. they can be introduced to the themes and things like that. From what I understand it's being phased out...all kinds of literature is downplayed on the Rose programme

Int: What of teacher education world?

Teacher: I'm not too sure what you're asking...(Interviewer explains again)...Basically the views that I have was because of the training I received.

Int: OK...do you know of any other group...?

Teacher: I'm not too sure...apart from writers.....no names come to me right now

Int: Any constraint.....

Teacher: The biggest restraint is being expected to stick to the ROSE programme...sometimes I feel that I'm being stifled especially the early part which is not very suitable. The second part which deals with communication is very apt because it covers a lot of talking, adverts, writing. But the first part which dealt with (*inaudible*) yes it would be good for average students but for students who...(*inaudible*) would've been better to deal with reading readiness...prepare them. Children, some are reading now...they can write a page. They're really interested in learning. They're dragging me behind. I feel good about that. But they're a few I worry about. They'll be leaving Grade 7 going to Grade 8 still unable to do some of the things that I wanted them to do.

Int: So you've taken that kind of experiential approach which includes a lot of discussion...and coming out of that will be.....

Teacher: Some writing, drawing...some of them a working on a scrap book...communication areas...telegrams, filling in forms, writing letters, making postcards...researchvocabulary...I'm really enjoying it.

Int: Why did you not enjoy it before?

Teacher: I did enjoy what I was doing. I was doing my own thing with them. I was stimulating them. But when the officials came in they really took me to task for not sticking to the ROSE programme.... Not enough booklets...you have to take it from them at the end of the class

Comments on the Response Statements:

1) **English is less violent:** I don't think so. The violence comes from within yourself. It depends on how you see civility. You can express yourself in patois without going down

2) **Patois is expressive:** I agree...it's very true..., Maybe this is something I shouldn't say but some times when you are trying to say something to a student.. They're standing there looking at you, not understanding, until you put it another way

3) **Some things can't be expressed another way:** I don't agree with this. Any thing that can be said in Creole can be said in any other language....and can be said

in a way that can be understood. All you have to do is master the language. Talking of vividness. .when you think of Shakespeare...I love Shakespeare

4) **Parents:**(Laughter) Well this is true....especially those who come from a background where they are not familiar with the language.. they think the child is trying to put one above them...they're better than them...They're not able to deal with it...but these are not all parents. Some parents encourage their children but on the whole it's true. I remember when I was growing up. .not my parents but my brothers...my older brother what are you trying to do to us..."speak what we understand.....we don't understand what you're saying....come down to our level".....The easiest was to speak the English at school as much as possible and then go home and switch. When they come to me....I find that when I'm here I try to maintain a professional tone but if I get a blank look on their face....then I switch.

Switching: I don't think it should be rigid but I think it should be done in such a way that they can switch...and they can't switch. .And you hear it when they try.

(People look down on you.....) It depends what the situation is.....if you don't follow...you're in trouble. Some situations when you cannot use Creole

Teacher S (Jamaica): The Biographical Interview

Int: When we spoke last I asked you about correcting the spoken language. You said that you didn't believe in coming in and teaching grammar just like that but that you did believe in correcting the spoke language. ..sometimes giving them the chance to correct themselves. They know some of it but they speak Creole as well. But in this class you didn't correct them directly. Why was that?

Teacher: Mainly because this is a Literature class. Not that language is isolated here but because they don't have a book to read and I don't want them to feel shy and don't come with one for themselves. I wanted them to express themselves as they were feeling. There are times when in Literature class I will correct them or I might say correct yourselves or something like that but for today because of the material that we are dealing with, limited time and the largeness of the class also, I wanted to keep the pace going and I felt that maybe if I paused to say correct yourselves or so forth it might break the pace.

Int: I wasn't sure that a lot of them would be able to correct themselves. I heard them using real basilect. They were saying things like, "Yu get a bluo in a yu yai and yu kyaang si gud".

Teacher: I think that was Gabriel and he would have an attempt; he might not have gotten everything correct but you have seen the difference. I don't think he would have been able to correct himself but then that maybe I would ask somebody in the class to assist him in making the correction. They would not have been able to get everything right but the difference would be seen.

Int: I would say that most of the children use the basilect. They use real creole features; some of them are using the mesolect, using more of a mixture... but there wasn't anybody here I would say who was using..... near the acrolect. Am I right in saying that? It's not a criticism; I'm just trying to describe what's happening in the classroom and I am thinking about how that might affect how we teach. What I wanted to do is to ask you about something to do with your own experiences. Were your parents teachers? What did they do?

Teacher: My mother did domestic work sometimes. I didn't grow up with her. I grew up with my father, and he had me when he was in his Sixties, so by the time I was going to school he had become a pensioner and my stepmother was a housewife with no formal education.

Int: So why did you decide to do teaching? What gave you that kind of impetus to do teaching?

Teacher: Well from I remember as a child I always wanted to be a teacher. I would go to school and whatever I learn I would come back and teach the chairs as I was an only child. I would teach the chairs and the bed and then beat the bed and the chairs. But moreso when I was in Grade 4 at a particular primary school I could read well but the other areas I could not do. I was unable to do mathematics and I was a problem child also. I would be involved in fights very often and my stepmother thought it was best to remove me from the school as it was right in the area where I lived.

Int: What made you a problem child?

Teacher: I think I was frustrated. I was not being given the attention that needed. In looking back now I basically needed attention and I did suffer from some inferiority complex.

Int: Why/

Teacher: The teacher then that I was dealing with, he had his favourites.

Int: What age are you talking about?

Teacher: Nine/ten. Primary school. .and he had his favourites. I was at the back of the class. I was always left out. I wasn't well-dressed because I was poor. My step mother was old so my hair wasn't always neatly groomed, so I think maybe I was a turnoff for the teacher and I was left out, so I was grasping for attention and I wasn't getting it and so the least little thing I would flare up. I think I realised that I was search for attention but if you just touched me it would be a big fight.

Int: Was this in the country?

Teacher: No, in KingstonTavares Pen.....Three Mile area. That is at the bottom of Hagley Park. I went to Tavares Pen Primary School.

Int: Is that near to Spanish Town Road?

Teacher: Yes.

Int: So you know all about these bad communities!

Teacher: Yes, that's where I live even now.

Int: Where do you live?

Teacher: Tavares Gardens, otherwise known as Payne Avenue.

Int: I only know about Rose Town and Craig Town.

Teacher: Well right there where the school is to Spanish Town Road, near to where Haile Selassie Secondary is, within that area.

Int: Who do you live with now?

Teacher: My stepmother

Int: How was it growing up in that kind of environment?

Teacher: Well, I was a sheltered child.....I was brought up in a very sheltered way. church school, home, nowhere else and during the holidays I would go and visit my mother. That's how it was for me.

Int: So it was quite a big deal for you to become a teacher?

Teacher: Yes to a certain extent. Let me tell you what really motivated me. When I left Tavares and went to Rousseau Primary, I was very slow. I was supposed to be placed in Grade 5. Just looking back now I think she realised that she had a task on her hands and maybe she didn't want it and she moved me up to Grade 6 and right now I'm wondering because I wasn't very good at Mathematics and she didn't want the problem but I bless them for the teacher that I got, because she took me up and really encouraged me, motivated me and within a year I was getting 90%. It was too late to pass the Common Entrance but I was getting like 90%, 80% in my work and the other year that I repeated Grade 6, it was like a walkover for me, and when I thought about the impact that she had on my life, I really wanted to give what she

did because I looked on her as model teacher. She was not very hard with me; she used a lot of patience and moved me from one stage to another until I became very independent.

Int: So why did you move from Tavares to Rousseau?

Teacher: Well because I was getting into fights and so forth....and my mother thought it was best to move me away to another school.

Int: And that's what made you finally decide to become a teacher?

Teacher: Right, and then moving on to High School, I saw a lot of teachers.

Int: Which one?

Teacher: St Andrew High.

Int: That's one of the best high schools in Kingston.

Teacher: Yes.

Int: And you got a scholarship to go there?

Teacher: Yes, I got a scholarship to St Andrew High and I had good teachers there that really made a mark on my life, teachers that I can remember. I didn't go to college immediately after leaving high school.

Int: Why didn't you go university?

Teacher: Well, I didn't think about university when I was thinking about teaching. I thought Teachers' college, mainly because I was being encouraged by my friends and stepmother and they didn't advise university.

Int: Maybe because you didn't know...that's what happened to me.

Teacher: They encouraged College. Moreso my friend was encouraging CAST [then a technical college] to do Business Education. That way if you don't make it in the teaching world you could always go out into the business world.....so I was aiming at that area.

Int: How may CXC subjects did you do?

Teacher: Six,...I got three of them.

Int: Couldn't you retake them?

Teacher: I did Social Studies at College. The money was one problem so for a while I was at home then I started working. I was living in Kingston and I was responsible for my stepmother, as my father had died by then and she was sickly and I had to be at home with her.

Int: So how were you regarded as a teacher in your community?

Teacher: I don't really move around in my community. I'm like from home to school...wherever. We don't have a community association; we're all isolated but one thing I can tell you...there's a lot of respect, maybe because of the life that I've lived I think, and also because I was educated. That is the sort of feeling that comes across, but more so because of the life that I've lived. I'm thinking of someone else who is a teacher in the community and I think about the relationship and the respect that's given and based on that comparison I think this is so because of the life that I lived. I lived a very quiet life. I go out now. I try to enjoy life as much as possible but I don't go to dances. I have never been to a dance, that's not my scene. I have seen what a dance is like because I have been in the country visiting my family and they had a dance, so I was able to see what it's like and I know that it's not my scene. I have also heard dances going on outside on the street but it's not for me.

Int: I remember you saying that when you went to teachers' college you met up with Mrs C------. Can you tell me something about that. You said Mrs C----- helped you to make the switch from creole to standard English. Tell me about that.

Teacher: Because of my home background, I had problems and I still do. There are times when I really don't make the switch with the tenses...if I write, I might not have so much of a problem as with the spoken language. I'm not comfortable with this. Maybe because of my home environment that I am from; it's not a practised thing. I speak Creole at home but not the basilect and believe me I am criticised for it where I live. As a matter of fact I was told off properly a couple weeks ago, "Where are you from? You're acting as though you just landed!" I was talking normally as I would to somebody in my community and I was told that you are acting as if you just got off the plane. And even in community, I remember when I

was in high school and doing the book The Year in San Fernando and I met up on this character and the teacher pronounced the name “Hogarth” and there was this man who sold ice-cream in the area and we called him “Ogart” Of course I called him by the pronunciation that I was taught and everybody was looking at me in amazement “Where do you come from?.....that sort of thing. I although, don’t speak the standard language comfortably, I am still told off because of that but when I went to college I had a problem making the switch.

Int: Were there many people with that problem?

Teacher: Yes many and Mrs C----- realised it and she pointed it out to me. She called me one day and she said to me, “O----- you have the ability to be an honours student but there is one thing that may pull you away from it and that is your language.” And she pointed out the error with the concord, tenses, agreement and she helped me along. She didn’t give me extra classes; she just pointed it out by talking to me and encouraged me, like when I made the mistake she would change it around and put it a better way, the right way of saying it and that was basically it for me; and knowing that she believed that I had the potential to do it really encouraged me.

Int: What about your step mother and father? Did they notice you speaking like this?

Teacher: My father was dead and when he died I was not going to college as yet. I was at home at that time. I stayed home for five years, worked in between and was at home for some time. I did not go straight to College because of the finances. I wanted to study more; I wanted to go into Sixth Form but the only person who would be able to send me was my mother but after graduating from fifth form, she told me to go and work. She didn’t want to spend any more money on me. Although I did not grow up with her, she had the younger children to think about and I was now graduated from school so her idea was for me to go to work. My father was unable to send me further so for a while I was trying to get jobs. I didn’t have subjects that were marketable such as typing and accounts. My subjects were mainly Language, Literature and Religious Education. It was very hard for me...then I finally got a job as cashier in a food place, then I was working as junior supervisor. I

worked in a factory once; I was supervisor there. I started doing some studies in computer studies at EXED and that was where I was really encouraged. They said I had the look of a teacher and a commanding voice and seeing I was interested in the field, I was encouraged to go to MICO. If I had not gone to EXED, I might not have gone into teaching at that time. I think maybe I would have, It was said to me on more than one occasion but I did not know about the Student Loan Bureau, so the one thing that was holding me back was the funds. I went to the Student Loan Bureau and then the for Mico was not as expensive as it is now.

Int: Do you speak to your mother now?

Teacher: Yes.

Int: What does she say to you?

Teacher: She is proud of the fact that I am a teacher. She brags to her friends but basically I went through without her helping me at all. Right now she is looking to me to help her financially.....

In fourth form I had a very good Literature teacher and when I went to fifth form she moved onto another school and I got another teacher whose views I did not agree with in the treatment of the novel and I was written off. She didn't agree with my views and she couldn't see through my views even though I could substantiate what I was thinking, I was written off. I was considered to be lazy and a no-good and so the classes were boring for me. I did my Literature exam based on what I was taught in fourth form and I came out with a 2. This is why I think Literature should be promoted. Basically I was an only child, my form of enjoyment was through reading. I could understand how other people think because I was seeing through the eyes of the book. I visited places that I have never really visited in real life.

Int: This school is now a comprehensive high. Do you think that some of the students here can go as far as you have?

Teacher: Yes, right now I have a Grade 10 class. They are not very..... but they're not remedial students. They are not on the CXC list but my aim is to channel them along that line, because I think that once they can read then you can do great things with them. I am even looking at the remedial students I have and I think that sooner

or later they can reach my stage. When I look at Ricardo, he was so enthused. He can think but the only problem is that he can't read well. I see where he has moved because he was sat the position last year where he looked at i and t and didn't know it was "it". He was able to identify some of the words on the chart; he might not have been able to read it through but he was able to identify some of the words and he was able to think, which is one important factor in reading and comprehension.

Int: Normally a class is not this large. Are you able to give him special attention?

Teacher: He is not in the class that I really teach.

Int: Are you able to give him extra classes?

Teacher: Basically, the children aren't interested in extra classes. As soon as the bell rings they are at the gate and even if they haven't left the compound, they're all over the place playing; they're not interested. We started with them when they went to Grade 7 and by the January the classes were not there any more. It went down to 1, then nothing. The present Grade 7 classes, we have now 2 remedial classes with approximately 70 and it has now dwindled down to about 10, because for them they see their friends going out and playing and they want to go; they want to play.

Int: One of the things I'm reading about teacher training colleges is that there are very strong networks that develop over the years. Tell me about Mico in particular.

Teacher: Basically, because of what Mico is like, when I went there I was told that Mico can either make you or break you. I found in my case it made me. I wasn't always an outgoing person, I thought I was an introvert, but Mico brought out something in me that I didn't know existed. The curriculum, the teachers, the social activities and I thought the teachers saw in me something that was there that I didn't know about and they drew a lot out of me and I think that's why I love Mrs C----- because she drew a lot out of me.

Int: What about your friends?

Teacher: My friends encouraged me. I don't know what they saw but they saw this strong leadership quality that I didn't know existed and they pushed me because I was in a class where at the beginning we were all shy and timid; most of us were

learning things that we didn't know about: Psychology of Reading and so forth. I was a person who always thought that I was mediocre student, not very bright, but here I was getting good grades without making an attempt, it was just coming. I think it was something that just came. Mrs C----- was a good teacher and what she said formed pictures in my mind and it just stuck and so I could easily understand what was being said and remember easily. I think she used reading strategies with us.

Int: How many of your friends from Mico are still teachers?

Teacher: Most of them. I know that some of them don't plan to remain long in it but they are still teaching. Most of them are trying to teach and study; it's convenient for further studies. Some of them are studying now at UWI; some of them are starting in September.

Int: What courses are they doing? Arts or Education?

Teacher: Arts.

Int: Why do you think they've gone into Arts and not Education?

Teacher: Because they don't intend to go back into the classroom. Arts allows them to branch out into different areas. Because of what Mico is like, once you find somebody you can stick with, motivate you and you can stick together, You can develop a relationship and when you leave you really don't want to end that relationship so sometimes 3 months might pass and you don't share but always arrange a time when you can really link up, meet and share with each other and the whole thing about the teaching system where you go out there and you're thrown into something because you were really sheltered at Mico and I came here for teaching practice and when I came back for actual classroom work, it was as if it was something completely new and different, because I could always go to my tutors and say I'm having a problem, and with my friends you're there planning lessons together and so when you come out and find that you're on your own, you feel different and so it is as if you're thrown out on your own you either sink or swim, and so it's good to find friends that are experiencing the same the same things that you can share with.If you look at the competition between Mico and Shortwood, the Miconians will tell you that we're the only college (or we would say that we're

the poor man's university). We feel that what we've got at Mico is as much it's as if we'd gotten a university training.

Int: Does that come from Mr S----- ?

Teacher: Yes. Mr S----- not only encourages you but forces you to do your best. One thing he will tell you is that he doesn't accept Cs. Cs are not acceptable and when you're going into exams, you'll hear him saying, "Oh let this cup of failure pass from me." And when exams are over, you know you had better do your best because Mr S---- is coming out to ask you why you got a C in the subject area and if you got 5 As and 2Bs, he will ask you why you got Bs, why you didn't continue with the As. You were motivated to work and when you did well, you were praised so it was like a family, not so much a school with teachers but we were together like a family.

In my second year in college, my mother took ill suffering from an ulcer and at one point I thought she was going to die. My mother was not working enough to have savings that in case she die we could turn to look about all the expenses and the sickness was going to take a lot of money for medication and everybody was looking at me. My younger sister wasn't working at the time; my older sister wasn't working but I had a job on the side, doing market research for a company and they're looking for me to foot the bills and I thought she was going to die. I looked at a woman who was looking well one day and in two days she looked like a skeleton. She lost a lot of weight.....she looked aged in her face and haggard and I felt she was going to die and I felt lost, because I feared the amount of responsibility I would have to take up and the teachers at Mico found what was happening and they rallied around me. I got time off, I went to work full time so I could get money to buy the medication. They understood; they encouraged me to keep up with the classwork and I got a little extra time to complete assignments and some of them put money together and gave me, to help out with the medication, and they always keep in check and ask about her condition every day. And even today, after leaving college two years ago, if I should see Mrs S----- who was the Principal at the time, the first question she would ask is, "How is your mother?" The knew what was happening

and they rallied around and gave me encouragement and motivation to keep on track. There was a time when I was actually thinking of stepping out and going to work and the first semester of my final year my mother and I had a big quarrel and she said something that got me very upset and I felt as if that was the end of it. I felt like leaving and going out to work for a while and come back and Mrs C----- “No way, finish it out. You have come this far, continue to bear what you’re bearing, because you believe in God and you know God will not give you more than you can bear.”

Int: Most of the tutors were religious weren’t they?

Teacher: Yes, most of them, not only religious but church-going.

Int: Were all the students like that also or did you have some who were not God-fearing?

Teacher: Sure but we have to cope. The teachers don’t come and preach religion to you but if they know that you’re a Christian, there are times when they will share with you.

Int: Did they give you more support if you were a Christian?

Teacher: Not really. They treat us all just the same. Most of the time when I’m talking about my tutors, I really have Mrs C----- especially in mind There’ others but Mrs C----- really made an impact on my life. I’m thinking how she treated all of us in the Reading option, We were all like her children; she encouraged all of just the same way. If I was wrong as a Christian she wouldn’t say you’re a Christian and shouldn’t do that. She would say you’re wrong and if you’re right, whether you’re a Christian or non-Christian you’re just as right for her and she tried to pass on a lot of values to us, whether you were a Christian or non-Christian, your life was moved by her.

Int: Of all the women that you know: your mother, stepmother, Mrs C----, who has been the most influential and gave you the most values?

Teacher: My stepmother and if you ask me to rank it I would say my stepmother, Mrs C----, my mother.

Int: Are there any men who would be in that group?

Teacher: Not then. Now I have male friends who encourage me but not then. They practically moulded my life to a certain extent.

Int: What about your teacher in high school or primary?

Teacher: At primary school my teacher was male. There was really not much influence there.

Teacher 13 (London): The Combined Interview.

Teacher: I did my English degree in Leceister and then I worked for a couple of years, then I went back and did my PGCE at G---

Int: What was your English degree like?

Teacher: Great!

Int: Mostly literature?

Teacher: I chose a language-based option as well. I did twentieth century language. I did..[laughter] No. I laughed because I did this paper on what I called yardie language and it really confused them..[laughter]

Int: Yes?..how long ago was this

Teacher: This must have been about 1989 when I graduated?

Int: And who did you use for that paper?

Teacher: Leceister is, sort of, quite a good community. I was in that community quite a lot because I lived in Highfields.....it's quite tough now apparently. A friend of mine was shot in January....crackhead...I haven't been back for a couple of years..... I'm really twentieth century orientated. I'm not very strong...I can't stand the Victorian stuff. It's too tight/high for me so I mainly did my degree on like twentieth-century literature and I did this option on twentieth-century language on language change, on racism and sexism in language and that sort of thing. I did...what did I do again. I did Russian formalism and Marxism and all this business. Bakhtin? Yea, right? I did all the things I thought were like radical and I had all the tutors who were like....I did some Chaucer. I like that yea but I have this gap which I'm trying to address cause I gotta to have a smooth...I try and address it in the classroom to get a balance.

Int: Why did you come to London?

Teacher: I didn't know what I wanted to do when I finished my English degree. And everyone had always told me I was going to be teacher so I didn't want to teach...and I worked ..my dad was self-employed .in retail. I worked for Top Shop...graduate manager in training. That really helped because the organisational skills and like all

this bookwork we have to a lot of the teachers find really difficult but I've been trained in it...not a doddle but I can pace my time a bit better. And that took me to Southampton and then to Basingstoke..

Int: You went to teach in Basingstoke?

Teacher: No, that was when I was working for Top Shop and then I decided I didn't want to do that..I wanted to teach and the only place I wanted to go and do my PGCE was G-----

Int: Why? Did you know the course?

Teacher: Yea and I'd heard that they were really strong on equal opportunities and those sort of issues and this was where I base my teaching from. So I went to goldsmiths and I asked them to put me in a school that had a really strong mix of children So I went to D----- and the Head there was really good. And that was really good and the English Dept there was really strong and that helped coming here because here it needed waking up a little. M----came at the same time so we worked together.

Int: So what's the mix of children in this school.. because I'm interested in Afro-Caribbean...

Teacher: There's about sixty in all

Int: Really...they're mostly second generation aren't they? or third?

Teacher: Probably second. .Every now and again ..like I had a girl in my year 11 who came over from Jamaica but hated it so she went straight back again. So every now and again you get but most of them are born here...maybe the biggest group here are the Asian students closely followed by the White kids. So that's mostly the culture of the school is pretty sort of Asian orientated.

Int: They're the biggest group ?...and then after that it would be White kids and then Afro-Caribbean. What percentage would they be?

Teacher: They're 60 out of 600

Int: I thought you were saying 60%.....Oh 10%

Teacher: Yea but it's dwindled..

Int: Why is that?

Teacher: I think you'll find they're over-represented in the amount of students that are excluded.

Int: Really..? Well, why is that?

Teacher: Well the equ....

Int: Oh...OK let's leave that question until I turn this off

Teacher: Probably better.

Int: Let's go back to one of the questions I was asking about the aim of the English curriculum.

Teacher: The way I teach it, I think literature should be accessible to everybody. I think that through the literature you can actually encourage children to be proud and use their own languages as well as being able to learn Standard English which we have to learn for the exams and for like general achievement in society. So I teach that as we're learning a separate language rather than it cancelling out the languages that they bring to the classroom whether it happens to be the Cockney or a Creole or some other language like Yoruba or any....Within the school the English Department is seen as teaching the skills they need in the other areas like research skills, presentation skills, spelling, punctuation, grammar skills. I just think it's basically fundamental to not only school life but life...we gotta teach them these skills they're gonna need outside of school.

Int: How to function?

Teacher: Yea..

Int: And you think in the classroom in doing that you use literature?

Teacher: And non-literary material. I mean in the exams they have to study non-literary material as well so I might do media...soaps or do some pastoral work and look at drugs or something..... but what I find really weak here is the actual reading and retrieving of information. I'm doing a TEFL diploma...and I had to find an original piece of work to work from a magazine and it's very hard 'cos I find that all the magazines the kids are reading, I find really difficult to focus on. Cos they're

just short, sharp little bits all over the place And I think that's why they find it so really hard to read and really take things in. But that's something We really have to work on at this moment, especially when they're setting exams now rather than just coursework.

Int: But it might not just be this school. It might be something about the way that culture is changing.

Teacher: Yea, because I was really shocked when I found this magazine ver difficult to read. There's a couple...Over Seventeen.. and a couple of music ones. .Big or something.But I couldn't concentrate and I was getting pretty frustrated so..and the amount of television that they watch as well

Int: And the youth programmes or “youf” programmes that they have. Everything lasts for about ten seconds.

Teacher: Yea and in class we're asking them to look at longer pieces and they find that a difficulty. I have one boy in my form he actually sits there and he can't actually look at it. he's really able...he'll do questions but he won't have read the questions properly. It's not that he can't do it...he's not used to it. Training outside of the school is so different. I think English is essential but then you're biased if you're an English teacher [laughter]

Int: I think other teachers might also think that it's essential. You said you brought in other languages in your teaching of English, preparing them to be more functional...how do you do that? Why do you think it's important? I mean the majority culture is English and they're in England. Why bother?

Teacher: I think from outside the school a lot of them are coming from very strong home communities and maybe the English culture is not their main. .they're not exposed to that all the time but I think it's important anyway to recognise your heritage and be like proud and to give everybody.... We use stories from different countries. We use stories like written in different dialects so that everybody...and that does vary from teacher to teacher..It's not the school's like policy.

Int: So you're talking about your own practice?

Teacher: Yea and the reason I do that is I want everybody to feel secure in a friendly, respectful environment and it makes you feel more at home more at ease and able to achieve if you feel respected if you can identify yourself. But also it goes towards educating the rest of the class about respecting each other. There were a lot of little snide remarks that I noticed when I first started, comments from all different people like appearance...something they said or...and I felt...this is what I believed in anyway but I found that really helpful that we sat down and started investigating differences in cultures in the literature we were looking at and we do a language unit as well where we have to speak in...whether it's a Northern dialect or that sort of thing... So basically what we got is that everybody is equal in here in the classroom. Things happen outside that confuse that but in here we all respect each other and we want to learn about each other and we all use the same material...It's interesting sometimes when you get stories from different countries that actually have the same idea which really helps with story telling and that sort of thing and everybody recognises the story ..that it changes. It's surprising how many of the kid's recognise the Anancy stories from primary school.

Int: OK this is what you but is there a language policy for the school that supports what you do?

Teacher: I'll try and get you the Handbook. They're in the process of writing up everything...OFSTED. We don't have a date but everybody is busy putting things together. Updating...I can't think of a policy but I wouldn't say there wasn't. It's obviously not a very prominent one. It's not a very policy-driven school. A lot of staff have been here since the school started and they always done things this way so I a lot of things haven't been written down...not always done things this way but the way they wanted.

Int: And how long was that?

Teacher: The first year 11 left three years ago so it must be about eight years that this school has been in ...It's got to a point now where people are actually now making these policies and writing them down. But the English department does have an aim...statement of intent which we will actually have by next week which is in the classrooms of every group that every one has equality of opportunity so we regularly

might look at what we're doing to make sure that all the children get access to poetry...to everything so we know what we're doing in each of the classrooms. And also this idea that languages are respected and encouraged in the classroom not just Standard English an obviously Standard English has got a status as well but we have to encourage....I know that in some classes students are not allowed to talk in their heritage language. But in here we, actually, like, sometimes that can be part of the process of writing in the end in Standard English. That's fine in here.

Int: When you say in other classes do you mean in other English classes or in other subjects?

Teacher: In other subjects yea. I think some people get really nervous about not being able to understand. And it can be abused. I think some teachers if they have a control head on.....that might be the idea.

Int: OK how long is the projecthow long have they been working in this school?

Teacher: When I started...this is the second year. M----- 's been in for the first term full time and then she was just one or two days a week...She's not in at all now.

Int: Do you think that's had any influence on the way you or any other English teacher has looked at the teaching of English?

Teacher: Yea I think well for me especially as it was my first year of teaching and a lot of the things that I sort of believed in but had never put into practice it was really handy having M--- there as a resource so I've got like access to resources I wouldn't have known about otherwise, somebody to sound ideas off of....also another pair of eyes that saw things a lot more clearly than I did because it was my first year and that was really good...and also we do work quite closely as a department and actually what M---- and I wanted to do was to make sure they were core units actually in place and that is happening now. So when I've gone and obviously she's gone....when I've gone, some of the materials we've put together will be there ready for the next teacher and will be used across the classrooms.

Int: Can you tell me something about those core units...give me an example of the kinds of things..

Teacher: We've added things like we've tried to make...the unit more multi-cultural by adding stories from different cultures rather than just reading one or two stories and she's got a lot of contacts with authors ...so we've had a lot more people in...Also we've have a young writers club and a drama club and we have the Black mime theatre. The students went to see them perform as well. That sort of thing really lasting effect but then the students want that sort of thing like next year and like why didn't I get that you know. So that's good. But the units we found there we're a lot of materials but they weren't actually centralised so we tried to centralise them and also add in things we felt would benefit the teaching of it and benefit the students, using the methodology that we were thinking of and then making sure they're there for use.

Int: But it's still very literature-based isn't it...the way you teach? Am I right in that?

Teacher: I dunno ..I'm trying to think what we do which isn't literature-based? I think because we do three lessons a week and only two with year 9 where they're doing a language and literature paper like with Key Stage 3.....Key Stage 4 it tends to be that you have your books that you have to study bit they also have to do a non-lit unit. What I did with year 10 this year was soaps and one of the angles we took was an article we found in the paper that actually said the Australian soaps were quite racist because of an audience that was watching them which was racist and the under-representation of any except the White characters basically. Well that was the angle on that.It was pretty strange because after we done that they had a token Chinese family in I think. That caused discussion in the class cause it was like...Oh...What other non-lit unit do we do?

Int: I see you have the languages book and I was wondering how you used that.

Teacher: What we would do in year 8 and year 9 is a Knowledge about Language unit. And we look at everything from slang, dialect, power in language, sexism and racism in language, newspapers, the way they write for different audiences.

Int: And what made you use that book?

Teacher: We don't just use that...no...that was here. That's an English Centre book. That's quite good. It needs updating. I use this book the Power of Language. Can't remember the name of the guy that wrote it but that is written from an African-

Caribbean perspective. It looks at the things...it gives lots of material...and it's for secondary or college.

Int: And you're doing this...it's not because it's on the National Curriculum?

Teacher: Yea, it is on the National Curriculum.

Int: Is that why you do it?

Teacher: Well I was doing it anyway but now we have to do that.

Int; But it's been taken off hasn't it?

Teacher: It's getting smaller and smaller but the actual knowledge about language they have to show now is about how language has changed but there's still scope for when you're teaching the unit on knowledge about language, as with anything that when you read and the exposure, you end up discussing things like the power of language don't you? When you get to the exams like the ones they're sitting now...it's on historical language change rather than..

Int: Is that the question they get?

Teacher: No, there's a question in there...within the question which is saying can you comment on the language. What we actually did was study *Marriage as a Private Affair* by Achebe (?) and one by Anita...I've written it down. Anyway, it was a Nigerian story and an Asian story. The way you would look at language is that obviously both of those stories were.....

Int: Written in nativised English?

Teacher: Yea..

Int: And this is year 9?

Teacher: No this was the exam piece.....this was for year 11 but that was sort of open. We chose to do those stories. You had to do something about love. There was also another story about love if people wanted to do it...an Irish story....James Joyce. But I think what the National Curriculum is pushing is yea...like...not this!

Int: While we're here, let me ask you about DFE. What do you think is their philosophy about the teaching of English?

Teacher: [laughter] Yea we've just had the draft proposals through...Dearing.

Int: what's your general sense of what they're about?

Teacher: I think it's a Eurocentric study of literature and language basically with some token bits and pieces in there to stop too many outcries.

Int: Do you think there's any good parts in it?

Teacher: Unless you're Welsh...you're bilingual and they'll look after you then [laughter]..There's some good things but I mean ..I've got these proposals and the new proposals to look through and I've seen that they've got the actual list of authors you could study or should study. And I think that it is very authoritarian anyway.

Int: OK, I notice.. a lot of people when they talk and think about English...one of the things you said was about the books. And a lot of people when they talk about English, they first of all look at what kinds of books. Are there any other aspects of it that you think are worthwhile? I know the list of books are pretty prescriptive and you're not expected to go beyond that...

Teacher: We only got the draft proposals yesterday...I'll look at them over the weekend so when I see you next I might have a better idea. We're all really sceptical of it but it's not really all bad but it is very prescriptive....In some ways the things that are happening at the moment are quite good in that you gotta be more accountable for what you're teaching and that can be good because it can put a whole department together and you can maintain equal opportunities so that all students are getting the same access, not just what each individual teacher wants to teach.

Int: That was why I was for it when it was first introduced..even though it was a Tory proposal. I thought Labour..they should have known there were so many different things going on in different classrooms that children I was concerned about weren't necessarily being given a fair deal. Anyway let me just ask you that as a question, do you think Jamaican, Afro-Caribbean children are well served or ill-served by this national Curriculum?

Teacher: I think most children are ill-served by it. I think maybe...it worries me the people who put these things together because even the exams that we got the questions..the Key Stage 4 ones and even the SATs we got, you can imagine were

aimed at...you can imagine the schools they're aimed at. They don't take account of mixed ability teaching which is like the biggest concern at the moment cos we're committed and more and more..they're not.

Int: An they're not?

Teacher: Well no because now we have to level the students and you have to decide which level paper they go in for. They're asking you within the classroom to actually create tiers and then you can still teach the same....you can switch it round to teach with the same material but you are in the end saying you're going to sit over this side of the room with this paper and you're going to sit over this side of the room and sit this paper.

Int: And this is for Key Stage 4?

Teacher: Three and Four. Although we didn't do the Key Stage 3 ones that's what they're asking.

Int: I can't understand why that was needed for English because I remember that debate about...well 10 years ago when talking about GCSE that English was always differentiation by out come and that it was quite simple to set a common task.

Teacher: Well, that's not how they're doing it now. There was three...I mean that's how we very carefully chose GCSE because we don't like that so obviously, the fewer tiers the better so we chose one that had two tiers because there were three tiers originally.

Int: In English? What...how do you have three tier English?

Teacher: Well we've gone for the one that's got two tiers..level 4-5 but you can actually achieve a level 6 if you do very well. Or level 6-10.....then they changed all that back into grades and you're levelling the students..then they actually mark it and change it all back into grades..it's a complete mess this year. Anyway, you're actually having to say.....I'll find you a sheet that says what the levels are.... you're actually saying EFG students are at Level P and your A-D students are sitting a paper a Q paper. The first paper that they had we'd all studied the same set books Sumitra's story and The Crucible. We'd all studied, we just sat on different sides and the level paper was supposed to be worded more accessible but there was very little

difference. The last paper they just sat which was based on this anthology that we put together, the level P question was guided much more than the level Q....I'll get hold of some of it for you

Int: The GCSE seems to have gone into bed with DFE. At one time it was separate.

Teacher: I think that's why we went with the NEAB because they've always sort of listened to the teachers as well. Even they like have chopped and changed so much in this last year and they've obviously just felt the pressure.

Teacher 14 (London): The Combined Interview.

Teacher: For me anyway it's about acquiring literacy . It's about basically being able to read and write as one thread. The second point, for me, about English is giving children the opportunity to be creative, to be imaginative, to be able to develop as writers. And within that to be able to look at different forms of literature as critical thinkers, to question what they read, not only in terms of the text but the author, the whole kind of holistic kind of approach to literature. The third strand for me is well. .that's basically the three: literacy, creative writing and being creative and being able to be critical thinkers

Int: Where do you get those ideas from? Where do you think you've developed to have such a kinda clear, three-pronged philosophy about your teaching?

Teacher: I've been teaching for four years when I started teaching, it was about imparting knowledge; it's about children acquiring a body of knowledge that I seem to possess and I'm just transferring it over to them.

Int: Which is what exactly, what was that body of knowledge?

Teacher: I started off teaching Sociology so to me it was about so forth and getting them in some way to grapple with the different perspective. Then I transferred to English.

Int: What's your first degree?

Teacher: Sociology.

Int: Did you do an English degree?

Teacher: No, I had to have a Diploma in English.

Int: So you said you started off with Sociology and you transferred to English. Why did you transfer to English?

Teacher: Sociology was not seen as a core subject or the foundation subject in the National Curriculum. I thought it would be wise to make a career move.

Int: So when you did a diploma, was that a PGCE?

Teacher: No, just at G------. They do a one year diploma in English.

Int: Really, the teaching of English or English literature?

Teacher: English Literature.

Int: OK. So let's get back to what you said about what are the kind of influences, what has lead you to this kind of very clear idea of what English teaching is about?

Teacher: From when I started teaching English, I felt it was exciting but I had to take into consideration where the children are at. In a mixed ability classroom you've got to think about the abilities of those ones who are poor readers against those ones who are bright or coping well so that's where the reading and writing aspect came from. The critical thinking was giving them a text for e.g. a poem, and the basically feeling once they've read the poem they never questioned in any way. That's where I try to get them to think about...who's to say that poem is about flowers, you tell me what you think it's about. I keep saying that when you're talking about your feelings you can't be wrong about your feelings because that's where you are at that stage and that's where the critical thinking comes from and wherever possible, I get them to think about it. Don't tell me you know, but it says here. And the third one, about giving them time to be able to come up with what they feel. Whether it be a slow story. So those were the kind of area that I was continually aware of when planning a unit.

Int: But what I am saying is that says that you do, but do you think some of your ideas came from teacher training, from teacher education, from other teachers?

Teacher: Part of it came from, I did a Bed so you had a teaching practice every year so part of that philosophy came from that. So each year you had a TP. You know it's only one TP. I had one every single year and every single year I went into a new school, new strategy. I was constantly thinking about those areas. What do I want from the children? What is the ultimate aim of the lesson, this unit for example. So that's why there's that questioning, to get the children to question what's put in front of them

Int: OK, so even though it was sociology, it didn't matter?

Teacher: No, no that kind of idea came from that...ahmm...the rest of it came from my own knowledge of literature, my own readings, my own awareness that I work in

a multicultural school. I have always done, and was aware that the literature we may place in front of children may not reflect their own cultural background. So the idea of that creativity coming from where there at.. comes from there.

Int: You mention teaching in a multicultural school, how do you take account of.....as I've said I'm interested in children with Jamaica somewhere in the background.....how do you take account, do you take account of the fact that there might be children from different backgrounds, say children whose parents or whose families come from Jamaica?

Teacher: I have in some respects I'm in a lucky position that I will bring a piece of work to the class that's in dialect and I will read in dialect.

Int: Yes, you read it?

Teacher: So I'll read it and they'll giggle something chronic for two minutes and they'll listen to the whole story, for example The Thief in the Village by James Berry. I read the whole thing in dialect. After about two minutes of giggling and being embarrassed they were there listening to this and everybody in the room understood what the story was about, even though it was supposed that they wouldn't because it's in dialect. But I read the whole poem, the whole story and they knew it and we worked on that. We worked on why it was different, in terms of the grammatical structures. We worked on what was the dialect and so forth, So from there I was able to look at poems from Lancashire, poems about Cockney and so forth and grapple with language, language in standard form as people say there are different ways of manipulating the language. And they cope quite well. Children are easily adaptable and they love the opportunity that they could hear their mom's or dad's patois in their classroom.

Int: How many children do you have in the classroom? Roughly 10, 20 30 or 40%

Teacher: Specially from the Caribbean or Jamaica?

Int: You wouldn't know specifically if they're from Jamaica?.

Teacher: I would.

Int: You would? OK, you're talking about year 8.

Teacher: In year 8 I have...[inaudible]...some from Trinidad, some from Barbados
[T shows list]

Int: So is that more or less than before because I know that the demography has changed in lots of inner city schools?

Teacher: I don't know....I've only been here 4 years and this has been my first school so I don't know.

Int: Do you get a lot of them being excluded?

Teacher: Yes

Int: A lot of them? I'm particularly talking about Caribbean children. Cos I find that it's a tendency in every single school I've been in.

Teacher: My most difficult pupils who display the most problems are Black boys.

Int: All right that leads me to some of these questions then on here. Look at these two.

Teacher: [T. shown Response statements] I always when a teacher says that African-America children are underachievers. I do worry about that statement. It's a blanket statement made for generalisation. I have lots of children in my year, bright Caribbean children who are achieving and achieving highly. So I worry about the blanket statements that all African-Caribbean are underachieving and they're not.. And my children that are experiencing the most problems are not educationally needy. They're bright Black boys. They don't have difficulties reading. They don't have difficulties writing: that's not the issue. If their behaviour is bad they're underachieving and it must have come through their education! The links are made too quickly between all those three areas and it's not as simple as that. That's why I worry about the second statement you have here. African-Caribbean being the underachievers, nothing to do with language.

Int: You don't think that's necessary?

Teacher: If other things were in place in their education, they would be in Band 1. They would be bright students coping with the curriculum and so forth. But there are other things getting in the way.

Int: Such as?

Teacher: Such as ahmm, I think of my last two boys who were expelled from this school who had extremely difficult home backgrounds.....to the point where it impeded their education. Their education wasn't the prime reason that they...he prime aim in their life. They had other issues going on for them and school can sometimes support a child through those problems....but not always; sometimes the problems are bigger than the school.

Int: I think that's what being said there. There are kinda social and economic reasons why. It's not thatat one time we used to say the very first children that came here...you know how people used to talk about language. Some people in the early days had some kind of cognitive deficit but we've abandoned all those theories. People are looking....but I don't think they can make sense of it because they don't know what to do. There are a lot of schools with this hardcore of Black boys that are just being expelled. They're being expelled!

Teacher: They are being expelled! They are being expelled! I'm not denying that but what I'm saying is that a White person may classify as being rude or challenging behaviour or being disruptive, I don't always see it that way. I just feel that there is some parts of Black culture that is part of the culture and that when they push up their face they don't necessarily mean that they're going to deck you. They're angry and that's the way they're expressing their anger which is not always the way a White person wants to see it. You see what I'm saying: it's very, very subtle. When I talk to the boys about their behaviour and the way other people perceive their actions, they understand that what you're asking them is to change their culture, to be assimilated into another culture, to change their whole being. And all you can do is to give them strategies, so that they are aware of what they are doing and what other people might find acceptable not only in school but in society.

Int: Suppose I told you that that statement was made by a Black person, a Black teacher.

Teacher: I'm not surprised if you told me! I'm not surprised at all because if you remember as with all institutions, once you're in the institutions you go along with the system. Sometimes you don't even question it yourself. We ask children to

question texts; we ask children to question everything in society and yet adults don't always do that. They don't always question the issues.

Int: You mean teachers?

Teacher: Teachers don't always question the system. It's in place, we go along with it. It doesn't necessarily mean it is right so I wouldn't be surprised if it was said by a Black teacher because some Black teachers get bogged down within the day today running of their lives and schools. They don't always question the authority, the system, the ethos of the school.

Int: Many Black teachers are becoming part of it aren't they...part of the management structure?

Teacher: They become the conflict ..the tools. It's difficult sometimes.. I mean I'm not gonna say I'm perfect I know they're times when I've gone along with a particular rule in the school when I know it hasn't been the most appropriate thing at that time but at the end of the day I've got to think for that child when they go outside. This is what they will experience and people are not always going to accommodate them.

Int: I noticed that you talked about it you, you didn't talk about the National Curriculum. Does it impinge? Did you have it in mind?

Teacher: Because it's such an integral part of English teaching, that's why I didn't question it and one can be creative with the National Curriculum, I believe. We have the main areas of English: writing, speaking and listening but one can be creative with that.

Int: Do you think more than that, the teaching, as someone said,...In some ways what is happening with the National Curriculum you have to be more accountable. Some people say it can actually draw a department together; others say it's good because at least now some Black parents have something that they know that their children have to do, and they know what kinds of demands they can make at the school. Do you agree with that?

Teacher: Lots of those areas I agree with totally. It does give parental power; it does enable a parent to be able to say: these are my three areas, where is my child in

relation to that? The level descriptors are helpful to the parents. All of that is really helpful to the parents so they can say, before I'm sure at the end of five years your child would fail and you'll say what happened you didn't tell me there was a problem. We could have dealt with this two years ago. So in that respect, it does give parental power and that's not a bad thing. I think assessment has made teachers more accountable and I don't think that's a bad thing. Teachers have to be aware of where every child is at a particular time in Key Stage 1, 2, 3 or 4 and that's good. It makes teachers constantly assess and reassess, not only their teaching and learning but what....how they teach.

In our department we have an extremely good Head of Department who's extremely efficient and I'm sure that you know that before National curriculum she had all the things in place anyway but it has made our department more cohesive and we have more consistency in how we mark, how we grade. All those areas are now set. So the children any time can come and ask a teacher what areas am I weak in; what level I'm on and ask a teacher should she be ableshould know.

Int: So you keep those kinds of records on achievement. Do you have a language policy?

Teacher: The school's doing a language policy as we speak and we're coming near to the end of that now. W-----, the chair feels very good about it and hopefully, we along the way, we the whole staff get in this venture because I don't think this is something the English dept is just doing; it's going through a cross-curricular phase. All departments are being involved and getting departments to look at and examine the literature, the texts that they provide or they put in front of pupils, how pupils access that text.

Int: Not just English?

Teacher: Not just English. .all departments: Science, Maths, Technology, Fabrics etc. All departments are looking at their texts and how children access that. So, next Monday we're gonna come up with a philosophy for the language and learning policy and a booklet so that the whole school, especially the departments can look and see what we do in relation to this. This is how children learn; this is how they access text.

Int: Can you send me a copy?

Teacher: W-----would have to be the person We haven't finalised it yet. What we have done , we've got six core members of the group. We've got two or three heads of departments that we liaise with. So the department that you're linking with, go back with your text and say to the. You now what about this idea or that idea...get departments to maybe adapt.

Int: So this is quite substantial...language across the curriculum.

Teacher: Yes, it's being around for three, four years now.

Int: Now what training is going to come? Is there something about training?

Teacher: The whole idea is that we utilise our special needs department as much as possible so that the special needs department will link closely with departments looking at their texts, looking at their texts and their units of work and saying is it, both end of the spectrum is it going to strengthen brighter students ,is it going to impede the lower level pupils. So that each department will link with the special needs department.

Int: Is there anything in it about language diversity. How does it take account, as we said before, how does it take account....that there might be children with different languages in the school?

Teacher: The access to text part of it that we're talking about will be done again in special needs department which will be subsumed under LAP.

Int: LAP?

Teacher: Language Achievement Project.

Int: Section 11; that used to be part of section.

Teacher: Yes, those teachers with specialist knowledge and expertise in that area with the special need department will work with subject department.....

Int: The last thing we have time for is another question about methodology because you said something about the kinds of methods you used...your philosophy...

Teacher: We should be able to see some today. Last year I went on a course.

Int: Question.. do you ever teach grammar? That's the question I meant to ask.

Teacher: Let's look at it two ways because the grammar is slightly different. Last year I went on a course in Montreal on a new technique called cooperative learning, which is different from group work. It's a way of utilising all the experiences of the child, the children in the classroom. So no child is made to feel that they have nothing to contribute, It's going to be hard to fit this into two minutes but let me try! So it's made me change my pedagogy. I've changed completely from the way I was trained to what I do now. It's taken me over a year to establish the basic tool to be able to do that. Because what you're asking the child to do is to completely think of a different way of learning; to get a child to realise that they can learn from everyone in that classroom. And that has taken some time for them to believe that. I've done it.....in rewarding them, praising them, encouraging them to get to this stage. They're in groups of three; sometimes it gets to four which I don't like because it tends to turn into sub-groups, into twos if you do it in fours. But I like it in threes; everyone has a role. It's a sink or swim situation. If you think you're going to hijack and coast the group, it means that you'll let the down the group. You can't be an individual in a group. Because I have the points system, points get prizes kind of thing. So they can earn bonus points throughout the lesson for anything, working together, listening, encouraging anything like that. So it's a two-pronged, the academic task whatever that may be and social skills. That's my kind of new way of teaching.

Int: So you use that method all the time?

Teacher: I've started all my classes except my year 7 classes, because they're just coming in but I've started with my year 8 and 9.

Int: So it has worked?

Teacher: Oh yea, it's very, very exciting. You can easily come into teaching, do the same thing year out, year in. You can have one experience sixteen times, that's my philosophy. This has given me a new impetus in the way I teach. So it's really exciting for me.

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