

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

**The Politics of English: A study of classroom
discourses in a township school.**

Rochelle Lynne Kapp

**Thesis Presented for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Department of Education in the Faculty of Humanities
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN,
December 2001.**

Table of Contents.

Acknowledgements	i
Abstract	ii
Acronyms	iii
Chapter 1: Introduction.	1
1.1. Description of the study	1
1.2. Context of the study	3
1.2.1. Department of Education and Training schools	3
1.2.2. The language context	3
1.2.2.1. National language policy	3
1.2.2.2. The school language context	4
1.3. The research setting	5
1.4. Objectives of the study	7
1.5. Research questions	8
1.6. Overview of the thesis	8
Endnotes	11
Chapter 2: Literature Review.	13
2.1. Introduction	13
2.2. New Literacy Studies	15
2.3. Critical discourse analysis	26
2.4. The politics of English and English language teaching	29
2.4.1. The politics of English language teaching in South Africa	36
2.4.2. Medium of instruction policy discourses in S.A.	42
2.4.2.1. The shift to 'mother-tongue' advocacy	43
2.4.2.2. The 'additive bilingualism' argument	45
2.4.2.3. The VinjevoId debate	50
2.5. The discourses of English second language learning and teaching	53
2.5.1. English second language learning and identity	53
2.5.2. Communicative language teaching	57
2.5.3. The role of talk in the classroom	63
2.6. Conclusion	67
Endnotes	68
Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology.	70
3.1. Introduction	70
3.2. Critical ethnographic research	70
3.2.1. Classroom observation	75
3.2.2. The role of the researcher	78
3.2.3. Key principles	79
3.3. Gaining access to the research sites	83
3.3.1. Gaining entry to Mziwethu Senior Secondary School	89
3.3.2. Gaining entry to Ilitha Senior Secondary School	91
3.4. Researcher's role at the two schools	93
3.4.1. Researcher's role at Mziwethu	93
3.4.2. Researcher's role at Ilitha	96
3.5. Data collection	98
3.5.1. Data sources	98
3.5.2. Description of data collection at Mziwethu	101

3.5.3. Description of data collection at Ilitha	105
3.5.4. Review of data collection	108
3.6. Data analysis	109
3.6.1. Critical Classroom Discourse Analysis	110
3.7. Conclusion	113
Endnotes	114

Chapter 4: 'With English you can go everywhere': Language, identity and power at Mziwethu. 115

4.1. Introduction	115
4.2. Students' attitudes to English in relation to their home language	117
4.3. Students' language practices	122
4.4. The township environment	126
4.5. Students' constructions and mediation of the township environment	133
4.6. Mziwethu Senior Secondary School	142
4.6.1. Social organisation	143
4.6.1.1. Daily life	148
4.6.2. Staff constructions of the learning environment at Mziwethu	153
4.6.3. Student constructions and negotiation of the culture of the school	156
4.7. Conclusion	165
Endnotes	167

Chapter 5: Teaching and Learning at Mziwethu. 169

5.1. Introduction	169
5.2. The ESL syllabus	171
5.2.1. Introduction	171
5.2.2. Listening; speaking; reading and writing	173
5.2.2.1. Listening	173
5.2.2.2. Speaking	173
5.2.2.3. Reading	174
5.2.2.4. Writing	176
5.2.3. 'Appropriate' uses of language	178
5.2.4. Grammar	179
5.2.5. Conclusion	181
5.3. Mrs Mabandla's teaching philosophy	183
5.3.1. Educational and teaching history	183
5.3.2. Communicative language teaching	184
5.3.3. The language of learning and teaching	187
5.4. Mr Bathaka's teaching philosophy	189
5.4.1. Educational and teaching history	189
5.4.2. Communicative language teaching	190
5.4.3. The language of learning and teaching	192
5.5. Comparison with approach at Ilitha	196
5.6. Description and interpretation of Mrs Mabandla's lessons	198
5.6.1. The students	199
5.6.2. The context of the lesson	200
5.6.3. The form of interaction	201
5.6.3.1. The overall structure	201
5.6.3.2. The 'chorus' feature	203
5.6.3.3. 'Wh' questions	207
5.6.3.4. The management of student responses	208
5.6.3.5. Development over time	214
5.6.3.6. Comparison of level of discussion	216
5.6.4. The lesson content	217

5.6.5. Summary	223	
5.7. Description and interpretation of Mr Bathaka's lessons	226	
5.7.1. The students	227	
5.7.2. The context of the lesson	228	
5.7.3. The form of the interaction	229	
5.7.3.1. The overall structure	229	
5.7.3.2. The 'chorus' feature	231	
5.7.3.3. Individual participation	235	
5.7.3.4. Comparison of level of discussion	236	
5.7.4. The lesson content	236	
5.7.5. Comparison with Mr Van Wyk's lessons	241	
5.8. Explanation and analysis of the discourses of the English Classroom	242	
5.8.1. 'Thirty facts for thirty marks'	243	
5.8.2. 'The teachers go with the students who are going'	249	
Endnotes	253	
Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations.	254	
6.1. Introduction	254	256
6.2. Language, policy, curriculum and school development	255	
6.2.1. Introduction	255	
6.2.2. The English curriculum	258	
6.2.3. Language across the curriculum	260	
6.2.4. School development	262	
6.3. The tertiary environment	264	
6.3.1. Introduction	264	
6.3.2. Access	265	
6.3.3. Academic literacy teaching	266	
6.3.4. The language of learning and teaching	268	
6.5.5. Broadening the conversation	268	
Endnotes	270	
Bibliography	271	
Appendices	286	
Appendix 1	286	
Appendix 2	287	
Appendix 3	288	
Appendix 4	296	
Appendix 5	305	
Appendix 6	310	
Appendix 7	312	
Appendix 8	314	

Acknowledgments.

I am greatly indebted to my supervisors Professors Doug Young (University of Cape Town) and Anne Herrington (University of Massachusetts, Amherst). Professor Young introduced me to the key debates on language in South Africa and has been supportive of me throughout. Professor Herrington agreed to be a supervisor at an extremely pressured time for her. She has consistently challenged my thinking and provided invaluable feedback on my writing. I am grateful to Professor Sinfree Makoni who supervised me in the first year of the thesis and directed my reading. Lucia Thesen has been a mentor in my transition from literary studies to applied language studies and I am very grateful for her guidance.

I could not have undertaken this study without the agreement and support of the principals, teachers and students at 'Mziwethu' and 'Ilitha' Senior Secondary Schools, as well as my students at the University of Cape Town who have all given most generously of their time. I am also grateful to the Western Cape Department of Education for granting me permission to undertake the study. Thanks are due to the many people who provided contextual information and help with Xhosa translation. They are Bongzi Bangeni, Xolisa Guzula, Punky Jacobs, Pam Maseko, Mncedisi Mashigoane, Nomawetu Ndlaleni, Phumla Satyo, Anne Schlebusch, Ruth Versveld, Rima Vesely and Sharman Wickham. I received invaluable feedback on early drafts from Shelley Angélil-Carter, Professors Jan Blommaert and Brenda Cooper, Robin Malan and Professor Charlie Moran.

The support of Professors Martin Hall, Ian Scott and Nan Yeld enabled me to take sabbatical leave. Thanks are due to my amazing colleagues at Academic Development Programme who put up with me and did what had to be done when I wasn't there. In particular, I wish to thank: Stella Clark, Arlene Archer, Lydia Dreyer, Rob Moore, Gideon Nomdo; Moragh Paxton, Suellen Shay and Veronica Twynam. I am grateful to my parents, brothers Michael and David and my friend Erica Gillard who are always there for me. Lastly, I wish to thank my dear husband Kelwyn Sole for being wonderfully supportive and for always keeping me focussed on what really matters.

The financial assistance of the Spencer Foundation, Harry Oppenheimer Institute, the National Research Foundation, South Africa (NRF) and the University of Cape Town Research Committee towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the National Research Foundation or any other person or organisation listed above.

List of Acronyms.

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills	BICS
Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency	CALP
Critical Discourse Analysis	CDA
Communicative Language Teaching	CLT
Department of Education and Training	DET
English Second language	ESL
English Language Teaching	ELT
New Literacy Studies	NLS
Pan South African Language Board	PANSALB
University of Cape Town	UCT
Western Cape Education Department	WCED

Chapter 1: Introduction.

1.1. Description of the study.

This is an ethnographic study, which investigates discourse practices in English subject classrooms at Mziwethu Senior Secondary,¹ a Western Cape township high school, where the subject is taught as a second language. The data were collected between October 1997 and March 1999.

Working within a critical theory framework, my assumptions are (1) that classroom discourse practices reflect and construct outside realities and (2) that motivation to learn a language, and classroom language practices are intimately connected to power relations outside the classroom, as well as to social identity.

These assumptions are embedded in my thesis title. Alongside Pennycook (1998), Kumaravadivelu (1999) and Canagarajah (1999), I believe that it is not possible to analyse English language practices in colonial and post-colonial contexts without a consideration of the history and national politics of English in that country. But, as all these writers emphasise, politics also extends to the contemporary local context in which the learning takes place, the roles and relationships in the classroom, and to literacy practices.

The term 'discourse' in the title also signifies this ideological perspective. Following Kress (1989); Gee (1990); Pennycook (1994a) and Fairclough (1996), I see language as one aspect of discourse. In chapter two, I explore these writers' definitions of discourse and, although I draw on aspects of all of their conceptions, it

is Kress' definition which best expresses my theoretical position. According to Kress (1989):

Discourses are systematically-organized sets of statements which give expression to the meanings and values of an institution. Beyond that, they define, describe, and delimit what it is possible to say and not possible to say (and by extension – what to do or not to do) with respect to the area of concern of that institution, whether marginally or centrally. A discourse provides a set of possible statements about a given area, and organizes and gives structure to the manner in which a topic, object, process is to be talked about. (p. 7)

The discourses of the classroom are thus never neutral, since they encapsulate the values, attitudes and processes of knowledge construction that are judged socially acceptable by educational institutions and the wider community. They are shaped and constrained by social structure but are also socially constitutive. Although Kress (1989) argues that discourses delimit subject positions, like Fairclough (1996) he acknowledges that individuals can and do act as agents in challenging the constraints of discourse.

However, the classroom does not only exist in relation to wider contexts. My conceptualisation includes an understanding of 'the classroom itself as a social domain, not merely a reflection of the larger society beyond the classroom walls but also a place where social relations are played out' (Pennycook 2000, p. 94).

Although the study focuses on classroom discourse practices in grades 11 and 12 English subject classrooms, because of this theoretical analysis these classes are viewed in the context of language practices across the curriculum, school culture, local social conditions and regional and national policy-making. Although this is a study of one school, data from a second school, Ilitha senior secondary, are used for

comparative purposes. The rationale for this approach is outlined in detail in chapter three.

1.2. Context of the study.

1.2.1. Department of Education and Training (D.E.T.) schools.

Until 1996, there were nineteen separate education departments in South Africa. These were organised along racial lines. Schools located in townships designated for 'African'² people were administered by the corrupt, inefficient and under-funded Department of Education and Training (D.E.T.). Since 1994, there have been attempts to address what has come to be known as a 'breakdown in the culture of learning and teaching' in these schools through policy implementation, better resourcing and some development work. Nevertheless, at the time of my data collection, the overall national matriculation pass and exemption³ rates were in steady decline. In 1994 the pass rate was 58% and the exemption rate 18%; by 1999 these had dropped to 49% and 12% respectively (Taylor 2001).

1.2.2. The language context.

1.2.2.1. National language policy.

In policy terms South Africa now has 11 official languages and the language rights of the individual are enshrined in the 1996 Constitution. The Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB) was established in 1996 as an independent statutory body required 'to monitor the observance of the constitutional provisions and principles' (LANGTAG 1996, p. 1). As I show in chapter two, the emphasis in recent South African language policy has been on destabilisation of the hegemony of English and development of African languages for use at all levels of society, but particularly

as languages of learning and teaching⁴ in schools (Granville *et al* 1998 and Young 2001). This emphasis is at odds with language practices in the public domain, including state institutions, where it seems that English has retained (some would say increased) its status as the language of the powerful in politics, business, the legal profession and the media (Young 1995).

1.2.2.2. The school language context.

The history of D.E.T. schooling has been characterised by rapid shifts in language policy, and most notably in the language of learning and teaching. From 1977 to 1997, English was the official medium of instruction from grade 5 onwards in most schools. Learners were taught through the medium of their home language until the end of the fourth year of formal schooling (grade 4) and then had to make a sudden shift to English, with a home language retained only as a subject.

In 1997, new legislation in the form of the “Language-in-Education” policy (Department of Education 1997a) was introduced. The policy advocates an additive approach to bilingualism, that is, ‘the underlying principle is to maintain home language(s) while providing access to and effective acquisition of additional language(s)’ (p. 5). The theoretical underpinnings and politics of school language policy are discussed in detail in chapter two, section 2.4.2.

Despite its strong advocacy of home language instruction, the policy makes provision for parental choice of medium of instruction where it is reasonably practicable. Schools are encouraged rather than obliged to offer particular languages. As indicated earlier, there appears to be a growing disjunction between the policy and

Abstract.

Title: The Politics of English: A study of classroom discourses in a township school.

Name: Rochelle Lynne Kapp.

This is an ethnographic study, which uses critical theory to investigate discourse practices in senior English subject classrooms at a Western Cape township high school, where the subject of English is taught and examined as a 'second' language, even though it is the language of learning and teaching across the curriculum. The three primary research questions are: (1) what kinds of discourses (ways of thinking, talking, reading and writing) are fostered in the classroom? (2) how do classroom discourses relate to learners' constructions of themselves and of English? (3) how do classroom discourses relate to (a) institutional culture and (b) 'official' discourses about English?

The data were collected from October 1997 and March 1999. In order to develop thick description and explanation, English classroom discourse practices are viewed in the context of (1) students' and teachers' attitudes to English in relation to Xhosa, the predominant home language; (2) language practices across the curriculum; (3) school culture and local social conditions and (4) regional and national policy-making and language debates. The data consist primarily of classroom observation, but also includes informal observation, interviews, student writing and policy documents. Although this is a study of one school, data from a second school are used for comparative purposes. The data are situated in the context of local and international research on English and classroom discourse practices. Tools from critical classroom discourse analysis are used for analysis.

The study describes and explains a number of contradictions with regard to English. It explores the ways in which students' complex, seemingly contradictory language attitudes and classroom practices are intimately linked to their attempts to define appropriate roles and identities in relation to the unstable school and township environment, as well as their construction of their place in the world within and beyond the township. It also highlights the contradictions of the English curriculum, which emphasises the centrality of language for learning and student-centred pedagogy; but values 'banking' of facts and functional, oral communication in its assessment practices. It explores teachers' negotiation of these contradictions, their constructions of their students and their notions of learning English. The data show that the situation-specific, examination-orientated discourse practices of the English classroom are incompatible with the need to use the language at cognitively demanding levels in other subjects. The study ends with a consideration of the implications of its findings for policy and practice at a range of levels. Whilst recognising the importance of multilingualism and instruction through the medium of the home language, the study shows the limitations of current policy discourses in South Africa, which attribute 'guilt' to English and classify those who desire proficiency in the language as 'assimilated'.

the desire on the part of learners, teachers and parents for English as the language of learning and teaching. In former D.E.T. schools, English has remained the primary language of learning and teaching (see Martin 1997; Vinjevold 1999 and Vesely 2000). Moreover, because of the perceived demand by parents, it appears that many of these schools are offering English (at least in theory)⁵ as medium of instruction throughout primary schooling (Setati quoted in Vinjevold 1999). Large numbers of urban students with little or no command of English are being sent to English medium schools because of a perception that going straight for English is most advantageous and that it enables one to obtain a higher standard of education (De Klerk 2000 and Plüddemann *et al* 2000). For similar reasons students from rural Eastern Cape are migrating to township schools in the Western Cape (Vesely 2000). At university level, the number of students who have African languages as their home languages who are enrolling from former Model C (English medium, 'white') schools has increased dramatically, while simultaneously the number of students majoring in the department of African languages has dropped significantly (Zwane 2001).

1.3. The Research Setting.⁶

Mziwethu senior secondary is located in a township, previously designated for 'African' people and located fifteen kilometres outside of central Cape Town. Most Mziwethu students and teachers live in the township and walk to school. The township has a high unemployment rate and is regarded as one of the most dangerous areas in Cape Town. Indeed, as I shall describe in chapter four, the vigilante violence which took place adjacent to the school during the period of my data collection had a marked influence on how I came to view school culture and language attitudes and practices.

Mziwethu is a typical former D.E.T. school – under-resourced, under-staffed and overcrowded. The school has approximately 1 600 students crowded into its 30 classrooms. Most of the classrooms are brick but, in recent years, prefabricated buildings have been added to accommodate the growing numbers. At the time of my research, the school had an average student to teacher ratio of 40:1; although in junior standards, the ratio is as high as 65:1.⁷ This is in part due to a shortage of classrooms at the school, as well as students' subject combinations. The matriculation pass rate averaged 48% between 1997 and 1999, the period of my data collection. This represented a drop from 75% in 1996, the first year that the matriculation examinations were desegregated. Between 1997 and 1999 a total of 10 students obtained matriculation exemption which would qualify them to be considered for admission to a South African university.

The second school, Ilitha Senior Secondary, is a former D.E.T. school, but since 1993 it has been located in a peri-urban, formerly 'white' area. The school is situated on a very busy main road and noise from the traffic is often overwhelming. Each day, students travel long distances from various townships to Ilitha. The teachers estimate that over 50% of the students have recently settled in the Western Cape from the rural Eastern Cape.

The school has 850 students and has bigger classrooms and better facilities than Mziwethu. It has a reasonable overall student to teacher ratio of 35:1 but, because of students' subject combinations, the ratios in junior classes are often as high as 60:1 and 45:1 in grade 12. Unlike Mziwethu, the school's matriculation results

were on a steady upward trajectory with an average 71% pass rate between 1997 and 1999. This was a significant improvement on the 12% achieved in 1994 when the present principal was appointed. Thirteen students obtained matriculation exemption between 1997 and 1999.

At Ilitha the students are all home language⁸ speakers of Xhosa but, at Mziwethu, about 10% of students identify themselves as first-language speakers of Sotho and Tswana although they are also generally fluent in Xhosa. At the time of my research the majority of the teachers at both schools were Xhosa-speakers. English is a second language for all the English subject teachers. The official medium of instruction is English at both schools, although, as I shall show, many lessons are conducted in a mixture of Xhosa and English or in Xhosa. English is a second language for some students and a third language for others. But the subject is taught and examined as a second language at both schools. I return to this issue in chapter five.⁹

1.4. Objectives of the study.

My primary motivation for conducting this research is to inform my own practice as a teacher of English to first-year university students from 'disadvantaged' school backgrounds emerging mainly from former Department of Education and Training (D.E.T.) schools. As an Academic Development practitioner at the University of Cape Town (U.C.T.), my brief is to develop courses and intervene in curricula to facilitate students' transition from school to university. This entails finding ways of inducting students into the discourse practices of their disciplines, as well as finding ways of articulating with the social transition they have to make as

they enter what remains a relatively elite, English-medium institution. As I show in chapter two, a great deal of research effort has gone into conceptualising the discourse practices of academic disciplines by Academic Development practitioners in South Africa. In the available literature, however, knowledge of school practices is either assumed as self-evident or anecdotal, based on what students say (often with considerable hindsight). Research on language in schools in South Africa has tended to focus on future language policy options for former D.E.T. schools, and has seldom been based on in-depth, qualitative research of these sites.

Extensive research has shown that it is important to promote multilingualism and education through the medium of the first language. It is imperative that efforts be made to develop the African languages as languages of teaching and learning. However, this should not be at the expense of research and development of English curricula and practices. Alongside Granville *et al* (1998), I believe that the fact that current policies downplay access to English, prevents a planned and effective policy of access to English competence, at both school and post-secondary levels. A major goal of this research is thus to go beyond policy advocacy and to begin to generate contextual knowledge of the role and status of English in the contemporary South African second-language learning environment. I hope that the research will speak to other teachers at both a school and tertiary level.

1.5. Research questions.

Following from my description of the study and its objectives, my central research questions are:

- What kinds of discourses (ways of thinking, talking, reading and writing) are fostered in the English classroom?

- How do classroom discourses relate to learners' constructions of themselves and of English?
- How do classroom discourses relate to (a) institutional culture and (b) 'official' discourses about English?

Implied in these broad questions are a range of sub-questions which identify the factors (within the classroom and outside) which shape classroom discourses. These are listed at the beginning of chapters four and five.

1.6. Overview of the thesis.

Chapter Two: Literature Review.

This chapter analyses critical approaches to literacy and schooling, discourse, English teaching and learning and classroom talk. I also discuss and critique South African approaches to language policy and English second language teaching.

Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology.

In this chapter I motivate my use of critical ethnographic methods and describe and reflect upon my processes of selection of the schools, and methods of data gathering and data analysis.

Chapter Four: 'With English you can go everywhere': Language, identity and power at Mziwethu Senior Secondary.

In this and chapter five, I describe and interpret my data. Part one of this chapter describes the language attitudes and practices of grades 11 and 12 students at Mziwethu Senior Secondary School. The students in the study say that they are highly motivated to learn English and that they wish the medium of instruction to remain English, as they view the language as key to future success. However, with the exception of a small group, their language practices inside and outside the classroom

often contradict these statements. Those who use the language outside of the classroom earn derision from their peers.

In part two of this chapter, I show that these contradictions can be explained in terms of students' social identities. At Mziwethu the township social environment impacts on school life and student identity in an immediate and often violent manner. The school environment and culture is impoverished and disordered. Students' views about language and their language practices are intimately linked to their attempts to define appropriate roles and identities in relation to (a) this unstable school and township environment where conventional moral order, boundaries and authority relations are shifting and uncertain, as well as to (b) their construction of their place in a world beyond the township, where English is the language of power and success.

Chapter Five: Teaching and Learning English at Mziwethu.

This chapter explores institutional notions of English; that is, the constructions embedded in the official Western Cape Education Department documents. It describes teachers' ideas about their students' needs and describes and interprets the discourses of English in the classroom. In the process, a number of contradictions are shown to emerge within policy, between policy and practice, between how teachers think they ought to teach, how they say they teach, and how they are observed to teach.

My data show that at grade 12 and even at grade 11 level, the teachers' discourse practices are overdetermined by their conception of what students need to know for the external matriculation examination. This has a marked effect on the form

of the interaction, on the manner in which teachers signal what counts as valid knowledge and on their relationships with their students.

The chapter concludes with an explanation of the discourses of the classroom. In this section I (a) characterise the discourse practices fostered by the teachers in the classroom (b) explain and analyse their relationship to official discourses about English and institutional culture and (c) explain and analyse how classroom discourses relate to learners' constructions of themselves and of English. I show that teachers and students hold a view of English that is congruent with the instrumentalist construction in the curriculum and argue that the very fact of learning the language in a functional manner contributes to constraining students' futures.

Chapter Six: Implications for policy and practice.

This final chapter explores the implications of my research and makes practical recommendations for (a) policy decisions and developmental initiatives with regard to the language of learning and teaching in schools as well as the English curriculum and (b) my own practice as an Academic Development practitioner in the tertiary context.

Notes:

¹ I have undertaken to keep the identities of the schools in my study anonymous. Therefore the names of the schools, the teachers and the students are all fictitious.

² It is impossible to contextualise fully the imbrications of South African language and educational policies and practices without using the Apartheid system of racial classification ('African', 'Coloured', 'Indian' and 'White') upon which they were based. However to signify my own belief that these categories are to some degree at least, artificially constructed, I will use quotation marks.

³ The matriculation examination is the high school exit examination and, although highly contested, remains the measure of school success. It is externally set and examined. A matriculation exemption qualifies candidates to be considered for university exemption. At the time of my data collection the matriculation examinations were set on a provincial basis. There are now plans to replace these provincial examinations with standardised national examinations.

⁴ The current policy documents use the term 'language of learning and teaching' rather than 'medium of instruction'. I use both terms in this thesis to facilitate clarity.

⁵ Even when teachers say that the medium of instruction is English, often extensive code-switching takes place (see Clark 1993; Meyer 1995; Gough 1996 and Vesely 2000).

⁶ This is a brief introduction. The schools' contexts are described in detail in chapters three and four.

⁷ The HSRC reports the highest average student to staff ratio in any one district in the Western Cape as 30:1 (Hartley *et al* 1998).

⁸ I use the term home language here to indicate that, although Xhosa may not be the first-language, it is a language used in the home environment. These are not easy distinctions to make (see Makoni quoted in Vinjevold 1999) and since I have not fully investigated this area, I cannot claim accuracy.

⁹ In the "Language-in-Education" policy document (Department of Education 1997a) and the draft revised curriculum statement (Department of Education 2001), second and third languages are referred to as 'additional' languages. But the curriculum documents at the time of my study refer to English as a 'second' language. Both terms are used in the thesis depending on the context.

Chapter 2: Literature Review.

2.1. Introduction.

This chapter surveys and analyses the work of sociolinguists and applied linguists whose theoretical understandings influenced my initial conceptualisation of the study, and my subsequent data analysis.

As Blommaert (1997) points out, although Hymes first called for studies of the social meaning of language through ethnography in 1971, it has only been in the last decade that significant shifts in the direction of more social analysis have been discernable. These have been mainly influenced by poststructuralist analyses of social history and contemporary culture, most notably Foucault's notion of the constructing nature of discourse (1970; 1972 and 1984); Said's (1978) conceptualisation of 'orientalism' and more recent postcolonial studies on hybridity and the discourses of English (Bhabha 1984; Spivak 1985 and Loomba 1998). Thus the linguistic turn taken by social theorists two decades ago has somewhat belatedly influenced language researchers' conceptualisation of the social.

For applied linguists so influenced, language use is seen as a form of social practice, rather than 'a purely individual activity or a reflex of situational variables' (Fairclough 1996, p. 63). Their position is summed up in a statement by Kress (1989):

Whereas psychologically-based theories place the individual (asocial) psyche at the centre, and attempt to account for the world from there, I prefer an account which places the social at the centre and attempts to account for the individual within that context. (p. 2)

The work of these applied linguists represents a critique of approaches in sociolinguistics which confine analysis of power and identity to speech situations and to the classroom, thereby positing a free-willed, decontextualised subject and language use free of ideological conditions (Pennycook 1994a; for further examples of this critique of applied linguistics, see Luke 1996; Moerman 1988 and Kumaravadivelu 1999). The move from description of *what* is said and *how* it is said, towards socio-cultural explanations for language use, literacy practices and classroom behaviour, signals a more politically engaged applied linguistics and has led to a reconceptualisation of key elements in language research, *viz.* discourse, identity and power.

Theorists like Fairclough (1989; 1995; 1995/6 and 1996), Kress (1989), Gee (1990) and Street (1995 and 1997)¹ have played a central role in this shift in applied linguistics as a whole. Much of their work focuses on, or is directly applicable to language education. Ngugi (1986); Ndebele (1987); Kachru (1990); Pennycook (1994b and 1998); Phillipson (1992) and Alexander (1999a and 1999b) have all made a major contribution to historicizing and analysing the role and politics of English and English language teaching. In the domain of English second language (ESL) specifically, recent research by Tollefson (1991); Norton (1995a; 1995b and 2000); Canagarajah (1999) and Kumaravadivelu (1999) have influenced my thinking significantly. As critical researchers, all view the process of language learning as social and embedded in complex power relations. Their work thus locates learners, teachers and the learning environment in their historical and socio-political contexts.

In order to outline my broad theoretical framework for understanding the notion of discourse and literacy practices, my discussion begins with the New Literacy Studies (NLS) theorists and Critical Discourse Analysts (CDA). I then explore the politics of English and English language teaching (ELT) in postcolonial settings, with a specific focus on the politics of English in South Africa, including medium of instruction policy discourses. Finally I discuss English in the second language classroom. In this section I outline (a) critical approaches to second language learning and identity; (b) the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach (the dominant approach in current South African English second language (ESL) syllabi² and (c) theoretical approaches to classroom talk.

This chapter highlights similarities as well as key differences both within and between the different approaches, in the process revealing some of the limitations of the theory, particularly in relation to the former D.E.T. school context. The discussion of the applicability of the theory is realised through analyses of key examples of its reception in South Africa. Because of limitations of space, my discussion is confined to those aspects of the theory that I consider relevant to my study.

2.2. New Literacy Studies (NLS).

Gee (1990) and Street (1995) are the prominent figures in the approach known as New Literacy Studies. Their social analysis of literacy is central to the approach to classroom discourse in this study. They conceptualise literacy not simply as a set of neutral, technical skills learnt in formal education, but as social practice 'implicated in power relations and embedded in cultural meanings and practices' (Street 1995, p.1). Both writers provide numerous examples to illustrate that (a) there are many forms of

literacy practices, that is, cultural ways of utilising written language and (b) that literacy practices are always embedded in ideological processes (see also Barton *et al* 2000). Street (1995) makes the case for an 'ideological' model of literacy, which locates research and development of literacy programmes in local context, by stressing the effect of the socialization process in the construction of the meaning of literacy for participants. He illustrates how literacy practices are encapsulated within internal and external structures of power and embedded in competing models and assumptions about reading and writing processes, which affect the manner in which new programmes are adopted or rejected.

Both Street and Gee debunk the 'literacy myth', which emphasises the oral-literate divide and assumes that reading and writing necessarily lead to higher order cognitive abilities and that greater levels of literacy acquisition will necessarily lead to empowerment and enhanced social standing for individuals and to economic growth and development for the society. They use Heath's (1983) seminal research to illustrate that school literacy tends to favour a narrow range of culturally-specific practices, generally characteristic of western, English-speaking, middle-class homes. They also cite Scribner and Cole's (1981) study of the Vai in Liberia. Among the Vai, literacy and schooling do not necessarily go together. There are three sorts of literacy, with some people having none, one, two or all three: English literacy acquired in formal school settings; an indigenous Vai script (syllabic not alphabetic) transmitted outside institutional setting; and a form of literacy in Arabic. Scribner and Cole found that:

English literacy, the only form associated with formal schooling of the Western sort, was associated with some types of decontextualisation and abstract reasoning.

However, after English literates had been out of school a few years, they did better than non-literates only on verbal explanation tasks ('talking about' tasks); they did no better on problem solving (on categorization and abstract reasoning tasks). The effects of schooling are transitory, unless they are repeatedly practised in people's daily lives. (Gee 1990, p.38)

Drawing on this research and their own, Gee (1990) and Street (1995) argue that the particular form of literacy that is associated with western schooling is generally conflated with literacy and as such it has become the yardstick by which society measures literacy, most visibly by measuring literacy levels by the number of years an individual attends school (see also Barton 1994). Like many theorists of educational inequality, such as Bourdieu (1991) and Bernstein (1990 and 1996), they show that schooling is not just about learning content knowledge, but about cultural reproduction: learning the norms and values and behaviour patterns deemed appropriate by the dominant members of particular societies. Thus, through schooling, social identities and unequal power relations are produced and reproduced. These relations are particularly evident in multilingual settings where some groups are forced to study through a language medium other than their home language.

Gee (1990) and Street and Street (1995) use the English language class as their frame of reference for discussing schooling. In Gee's (1990) view, teachers apprentice students into dominant, school-based social practices (p. 67). The example he gives is of an English teacher who, in teaching a standard dialect of English, is teaching a set of discourse practices. He writes that the history of literacy shows that for the most part education has primarily 'stressed behaviours and attitudes appropriate to good citizenship and moral behaviour, largely as these are perceived by the elites of the society' (p. 39; see also Street 1993). Consequently, students are not only socialised

into 'ways of using language' but also into 'ways of acting and interacting, and the display of certain values and attitudes' (p. xvii):

[t]here is no such thing as 'reading' or 'writing', only reading or writing *something* (a text of a certain type) in a certain way with certain values, while at least appearing to think and feel in certain ways. We read and write only within a Discourse, never outside all of them. (p. xviii)

His 'Discourse' (with a big 'D'):

... is a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or 'social network', or to signal (that one is playing) a socially meaningful 'role'. (p. 143)

Derived from Foucault's notion of the constitutive effects of discourse, Gee's definition goes beyond the conventional socio-linguistic description of discourse as a 'stretch of language' or language 'beyond the sentence'. He does not allow for the existence of a material reality outside of discourse, a problematic position taken by many critical applied linguists (see Fairclough's critique in section 2.3.). Nevertheless Gee's framework enables us to see that literacy is an ideological process, that is, that reading and writing are always embedded in power relations and social roles.

Gee (1990) makes a distinction between primary and secondary Discourses that is useful in thinking about the educational context as well as about transitions from one context to another. A primary Discourse is essentially one's home discourse – the ways of thinking and acting and believing that are naturally (mostly unconsciously) acquired³ through social interaction in natural settings. Secondary Discourses are the many (often more formal) discourses which involve social institutions outside of the home environment. These may or may not be compatible and overlap with home discourses. The more distant the values and ways of using language, the harder it is to gain access to the secondary Discourse. Discourses are

heterogeneous and often, contradictory. Becoming fluent in a secondary Discourse generally entails some learning, that is, conscious reflection gained through explicit mediation. Gee says that whilst the process of acquisition fosters performance, learning facilitates meta-knowledge. Meta-knowledge enables one to compare and to talk 'about'. It puts one in a position to critique and resist.

Thus Gee (1990) defines literacy as 'mastery of, or fluent control over, a secondary Discourse' (p. 153); a definition that extends the meaning of literacy far beyond just the ability to read and write. He argues that Discourses are not best mastered by overt instruction but by enculturation ('apprenticeship'):

Acquisition must (at least partially) precede learning; apprenticeship must precede 'teaching': classrooms that do not properly balance acquisition and learning, and realize which is which, and which student has acquired what, simply privilege those students who have begun the acquisition process at home, engaging these students in a teaching/ learning process, while the others simply 'fail'. (p. 147)

Gee allows little space for individual agency and the possibility of transformation, a position modified in later writing (see Gee 2000). Individuals are by and large, overdetermined by Discourse. To be accepted into a Discourse, one must attain fluency or be marked as an outsider or pretender. One is allowed a space to be an apprentice but that identity is limited. He allows for three roles *vis-à-vis* a Discourse: 'you are an *insider*, *colonised*, or an *outsider*' (p. 155) [his emphasis]. He suggests that where it is only possible to achieve partial acquisition, students have to work out how to 'make do' by making use of their meta-knowledge and by developing strategies to disguise their surface difficulties, alongside the development of meta-knowledge.

Street (1997) argues that the implication of the New Literacy Studies' analyses for teaching is that it questions the validity of acknowledging and teaching only one kind of literacy. It requires educators to take account of the literacies that students bring into the educational setting. In response to a critique by Moss (2001), he acknowledges that transferring texts and practices from outside school into the school curriculum is a complex process which entails recontextualisation and therefore change of both home and school practices (Street 2001).

According to Street (1997), the implication of the NLS approach for research is that: 'it requires language and literacy to be studied as they occur naturally in social life, taking account of the context and their different meanings for different cultural groups' (p. 47). The research has to be interdisciplinary, involving applied linguistics, anthropology and education. Like Hymes (1971) and Blommaert (1997), Street (1995) advocates the use of ethnographic methods.

Two recent collections have taken up Street's call for ethnographies of local literacies. The first is a collection emanating from Lancaster University by Barton *et al* (2000). Their work focuses on 'literacy events,' a concept which originates with Heath (1983). Literacy events are regular, repeated and observable activities in which literacy plays a role and 'which arise from practices and are shaped by them.' (Barton and Hamilton 2000, p. 8). The writers emphasise 'insider and contextualised meanings of literacy practices' and, like Fairclough (1996) and Kress (1989), are interested in 'theorising the precise ways in which local literacy events both reflect and contribute to the constitution of broader social structures' (Maybin 2000, pp. 199 and 208). Individuals in the research process are constructed as actors and the

researchers are interested in people's use of oral language around texts. The notion of literacy events highlights the 'mediation of texts through dialogue and social interaction' (Maybin 2000, p. 197).

The second is a South African volume by Prinsloo and Breier (1996). Their collection illustrates the extent to which adults who are classified 'illiterate' frequently operate successfully in the townships through the use of oral networks. It also demonstrates how the diverse range of social uses of literacy in the townships are often connected to power relations and constructions of identity which are invisible to mainstream institutions, including those institutions engaged in teaching literacy to adults.

In the South African context, the New Literacy Studies' research offers a valuable framework for debunking the literacy myth and for identifying and analysing literacy as situated social practice. No South African who has lived through Apartheid has to be told that education is about social reproduction; but the notions that reading and writing are neutral technical skills, and that increased enliteration will necessarily lead to social and economic upliftment, are still strongly prevalent. Our newspapers and popular magazines regularly contain 'good news' stories about the power of literacy or statistics that attest to a 'literacy crisis' (see for example Singh 1999; Sylvester 2001 and Van der Merwe 2001). When he first came into office in 1999, the current Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, announced that he would eradicate illiteracy in five years. He has subsequently ameliorated this position because it was 'utopian' (Asmal 1999). Gee (1990) argues that the periodic proclamation of a 'literacy crisis' by governments diverts people away from the real causes of social

injustice by locating the 'problem' in individuals. Declaring a 'crisis' allows people to believe that something is being done to remedy the 'illness' and sustains the myth that literacy acquisition will necessarily lead to empowerment and economic prosperity (pp. 27-30; see also Street 1995).

Gee's distinction between teaching that fosters performance and teaching that fosters meta-knowledge through learning is also a very useful framework for thinking about classroom methodologies. However, in the South African context, where the overwhelming majority of people have to study and negotiate their working lives in English, their second or third language, it is important to bear in mind that the New Literacy Studies' orientation does not directly take into account the cognitive and affective processes of second language learning which are central to an understanding of literacy practices in this context. The context in which much of NLS theory arises, premises marginalized working class children attempting to master dominant discourses in middle class English (subject) classrooms, a context very different from my study where marginalized, working class ESL students with teachers from a similar class, language and cultural background are trying to master the dominant discourses of the society through a second language.

The notion of multiple literacies has entered the language of the new school curricula. The curriculum documents emphasise the culturally constructed nature of literacy and enumerate a range of literacies: media literacy, computer literacy, cultural literacy, artistic literacy, critical literacy and visual literacy (Department of Education 1997b and Department of Education 2001, p. 3). The challenge will be in the interpretation of this list. Street cautions about the danger of creating a 'reified' list of

literacies or of reproducing 'culture as a listed inventory' through adopting a multiliteracies approach (Street 1995, p. 134). What this does is to introduce new categories of depoliticised, static technologies to be learnt and reproduced.

Many academic development practitioners in the South African tertiary context have used the theory to conceptualise the transition that (particularly former D.E.T.) students make from school to university. This has included developing understandings of the dynamic relationship between the 'culture' of academic disciplines and the language that underpins them, and beginning to identify the multiple literacies that students bring with them when they enter the tertiary field, in order to ascertain how these may facilitate or hinder access (see Volbrecht 1993; Katz 1995; Thesen 1997; Angélil-Carter (ed.) 1998 and Leibowitz and Mohamed (eds.) 2000 for examples). Taken together with Taylor *et al* (1988), genre theorists like Luke (1996), Cope and Kalantzis (1993),⁴ as well as Fairclough's (1992) work on critical language awareness, the work of the NLS theorists has had a marked effect on the curricula of foundation (entry-level) courses in a number of university contexts.

At the University of Cape Town, a social conceptualisation of the academic environment has resulted in a shift away from the notion that students' difficulties with academic literacy can be addressed by teaching decontextualised reading and writing skills. There has been a conscious effort to make explicit the discourses of students' disciplines and to create the space for students to reflect critically on their own identities and practices in the process of learning and acquiring the discourse practices of their disciplines. This has also entailed a move beyond the confines of process writing pedagogies which stress 'natural' learning through 'doing' writing.

(see Cope and Kalantzis 1993, p.5), towards a pedagogy that combines acquisition and learning.

In my view, a weakness in the South African tertiary reception has been the under-researching of South African school literacies. Another weakness, evident in the descriptions of a University of the Western Cape entry-level academic literacy course is that staff seem to concentrate their efforts on validating students' previous literacies, on creating a therapeutic space outside of the disciplines and the constraints of theory in order to empower students. Although they claim that they are using the New Literacy Studies' paradigm, the descriptions of the course bear a strong resemblance to expressivism (see Katz 1995 for example). It is difficult to see (from the descriptions) how their students would be able to access their disciplines, armed with self-confidence and affirmation but without meta-knowledge.

By contrast, Thesen's (1997) study of University of Cape Town students, who have been categorised as disadvantaged, probes the literacies that the students bring to the academic arena and investigates how they articulate their voices in relation to academic discourse. She discovers that the students are self-conscious and highly strategic in their negotiation of the new discourses. But, unlike the University of the Western Cape conceptualisation, she views this research as part of a project which facilitates an exchange of meaning within the academic context to bring together disparate worlds' (p. 509), to facilitate a process whereby students bring their voices and experiences into the academic conversation and into the curriculum.

To my knowledge, published research which has used a New Literacy Studies theoretical framework to research South African school literacy, has been located mainly in the domain of early literacy (see Adendorff 1999; Bloch 2000 and to a lesser extent Plüddemann *et al* 2000). Adendorff (1999) has shown the ideological effects of 'news-time', a seemingly innocuous classroom activity. One of the strengths of his meticulous study is the comparison of how teachers and students construct news-time. Bloch (2000) and Plüddemann (2000) have used NLS theory alongside theories of bilingualism and multilingualism in order to demonstrate the negative effects of early literacy through the medium of a second language. All three studies highlight the ways in which schooling marginalizes children who are not from the 'mainstream' language and culture of the school and reinforces social class positions. These disjunctions are particularly evident in the South African context at the moment as the enforced apartheid categories of school and region dissolve. A general weakness in these studies, and in studies of language classrooms in South Africa as a whole is that research tends to be confined to the classroom with school and social context thinly described as background, that is the relationships between the layers of context are under-explored.

Research conducted by Stein and two English teachers on high school students' literacy practices is an important beginning in that domain, especially because it involves students themselves in the research process (Brouard, Wilkinson and Stein 1999). Using the theory from an Honours course taught at the University of the Witwatersrand by Stein, the teachers initiated a project whereby their high school students conducted ethnographies of the literacy practices in their own homes. According to the researchers, the project yielded rich data about students' home

literacy practices which constituted valuable knowledge for the teachers about the relationship between home and school literacies, but the research process also enabled their students to achieve critical distance through observing, describing and analysing. They engaged with the concept of literacy and developed ideas about the links between school, home and community. The teachers conclude that the project changed the role of learners and teachers as both groups were challenged to question their assumptions about teaching and learning, language and culture. In many ways this research echoes Thesen's (1997) notion of a reciprocal curriculum.

2.3. Critical discourse analysis (CDA).

Critical discourse theorists work from the premise that the ideology that constitutes dominant institutional discourses is hidden from ordinary people because it has been naturalized to the extent that it appears to be commonsense. Through close linguistic analysis of texts in their institutional and socio-political contexts, CDA theorists aim to make transparent the power relations manifested in language (Wodak 1995). According to Luke (1996):

Such an analysis attempts to establish how textual constructions of knowledge have varying and unequal material effects and how whose constructions come to "count" in institutional contexts is a manifestation of larger political investment and interests. (p.12)

Kress (1989) and Fairclough (1996) are the foremost proponents of CDA and it is their notion of 'discourse' that mainly informs my study. Fairclough's (1996) view of language as social practice has two implications:

Firstly, it implies that discourse is a mode of action, one form in which people may act upon the world and especially upon each other, as well as a mode of representation... Secondly, it implies that there is a dialectical relationship between discourse and social structure, there being more generally such a relationship between social practice and social structure: the latter is both a condition for, and an effect of, the former. (pp. 63-4)

These comments highlight important points about Fairclough's conceptualisation of discourse. His work critiques the 'overemphasis on the determination of discourse by structures' represented in structuralism (p. 66). In his conception, discourse is not merely a reflection of a deeper social reality. He highlights three aspects of its constructive effects. Discourse (a) contributes to the construction of social identities/subject positions; (b) helps construct social relationships between people and (c) contributes to the construction of systems of knowledge and belief (p. 64).

But he believes that Foucault overstates the constitutive effects of discourses. He argues that discursive practices take place within 'a constituted material reality' (p. 60). Discourse is not the source of the social: 'social practice has various orientations – economic, political, cultural, ideological – and discourse may be implicated in all of these without any of them being reducible to discourse' (p. 66). In taking this stance, his work represents a (valid) critique of many poststructuralist-applied linguists (like Gee 1990 and Pennycook 1994a) who contest the notion of a social reality, which exists outside of discourse. Fairclough's position is that discourse is shaped and constrained by social structure as well as socially constitutive (p. 64). Both Kress (1989) and Fairclough (1996) view the relationship between structure and agency as dynamic. They argue that individual action is generally overdetermined by social structures but individuals can and do act as agents. Discourse has the potential to reproduce society, but can also contribute to its transformation.

Although CDA has been widely taken up, a number of recent articles by critical theorists (like Pennycook 1994a; Thesen 1997 and Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000) and sociolinguists (like Widdowson 1998 and 2000) highlight problems, which

mainly relate to the proponents' actual analyses of texts and discrepancies between the theory and the analysis. A central criticism relates to a determinism in the analysis of human agency which, contrary to the theory, does not take into account the effect of local knowledge and culture on social practices (Pennycook 1994a and 1999; Thesen 1997 and Widdowson 1998). The readings are also deterministic in that they do not make allowance for multiple interpretations of texts (Widdowson 1998).

In a review of CDA, Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000) point out that the textual analysis draws extensively on Halliday's systemic-functional linguistics, but also borrows categories and concepts 'from more mainstream discourse analysis and text linguistics, stylistics, social semiotics, social cognition, rhetoric and conversational analysis (p. 450; see also Widdowson 1998). They also note that despite theoretical claims to the contrary, limited attention is paid to how texts are produced and consumed. They cite Schegloff's critique that stable patterns of power relations are sketched. These are 'often based on little more than social and political common sense, and then projected onto (and into) discourse' (p. 456). Blommaert notes 'the uncritical acceptance of particular representations of history and social reality as background facts' in analyses (cited in Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000). Blommaert and Bulcaen suggest that texts could be more satisfactorily analysed if CDA were to use a more dynamic concept of context by using ethnography as a resource for describing and analysing institutional culture (Kress 1996 also makes this point).

Despite these (valid) critiques of CDA's methodology, CDA theorists have made an important contribution, though this contribution lies much more in their theoretical insights about language as social practice and in their theorisation of

discourse, than in the actual analyses. The CDA approach is distinguished by their critical analyses of the material effects of textual constructions of knowledge (Luke 1996) and their consequent promotion of critical language awareness. In South Africa this has been used to good effect in school and university texts, most notably by Janks (1992a and 1992b), and has informed the approach to language study in the new school curriculum (Department of Education 1997b and Department of Education 2001) which emphasises critical analyses of the 'aesthetic, cultural and emotional values' in texts and stresses that students need to 'analyse social, historical and cultural implications' of textual constructions (Department of Education 2001, p. 7 and p. 107). These statements imply an approach to textual analyses which situates texts in their contexts and which takes ideological effects into account.

2.4. The politics of English and English language teaching (ELT).

Pennycook (1994b and 1998) and Phillipson (1992) have both produced book-length studies, which examine the historical and contemporary role of ELT in detail. Both writers view ELT as a discipline and profession, which is a product of the colonial period. They show that the teaching of English under British colonialism went beyond the instrumental goals of facilitating communication and sought to assimilate, as part of the project of building a passive, middle-class elite who would aspire to 'English' norms and values. Successful learning of English was a primary goal in colonial education systems and being educated became synonymous with the ability to speak, read and write in English (see also Ngugi 1986 and Ndebele 1987).

Many writers have used Gramsci's (1971) notion of hegemony to show how the continued dominance of English in post-colonial contexts has come to seem

natural and inevitable because dominant groups build consent 'by influencing the culture and knowledge of subordinate groups' (Canagarajah 1999, p. 31). Alexander (1999a), the foremost advocate of multilingualism in South Africa and first chairperson of the Pan South African Language Board, suggests that 'an authentic policy of multilingualism' can only be achieved if the 'major stumbling block', the language attitudes of the people of Africa, is removed (p. 6; see also Ngugi 1986).

But, he also emphasises that these attitudes have an economic basis:

the 'debilitating language attitudes of the vast majority of African people as they emerged out of the formal colonial era... could not have been sustained if they were not integral to, and reinforced by, the political economy of the neo-colonial state. (1999b, p. 10)

He uses Alexandre and Bourdieu to argue that the class structure in neo-colonial states is sustained by the linguistic policy so that only a small middle-class elite who has access to the colonial language have the necessary cultural and symbolic capital to participate meaningfully in the major institutions of the society (Alexander 1999a; see also Tollefson 1991). In his analysis of the position of English in South Africa, creative writer and critic Ndebele (1987) labels the choice of English as *lingua franca* by post-colonial countries as 'historically pre-determined pragmatism' (p.3):

Indeed the history of the spread of the English language throughout the world is inseparable from the history of the spread of English and American imperialisms. This fact is important when we consider the place of English in formerly colonised multi-lingual societies. The imposition of English effectively tied those societies to a world imperialist culture which was to impose, almost permanently, severe limitations on those countries' ability to make independent linguistic choices at the moment of independence.... How can we fail to note that the supposed decision-makers were, structurally speaking, captive native functionaries of the colonial powers? In reality, the functionaries merely responded to the call of necessity at a given point in time: the necessity of limited choices. (p. 3)

Phillipson (1992) describes how the British Council facilitated an expansionist, missionary role for ELT in the sixties in post-colonial Africa and India

through aid policies. Aid from Britain and the United States for language development was (and still is) almost exclusively designated for English. ELT has boomed over the past thirty years and is now a billion-pound business, one of Britain's largest export industries (Phillipson 1992 and Granville *et al* 1998). Pennycook (1998) writes:

ELT is a product of colonialism not just because it is colonialism that produced the initial conditions for the global spread of English but because it was colonialism that produced many of the ways of thinking and behaving that are still part of Western cultures. European/Western culture not only produced colonialism but was also produced by it; ELT not only rode on the back of colonialism to the distant corners of the Empire but was also in turn produced by that voyage. (p. 19)

Phillipson (1992) and Pennycook (1998) argue that contemporary ELT theories and practices still carry the traces of colonialism and that colonialism should be seen as the 'context in which current ideas were framed' (Pennycook 1998, p. 23). Pennycook (1998) uses Bakhtin's notion that every utterance is laden with the history of past utterances⁵, as well as Foucault's notion of the constitutive nature of discourse, in order to argue that there are 'intimate relations between the language and the discourses of colonialism' (p. 4). He does not argue that language has an intrinsic character, but that as a result of colonialism, certain discourses have come to '*adhere to English*' [his emphasis] – to construct how we define and relate to the language (p. 5). One such discourse associates English with civilisation, scientific advance, knowledge, wealth and modernisation (see also Ngugi 1986; Ndebele 1987 and Phillipson 1992).⁶ He argues that it is important to consider 'how using English implies certain relationships to certain discourses':

The global position of English means that it is situated in many contexts that are specific to that globalization: to use English implies relationships to local conditions of social and economic prestige, to certain forms of culture and knowledge, and also to global relations of capitalism and particular global discourses of democracy, economics, the environment, popular culture, modernity, development, education and so on. The particular position of

English suggests that these relationships, both local and global, will be very different from those between other languages and discourses. (1994b, p. 34)

Pennycook (1994b and 1998) also quotes Ndebele (1987) to support his argument that

English connotes certain meanings:

... we cannot afford to be uncritically complacent about the role and future of English in South Africa, for there are many reasons why it cannot be considered an innocent language. The problems of society will also be the problems of the predominant language of that society, since it is the carrier of a range of social perceptions, attitudes and goals. Through it, the speakers absorb entrenched attitudes. In this regard, the guilt of English then must be recognized and appreciated before its continued use can be advocated. (p. 11)

Pennycook (1994b) concurs that English is 'guilty' (p. 33). Whilst pointing out the very real connection between English and global capital, neither of these two writers take agency into account. Both assume that individuals are completely overdetermined by the discourses of English and that English can consequently be proclaimed guilty (this point is followed up in section 2.4.1.).

In Pennycook's case, this argument exists side by side with a contradictory interest in how people create meanings and how they reveal identities through English within the 'ideological and discursive constraints on their language use' (pp. 28-9). Although he shows that there is continuity in the discourses of English, he also analyses the changes that occur. Like Bhabha (1984), Loomba (1998), Canagarajah (1999) and Kumaravadivelu (1999), he examines the ambivalent, hybrid and strategic response of the colonised to English. In Singapore, for example, Anglicism thrives in local communities alongside intense nationalism. Positive attitudes to English exist with oppositional perspectives. Thus English is:

both the language of modernity and the language of decadence, the 'first language' (the medium of education) but not the 'mother tongue' (the racially assigned language), a neutral medium of communication yet the bearer of

Western values, the language of equality and yet the distributor of inequality,
the language of Singaporean identity and yet the mother tongue of few.
(p.255)

The consequent hybrid identity that characterises the post-colonial subject is often denied in public nationalist discourses, but is expressed particularly by creative writers from post-colonial contexts who feel compelled to explain why it is that they choose to write in English, a language which the majority of their compatriots will be unable to read. Achebe's (1975) famous: 'If it [colonialism] failed to give them [the colonised] a song, it at least gave them a tongue, for sighing' (p. 57), is echoed by many South African writers (see for example Sepamla 1982 and Gwala 1984).

Canagarajah (1999) criticises both Pennycook (1994b) and Phillipson (1992) for failing to recognize that colonialism also generated a subtle, but significant, tradition of resistance and appropriation of English, most evident in 'nativized versions of English, novel English discourses in post-colonial literature, and the hybrid mixing of languages in indigenous communities' (p. 42). In his review of Phillipson's Linguistic Imperialism, Makoni (1997) argues that Phillipson is ignorant of the critique of English by postcolonial language scholars. He says that Phillipson:

creates a captivating, but unfortunately false impression of a local group of African language teachers so thoroughly dominated by the Centre that they accept the myth of the apolitical nature of language teaching and the neutrality of the technical expertise of Centre [Britain and the United States] trained teachers. (pp. 14)

This is not an entirely valid criticism. Though he mainly uses British sources, Phillipson does acknowledge and quote critical scholars from postcolonial contexts. What he does not acknowledge is the ambivalence towards English described by so

many writers and scholars, nor the resistance and appropriation of English by ordinary people (described by Canagarajah 1999).

Another important contribution by the critical theorists is their analysis of the form of ELT that has been exported to 'developing' countries by Britain and the United States of America. Phillipson (1992) shows that the monolingual, predominantly anglocentric bias of ELT has seldom taken local language conditions and culture into account (see also Kachru 1990; Pennycook 1994b; Sridhar 1994 and Canagarajah 1999). The bias has persisted despite the fact that a considerable body of research has shown the interdependence of first and second language learning development, the important linguistic, cognitive and affective benefits of learning through the medium of the first language and of valuing the mother tongue as a resource for learning (p. 191). Thus for example, very little attention has been paid to the development of indigenous languages for academic use, to fostering literacy in home languages or to examining how language is used across the curriculum. Moreover, Phillipson (1992) argues that the form of ELT that has been exported to 'developing' countries has reinforced and perpetuated relationships of dependency and augmented the notion that authentic knowledge is located in Britain and America.

Sridhar (1994) points out the irony that, although the goal of second language acquisition is bilingualism, with rare exceptions the dominant models hardly refer to theories of bilingualism. Phillipson's (1992) sources indicate that historically English teaching policy has seldom been based on research; and consequently (for example) the British Council's policy on 'what ELT activities it should support, does not originate in research findings' (p. 238). He notes the irony that the dominant ESL

models have originated in Britain and America, both notorious for their monolingualism. In both contexts, ESL is a minority phenomenon and is located in a vastly different sociolinguistic context to Africa or India. Canagarajah (1999) points out that comparatively little research that examines language acquisition and everyday communication has taken place in postcolonial settings.

There are further examples of how the dominant models in the United Kingdom and the United States still prevail. Pennycook (1994b) and Canagarajah (1999) illustrate how communicative language teaching methodology has been exported, with a presumption of a universal notion of communicative competence and assumptions that teaching can take place in small, informal contexts where teachers have access to a range of materials and technology – I shall return to this point in section 2.5.2. Phillipson (1992) points out that it is also assumed that teachers are fluent in English - and ‘standard’ English at that - and that classes really do take place through the medium of English. This is often not the case; and teachers are placed in a false position as a consequence (see also Canagarajah 1999 and Heugh 2000).

Kachru (1990) shows how the tradition of ‘error analysis’ in ELT has used concepts like ‘interlanguage’ and ‘fossilization’ to classify varieties of English in ESL contexts as errors, rather than to recognise them as varieties. He argues that these deficit models deny the creativity of ESL speakers. He shows how theorists like Quirk reject the ‘false extrapolation of English “varieties”’ because they are inadequately described at linguistic levels (cited in Kachru 1990, p. 8). Quirk, described by Phillipson (1992) as ‘the most active protagonist of an exo-normative model’ (p. 197)

has argued that the maintenance of a single, static standard is best achieved by native speaker teachers.

In response, Kachru's (1990) research has shown that there are distinct, systemic varieties of English in India which are anchored in local culture. He has critiqued the notion that the goal of ESL teaching is native-like competence by arguing that in many developing countries such as India, the target for most people is national or local intelligibility (intranational communication) as people from different language backgrounds converse with each other using a variety of English as *lingua franca*. His contestation of the notion of whole, homogenous languages is similar to Pennycook (1994b), but unlike Pennycook, Kachru assumes that the spread of English is 'natural, neutral and beneficial' (see Pennycook 1994b, p. 11 for this critique).

2.4.1. The politics of English and English language teaching in South Africa.

The issues raised by the critical theorists related to the discourses of ELT including language choice, varieties and standards, as well as those related to language attitudes, provide a crucial context for understanding the politics of English in South Africa. The work of these theorists illustrates that there is a great deal of commonality in the way in which ELT has been, and continues to be, experienced in postcolonial contexts globally. For example, in the post-1990 debates on future language options, the executive of the English Academy of Southern Africa, consisting mainly of 'white' university English professors, and originally formed in defence against Afrikaans, proposed English as the country's official language. This time they were defending themselves against African languages, as well as Afrikaans. Titlestad (1993), the then president of the academy, was adamant that English was the

pragmatic choice and the choice favoured by the majority of South Africans, and proposed that the written form be restricted to the British standard, citing Quirk as his major authority. Seemingly in response to Ndebele's (1987) call for an open-minded attitude towards varieties, Titlestad (1993) and Jeffrey (1993) cast doubt upon the existence of South African varieties of English and caution against romanticising the mistakes of second language learners. Their campaign was not only to maintain the dominance of English, but also to preserve a dominant dialect in the written form - a gate-keeping mechanism - which would ensure that ESL speakers (the vast majority of whom have been educated under 'Bantu' education) could not participate in the institutions of power. They were not alone – numerous letters to newspapers attest to the outrage felt by English-speaking 'white' South Africans at the 'non-standard' pronunciation of English by black South Africans, particularly on the public broadcaster (for examples see Frankel 1996 and Oosthuizen 1999).

However, while the post-1990 debate in the English Academy illustrates many of the points raised by the critical theorists about how English is used as a gate-keeping mechanism, there is also a danger of over-generalising the colonial and postcolonial experiences of English and romanticising the value of home languages, especially with regard to South Africa. In his critique of Phillipson (1992), Makoni (1997) shows that in many ways Phillipson's methodology exists in tension with his ideological position. Phillipson claims that ELT is exported without consideration of local conditions, but in effect his book, based mainly on a narrow corpus of British library sources and interviews with British ELT specialists, homogenises post-colonial language conditions (see Canagarajah 1999 for a similar critique). One such example is Phillipson's notion that English could be challenged by the promotion of

indigenous languages. Makoni (1997) reminds us that in South Africa the promotion of local languages as discrete categories was part of the nationalist government's policy of separate development. Ethnicity and language differences were emphasised as part of the strategy of divide and rule (see also Alexander 1989 and Young 2001). Gough (1994) argues that in South Africa, it has often been the oppressors who have both promoted and learnt indigenous languages and have used their knowledge of African languages 'as a powerful tool of oppression' (p. 9). He cautions that 'the consequences of multilingualism are strongly contingent on the socio-political context in which they occur' (p. 9).

Many other writers have shown that, both because the Apartheid government used language as a tool for ethnic division and because of the attempts at different times to enforce 'mother tongue' and Afrikaans as media of instruction, English has tended to be viewed as the language of resistance.⁷ As in many other colonised countries, English was seen as a vehicle to communicate the violent atrocities of the South African government to the outside world, including the former colonisers, Britain. English was viewed, even by the Black Consciousness movement, as a language of potential unity and resistance to the policy of separate development (Alexander 1989).

Hirson (1979) has explored how, from an early stage in the struggle against Apartheid, English came to be equated with education, modernisation and high culture, in opposition to the imposition of Afrikaans. Alexander (1989) quotes Abdurahman, leader of the African People's Organisation who, in 1912 advocates

multilingualism in South Africa” (1999).¹⁰ The document assumes that language development necessarily leads to national development and empowerment – the writer/s cite a link between ‘the failure of Africa “to develop” and the implementation of Western orientated language policies, which ignore the multilingual reality of the continent’ (p. 61).¹¹ This is similar to the ‘literacy myth’ identified and critiqued by the New Literacy Studies theorists. It ignores the economic and political factors that have caused the underdevelopment of the majority of people. To describe language as the sole causal factor is overly simplistic. Blommaert’s (1999) research, as just one example, shows how in many African countries, the concept of mass education of quality does not exist. Schools are overcrowded and under-resourced and teachers are underqualified. Most people do not have access to even a basic primary school education. He shows that in contexts like these, the quality of education would not improve with the introduction of a local language alone.

Another problematic element in the PANSALB document is the assumption that mother tongue education is *de facto* beneficial. It quotes 1930s and 1940s research by Malherbe to assert that ‘bilingual people demonstrate greater social tolerance and are more likely to have academic success than monolingual people are’ (p. 61).¹² Malherbe’s research was based on a survey carried out among ‘white’ English/Afrikaans bilingual school children, and he himself asserts that: ‘*some* of the superiority of the bilingual may, however, have been due to social selection in the South African situation’ [his emphasis] (Malherbe 1977, p. 6.). Bilingual advocate Cummins (1996), who is the primary source of South African policy on bilingualism, writes that research evidence shows that bilingual children are ‘more adept at certain aspects of linguistic processing’, but that ‘the evidence is not conclusive as to whether

this linguistic advantage transfers to more general cognitive skills' (p. 105). Martin-Jones and Romaine (1986) assert that:

the social and linguistic consequences of using two or more languages for different functions are not the same everywhere. Communicative competence is differentially shaped in relation to patterns of language use, as well as community attitudes and beliefs about competence. (p. 34)¹³

Most telling in the PANSALB document is the tendency to downplay English.

Although it states that: 'it [the Board] has to ensure that the maximum advantage is taken of what English and other international languages have to offer', it also suggests that:

the over-estimated use and reliance upon English as a *lingua franca* needs simultaneously to be reassessed. Whilst *isiZulu* functions as a *lingua franca* for 70% of the country's population, English can only, at present, be used efficiently by only 20% of the population. (p. 56)

The repetition of 'only', whether conscious or not, is an indicator of emphasis. It is certainly true that English is over-used, that people are denied access to public information as a consequence and that (according to the 1996 census data) Zulu is the majority African language. It is rated as a home language by 24% of South Africans. However, the 70% statistic is not based on survey data, or any kind of test or survey of proficiency. The figure has been assumed on the basis of adding the number of speakers of languages that are cognate with Zulu (Xhosa, Ndebele and Swati).¹⁴ The document fails to articulate the very real political reasons why Zulu, the language on which the *Inkatha Freedom Party* has based its ethnic political programme, would be a very contentious choice of *lingua franca*, not least to the current government. Gough (1994) argues that there has been very little research on interlingual attitudes amongst African languages and very little empirical study of the whole issue of mutual

intelligibility: 'the guiding assumption appears to be that similarity on formal grounds equates with comprehensibility' (p. 10).

Another trope evident both in PANSALB (1999) and in articles by its members (see Alexander 1999a and 1999b and Heugh 2000 for examples) is one which ascribes false consciousness and a desire to be assimilated to African language speakers who want fluency in English:

South Africa is just emerging from a lengthy period of segregation and language policy based on the view that languages other than Afrikaans and English are problems. With the emergence of the new ruling elite, language as a problem continues to prevail. However, it is manifested through assimilationist tendencies. (p. 57)

This statement assumes that the desire for English is a product of the emergence of a new elite and that it is necessarily linked to a desire for cultural assimilation. Heugh (2000) also assumes that survey data indicating that people desire to be educated in their home languages rather than English is a sufficient indicator of language perceptions and attitudes. Arguments like these are made without any research as to how people are using language and why. I return to this point later in the chapter (section 2.4.2.3.).

2.4.2. Medium of instruction policy discourses in contemporary South Africa.

I have already outlined (in brief) the complex political reasons why English has been favoured historically, even by left wing activists, in South Africa. In this section I will (a) briefly sketch the key research moments which influenced the shift towards 'mother-tongue' advocacy; (b) summarise the theory upon which the current schools' language policy is based and (c) outline the debate, which ensued subsequent

to the publication of Vinjevold (1999) which critiqued the South African schools' language policy.

2.4.2.1. The shift to 'mother-tongue' advocacy.

As I have already indicated, Alexander, who is also an educationalist and politician to the left of the ANC, was the first anti-apartheid activist to promote multilingualism in recent years. Heugh (1995) points out that 'prior to his intervention, conventional wisdom about the unchallenged position of English as the language of liberation and ... international communication had prevailed in South Africa' (p. 335). His 1989 book, Language policy and national unity in South Africa/Azania, was highly controversial in that, drawing on proposals made in 1944 by Nhlapo, a member of the African National Congress (ANC), Alexander suggested that the major varieties of Nguni (Zulu, Xhosa, Swati, Ndebele) and of Sotho (Southern Sotho, Northern Sotho, Tswana) be standardised or unified in writing and in all formal settings. This form of linguistic engineering was rejected by African language speakers and linguists for failing to take into consideration that these are languages and not varieties, as well as a failure to consider sociolinguistic factors such as interlingual attitudes and group identity (see Zotwana 1988, quoted in Alexander 1989; Satyo 1992 and Gough 1994).

The next initiative to have a major impact on research and policy was a psycholinguistic research project undertaken by MacDonald (1990). This research showed that in the (then) D.E.T. system of education, students had to switch abruptly to English as the sole medium of instruction after four years of schooling, before they had learnt to understand and manipulate academic language and before they had the

necessary vocabulary to cope with academic subjects through that medium. Moreover, the primary experience of learning for many students was *via* the method of rote-learning; therefore their cognitive skills were poorly developed. She argues that there were also negative affective consequences, in that the mother tongue was devalued because of its restriction to informal domains. The research drew centrally on Cummins (1984) and Cummins and Swain (1986) to describe this practice as 'subtractive bilingualism' (MacDonald 1990, pp.137-144).

The National Educational Policy Initiative (NEPI 1992) on language, which canvassed the views of applied linguists and language educators nationwide, was also a significant document; as it formed part of a series of studies by educators and activists in non-governmental organisations who came together to research policy options in anticipation of the new political dispensation. The NEPI document is careful to articulate a range of possible options and to signal the complexities of advocating education through the medium of African languages in South Africa, but its orientation towards home languages as the initial language of learning and teaching is clear. Though not always explicitly so, it too draws centrally on the work of Cummins and Swain. Subsequently, the work of South African ESL theorists has almost been dominated by this theory, as is evident from the proceedings of conference papers, from theses and published texts (see Angélil-Carter *et al* 1994, Hibbert 1995 and Heugh *et al* 1995 for examples).

In the early nineties, by the time of the multi-party negotiations which decided the future of South Africa, there was strong advocacy of multilingualism and mother-tongue instruction in academic circles and non-governmental organisations. However,

McCormick (1994) shows that in fact very little time was spent negotiating a language policy, a possible indicator of its scale of importance in the eyes of the negotiators. She argues that the resultant 11-language policy (which was later enshrined in the constitution) was a symbolic choice, made in the spirit of the compromise politics of the day. Sonntag (2001) asserts that the ANC leadership preferred English, but it responded to a strong Nationalist Party lobby that Afrikaans be retained as an official language by making all the bantustan languages [languages of the apartheid-created homelands] official as well. The subsequent lack of implementation of the policy seems to bear out the truth of both McCormick (1994) and Sonntag's (2001) assertions. As outlined in my chapter one, the school language policy, which followed in 1997 (Department of Education 1997a), advocated education through the medium of the home language with a preference for additive bilingual instruction.

2.4.2.2. The 'additive bilingualism' argument.

Cummins and Swain's (1986) theory of additive bilingualism is based on psycholinguistic studies of Canadian immersion programmes. Unlike many early behaviouristic studies of second language acquisition, which concentrate on the struggles associated with learning a second language or which focus on first language interference with second language learning, they stress the existence of a common underlying proficiency and argue the advantages of bilingualism (see also Appel and Müysken 1993 and Skuttnab-Kangas 1995). They argue that 'early bilingualism can accelerate the separation of sound and meaning and focus the child's attention on certain aspects of language' (Cummins and Swain 1986, p. 20).

Cummins (1996) points out that if they are well-motivated and have adequate teaching support, learners generally acquire basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) in a second language relatively easily. However, cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), which entails using language in decontextualised, cognitively demanding situations, is far harder to acquire. Cummins and Swain (1986) argue that it is preferable initially to teach literacy-related skills in only one language (whether it be the first or the second language) in a gradual process over a number of years. Once they are well-established in one language, literacy-related skills will transfer more easily to the other language. In a community or context where the first language may be less strongly supported, as is the case for many children of minority groups, teaching initially in the first language is likely to compensate for the possibly limited use of the language in its full range of functions and skills (Cummins and Swain 1986, p. 45). The importance of retaining the first language alongside the second language (additive bilingualism) is stressed.

In their discussion of the development of 'cognitive academic language' proficiency, Cummins and Swain (1986) make a further important distinction between the use of language in context-embedded and context-reduced situations. Context-embedded situations are typical of face-to-face interactions where the communication is supported by a range of contextual, interpersonal and linguistic cues to meaning such as gestures, facial expression and intonation. Context-reduced situations are typical of (although not limited to) many academic contexts that require high levels of cognitive engagement and typically rely on primarily linguistic cues to meaning. Such contexts require high levels of academic language proficiency. The ability to function in context-reduced, cognitively demanding tasks in the first language underlies the

ability to do the same in the second language, but development of this ability in a second language is a gradual process and usually requires careful scaffolding.

Cummins (1996) argues that although it is true that cognitive academic language proficiency may be fostered in both oral and written modes, writing, if it is carefully mediated, can serve as an invaluable tool for thinking and concept development. Writing helps learners discover connections, describe processes, express emerging understandings and raise questions. The process of writing is in itself demanding, because it requires the production of large units of discourse without a teacher constantly supplying coherence. Cummins argues that effective instruction, which will facilitate access to the CALP skills, ought to include active communication of meaning, cognitive challenge, contextual support and the building of student self esteem. He suggests a four-part instruction framework whose sequence may vary:

- Activate prior knowledge/build background knowledge;
- Present cognitively engaging input with appropriate contextual supports;
- Encourage active language use to connect input with students' prior experience and with thematically-related content;
- Assess student learning in order to provide feedback that will build language awareness and efficient learning strategies. (pp. 74-5)

Cummins' work has been acknowledged as ground-breaking in its description of the development of second language proficiency and the relationship between language and cognition. But it has also been challenged on the basis that its 'dichotomization of the notion of linguistic competence' does not take social context into account (Martin-Jones and Romaine 1986, p. 29). Romaine (1984) points out that Scribner and Cole's study of the Vai people (referred to in section 2.2.) illustrates that literate Vai perform no better on CALP-type tests than non-literates. She also quotes Edelsky *et al* (1983) who say that the argument that CALP is transferable from one

language to another is a very difficult hypothesis to test 'because the skills which comprise CALP are bound up with culture-specific types of literacy and experience with written language' (quoted in Romain 1984, p. 228). In most Western societies, the effects of literacy are connected with those of schooling (Romaine 1984). Indeed, Cummins' (1996) later work on the role of identity in language learning seems to acknowledge this point, asserting that educators often attribute the failure of ESL children to 'superficial linguistic mismatches between home and school or insufficient exposure to English' when in fact their difficulties may be related to societal power relations which are replicated in the school system (pp. 64-5).

Street (1993) problematises the application of Cummins' theory to the South African context. Similarly to Romaine (1984), he critiques the notion of automatic transfer of skills from the home language to a second language both on technical grounds (given that the Nguni and Sotho languages are not cognate with English) and in terms of the different social meanings and uses of literacy in each language.

Martin-Jones and Romaine (1986) also argue that research in many bilingual contexts has shown that code-switching is becoming 'a communicative mode in its own right' (p. 33). Similarly Blommaert (1999) and Makoni (quoted in Vinjevoold 1999) have argued that in some Congolese and South African communities (respectively), children have no obvious mother tongue. Blommaert (1999) writes:

In the course of research on Lingala-French codeswitching data from Congo (Zaire), Michael Meeuwis and I came to the conclusion that the codeswitched variant was 'monolectal'. That means: to the speakers, the mixture of Lingala and French served as one single code, a language in its own right, displaying all the internal variabilities we typically associate with ('ordinary') languages (Meeuwis and Blommaert 1998)... Treatments of code-switching that start from [the] assumption of monolingualism, which is then transformed into a clash of two grammars in a monolingual mind, obviously miss the point, since

the languages that are supposed to be duelling in the speaker's minds are often completely absent from these speakers' speech repertoire. (p.4)

The language of the home is a mixture of codes, which the speakers do not distinguish as two separate languages.¹⁵ The extent of this sociolinguistic phenomenon obviously needs more research in the South African context, but its existence does question any easy assumptions about mother tongue education and bilingualism.

There is a considerable body of knowledge that indicates that cognitive processes work best through the mother tongue, and that students need to develop both CALP and BICS skills in order to be able to function in a language in context-reduced, cognitively demanding situations. Nevertheless, the validity of the absolute BICS/ CALP dichotomy, and the notion of transfer from one language to the next, need further research in the South African context. All of the critiques cited above support Young's argument (2001) that:

However intuitively appealing and pragmatically sound it might seem as a theory, there is little evidence in South Africa of the successful application of additive bilingual theories of Cummins and Swain and Skuttnab-Kangas. We need to persuade teachers with solid evidence from our research that the 1997 language education policy's prescription of additive multilingualism is a practically achievable goal in the classroom. (p. 253; see also Makoni quoted in Vinjevold 1999)

Second language acquisition theorists, including Cummins himself (1996), have shown that the language learning process is not just cognitive, but also social and psychological; and that the acquisition of CALP skills is connected to the specific conditions of the literacy environment. Therefore it cannot be assumed that theory developed in one social context will necessarily translate to another. In particular, Cummins' experiments took place in an immersion context, which was well-resourced with well-trained teachers and middle-class learners whose mother-tongue occupied a

It would seem that modernisation in South Africa and, the inexorable urbanisation in particular, is undermining the possibilities for the first alternative [promoting additive bilingualism] and that the more realistic option is a straight for English approach, except in linguistically homogenous classes where there is little exposure to English outside the classroom or where parents expressly request an alternative. (p. 225)

In coded terms, Vinjevold is advocating 'straight for English' for middle-class environments and some other form, presumably additive bilingualism, for working class township and rural schools ('linguistically homogenous classes') who - in the majority of cases - will be speakers of African languages. In coming to this conclusion, Vinjevold does not explore curriculum or teaching conditions in any meaningful way.

The effect of this proposal was to evoke highly emotive defences of additive bilingualism from Alexander (1999b) and Heugh (2000), which do little to further the cause of any research that will move away from what Young (2001) calls 'single-minded advocacy'. Heugh's paper, entitled, "The case against multilingualism" cites the 1930s and 1940s Malherbe research on 'white' English/Afrikaans bilinguals (which was also quoted in PANSALB 1999) as evidence that significant research on bilingualism has been completed in the South African context. She also correlates improvement in the matriculation statistics in the first few years of D.E.T. education with the fact that mother tongue education was maintained in those years. This is an astounding claim, given the substantial historical and educational research which has demonstrated the declining capacity of the D.E.T. system as a result of the increasing underprovision of resources and teacher training in the face of massification, as well as the effects of school boycotts (see for example Hirson 1979 and Hyslop 1999).

Heugh (2000) notes 'that in the province (Western Cape) where 80% of learners wrote their 1999 [matriculation] examination in their mother tongue, there was a 79% pass rate' (p. 42). It is a well-known fact that the Western Cape is (a) comparatively well-resourced both in terms of school provision and overall social class position and (b) has a minority of former D.E.T. schools. The final matriculation examinations in D.E.T. schools have always been written in English. Hartshorne (1995) shows that the outcome of the constantly shifting language policy over the last forty years has been to lower the standards of English throughout the system. One simply cannot attribute the good pass-rate to mother tongue instruction alone. In effect Heugh's article perpetuates the fallacy arising out of academic work in the sixties and seventies that 'educational failure is linguistic failure' (Stubbs 1990, p. 558).

But there is an additional issue raised by the Vinjevold article and by several other recent researchers (see De Klerk 2000 and Vesely 2000) that relates to the desire among African language speakers to be educated through the medium of English. This research points to the need for nuanced exploration of language attitudes, motivation and identity in South Africa. It is not enough to say that people desire English nor is it enough to dismiss those desires as assimilationist (as PANSALB, Heugh and Alexander do); not least because successful implementation of policy is reliant on favourable attitudes among learners.¹⁶ Critical research needs to engage with *how* and *why* people identify as they do and how this identification relates to their language acquisition and literacy practices in relation to the dominant discourses. As Blommaert (1996) points out, language planning and policy-making efforts are likely to have little effect if language attitudes, real-life relevance and contexts of use are not taken into account.

2.5. The discourses of English second language learning and teaching.

In this section I review contemporary approaches to ESL teaching and learning. I show that the implication of the critical theorists' view that language learning practices are embedded in complex power relations is that the English classroom cannot be viewed in isolation from institutional and social contexts.

2.5.1. English second language learning and identity.

A considerable body of ESL research has shown that language attitudes and motivation are related to achievement in a second language (Gardiner 1982 and McGroarty 1996). Here, language attitudes are defined as:

beliefs, emotional reactions and behavioural tendencies related to the object of the attitude.... Attitude is thus linked to a person's values and beliefs and promotes or discourages the choices made in all realms of activity, whether academic or informal. (McGroarty 1996, p. 5)

Motivation is defined as 'the combination of desire and effort made to achieve a goal' (McGroarty 1996, p. 5).

However, ESL theorists using post-structural frameworks have argued that definitions such as these 'decontextualize, generalize and objectify' since they implicitly support 'a notion of identity as insular and static, passed down intact over time and across boundaries' (Morgan 1997, p. 431). Norton (2000), a post-structuralist ESL theorist, argues that when people speak, they are not only exchanging information; it is through language that 'a person negotiates a sense of self within and across different sites at different points in time, and it is through language that a person gains access to – or is denied access to powerful social

networks that give learners the opportunity to speak' (p. 5). Norton (2000) uses the term 'identity' to 'reference how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future' (p. 5). This view includes a notion that identity is social, fluid, multiple and often contradictory.

The basic premise of post-structuralist thinking on the subject is that discourses and discursive practices provide subject positions, and that individuals take up a variety of positions within different discourses, all of which are structured by relations of power (Norton 1995a and Canagarajah 1999). Individuals therefore have the possibility of forming new identities and of sustaining hybrid ways of being in relation to different discourses. Although some of these subject positions conflict with each other, as individuals we constantly attempt to present our identity as coherent, singular and stable (Herrington and Curtis 2000).

The reader will recall that in Gee's (1990) conception, it is not possible to learn/acquire a new 'secondary Discourse' without also taking on the mantle of its values and attitudes (or at least pretending to do so). If this conception is extended to learning a second language, one can see that the process is not neutral. Learning to speak, read and write a language takes place within a discourse or a complex interplay of discourses. In colonial and postcolonial school contexts, for example, English subject syllabi have generally been dominated by literature teaching and the literature taught has tended to be British, with Shakespearean texts often forming the core (see Johnson 1996). For generations of South African children, learning to read has been inextricably linked to learning the norms and values of British culture. A modern

competing, arguably far more dominant and powerful discourse (in South Africa anyway), has been the American media, which dominates radio, television and popular print media.

For students from marginalized communities, learning and using English in a society in which it occupies the status of a dominant discourse, may entail tensions around identity and culture. This point is illustrated by Canagarajah's (1999) ethnographic research on Sri Lankan students. He shows that students desire English for instrumental purposes in educational and vocational domains, but that their lived experience 'reveals cultural and ideological conflicts in using and learning English' as the discourses and literacy practices in the curriculum and teaching material clash with their values. He describes how students negotiate this tension in values and identity (mainly unconsciously) through discursive strategies such as code-alternation, mixing and switching (pp. 174-175). One can of course resist and critique the dominant discourses, as Canagarajah shows, but it takes considerable resources to develop alternatives if access to multiple discourses is limited. In my own experience in South Africa, the political theory learnt in anti-Apartheid organisations, very often presented an alternative which could serve as a basis for school learners and teachers to resist Apartheid education.

The approaches to second language learning that have dominated the field construct ideal or typical learners and learning habits, and do not take these sorts of social tensions into account. Tollefson (1991) and Norton (2000) both provide important critiques of the 'neo-classical' approach to second language learning, arguing that psychological explanations that locate second language learning

'problems' solely in the individual, fail to take into account the socio-historical pressures and inequalities which 'constrain individual choice' (Tollefson 1991, p. 32). Norton (2000) argues that second language theorists have often assumed that learners can be defined unproblematically:

as motivated or unmotivated, introverted or extroverted, inhibited or uninhibited, without considering that such affective factors are frequently socially constructed in inequitable relations of power, changing over time and space, and possibly coexisting in contradictory ways in a single individual. (p.5)

She argues that the traditional (Enlightenment) conception of the subject as unitary, fixed and ahistorical has enabled the categorisation of individual motivation to learn a language as either 'instrumental' or 'integrative'. Instrumental motivation refers to the learner's desire to learn the language for utilitarian purposes such as employment, whereas integrative motivation refers to a desire to be integrated successfully into the target community. Norton (2000) argues that these autonomous constructions of motivation do not capture the intricate relations between power, identity and language learning:

Theories of the good language learner have been developed on the premise that language learners can choose under what conditions they will interact with members of the target language community and that the language learner's access to the target language community is a function of the learner's motivation. (p. 5)

In Norton's (1995a) view, identity relates to desire – 'the desire for recognition, the desire for affiliation, and the desire for security and safety'. These desires cannot be separated from the distribution of material resources in society (p. 410). She argues for qualitative research that examines contexts of use and relations of power. She emphasises that critical researchers are interested in 'the way individuals make sense of their experience' and, like Kress (1989), Fairclough (1996), Canagarajah (1999)

and Barton *et al* (2000), foregrounds the need to investigate the relationship between structure and agency without resorting to deterministic or reductionist analyses (1995b, p. 571). This is an area that I explore fully in chapter four.

2.5.2. Communicative language teaching (CLT).

Communicative language teaching has become the dominant approach to English second language teaching, despite the fact that CLT's origins were not originally based on second language acquisition research. Lightbrown (2000) points out that communicative language teaching originated in the seventies at a time when second language acquisition research was still a young field. British linguists and applied linguists like Breen, Brumfit, Candlin, Widdowson and Wilkins were dissatisfied with 'pedagogical approaches which treated language as a set of morpho-syntactic rules rather than as a richer set of communication involving many kinds of competence other than the purely syntactic' (p. 435). Widdowson (1991) categorises the previous approaches as 'structural' approaches which 'focus on knowing':

Here items of language, words and sentences, are presented and practised in a way which is intended best to help the learners internalise them as forms containing meaning within themselves, as semantic capsules. The assumption is that once learners have achieved this semantic knowledge, then they will be able to use it pragmatically (p. 157).

In this sense, communicative language teaching reflected 'a move away from linguistics as the main or only basis for deciding what the units of language testing would be' (Lightbrown 2000, p. 435). The communicative approach reverses this emphasis by concentrating on performance; getting learners to do things with language. Central to communicative language teaching is Hymes' (1972) notion of 'communicative competence,' which encompasses not only (conscious and unconscious) knowledge of linguistic structures, but also the skill of using language

appropriately in actual communicative events in different contexts in order to achieve specific purposes. Thus, communicative language teaching emphasises 'genuine communication rather than participation in pedagogically motivated or structured activities' (Wilkins 1983, p. 24).

In the communicative language teaching approach, course content is defined not in terms of forms and sentence patterns, but 'in terms of concepts or notions, which such forms are used to express, and the communicative functions which they are used to perform' (Widdowson 1991, p. 159). Emphasis is on integration of the skills of listening, talking, reading and writing. Although Widdowson (1991) emphasises that methodology is key, historically communicative language teaching has been constructed as a range of principles and not as a specific method.¹⁷ Because negotiation of meaning and the ability to produce sustained discourse is primary, communicative language teaching advocates stress the use of interactive teaching with task-based exploration and problem-solving in small groups (Wildsmith-Cromarty 2000). They also stress the constructivist learning principle of starting from where the learner is, and of articulating with the knowledge of language that the learner brings to the classroom.

Communicative language teaching principles are congruent with many of the findings in second-language acquisition research. For example, a considerable body of second-language acquisition research has shown that learner interaction in small groups with peers on guided tasks will result in more language-, and possibly more complex language production (Chaudron 1995). Because of the value placed on developing fluency, communicative language teaching stresses that learners should

feel free to communicate and that teachers should not engage in hyper-correction. In this respect, communicative language teaching also engages with second-language acquisition theory in viewing learner errors as an inevitable and natural part of the language learning process. This kind of attitude enables learners to develop the confidence to take risks by trying out new forms. Second language theorists generally associate risk-taking with greater learning success (Skehan 1993).

There are a number of criticisms of communicative language teaching that have crucial significance for the South African context, where communicative language teaching informs the ESL teaching at secondary schools.¹⁸ Pennycook (1994b) critiques the fact that communicative language teaching has tended to construct multilingualism as a problem rather than a resource. Another criticism is that educators have often interpreted the focus on 'performance' to mean oral communication (Wilkins 1983). Given that a considerable body of research has shown that writing helps thinking and concept development, this is a problem, particularly in a context where the second language is used for academic purposes across the curriculum. Pennycook (1994b) argues that the focus on functional, informal situations in communicative language teaching syllabi and textbooks is inappropriate in contexts such as India (and I would add South Africa), where English is the primary language of learning and teaching in school and higher education. Like Candlin (1984) and Widdowson (1991) he critiques the emergence of syllabi with a reductionist concept of notions and functions which may be learnt by rote.

There has been widespread criticism of communicative syllabi (by leading proponents of CLT) for the assumption that 'functional' language teaching is

necessarily concerned with spoken language and with productive rather than receptive skills (Celce-Murcia *et al* 1997; Widdowson 1991 and Wilkins 1981). Widdowson (1991) argues that functional syllabi fail to develop knowledge of system. In his view, learners do not readily infer this knowledge from their communicative activities.

Moreover:

... the process of communication which calls for external synthesis with context would run counter to the process needed to develop competence, which calls for the internal analysis of the language itself. (p. 162)

In the South African context, where the communicative language teaching approach has become an explicit part of the English second language syllabus in the mid-nineties, Muthwa-Kuen (1996) a former D.E.T. teacher, argues that:

To rule out specific grammar teaching, as is done with the incorporation of the new rhetoric into the syllabus, leaves the teacher without option to make sound decisions based on real choices, to best meet the needs of the particular students being taught, just as the old system left them without options. (p.47)

While not denying the importance of a communicative approach (as opposed to a structural approach), these critiques highlight the fact that knowledge of form, particularly in the acquisition of an additional language, does not necessarily arise naturally from exposure to the target language. This point appears to be acknowledged in the draft revised curriculum statement (Department of Education 2001) which states that there needs to be an explicit focus on form when teaching additional languages and identifies specific features of form for each grade level.

Pennycook (1994b) and Fairclough (1995) both provide important ideological critique of the normative rules of appropriacy of communicative competence. For

Pennycook (1994b):

The issue is not merely one of inappropriacy but rather that the supposedly neutral notion of communicative competence is a very particular discursive

construct. Not only can it lead to the transmission of fixed norms of appropriacy, but it supports wider views of language, communication and interaction. (p. 170)

Fairclough (1995) points out that the matching of language to context is characterized by 'indeterminacy, heterogeneity and struggle' (p. 241). The notion of 'appropriacy' while seeming to provide a flexible approach to diversity, potentially fixes language into static, idealized forms: 'it provides an apparent resolution of the paradox that use of standard English is to be taught, while use of other varieties is to be respected' (Fairclough 1995, p. 238).

Fairclough (1995) shows that theories of appropriateness underpin controversial policies on the teaching of standard English, but also the development of a competence-based 'communication skills' view of language education with its emphasis on 'oracy' and spoken language education (p. 231). In his view they make the 'suspect assumption':

... that speech communities are characterized by well-defined varieties clearly distributed among contexts and purposes, so that what is appropriate or inappropriate is a clear-cut matter for all of us. (Fairclough 1995, p. 236)

As I shall show in chapter five, this point is particularly significant in a context where teachers do not necessarily have control over what is regarded as standard English.

Nevertheless, as Celce-Murcia *et al* (1997) and Lightbrown (2000) show, the basic principles of communicative language teaching – the emphasis on production of extended discourse and of learning to use language in a variety of contexts, as well as the use of a methodology which is dialogic and which allows for risk-taking - are sound. In an article for teachers on the possibilities for the communicative language

teaching approach in the South African context, Wildsmith-Cromarty (2000) argues that because of its emphasis on negotiation of meaning, discussion and interpretation, communicative language teaching is compatible with more recent critical approaches to language study such as critical language awareness. Critical language awareness' focus on how grammatical structures, such as modals and pronouns, work to create subtle differences in meaning, may be used in second language contexts both to create meta-awareness of linguistic form and of the manner in which language expresses power relations.

In the former D.E.T. school context, a number of researchers have written about the authoritarian nature of classroom communication which constructs students as passive recipients (see for example Simons 1986; Clark 1993 and Walker 1996). Recent research has suggested that in many schools there is heavy reliance on the oral mode with very little written feedback and very little use of textbooks (Department of Education 1998 and Taylor and Vinjevold 1999). Hibbert (1994) found that student teachers who were about to teach in D.E.T. schools thought that using the communicative language teaching approach meant that the teacher needed to be physically active and that learners should work in groups unaided. Hibbert's study does not include any classroom-based research on how teachers actually use communicative language teaching in the classroom. In so doing, she assumes that what people say about their teaching is congruent with how they actually teach. The classroom-based studies conducted for the President's Education Initiative (Taylor and Vinjevold 1999) show that this is often not the case.

2.5.3. The role of talk in the classroom.

Kress (1989) points out that verbal texts tend to constitute the principal form of interaction in school classrooms. According to Edwards and Westgate (1994), whose book is a comprehensive review of research on classroom talk by classroom discourse analysts, classroom discussion is central to the process of learning and knowing '... because it helps learners to make explicit to themselves and others what they know, understand and can do' (pp. 6-7). In this social constructivist paradigm, knowledge is viewed as a process which, helped by social interaction, will enable the learner to make connections between what is already known and new experience. Individual student participation in classroom talk is viewed as essential to learning. It enables the teacher to establish when communication has broken down; it opens the possibility for exploring new avenues and it facilitates the development of shared understanding. This form of talk has come to be known as 'exploratory talk' (Ellis 1987) and its principles are central to a communicative language teaching approach.

However, research has shown that teacher dominance in classroom conversation is an almost universal phenomenon and often extends even to those classrooms where alternative teaching methods are thought to be in process (Bernstein 1990; Edwards and Westgate 1994 and Taylor and Vinjevold 1999). Indeed, Barton (1994) goes so far as to argue that:

In classrooms someone is talking for about two-thirds of the time; two-thirds of this is the teacher talking and two-thirds of teacher talk is lecturing or asking questions. (p. 181)

ESL researchers have largely concentrated their efforts on analysing the sociolinguistic form (the routines of turn-taking, the grammatical and lexical elements of textual cohesion and discourse coherence) of classroom talk, as they believe form

to be of crucial significance to the quality of learning (Gardiner 1992). How and when teachers 'mark' what is counted as important, and the nature of their responses to student talk, will have a significant impact on what is learnt and how learning takes place. The speech form typically assumed by teacher talk was first identified by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) and has become known as the 'the essential teaching exchange' (Edwards and Westgate 1994, p. 236). Rather than imparting information through direct telling, teachers tend to pose questions, answers are elicited from students and teachers respond with evaluative feedback (initiation-response-feedback or I-R-F). Edwards and Westgate (1994) assert that 'the frequency of those exchanges and the overwhelming tendency of teachers to make the first and third moves is "essentially" what makes classrooms so distinctive' (p. 124).

Edwards and Westgate (1994) describe how students characteristically learn how to strategise around this structural imposition. They limit their replies, providing just enough information to satisfy the teacher who will move on to someone else or more likely, take an element of the answer and do the work of reinterpreting, redirecting and evaluating until the desired information is imparted. Alternatively teachers will provide ever-increasing numbers of clues which will make the answer easier to elicit (see Simons 1986).

The I-R-F pattern does however have the potential to be more than a functional ritual depending on the nature of teacher questions and the treatment of student responses. Questions of a referential nature 'who, what, where' which demand factual recall and contextual reasoning are very different from those which encourage exploration and 'conscious reflection on the linguistic structure of the discourse itself'

(Walkerdine, quoted in Taylor 1999, p. 113) - what Gee calls meta-knowledge. If students feel that questions are open to debate and that their views are genuinely being sought, their responses may well be different and more forthcoming.

Kumaravadivelu (1999), a critical theorist, argues that classroom discourse can be seen as a three-dimensional construct consisting of a (socio)-linguistic dimension, a sociocultural dimension and a sociopolitical dimension. While he, like Fairclough (1996) commends the work done by classroom discourse analysts on identifying and analysing the sociolinguistic dimension of the classroom, he criticises their exclusive focus on that area. He also critiques sociocultural analyses of classrooms since they tend to be confined to communicative performance and conversational style and ignore the 'complex and competing world of discourses that exist in the classroom' and how these in turn relate in complicated ways to social identity (pp.469-470). Because these analyses often define identity and culture as static concepts, they fail to see the fluid and contradictory nature of classroom dynamics, as individuals struggle to preserve 'face'¹⁹ and subvert dominant discourses in relation to the often conflicting demands of teachers, parents and peers.

Like Gee (1990), Bernstein (1990), Kumaravadivelu (1999) and Pennycook (2000), I argue that the routines of classroom talk are constituted by larger institutional discourses; that teacher talk and by extension pedagogic practice, is an ideological process (whether conscious or not). It serves as a relay for both the production and reproduction of culture (Bernstein 1990). The degree to which school rituals are emphasised and enforced varies considerably and has an impact on the nature of classroom talk. Teachers' discourse is often dominated by 'procedural' talk (Street and Street 1995) which makes little sense to an outsider except when seen in

the context of that institution's particular norms and values. Many of these relate to attempts to inculcate discipline, obedience and submission. In other words, talk in classrooms is also about social control, and in contexts where corporal punishment is no longer acceptable, 'talk is the main control in the classroom' (Mercer 1992, p. 217). Bernstein (1996) goes so far as to argue that 'instructional discourse is always embedded in [a] regulative discourse and the regulative discourse is the dominant discourse' (1996, p. 28). Classroom talk is also ideological in that it is an essential part of apprenticing students into the discourse of the discipline, and, as Gee (1990) has shown, the discipline's way of using language is intimately connected to its processes of thinking and valuing.

Kumaravadivelu (1999) asserts that classroom discourse analysts, particularly ESL researchers, have shied away from 'any serious engagement with the ideological forces acting upon classroom discourse, even as they frequently emphasise the significant role these forces play in shaping and reshaping that discourse' (p. 470). Whilst he concedes that their studies have marked a notable departure from the behaviouristic approaches of the earlier classroom interaction studies, he critiques the notion that social context can be defined in terms of the classroom only. The analyses in these studies tend to be confined to a description of what is said and how it is said, with little attempt to explain why the discourse takes the form that it does.

Because of the politics of gaining access to former D.E.T. classrooms (discussed in chapter three), there have been relatively few studies of the form of classroom talk in that context. However Chick (1985) and Simons (1986) have both conducted detailed studies in that domain which focus on form, particularly turn-taking. Both studies are ethnographic, and classroom talk is viewed in its socio-

cultural and socio-political contexts. On the basis of critical research, Chick (1996) revised his 1985 research which stopped at the socio-cultural dimension and which defined culture and explained face-saving practices in the classroom mainly in static, ethnic terms.

The classrooms researched by Chick (1985) and Simons (1986) were teacher-fronted and the I-R-F pattern was strongly present. Both writers discuss, in detail, the effects of students chorusing answers. In both cases, the research shows how teachers use talk to compensate for their own and their students' lack of confidence and competence in English. I shall return to a more detailed discussion of these two studies in chapter five when I discuss the 'chorus' feature in my own data.

2.6. Conclusion.

This chapter has highlighted concepts that are central to my study. The theorists I have reviewed show the importance of viewing language use and acquisition as social practice. They demonstrate that, particularly in postcolonial contexts, it is not possible to study classroom uses of English without also considering its politics and the institutional discourses in which it is embedded. They argue that institutional discourses are always ideological and connected to relations of power. Recent work in ESL theory has shown how important it is to consider motivation, perceptions and language attitudes in the context of these power relations. They show, however, that individuals are not necessarily overdetermined by these discourses. Classrooms are in themselves social domains where ideologies and identities are constructed. Classroom discourses thus, both reflect and construct institutional discourses.

South African attitudes to English are complex and reflect a history that has been characterised by an unusual form of language oppression. In policy terms, the new South Africa's Constitution enshrines what is regarded as one of the most progressive multilingual language policies, and yet people seem to be demanding education through the medium of English. It is important that the nuances of these attitudes and practices, and their relationship to institutional and official discourses, be investigated through ethnographic study, rather than dismissed.

Notes:

¹ Although Street is primarily an Anthropologist interested in ethnographies of literacy practices, his work on literacy is situated at the interface of Linguistics and Anthropology. He has also conducted ethnographic work on school language classrooms.

² In 1997 the government released proposals for a new outcomes-based curriculum, "Curriculum 2005" (Department of Education 1997b). This curriculum was launched at primary schools in 1998. It has subsequently been reviewed (Department of Education 2000) and there are new draft curriculum proposals (Department of Education 2001). None of the proposals have been implemented beyond grade 8. As I shall show the new curriculum proposals (Department of Education 1997b and 2001) take a more critical approach to language. There is evidence of a New Literacy Studies' orientation and of Fairclough's critical language awareness approach. The first version (Department of Education 1997b) did not take ESL into account in its discussion of language learning, but the revised version has detailed sections on learning an additional language (Department of Education 2001).

³ Gee (1990) borrows his distinction between acquisition and learning from the work of the linguist Krashen (1982).

⁴ Street (1995) homogenises genre theorists when he dismisses the theory for its 'wait for critique' approach (p.139).

⁵ Bakhtin (1981) writes: 'Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated-overpopulated – with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accents, is a difficult and complicated process.' (p. 294).

⁶ Here, the similarities to the 'literacy myth', described by the New Literacy Studies theorists, cannot go unnoticed.

⁷ When the Nationalist Party came to power in 1948 they extended mother-tongue instruction to cover the entire period of primary school. English and Afrikaans were compulsory subjects at high school, and one of the two had to be used as a language of learning and teaching. The attempt to entrench Afrikaans through dual medium English/Afrikaans instruction after standard four (grade 6) sparked the Soweto uprising in 1976 (Hartshorne 1995 and Desai and Van der Merwe 1998).

⁸ Alexander quotes Phillipson (1992) extensively to support his (Alexander's) case for use of the home languages as media of instruction, but does not critique Phillipson's generalisation.

⁹ See Granville *et al* for the same critique of LANGTAG (1996).

¹⁰ Although it is labelled as a 'discussion document', the paper takes the form of a government gazette.

¹¹ They cite Djité, but it is not clear whether the quotation marks indicate a direct quote since they also attribute this view to 'several scholars' (PANSALB 1999, p.61).

¹² Heugh (2000), a member of PANSALB, cites this research by Malherbe (1943) as a central part of her argument against those researchers who have claimed that not enough South African research has been conducted to warrant a bilingual education policy. In Young's analysis of applied linguistics in South Africa, he describes Malherbe as a 'liberal Afrikaner' (Young 2001, p. 226).

¹³ In fact, as I show in section 2.4.2., Martin-Jones and Romaine (1986) critique Cummins' early work for not showing sensitivity to context.

¹⁴ Cummins (1996) says that policy-makers and researchers rarely analyse 'exactly what constitutes proficiency' (p. 51). My attempts to ascertain how this statistic was formed were unsuccessful. A PANSALB member explained that the number of estimated home language speakers was added to the number of speakers of cognate languages, many of whom were thought to speak Zulu. Even when she added these figures, they did not tally. She then referred me to an academic at the University of Witwatersrand who had a similar estimation of proficiency, based on surveys completed by the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). But this academic did not reply to my request for clarity.

¹⁵ Heugh (2000) mistakenly thinks that this is an argument about non-standard dialects. In a critique of Vinjevoold's (1999) representation of Makoni, she writes: 'Surely nobody would suggest that there is some cognitive difference between children in South Africa and children elsewhere which would preclude South African children from requiring and benefiting from mother tongue education? An argument, which suggests that bilingual or multilingual children do not have sufficient proficiency in any language other than a messy amalgam of languages, belongs with a deficit theory of language and learning' (p. 27).

¹⁶ Both Alexander (1999b) and Heugh (2000) express their regret that the 1997 school language in education policy allows for parental choice about the language of learning and teaching.

¹⁷ There is debate among communicative language teaching advocates about whether to specify methodology in syllabi (see Melrose 1995).

¹⁸ In theory the primary school syllabus is informed by the more critical approaches in the new curriculum (Department of education 1997). These have entered the high school for the first time in 2001. Given the lack of training for teachers, the confusion among teachers about what they are required to do (reported in Vinjevoold 1999 and Department of Education 2000) and the lack of differentiation between first and second language, the use of the critical language approaches is doubtful.

¹⁹ Goffman (1967) describes how there is a strong tendency among people to aim to cultivate and maintain an image (face) that is aimed at the average.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology.

3.1. Introduction.

In chapter two I reviewed the work of key critical theorists who argue that language and literacy practices are socially embedded and inextricably linked to social identity. Their studies contest singular homogenising notions of language and literacy, and challenge researchers to investigate situated practices. I argued that a study that aims to explain the discourses of the English classroom has to include an analysis of the discursive practices and social structures outside the classroom: it has to engage with the values and power relations that characterise the social context, as well as analyse how individuals construct their identities and are constructed by the environment. This theoretical paradigm has informed my choice of a critical ethnographic approach, because of its emphasis on understanding and explaining the discourses that underlie social roles and behaviour through study of events in their social context.

In part one of this chapter I define and present my rationale for using a critical ethnographic approach and outline the principles of the approach. In part two, I describe the process of selecting schools and negotiating entry, and explicate my methods of data collection and analysis.

PART ONE.

3.2. Critical Ethnographic Research.

Watson-Gegeo defines ethnography as 'the study of people's behaviour in naturally occurring, ongoing settings, with a focus on the cultural interpretation of behaviour' (quoted in Ramanathan and Atkinson 1999, p. 47). The assumption is that

values and attitudes 'are revealed by people, explicitly and implicitly, in and through the specific actions they take in the conduct of social life' (Erickson and Mohatt 1982, p. 137). The task of the ethnographer is, according to Harvey (1992), to 'elucidate the symbolic practice of a particular culture' (p.72) through 'careful analysis of the *how* of face-to-face interaction' (Erickson and Mohatt 1982, p. 137). Blommaert (1997) points out that in ethnography:

... a close connection is made between fieldwork, data construction, and analysis in generating knowledge. An armchair linguist, discourse analyst or conversation analyst is perfectly imaginable; an armchair ethnographer would be an oxymoron. The fieldwork situation, the informants, the time and place at which the data were gathered, are all crucially informative elements of the data themselves. No knowledge can be gathered apart from the actual communicative practices engaged in during fieldwork, and all 'data' are at the most fundamental level connected to their situated production in fieldwork interaction. (p. 18)

The focus on psychological description and methodology in the discipline of linguistics (see chapter two), has meant that second language research in particular, has not traditionally been characterised by fieldwork. Context has been defined narrowly in terms of 'immediate surroundings, speakers' intentions, background knowledge, or conversational rules' (Pennycook 1994a, p. 121). Individuals' language motivation and practices have been regarded as ideologically neutral. However, as shown in chapter two, in recent years ethnography has gained considerable support as an approach to classroom research in education in general, as well as in studies of language teaching and learning (see Davis 1995; Graddol *et al* 1994; Canagarajah 1999 and Kumaravadivelu 1999) and situated literacy practices (see Street 1995 and Barton *et al* 2000).

Hymes' (1989) understanding is that in an ethnography of language:

one cannot take linguistic form, a given code, or even speech itself as a limiting reference. One must take as context a community, or network of persons, investigating its communicative activities as a whole.... (p. 4)

He cautions against regarding ethnography as mere description. The method of this approach is to ask questions which will yield an account 'not merely of what can be said but for when, where, by whom, to whom, in what manner, and in what particular circumstances' (Saville-Troike 1997, pp. 351-2). Implicit in these questions is an attempt to explain, 'a theory of speech as a system of cultural behaviour' (Hymes 1989, p. 89). The focus is on the patterning of communicative behaviour. However, what may seem to be 'variation and deviation from the standpoint of a linguist's analysis may emerge as structure and pattern from the standpoint of the communicative economy of the group among whom the analysed speech form exists' (Hymes 1989, p. 4). The meanings that participants ascribe to an event are therefore crucial.

There is some debate in the literature about what constitutes full ethnography. This is ascribed in part to the overlaps with other related methods, described variously as 'interpretative research', 'case study', 'participant observation', 'life history method', 'discourse analysis', and many more (Hammersley 1994, p. 1; see also Ramanathan and Atkinson 1999). Wilcox (1982) points out that 'as ethnography has developed as a research tool, the focus has become increasingly narrow' (p. 459). Ramanathan and Atkinson (1999) define 'ethnographic' research (as distinguished from ethnography):

... as a species of research which undertakes to give an emically¹ orientated description of the cultural practices of individuals.... Additionally, ethnographic research aims to bring a variety of different kinds of data to bear

in such description, on the principle that multiple perspectives enable more valid description of complex social realities than any single kind of data could alone... a number of educational researchers have distinguished full-scale ethnographies from less traditional uses of ethnographic approaches and methods by applying 'ethnographic' to the latter, in full or partial contrast to 'ethnography' for the former.(p. 49)

Ethnographic research encompasses all the key principles of stance and method that characterise full ethnography (see also Lea and Street 1998). The distinction between full ethnography and ethnographic research relates mainly to scope and focus. Ramanathan and Atkinson (1999) point out that, in keeping with the applied nature of much educational research, ethnographic researchers often enter the field with a problem that they wish to investigate (see also Woods 1996). This necessitates the selection of particular cultural scenes.

Because of constraints of time and the limitations of a thesis project, it has not been possible for me to conduct what I consider to be a full ethnography. I believe that this would have necessitated an investigation of students' home culture and attendance at school on a daily basis for a year or more. Even when I was in a position to do this (at Ilitha), teachers made it fairly clear to me that they did not want a 'visitor' in their classes on a daily basis for an extended period. I had been pre-warned of this by another researcher, and had no preconceptions that it would be possible to do otherwise. Moreover, as indicated in chapter one, I undertook the research with a specific focus: to investigate the discourses that characterise the English classroom. Thus I have chosen to place my research in the paradigm of 'ethnographic' research: a focused inquiry.

However, the danger of narrowing scope is precisely the criticism Kumaravadivelu (1999) has made of classroom discourse analysis (chapter two, section 2.5.3.). He believes that the use of microethnography as a method has contributed to classroom discourse analysts' conceptualisation of the classroom as a self-contained 'mini-society' rather than 'a constituent of the larger society in which many forms of domination and inequality are produced and reproduced for the benefit of vested interests' (p. 472). The effect is to lose any sense of the manner in which power relations outside of the classroom affect how individuals identify and are identified within the class. Similarly, Scollon (1995) critiques the tendency towards a 'miniaturisation of the concept of culture' and a loss of the 'broader contextualising goal' which has resulted from the 'narrowing down of scope' (p. 382; see also Wolcott 1982). Although this is indeed a danger, it is not necessarily so.

I describe and explain the form and content of classroom talk and classroom culture in detail. But this sociolinguistic focus on speech context does not preclude an examination of the cultural and political context of talk. Indeed, as both Blommaert (1997) and Kumaravadivelu (1999) illustrate, Hymes' work exemplifies that this is possible. The essence of his approach to ethnography of communication is to investigate recurring speech patterns and their variations in a given socio-cultural unit. The challenge is to study classroom culture in its school as well as its wider context. Individual practices are viewed as manifestations of social practices (Herrington 1993). The assumption is that 'in every moment of talk, people are experiencing and producing their cultures, their roles, their personalities' (Moerman 1988, p. xi); that is, their social identities.

The ethnographer's task is foremost to describe the features of social discourse among a group of people (Wilcox 1982 and Hammersley 1998). Description implies a process of interpretation, since it entails a selection structured by theoretical assumptions that 'what we include in descriptions is determined in part by what we think causes what' (Hammersley 1998, p. 13). The critical ethnographer's task is also to explain relationships: to ask 'why?'. As Kumaravadivelu (1999) argues, the critical ethnographer has to undertake both 'thick description' and 'thick explanation':

To do thick description, popularised by anthropologist Geertz (1973), the critical ethnographer returns to the same piece of data again and again and adds layers and layers of description as seen through participant observation. To do thick explanation, the critical ethnographer takes into account "relevant theoretically salient micro- and macrocontextual influences, whether horizontal or vertical, that stand in a systematic relationship ... to the behaviour or event one is attempting to explain" (Watson-Gegeo and Gegeo 1995, p. 62). (p. 477)

Canagarajah (1999) writes that while:

traditional ethnography has claimed to treat the words of the informants from the community as sacrosanct, critical ethnography analyzes the words in relation to the larger historical processes and social contradictions, searching for the hidden forces that structure life. (p. 48)

Central to the critical approach I have taken in this study is the explanation of silence and contradictions. I try to distinguish 'between how people think they ought to behave, how they say they behave, and how they are observed to behave' (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985, p. 207).

3.2.1. Classroom observation.

Observation is central to ethnographic study. In my case, classroom observation constitutes the major part of my data. Early classroom studies were characterised by positivist and behavioural approaches. Generally, coding systems (in particular the Flanders system) were used to document 'teacher talk' in pre-

determined categories. Popular in the sixties, this form of investigation has come to be known as 'systematic' research. Many researchers have critiqued the focus in such research on finding 'cause-effect relationships between certain actions and their outcomes', which in turn leads to a concern with 'strong correlations, levels of significance, definability and control of variables' (Van Lier 1988, p. xiv; see also Hitchcock and Hughes 1989 and Kumaravadivelu 1999).

The result of such methods, it is argued, is to ignore the social context of the relationship between teachers and learners - to ignore 'what may underlie that behaviour and give it shape' (Edwards and Westgate 1994, p. 74). This relates both to the wider context of the interaction which is observed (including the history of the relationships in the classroom) and to the 'immediate sequences in which the "acts" recorded are located' (Edwards and Westgate 1994, p. 99). In other words, because of the extended amount of time (sometimes years) students spend with each other and with particular teachers, a classroom culture emerges. 'Without an understanding of that culture, many of the events which occur in a particular situation will be meaningless to the outside observer' (Nunan 1996, p. 44).

Systematic research tends to presuppose classroom situations in which the transmission of information between teacher and student is the primary means of language learning. However, there are many exchanges, including forms of literacy practices that students engage in, quite independent of the teacher. Students are capable of subverting teacher talk resulting in unintended consequences (on the part of the teacher) for the lesson.

Although I have stressed its limitations, systematic research has produced significant insights as to the nature and structure of dialogue (Fairclough 1996) and a considerable body of information about what actually takes place in L2 classrooms. This kind of research can play an important role in providing a comparative basis in large-scale studies, particularly in contexts where specific phenomena are being researched e.g. the use teachers make of multimedia, or a specific feature of speech. It can also play a useful role when used alongside qualitative methods. The limitations I have described relate to the exclusive use of systematic research for the study of the learning and teaching in the classroom. This danger exists in South Africa at the moment because of the tremendous pressure to produce quantifiable data for policy development, a common problem in developing countries (see Vulliamy *et al* 1990).

Although qualitative researchers enter the classroom with notions of their area of focus, they try to allow for issues to emerge from the data by asking open-ended questions, by trying to describe as fully as possible, and by avoiding narrow predetermination of categories. Modern technology in the form of video and audio-taping has made this easier, since the researcher has a reasonably full record of the oral exchanges to review afterwards. However the use of this technology may pose fresh problems. It is tempting for researchers to rely on the recording and ignore data (such as non-verbal exchanges) that the technology has not captured. The technology may also serve to increase the participants' awareness of the researcher's presence.

Edwards and Westgate (1994) provide a useful summary of reports by researchers on the effects of their presence:

Samph (1976) ...found that under observation teachers' behaviour came to resemble both that of their own ideal teacher and that which they believed a

visitor might expect of them; this tendency was most marked when formal teaching styles were being observed. There are also the distortions which Wragg (1984) identifies as resulting from teachers' simple irritation at being watched and having their every move recorded in a setting which they are likely to regard as their territory.... Similarly, Blease (1983) reports children tending to play to the gallery when observers are present. (p. 77)

Whereas those undertaking the 'reproduction' model of ethnography attempt to factor out the effect of their presence on the assumption that there is one 'true' description of classroom 'reality' (Hammersley 1998, p. 24), these qualitative researchers attempt to account for its effect. The researcher's role as 'an instrument of analysis and interpretation' (Herrington 1993) is viewed as central to the research.

3.2.2. The role of the researcher.

Qualitative researchers accept that the researcher enters the process with a personal and social history that will affect the choice of research topic, how questions are framed and what assumptions are made about the researched. In addition, the researcher holds preconceptions derived from what Goodwin (cited in Blommaert 1997) calls 'professional vision'. This refers to disciplinary ways of knowing and seeing - the lens which shapes the angle, depth and breadth of our gaze. The choice of lens is at least to some extent affected by the knowledge that the picture that is developed has to take a form and composition which is easily recognisable, relevant, credible and aesthetically pleasing to our peers. Thus professional vision is, as Goodwin points out, always selective vision (Blommaert 1997). Given these claims, it stands to reason that methodology is more than a series of techniques (Vulliamy *et al* 1990). The researcher's epistemological and ideological assumptions shape choices of research design and method, and ultimately influence findings (see Cameron *et al* 1992).

In its strong form, the post-modernist approach argues that because of the researcher's subjectivity, ethnography is always 'caught up in the invention not the representation, of cultures' (Clifford and Marcus 1986, p. 2; see also Wolcott 1982). Clifford and Marcus (1986) argue that 'the writing and reading of ethnography are overdetermined by forces ultimately beyond the control of either an author or an interpretive community' (p. 25). Yet even they concede that this recognition does not require that one 'give up facts and accurate accounting' (p. 26). Woods (1996) argues that 'while few would still subscribe to a view that there is an objective reality that is totally knowable, the modified view ... is that there is an objective reality, but it can be apprehended only imperfectly...' (p. 8).

Edwards and Westgate (1994) suggest three options for penetrating beneath the 'surface' of classroom interaction. The first is to subject the discourse itself to detailed analysis; the second is for researchers to immerse themselves in the setting for long periods in order to minimise the 'reactivity' factor; and the third is to engage in triangulation, creating a three-dimensional picture composed from varying angles of actors and observer (pp. 76-8). What is acknowledged is that, while it is impossible for anyone to paint an objective picture of social reality, it is possible to 'capture some of the uniqueness that characterises every cultural scene' (Ramanathan and Atkinson 1999, p. 56) by means of 'thick' description that places the researcher's interpretation alongside the meanings ascribed by the participants.

In Hymes' (1996) view, concern about the effect of identity has at times led to a crippling obsession with the researcher's own psychology (see also Chang 1992).

Herrington (1993) stresses the importance of considering the 'broadest possible range of views in the process of interpretation - not to control out the researcher's interpretation but to broaden it' (p. 53). Cameron *et al* (1992) argue that:

... the subjectivity of the observer should not be seen as a regrettable disturbance but as one element in the human interactions that comprise our object of study. Similarly, research subjects themselves are active and reflexive beings who have insights into their situations and experiences. (p. 5)

These factors raise important methodological issues with regard to selection and sampling and the textual representation of the research. Since the research process is social, it is messy. Researchers constantly have to make strategic choices around people and their contexts, alter original plans and adjust their preconceived categories. These interactions have to be viewed as part of the research process. Altheide and Johnson (cited in Woods 1996) motivate this position very well:

...the meanings and definitions brought to actual situations are produced through a communication process. As researchers and observers become increasingly aware that the categories and ideas used to describe the empirical (socially constructed) world are also symbols from specific contexts, this too becomes part of the phenomena studied empirically, and incorporated into the research report The process by which the ethnography occurred must be clearly delineated, including accounts of the interactions among context, researcher, methods, setting, and actors. (p.489)

In order to illustrate the process whereby evidence is granted the status of data (Blommaert 1997), I provide lengthy description and narrative vignettes to conjure up specific scenes. Wherever I can, I allow the participants to speak in their own words (Rampton 1995) in order to widen the angle of vision and to render visible the basis of my analysis. As part of this process, and in the interests of research ethics, I committed myself to showing the draft to the research participants and to represent any comments they make in the final version.²

Bloom and Munro (cited in Woods 1996) argue that 'we must allow the complexity, ambiguity, and contradictions of lived experience to disrupt the traditional coherence of the text' (p.56). The goal is to make one's theoretical assumptions, values, methods and unforeseen flaws explicit so that: (a) the reader can judge the extent to which the research actually investigates that which it purports to investigate; (b) the validity of the consequent interpretations and explanations may be examined and (c) characteristics of the group studied are delineated clearly so that they can serve as a basis for comparison with other or like groups (Le Compte and Preissle 1993).

This form of reflexivity has become an important part of ethnographic research and qualitative research in general. I have chosen to represent processes rather than select and rework my data into an artificial wholeness. I consciously locate myself in the text in order to reveal the road I travelled - with all its dangerous bends, and unannounced potholes.

But this path has a double function. As Davis (1995) points out: 'studies are both informed by and inform theory in the process of conceptualising, conducting, analysing, and interpreting research' (p. 436). She illustrates that the methods used are both instrumental and goal driven:

Methods are instrumental in that they are designed to obtain data from an emic perspective while ensuring credibility and dependability. Methods of data collection, analysis, and especially interpretation are also utilized with the goal of generating theory. (p. 436)

It is important to note that, whilst the qualitative researcher enters the site with theoretical assumptions and an idea of the categories/ phenomena that s/he wants to

examine, the research is not hypothesis-driven. Theory emerges from the data (grounded theory). The goal of critical classroom research is to provide descriptive and explanatory accounts which will ultimately build models and theories (see Mitchell 1996) and which will provide a framework for intervention.

3.2.3. Key principles.

The following principles are key features of my critical ethnographic research project:

- (a) It is concerned with analysis of empirical data (Hammersley 1994 and Blommaert 1997).
- (b) Data are gathered from a range of sources, but observations and/or relatively informal conversations are usually the main ones (Van Lier 1988 and Hammersley 1994).
- (c) The focus is a single setting or group, of relatively small scale; or a small number of these settings or groups. It is 'holistic' in that it attempts to provide contextual understandings of complex interrelationships of causes and consequences that affect human behaviour. Rather than seeking generalisability, ethnographers seek validity in terms of comparability and transferability (Vulliamy *et al* 1990; Nunan 1993 and Hammersley 1993).
- (d) An essential aspect of ethnography is its focus on the meanings attributed by the participants in the study (emic view). However, ethnographic accounts are seldom exclusively emic (Hammersley 1998).
- (e) Hornberger (1994) points out, 'the very essence of the approach is to ensure comparison and contrast between what people say and what people do in a given context...' (p. 688). It entails creating a three-dimensional picture composed from

various angles of actors and observer. This is known as triangulation (Nunan 1993 and Edwards and Westgate 1994).

(f) The researcher needs to try to account for the effect of her/his presence (Herrington 1993 and Blommaert 1997).

(g) It is hypothesis-generating, and theories emerge from the data (grounded theory). As a result, the approach to data collection is 'unstructured', in the sense that it does not involve following through a detailed plan set up at the beginning; nor are the categories used for interpreting what people say and do pre-given or fixed. The process of data collection and analysis is recursive (see Vulliamy *et al* 1990; Nunan 1993; Hammersley 1994 and Davis 1995).

(h) It is understood that systematic sampling cannot always be achieved because the research is initially largely unsystematic and exploratory in nature and because of problems of negotiating access (Woods 1996).

(i) The analysis of the data involves interpretation of the meanings and functions of human actions and mainly takes the form of verbal descriptions and explanations (Hammersley 1994).

PART TWO: description of my research process.

3.2. Gaining Access to the research sites.

The negotiation that precedes entry to the research sites is a critical part of the research as it pertains to issues of selection, the establishment of a relationship with the researched, and research ethics. As such, it constitutes an important part of the data and its explicit narration (as part of methodology) is, as argued earlier, simultaneously an acknowledgement of the socially constructed nature of the research and key to establishing validity and reliability. I kept detailed journal notes from the

moment that my research proposal was accepted by the Doctoral Degrees Board of the university in August 1997. The journal notes are a record of events but also of my impressions and emotions as I embarked on my research journey.

A major problem for me when I started this research was that there was no culture of classroom observation in former D.E.T. schools either, on the part of senior ('control') staff or education officials (see Department of Education 1998). During the eighties, officials of the D.E.T. were prohibited from observing classes by teachers because they were seen as working on behalf of the Apartheid state. In earlier years, there was a culture of surveillance that resulted in teachers being victimised, banned or fired if they were thought to be using the classroom as a vehicle for anti-Apartheid activities (see Soudien 1998b). This situation is now changing with the introduction of performance appraisals and with increasing numbers of research and development projects in schools.

I wanted to locate my research at two schools in order to allow me a comparative perspective, an important dimension of ethnographic research (see Rampton 1995). I had known that negotiating entry would be difficult, but had not anticipated the degree of complexity. At the time, morale was low as teachers were being heavily criticised for low productivity and falling standards. Many of the schools were categorised as 'dysfunctional' and threats of retrenchment and redeployment loomed large. Secondly, visits to school principals in February 1997 revealed that schools generally regard the University of Cape Town with considerable scepticism as an elite institution, inaccessible to the black community in the Western

Cape. Thirdly, in a context of tense racial politics, I was aware that my 'coloured' identity might act as a barrier.

The entry in my research journal on 17 September 1997 reads: 'I should have begun negotiating access before writing the proposal. The proposal was directed towards the university authorities and the genre demands of a thesis proposal and I did not give enough thought to the reality on the ground'. On reflection, I realise that prior knowledge of the difficulties associated with gaining access to the sites, would have influenced the statements I made about selection of schools. Initially I had wanted to select schools that could be categorised as feeder schools to U.C.T. because of my interest in the struggles students have with academic literacy at a tertiary level. However, it soon became clear that I would only gain access with the help of 'insiders,' and that I would have to take whatever offers came my way.³ Nevertheless, as shown in chapter one, both schools I eventually researched have features regarded as typical of former D.E.T. schools. They are both overcrowded and under-resourced. The students come from working-class environments. All students and most teachers were second or third language speakers of English. The majority of teachers and students were first language speakers of Xhosa. All the English subject teachers were second language speakers of English.

From 1 August 1997 to 9 September 1997, I arranged contact with a number of people who had some connection to former D.E.T. schools: (a) I met with two schools' development workers and a researcher; (b) I surveyed 22 students and conducted formal interviews with six former D.E.T. students (who were then first-year students in the English Department at U.C.T.); (c) I met with two Western Cape

Education Department English subject advisors. These initial encounters helped me to build contextual knowledge of the schools and the research challenges posed by the particularities of the South African schools' context.⁴

Everyone was very encouraging and felt that my proposed research was exciting and much needed. However the development workers were sceptical that I would gain access and obtain trust unless I offered to partake in development work for a considerable period of time prior to the research (field-notes, September 1997).

The researcher told of how she had been discouraged by a long, drawn-out process of attempting to gain access to a former D.E.T. school. When she finally obtained permission, a combination of school disruption (as a result of local unrest), and the teacher's delaying tactics, forced her to abandon the project and concentrate her efforts in formerly 'white' ('Model C') schools (field-notes, September 1997).

The students all had tales to tell of how their teachers had engaged in prior 'briefing' about how they should 'perform' on the rare occasions when school officials had visited them. Most characterised their school teachers as 'authoritarian'. They felt that the focus in their English classes on grammar and on plot summary of literary texts had contributed significantly to their disadvantage when encountering close analysis of texts and argument in the English Department at U.C.T. They almost all viewed my research in terms of a kind of exposé of the poor teaching and learning conditions in 'African' townships (field-notes, August-October 1997).

The two subject advisors were very encouraging. Both had postgraduate degrees in the field of applied language studies and were keen for the research to be conducted. They were recent appointees who aligned themselves with the new democratic order and the process of transformation. They had been working hard at building meaningful relationships with the teachers, through consultation and a range of development workshops. One of the advisors is herself a speaker of English as a second language and had been working specifically with former D.E.T. teachers. She suggested that the best approach would be for me to go to schools that had good heads of English and who would therefore not feel threatened by my presence. She offered to facilitate my entry process by speaking to the teachers beforehand, thus lending credibility to the project and to me. She recommended five schools and I elected to try the first two, one at a time (in her order of preference). Insights and categories from the first research site would be used as a basis for investigating the second site.

I had a disillusioning meeting with the first head of English recommended to me. A first language speaker of English, she foregrounded her role in the impoverished and violence-stricken school in which she worked, as 'missionary' in nature and emphasised her identity as a 'committed Christian'. According to her, the problems were easy to diagnose: malnourishment, low motivation among teachers and students, drug abuse, corporal punishment etc. She elaborated Cummins' theory of additive and subtractive bilingualism, even when I indicated that I was familiar with the theory. It seemed that she wanted to emphasise that the problems had already been diagnosed. She expressed her scepticism about researchers and was open about her hostility towards someone who wanted to conduct research for degree purposes. She kept asking: 'what's in it for us?' Interestingly, she herself was enrolled for a

Masters' degree in Medieval Studies at U.C.T. She suggested that classroom observation would yield no new insights, as teachers would 'control what gets seen'. Whilst constantly reminding me of the ignorance of 'ivory tower intellectuals', she suggested I become involved in development projects at the school that would include organising an extra-mural enrichment programme for the school. When she met a colleague of mine the next day, her only comment on my proposed research was: 'it's a pity she's not black' (field-notes, September 1997).

After this bruising encounter, I seriously considered abandoning the research and retreating to the 'ivory tower'. On the 10 September I wrote 'very depressed about the possibilities of gaining entry. Development/research dilemma is worrying'. I felt that I needed to know far more about schools to be in a position to contribute to their development. I was also sure that what I really needed was to understand classroom processes and school culture in order to improve my own practice in the tertiary context. Entering the schools as a developer seemed to undermine this project whilst reinforcing all the prejudices about 'outsiders' (especially 'intellectuals') who think they know best.

However a number of people, but particularly the subject advisor, discouraged me from giving up. The second teacher on the list, whom I shall call Mrs Mabandla, was contacted and from the moment I spoke to her on the phone and she expressed her 'excitement', my spirits lifted. She insisted that we meet the next day, even though the school was about to close for the September vacation. Before I visited her, I took stock of what I had learnt from the meetings thus far and came up with the following list:

- (a) Whilst stressing that I was there to learn, I should offer any U.C.T. resources I could as part of the exchange. In the long term I would need to give serious consideration as to how my research could contribute to development and transformation. I should also become involved in development initiatives.
- (b) I would have to limit my periods of formal observation or teachers would refuse entry.
- (c) Because of the prevailing climate of job insecurity, I would need to guarantee students and teachers anonymity.
- (d) I would need to be very conscious and reflective of the ways in which teachers attempted to limit what I saw.

3.3.1. Gaining entry to Mziwethu Senior Secondary School.⁵

Mrs Mabandla was clearly pleased that she had come highly recommended by the subject advisor, with whom she has an excellent relationship. On the first day that we met, 18 September 1997, she spent a long time getting me to talk. She asked questions which related both to my professional interests and my personal biography. This process of establishing my credibility was one that was repeated with nearly all the teachers I subsequently encountered at the school. Not surprisingly given the political climate, it entailed getting to know my political rather than my research credentials. In a subsequent visit, my 'struggle' credentials were assured after a visitor to the school, who looked only vaguely familiar to me, hailed me as an erstwhile 'comrade' (field-notes, October 1997). Teachers asked whether I had taught in schools and when they established that I had not, it seemed to make them feel more secure. But on the whole, with the exception of the proviso that the school and the

research participants should remain anonymous, teachers seemed nonchalant about issues of research ethics.

Once I had told Mrs Mabandla my life story (where I lived, whether I was married, where I had worked and studied) she reciprocated by telling me about the school and her teaching history and practices. That I had taught students from the school (all three ex-students of Mrs Mabandla) who had been successful at U.C.T. clearly worked in my favour. We also had several mutual acquaintances in U.C.T. academics and a school friend of mine, who unbeknown to me had taught and conducted participant research at the school. On the strength of my school friend's contribution to the school (in another subject) Mrs Mabandla invited me to teach a grade eleven class the following year. I had to decline but offered to provide whatever resources I could in the future, and she held me to the promise whenever she needed materials or advice. A further contributory factor to my connection with Mrs Mabandla seemed to be that she was impressed that I was prepared to make the journey to the township at a time when gangster violence featured prominently in the local newspapers on a daily basis (discussed fully in chapter four).

Mrs Mabandla agreed to participate in the research at our first meeting. Her only condition was that I first obtain permission from the principal and she took me to meet him straight away. He and I had met earlier that year when I visited the school with a U.C.T. (Xhosa-speaking) public-relations official. He was warm and friendly and said that I should fax him a letter. This I did, but it took several weeks of telephone calls before I managed to reach him to obtain his permission and before I managed to reach Mrs Mabandla. She had received none of my messages and said that

she had been eagerly awaiting my call. We arranged that I would conduct my pilot project of classroom observation (for a one-week period with grade eleven students) starting on 20 October 1997.

In the following year, a combination of personal circumstances and an intensive process of curriculum reform at the university prevented me from returning to the school in January as I had intended. I returned in July 1998. Mrs Mabandla and her students were always in my thoughts as I attempted to analyse the pilot study, but I had failed to contact them. Mrs Mabandla was justifiably upset that I had 'disappeared' (field-notes, July 1998). After I explained to her why I had had to postpone my data collection, she softened immediately and her warm and helpful demeanour was restored. I learnt a valuable lesson about the dangers of taking goodwill for granted. I had thought of the project selfishly as my own and had underestimated how much Mrs Mabandla had invested in it.

3.3.2. Gaining entry to Ilitha Senior Secondary School.

On the surface, gaining entry to Ilitha was a much easier process. The subject advisor spoke to the head of English, whom I shall call Mr Van Wyk, in late November 1998 and I went to meet him at the school during a lunch hour on 1 December 1998. Mr Van Wyk was distant but polite and our meeting was brief, in sharp contrast to the hour-long discussion I had had with Mrs Mabandla. Without hesitation, he agreed that I could conduct the research, on condition that I ask permission of the principal and each teacher with whom I wanted to work. He provided me with the names of all the individuals who were likely to be involved. He introduced me to them, but I had to ask their permission myself. Most of the teachers

responded positively but without much enthusiasm or curiosity. This contrasted with Mrs Mabandla's approach. She had introduced me to the whole staff as 'a visitor to the English department' (field-notes, October 1997) and then, after I had introduced myself, negotiated on my behalf.

Mr Van Wyk asked me very little about my own background then or at subsequent meetings, except to establish whether I had taught in schools before. He nearly always answered my questions about his own background with brief factual responses. I developed a more personal relationship with Mr Nyembe, a senior English teacher and my second principal informant. He had been a student in my department (before my arrival) and had also been taught by my husband. Nevertheless, even this relationship did not compare with the warmth and generosity I had experienced at Mziwethu. Mr Nyembe showed little enthusiasm for discussing his students; indicating early on that he was disillusioned with teaching and looking for 'a way out' (field-notes, February 1999).

At a meeting with the principal on the same day, I established that at least some of the reticence I had noticed could be attributed to wariness about researchers. Unlike most former D.E.T. schools, the proximity of this school to a university and the fact that it was located in a relatively safe suburb had meant that, in the two years prior to my entry, it had been the subject of a number of research projects. The principal was angered by one group of researchers on whose behalf she had assembled the entire staff. The researchers had taken up a great deal of time asking questions, and had subsequently failed to return without explaining why. When I ventured that I would show them the product of my work and ask their opinion on how I had

represented them, both the principal and Mr Van Wyk responded enthusiastically, remarking in almost identical terms on the lack of accountability of my predecessors. The principal also remarked that teachers were naturally cautious about 'surveillance' because of 'threats to the profession' (field-notes, December 1998).

After this meeting I wrote a formal letter of request to the principal and was able to return to the school in February the following year. In sharp contrast to the delays experienced at the first school, the initial process of gaining permission was quick and efficient. However, I was soon to learn that the casual, informal context of Mziwethu, together with Mrs Mabandla's sociable manner, had allowed a far more meaningful access. I learnt that although I had gained permission to undertake the research, gaining access to information and engagement in meaningful communication would prove a far harder task.

3.4. Researcher's role at the two schools.

In this section I reflect on how I was constructed by the participants at the two schools. The marked differences in the degree to which I was accepted and trusted at the two schools played a substantial role in the nature and quality of the data that I collected.

3.4.1. Researcher's role at Mziwethu.

Once I had gained entry, teachers and students alike were very keen for me to witness the terrible conditions under which they worked, and in this sense I was seen as someone who would make public their hidden reality. Mr Bathaka, a senior English teacher and my second principal informant, said that I had come 'to the right place to

get a real picture' (field-notes, October 1997). On the other hand, Mrs Mabandla was often protective of the chaos at the school. This impulse was expressed at an early stage when she addressed a student who had come to account for himself after a transgression: 'Anyway, let us not air our dirty linen in front of Rochelle' (field-notes, October 1997).

My welcome at the school and in classes was always warm and people were forthcoming with information. Yet there was a never a moment when I did not feel that there was a self-consciousness about my presence, no matter how long I stayed. Two teachers encouraged me to return to their classes because their students were less 'passive' when I was present (field-notes, August 1998). This was endorsed by Mark, a student (and talented singer) who said he liked having me in the class because 'I always like an audience' (Interview C). I was sometimes drawn into the classroom discussion by teachers, or students like Mark were made to 'perform' (literally) for my benefit. I was asked my opinion in a Biology debate on the properties of 'dagga' (marijuana) and on the role of Afrikaans in a History class (both August 1998). Sometimes I was asked to confirm spelling, the meaning of words or to comment on a grammatical construction. Students generally cast me in the role of 'student teacher,' possibly because that was the only kind of observer they had ever had in their classrooms. I was sometimes asked by Mrs Mabandla and Mr Siko, a history teacher, to obtain materials, to interpret a text and, on one occasion, to teach a poetry class. Mrs Mabandla observed the class and said she would use my approach in her other classes (field-notes, August 1998).

It was assumed by both teachers and students that I had no knowledge of the Xhosa language or of local traditions and history. Although I understand a fair amount of Xhosa, my lack of conversational fluency means that I do not normally attempt to converse in the language. This had two discernible effects: (1) that I sometimes overheard what was not meant for my ears - teachers tended to address most of their disciplinary comments in Xhosa - and (2) that teachers sometimes interrupted lessons to mediate (or get the students to mediate) aspects of local culture which they thought I would not understand. Gradually, as teachers came to know me, both of these effects diminished. This did not however diminish their consciousness of my presence: a History teacher switched almost entirely to Xhosa as a medium of instruction after we had had a discussion about multilingualism (field-notes, August 1998), and another teacher's lessons became increasingly sexist after I had agreed with him that university curricula address issues of gender more easily than race and class (field-notes, July 1998). To my knowledge, the teachers did not engage in prior briefing of their classes, since it was plain that they had very often forgotten that I was coming. This was also the case at Ilitha.

During my research period, Mrs Mabandla went to great lengths to organise my timetable. I never knew whether she did this in order to ensure that I would not experience direct refusal, whether she undertook these negotiations because of the constant timetable changes, or whether she was attempting to shield me from her notion of dysfunctional classes. She certainly achieved the first two, but I came to experience the chaos firsthand on many occasions. I succeeded in seeing the subject classes that I requested for grades eleven and twelve. When I returned to the school for a brief observation period in 1999, she said that she thought that she should have

taken me to observe 'old-style chalk and talk' teaching - which seemed to indicate that she had been consciously protecting me from what she regarded as bad teaching (field-notes, March 1999).

A significant breakthrough (in my view) was when, at the height of the vigilante violence in August 1998, a student asked whether the class could discuss what was happening 'without the [tape] machine on'. I quickly obliged and was granted insight into students' perspectives of the power relations in the township. I think that this was a sign that they trusted me and wanted me to know 'the truth' in a context where speaking to outsiders about the issue constituted a brave act (discussed in chapter four, section 4.5.).

While I have no doubt that a great deal of what I saw and heard was staged, I feel that the length of my stay, the variety of teachers and classes I observed and the diverse members of the school community with whom I conversed, enabled me to form a multi-layered picture of classroom practice.

3.4.2. Researcher's role at Ilitha.

At Ilitha, students and teachers were as self-conscious about my presence. Mr Van Wyk openly expressed concern about my observation and its effect on him. Although he voiced no outright disapproval, he was clearly unhappy about the tape recorder and so I did not always use it. At the same time, towards the end of my observation period he asked whether I had become aware of the extent to which teachers were absent from their classes. When I indicated that I had, he seemed

pleased that I had noticed (field-notes, February 1999). I assume that he felt I would expose their behaviour.

The big difference between my experiences at the two schools was that I felt much less like a participant at Ilitha, where I never stopped feeling like an intruder. I was not invited to participate in the classes and there was little acknowledgement of my presence. At Mziwethu, teachers had always introduced me to new classes and had explained that I was studying for a doctorate. I was invited to add anything I thought relevant, and I was able to use the opportunity to end with 'I hope that's okay with you'. I felt it was important to make at least a gesture towards asking their permission.⁶ At Ilitha, I had to ask teachers whether I could be introduced. Sometimes this was done in a cursory fashion: 'This lady is from U.C.T. and she will be sitting in on our class' (field-notes, February 1999). On a number of occasions, I was asked to introduce myself. I felt embarrassed by students' lack of inclusion in the process and later came to see this treatment as symptomatic of the way they were constructed by the teachers as 'passive'. Their lack of information showed, because whenever they had the opportunity - in group sessions, in the corridors and in unattended classes they frequently asked why I was attending their classes.

My experience of the History classes at Ilitha was different. The teacher would look at me self-consciously throughout the lesson. She asked students 'to explain for the visitor' and checked up on how much I knew about the Russian Revolution before she started teaching. She always made a point of talking to me before and after the lesson (within the classroom). On one occasion she exhibited what to me seemed like

remarkable unselfconsciousness when she walked around a grade 12 class pinching each student individually to elicit an answer (field-notes, February 1999).

The fact that I was seldom included in the lessons, that many of the lessons consisted almost entirely of silent completion of worksheets, and the arrangement of the desks in straight rows all contributed to my own feelings of self-consciousness at Ilitha. Added to this was the fact that, with the exception of a teacher who taught at a junior level and the history teacher, teachers did not generally chat to me informally, even when I sat in the staff room. I always had to approach them with a barrage of questions that they answered politely, but without much detail. The students were far more forthcoming and a few individuals would even seek me out.

I was asked by the principal to try to find someone from U.C.T. to help catalogue the books in their newly acquired resource centre. This I did, and she was very pleased; but Mr Van Wyk (who was in charge of the centre) was sceptical as they had earlier had someone who had left midway through the process. I was also asked by a student to provide him with information about admission to U.C.T., which I did.

3.5. Data collection.

3.5.1. Data sources.

My main data in both schools consisted of observation of the English (subject) classroom. The key questions that informed my investigation into the discourses of the English classroom were: (a) what forms of proficiency do the patterns of language

use in the classroom foster? and (b) how are the learners constructed by classroom discourse?

Although I used a tape-recorder for most of my classroom observation, I would generally not use it the first time I observed a class. This was in order to minimise the 'reactivity' factor. As mentioned earlier, because of (particularly) Mr Van Wyk's self-consciousness about the tape-recorder at Ilitha, I used it less often there. I supplemented the tape-recorder with field-notes whilst in class. I wrote fairly cryptic, sketchy notes in class because I was aware that extensive note-taking might make teachers anxious. Again, this was especially the case at Ilitha, where I faced the teachers because of the seating arrangements.

My notes consisted of:

- (a) contextual information - length of lesson; time spent on tasks; descriptions of the physical environment; number of students; description of their dress; gender composition etc.;
- (b) non-verbal gestures; comments on student behaviour - eg. body language and passing of notes;
- (c) any significant phrases or areas of incomprehension about which I needed to ask questions;
- (d) any asides or discussions in groups.

At the end of each day, I would write full descriptions of the lessons plus my observations outside the classroom based on the tape, my memory and my notes. Through this process I was able to refine my questions and categories for observation.

I was also able to develop questions to ask informally when I returned the next time, or in the formal interviews at the end of my data collection.

My data also consisted of informal observation and talk aimed at understanding school culture and students' language practices. The following key questions informed my data gathering outside of the classroom:

- (a) what is the nature of the environment in which the school is located?
- (b) what are the characteristics of school culture?
- (c) how is English used outside of the classroom?

My interviews were all semi-structured, allowing for digressions and long responses by the interviewees (see Bell 1995). Besides helping to clarify issues, they were also used to establish:

- (a) students' and teachers' expressed attitudes to English;
- (b) students' and teachers' constructions of themselves, each other, the school and township environment;
- (c) teachers' philosophies about English teaching and classroom practice;
- (d) personal biographical details.

A further source of data in the form of students' attitudes emerged from the research process at Mziwethu, and took the form of students' writing on perceptions of English (appendix 2; described in 3.5.2.).

I collected official documentation, statistics, school documentation and newspaper articles. These included government gazettes on education and language

policies; Pan South African Language Board policy documents; Western Cape Department of Education Department policy documents; matriculation examination papers; official statistics on the township, the school and former D.E.T. schools in general, and school worksheets and newsletters. This corpus helped me to analyse the 'official' discourses of the language, educational and social environment in which the two schools functioned.

From 1997 to 1999, I collected a range of contextual information through my work on two schools' development projects based at U.C.T. and through informal contact with former students of D.E.T. schools, researchers and three residents of the township in which Mziwethu is located.

3.5.2. Description of data collection at Mziwethu.

As mentioned earlier, I conducted a pilot study at Mziwethu for one week commencing 20 October 1997. During this period I observed four English classes taught by Mrs Mabandla. I also addressed staff on my project, and conducted lengthy informal discussions with two senior English teachers (Mrs Mabandla and Mr Bathaka) who were to become my principal informants. I spent as much time as I could familiarising myself with the layout of the school, obtaining statistical information on funding, enrolment and staffing patterns and chatting informally to teachers and students. I made extensive journal notes and tape-recorded three of the four lessons. The quality of my tapes for these lessons is relatively poor as I sat at the back of the class and the tape-recorder I used then was not sufficiently powerful. The teacher and the students near me emerged clearly, but the pupils in the front did not.

However, I was able to reconstruct most of the three tape-recorded lessons. The next six months were spent analysing the pilot study and returning to theoretical reading.

As a result of interaction in the field, and of my preliminary processes of analysis, my research questions, and thus my research focus shifted and deepened. After my pilot study a shift in my research focus was necessitated by the research context. Initially I had intended to focus primarily on students. This shifted to teachers for a number of reasons:

- (a) the style of classroom delivery was mainly teacher-fronted;
- (b) in large classes the students do not emerge as individuals - quite often at Ilitha, teachers did not know the students' names;
- (c) the constraints of the timetable and the logistics described earlier meant that it was easier to follow teachers than students;
- (d) the noise levels and size of classes meant that the quality of the tape for students at a distance from the machine is often poor.

My main data collection took place over a period of ten weeks from 29 July 1998. I spent one day per week at the school and attended on average six (fifty-minute) periods per day although, because teachers sometimes failed to arrive to teach their classes, I often sat in classes where no lessons took place. I observed a total of forty-two grades eleven and twelve lessons. Eighteen of these were tape-recorded. I observed 32 English language, literature and oral lessons. The remaining 10 lessons consisted of Afrikaans, History and Biology. I had taken a decision to observe other classes in order to get a sense of how language was used across the curriculum in students' other courses, but I was also urged to do so by the two teachers. Mr Bathaka

taught the grade eleven classes whilst Mrs Mabandla taught the grade twelve classes. Consequently I could compare both the content and form of their classes. I could also compare the classroom culture of the 11a class in 1997 with their performance as 12a in 1998, their final year of school. Mrs Mabandla taught them English in both years.

Because of logistics, it was impossible to clarify issues of uncertainty with teachers and students immediately after class. However, I was often able to chat to teachers later. In the case of Mrs Mabandla, and to a lesser extent Mr Bathaka, I spent most lunch periods (an hour) and sometimes additional time at the beginning and end of the day chatting informally in Mrs Mabandla's small office. Through Mrs Mabandla I was inducted into the school culture. Because of her English language skills and her many administrative duties, she acted as a resource person to parents, teachers and students. I had conversations with dozens of people who flowed through her office. This enabled access to knowledge of school practices, relationships between people and current debates. It also enabled me to obtain answers to the questions I wrote down each week after analysing my data. I chatted informally to (particularly) grade 12 students during the many periods when their classes were unattended, and sometimes in the lunch break. Informal talk played a crucial role in enabling me to confirm or question the impressions and assumptions I had made on the basis of prior observation.

At the end of the school year, I conducted formal interviews with Mrs Mabandla (Interviews A and B), Mr Bathaka (Interview G) and five grade twelve (12a) students (Interview C). This database consists of approximately six hours of tape-recording, three of which are taken up by Mrs Mabandla. I made numerous

appointments to interview the principal. He always agreed readily but cancelled at the last minute because of pressing engagements. When we met informally, he was always willing to chat and readily provided information.

I considered conducting the interview with the 12a students in Xhosa. But I decided that since these students were so confident and fluent in class, and so favourably disposed to English, the medium would not be a major issue. Since it was a group interview, students could support each other where necessary. I encouraged the students to speak Xhosa in the interview if they wished; but - other than to ask for clarification about a few words when we were talking about Xhosa - they chose to communicate in English. This was also the experience of Pam Maseko, a U.C.T. African languages' lecturer, when she gave the students (in her research of former D.E.T. schools) a choice about the language of interviews (*personal communication*, November 1998). The 12a students were remarkably relaxed – they joked and freely criticised their teachers and the school (discussed fully in chapter four).

I conducted interviews with three former students of the school, Mpho, Siphon and Thulani, all of whom were taught by Mrs Mabandla at Mziwethu and myself at U.C.T. (Interviews D; E and F). The three students (and one whom I could not trace) were the only former students from that school who were then registered at U.C.T. The interviews lasted approximately four hours, with Mpho speaking for more than two hours.

After I had listened to a debate on the medium of instruction issue in Mr Siko's grade 11c class (August 1998) where students had expressed very positive

attitudes towards English, I asked Mr Bathaka if he would set an essay on the topic of the medium of instruction debate to a much wider group (the 11a, c, and d classes). He readily agreed; but the question had to take the form of a dialogue because of the requirements of the syllabus (to be discussed in chapter five). Sixty-five grade eleven students answered this question, and although written under examination conditions, it provided a rich set of data in terms of students' perceptions about English. I was able to triangulate this data with what students' and teachers said about language, and with students' language practices inside and outside the classroom, in order to develop a picture of students' attitudes to English in relation to home language.

I kept contact with Mrs Mabandla and Mr Bathaka subsequent to my data collection. In March 1999, I negotiated to observe some Shakespeare classes as Mr Bathaka was teaching Shakespeare's "Othello" to grade 12 students at exactly the same time as Mr Van Wyk and Mr Nyembe. I observed and tape-recorded two of Mr Bathaka's "Othello" lessons on 8 and 9 March 1999. This data provided excellent comparative material.

3.5.3. Description of data collection at Ilitha.

I conducted my main data collection for a five-week period from 5 February 1999. I attended the school on every alternate day. Mr Van Wyk handed me the school timetable, which worked on the basis of a seven day cycle. Each day I would spend time trying to find teachers in order to make arrangements for my next visit. This was a time-consuming and often fruitless task, since even when I did manage to find the teachers and make the arrangements, I would often arrive at the school at the appointed time only to find that the timetable had changed, a school assembly was

taking place or the class was unattended. Women teachers, the students and especially the principal were always concerned to try to help me, but the vagaries of the timetable and whereabouts of their colleagues and peers appeared to baffle them as well.

Eventually I resorted to opportunistic measures - I would see a teacher walking down a corridor towards the set of grade twelve classes I wanted to observe, and I would pounce on him or her and try to charm my way into the class they were about to teach. Sometimes they found a reason why this would not be worth my while, but I was more successful this way than through prior arrangement. However, it contributed significantly to my feelings of discomfort. I would not want to be apprehended by a researcher in a corridor!

In the end, although I spent the same amount of time at the two schools, my corpus for Ilitha is substantially smaller, consisting of twenty-three grade twelve lessons, of which ten are tape-recorded. Sixteen of these are English lessons, nearly all on "Othello," since English classes were structured to concentrate on one section of the syllabus at a time. The rest consist of Afrikaans, History and Biology - the same selection as Mziwethu.

When I left the school, both Mr Nyembe and Mr Van Wyk said that I was welcome to return after July. This was important as I felt that I needed comparable data in terms of language lessons, student oral presentations, and the dialogue assignment. I also wanted to interview them and their students. However, both men failed to respond to my numerous phone and e-mail messages between July and

September. Eventually I gave up on more classroom observation and instead faxed them to find out whether I could interview them. When I received no reply I went to the school near the end of the school year to ask. Mr Van Wyk had already left school to do matriculation marking, and Mr Nyembe said he was too busy with marking but I could phone him. His cell-phone became disconnected and I was unable to contact him. On 7 February 2000, I received an e-mail reply from Mr Van Wyk which was highly apologetic. He had just received my (November) fax and wanted to know whether I still needed his assistance. I replied immediately but did not hear from him again.

I have subsequently interviewed both teachers (Interviews H and I) and they were both co-operative and friendly, answering all my questions. However, I believe that their evasive behaviour confirms much of my early suspicion that I was experiencing a passive resistance, possibly based on scepticism or defensiveness about research and researchers. As mentioned earlier (in 3.3.2.) the Ilitha teachers had also encountered numerous researchers at the school. My experience resonated with the forewarnings from the development workers and the researcher (described in 3.3.). Canagarajah (1999) writes of the resistance sometimes experienced by researchers when their informants are not conventional 'naïve' informants. It is interesting to note that, unlike the teachers from Mziwethu, these two teachers and the teacher who first resisted my entry to her school are all graduates of universities where research is commonplace and highly valued (in contrast to the teacher training colleges and historically black universities). Their knowledge of the consequences of research may account for some of their attitudes. The basis of their 'resistance' is however likely to remain a mystery to me. What emerged for me very strongly at both sites was the

extent to which the data cannot be divorced from the context in which it was collected (see Blommaert 1997).

3.5.4. Review of data collection.

Both because my data felt incomplete and because I did not have the kind of rich informal data that I obtained from Mziwethu, the fieldwork at Ilitha felt inadequate. Yet at the same time, the comparative perspective seemed invaluable. The two schools have quite different teaching approaches. Ilitha is characterised by more 'drilling' and much more writing. Ilitha was more focused on the October/November matriculation exams already in February, at the beginning of the school year, than Mziwethu was in September. As mentioned in chapter one, Ilitha's examination results are far better than Mziwethu; and the school has been commended for their improvement twice in the last three years. The atmosphere was far lighter and warmer at Mziwethu where pupils could on occasion, despite the large numbers, emerge as individuals. At Mziwethu it was possible for students to argue and debate, whereas classroom discussion was virtually absent at Ilitha. Teachers at Ilitha constructed their students far more negatively, as 'passive' and 'weak'.

My experience at Ilitha, while disappointing in so many respects, also served as a tool for analysis of Mziwethu. It enabled me to:

- (a) differentiate between typical and unique, thus providing an additional level of triangulation and correction of bias;
- (b) appreciate the considerable role played by school culture in everyday classroom reality;

(c) evaluate my role as researcher by providing another frame for evaluating my research approach. The comparative perspective helped cultivate necessary 'social distance' (Woods 1996) from Mziwethu. The warmth of my reception at Mziwethu may have led me to romanticise my participants. However the fact that Ilitha is significantly more successful in the matriculation examination, caused me to re-examine teaching and learning and school culture issues at Mziwethu.

Ironically, the difficulties in penetrating the 'outer layer' (Woods 1996, p.52) at Ilitha, enabled me to appreciate the richness and variety of my data at Mziwethu. As stated earlier, ethnographers view selection of data as recursive and dynamic. 'Data collection and analysis inform each other, and lead to revised research designs' (Woods 1996, p.151). At this stage I decided that my research would most profitably focus on Mziwethu, given the depth, variety and more systematic nature of my data in contrast with the data gathered at the second site. However, I would make use of the data from Ilitha for the purposes of 'constant comparative sampling' (Le Compte and Preissle 1993, p. 47) across categories. This strategy allows for comparison within a single setting and for comparison of social incidents across settings.

3.6. Data analysis.

In keeping with the principles of qualitative research my data analysis has entailed shifting between different methods of data collection; analysis; reformulation of research questions and re-examination of the theory. Analysis has been co-terminus with data collection (Woods 1996). Throughout the data collection phase, I analysed the observations in my field journal; listened to the tapes; transcribed what I could;

and attempted thematic/topic categorisation and comparison. I identified significant events, words and patterns of speech and behaviour. I compared classes taught by the same teacher; classes taught by different teachers; and I compared what people said with their practices. I compared teachers' expressed philosophies about teaching with the notions of English teaching in the syllabus and the matriculation examinations, and with teachers' practices. I compared what students say about the school and township environment with their teachers' views, my own observations and the depictions in the daily media. In order to triangulate, I would return to the site with factual and interpretative questions. Blommaert (1997) describes how the researcher acquires 'common-sense' through praxis: '... one tries out and enacts what has been observed. The meanings observed with others are absorbed and (paraphrasing Gumperz) so become the essential instrument for decoding and interpreting...' (p. 21).

3.6.1. Critical Classroom Discourse Analysis.

My analysis of classroom discourse was informed by my first research question: 'what kinds of discourses (ways of thinking, talking, reading and writing) are fostered by the English classroom'? My starting point for analysis of the classroom was to use the methods of classroom discourse analysis described by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975); Van Lier (1988); Edwards and Westgate (1994) and Cazden (1988) to analyze lesson content, classroom routines (such as the characteristic initiation-response-feedback structure), practices (the types of activities: drills, pair work, repetition etc.) and classroom social dynamics (patterns of control and authority, register, tone etc.).

Crucial issues for each lesson included:

- (a) topic choices and management (are there recurring themes? what assumptions are made? who initiates and who controls changes?);**
- (b) types of exchanges (question and statement types);**
- (c) error treatment;**
- (d) interactional routines (e.g. How symmetrical? Who speaks when? For how long)?;**
- (e) linguistic choices (vocabulary; modals; pronouns; metaphor; etc.);**
- (f) non-verbal gestures;**
- (g) politeness strategies (by whom and for what purposes?);**
- (h) intonation.**

In trying to establish the overall pattern of the interaction, I found it useful to count the types and number of speaking turns and to compare this yield with other classes. The comparison often highlighted significant deviation, even among the same group of students. I also asked the following questions posed by Fairclough (1996):

- (a) is there an obvious way of characterising the overall sample?**
- (b) is the discourse sample relatively conventional in its interdiscursive properties, or relatively innovative?**

A brief example (expanded in chapters four and five) may help to clarify my approach to analysis. In a short story lesson I observed during my pilot study, Mrs Mabandla asked seventy-three questions in the space of thirty-five minutes. When I observed Mrs Mabandla teach the same class, in a comparable lesson nearly ten

months later, the interactional patterns had changed. Forty-eight questions were asked in forty-five minutes. The 'chorus' effect strongly present in her earlier lessons with this class had all but disappeared. There was less space for her questions because students' turn lengths had increased dramatically.

In order to explain the change in form, I needed to analyse its relationship to the immediate classroom context - classroom dynamics and the unfolding contextual relationships, concepts of learning; understanding of disciplinary content; attitudes to English, identity construction; and ideological framing. I also needed to consider how, when, where and why the broader institutional, socio-cultural and political contexts (the forthcoming matriculation examination for example) impinged on classroom discourse practices. In order to achieve this, I examined the data from informal observation; informal talk; interviews and contextual sources; in order to look for thematic and linguistic patterns and variation, as well as silences and contradictions.

After conducting this analysis, I returned to Mrs Mabandla to find out her explanation. She accounted for the change in terms of her students' growing confidence in English and the pressures of the impending matriculation examination. I assessed her explanation by examining the 12a students' performance in other classes; as well as well as comparing their interaction with Mrs Mabandla to that of students in two other grade 12 classes who were being taught the same material at the same time by her. I also considered whether the increased participation was because the students had become used to my presence. The perspective of the three ex-students from the

months later, the interactional patterns had changed. Forty-eight questions were asked in forty-five minutes. The 'chorus' effect strongly present in her earlier lessons with this class had all but disappeared. There was less space for her questions because students' turn lengths had increased dramatically.

In order to explain the change in form, I needed to analyse its relationship to the immediate classroom context - classroom dynamics and the unfolding contextual relationships, concepts of learning; understanding of disciplinary content; attitudes to English, identity construction; and ideological framing. I also needed to consider how, when, where and why the broader institutional, socio-cultural and political contexts (the forthcoming matriculation examination for example) impinged on classroom discourse practices. In order to achieve this, I examined the data from informal observation; informal talk; interviews and contextual sources; in order to look for thematic and linguistic patterns and variation, as well as silences and contradictions.

After conducting this analysis, I returned to Mrs Mabandla to find out her explanation. She accounted for the change in terms of her students' growing confidence in English and the pressures of the impending matriculation examination. I assessed her explanation by examining the 12a students' performance in other classes; as well as well as comparing their interaction with Mrs Mabandla to that of students in two other grade 12 classes who were being taught the same material at the same time by her. I also considered whether the increased participation was because the students had become used to my presence. The perspective of the three ex-students from the

school, who resented their teachers' exclusive focus on those students considered 'clever,' helped me to consider who was participating in the two lessons, and to look more closely at these students' academic performance and language attitudes. This insight opened up an important perspective for me on teachers' roles in reinforcing or constructing identities, particularly in large classes, as well as the relationship of English to students' images of themselves and their futures. Thereafter, I found that a number of second language researchers in postcolonial contexts had addressed this topic.

Thus I explain the classroom interactional pattern by examining the classroom, institutional and socio-political context through comparison of my data from my research participants, my contextual sources and the existing literature. Thick explanation is achieved through such constant comparison.

As part of the data analysis I have shown my work to school teachers, former D.E.T. students and fellow researchers, in order to gain multiple perspectives on my work and to seek clarity on contextual issues. Wherever relevant I have represented these in my text as *personal communication*.

3.7. Conclusion.

This chapter has provided the rationale for my use of critical ethnographic methods. I have narrated my research process and the rationale for my research design in detail, in order to make explicit the basis of my judgments and the politics of observation. In the process I have highlighted both the strengths and limitations of

Chapter 4: 'With English you can go everywhere': Language, identity and power at Mziwethu Senior Secondary.

... every time language learners speak, they are not only exchanging information with their interlocutors; they are also constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world. They are in other words, engaged in identity construction and negotiation. (Norton 1997, p. 410)

4.1. Introduction.

This chapter describes the language attitudes and practices of grades 11 and 12 students at Mziwethu Senior Secondary School.¹ The students in the study say that they are highly motivated to learn English and that they wish the medium of instruction to remain English, as they view the language as key to future success. However, with the exception of a small group, their language practices inside and outside the classroom often contradict these statements.

Following Norton (1995a and 2000) and Canagarajah (1999) I argue that these contradictions can be explained in terms of students' social identities. At Mziwethu the township social environment impacts on school life and student identity in an immediate and often violent manner. The school environment and culture is impoverished and often disordered. I show that students' language attitudes and practices are intimately linked to their attempts to define appropriate roles and identities in relation to this unstable school and township environment, where conventional moral order, boundaries and authority relations are shifting and uncertain. In the world beyond the township, English is the language of power, success and stability. In such a context students' motivation to use English, with its attendant political, economic and cultural connotations (described in chapter two)

collar' employment. The world of employment is foregrounded in the dialogues and is consistently characterised as 'white' and by implication 'English' and wealthy:

Sandiswa: Your mother-tongue cannot give you a job because you cannot be able to speak English. Employers look for the pupil who can speak their language and has the skill of that job.

Thabang: I can get a job from the Africans because they own big businesses so I can be employed without knowing the English.

Sandiswa: I disagree with you. I can get a job from the black owners but the salary would be low because they are still developing they are not developed.
(11c)

For many of these students, race, class and language are synonymous: 'We have to know English - we can't speak to whites in broken English' (11c).

Some students view it as strategic to gain proficiency in English 'because it will take too long for things to change so that African languages are spoken' (11c). Pressed by Mr Siko (in the class debate) to explain why students wanted English as a medium of instruction, an 11c student remarked flippantly: 'you see Sir, we are colonised'.

African languages are frequently characterised as belonging to a past era where access was limited, whereas English is the language of future opportunity: 'Well in this new South Africa they say no English no communication so you won't get employed' (11c).

Unsurprisingly, many foregrounded the fact that English is an international language; but in addition, eight students mentioned that they wanted to know English in order to go to the United States. Nelson Mandela was thought by a student (in both Vesely's 2000 research and mine), not to know an African language: '... [the teachers] want us to be perfect in English so that we should talk with other white people or Mandela'

(11d). Given that South African leaders speak English (almost exclusively) on television and in parliament (which is also televised), this is not surprising. The overall sentiment expressed by the students is summarised by one student who writes: '... with English you can go everywhere you will like, but in mother tongue you don't go anywhere' (11c). These quotes reflect a consistent image in the data that associates proficiency in English with travelling. English signifies future mobility - transcendence of the boundaries of the township. The students' responses are marked by a strong sense of the instrumental value of English in their pursuit of individual, material goals outside of the township.² They can use English as a commodity. English appears to carry the symbolic value of a key or a gatekeeper, depending on whether or not one is proficient.

A common trope is that students cannot see a reason for studying their first language, because 'no one has to go to school to learn your [mother] tongue' (11c; see also Ntete 1998). Given that Xhosa is mainly used for interpersonal communication in informal contexts, their resistance to the theoretical (linguistic) focus of the current syllabus is understandable. In the 12a group interview, Siyabonga expressed his bewilderment at the difficulty he was having with Xhosa grammar: 'I'm having a problem, I don't know why, I don't know with the Xhosa what has happened to me, it's running away' (Interview C). The metaphor of movement here expresses helplessness and lack of control, a sense that language itself has agency. Their English teachers, Mrs Mabandla and Mr Bathaka, cited as reasons (for students aversion to Xhosa as a subject): the focus on structural knowledge; the particular variety of Xhosa which has been standardised; and the prescription of unimaginative, outdated literature texts (Interviews A and G; see also Department of Education 1998 and

value of Xhosa for the wider world in which they wish to function. They express positive, sometimes defensive attitudes to the language insofar as it is linked (in their view) to cultural identity. A similar pattern was evident in a study of first-year (ex-D.E.T.) students at U.C.T. (see Kapp 1998). Indeed Adebija (1994) points out that 'in spite of the very positive evaluation of European languages in most sub-Saharan African countries, virtually all the studies available also reveal strong feelings of mother tongue loyalty' (p. 63).

In the grade 11 dialogues, culture is narrowly defined in ethnic terms and refers exclusively to traditional custom, a discrete entity which has to be protected and preserved as a heritage. Students' comments suggest that language loyalty is key to securing engagement with this 'culture':

... we can't stop speaking our mother tongue. That would make us to forget about our cultures and our customs.... (11a)

... we are no longer following our traditions because we all speak this English and by doing that we are following other peoples traditions. (11a)

I think we should not forget our culture and our mother tongue. (11c)

In these statements, language assumes symbolic value and connotes an ideal of community indicated by a shift from the 'I' in the statements about English, to 'we' and 'our' in relation to home 'culture'. The repetition of 'forget' simultaneously expresses anxiety and exonerates them from deliberate intention. The statements about Xhosa reflect emotional investment. The sense of 'preserving' in the statements about Xhosa contrasts markedly with the image of movement, of leaving home, in the statements about English. Following Heine's terminology, Gough (1996) writes that, for African language speakers in South Africa, English functions as a 'vertical code' -

as the language of social access and mobility - while the mother tongue functions as a 'horizontal code' - as the language of social solidarity (p. 57).

4.3. Students' language practices.

In seeming contradiction to the expressed desire for English proficiency, the language was hardly ever spoken outside the classroom. There was however, plenty of code-mixing between English and Xhosa. In my observation, English was used only in exchanges with non-Xhosa speaking and English subject teachers (although not consistently).

Inside the classroom, a great deal of the interaction took place in Xhosa, with language choice and practices varying from teacher to teacher. At the beginning of my research period, the content (History and Biology) teachers tended to use English predominantly in the classroom. As they became used to my presence, these teachers used more and more Xhosa. Typically, explanations were given in both languages, but Xhosa was used to discipline students and for checking understanding. English was used for specific lexical items (for which there are often no Xhosa equivalents). The only written work consisted of students taking notes from the board and these were all written in English. The textbooks were in English as were tests and examinations (with the exception of the grade 11 experiment with Xhosa).

Mr Siko, the History teacher, often started his classes with the instruction that students should speak English (while he spoke Xhosa), but he always allowed them to speak Xhosa. In response to students' assertions that they wanted English as their medium of instruction (in the class debate on the issue), he said: 'about 80% of your

lessons are in Xhosa anyway, so why not have Xhosa as your medium of instruction'? (11c History, August 1998). A grade 12 Biology teacher, like the History teacher at Ilitha, spoke Xhosa for most of the period, but had a very strict requirement that students should answer in English only.³ At both schools, the only classes I observed that were conducted in English, were English subject classes and those few classes taught by teachers who did not speak Xhosa. This included an Afrikaans class taught predominantly through the medium of English. But the 12a students reported that English was also taught through the medium of Xhosa at junior levels, a statement confirmed by both Mrs Mabandla (field-notes, October 1998) and Mr Nyembe at Ilitha (Interview I). Mark (12a) commented thus:

There was no force that maybe you had to speak English, no, no, and it makes some other people shy to speak English. The thing is when you speak and some others laugh you tend to tell yourself that no, I'll never speak again. (Interview C)

The derision that Mark refers to was a common feature of classroom discourse. Coleman (1992) argues that adolescents, perhaps more than other groupings, need to preserve 'face' among their peers. In the classes I observed, most students achieved this through silence, by joining in group responses or by limiting their input to short answers rather than risk mockery by conversing in English (see chapter 5, section 5.6.3). Another response, evident in the oral presentations when students were forced to speak in English, was to act out roles which could serve as a protective mask and earn 'audience' approval (see section 4.5.).

A notable exception to this were the 12a students (whom I observed in grade 11 and 12). Strongly influenced by Mrs Mabandla, who had taught all of them for two consecutive years (and some for a year when they were in grade 9) they spoke English constantly to each other in class and out in order to 'practise and improve' (Interview

C). According to Loyiso, they deliberately used 'bombastic' words. For this they earned the derogatory label 'Model Cs' from the 12b class (Interview C; field-notes, Mrs Mabandla September 1998). The term 'Model C' refers to schools which were formerly classified as 'white' and as such connotes 'white', 'elitist' and 'Englishness'.

The students were upset by this construction. Mark commented thus:

We are too afraid because we don't, we don't want to be called names, given names. We want to be proud of ourselves. (Interview C)

The fear that he may be perceived to be desirous of 'white' culture seemed strong. And yet, when I remarked that it was indeed unusual to hear students speak English outside of the classroom, he became quite defensive:

It's not because we are using English outside the classroom but it's because we are called the 10a [12a]⁴ so they are taking us as if we are intelligent and better than others. (Interview C)

Here Mark clearly needs to distance himself from any notion of cultural assimilation. This kind of conflict again highlights the extent to which students are consciously linking language and racial identity. In this case, the accusers conflate the notion whilst the accused work hard to signal a distinction. It also illustrates how guarded the students have to be about signalling their ambitions and desires openly. Both Mr Nyembe at Ilitha (Interview I) and Vesely (2000) noted that students in their classes who were fluent in English and used the language readily in classroom discussion were ostracized by others. Writers in other countries describe similar cultural and class conflict. The Sri Lankan students in Canagarajah's (1999) study felt that 'their use of English for classroom interactions would be interpreted by classmates as an attempt to discard their rural identity and pass for a member of an anglicised elite, or even a foreigner' (p. 95). There has also been research conducted on successful African-American students who experience conflict when their peer group regard

them as selling out to 'white' norms (see Fordham in Cummins 1996 and Delpit 1995).

For the overwhelming majority of students at Mziwethu, as for students at other former D.E.T. schools, formal and informal interaction in the township and in the private domain takes place in African languages (Interviews A; G; H and I; see also Hibbert 1995; Gough 1996; Makoni 1997 and Vesely 2000). The students' need to speak or write in English in daily life is limited to their journeys outside of the township, which may include acting as intermediaries for their parents when they have to interact with elements of the public sector in English. However, students do have a high level of exposure to hearing English *via* the media in the form of mainly American programmes on radio and television and public advertising (Interview C; see also Wickham and Versveld 1998 and Vesely 2000). The influences of the media, rather than their espoused Xhosa traditions, are apparent in their everyday identification. Alongside *kwaito* (a modern, local version of rap) iconography, the American influences were evident from the pin-ups of film stars on their book-covers, their reference points in the oral presentations and the Americanisms in their English. Gough (1996) claims that there is evidence that 'urban blacks positively evaluate and may attempt to emulate American English, specifically Afro-American English' (p. 58). Mrs Mabandla reported that she frequently uses examples from the American 'soapie' (soap opera) *The Bold and the Beautiful* (known in the township as *The Bold*) to illustrate irony because she knows that all her students watch it (field-notes, August 1998).

PART TWO: The context of learning at Mziwethu.

To explain the reasoning behind the Mziwethu students' equivocal constructions of language and identity, I will describe and interpret their social context and show how students position and reposition themselves in relation to the dominant discourses and social conditions of the township, the school and the classroom; as the instrumental desire to be educated in English in order to escape the township competes with the desire to belong in, and be accepted by, the community.

4.4. The township environment.

Mziwethu Senior Secondary is situated in an area of 542.6 hectares, which was established as a township for 'African' people in 1958. All of the Mziwethu students and many of the teachers live in the township. In the 'old' South Africa, most teachers were resident in the area, but recently some have moved to 'coloured' lower middle-class areas. This mobility reflects both the demise of the Group Areas Act and the fact that teachers now earn equal salaries across racial groups.

According to the 1996 Government Census, the township has an estimated 79162 residents. It is located fifteen kilometres outside of central Cape Town and about seven kilometres from my home. Despite its proximity, the journey there always assumed the surrealistic quality of entering another world. This feeling was shared in another form by Mziwethu's students. Independently of each other, three students described the township as 'rural', which may refer to its socio-economic status, but is, I think, a telling indication of how physically and socially isolated the community may feel for those residents who do not commute outside of it (Interview C and field-notes, 11d History August 1998). Just as my conception of the physical

and social landscape was powerfully shaped by the perspective from the car, so the students' notions of other schools in the neighbouring working-class 'coloured' area were gleaned on the basis of the view from the taxi on the rare occasions when they did commute to the city (Interview C). They had little or no contact with peers outside the township other than *via* television.

The spatial confinement of the township is a legacy of the Apartheid policy of separate development. It also reflects the practice of constructing townships in such a way as to be able to isolate and contain political violence. Mills (1983) points out that the combination of the highly structured grid divisions and the entry points were designed to make it easy to cordon off the township or sections thereof during periods of unrest. In this respect, the township has two entrances with a police station situated at the main entrance. Under the Apartheid government, people of other racial groups were (in theory) required to obtain a permit to enter. The township is divided into three sections with an attempt to separate migrant workers from resident families. In the 'new' (post-1994) South Africa the formal restrictions which separate designated racial groups have disappeared, but the township still exists as a separate entity. As I shall show in this chapter, residents themselves now maintain many of the boundaries designed by Apartheid.

But some school students do cross the borders daily. In the last ten years, following the desegregation of schools, those who can afford it have attended schools in the neighbouring working- and lower middle-class 'coloured' area, and further afield in formerly 'white' schools. The new order signals choice and mobility for some. These students commute by mini-bus taxis and *bakkies* (pick-up trucks),

which are hired by their parents at exorbitant rates. The transport costs increase exponentially the further the school is from the township. The perception is that the further away the school, the less the likelihood of disruption and the better the facilities and general quality of education (see also Hoadley 1998). As mentioned in chapter one, the exodus has also been attributed to a demand for English (Vinjevold 1999; Plüddemann *et al* 2000 and De Klerk 2000). Like the 12a students who speak English outside the classroom, those who attend schools anywhere outside of the township are shunned and labelled 'Model Cs' by Mziwethu's students. Interestingly, some students also travel from the township to former D.E.T. schools such as Ilitha, which are perceived to be better (I shall return to the issue of student perceptions of other schools in 4.6.3.).

At the time of both my pilot study and main data collection period, my sense of journeying to a 'different' world was exacerbated by the fact that the township occupied the front page of the local newspapers almost daily. In 1997 news of gang violence and school vandalism predominated, whilst in 1998 vigilante violence and car hijacking assumed centre stage (see Mabaso 1997; Bavuma 1998; Damon and Mokwena 1998; Grootman 1998 and Lund 1998;). In July 1998 reported crime in the township was as follows: 37 cases of theft; rape: 10; murder: 57; housebreaking: 38; unlicensed firearm arrests: 23 (Ntabazalila and Mokwena 1998). In August 1998, the U.C.T. medical faculty suspended its services and teaching activities at the local maternity clinic because the safety of doctors and students could no longer be guaranteed (Heard 1998). And yet my perception (gleaned from the newspapers) that the levels of gang violence were at an all time high, were met with scepticism by

former Mziwethu students Mpho, Thulani and Siphso, who felt that in the past the gang violence had been largely unreported in the newspapers (Interviews D and F).

I was always tense and fearful as I drove from my relatively safe, middle-class, racially mixed suburb, past the working-class 'coloured' townships. A thick pall of wood-fire smoke hanging over the bridge signalled arrival in the township. This area does not exist on my street map of Cape Town. As one turns left into the unmarked main street, the huge police station dwarfs the semi-detached houses (commonly known as 'matchboxes'). The main road is filled with litter and potholes and is devoid of trees and shrubs. The houses in this section are made of brick and cement-block, thus identifying the more established status of their occupants, many of whom now own the houses. Previously 'African' people were defined as migrants in the Western Cape and could not own property (Ngcokoto 1989) ⁵ There is a middle-class sector in the township where some of the teachers live, a section inhabited by hostel-dwellers, and an informal settlement inhabited by more recent migrants to Cape Town. The latter consists of wood and iron shacks. According to the 1996 census data, 58% of households in the township have electricity and running water.

The class divisions are far more complex than is visible to the outsider driving through. Makosana (cited in Walters 1996) writes that there are class distinctions between migrant workers, legal residents, shanty owners, backyard tenants, residents of two-bedroomed homes, and middle-income residents who are located in three- and four-bedroomed houses. Ramphele (1998) describes fierce contestation over space, commercial activity and leisure facilities between the

'migrant' workers (hostel-dwellers) and other residents. The hostel-dwellers, many of whom have in fact lived in the area for twenty-five years, are still constructed as 'migrants' and outsiders. They are labelled *amagoduka* - 'those who go home somewhere else' (p. 31). The problems of overcrowding at Mziwethu, for instance, were attributed by the principal to the influx of 'squatters' from elsewhere (field-notes, September 1998). According to Mr Nyembe from Ilitha, students who enter former D.E.T. schools from the Eastern Cape are viewed as ignorant and lower-class and (especially boys) have to go to considerable lengths to prove themselves (Interview I).

During my research period, I also became conscious of ethnically-related divisions. People generally signalled their sense of community in terms of Xhosa culture. The predominantly Xhosa residents tended to pay tribute to the diversity of the township but, even when they had lived there for decades, Sesotho and Setswana-speaking residents were invariably 'othered' and classified as 'rural' or 'migrant'. In fact, most 'migrants' to the area are Xhosa people who have come to Cape Town from rural Eastern Cape (Ramphela 1998). A resident of the middle-class sector of the township, who worked as a cleaner at U.C.T., spoke fondly of her neighbour, the vice-principal of Mziwethu (whose name she did not know) as 'Sotho but quite nice' (field-notes, November 1998). Mpho, the child of Sotho-speaking parents and a Xhosa step-father who was initially reared by an Afrikaans-speaking 'coloured' aunt, spoke of learning the languages, norms and values of all three 'cultures' but of consciously foregrounding a Xhosa identity:

In the township, most of the people never know that I am a Sotho, they just know me as a Xhosa person. At school you'll find they just want to distantiate, there are a distance from Sotho and Tswana. (Interview D)

He spoke with anger of how Xhosa males would no longer interact across ethnic lines after they had been initiated (Interview D).

The main road carries some visual clues to the complicated weave of everyday life - a glossy, English-medium coca-cola sign welcomes one to the township and a Shell petrol billboard looms large over hand-painted Xhosa advertisements for black hair products. Commercial activity takes on the local form of *spaza* shops (makeshift general stores), open-air meat stalls, hair salons and the now legal *shebeens* (bars or pubs). Some people whiz by in smart cars, whilst others splutter along in barely moving old contraptions pouring forth dangerous-smelling emissions. The majority are on foot, heading towards the taxi ranks where they crowd into perilous mini-bus taxis which hurtle them off to the city or to the train station. Because of the danger of hijacking, I learnt to pause at stop streets and jump red traffic lights along with everyone else.

In the early mornings, people seemed to be walking purposefully to school or work, but during the day the streets were filled with young male pedestrians milling about, often standing in groups at street corners or sitting at the taxi rank. Women, especially girls, are constantly under threat of sexual harassment and rape, and have to be wary of when and where they walk. Both in the Western and Eastern Cape, African women are increasingly becoming the breadwinners as they are more easily employed as domestic workers in the suburbs (Bank 1997 and Henderson 1999). In 1997 the unemployment rate in the township was estimated at 60% as compared to a national average of 25% (Anon. 1997). According to the 1996 Census, 12% of households in the township have no income at all. The exceptionally high

unemployment rate is in part due to the massive migration by rural Africans to the urban areas after the scrapping of the influx laws (which controlled the movement of Africans) in 1986 (Worden 1994). Another crucial factor is the fact that until 1985, Cape Town was classified as a 'coloured labour preference area'. Ngcokoto (1989) also ascribes unemployment to the high dropout rate from schools. Crouch and Mabogoane (1997) claim that about 50% of each cohort gets as far as grade 12, but only 25% actually passes the final matriculation examination. As mentioned in chapter two, the Western Cape matriculation results are the best in the country, with an average pass-rate of around 80% in recent years. Yet the former D.E.T. schools in the area averaged between 20-39% in 1999 (Pretorius 2000).⁶

The physical demarcation of the township into sections for the purposes of control by the Apartheid government has been appropriated by gangs. During periods of gang violence, the streets were often empty; and Mrs Mabandla explained to me that this was because turf wars confined the 'boys' to their 'own zones' (field-notes, July 1998). Siphso spoke of having to take 'long cuts' to school, a description very similar to that given by the 1998 students who spoke of 'no go' areas (Interview F and Interview C). According to Babalwa (12a) 'you are not allowed if you are like staying at section two to go at section three. Some others were afraid to come to school' (Interview C). A newspaper report estimated that twenty young men were killed in drive-by shootings between June and August 1997. Many of the gang members are school-going children who model themselves on 'gangsta rappers' and mobsters in the United States. According to the report, the gangs are even split along the lines of the United States gang rivalries (Mabaso 1997).

4.5. Students' constructions and mediation of the township environment.

The grade 12 oral presentations held on Thursday 20 August 1998 helped me to decipher some of the ways in which the township environment impacted on school life and student identity. On that day it was difficult to drive, as the road was crowded with men and women of all ages flocking in their hundreds to the taxi rank where a man, accused of shooting a resident, was being paraded naked as a prelude to being whipped. The ongoing vigilante violence in the township had made headline news in Cape Town for the previous three days. I arrived at the school shaken and convinced that school could not possibly proceed that day. But the siren sounded and I accompanied Mrs Mabandla to her first English class.

Inside Mrs Mabandla's 12a classroom, the presenters were required to stand in front of the room and to address the class exclusively in English. These 'prepared orals' counted towards students' final matriculation mark. They had had to select a newspaper article, read it aloud, illustrate that they understood its contents through summary, and then render their own views. Most selected to talk about violence of some kind: alcohol and drug abuse, incest, robbery, rape etc. Mrs Mabandla said that this was usual and reflected the realities students confronted daily (field-notes, August 1998). Similarly, in her ethnographic study of 16 children in a neighbouring township, Henderson (1999) documents in some detail the many personal instances of physical injury, violence and dangers from conditions of living that confront the children daily.

A number of students selected articles on the violence just outside the school.

It was clear from the statements made that they regarded the police as 'corrupt' - in league with gangsters and criminals - and unwilling to protect ordinary people:

Here it is easy to murder and rape. (Busi)

The police don't do their jobs because they don't catch the criminals. The taxi drivers are keeping us safe. (Mandisa)

Ja, in our times the police are not actually doing their work. You see we have the gang members and then the police will sit down in the police station. If you come to them and tell them what is going on in your area, they will beat you. Like for example the journalist [referring to a recent incident, widely reported] he was being beaten in the police station by the police. (Thabo)

In these comments, the students clearly identify themselves with ordinary, law-abiding citizens under threat. They express outrage and moral indignation, which reflected the general mood in the township at that time. The relationship between the police and the community had deteriorated to such an extent that six members of the police management of the local station were to be transferred elsewhere the following month (Ntabazalila and Mokwena 1998).

Mzwandile, a very articulate student, had a different line of argument. He read aloud an article about a robbery in the township and commented thus:

Some people may argue that these robbers or whatever you want to call them, must be put in jail. But personally, I think these people are just trying to make a living because the government promised more jobs, housing, more everything. But these people which are called robbers need to feed their families. I don't condone stealing but there are some circumstances where you might steal from other people. Some of them are fathers who have to feed their kids, buy their kids school uniforms, buy their kids books.

The extract captures an ambivalence in students' attitudes towards gangsterism, which I witnessed time and again. A study of the pronouns in this passage reveals interesting shifts in agency as the student simultaneously identifies with the cause he describes

and distances himself from complicity through the use of 'these people' and 'them'. Despite their earlier condoning of the 'community courts', Mzwandile's fellow students found his presentation highly entertaining. Even as the evidence outside the class screamed otherwise, one student read an old newspaper article about a peace agreement between the gangsters:

They agreed they will no longer carry guns in the streets. They will no longer do crime. If one of them carry a gun, they must take him to the police station or prison. There is no more crime here and they have a peace agreement.

This attempt to envision the township as a united community is a common trope in my data. Despite all the evidence of division and rupture, students and teachers always seemed to talk of 'us', 'our culture' and 'the community'.

Because many students were absent that day, there was time left at the end of the student presentations, and Mrs Mabandla asked if there were any issues students wanted to raise; adding that they stood a chance of improving their marks were they to make a contribution. The ensuing discussion focused on the events taking place outside, and on teacher irresponsibility with regard to preparation for examinations (I shall return to the latter point under 4.6.3.).

I did not tape-record what followed at the request of the students (referred to in chapter 3, section 3.4.1.). At the time, the newspapers were depicting the violence as 'community' versus 'criminals' in the form of headlines such as 'Angry citizens strike back' (Damon and Mokwena 1998). It was through the students' discussion in class that I learnt of the central role of the taxi drivers, who were beating up the alleged criminals. This fact only emerged in the newspapers later that week. I also learnt that the police were arresting criminals and handing them into the custody of

and distances himself from complicity through the use of 'these people' and 'them'. Despite their earlier condoning of the 'community courts', Mzwandile's fellow students found his presentation highly entertaining. Even as the evidence outside the class screamed otherwise, one student read an old newspaper article about a peace agreement between the gangsters:

They agreed they will no longer carry guns in the streets. They will no longer do crime. If one of them carry a gun, they must take him to the police station or prison. There is no more crime here and they have a peace agreement.

This attempt to envision the township as a united community is a common trope in my data. Despite all the evidence of division and rupture, students and teachers always seemed to talk of 'us', 'our culture' and 'the community'.

Because many students were absent that day, there was time left at the end of the student presentations, and Mrs Mabandla asked if there were any issues students wanted to raise; adding that they stood a chance of improving their marks were they to make a contribution. The ensuing discussion focused on the events taking place outside, and on teacher irresponsibility with regard to preparation for examinations (I shall return to the latter point under 4.6.3.).

I did not tape-record what followed at the request of the students (referred to in chapter 3, section 3.4.1.). At the time, the newspapers were depicting the violence as 'community' versus 'criminals' in the form of headlines such as 'Angry citizens strike back' (Damon and Mokwena 1998). It was through the students' discussion in class that I learnt of the central role of the taxi drivers, who were beating up the alleged criminals. This fact only emerged in the newspapers later that week. I also learnt that the police were arresting criminals and handing them into the custody of

the taxi drivers. Those students who spoke, supported the taxi drivers and took highly moral stands about crime and violence. Whilst most seemed tense and anxious, some of the males were ebullient; gesturing to indicate that they thought the criminals should have their hands cut off. The female students were entirely silent.

Students were restless that day and it was difficult for teachers not to allow discussion of what was going on just outside. After school, many students joined the crowds at the taxi rank. Describing this period, Mr Bathaka said: 'You'll be in your class doing your bit and there's a show - a man running naked and everyone wants to run and watch. There's a lot of chaos' (Interview G).

Whilst critical of the police, the teachers condemned the vigilante violence and saw it as part of an attempt by the taxi drivers to gain control in the township. However they ventured their opinions only in private conversation. Although the events were discussed in both Mrs Mabandla and Mr Siko's classes, the teachers were guarded in their remarks to the students. In class, Mrs Mabandla asked questions of students that were veiled comments, for example: 'Aren't the taxi drivers doing the work of the police?' She joked at the end of the class: 'If you don't do your homework, I'll hand you over to the taxi drivers'. Students received no trauma counselling, political analysis, moral guidance or practical advice on how to negotiate the situation just outside the school gates.

After class, Mrs Mabandla told me that the school principal had been warned that his school would be targeted for violence after a student had condemned the actions of the vigilantes on a local television news programme. She felt that this was

the reason why the students had wanted me to switch off the tape-recorder. She also said: 'if you say too much, they [the students] will use it against you' (field-notes, August 1998). A resident of the township informed me that later in that year the taxi drivers forced the principal to cancel buses he had hired for a school trip. He was coerced into using the services of the taxis instead (field-notes, November 1998). In the 'old' South Africa, there was heavy surveillance over what teachers said in the classroom and many teachers were transferred, banned or fired from the profession (see Soudien 1998b). It seems that power relations within the community now censor classroom talk.

Like Mziwethu, many black working-class South African schools are subject to the violence in their environment. In Cape Town there are regular reports of learners being caught in the crossfire of local gangs. Writing about visits to former D.E.T. schools, as part of an investigation by the Committee on the Culture of Learning and Teaching in Gauteng, Christie (1998) writes: 'problems from local communities spilt over into schools; violence of all sorts threatened the safety of students, teachers and principals...' (p.290; see also Henderson 1999). Although stressful, collecting my data during this period had a considerable effect on my understanding of power relations in the community and the impact of a tense, violent environment on the lives of individuals. The effects were far greater than the statistics in the newspapers. As Henderson (1999) writes:

Reports tend to fetishise violence, restricting its location to forced incursions into and mutilation of bodies.... The beginnings and endings of violent circumstances and their meanings for individuals are much more intangible and wide-ranging. The rupture that ... violence constitutes to ideal configurations of social relationship creates ongoing reverberations for individuals and groups. (p.85)

The students were confronted with the brutality of the vigilante violence just three weeks before their 'mock' matriculation examination.⁷ The English classroom provided an important, safe space to talk about their experiences. Mrs Mabandla showed respect for students' opinions and drew out reticent presenters through questions. It was clear to me that they trusted their teacher (and myself) sufficiently to talk openly. Nevertheless, some students were acting out roles, and in the process, deliberately obfuscating their positions. Mzwandile's presentation was delivered in a facetious tone, as he stood in front of the class, hands on hips, wearing his haversack as though he were just passing through. He could do this, confident that it would not affect his marks, since Mrs Mabandla made it clear that her oral mark allocation was based on fluency and presentation rather than content, and he was one of the top students in the class.

Discussing youth culture in general, Clark *et al* (quoted in Rampton 1988) remark that adolescent sub-cultural style is usually a mix of resistance and accommodation in which members both contest and agree with dominant definitions (p.509). Henderson (1999) argues that violent acts mark additional conflict in identities of self. She uses Moore (1994) to argue that an individual's sense of self is dependent on 'certain types of behaviour on the part of others that confirm the individual's senses of self. Senses of self are also related to desires for particular configurations of power in relation to others' (quoted in Henderson 1999, p.106). In South Africa, youth resistance in urban township schools took on a legitimised form in the mid-seventies and eighties when school children became the 'shock troops for control of the township streets' (Hyslop 1999, p.171). The township community, and Mziwethu in particular, has a long history of such activism. There were frequent calls

by the resistance movement for students to boycott school; and the prevailing slogan in the mid-eighties was 'Liberation now, Education later'. Conventional authority relations at schools broke down during this period as students took control of the schools and the streets. Hyslop (1999) writes that a culture of militancy developed among the youth:

It did, on the positive side, generate unprecedented levels of organisational and political coherence among youth. More negatively it also legitimised random violence and factional strife. (p.184)

Students need no longer boycott classes or wage pitched battles with the police. But they are nevertheless faced with difficult choices. In the township, strong moral traditions offered by African traditional culture and Christianity exist side by side with violent crime and drug abuse (Ngcokoto 1989). Sometimes there is little choice. The teenagers in Henderson's study tell of occasional identifications with gangs through force of circumstance as they are almost unavoidably drawn into declaring allegiance with particular gangs by virtue of where they live.

The classroom was sometimes used as a forum to air the tensions students faced. In the 11a class in October 1997, following a presentation by Sandile on the symptoms of drug abuse, students dropped any pretence that they were engaging in a theoretical discussion. It became clear that some of the women students (in particular Babalwa and Phumla) were using the classroom as a platform to accuse a group of male students of abuse and, possibly, pedalling:

Babalwa: How do you know they are making you dizzy if you are not abusing them?

derisive laughter

Sandile: I read it.

laughter

Phumla: You said that the youth use drugs to have fun. What do you do to have fun?

Sandile: I play soccer sometimes or I read my books.

laughter

Sandile: *Hayi* [no] I'm not using drugs.

Phumla: What should be done to people who sell drugs?

Sandile: Maybe they are earning a living.

Phumla: I want to know what should be done?

Sandile: Maybe they should go to prison.

Mrs Mabandla: Seems like a hidden agenda here.

After class, Mrs Mabandla said that this class enjoyed teasing each other but that they were very closely bonded. Yet both here and in another class where the discussion was on AIDS, I felt that women students were appealing to those in authority (the teacher and perhaps myself) to intervene in a fraught situation. Babalwa eventually asked: 'Miss, what would you do if you knew that your daughter was involved in drugs?'

Witnessing the violence, and the teachers' and students' responses to it, helped me to begin to understand their complex, often contradictory, stances and to make sense of their perspectives of the world. At the same time, I became mindful that the statements students made about the events were not only shaped by the politics of the outside world, but also by the culture and power relations of the classroom. The context of an oral performance; the examination situation; the relationships among students and between students and the teacher; are all factors which may contribute to the roles and identities which students foreground in constructing the reality outside as they simultaneously struggle to find a place from which to stand and preserve 'face' among their peers.

The fact that the students also wanted to discuss examinations is an indication of where their priorities lay, even at a time of intense and immediate social upheaval. Many of these students are under enormous social pressure to pass the matriculation examinations and succeed. Their families make huge sacrifices to ensure that they are

able to remain at school. Only 26 out of a total of 150 of the matriculants passed their June examinations that year. Moreover, the matriculation rate at the school had dropped significantly from 75% in 1996 to 47% in 1997.

Taylor (1989) writes that at a psychological level:

... late adolescence is perhaps the first time that the individual consciously attempts to conceptualise the self, to assess what one has been as a child, is now and would like to be in the future. (p.157)

Adolescence is a time of transition but also a time of tremendous confusion and ambivalence, as young people attempt to identify appropriate roles for themselves (Coleman 1992 and Chang 1992). There seemed to be a very real sense in which students were losing faith in the promises of the ANC government for 'a better life for all' in the new South Africa. In the oral presentations I listened to on 20 August, comments about what the struggle had yielded for the present were characterised by despair. On the one hand, students seemed conscious that, potentially, they have more opportunities available to them than their parents had ever had; on the other, there seemed to be a perception that the moment for development within the township has passed. Luleka's presentation was a typical example:

At the beginning of the new South Africa, most of us were pleased because Apartheid laws were abolished There is a lot of improvement in the location. But now I think things are beginning to go a bit sour especially in terms of teachers. The Department of Education is dying slowly. Teachers are being retrenched and they were never retrenched in the old government. We know nothing about retrenchments. The rate of crime is so high and everybody has a gun. There's a lot of problems in the new government.

The social world in which these Mziwethu students were attempting to position themselves was itself unstable. The conventional moral order, boundaries and authority relations were shifting and uncertain. At one moment the gangsters were in

power, at another the taxi drivers. The police were powerless and corrupt. Because of their own very real fears of being judged and sentenced, teachers held back from providing guidance.

The contradictory stances that students took in the ways they identified or distanced themselves were psychologically as well as socially located. Their individual instrumental desires to be educated in English in order to escape the township competed with the desire to be accepted, to belong among their peers and in the community. These students had made it to their final year of their schooling, an achievement in itself in the township. Yet the possibility of failure or future unemployment still loomed large. The more easily attainable alternative of drugs and gangsterism beckoned.

4.6. Mziwethu Senior Secondary School.

How the school is maintained, how people relate to one another, how the school has access to and utilises its resources - all of these form part of the learning of young people and shape the way in which they make sense and have expectations of and apprehend the world both in and beyond school. (Davidoff 2000, p. 5)

In this section I describe the physical structure of the school, its organisational principles and daily rituals. I then describe teachers' perceptions of the school and construction of their students, and compare these with students' constructions of the culture of the school and their roles within it. The differences in perception are an important part of understanding student identities and roles.

4.6.1. Social Organisation.

Along with many other theorists, Christie (1998) identifies space and time as constitutive frameworks in schools (and indeed, in most institutions). School buildings are designed with certain kinds of spatial arrangements in mind. School principals and teachers regulate when and how and for which purposes space is used, and they monitor the boundaries against student transgressions which may challenge their authority.

Mziwethu Senior Secondary is fenced right around. Since the gang violence in 1997, the school gates are controlled by security guards employed by the Western Cape Department of Education. These barriers do not insulate the school from its neighbourhood. The fence is broken in places and goats sometimes graze on the only patches of grass just inside the fence. Residential houses border the school on three sides and it is possible to catch glimpses of domestic life at close range from some of the classrooms. Occasionally a car, usually filled with young men, would drive past slowly, its pounding loudspeaker bass turned so loud as to drown out the voices of students and teachers and set off car alarms.

The school is treated as a resource in the neighbourhood. Locals arrive to have forms filled in or letters interpreted. Because of her excellent command of English, Mrs Mabandla often fulfils the role of interpreter and mediator. She also responds to appeals to undertake community work such as teaching in the local night school at short notice. At lunch-times, informal traders sell fruit and sweets, and businesses market their wares to staff. According to Mrs Mabandla, at one stage a neighbouring

family sold *dagga* (marijuana) on the premises (field-notes, August 1998). The school is regularly burgled and vandalised (five times in 1997 and once in 1998).

The grounds are desolate. The area between buildings is tarmac or cement; the playground is sand and stone. There are no trees or plants. The school has approximately 1600 students crowded into its 30 classrooms. Most of the classrooms are brick, but in recent years prefabricated classrooms have been added. At the time of my research the latter were deteriorating badly with holes (filled with rubbish) in the floors, broken ceilings and windowpanes. Teachers do not have their own classrooms and within the class they have no real space allocation. There is no table, chair or cupboard for them and the students' desks are really close to the board and close to each other, leaving them little space to move. Following an innovation introduced by Mrs Mabandla, the desks in the senior classes where the classes are smaller are placed in groups of four.

Classes were grouped together on the basis of subject choice but, like many South African schools, there was a distinct hierarchical character to this. The "a" classes consisted of students who took Mathematics and Physical Science, which were considered elite subjects. The "d"; "e" and "f" classes comprised students who were classified as academically weaker. These students took 'soft' subjects like Business Science and practical options like Domestic Science. In grades eight to eleven, many of these students were repeating the standard and were older than would be expected.⁸ The classes were generally bigger and teaching methods and the student-teacher relationships were different in the "a" classes (as I shall show in chapter five).

The limited physical space of the classroom is 'given shape and meaning through social processes' (Jacklin 1998, p.69). In 11a the males appeared to assert symbolic control over the physical domain of the classroom. Mr Bathaka said that some of the boys specifically organised their desks so that teachers could not easily reach them (Interview G). The walls of most classrooms were bare, except for posters of soccer heroes near the back of the room and graffiti. The graffiti above the blackboard in the front of the 11d classroom declared affiliation to local gangs, modelled on U.S. 'gangsta rappers' and mobsters - 'Die in LA'; 'Bad Boy Outlaw', 'Welcome to Moscow. Love and Hate'; 'Badd Dog'. The 'Moscows', 'Dogg Pounds' and 'Bad Boy Outlaw' are names of local gangs (Mabaso 1997 and *personal communication*, Mashigoane December 2000). These were written alongside a proclamation that 'the 9d [11d] girls are prostitutes [sic]' and advice to 'Go to school to go to learn'. Mr Bathaka said that because teachers do not have their own classroom space, 'they cannot improve their environment' (Interview G).

Students seldom have access to the laboratory or library facilities, both of which were limited in any case. The audio-visual equipment was kept locked in the strong room for security purposes; and teachers tended not to use the equipment because they said they found the logistics of organising to retrieve them, overwhelming (see also Wickham and Versveld 1998). The school has no hall and assemblies are held in the quadrangle. During the matriculation examinations in 1997, when more space was needed in order to ensure security and quiet, the rest of the school moved into a 'platoon' system. Classes were run on a double-shift system with students receiving only three hours of schooling per day for several weeks. At the time of my study, the shortage of space had reached crisis proportions and the principal

was engaged in constant campaigns for relocation or extensions. The principal intimated that, because of the lack of classrooms, he could not accept the offer currently being made by the Department of Education to increase the number of teachers at the school.

Teachers felt that, although the school was still desperately poor, they had more access to resources in the 'new' South Africa. Mr Bathaka said: 'we may have some resources but there is always something to threaten it. But we make do' (Interview G). Whereas textbooks and other consumables used to be allocated centrally by the Department of Education, the school was now given a budget and could decide on resource allocation. The school owned a fax machine, ten computers and audio-visual equipment such as a television and overhead projector. Although not all students had textbooks, the existence of a photocopying machine meant that teachers could copy materials such as poems and grammar exercises.

Since 1994, there have been substantial attempts to redress the imbalance in school resourcing. But the backlog is considerable. Hyslop (1999) writes that in 1970, the state spent eighteen times more on 'white' children than 'African'. In 1984, the ratio was 7:1. In 1986 a Ten Year Plan was introduced with a clear indication 'that this was a cautious move in the direction of the implementation of an, 'equal' but 'separate' policy' (Hartshorne 1999, p. 82). The mechanism for allocating funding was not made public and there was, in real money terms, less spent on development of D.E.T. schools (Hartshorne 1999). A study by the Finance and Fiscal Committee in 1998 showed that the poor in South Africa make up 53% of the population but receive 40% of government's education funding, while the rich make up 12% of the

population and receive 23% of education resources (quoted in Lewis and Bot 1998).

At the time of my research, resources were shrinking. In 1995 the budget for books and consumables at Mziwethu was R168 000. By 1999, it had dropped to R95 000. As a consequence, student fees were raised from R50 per annum in 1998 to R100 in 1999.

The attainment of additional resources seemed to be connected to locale.

Although some of the classrooms at Ilitha were overcrowded (with up to 60 students in the junior classes and 45 in grade 12) the school's classrooms were much more spacious and better resourced with regard to equipment and books. This is, in part, because the premises had previously housed a 'white' school. In addition, according to Mr Nyembe, because the school is located in the suburbs and, as such, is accessible to 'whites', donors would make trips to the school whereas they were too scared to venture into the townships. There were also wealthy local businesses (compared to the townships) to whom the school could appeal (Interview I).

Like all South African schools, the teaching staff structure at Mziwethu was hierarchically constituted. Teachers were very conscious thereof. The principal was assisted by two deputies and, together with the subject heads of department, they constituted the 'control' staff of the school. The 'control' staff generally taught the senior classes, although Mrs Mabandla had decided to teach a junior class in 1999 in order to model good practice. The staff who taught at senior levels almost all had university degrees. Again Mrs Mabandla was an exception here as she only had a training college qualification. Departments functioned separately and I saw no formal attempts at interdisciplinarity (although, as at Ilitha, there were some sporadic,

informal contacts initiated by individual teachers). This insulation is typical of Western Cape schools (see Abrahams 1997). In terms of physical space, the 'control' staff were allocated offices (generally shared by two people) whilst the rest of the staff used the communal staff room.

4.6.1.1. Daily life.

On a typical morning, teachers and students stream into the school, mostly on foot. The male teachers tend to drive. Ninety percent of the teachers are first-language speakers of Xhosa. There are now also four young 'coloured' teachers on the staff who teach Domestic Science, German, Business Science, Biology and Afrikaans. Older teachers, like Mrs Mabandla, tend to be dressed formally in suits and dresses but their younger counterparts, like Mr Bathaka, sometimes wear denim jeans and sport cell phones attached to their belts.

The students are nearly all resident in the township and transfer to the school from the neighbouring primary schools. Many of their parents have attended the school. Entrance admission is organised on a first-come first-served basis and students transferring from other high schools are seldom admitted. This contrasts to Ilitha where students coming from the Eastern Cape transfer at all levels, resulting in massive problems for teachers, particularly because (according to Mr Nyembe and Mr Van Wyk) students from the Eastern Cape are less proficient in English (Interviews H and I; see also Vesely 2000).

Like their counterparts from Ilitha, Mziwethu students are always dressed in the school uniform with neatly ironed shirts. They wear the school track top or jerseys

rather than the expensive blazers characteristic of the wealthier schools in the suburbs. Male students who had recently been to initiation school are more formally attired in caps and jackets, the only visible sign of students' professed ethnic cultural identity. Mr Bathaka taught me to look for what he termed 'signs of [adolescent] rebellion' in the form of individual 'touches' to the uniform such as a missing tie, *tackies* (running shoes), waistcoats, earrings and bangles worn by male students. He said that those who dress in full uniform are 'tagged' as 'aspiring to be Model C' (Interview G). Many of the female students are wearing the latest fashion hairstyle, a close-shaven look, rather than the more conventional 'cornrows'. Everyone chews gum in and outside of the classroom, and male students often balance a matchstick in the corner of their mouths.

Christie (1998) writes that schools generally run in terms of 'chronological codes that are uniformly imposed' (p. 287). At Mziwethu and Ilitha, as in the former D.E.T. schools in Christie's study, these codes are constantly transgressed (see also Walters 1996; Wickham and Versfeld 1998 and Taylor and Vinjevold 1999). The school siren sounds at 8h15, but there are nearly always in the region of thirty or more students late. Here, the security guards serve an interesting additional purpose. On most days the gates are locked at 8h30 and the students who are late have to stand outside until they are allowed entry by a senior teacher later, often well after 10h00. The gate is however, opened for the many teachers who arrive late. This is a common phenomenon in former D.E.T. schools in the Western Cape (see also Hoadley 1998). At Ilitha, late students would be allowed in earlier and their names taken for unspecified disciplinary action. At Mziwethu and at a school where I conducted evaluation for a U.C.T. development project (referred to in chapter 3, section 3.5.1.),

the students were sometimes ushered in in the middle of a teaching period. In this case, most teachers made them stand at the door with their haversacks on their backs until much later in the period, when, at a signal often undetected by me, they were allowed to be seated. In a grade 11 class in October 1997, the class started with 25 students, after 10 minutes there were 37 students, and the full compliment of 44 were present after 25 minutes.

In 1997 and 1998, a typical day at the school consisted of six, fifty-minute periods with an interval of one hour. The timetable was quite complicated as students split off to do different subjects and joined with students from other classes. Students would take up to ten minutes to walk from one classroom to another. In the 'old' South Africa, all students had to do English and Afrikaans in addition to their home language. Now those students (from the academically stronger classes) who feel averse to Afrikaans have the option of German. The school was able to make provision for Library, Religious Instruction and Guidance in its formal curriculum, but not for Physical Education, Art or Music.

The school day was often disrupted by visiting politicians (the national and local Ministers of Education visited during my data collection period); staff meetings or meetings called by the teachers' union; and choir practices. The grade 12 students had to forgo their history revision when a government minister visited the day before their 'mock' matriculation examinations commenced. On one day two teachers and the choir left school after lunch-time to rehearse for a competition at another school because Mziwethu does not own a piano. As mentioned in chapter three, teachers frequently arrived late or failed to appear for their classes.

Many Mziwethu students would leave the grounds during the lunch hour and some were said by teachers and students to return intoxicated or 'high' on *dagga*. Others did not return at all. Some students would carry on working, but most would sit around chatting in small groups or kicking a soccer ball. Nearly all the male teachers left the school in cars at lunchtime. I was told that they went to eat together at the local *shebeens*.

At the end of the school day, with the exception of those students who had to stay for some form of punishment (detention or cleaning) and those teachers who needed to supervise them, everyone rushed to the school gates, a fact commented on by Loyiso, a 12a student with a great deal of passion:

I'm just telling you now it's twenty-five past [two]. At half past that gate will be open and then you will see the student and the teachers pushing against each other to the gate. I don't know what's happening to the teachers because they will usually if the bell rings they should maybe stay behind and let the students go first and then if some other student are staying behind because they have problems, then those student can come to the teacher and ask them... they know the students wanted to go to them but they [the students] can't find them... yesterday when we were in the taxi there's I think students from [name of neighbouring coloured township school] were out... in the field and there were some teachers which were playing with their students and I think they were teaching them rugby and cricket (·) I don't actually see that in [Mziwethu] that other teachers are staying behind and then doing sports with their children so that they can get involved. (Interview C)

Loyiso and Mpho said that there was very little for students to do after school other than their homework. Loyiso saw sporting activity as an important way to keep students out of participating in gangsterism and crime (Interviews C and D). There were sporadic attempts at organising sport, mainly initiated by outsiders, including a donation of sports equipment by the German embassy and visits by the Olympic Bid committee and local minister of sport. In 1999, the school was to convene the local

athletics competition. Given that there were no playing fields and the limitations of space for developing them, it was hard to see how sport could be played at the school. There appeared to be more sport at Ilitha where, although the field bore no comparison to the rolling green lawns of its suburban neighbours, it was at least adequate and well maintained.

As at Ilitha, Mziwethu staff put their students in contact with a range of extra-mural academic activities, run by outside organisations. These included extra tuition through local non-governmental organisations; participation in a science exposition, (telephonic) twinning systems with students from other schools and media courses. In many cases, the students perceived to be best from grades 11 and 12 were selected for participation.

Mziwethu's major extra-mural activity, and the source of great pride, was the award-winning choir. Its trophies were prominently displayed in the principal's office and visitors were always taken to view them. Mr Bathaka was the choirmaster and was frequently exhausted or distracted by the preparations for upcoming events. Sometimes students would greet him in their singing roles and he would return the greeting in role or correct them. Mr Bathaka acted as mentor to promising students, some of whom were participating as extras in the Nico Malan Opera House (previously reserved for 'whites'). Two of the students had been guaranteed full scholarships for further study. One of them was Mark, nicknamed 'Pavarotti', who was also one of my principal student informants.

Although boundaries are defined and delimited by the education authorities, it can be seen from the description of Mziwethu's organisational structure that there are also many internally defined limits as well as transgressions. It is apparent that time allocation and space and resource constraints have a significant effect on school organisation and ultimately on school culture. Access to the limited resources is hierarchically controlled. Time and resources are prioritised for some students and some activities, but not others. This has the effect of creating or reinforcing social identities and social relationships such as the tension between the 12a and 12b class described in 4.3. (see also 4.6.3.). Staff and students struggle for control over space as evidenced in the appropriation of classroom space by the male students or in the symbolism of the gate closure. I shall return to the categories of space and time when I discuss classroom practices in chapter five.

4.6.2. Staff constructions of the learning environment at Mziwethu.

In conversation, and in the interviews I conducted, Mziwethu teachers generally stressed the violent environment of the township, overcrowding and the shortage of resources as the biggest problems faced by the school. Mrs Mabandla was critical of poor teaching by junior teachers and their resistance to innovation, which meant that students were left under-prepared for the matriculation year. However, Mziwethu teachers did not generally criticise their colleagues (at least not in front of me). Mr Bathaka asserted that the teachers at the school were all 'quality people' (Interview G). Mr Bathaka and Mrs Mabandla were highly invested in, and loyal to, the school. Their enthusiasm contrasted to the widely reported disillusionment and low morale expressed by many teachers in Cape Town in 1998, a year marked by

retrenchments and criticism of teachers by the Department of Education and the general public.

By comparison, the Ilitha teachers Mr Nyembe and Mr Van Wyk felt that, despite the sometimes unbearable traffic noise, their school's distance from the townships was a major strength. They both felt that there was good discipline and they were positive about the matriculation results. Nevertheless, both teachers were far more outspoken than Mziwethu teachers in their criticism of their colleagues' laziness and lack of competence, particularly with regard to English language proficiency (field-notes, February 1999 and Interviews H and I).

I asked Mrs Mabandla and Mr Bathaka how Mziwethu compared with other schools in the township. Both felt that their school surpassed its neighbours. They foregrounded an identical set of factors: good matriculation results, the school's discipline⁹ (reflected in the wearing of the school uniform), the closure of the gates and the choir. Mrs Mabandla contextualised the school's current status in terms of its tradition:

Well, I think first of all [Mziwethu] is the first high school in the township here... and most of the parents who are now parents who bring children to the school have been products of [Mziwethu] and it was the first school and it had a good reputation. It had very good results. It had a very successful choir that always won the competition and went outside of Cape Town to sing, so it was a very popular school then ... I think that is one of the reasons why we are so very overcrowded because each and every parent wants his or her child to come to [Mziwethu] ... I think we still have that er esteem you know at least in terms of discipline... and er (·) you know the uniform which is part of disciplining and people always comment about how beautiful our students look and we have you know revived the choir... our choir is known nationally you know (·) and whenever there's um a guest or somebody or tourists from Germany or from France they're not going to leave Cape Town without coming to [Mziwethu]. And you know Terror Lekota [a government minister] and the Minister of Education and even their secretaries have all been here and

heard the choir. ... the [matriculation] results are better than you know in other areas.

Interestingly, in Hoadley's (1998) research on school choice in a neighbouring township, the principal and students also foregrounded the wearing of the school uniform and the closure of the gates. She draws attention to the fact that these indicators are based on visual perceptions – how the school appears to outsiders.

Like Mrs Mabandla, Mr Bathaka emphasised the community's perceptions but, in addition, spoke at length about school 'governance':

In terms of results at Std 10 [grade 12] we're not bad. At some stage we got just above 80%.... People identify with [Mziwethu] and I think this school (·) in fact I'm confident that it's better governed than other schools. Well, the other things, there's lots of transparency here as post level 1 teachers, that is as ordinary teachers, we know what's going on. We have an impact, we have a say in what is going on. As a result we do not expect the HODs [subject heads of department] or the governing body of the school to be on our case. We charge ourselves. We go to classes. We identify our responsibility and we go to classes. We take charge and we attend to them. Wherever we are we make our presence felt even with extra-curricula activities (·) we make our presence felt.

Mr Bathaka's reply to my question had the incantatory quality of a speech. His perception of school governance was not shared by Mrs Mabandla. As a head of department, she felt hamstrung by the legacy of past resistance to Apartheid (discussed in chapter 3, section 3.3.), which enabled junior teachers to prevent her from observing and critiquing their classes.

The two teachers' rating of Mziwethu in relation to other schools in the area was accurate in terms of matriculation results and discipline. Two students had recently been shot and wounded at one of the neighbouring schools (Mabaso 1997). According to Mziwethu's principal, another school was temporarily closed by the

Department of Education in 1999 because of a complete breakdown in discipline and persistent student protests against teachers (field-notes, February 1999).

An interesting difference between the two teachers lay in their perceptions of the students. Mr Bathaka and Mr Bacela, the guidance teacher, spoke of how in 1997 the school had to take action to contain gang violence by suspending those students who were known to be gangsters. In this way, it was hoped that the fighting would be kept off school premises. Mrs Mabandla spoke of the same action (when I first met her and in an interview) but stressed that the suspended students had been 'friends of gangsters' who were likely to be harassed on school premises by rival gangs looking for the gangsters who had gone into hiding (field-notes, October 1997 and Interview B). Mrs Mabandla spoke of the empathy she felt with her students: 'because we have a shared background' (Interview A). Mr Bathaka's view of students was strongly gendered. He tended to characterise the female students far more positively in terms of behaviour, school attendance and academic performance (Interview G). In class, he would tease them.

4.6.3. Student constructions and negotiation of the culture of the school.

In contrast to their teachers, the 12a students whom I interviewed felt that Mziwethu was no different to other schools in the area. Babalwa had this to say:

The things which is happening here are happening at [name of another local school]. It's happening all over. Because at the end of the day if you can ask your teacher: 'Is your child here [at Mziwethu] maybe or coming here or around the rural areas?' No, not even a single one. They can't take their children to a township school because they know there is no better education there. (Interview C)

Mrs Mabandla's explanation for why people sent their children to school elsewhere, was that the classes were smaller and the facilities better (field-notes, October 1998).

The students also foregrounded the school uniform and the choir in their comparison, but they were very critical. Loyiso's reference point for talking about discipline was primary school:

Well, let me start basically from the bottom that happens... in primary school. Well there it is discipline. You have to be disciplined your (·) starting with your black shoes, grey short, grey trouser, white shirt and also just then you don't wear earrings and sort of funny hairstyles. Then the problem is that you come to high school and then the whole thing change. [You] start to socialise starting with have boyfriends, girlfriends and all sort of that stuff and then the whole part of the discipline now it depends on the teachers... then if you are not wearing those funny clothes and then you'll see that you are left behind. You have to keep up with the crowd. Then the whole part of that discipline is not emphasise by the teachers. They just let you do whatever you want to do, they say it's your fault, it's what you are doing to yourself. (Interview C)

The students spoke proudly of the choir but Mark (the singer) added:

I think basically why the teachers don't do their job especially in the field of sport, they are discouraged by some other teachers you see. Because like sometimes we go to sing maybe er at Nico Malan and we came back and you'll hear some response from some other teacher maybe so saying: 'no, you see at the end of the day you are not going to pass because you concentrate on music'. Ja, I think basically the teachers must realise where we are and er give us that thing we need because if we are going to have something like when we are having a competition we need some courage from the support of your teachers and also parents. They will never give you that. (Interview C)

When I asked their opinion of the locking of the gates, Babalwa, who was also the Deputy Chair of the Students' Representative Council (S.R.C.), replied:

Well it's something that I can promise you maybe next year it will not happen like that... It is only that there was a parents' meeting and then the parents decided that no pupil from [Mziwethu] will come in the gate not wearing school uniform starting from shoes and jerseys and all that stuff and that is half past eight the gate must be closed. So that it came from the parents and I believe it will end soon but it will depend on the principal. (Interview C)

Sipho and Thulani, the former Mziwethu students, also noted that the parents put pressure on the teachers with regard to discipline (Interview F). Babalwa explained a complex procedure whereby students could raise difficulties with the teachers *via*

their class representatives and the S.R.C. But the others were sceptical (Interview C).

Again it is Loyiso who is most vocal:

But the problem is this and it will stay like that as we as the student are afraid to fight for our rights because sometimes {*Luleka adds: 'teachers have power'*} Ja... you go maybe now to the staff room, and you will see they are sitting there and doing nothing whereas there are students who are supposed to [be] sitting in class and taught by them but they are sitting there. I think maybe if our teachers could realise now it's time because it's never too late to succeed. That is the time now to wake up and not just have the government pay them but they are doing nothing.... They will tell us you are writing this paper and this paper is written by the same student which are over the station in [name of neighbouring coloured township]. They compare us but they think that they as teachers are not responsible also. We are just told information: 'now take it down. If you don't understand, it's your problem'. (Interview C)

These comments resonate with complaints made by a student from a former D.E.T. school at a key education conference held in Cape Town, which received prominence in a newspaper report the day before my interview with the students. The article quoted a student at the conference who said: 'Schools are not being used the right way. Some teachers use their time as sun-sitting' (Fakier 1998). According to the article, the term 'sun-sitting' is a pun on 'Sun City', an expensive South African pleasure resort. It is possible that these very public comments emboldened my participants to speak out. Several education summits were held in September and October that year, and teachers were repeatedly condemned by education authorities and union officials for poor discipline, lack of responsibility and poor classroom delivery. The need to restore a 'culture of learning and teaching' in former D.E.T. schools became a rallying slogan of the Department of Education (see for examples, Hofmeyr 1998; Khumalo 1998; Paton 1998 and Zille 1998).

The former Mziwethu students made similar comments but added sexual harassment and corporal punishment¹⁰ to their account of teacher culpability. Mpho

described the school as 'corrupt' (field-notes, September 1998). Exactly the same word was used by an Ilitha student to describe all township schools (field-notes, February 1999). When I probed as to the meaning of the word, it seemed to relate to teacher absenteeism, lack of school discipline and the negative influences of the township. Ilitha students say that they travel long distances to the school to escape this environment (field-notes, February 1999). Yet my experience (as described in chapter 3, section 3.5.3.) was that their school day was frequently disrupted by teacher absenteeism, unscheduled meetings, timetable confusion and sports events. The vagaries of the transport services meant that students were often late or absent. Moreover, in September 1999 a student was shot by a classmate at the school, an incident that Mr Van Wyk and Mr Nyembe were reticent about discussing. It seems clear that despite the significant disadvantages in the physical and social environment at Ilitha, teachers and students attribute the school's relative success (at matriculation results) in large measure to the freedom from the township environment.

The criticism expressed by Mziwethu students, present and past, was overwhelmingly directed at young (particularly) male teachers. Mrs Mabandla was exempted. They regarded her as a mother figure who really cared. They had metaknowledge of her teaching methods and approved of her attempts to develop their confidence to speak English (I shall return to this point in the next chapter). Although I did not interview Mr Bathaka's students, it was clear from the remarks made by the students in the choir that he was highly respected in that domain. However, as I shall show in chapter five, he struggled to maintain discipline in class and many students were openly disrespectful.

Student perceptions of negligence also extended to classroom learning.

Anxiety was expressed about not being prepared for the type of questions and the level of difficulty required for the external matriculation examination in the 12a class discussion (referred to earlier). One student said:

Students should be given information about the running of the education system. Students need to know how the exam system is run. How to write a question paper. Teachers should bring some format of the paper. Not the questions, but the way the paper is asked. The std 10 [grade 12] is not like the std 9 [grade 11]. (12a, August 1998)

Another student added:

[name of teacher] says we must read the notes in our notebooks but he set questions from previous years [externally set matriculation examination papers] and our notes did not help. (12a, August 1998)

Although the students were careful to indicate that the criticism was not directed at her, Mrs Mabandla reacted defensively and said that they seemed to have misunderstood the newspaper article (about inefficiency in the education system) which had prompted the discussion. Afterwards, she said that one has to be wary of students' complaints about other teachers and (the students') tendency to be fickle. My perception was that, once more, the students had deliberately used the opportunity to air their grievances in front of potentially sympathetic witnesses.

The students I interviewed also complained about never having finished the syllabus in earlier years. According to Babalwa:

... we lack information in standard 10 [grade 12]... because in standard 6 [grade 8] we never finished the syllabus. You are not introduced to things like projects - that you have to build your own projects. You are used to never finishing the syllabus but in standard 10 you have to because it is written in the whole Western Cape. (Interview C)

The students' experience was that teachers in grade 12 expected them to know concepts that they had not been taught at earlier stages.¹¹ The pace was suddenly

increased in their final year of school, and they had difficulty coping. The students' critique was limited to their instrumental need to pass the matriculation examination. Mpho, who was interviewed at the end of his first year at university, had a more nuanced, less instrumental analysis of the problems with the teaching methods. I will discuss this in chapter 5, section 5.6.5.

The former Mziwethu students, who unlike the 12a students, were not part of the 'elite' classes also spoke of the preferential treatment bestowed upon those students who were members of the "a" class. Mpho who was in 12b remarked that: 'if you are not a clever student, it is difficult for you' (Interview D). Thulani (12c) said that he had had to drop Mathematics after grade 9 because there was no remedial help for those who struggled. Siphon, from 12c, noted that 'the teachers go with the students who are going' (Interview F). Apparently this is a common idiom used by teachers at former D.E.T. schools (*personal communication*, Guzula November 1998). The narrator in Sindiwe Magona's (1990) autobiographical novel says: 'For many it [Bantu/ D.E.T. education] gives no education, but is simply going with those going (*ukuhamba nabahambayo*). Teachers just do not have the time to help stragglers' (p. 8). This formulation aptly describes the academic and social differentiation I observed at school and classroom level. The notion of 'students who are going' also articulates with the statements in the grade 11 dialogues about using education (and by extension English) to leave the township. I will return to the issue of the effect of this notion on classroom discourse and student identity in chapter five.

The students whom I interviewed all saw themselves as 'going' and, as mentioned earlier, they viewed English proficiency as key to their journey. They were

fluent in English (when compared to my first-year university students), motivated, confident and determined to succeed despite the odds. Mark intended pursuing a degree in music; the others were all applying to the local technikons. The school only achieved a 49% pass rate that year (1998) but my informants all passed the matriculation examination, with Siyabonga and Loyiso obtaining university exemptions. Mark is now a music student at U.C.T., but I do not know how the other students have fared. Significantly, they were determined not to enter the teaching profession because of the low pay and teacher retrenchments. This is a departure from the days when, in part due to the limited other options, teaching was highly valued as a profession in black communities. Other than Mark, they were not applying to university because, according to Loyiso, they 'demand higher grade at U.C.T.'¹² and because, according to Luleka, they had been advised (by a local non-governmental organisation) that they would be more likely to obtain jobs through the 'practical' route of technical education (Interview C).

As mentioned in chapter three, Mpho, Thulani, Sipho and one other student whom I could not trace, were the only students from the school studying at U.C.T. at the time of my data collection.¹³ They were all located in the Humanities faculty and have subsequently completed their degrees according to schedule. Mpho and Sipho have also obtained postgraduate diplomas. All three students took initiative in seeking help when they were struggling to cope academically at university. I had the impression, particularly from Mpho, that there is a real sense in which students feel that they have to rely on their own resources to succeed; not only because so many of their teachers are irresponsible, or do not provide guidance, but also because their home lives are fraught. Sipho was raised by his cousins. He knew that he would have

to leave school if he failed an examination. He also knew that he would have to do well enough in the matriculation examination to obtain a bursary to study further. Thulani lived with his elderly grandparents and Mpho had a difficult relationship with his stepfather, which meant that there was always tension in his overcrowded home.¹⁴ Mpho expressed a sense of abandonment by authority and frustration because everyone in the township 'is out for themselves'. In his view, young people have to make a personal, individualised choice if they wish to escape the hardship of the township (Interviews D and F).

Indeed, past and present students seemed highly strategic and self-reliant in their approach to passing the matriculation examination. They spoke of forming study groups with fellow students and attending Saturday classes run by local non-governmental organisations. Sipho and Thulani spent time finding out where there were good subject teachers in the area, and they would attend revision classes at those schools during the day when they were meant to be at Mziwethu. Mpho was an avid reader who, under the mentorship of a left-wing History teacher at the school, joined the City library (15 km away in central Cape Town), and read Marx 'and everything I could get hold of' (Interviews C, D, E and F).

Despite all their criticism of the school, the past students also register a strong sense of loyalty. Mpho, perhaps the most critical and angry, had this to say when asked how he felt about the school:

I feel er I mean I feel proud because that's my school. You see like there was no window, there was no door but I managed to go to school in the morning. There was few facilities you see, the equipment was not sufficient but some teachers managed to go to school and teach. Some teachers were dedicated so I'm proud of that school because some of the teachers really they tried to push

(·) they tried to move the students but it was difficult for some other students because some teachers will never make it. (Interview E)

The first-year U.C.T., former D.E.T. students whom I interviewed in 1997 (see chapter 3, section 3.3.) were similarly ambivalent. They were angry about missed learning opportunities and the wasted time at school, but also immensely grateful that they had gained access to university against all odds. They often attributed their success to the combination of a supportive mother and the intercession of a teacher who recognised their potential.

Although the 12a students' critique of their school matched many of my observations, I was surprised by the extent of their anger in the interview, because their relationships with their teachers, inside and outside the classroom always seemed genuinely warm. Their teachers spoke highly of them and they were regarded as one of the best classes in years. This again raises the issue of how people position themselves in different contexts. When viewed in relation to the wider world, their teachers are found wanting (in terms of providing them with the literacy they believe they need to succeed), but on the other hand their teachers represent the familiarity of home identity and discourses. The students are also completely dependent on their teachers to mediate the literacy of the matriculation examination, not least because of the students' difficulties with English, the language of learning and teaching.

4.7. Conclusion.

Each of us is a member of many Discourses, and each Discourse represents one of our ever multiple identities. These Discourses need not, and often do not represent consistent and compatible values. (Gee 1990, p. xix)

This chapter started with a description of students' language attitudes and practices. Although most students express a desire to be proficient in English, they have little exposure to it and seldom use the language. I drew a picture of the environment in which Mziwethu's students and teachers live, work and study and showed how students conceptualise the environment and locate themselves and each other within it, often in contradictory and ambivalent ways. Their negative perceptions of their learning environment contrast starkly with their teachers' perspectives. The violent, over-crowded and impoverished environment of the township and lack of space and resources at school impact negatively on the learning environment in terms of organisation, social relations and students' personal development. Yet it is also apparent that a number of the practices which have a debilitating effect on organisational capacity and on the lives of individuals are not necessarily the result of the wider social structure, but of an internal institutional culture which has evolved unchecked over five decades of Bantu education. With few exceptions, the principal and teachers lack responsibility and commitment to the school and their students. Students have to rely on their own resources since they have little adult or peer guidance and support for coping with the stresses of their daily lives.

Students' positive attitudes towards English may be understood in this context. As evidenced from much of what they say in their written assignments, English signifies access to material wealth outside of the township. It 'indexes translocality' (*personal communication*, Blommaert December 1999). Henderson (1999) writes of

the township children in her study: 'Dissatisfaction with the textures of life result in imaginative flight, the idea that home lies elsewhere, a desire to be elsewhere, to create an elsewhere' (p.166). That English and education are conflated is significant. As Ngugi (1986) and Ndebele (1987) have pointed out, this is a common feature of postcolonial contexts. The system is structured so that it is not possible to attain a reasonable level of employment without a matriculation certificate in English. The national and school policies of multilingualism have had no impact on their lives.

In a political climate which is simultaneously promoting an 'African Renaissance'¹⁵ and capitalism, students readily acknowledge their desire to accumulate wealth, but are more cautious about articulating their desire to be fluent in, and have access to, American popular culture and its accompanying discourses. Instead they define their identities in relation to their primary socialisation – in singular ethnic terms. This too reflects the prevailing ideology of a 'rainbow nation', which stresses equal but separate ethnic identity.

Students are conscious that proficiency requires practice. Yet, to be seen to be too 'invested' in English or in schooling in general may earn derision and an accusation that one is aspiring to be 'white'. As Canagarajah (1999) writes:

The dual attitudes (motivation and opposition) display the conflicts students face between the threats of cultural alienation experienced subconsciously and the promises of socio-economic necessity acknowledged at a more conscious level. (p.96)

For the students it is safer, perhaps less exposing, to preserve 'face' by seeking refuge in primary discourses that signify belonging and identification with their peers and the township. Thus there appears to be a simultaneous desire to transcend the boundaries of their community and to reinforce them. The data challenge any easy categorisation

of these second language learners as motivated or unmotivated. Motivation to be proficient is, as Norton (2000) has pointed out, complex and contradictory. It is inextricably linked to identity construction, which is in turn embedded in relations of power.

This does not imply that students are simply overdetermined by social forces. Similarly to Thesen (1997) and Soudien (1998a), my data shows that the choices students make about what to say and when and how to position themselves *vis-à-vis* the multiple discourses in their environment are often contradictory but, nevertheless, highly conscious and strategic. It challenges the notion expressed by Alexander (1999b) and Heugh (2000) that second language speakers are motivated to value English because they have been 'assimilated'. My data highlights the importance of engaging with actual contexts of use through ethnographic study in order to understand the dialectic between individuals and social structure.

Notes:

¹ Some of the data in this chapter have been used in Kapp (2000).

² I am grateful to Jan Blommaert for pointing out to me the extent to which the metadiscourse of English (used by the students) is imbued with spatial and geographical framing (*personal communication*, December 1999).

³ I was informed by Pam Maseko, who has conducted research in former D.E.T. schools, that this is a common practice (*personal communication*, November 1998).

⁴ The school still used the old nomenclature of standards (1-10) whereas the Department of Education has shifted to grades 1-12. I have used grades throughout the thesis for purposes of consistency.

⁵ In 1954 it was decided that workers classified as 'coloured' were to be given labour preference in the Western Cape. It was hoped that this would limit the influx of 'African' people into the Western Cape. The area was demarcated in January 1955 (Mills 1983). At that time, the majority in the province, 59,7% were classified 'Coloured'; 22,1% 'White'; 17,8% 'African' and 0,7% 'Indian' (Kruss 1997). Worden (1994) writes that 'under Section 10 of the 1955 Natives (Urban areas) Amendment Act, rights of 'Africans' to live in a town were confined to those who had been born there or had worked there for fifteen years or for ten years with a single employer. All others needed a permit to stay for longer than three days' (p. 98).

⁶ Matriculation figures for specific schools were not released to the public in 1997 and 1998.

⁷ This examination is held in August-September as preparation for the finals. Tertiary institutions and scholarship committees use these marks as the basis for scholarship awards or to make early offers of placement.

⁸ Grade 12 students who fail are not allowed to return because of space constraints. They have to attend one of the local 'finishing' schools if they wish to repeat the standard. Crouch and Mabogoane (1997) estimate that, due to repetition, 'African' youth are spending on average close to 15 years at school.

⁹ This conception of school discipline was not confined to comparison with the schools in the area. When Mziwethu was accused of being 'ill-disciplined' by a teacher from a former Model-C school (with whom Mziwethu had been partnered in an outreach programme) Mrs Mabandla and a science teacher were outraged (field-notes, July 1998).

¹⁰ Corporal punishment was outlawed in South African schools in 1997, after these students matriculated. The prohibition caused considerable outrage in former D.E.T. schools in particular. Teachers and parents say that, in a context where student misdemeanours are of such a violent nature, no other form of punishment is adequate. It seemed from the account by current students and teachers that it was no longer practised at Mziwethu. However, I was told privately that it still takes place at Iitha because 'the parents want it' (field-notes, February 1999). Evidence from a range of sources suggests that it is still commonplace in former D.E.T. schools (see Henderson 1999 and Pretorius 1998).

¹¹ The phenomenon of teachers in former D.E.T. schools concentrating on easier examples because of their own insecurities about the subject matter was something I observed in (particularly) Mathematics and Physical Science classes in the development project in which I worked (see also Taylor and Vinjevold 1999). The current emphasis in the Department of Education is to improve the matriculation pass rate by encouraging students to take subjects at the lower (standard grade) level. This has already had the effect of lowering the percentage of university entrance qualifications (matriculation exemptions).

¹² This comment probably reflects the students' knowledge that they would be unlikely to obtain matriculation exemption because of the limited number of subjects taken on the higher grade.

¹³ According to Census 1996 only 0.6% of the township's population have a degree.

¹⁴ Henderson (1999) documents the multiplicity of ways in which the children in her study experience disruption and betrayal within networks of care-giving kin.

¹⁵ The President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, has been actively promoting this concept. In the 'new' South Africa there has been a general emphasis in government and in the media on the promotion of an African identity.

Chapter 5: Teaching and Learning English at Mziwethu.

'You have read between the lines, you have not read on the line'. (Mrs Mabandla, August 1998)

'We are trying to be very polite and educated nè? We are trying to move away from being rude and crude'. (Mr Bathaka, August 1998)

5.1. Introduction.

This chapter explores institutional notions of English teaching; that is, the constructions embedded in official Western Cape Education Department documents (1995-1999). It also describes teachers' ideas about their students' needs, and describes and interprets the discourses of English in grade 11 and 12 classrooms at Mziwethu. In the process, a number of contradictions are shown to emerge within policy, between policy and practice, between how teachers think they ought to teach, how they say they teach, and how they are observed to teach (to abstract from Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985, quoted in chapter 3).

In part one, I examine the official discourses that regulate what is taught. I describe and analyse the construction of English in the current senior English second language syllabus in the Western Cape (WCED 1995a). I show that when read together, the syllabus, guideline documents to teachers and the matriculation examination papers promote narrow, instrumental uses of English.

In part two I describe the philosophy that informs Mrs Mabandla- and Mr Bathaka's approaches to English teaching. Both are very conscious of the syllabus and, as I shall show, its communicative language teaching approach informs their

teaching. Nevertheless, a combination of their individual personalities, personal, educational and language histories, assessment pressures, and language attitudes, contribute towards quite distinct conceptualisations of English and of their students' needs. I briefly compare their approaches with that of the Ilitha teachers in order to signal crucial differences between the two schools.

In parts three and four I show how the teachers' philosophies and interpretation of the official discourse translate into classroom practice. Part three describes and analyses Mrs Mabandla's literature teaching. Part four focuses on Mr Bathaka's language classes.¹ I represent the teachers' logic for their practices alongside my own interpretation and explanation. In keeping with my ethnographic approach, I have elected to describe a few typical classes in detail, drawing on comparisons from other classes, in order to (a) explicate fully the context of the classes; (b) focus not only on the dominant patterns and content of talk, but also on its sequencing and structure and (c) triangulate, through comparison between different teachers, different groups of students and the same group at different times. The choice to represent the full context of the interaction reflects my dual assumptions (outlined in chapter one) that the classroom discourse reflects outside realities; but also that the classroom is itself a social domain where social relations are enacted (Pennycook 2000).

In part five of this chapter I (a) characterise the discourse practices fostered by the teachers in the classroom (b) explain and analyse their relationship to official discourses about English and institutional culture and (c) explain and analyse how classroom discourses relate to learners' constructions of themselves and English.

My data show that, at grade 12 and even at grade 11 level, the teachers' discourse practices are overdetermined by their conception of what students need to know for the external matriculation examination. This has a marked effect on the form of the interaction, on the manner in which teachers mark what counts as valid knowledge and on their relationships with their students.

Thus, the central questions which inform this chapter are.

- What is the construction of English and second language learning and teaching embodied in the ESL syllabus, the matriculation examination and other Western Cape Education Department (WCED) policy documents? How do these constructions compare with teachers' notions of English learning and teaching?
- What is the relationship between teachers' philosophies about English teaching and classroom practice?
- What forms of communicative competence do the patterns of language use in the classroom foster?
- How are the learners constructed by classroom discourse?

PART ONE: The official English curriculum.

5.2. The ESL Syllabus.

5.2.1. Introduction.

The current syllabus was first introduced in 1995. It foregrounds the fact that:

As English is currently a medium of instruction for a large part of the population, many of whom do not have it as a home language, English is of central importance to the whole learning process. (WCED 1995a, p. 1)

It describes English as a language of access to a range of resources and a prerequisite for wider educational and employment opportunities, but stresses the 'interim' nature of this position: 'in the present situation, therefore, until new language in education policies are in place, the ability to understand and to use English effectively is

important' (p.1). At the same time it acknowledges the significance of the home language(s) for learning:

... pupils' proficiency in their home language(s) should be acknowledged and teachers should draw on this resource, also by allowing pupils to code-switch with a view to enhancing pupils' comprehension, clarification and acquisition of the target language. (p.1.)

In the past, South African ESL syllabi were based on structural approaches where, as outlined in chapter two (section 2.5.2), the aim was for the learner to internalise items of language, words and sentences 'as forms containing meaning in themselves' (Widdowson 1997, p. 157). Barkhuizen (1998) observes that these earlier syllabi (1984 for example) refer only indirectly to teaching English for communicative purposes (see also Yeld 2001). The 1995 syllabus marks a shift in approach. It is based on the communicative approach to language teaching (CLT), which emphasises 'performance' and an integration of skills teaching (see chapter two, section 2.5.2). The acknowledgement of the importance of the home language for second language development, and in particular the sanctioning of code-switching, marks a departure from the 'English only' approaches of the past, which as Phillipson (1992) points out, forced teachers into covert code-switching (chapter two, section 2.4.).

Four basic principles are outlined in the 1995 syllabus:

- A. The focus should be the pupil as learner: starting from where pupils are.
- B. Variations in English vocabulary, syntax, accent, stress and intonation patterns should be acknowledged.
- C. Language has a fundamental role to play in the whole process of cognitive development. This role needs to be acknowledged by all teachers. The adoption of a language-across-the curriculum policy is advocated.
- D. The four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) should be taught in an appropriately integrated and interactive approach (WCED 1995a, p. 2).

5.2.2. Listening; Speaking; Reading and Writing.

Four key skills are listed: listening; speaking; reading and writing. Under the heading of each skill, the writer/s detail the kinds of functions to which language has to be put, but in each case, underscore the need for integration.

5.2.2.1. Listening.

The first skill is 'listening'. The document calls for the development of the junior secondary phase stress on 'an ability to understand the native speaker of English' and for an awareness of 'context and purpose' (WCED 1995a, pp. 4-5). It contains a list that includes interpersonal functions such as recognising words, idioms and register in social situations and relationships; as well as more academic functions such as following arguments or interpreting character in dramatisations.

5.2.2.2. Speaking.

The 'speaking' list is by far the longest and most specific, a characteristic of many CLT syllabi (see chapter two, section 2.5.2). In a document on evaluation issued to schools subsequent to the revision of the syllabus, English teachers are advised that the oral mark will henceforth count a third of the total English mark: 'The large number of marks awarded to the oral component recognise [sic] the primary role of the spoken word in language acquisition' (WCED 1995b, p. 1). An extract from the long list of desired functions under 'speaking', states that pupils should be able to use language in '*basic social interaction* with people to whom they relate in various ways', e.g.:

- initiating, conducting and closing a conversation
- greeting and responding to greetings
- introducing someone and responding to being introduced
- paying and responding to a compliment

- taking leave
- apologising
- offering condolences
- reacting to a request for information
- commenting informally on a film, event or incident
- giving and responding to instructions
- asking for help, information, directions
- chairing a meeting
- participating in a meeting
- participating in an interview ...(WCED 1995a, pp. 4-5).

The emphasis in the above is on basic interpersonal communication. Students are however, also required to perform more cognitively challenging academic 'speaking' tasks in order to 'enhance their own knowledge and understanding of a subject' in the form of:

- asking questions/ enquiring
- rephrasing statements and questions for clarification
- offering explanations or alternatives to peer/s or teacher. (WCED 1995a, p. 5)

5.2.2.3. Reading.

The 'reading' section begins with the statement that:

The importance of reading needs to be reaffirmed. Unless pupils have both a *desire to read* (reading for enjoyment and information) and the *ability* to do so (reading skills) they will not be able to cope adequately in the classroom, nor will they be able to use to the full the many opportunities for career advancement in a literate society. (WCED 1995a, p. 5)

This section lists dictionary skill; surface book recognition skills such as understanding the function and purpose of title and contents pages; understanding of genre; overview skills (such as skimming and scanning) as well as close analysis skills such as the ability to understand when a writer is 'emphasising a point' or 'introducing and developing an idea'. It also includes critical analysis features such as 'distinguishing main points from supporting argument' and detecting 'bias and stereotyping' (WCED 1995a, p. 6).

The list makes no mention of the specialised disciplinary vocabulary and concepts required to analyse a literary text other than an injunction that reading activities should enable students:

to distinguish between fact and opinion and factual and emotive language.
to distinguish between and respond to literal and figurative language, as it occurs in their reading and to infer meaning expressed through implication and figurative language. (WCED 1995a, p. 6)

The discussion on the grade 12 literature paper in a guideline document for teachers (WCED 1997) states that an understanding of the terms 'plot', 'theme', 'setting', 'characterisation', 'conflict' and 'register' should be 'inculcated' (p. 7).

Despite the fact that it counts a third of the final marks, literature is de-emphasised as a discipline. The term 'literature' is used generically (i.e. including creative writing and other texts) in three paragraphs under the heading 'reading'. These paragraphs deal with the need to teach a variety of texts appropriate to the age, background and interests of the pupils '... which should allow pupils to see literature in English in the context of both South Africa and the wider world' (WCED 1995a, p.5). The final paragraph advises that 'should textbooks and setworks contain contentious material', teachers should use the material 'in a way which will contribute to the development in pupils of a critical awareness' (WCED 1995a, p.5). The use of the word 'critical' is ambiguous when used in this context. It may imply 'finding fault' and/or 'asking why'.

The outcome of the de-emphasising of literature as a discipline is evident in the WCED matriculation literature examination papers,² where the emphasis is on what Bernstein (1990) calls 'states of knowledge' rather than 'ways of knowing'

(p.98). Surface-level, 'wh' (what, who, why, where, when and how) questions predominate. These require students to summarise plot, identify themes and describe character and setting. There is little sense of critical engagement with the metaphoric layer of texts or with narrative point of view, and the technical vocabulary associated with figurative language is hardly used. Literature essays are not required. In effect the questions encourage a passive, literal reading. In her documentary analysis of matriculation ESL examination papers from 1994 to 1996, Hansen (1997) concludes that:

... the ESL matriculation examination papers can be classified as achievement tests since they are based on what has been learned from a syllabus. Having noted the focus on content, in both the language and literature papers, I would argue that these papers do not test communicative competence. (p. 53)

Hansen shows that in many cases students 'did not have to understand the texts as a whole to respond to contextual questions' (p. 46). Barkhuizen (1998) also makes this point and argues that the focus on factual recall in the examination encourages teachers to concentrate on the literature section of the syllabus because it can be learnt.

5.2.2.4. Writing.

The 'writing' section acknowledges the relationship between writing and cognition - 'that writing contributes to enabling pupils to clarify and structure their own thinking' - and consequently advocates that writing should be 'regarded not only as a product but also as a process' (WCED 1995a, p. 7). In contrast to the syllabi of old (see Reid 1982 and Wissing, quoted in Gough 1996), there is only one reference (situated in the preamble) to 'imaginative and aesthetic development' (WCED 1995a, p.1). Students are required to be able 'to express themselves comfortably' in a range of genres such as informal letters; descriptive or narrative composition; record-

keeping and 'other forms of writing required by the needs of other content areas' (WCED 1995a, p. 7). They also need to learn to 'express themselves in more formal ways ... as required by a given context for a specific purpose and audience' (WCED 1995a, p. 7). The document lists examples of 'practical or functional writing' which relate to students' 'daily needs and the demands of the workplace'; students must learn to 'apply the conventions appropriate' to these (WCED 1995a, p.7). The genres listed are telegrams; notices; informal letters; formal letters, including letters of application; minutes and reports.

Between 1997 and 2000, creative writing was not examined in the final Matriculation examination.³ The focus was entirely on what is termed 'transactional writing', in keeping with the utilitarian emphasis in the syllabus and a transition to a more 'outcomes-based approach' (Mrs Mabandla, field-notes, October 1998). The guideline document (WCED 1997) defines this form as 'factual, "real-life" writing' and lists examples of such writing as: covering letter and curriculum vitae; agendas and minutes; dialogues; business/formal letters; creating information brochures; newspaper reports/articles; notices; letter to the editor and friendly/informal letters (p. 1). The list consists primarily of instrumental forms, which work directly against the objective of seeing writing as a process that aids cognition. The formats can be learnt, memorised and reproduced *verbatim* in the examination. Mr Van Wyk, who has been employed as a marker of the language matriculation papers for the past nine years, spoke of how the examination rewarded a fixed ('tight') format. He felt conflicted because: 'I know the problems with marking, the problems with setting a standard and getting everybody to stick with it'. On the other hand, he felt that creativity was stifled because one could not reward pupils who produce alternatives:

Mr Van Wyk: I mean how many people memorise their CV [*curriculum vitae*]? You get a student who has memorised a CV who can get 15 out of 15 for that, getting the very next question 2 out of 20 for the comprehension question. That is what is irritating.

But there are many positive things.

Rochelle: Such as?

Mr Van Wyk: Well um (·) in the world out there, there are many rules and regulations. So in many jobs that the kids are going to take, they need to stick to certain, they don't have to think much. In some jobs, I shouldn't say many, but let's be frank, there are systems in place and these systems have to be followed and so forth, so that outcome is useful. (Interview H)

Implicit in the 'writing' list and in Mr Van Wyk's interpretation is a construction of students as functionaries for the workplace. The skills they learn at school are designed to enable them to perform 'appropriately' in that context. Writing about the British context, Fairclough (1995) describes a general shift towards 'seeing knowledge operationally, in terms of competence, what people can do; and towards seeing education as training in skills' (p. 239). He sees the new emphasis on conversational forms of talk in Britain as part of this impetus.

5.2.3. 'Appropriate' uses of language.

As discussed in chapter two (section 2.5.2), appropriate use of language in different contexts is key to the CLT approach. The terms 'appropriate' and 'inappropriate' are used throughout the syllabus document (ten times in an eight page document). In the 'Principles' section near the beginning, we are told that:

... the multilingual nature of South African society has led to variation in English vocabulary, syntax, accent, stress and intonation patterns. Using language effectively (that is language which is appropriate in terms of context, audience and purpose) should be valued more highly than the correct use of a single standard variety of the language. (WCED 1995a, p.2)

On the next page, teachers are told that they should correct students 'only when their choice or use of language is inappropriate' (p.3). This raises important questions: (a)

if all varieties of vocabulary and syntax are acceptable, when is use of language 'inappropriate'? and (b) how are teachers meant to judge which varieties are appropriate for which contexts especially given that (as discussed in chapter two, section 2.4.1) the notion of varieties is highly contested in South African linguistic circles? The document assumes that teachers themselves are in control of 'a single standard,' which as I shall show in part four, is not necessarily the case. We are told that appropriacy is valued above the standard form. Does that mean that language is non-standard when it is 'inappropriate'? Or perhaps it implies that non-standard language is appropriate for certain informal contexts? By leaving key terms like 'appropriate', 'standard' and 'variety', undefined, the document assumes shared norms. And yet, these terms have all been the subject of vigorous debate both in South Africa and abroad. Although I have no access to documentary evidence, Mr Van Wyk's comments about the marking of the matriculation examinations suggest that the marking grids in the memoranda do not support the kind of flexibility and sensitivity to diversity suggested by the syllabus document (Interview H). The repeated use of the term 'appropriate' in relation to 'context and purpose' in the syllabus document in effect underscores the narrowly functional nature of the curriculum. The notion of appropriacy appears to be progressive, in that it advocates respect for other varieties; but, as Pennycook (1994b) and Fairclough (1995) show, this kind of approach actually reinforces undisclosed norms (see chapter two, section 2.5.2).

5.2.4. Grammar.

In line with global trends, explicit teaching of grammatical form is significantly downplayed in the syllabus. It occupies the last page and is termed

'language-in-action'. The focus is on function. We are told that 'where specific aspects of grammar are taught they will normally arise from pupils' reactions to, *inter alia*, the work done in listening, speaking, reading and writing' (WCED 1995a, p.8).

Further the syllabus requires:

- some understanding of how language works
- that language knowledge and the ability to apply it should be developed in an integrated way by showing students how language works in context
- [that grammar teaching] should not occupy the focus of a lesson for longer than is necessary. (WCED 1995, p.8)

In recent years the matriculation examinations have moved away from the 'heavy reliance on discrete-point testing of decontextualised grammar' described by Hansen (1997, p. 43). There is no longer a separate language paper, and language testing is integrated with textual analysis. In chapter two (section 2.5.2), I showed that there has been extensive criticism of (particularly second language) CLT syllabi for their lack of focus on knowledge of system based on the assumption that knowledge of form will result 'naturally' from exposure to the second language. They maintain that, in a second language, grammar has to be 'learnt' through mediation (Wilkins 1981; Widdowson 1991 and Celce-Murcia; Dörnyei and Thurrell 1997). This critique is especially valid in a context where English subject classroom time (approximately four hours per week in large classes) is the most sustained exposure to the language that students are likely to have. In large classes, the errors that 'arise' naturally from class discussion may be made by those students who are sufficiently confident of their proficiency to participate in discussion. Thus the necessary process of risk-taking and feedback on errors described by L2 theorists like Skehan (1993) will be confined to a few.

5.2.5. Conclusion.

The predominant discourse in the syllabus and the examinations is one of functionality. The literacy practices are orientated towards the development of what Cummins (1996) calls 'basic interpersonal communication skills' in a limited range of everyday contexts. The syllabus recognises that language has a central role to play in the development of cognitive processes, that students have to use English at a cognitively demanding level across the curriculum, and that writing helps thinking. It emphasises the importance of process-orientated exploration through writing. But the writing forms that have been prescribed - transactional writing genres, summary paragraphs and single word denotative answers - are cognitively undemanding forms, which may be rote-learned. Rather than challenging students to engage in critical reflection and analysis, the examination tasks require them to identify facts and produce summaries.

Literary study has been reduced to a functional labelling and summarising exercise instead of a platform for critical engagement. Widdowson (1991) writes of the powerful role which a study of literature can play in a communicative syllabus, because it involves moving beyond schematic knowledge, that is the 'common knowledge of shared experience and conventionally sanctioned reality' (p.102). The interpretation of literature, he concludes: '... involves acts of schematic realignment and these can only be achieved by a particularly intensive exploitation of the language medium' (p. 178). Through literary analysis, we are forced to question 'the normal relationship between the diction of the text and the referents of the words used' (Miall and Kuiken 1994, p. 346). Literary study stimulates the imagination by extending the boundaries of experience and challenging students to interpret and make connections

between the familiar and the unfamiliar. The study of literature thus has the potential to combine cognitive, linguistic and affective dimensions of learning.

The syllabus acknowledges that English has a unique role to play in the South African context where it is also the medium of instruction, but it presents no guidelines on how to cater for those demands, other than to stress the importance of 'language-across-the curriculum'. Advocacy of a 'language-across-the curriculum' programme implies a planned, co-operative process with teachers of other subjects, and a radical reconfiguring of subject boundaries. But the syllabus and guideline documents are generally silent on methodology. Together with the matriculation assessment practices, the emphasis in the syllabus on basic interpersonal communication skills in effect contradicts the cognitively demanding role that English plays as the language of learning and teaching. Research seems to show that that the necessary cognitive academic language skills are not being developed in the first language either (see Department of Education 1998 and Vinjevold 1999). Given the dominance of English in South African public, life and the fact that none of the thirty-seven institutions of higher education offer African languages as languages of learning and teaching, the notion of proficiency constructed by the curriculum for the students suggests an ideology that envisages their futures as limited. The syllabus makes theoretical gestures that are at odds with the assessment practices (see also Yeld 2001).

PART TWO: Teachers' approaches to English teaching.

In chapter four I described how my two main teacher informants, Mrs Mabandla and Mr Bathaka, viewed the school and their students. I showed that, although both are second language speakers of English, they are strongly committed to the notion of English as the language of teaching and learning, because they believe that their students' futures would otherwise be constrained. My assumption in this section is that in order to understand and to be able to explain classroom discourse practices, it is essential to uncover what motivates these teachers' practices: how they view their role in the English classroom, how they relate to and interpret the official discourses in relation to their particular teaching environment, and their conception of what their students need. In both cases my understanding of the teachers' approaches was gained over time through comparison of multiple sources - observation, informal talk and the formal interviews.

5.3. Mrs Mabandla's teaching philosophy.

5.3.1. Educational and teaching history.

Mrs Mabandla has an unusual educational background. She completed her own schooling as a mature student through the route of night school whilst working as a domestic worker. She had fled a difficult, hastily arranged marriage in rural Eastern Cape and escaped first to Gauteng and then to Cape Town 'when the heat had died down'.⁴ After completing her high schooling in 1983, she obtained a bursary and enrolled at a teacher training college in the Eastern Cape, where she qualified as a Geography and English teacher in 1987 at the age of forty-three (Mrs Mabandla, field-notes, August 1998). Mziwethu was her first teaching post. In both 1997 and 1998 she taught three senior classes (a total of about 135 students) in addition to her role as

head of English, and considerable administrative duties (such as distribution of bursary money, and allocation, purchasing and distribution of books for the whole school). In 1997 Mrs Mabandla was part of the team of teachers chosen by the Western Cape Education department to set the final English matriculation examination papers.

5.3.2. Communicative language teaching.

In contrast to Mr Bathaka, who had been university trained, Mrs Mabandla has a very conscious philosophy and framework for teaching English which she is able to articulate confidently through a discussion of her classroom methodology.⁵ She attributes this to her training in English, which was unusual in the context of D.E.T. teacher training. Her descriptions contrast markedly from the authoritarian 'chalk and talk methods' characteristic of the training colleges set up for African teachers (see Simons 1986; Austin 1993 and Muthwa-Kuen 1996). Her lecturer, the author of a Masters thesis critiquing structural approaches to language teaching, presented an alternative to Mrs Mabandla's own experience of learning English. This lecturer's emphasis on developing students' confidence had a dramatic and lasting impact on Mrs Mabandla's teaching philosophy. It was through her lecturer that Mrs Mabandla was introduced to the communicative approach, well ahead of its introduction into the revised ESL syllabus in 1995 (Mrs Mabandla, field-notes, October 1998).

Mrs Mabandla's teaching philosophy focuses very strongly on oral communication:

... right from day one I encourage them to try and speak the language, and I allow them to make mistakes ... I want everyone to be free to express whatever one feels I always try to protect those that are not as good.... And what I say to them is that 'okay, let's try to speak the language. You

know the only way for us to be perfect is to practise speaking the language. If you hear somebody making a mistake, try to correct that person very politely, don't howl because if you do that then that person won't try again' ... and then they know right from the beginning that we are allowed to speak and make mistakes and learn from our mistakes. So that is why you would hear them correcting each other and there won't be hard feelings about that.... I also allow you know some element of freedom. I allow them to make noise.... I want a statement to come out spontaneously you know ... even if it's not hundred percent fluent. (Interview A)

Mrs Mabandla's awareness of her central position as authoriser and facilitator of student talk comes across strongly. This is a very clear statement about the importance of practising the language in order to achieve fluency, and of developing the confidence to take risks and make errors. She believes that students' views should be taken seriously - that they are not 'empty vessels' - and that the subject should be made enjoyable and 'relevant' (Mrs Mabandla, field-notes, August 1998).

Mrs Mabandla seldom corrects students' grammatical errors while they are speaking. She notes the errors and integrates them into later lessons (Mrs Mabandla, field-notes, August 1998). This reflects her strong reaction to her own confining, 'rule-based' study of English, which resulted in an inability to 'express myself without first thinking through all the rules':

... when I was at school or when I started my teaching you know students would obtain A's in English in written language and when it came to expressing oneself it would be difficult because a person has never had a chance of speaking the language. (Interview A)

It also reflects her image of the culture and literacy practices of tertiary institutions and the workplace:

I always tell them that when you go to U.C.T., U.W.C. [University of the Western Cape] or Pentech. [Peninsula Technikon] or whatever tertiary institution of your choice, you won't have lecturers who know your mother tongue and who will be able to communicate things in your language. And now, because you were not trained to speak the language, you were not given

that opportunity to practise speaking the language, it will be difficult for you to even ask questions you don't understand because you fear you are going to make mistakes. So this is the place to make mistakes, so you know trying to look into the future that it is not just to pass your exam. It is for you to be able to express and communicate and argue your point out there in the wider world. (Interview B)

The emphasis on performance and fluency in Mrs Mabandla's description of her classroom methodology is consistent with the principles of the communicative approach to language teaching expressed in the syllabus. Her tendency to emphasise oral skills is, as I have argued earlier, a characteristic feature of many communicative approaches and, indeed, of the current syllabus.

However, what became evident to me is that Mrs Mabandla conflates the notion of a communicative approach to language teaching with oral communication:

So I find that those who do very well who express themselves very clearly and very confidently, they do as well in their written work. They seem to understand the work more and their interpretative skills are very good. So I find that it really helps now that they are free, they speak and their communicative skills have improved. So has their writing. (Interview B)

Mrs Mabandla does not think of writing as a special or particularly significant form of literacy. This view of writing has its roots in Mrs Mabandla's past. Her experience of school writing appears to be one of filling books with grammar exercises, which she found tedious:

[when I was at school] it was always writing, writing and not speaking. So I always devote more time to speak in class...I think we need to instil the fact that this English has got to be communicative, it's not just about doing work and filling the children's exercise books with work. You know I do very minimal writing with my classes. You might have noticed thatI believe that if you can't communicate effectively then that is also going to affect your writing negatively. (Interview B)

Thus, because Mrs Mabandla believes that the literacy of writing will flow naturally from speaking confidence, writing is undervalued in her classes. She showed no awareness of how writing could be used as an exploratory tool to aid cognition.

5.3.3. The language of learning and teaching.

The 'freedom' in Mrs Mabandla's conception of the safe space created in her classroom is offset by her adoption of a strict 'English only' policy in her classes. Students are often reprimanded or punished (by having to stay behind after class or by having marks deducted) if they speak Xhosa in class or in communication with her:

Whoever comes to my class has got to speak English even if it is an S.R.C. [students' representative council] member coming to deliver a message. They will look through the window and see if I'm there and they will go or they will pass on and they will come later on. And if they speak in Xhosa, my students will howl at them 'we don't understand you, what are you talking about' And you know my classes are known for that, I'm labelled by other classes....
(Interview A)

Over time I learnt that Mrs Mabandla's 'English only' position was more nuanced than it would appear at first glance. She used Xhosa to explain figures of speech for example, in lower standards 'because nowadays it's acceptable to code-switch' (field-notes, September 1998). She also used Xhosa to signal shared culture with the students by getting them to name the Xhosa word for indigenous customs or concepts, which arise in English texts (see for example appendix 3, turns 78-80 and 150-152). But she believes that at matriculation level, extensive code-switching should no longer be necessary or desirable (Mrs Mabandla, field-notes, September 1998). She remains critical of the notion of instruction through the medium of an African language because she feels that this would limit post-school opportunities (Interview A).

According to Mrs Mabandla, students accept her 'English only' policy because of the 'incentive' of the oral mark, which counts a third of their total mark and requires informal as well as formal participation:

Another thing that helps in my classes is that on the first day I expose them to the syllabus ... [I tell them] if you don't participate in oral then you lose out on the hundred because it cannot be given to you, so that is another incentive, so if I ask a question, or you want an answer, you want to borrow a pen from your desk-mate, it has to be English all the time.... (Interview A)

In a grade 12 literature class (12c), this sounded much more like a threat than an incentive. Mrs Mabandla told students that they could gain 5 marks through active participation but: '... minus 5 marks for speaking any other language but English. If I just hear a click [indicating Xhosa pronunciation] that is minus 5 marks'. Later, when the students do not participate actively in groups she complains: 'Why are you so quiet, I want a conversation to take place', before adding 'otherwise there's no plus 5 [oral marks]' (August 1998). Here it is quite apparent that Mrs Mabandla manipulates the students' fears and anxiety about their marks and the matriculation examination (discussed in chapter four) to gain co-operation for her method.

Mrs Mabandla's 'English only' policy is in part a result of her belief in the high status of English and a reaction to a situation where students had very little opportunity to practise English in oral or written form other than in some English classrooms (and even then, students are frequently taught English through the medium of Xhosa, as described in chapter four, section 4.3). Although English is the high status language at the school and ultimately plays a major role in determining academic success (as shown in chapter four) its role in daily interaction and in the classroom is minimal. But Mrs Mabandla's approach to the issue of language medium has also been influenced by her desire to demonstrate solidarity with her Xhosa

community and to conform to the new norms of the syllabus that now encourage code-switching. Just as students' attitudes and practices with regard to language and language learning are complex and defined in relation to personal factors and societal and institutional power relations, so teachers' choices and practices with regard to language medium are shaped by a combination of personal and contextual factors.

5.4. Mr Bathaka's teaching philosophy.

5.4.1. Educational and teaching history.

Mr Bathaka was educated at a former D.E.T. school in the Eastern Cape. He wanted to study music at the University of the Western Cape but was not permitted to do so because he did not have the necessary formal music qualifications. Instead, he enrolled for a B.A. degree at the university, majoring in English and History. Thereafter he completed a postgraduate Honours degree in History and a teaching diploma. Whilst at the university, he led its award-winning creative arts choir, consisting of students outside of the music department. He also taught matriculation winter schools for the non-governmental organisation which had sponsored his studies. After graduating, he was employed as a primary school teacher in a Western Cape township for just over a year before joining Mziwethu in April 1995. Thus, at the time of my study, Mr Bathaka was a relatively new teacher but was teaching English at senior levels because of his university qualifications. In 1998, he was responsible for a total of 280 students – four grade 11 English classes and one grade 9 History class. This was considered a normal teaching load at the school. As mentioned in chapter four, he was also the choirmaster.

5.4.2. Communicative language teaching.

Mr Bathaka chose the route of teaching mainly English because:

I enjoyed English and it was having a lot of scope. Whereas with History, well there is some scope in terms of analysing whatever material that there is but in terms of, in terms of your own expression and that kind of stuff, well it kind of confines one. (Interview G)

In Mr Bathaka's view, the primary objective of teaching English as a second language in the present syllabus is that:

Children should be taught to communicate. But before that it was not like that, it was that the person should be able to seek job, should be able to ask the owner of the firm for a job... but there has been some positive shifts in terms of objectives. I always differed with the fact that I'm teaching my kids to be able to communicate. It underscores my job. Well to be able to communicate does it only mean that they should be able to say what they want and so on. It has to go beyond that. They should be able to make a living out of what I'm teaching them. Whatever that means... so the original stream of teaching was functional. You had to stream your kids towards a particular direction. Well, nowadays there's a new term 'outcomes-based'. You look at your outcomes and base your teaching on whatever which is fine so long as it does not confine the kids. (Interview G)

Here Mr Bathaka is reacting to the notion in 'Bantu' education that 'African' students were being trained as functionaries, to perform menial jobs. Only a basic, instrumental command of English was needed because the primary goal was to communicate with 'white' employers who could not communicate in an African language (Ndebele 1987 and Hartshorne 1999). Mr Bathaka's construction of his students' futures is similar to that of Mrs Mabandla, but contrasts starkly with Mr Van Wyk's notion that his students will work in jobs where they will have to do as they are told (section 5.2.5).

Although he does not say so directly, Mr Bathaka's teaching philosophy bears the hallmarks of the communicative approach, as well as aspects of academic literacy such as critical analysis and argument. He spoke of building 'complete and holistic' and 'confident' students (Interview G) and of getting students to express their own

opinions and 'to challenge' (field-notes, September 1998). In class, he would frequently invite students to be 'critical' or to 'come with an argument' (see appendices 5; 7 and 8). In informal conversation and in the interview, he foregrounded the importance of creativity and lamented having to teach large classes because of the limits placed on creativity (field-notes, August 1998; Interview G). He organised for his students to participate in public-speaking contests because he believed 'that speaking is as important a component of the language as the written component':

At the beginning of the year, I make them do little assignments and to talk a lot such that I'm sure at some stage they thought that, well English is fun, you see. You send them on their rounds and then they come back and they get a lot of information and they've achieved something. You will see them satisfied that 'look we have done this work, come up with statistics'. (Interview G)

Mr Bathaka constantly stressed the importance of building students' research skills. He twice told me of a research project on child abuse that his grade 11 students had completed, over a period of six months, in 1997. The students had visited the child abuse centre and the police station where they had collected statistics and interviewed staff. A few students compiled the final report under his supervision. He spoke of the students' emotional investment in the project:

They were 'shocked'. When they gave the report to the classes others cried, they did not believe that, it was shocking ...when they go out and so these reports, they get a lot of satisfaction, somehow their confidence builds. (Interview G)

Through classroom observation, I learnt that Mr Bathaka's concept of 'research' was somewhat circumscribed. At the time of my data collection, his students had been engaged in a group literature research project. This entailed selecting a poem, novel or a play from the library and presenting an analysis to the class. I listened to the presentations in 11a and 11d. In both classes, students seemed

to have selected poems from their prescribed poetry anthology and their analyses were copied (sometimes *verbatim*) from the notes at the back of the textbook. The student who sat next to me silently pointed this out to me. Some presentations were almost incomprehensible as students struggled over the words, shuffling awkwardly and cringing in embarrassment. Mr Bathaka voiced his consciousness of their plagiarism on one occasion. But his corrections were confined to pronunciation errors. The rest of the students paid little attention as they busied themselves with Mathematics homework. Only one student in 11a, a gifted storyteller, narrated the plot of a George Bernard Shaw play with such passion and eloquence that the rest of the class put aside their Geometry to listen and applaud enthusiastically at the end. I felt really embarrassed by these classes, but Mr Bathaka's comments to me afterwards reflected that he was proud of his students' 'research'. He viewed the project as part of his efforts to get students to read beyond the curriculum. Other than the Bernard Shaw presentation, I saw little evidence that students had read what they presented or conducted independent research and analysis.

5.4.3. The language of teaching and learning.

Although Mr Bathaka believes that English should remain the language of learning and teaching at school, he does not have the strict 'English only' policy that characterises Mrs Mabandla's teaching philosophy and practice. He believes that students should use mainly English in the English classes, but his concern for their lack of competence in Xhosa (discussed in chapter four, section 4.3) and their lack of interest in maintaining Xhosa traditions and their Xhosa identity leads him to check on their Xhosa knowledge base when he is, for example, teaching English proverbs:

Whilst I was teaching, I would be interested in knowing how is their base, that is, their mother tongue. Although I don't do it quite often, but I would do it

just to check them if they still follow their own language which is actually I think, what I found is quite shocking. They'll be doing far better with other languages than they're doing with *isiXhosa*. (Interview G)

Like the Biology and History teachers, Mr Bathaka sometimes slips into Xhosa to discipline students (appendix 8, turn 18) but, when students use Xhosa to answer his questions, he admonishes them (see for example, appendix 8, turns 21-25).

Nevertheless, students resist by using Xhosa to each other, in what Tsui (1996) calls 'private turns' (p. 96), before answering his questions in English. They also use it to mock wrong answers (appendix 8, turn 19).

Mr Bathaka sometimes uses Xhosa as a resource to scaffold students' understanding of English grammar. In the 11a class on affixes he adapted a Xhosa rule to explain English usage (appendix 8, turns 81-3).⁶ The students did not understand his explanation, apparently because he had not used the same terms as their Xhosa teacher and because they had learnt the rule the previous year and not recently (as he had thought when he taught the lesson) (Interview G). Yet, Mr Bathaka abandoned his explanation when it became clear that the students did not follow. When I asked Pam Maseko (U.C.T., African Languages) to evaluate his explanation, she thought it excellent and decided to use the idea for her own first-year Xhosa classes. Unlike Mrs Mabandla, Mr Bathaka attempts to convey the value of Xhosa to his students by using it both as a reference point and as a scaffolding tool. However, whereas Mrs Mabandla is explicit about her policy, Mr Bathaka and Mr Siko, the history teacher, constantly shift the parameters of what is permissible and students are required to adjust accordingly. As I have shown (in chapter four, section 4.3.), students resist and use Xhosa anyway.

It is worth pausing here to consider Mr Bathaka's own use of English because; it was markedly different from the other English teachers I observed, but similar to the majority of teachers (at both schools) who were speakers of African languages. As is common in former D.E.T. schools, all four English teachers in my data were second language speakers of English. Each spoke with the accent of their region of origin. With the exception of Mr Nyembe, a U.C.T. English honours graduate, all of them made occasional common errors of concord, tense or word order but none of these were consistent. However, in addition to these errors, Mr Bathaka's English bears many of the hallmarks of what Buthelezi (1995) and Gough (1996) identify as 'Black South African English'. Some of the grammatical features may be observed in the quotes I have used. Most prominent is the use of the present continuous tense; the omission of articles; the use of 'nè' as an invariant tag question; the distinctive use of quantifiers ('others' instead of 'some'). All of these are features identified by Gough (1996), who attributes them to 'native-language transfer (which explains the African quality) as well as universal features relating to language learning (which explains their similarities with Englishes generally) ...' (p. 63). Mr Bathaka reproduces these features in his grammar classes. For example, in an exercise that focuses on 'common second language errors' (appendix 6, exercise 1, no. q), the 11d students have to fill in the blank in the following statement using the options provided:

Television _ stay at home

A. makes me to. B. makes me C. make me to D. make me

Mr Bathaka says that the correct answer is 'television makes me to'. His answer is probably the result of native-like transfer from the Xhosa (*personal communication*, Bongani Bangeni, September 2001). Mr Bathaka tells the class that he had been unsure but had decided on this option after consultation with a colleague.

In addition, (as is evident in the quotes above) Mr Bathaka's English includes stylistic markers of black South African English, characterised by Gough (1996) as 'a penchant to the florid' (p. 68). Whereas the other English teachers tended to use a very direct, modified speech in interaction with the students, he has a tendency towards circumlocution. As pointed out in chapter four, his verbal style sometimes has the incantatory quality of a formal speech. He occasionally uses colloquial expressions such as '*what-what*' (a Southern African expression used to denote a mutually known concept) and *hayi khona* (meaning 'no but' in Xhosa, but frequently used in South African English).

Mr Bathaka has majored in English successfully at an English medium South African university that has obviously accepted the language variety that he uses. In turn, this is the variety that he models for his students. Canagarajah (1999) has remarked that the 'vernacularization of ELT classrooms in periphery communities is a sociolinguistic reality' (p.143). I could find no statistics, but the assumption can safely be made that nearly all teachers in former D.E.T. schools are second language speakers of English. The overwhelming majority of South African matriculants (92% in 1997 and 90% in 1998) are second language speakers as well (Shindler 1998 and Shindler and Bot 1999). As I have shown (in section 5.2.5.) the syllabus advocates that all varieties should be acknowledged and tolerated, but does not provide guidelines for teachers. Moreover, it does not discuss the issue of teachers' use of language, and seems to assume that teachers themselves will be in control of (an undefined) standard: that they are able to make distinctions between varieties. And,

according to Mr Van Wyk, the examinations have quite fixed guidelines in this regard. I shall return to this issue when I discuss Mr Bathaka's language classes.

5.5. Comparison with the approach at Ilitha.

The Mziwethu teachers' faith in communicative language teaching and belief in the value of oral communication contrasted strongly with the attitudes expressed by the Ilitha teachers. Mr Van Wyk and Mr Nyembe mentioned, independently of each other, that students were 'naturally passive' (Mr Van Wyk, field-notes, December 1998) because of 'a culture where they are brought up to sit and listen' (Mr Nyembe, field-notes, February 1999). Mr Nyembe spoke of how students would go to considerable lengths to avoid the embarrassment of speaking English in class:

They are quite happy if you give them exercises. You know they like that because they can just sit down, keep quiet and do the exercises because then they don't get to speak in class and everybody's listening to them because now they dread having to stand up and speak. So they're quite happy. They can just simply switch off and hope that when the bell rings, the class would have finished. They go home and possibly copy from someone. (Interview I).

In the interview Mr Van Wyk said that every year he had a 'backlog' because students had not been properly prepared for grade 12 and 'refuse to do second language on the standard grade'.⁷ In informal conversation he questioned the viability of the communicative approach and the value of group-work in a context where one has to teach in 'crisis mode' according to 'what comes up in the examination'. He felt that students do no work when they are put into groups (Mr Van Wyk, field-notes, February 1999). He said that the emphasis on oral communication in the syllabus was not very 'practical' in large classes. He added that 'there is little time for oral when you are trying to cover the basics':

I asked you know a student the other day: 'How often do you speak English?' 'Where do you speak English?' [He replied] 'At school'. [I asked] 'To

whom'? [He replied] 'To you'. And that is about once a week when I get around to asking that person something or having a sort of exchange that's all, or asking that student to read. (Interview I)

The matriculation assessment was used by all the teachers I observed as a mechanism for gaining student co-operation, a point Wickham (1997) also makes in relation to Model C schools. The tendency was, however, far stronger at Ilitha where teachers referred to types of examination questions and techniques for gaining extra marks in every single class I attended. Mr Van Wyk devoted an entire class to the literacy of answering questions. He said that the examination forced teachers into a situation where 'creativity is cut down' and they have to 'drill...training to pass, training to do certain things to get marks, that is the main objective' (Interview H). When I asked him to comment on my perception that there appeared to be an emphasis at Ilitha on writing, worksheets, and tests, he replied:

Probably yes, it links up with drilling for exams because the exam is written. Not a single student would fail oral. So let's say it's being pragmatic. I'm not saying we're right. We should be following a communicative approach but I think there are pragmatic reasons. We realise that our kids are passing oral and we normally have our marks lifted by five let's say every year and they don't go higher than that. But nobody is increasing our written mark. (Interview H)

Mr Nyembe believes that 'everyday there must be writing' (Interview I). Whereas Mrs Mabandla encouraged her students to speak English, Mr Van Wyk's injunction to his grade 12 (12a) students was to 'think in English' so that they could develop the appropriate 'idiom' for writing otherwise they would forfeit marks in the examination (February 1999).

Mr Van Wyk's critique highlights the extent to which the functional literacy requirements of the examination dominate in a context where both readers and students are measured by the matriculation examination. From my conversations with

them, I know that both Mr Van Wyk and Mr Nyembe have the necessary education and training to teach creatively and at a cognitively demanding level. Nevertheless they have taken the decision to be 'pragmatic' and teach instrumentally for the examination. By contrast, the Mziwethu teachers believe that they can fulfil the CLT requirements of student-centred, oral exploration, as well as the factual, product-orientated examination.

PART THREE: Mrs Mabandla's literature teaching.

The respect that Mrs Mabandla shows when she speaks of her students is borne out in her teaching practice. Nevertheless, the form of her classroom interaction precludes her from activating her desire for a student-centred pedagogy that will promote fluency for all her students. In addition, the examination requirements, together with her limited sense of literary study, promote a surface-level reading of texts.

5.6. Description and interpretation of Mrs Mabandla's lessons.

Out of the twenty lessons I observed Mrs Mabandla teach, I have chosen to focus on a short story lesson taught to the 11a class at the beginning of my data collection period in October 1997, and to draw comparisons with another short story lesson taught to the same class almost ten months later in August 1998 when they were in grade 12 (12a). Where relevant, I shall refer to other literature lessons taught by Mrs Mabandla and Mr Bathaka, Mr Van Wyk and Mr Nyembe.

The first lesson is an analysis of a short story by Bessie Head called "Property" (see full transcript, appendix 3). The story is set in Botswana and examines

critically the effect of bride-price on social relations. Bessie Head was a black South African writer who lived in exile in Botswana for most of her life. The story is part of an anthology called Nations (Cooper 1995), which had been prescribed for the matriculation syllabus for the following year. However, Mrs Mabandla started the story with the grade 11 class in order to ensure that she would 'complete' the syllabus the following year (Mrs Mabandla, field-notes, October 1997). The students had been requested to read the story for homework a week prior to the lesson.

The lesson which I shall use as a basis for comparison focused on another short story from Nations, entitled "Two Women" by an 'Indian' South African writer, Agnes Sam (see full transcript, appendix 4). The plot centres on an encounter between two South African women: an 'Indian' guerrilla fighter attempting to cross the border illegally, and the 'white' farmer who captures her. Narrated from the perspective of the 'Indian' woman, it is an ironic look at the effect (on social relationships) of racial and gender conditioning in Apartheid South Africa.

5.6.1. The students.

The class whom I have selected for analysis here were Mrs Mabandla's favourite students and, with the exception of their Xhosa teacher who thought them outspoken, were highly regarded by their teachers because they were 'bright' and worked hard (Mrs Mabandla, field-notes, July 1998). There were 44 students in the class in 1997 and 40 in 1998. In both years, 22 were women. In 1997, their ages ranged from 16 to 20. The 'dominant' personalities in the class – Loyiso, Mark, Babalwa, Luleka and Siyabonga - were also the students whom I interviewed and quote extensively in chapter four. The fact that I was able to observe Mrs Mabandla's

interaction with this class in October 1997, and again in the second half of 1998 when they were in the final stages of their matriculation year was beneficial in terms of observing (a) their unfolding relationship with Mrs Mabandla and (b) any changes in their classroom talk. It also meant that they became used to my presence and answered my questions readily in both formal and informal contexts. In 1998, I was able to observe these students in their Biology, History and Afrikaans classes as well.

5.6.2. The context of the lesson.

The "Property" lesson took place near the end of the school year. I shall begin by recreating the scene at the beginning of the lesson before describing and analysing its form and content.

As a result of the movement to a 'platoon system' (discussed in chapter 4, section 4.6.1), on Monday 27 October, the grade 11a school day starts at midday with English. The lessons are fifty minutes long as usual but, because of the limited time available, the students now have English on alternate days (instead of once a day). We wait outside a prefabricated classroom at the back of the school where a male teacher is slashing the board with a whip and demanding that students return a watch that has been stolen. Mrs Mabandla goes to talk to him and he and some 50 or so grade 9 students vacate the room. The classroom that we enter is small, hot and dusty with few windows, many broken panes and no electricity. The walls are paper-thin and the noise from the unattended classes on either side is unbearable to me.

I sit in a seat near the back, sharing a desk reserved and cleaned for me by one of the students. The class takes five minutes to settle and nearly half arrive late. Mrs

Mabandla does not show her irritation at this (although she speaks of it privately afterwards). The students who are late gather at the front of the room, without texts, watching silently and impassively as the lesson proceeds.

5.6.3. The form of interaction.

5.6.3.1. The overall structure.

As is typical in Mrs Mabandla's classes, the first ten minutes of this class are assigned to group work 'to get a discussion going' (turn 1). Students are required to answer two 'background' questions in their groups:

- Who or what do you think is called 'Property' in the story?
- Do you think the title is appropriate? Give a reason for your answer.

Other than this directive, there is no introduction to the purpose or general structure of the lesson.⁸ Mrs Mabandla leaves the room to quieten the unattended classes next door.

Most students have photocopies of the text. No one has the anthology, although they will receive it the following year. It is clear (from the group discussions around me) that some students are familiar with the story while others have not yet read it. This is a consistent pattern, although more students read in this class than any other I observed. The discussions are lively and interactive in some groups, while a few students use the time to exchange notes, catch up on gossip and blow bubbles from their chewing gum. When she returns, Mrs Mabandla interacts with some of the groups, but the room is so crowded that she cannot reach those located at the back.

After ten minutes Mrs Mabandla conducts a 'plenary' discussion with the whole class for the remainder of the lesson. At the end she assigns further questions for homework. This format is typical of Mrs Mabandla's literature classes. She starts by getting students to outline who the main characters are and to summarise plot, and then moves onto character interpretation. This method of working through a text contrasted to that used at Ilitha where students would analyse "Othello" scene by scene, primarily by means of worksheets and tests. Literature classes would involve reviewing the answers that students had filled in, resulting in far less verbal interaction.

In framing the "Property" lesson with the two 'background' questions (listed earlier) rather than those questions listed by the editor at the end of the story, Mrs Mabandla is consciously using the communicative principle of 'starting from where the students are' because she believes that the questions in the book are too difficult (field-notes, October 1997). In the "Two Women" class, her students had to produce a group summary, which outlined who the main characters were, what happened in the story, and how the story ended. As is evident from both transcripts, the bulk of class time is spent in 'plenary' discussion. It takes approximately a week of class time (that is four hours) to 'complete' a short story (Mrs Mabandla, field-notes, August 1998).

The plenary in the "Property" class is interactive and takes the form of the 'essential teaching exchange' (described in chapter two, section 2.5.3). Mrs Mabandla's style is to elicit information through many questions. In the space of thirty-five minutes, she asks the students seventy-three questions which may be classified into five types: two-choice (34); 'wh' (12); open (7); injunctions to the class

or to individuals to speak which take the form of questions (13) and 'echoic' (clarification and confirmation) questions (7) (Kearsley 1976, quoted in Long and Sato 1983, p. 274). Mrs Mabandla does not wait when the answers to her questions are not forthcoming. Instead, she repeats her questions or asks them in a variety of ways, a common feature of L2 instruction (White and Lightbrown 1984, cited in Chaudron 1995, and Taylor and Vinjevold 1999). Her feedback turns are predictably longer than any of the student responses and take the form of summarising student input, evaluation and redirecting the conversation.

Students' responses are channelled through Mrs Mabandla. She takes nearly half of the total number of turns (84 out of 173). She starts with the two questions, which had been allocated for group work. There are many responses (turns 1-53). Then she moves on to further questions, and only seven students participate in the ensuing discussion (turns 54-173).

5.6.3.2. The 'chorus' feature.

Twenty-two of Mrs Mabandla's thirty-four two-choice questions are answered in 'chorus' by the whole class. Of these, three questions directly address the class as a whole through the use of 'we all', for example:

55. Mrs Mabandla [Mrs M.]: Do we all agree?

56. Students [SS]: Yes, miss [*in a long drawl*].

The nineteen questions which the chorus elects to answer, relate to self-evident, general knowledge issues. The above example is contained in a sequence about arranged marriages which consists almost entirely of interaction between the teacher and the chorus:

54. Siyabonga: In the story, eh, the one who arranged the marriage was the uncle of the man.
55. Mrs M: Do we all agree?
56. SS: Yes miss [*in a long drawl*].
57. Mrs M: Okay, does it still happen that way today? Even if you are not married, but at least we all see these things happening around us, not só?
58. SS: Yes.
59. Does it still happen that way for an uncle arranging marriage for-for a couple? Does it still happen that way?
60. SS: No.
61. Mrs M: Alright [South African colloquial expression for 'all right'], so now, okay, alright, so in the olden days marriages were arranged by an uncle or another experienced person, so the two people would just meet thereafter. But today, we know that the two people are the ones that are involved, not só?
62. SS: Yes.
63. Mrs M: Before the other parties would be involved. So we see the difference here between the olden days okay and eh today. That's point number one. And now people also mentioned a price that this man has bought, has paid a price for the woman (·) Do we all agree?
64. SS: Yes.

The answers to the questions are self-evident confirmations that can be answered without knowledge of the text. The chorus is frequently cued to answer by Mrs Mabandla's confirmation-seeking tag questions like 'not so?' which are characterised by rising pitch, a characteristic also noted by Simons (1986) and Chick (1996). The use of 'we' evokes an inclusive, common cultural background between herself, the students and the characters in the story and constructs the knowledge sought as everyday: 'at least we see these things happening round us' (turn 57).

Significantly, the chorus is silent on the occasions when the text is being interpreted. That the chorus reflects rote response, and not necessarily understanding, is highlighted by a sequence where the chorus correctly judges that Mrs Mabandla's pitch indicates a necessity for a 'yes' answer, but incorrectly steps in when she pauses:

114. Mrs M: Now is this slave refer to the wife, this particular wife (·)
115. SS: Yes miss.

116. Mrs M: or does it refer to other wives generally? Yes?

117. *Muffled mumbles*

Here Mrs Mabandla supplies the corrective 'yes', albeit with a question mark, after she perceives that the class has misunderstood. It is left to an individual student (Siyabonga) to provide the actual information. Another similar instance takes place when Mrs Mabandla asserts: 'Mark said that the wife was treated like a slave on page 136. Was it page 136?' The chorus confirms that it was (turns 125-6). The actual reference was on page 176. It seems then that a pattern of interaction is enacted which is familiar to the students; and they are relying, at least to some extent, on the rhythm of the interaction in order to gauge how and when to respond. A combination of tone and the pattern of questions enable them to reach the right answer.

As discussed in chapter two (section 2.5.3), Chick (1996) and Simons (1986) both write of the function of the 'chorus' in former D.E.T. schools in South Africa.⁹ In his ethnographic study of teaching and learning in a Kwazulu Natal classroom, Chick (1996) argues that the information value of chorused items is low, the function being social rather than academic. He observes that a 'restricted set of prosodic cues is used', identifying yes/no questions and the use of rising tone as key features (p.28). Similarly, Simons (1985) uses the term 'cohort productions' to characterise the participation pattern in a Soweto class he analyses, noting that:

the knowledge sought is so 'weak' that the chorus response acts more as a back-channel response than as an 'answer' to a question which seeks to elicit a real knowledge display from students: they serve a 'phatic' function and ensure that students are 'attending'. (p. 184)

Simons points out that the 'significant thing about back-channel responses is that they sanction the teacher to continue' (p. 181). This is because they create the impression

that everyone understands and is attentive. They also create the impression that many students are participating. Chick (1996) takes this further by arguing that:

... chorusing gives the students opportunities to participate in ways that reduce the possibility of the loss of face associated with providing incorrect responses to teacher elicitations, or not being able to provide responses at all. (p.29)

As mentioned in chapter two, in his 1996 article Chick revises an earlier explanation in a 1985 article where, using micro-ethnography, he had attributed the existence of the chorus to 'culturally-specific Zulu interactional styles' (Chick 1996, p. 24).

Taking into account the social context of Apartheid education, he reinterprets the data and explains the existence of the chorus as 'collusion' between teachers and students, which 'hides the fact that little or no learning is taking place' (p.24). In his view, its existence disguises a poor command of English, obscures inadequate understanding of academic content, and maintains a façade of dignity (p.36).

The notion of 'collusion' implies a deliberate, conscious deception, and it is unclear from Chick's data how he arrives at such an explanation. However, the idea that teachers and students work to preserve 'face', also identified by Cazden (1988) as central to classroom discourse, certainly seems to hold true for Mrs Mabandla's classes. As I have shown, she has an explicit policy of protecting her students (see 5.3.2.) and is keen to cultivate a pleasant atmosphere in her classes. This philosophy is borne out by a number of practices. In the oral classes (described in chapter 4, section 4.5) she went to great lengths to provide a dignified passage for those students who froze or were unprepared. In language and literature classes she avoids any practice that may embarrass students and seldom judges them 'wrong' directly (as I shall illustrate in section 5.6.3.4). When students had not completed the requisite homework, she made allowances for time in class or compensated by (for example)

providing newspaper cuttings when students were meant to bring their own. In other classes, when students had plainly not done their prescribed reading, she commented only at the end of classes, and even then refrained from direct accusation, intimating instead that their reading has not been of a sufficiently high standard. Although, as I have shown, these practices are part of an explicit philosophy, it is possible that my presence in Mrs Mabandla's classes caused intensification.

5.6.3.3. 'Wh' questions.

As stated above, 'wh' questions are a dominant feature of the "Property" lesson. Examples are:

- 86. ... how different was he in the way that he treated his wife?
- 139. ... how would the family would feel about the beating?

These are 'display' questions, used 'to test whether the pupils know what the teacher knows' (Wells 1992, p. 295). They require students to provide information about plot or characterisation, or general knowledge about context. With two exceptions, individual students (Loyiso, Mark, Siyabonga and Phumla) volunteer answers to all these questions. The exceptions are answers to 'cultural' questions: 'What do we call this [bride] price in, er in, in our language, what do we call this price?' The chorus shouts out, '*lobola*' (turns 78-9) and 'What is the term called in Xhosa? When the daughter is going to be kept at home till a beast is paid by the in-laws...?' The 'chorus' replies: '*ukuthelokwa*' (turns 150-1).

'Wh' questions become the dominant feature in Mrs Mabandla's grade 12 classes and are the dominant form in all three of the other teachers' English literature classes. They are particularly noticeable in the "Othello" lessons in both schools.

Because Shakespearean language was so difficult for the students, teachers worked on establishing the 'gist', resulting in many questions of the 'what is happening?' variety.

As discussed in part one, this type of question is congruent with the requirements of the syllabus and the types of contextual questions asked in examinations. In Mrs Mabandla's words 'all they really need to do for second language is to summarise' (field-notes, August 1998). Indeed, when I asked Mr Van Wyk why the school chose to study "Othello" (seemingly the most difficult literature option), he said:

We [recently] had a workshop with a um senior marker, marking the second paper and he said what I've always believed, and that is if you choose Shakespeare it's a struggle to get the students to initially to get them to understand the language but if they have the plot line more or less, characterisation and so forth, then in the exam the questions tend to be easier than the questions on short stories ... he said the learners do better in the Othello section in the exam than in short stories. (Interview H)

5.6.3.4. The management of student responses.

The students' responses to the dominant mode of questioning ('two-choice' and 'wh') are short and factual. Mrs Mabandla does not initiate quoting from the text but interestingly students do, albeit on only three occasions. The following sequence is one such example:

86. Mrs M: ... how different was he in the way that he treated his wife? Now this couple here in "Property", the man was somewhat different from other men in the way that he looked at his wife, or the way he treated his wife. Yes Mark.

87. Mark: He saw his wife like a 'grass that's swaying in the summer wind'.

88. Mrs M: What?

89. Mark: He saw his wife like a 'grass that's swaying in the summer wind'.

90. Mrs M: Now how would you try to explain that?

91. Mark: () but there's, there's no way that he can communicate with his wife because (·)

92. Mrs M: Was he just admiring his wife, or does it mean that he did not communicate with his wife? Do you want to answer this Loyiso?

93. Loyiso: I think that, I think um

94. Mrs M: Can you go to that expression of the wife swaying like a grass, that expression. What do you understand by that?
95. Loyiso: I think that the wife was, was beautiful so the man was admiring.
96. Mrs M: So, he was admiring the beauty of his wife. Do we agree or disagree? (·) You agree [nodding to a student]. Well, you are in the same group, so you have to agree. Yes, Siyabonga.
97. Siyabonga: The story, the story says the man admires his wife. It's because he did not agree with beating.

Although he misinterprets it, the simile which Mark foregrounds is central to the text.

Mrs Mabandla responds with an open question, which invites explanation and interpretation (turn 90), but quickly delimits the answer by reverting to a two-choice question (turn 92). She uses Mark's pause to elicit a 'correct response' by providing two alternatives, both in question form: Mark's version versus hers. She nominates a hesitant Loyiso to answer (whereas she normally relies on volunteers) and reconstructs his answer to fit in with her interpretation. As Edwards and Westgate (1994) point out:

... a striking feature of teachers' questioning is the care with which they listen for answers, or elements within answers, which can be usefully built into their own developing exposition ... teachers are extremely skilful in throwing doubt indirectly or obliquely on an answer they have elicited. (p. 126-7)

The simile is not directly useful at this point and is ignored. Mrs Mabandla returns to it only later (turn 156), but assumes at that point that it has been understood and uses it as a basis for further questioning which will unravel the plot.

Mrs Mabandla deploys a number of indirect methods to signal disagreement with student responses: she presents two alternatives (as cited above); she moves on to the next student without comment; she defers an answer, saying 'we'll come back to that later'; she allows other students to provide the corrective; or else she elicits a number of responses and shows her endorsement of a particular one by repeating and

summarising it: 'I let them move, and then I draw them in when they go too far' (field-notes, September 1998). Even when she does not understand what point students are trying to make, she seldom gets individuals to rephrase unless they are one of the confident 'going' students, appealing instead to other members of the class (for example, see appendix 4, turns 51; 102). This means that students get little or no opportunity to restructure their statements, to negotiate meaning, and thus achieve clarity. But they are never humiliated or embarrassed. An example of this feature is a sequence that occurs near the beginning of the class (turns 16-44) when Mrs Mabandla asks students to motivate why they think the title of the story is appropriate or not: again a potentially open-ended question of interpretation. There are thirteen attempts to answer the question before Luleka:

44. Luleka: If she is bought, then she is not his property. If she is unhappy, she can leave.

45. Mrs M: So what are you saying there?

46. Luleka: She can leave.

47. Mrs M: So she's got a chance. If she doesn't like to be his property she can just simply get out of the marriage? Babalwa.

48. Babalwa: If you read the story you see it is in the olden days. In the olden days the woman is the property of the man. In the olden days. And so it's about the laws of the olden days.

49. Mrs M: So then it means that the man would be justified according to the laws of the olden days. That's interesting. Yes Mark.

50. Mark: My group does agree that the woman is the property. Because even though she wants to divorce (·) if she doesn't want to be a property, let us just look at that case, if she doesn't want to be a property. It doesn't count in my opinion if she divorces her wife, because in my opinion if she divorces I think that at that time she even if she divorces the man, she is still the property of the man.

51. Mrs M: So do you agree with Luleka?

52. Mark: No, I just wanted to correct her, what she was going to say.

53. Mrs M Okay. Any more responses? Okay, anymore? Okay, Babalwa made a point here, eh, saying that after she has read the whole story, she found out that this happened in the olden days where things were were done differently from the way they are done today, so then she understand the story in the context of the olden days whether although it may not apply, if I quote you correctly, although it may not apply to the present day situation, but in the olden days er context then she says she ah understands why. (2 secs) Okay, let's look at the way, okay now using the background and our understanding

of the story as we have read it, let's look at the way the two, now taking Baba, ah Babalwa's point further, looking at the way the two people met

Mrs Mabandla's first response to Babalwa is: 'That's interesting' (turn 49). Her later summary of Babalwa's input, and the use of it to build the argument further, signal approbation; and this again highlights Mrs Mabandla's skill in reconstituting a student's response to pursue a future line of questioning and argument on the issue of bride-price (as we shall see later in 5.6.4.). At the same time she shows considerable respect to the student: 'if I quote you correctly'. Significantly, though, she ignores Mark's challenge to Luleka and provides no opportunity for them to debate. Here she is marking what she considers to be important information and disregarding the rest.

Mrs Mabandla withholds feedback for lengthy periods, confining her turns to questions and to eliciting and sanctioning participation. Although she is explicit in class about her methodology (of allowing multiple responses first, before indicating the correct one) the students often become confused about which answer is being sanctioned and are anxious to have the 'correct' answer in place. Those who are confident enough, speak out. On two occasions in the "Property" lesson Loyiso voices uncertainty and hints at disagreement (turns 122 and 153). Mrs Mabandla responds directly to both of these interventions.

Simons (1986) writes of the absence of the feedback move in South African 'teacher talk' and attributes this to a lack of confidence that results in a general lack of explicitness (p.147). In Mrs Mabandla's case, the feedback move is present, but is often underdeveloped and limited to the facts of the story. In the "Two Women" class, Mrs Mabandla asks two questions (drawn from the editor's list) which require

students to engage in close analysis of the text: 'Why did she choose the weather to be like that?' (turn 19) and '... find evidence from the story... that the writer was looking back at events that had taken place long ago' (turn 166) . She spends a long time eliciting 'correct' responses. In the second case, she devotes fifteen minutes to finding one correct answer when, in fact, there are many. In both cases, when she eventually gets the answers she is looking for, she closes the discussion without explanation about textual construction. That Mrs Mabandla allows many responses and her students voice their uncertainties and disagreement is a positive sign. That she and they are desperate to 'fix' a single meaning to the text is symptomatic of a wider problem, which relates to an approach to literature and learning which requires reproduction of factual information.

In Mrs Mabandla's classes, participation takes place on a voluntary basis *via* signalling (raising of hands). Despite the fact that students speak more in her classes than elsewhere, the overall effect is that individual participation, is, for the most part, confined to a few students. Although there are many responses to her questions, only fourteen individuals participate. Loyiso, Siyabonga, Mark, Luleka, Babalwa and Phumla are the only students who emerge as individuals, and are the only students who ever challenge a question, initiate a debate or ask for clarification in Mrs Mabandla's classes, as well as in the Biology and Afrikaans classes I observed. Loyiso, Mark and Siyabonga take 17; 9 and 6 turns respectively. Mrs Mabandla is aware of the problem and addresses the issue through enquiries (thirteen in total) such as 'any more responses?' (turn 53) and more explicitly 'but why are you so quiet today?' (turn 72) and 'where are the other people?' (turn 129). Although these are posed as questions, they have the 'illocutionary force' of instructions (Edwards and

Westgate 1994, p.139). At these moments, students who are nervous of being approached literally keep their heads down as Mrs Mabandla pauses in her speech. Nevertheless she attempts on only one occasion to cajole an individual unwilling participant into speech (turn 129). In this lesson, (and others) Mrs Mabandla's awareness of Loyiso is apparent. On two occasions when he makes a gesture or indicates uncertainty through facial expression, she draws on him. For example:

104. Mrs M: So we see from that he did not, er, treat his wife like a slave.

Loyiso.

105. *Silence*

106. Mrs M: Did you have your hand up?

107. Loyiso: No.

108. Mrs M: I'm sure you did. No? Just forgotten what you wanted to say?

Space plays a role in the interaction. The students who come late and stand in the front of the class, just outside Mrs Mabandla's 'surveillance zone' (Shamim 1996, p. 125), are spectators who play no part in the lesson. With the exception of Loyiso who sits right at the back, students who participate are usually seated near the front. Loyiso's lively presence at the back has the effect of raising the attentiveness levels of the students who sit close to him because everyone's attention is focussed in that area. The cramped conditions and the noise levels from surrounding classes, mean that they would otherwise always be located at some (cognitive and physical) distance from the action, exchanging notes and chewing gum.

A pattern of participation, in part related to the size of a class, has been noted by a number of ESL researchers in developing countries (Adendorff 1996; Barkhuizen 1998; Holliday 1994 and Shamim 1996). Writing about a Pakistani context, Shamim notes that within large classes, the effect is often to create 'a smaller class of students who [sit] in front' (p.129). Holliday (1994) observes that small class culture (in

Egypt) seemed to be based on 'tacit, implicit relationships' (p. 37). In large classes, where the teacher dominates, students have to make a considerable effort to make their presence felt. It is clear that those students who volunteer responses and demonstrate that they are keen to learn, are likely to be the recipients of attention. Here one is reminded of Siphon's view (quoted in chapter 4, section 4.6.3.) that 'the teachers go with the students who are going' (Interview F).

The data show that Mrs Mabandla goes to considerable lengths to make her students feel comfortable and to respect and affirm them (features which L2 theorists regard as crucial to language learning). A significant absence in Mrs Mabandla's discourse (compared to other teachers) is that, with the exception of the ritual around late-coming, she does not have rigid rules for classroom behaviour. Compared to Mr Bathaka, she had little need to exert disciplinary control. This she attributed to students' respect for her age (an often repeated dictum in Xhosa culture) and to the fact that she does not insist on silence in the class (field-notes, August 1998). These factors seem to contribute to a higher degree of voluntary participation than observed elsewhere. Unlike Mr Van Wyk, who didn't know his students and read their names off a register, Mrs Mabandla knew all her students, despite the large numbers. Nevertheless, the size of the class, together with the form of the interaction, work to constrain her efforts. Ironically, her desire to affirm her students by not embarrassing them limits their participation in the interaction.

5.6.3.5. Development over time.

Significantly, the form of Mrs Mabandla's interaction with this class does change over time. This can be illustrated through the "Two Women" lesson, taught

nearly ten months later. Here, far fewer questions (forty-eight questions in forty-five minutes) are asked. She still takes nearly half the number of turns (96 out of 213) but class participation (although still limited to very few students) increases markedly. Of the questions asked, only seven are of the 'two-choice' type; and four of those are answered with long explanations, rather than 'yes/no'. The chorus affirmation all but disappears. Mrs Mabandla's role is often turned into one of turn-manager, as she lines up the order of speakers. This is because students compete enthusiastically for turns, with an average of six students answering one question. However, although 18 students are named by Mrs Mabandla in the "Two Women" lesson, essentially the same group dominates with Loyiso, Mark and Siyabonga consecutively taking 12; 14 and 8 turns each.

There are more questions (in the "Two Women" lesson than in "Property") which relate directly to the text, but there is still a noticeable absence (with the two exceptions discussed under 5.6.3.4) of questions about text construction and critical analysis. The questions are predominantly 'wh' (26 in total) with only two 'open' questions (see turns 19 and 166).

Mrs Mabandla attributed the increased participation to the students' growing confidence in English and to their added motivation to engage with their work in the face of the final matriculation examination (field-notes, March 1999). I considered whether the increased participation could have been attributed to students becoming used to my presence but dismissed this explanation since it was clear that, in contrast to earlier lessons, more students had read and students knew the text better.

5.6.3.6. Comparison of level of discussion.

It is significant that the 12a students understood the basic plot of “Two Women” when compared to the 12b and 12c class who appeared not to have read the story. In those classes (held on the same day) the quality of the interaction was very different. In the 12b and 12c classes, Mrs Mabandla’s enquiries are far more basic ‘what’ questions:

- what was the black woman carrying?’
- what was she wearing?’
- what did the white woman say?’

‘Wh’ questions are often turned into ‘two-choice’ questions in a bid to elicit the ‘correct’ answer. The following example is taken from the 12c class on “Two Women” on the same day:

Mrs M: What did the white woman do?

S: It says she was a soldier.

Mrs M: Was she a soldier?

SS: No.

Mrs M: She was a farmer, not so?

SS: Yes. (August 1998)

In both Mrs Mabandla and Mr Bathaka’s literature classes, two-choice questions predominated more in the ‘weaker’ classes; where the students’ lack of understanding or reading required teachers to engage in more direct presentation, virtually telling the answers. In his “Othello” classes for example, Mr Bathaka asked the 12a students to name the characteristics of a soliloquy, but listed them for the 12d class (March 1999). Both teachers were aware that they spoke more in these classes, and classified the students in the weaker classes as ‘passive’ in relation to the “a” students (Mrs Mabandla, field-notes, August 1998; Mr Bathaka, September 1998 and Interview G).¹⁰ In these classes, both teachers were more direct about distinguishing between ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ answers.

5.6.4. The lesson content.

There are two turns in the “Property” lesson which are significant because of their length and because they consist of ‘telling’ rather than ‘questioning’. They revolve around the subject of bride-price and arranged marriages, and constitute Mrs Mabandla’s contribution to the explanation of background - ‘just a brief understanding’ (turn 80). During this sequence, Mrs Mabandla (unusually) makes no allowances for student contribution (even in the form of the chorus confirmation). The first turn addresses the subject of *lobola* [bride price]:

80. Mrs M: okay, *lobola*, okay, okay, it’s called *lobola* (·) Alright um, but now, from my own experience, *lobola* had to be paid because those days when it started, people thought that if a man pays *lobola*, then that man is going to look after their daughter very well. He’s going to value her because he has given something towards her. It’s like if somebody gives you a-a pair of shoes, you’re not going to look a very well after that pair of shoes as you’d look after a pair of shoes that you bought yourself where you have gone to, to do a casual [a part-time job] (·) over weekends, sacrificed everything, you work over weekends, you work over the holidays and then you get that bit of money and you buy yourself something. You are going to value that more than what you have been given by somebody else. So those days they wanted to secure, so there was a-a spice of truth in what um, um Siyabonga was saying about the happiness of their daughter, because he would um look after their daughter very well because at least he has paid something towards her. But er then again if people did not pay *lobola*, they would take her today and tomorrow they would chuck her out and take another one. But one cow is not child’s play. You cannot keep paying on cows to all these families every day so that was also a reason to want her and keep her, and perhaps live happily ever after. But anyway, just a brief understanding of the whole concept. Okay, let’s look at the story....

This is followed by a brief interchange with the chorus at the characteristic basic, incontrovertible level: ‘Now this, this young woman, they could not have a relationship with the young man, did they?’ ‘Did they know each other?’ and ‘They could not go out together, did they?’ This formulation creates the illusion of co-construction of knowledge described earlier. Then follows the second contribution:

86. Mrs M: So, that is what happened in the olden days. They would look for a girl where they are not ah very poor. Where at least there are cows and beans

in that particular home, in terms of cattle and sheep and things like that. So they would look at a home like that and that daughter would then get married into their family. So, this daughter knows about wealth. Okay. She does not come from a poor home. Not meaning that girls that come from poor homes did not marry, but they would target certain homes where they are well off, so that if something goes wrong here then the young wife can go home and get more cows and oxen to come and plough the fields, and so on, and so, so they will arrange them then like that. But now when we look at this one here, we find that the man, this particular man was different from other men. Okay, could you perhaps try to remember, how different was he in the way that he treated his wife?....

There is little reference to the text in both these extracts. Mrs Mabandla cites bride-price as a practice which works in the interests of women ‘... because he would um look after that daughter very well because at least he has paid ...’. In fact the example she uses (the value placed on a pair of shoes) reinforces the idea that Head is critiquing, namely that under the system of bride-price, women are regarded as bought goods or property (the title of the story). Her assertion that people believed that their daughters would be protected if *lobola* were paid, is contradicted by the evidence from the story (which she articulates near the end of the lesson in turns 133-152) that the family wanted their daughter to be beaten so that they could demand another beast from the man. Mrs Mabandla’s benign interpretation in effect contradicts the story, although she does not say so.

This sequence may be the source of the considerable confusion when she tries to elicit an interpretation of how the husband in the story treats his wife (turns 98-133). The story represents abuse as a commonplace male behaviour pattern. Head’s protagonist is different from other men because he does not beat his wife. This is the opposite of the epistemological framework with which the students have been presented. Consequently, Loyiso and Mark struggle to differentiate between the general background and the particularities of the story (turns 109-122 and 153-156).

Through the provision of 'background' context, Mrs Mabandla provides the ideological framing for the learners' understanding of bride-price and for the consequent interpretation of the story. The discourses of instruction and morality become inseparable (Bernstein 1990). Mrs Mabandla's authority as spokesperson on the subject is reinforced through phrases like 'from my own experience', and the frequent repetition of 'the olden days', 'those days when it started' and 'those days'. By casting the story and the experience therein in the past¹¹ and as part of her life experience (which indeed it is), she effectively excludes most of the students from participation at this point (although she does skilfully incorporate earlier points made by Babalwa and Siyabonga).

The author is never mentioned and Mrs Mabandla implies that the experience described in the story is part of a common heritage by frequently using the phrase 'our culture' and 'our language' and the Xhosa word *lobola*. In fact, the setting of the story is Botswana and not South Africa, and the ethnicity of the characters is not mentioned in the text. Mrs Mabandla's references to 'our culture' and 'in those days' have the effect of equating the text with reality rather than regarding it as a representation or individual construction, with a specific context.

A similar process happens in the "Two Women" lesson where the author and the first person narrator are conflated. Loyiso provides evidence for the identity of the protagonist from the author's biography that precedes the story in the Nations anthology (turns 162-165). She accepts his answer, correcting only his grammar. At

the moment that Mrs Mabandla does ask a question that relates to textual construction, it becomes apparent that she too regards the story as autobiography:

166. Mrs M: ... She is writing about events that took place a long time ago. And now later on she is looking back at her own life and she is telling us and she has written this short story. So now I want you to find evidence.

Significantly, a section on narration in the Nations anthology clearly explains the different forms of narration, as well as distinguishing autobiography from first person narration.

Mrs Mabandla's wide-ranging questions rely on memory and focus on content rather than an understanding of context, language and point of view. She tends to talk around the text rather than engage directly with it. A focus on the 'gist' of the narrative rather than an engagement with the language of the text frequently causes students to miss irony, for example. In the "Two Women" lesson in the 12c class, a few students thought that the central characters were both united in struggle rather than enemies, because of the guerrilla fighter's ironic use of the word 'sister'. When some 12b students quote from the text in their summaries of the "Two Women" story, she admonishes them for doing so because they needed to state what happened 'in your own words' (August 1998). Again, this illustrates the focus on factual summary of a series of events and interactions rather than close textual analysis of an imaginative story. This kind of writing seemed identical to the essays Mr Siko rehearsed the 12c students to produce for their History examination – they needed 'thirty facts for thirty marks'. Although he constantly reminded students not to plagiarise, the students' answers reflected that they ignored his instructions (August 1998). Cataloguing of items and mapping out model answers was common in the Biology and History classes and, according to Mpho, was known in the school as

'scope' (Interview E). I have subsequently learnt (from my students at U.C.T.) that this term is widely used in D.E.T. schools all over the country.

The imprecision in engagement with the language of texts and the vagueness about historical contexts (which was also evident in Mr Bathaka's literature classes) contrast with a focus on factual detail - such as the kind of clothes worn by the characters in "Two Women" in the 12b and 12c class, and the racial identity of the women in all three classes (see appendix 4, turns 144-166 for example).¹² Mrs Mabandla approached other texts such as cartoons and advertisements in the same way, focussing on details of factual content rather than on the underlying conventions of the genre. It was only when transactional forms such as the 'business letter' were being taught, that fixed forms were dictated and the rules made explicit. As mentioned earlier (in 5.2.2.4.), these forms could be reproduced *verbatim* in the examination. 'Factual reading' and 'summary writing' were both key components of the language paper at the time (counting a total of 55 out of 100 marks in the language paper). Like Mr Van Wyk, Mrs Mabandla knows that in order for her students to pass the examinations, they have to know the facts.

A further incident serves to illustrate the problem. Mrs Mabandla asked me for help because she was struggling to interpret the story "In the Shadow of War" by Ben Okri. She was convinced that this story would appear in the matriculation examination that year, as it was the only story in the anthology that had not yet been tested. I consulted Brenda Cooper, the editor of Nations, and conveyed her interpretation to Mrs Mabandla. My account did not satisfy Mrs Mabandla. She needed a 'yes' or 'no' answer as to whether the woman in the story was a ghost or not, and found my

attempts to explain the ambivalence at the heart of the story very confusing. The story did appear in the examination.

The overall aim of Mrs Mabandla's literature lessons seemed to be to reach a single denotative interpretation of the text. In the "Property" lesson this interpretation is heavily controlled, not through careful reading and analysis of the text, but through exertion of the authority of 'own experience' and through intonation. The control over the interpretation of the concept of bride-price, contrasts with the virtual absence of meta-talk about text construction.

This kind of approach to texts is not uncommon. In their case study of United States language classrooms, Street and Street (1995) assert that: 'there was little discussion of the meaning of language, of alternative interpretations of texts, or of how the teacher arrived at her sense of what they meant' (p. 116). In the Australian context, Ludwig and Hershell (1995) found that the lessons they observed, were less about learning related to how texts are organised, constructed, and produced than they were about 'developing a strategy to come to a shared cultural conclusion' by focusing on the 'common sense' knowledge within the text (p. 23). They conclude that:

... there is little doubt that learning is enhanced when it is contextualised in ways that make it accessible to students. However, analysis of the classroom transcripts reveals that much of the contextualisation is only loosely related to a focused set of learning objectives. In the classroom data there is a large degree of blurring of foci which makes it difficult for many students to identify and make portable appropriate learning content. Rather than making the learning accessible, the integration seems to preserve the culturally bound nature of learning. (p. 54)

Following the constructivist paradigm, it seems important to make learning relevant, to use the familiar in order to make connections to new knowledge. However, the danger is that the starting point may become the centre, that it may reinforce misconception or that if not explicitly marked, it may cause confusion between local experience and the representation in the text: 'the context becomes the content' (Ludwig and Hershell, p.111).

An injunction at the end of the "Two Women" lesson in the 12c class provided an insight into the problem. Mrs Mabandla tells the students to go home and re-read the story because: 'You have read between the lines, you have not read on the line' (August 1998). Mrs Mabandla's complaint is that students had not read 'the facts' of the story accurately, which indeed they had not. However, her choice of words is revealing. 'Reading on the line' is a phrase used in the guideline document 'to assist teachers preparing Senior Certificate candidates' which I received from Mrs Mabandla. It refers to literal, factual reading or information retrieval. The phrase 'reading between the lines' refers to inferential and figurative readings (WCED 1997). It is precisely this second step (which relates to creative, critical engagement with the metaphoric layer of the text), which is absent.

5.6.5. Summary.

Mrs Mabandla's conscious effort to use a communicative approach provides a platform for lively classroom interaction and an atmosphere conducive to making errors. It is significant that the length and number of student responses increased in 12a after 10 months. However, the danger in large classes is that this interaction is often confined to a few students, who then obtain individual attention and feedback.

Additional factors external to the control of the teacher such as the lack of space, limited time and the noise levels all act against the possibility of individual attention for most students. Classroom talk thus contributes towards the development of proficiency for some, the 'going' students who are, as I showed in chapter four, sufficiently motivated, confident and affirmed to practise their English. Mrs Mabandla's philosophy of making students feel comfortable, of preserving 'face', seems to work against the goal of communicative language teaching because it allows large numbers of students to avoid active participation.

What emerges strongly from the data is the importance of methodology. Many students respond after there has been group work. Although not conclusive, research in second language classrooms has shown that, depending on the task, peer group interaction yields not just a greater quantity of student talk, but a greater variety in pedagogical moves and social skills (Pica 1987 and Chaudron 1995). The response pattern changes dramatically after Mrs Mabandla moves away from the initial group-work questions.

The initiation-response-feedback framework and the types of questions asked, influence the kind of analysis conducted and structure the form and content of student response. Gardiner (1992) writes that 'the quality of learning depends to a great extent on the nature of the language in which it takes place' (p.201). He advises that if teachers wish to know 'where the learner is at' or where they would like to go next, they should avoid frequent questions (p. 209). Reporting on the findings of second language classroom-based research in general, Chaudron (1995) writes:

The general picture of classroom interaction that results from teachers' questions is that the questions alone may not promote a great amount of

learner target language production or other interaction, unless the teacher is aware of the pitfalls of too closed, too fast, or too vague questions, or worse, too many repetitions of the same non-understood questions. (p. 131)

Although it has the appearance of moving away from rote learning, the restrictive surface-level 'on the line' questions have the potential to encourage a literacy which promotes recall of facts and the reduction of the text to a single meaning. Cognitive engagement remains at an immediate, contextual level. The proficiency that students develop is highly limited.

Inevitably, the teacher has strong control over which responses are selected and marked as knowledge; but what is striking is the extent to which an ideology of 'common sense' and 'relevance' is superimposed onto the text. The teacher's experience of L2 learning and her personal history have a powerful influence on the form and content of classroom talk.

A disturbing element of the classes I observed was the lack of follow-up with writing, and Mrs Mabandla's belief that writing ability would flow naturally from oral competence, a view that may have arisen from her training in the communicative language approach. But it is also the result of her conception of the function of writing purely as recording for later reference. Writing is neither viewed as a tool for creative expression, nor as a tool for reflection and analysis.

With hindsight, Mpho, Mrs Mabandla's ex-student, is able to analyse the consequences of this kind of literacy practice. Asked about the difference between studying English as a subject at school and at university, Mpho (Mrs Mabandla's ex-student), replies:

The problem is that people who were teaching us English they were just looking for facts. Here we have argument. ... in English schools people are used to writing a lot of composition and all that stuff, so it is easy for them just to put something in, but for us it is difficult. We hated even to write English essays. You just write it and just correct it as well by yourself. So now we are at university and we have to write academic work and we are not used to it, so it is difficult really to expound. (Interview D)

Mpho accurately identifies that his difficulty relates to the level and content of analysis. His verbal fluency in English is excellent, and he was excited by the more analytical mode of tertiary study. Nevertheless, he had considerable difficulty with the university Literature syllabus, failing or just passing many of his essays. His essays bore the hallmark of keen intelligence but lacked cohesion and tended to avoid close analysis of texts. The fact that literature is viewed as an act of communication rather than as an imagined text in schools, is evident not only in the examination papers, but in the way in which first year university former D.E.T. students tend to treat literary texts as 'reality' or else as moral tales. It is also evident in their tendency to summarise rather than analyse the language of literary texts. Students do not have the conceptual framework or the vocabulary required for the task.

PART FOUR: Mr Bathaka's language teaching.

In this section I illustrate the effects of teaching language in a decontextualised manner. I show that Mr Bathaka's attempts to teach his students to be critical thinkers are thwarted by the context of testing, his prescriptive practice, his limitations with English, and the students' disruptive behaviour.

5.7. Description and interpretation of Mr Bathaka's lessons.

I have chosen as my focus a language lesson on 'euphemism' (appendices 5 and 6) taught to the 11d class by Mr Bathaka in September 1998, both because its

form is typical of Mr Bathaka's language teaching, and because its content highlights the issues about 'appropriate' varieties of English and about grammar teaching raised by my discussion of communicative language teaching (in chapter two, section 2.5.2.) and of the 1995 ESL syllabus earlier in this chapter (in section 5.2.). In the process, I shall refer to two other lessons which elaborate on these issues, but which also help to explain Mr Bathaka's relationship to his students. They are both lessons on affixes taught to 11d and 11a on the same day, in August 1998 (appendices 7 and 8). The 11d class was slightly behind and so the content differs. As in part three, I compare his approach to that of the other English teachers.

5.7.1. The students.

I observed the 11d class from July-September 1998, and briefly in 1999 when I returned to observe the "Othello" lessons (see chapter three, section 3.5.2.). Mr Bathaka was their class teacher in both years. These are the students whose views on English as medium of instruction are included in chapter four, section 4.2. The class consisted of 54 students, of whom 20 were women. As a class, they were regarded as passive by Mr Bathaka (in comparison to 11a). He was very conscious of the fact that he had to talk more in 11d. Since the class was always noisy and boisterous, and frequently challenged his views, I came to think of 'passive' as a synonym for 'weak'.

Though he seldom used their names, it was clear to me from his informal exchanges with them that Mr Bathaka knew the individuals in the class. He spent a lot of class time admonishing them for poor behaviour, not following his prescribed work patterns or for not handing in their work.

5.7.2. The context of the lesson.

As with the “Property” lesson, I shall begin by recreating the scene at the beginning of the lesson before describing and analysing its form and content.

The ‘euphemism’ lesson takes place on 3 September at 10h20. The weather outside is cold and rainy, but the classroom I enter with Mr Bathaka is hot and humid and the tightly shut windows are all steamed up. The classroom is part of the old brick structure and is less dilapidated than the one occupied by Mrs Mabandla’s 11a class. Nevertheless, except for graffiti, the walls are bare. The students are already seated as they have just been taught Xhosa. They quieten as we enter but the noise from the 11b class next door remains deafening. I find an empty seat with a group of three women students on the side, near the front of the classroom. I face a row of sodden washing, weighing heavily on the line in a neighbouring backyard.

Mr Bathaka tries but fails to convince students to open some windows. Because he is the class teacher, he takes a register of those present, requests explanations of those who were absent the previous day and asks about the whereabouts of students who have been absent for a while. Because he struggles to control problems with absenteeism (in such a big class) Mr Bathaka has implemented a group accountability system. The students are divided into groups for the year and each group is allocated 10 marks for attendance. Marks are deducted from the whole group when an individual fails to provide a reasonable explanation for absenteeism. Mr Bathaka calls this practice ‘negative-marking’, a concept frequently employed in multiple-choice testing in South African universities (Interview G).

Mr Bathaka hands back the exercise books he has just marked. The system of continuous assessment has been newly introduced; and whereas before the grade 11 classes would be required to write a formal examination at this time of the year, now they have to write class tests and complete a requisite number of assignments to constitute a mark. Most of Mr Bathaka's lessons during the month of August and September revolve around exercises which count towards this mark. Like the other teachers I spoke to informally at the school, Mr Bathaka is sceptical of continuous assessment because he believes that it enables students to pass who would not normally do so were they to be examined solely on the basis of the final examination: 'you get students going through just because they submit their work' (Interview G). In his opinion, this means that more students are entering for the matriculation examination before they are ready.

5.7.3. The form of the interaction.

5.7.3.1. The overall structure.

Mr Bathaka hands out two worksheets which students are required to complete (without discussion) in ten minutes (appendix 6). The first is an exercise that contains common second language errors; the second is an exercise on 'euphemism'. He says that the exercises have been taken from a textbook (although the layout is reminiscent of an examination format). Because of the expense, the school does not purchase any language textbooks for the students and they constantly receive 'worksheets' such as this. The questions that the students have to answer are 'closed'. They are required to circle the 'right answer'. As with Mrs Mabandla's lessons, Mr Bathaka's introductions are brief. In this case, he only introduces the 'euphemism' exercise, relying on students' memory of work completed earlier in the year:

1.Mr B: If you look at question two of this, if you look at question two of this, some of the questions in this, we'll be using what we call euphemism. Do you remember euphemism from when we did figures of speech at the beginning of the year? Do you remember it?

2.SS: Yes.

3.Mr B: Alright. At some other stages we'll be looking at euphemism, at some other stages we'll be looking at more palatable, more easily accepted ways of saying things. Things like if you want someone to move out. Do you say 'get out' or do you say 'could you please get out' [said softly] or do you say 'this is my space and that's very uncomfortable for me'? How do you say it without sounding rude? The questions will have more or less that kind of thing. Can you look at the questions and make your own choices?

After some exchanges with students about their previous work and a warning that this exercise is compulsory for those students who missed the 'take home test', as well as some 'procedural'¹³ instructions (turns 3-12), the students work on the exercise while Mr Bathaka leaves the room to quieten the 11b class, with little effect. When he returns, he has a private conversation with a student whom he believes has been playing truant. After 10 minutes he interrupts the students to provide further clarification and examples because students are struggling with the 'euphemism' exercise. The students continue to work for a further five minutes before Mr Bathaka conducts a plenary session on the 'euphemism' exercise for the rest of the period. He runs out of time before he can work through the exercise on common second-language errors.

The interaction has the same overall initiation-response-feedback pattern as Mrs Mabandla's classes. Mr Bathaka reads the worksheet questions, students respond and he judges the response. But, as I shall show, there are significant differences in the way that Mr Bathaka elicits and evaluates student input. Whereas she takes many responses before providing the answer, in general he 'gives' the correct answer immediately after students respond, but invites them to argue through their versions.

He provides lengthy explanations for why his answer is justified and, in general, his turns are substantially longer than hers.

5.7.3.2. The 'chorus' feature.

The function and effect of the 'chorus' in this lesson is quite different when compared to Mrs Mabandla's classes and the form described by Simons (1986) and Chick (1996).

Unless thwarted by Mr Bathaka, the 'chorus' answers all the questions and sometimes responds to his reprimands. Mr Bathaka frequently uses sarcasm and students respond in kind, individually and as a group:

24. Mr B: And in your view, there's no difference between circling and underlining?
25. S5: No sir.
26. SS: *loud laughter*
27. Mr B: You sometimes you fail not because you, you are stupid, but sometimes you fail because you do not follow instructions. Did you know that?
28. SS: Yes. [*in a loud drawl*]

Mr Bathaka does not often solicit a 'chorus' in this way. Although the 'chorus' is a significant feature of his interactions with the 11d class (see appendices 5 and 7), it often acts in defiance of his requests for students to speak 'one at a time'. After he reads the questions, students shout out the answer:

29. Mr B: ... [reads the question] 'If we admit we didn't enjoy an outing we should say'?
30. SS: It was boring.
31. Mr B: Can we have one at a time?
32. S4: It was boring.
33. Mr B: It was boring.
34. SS: [loud sounds of distaste] {*uugh, uugh*}
35. SS: {*ewe* [the Xhosa word for 'yes']}

Whereas in Mrs Mabandla's classes the 'chorus' has the ring of docile compliance, of cued elicitation (see also Simons 1986 and Chick 1996), in Mr Bathaka's classes the chorus is a generally unsolicited clamour. The students seem to use the chorus to subvert his authority. As the lesson proceeds the students' responses become louder. The effect of the gales of laughter and noisy undercurrents is to create a rowdy, carnival atmosphere in defiance of his appeals and directives for order. As in 11a, Mr Bathaka has to devote a considerable amount of class time to discipline:

57. Mr B: Please, this is not, this is not a congregation, a church congregation where we say Amen Hallelujah.

58. SS: *loud laughter*

59. Mr B: Can we hold our horses? We want some arguments. This is not a yes or no booth.

60. SS: *loud laughter*

A similar pattern takes place in the feedback session on 'affixes' (appendix 7). At first the 'chorus' answers most of the questions (turns 1-15) without protest from Mr Bathaka. Then, he requests that they speak 'one at a time' (turns 16 and 18). When they fail to comply, the following sequence takes place:

23. Mr Bathaka: Guys, I'm a conductor *nè?* I conduct the school choir. But the principle is that I do not conduct the school choir during school hours. I conduct the school choir after

24. SS: hours

25. Mr B: I conduct the school choir after hours and this is during school hours. So what I mean is do not speak. We want one person at a time so that we can make sense of what is being said... [he moves on to the next question and when there is no response to his questions, asks:] Where is my choir now?

26. *giggles*

27. Mr B: Not even soloists?...

It is interesting that Mr Bathaka, the school choir-master, deploys rising intonation to cue a 'chorus' response even as he is critiquing its use, thereby delivering (what seemed to me) a mixed message. Students continue to 'chorus' here and in his other classes, and he mocks them for it with varying degrees of humour and irritation,

illustrating that he is fully aware that the 'chorus' answers the self-evident questions (see appendix 5, turn 71 and appendix 7, turn 33).

Whereas the 'chorus' remains throughout, despite his appeals, in Mrs Mabandla's "Property" class, the 'chorus' effect lessens as the questions become progressively more difficult, and in her grade 12 classes it is hardly present. Mr Bathaka believes that it is particularly evident when students are defending answers that count toward their continuous assessment mark. He also indicated that my presence in his classes meant that he held back from 'disciplining' them in his usual manner (field-notes, Mr Bathaka, September 1998). This is evident in turn 73 when he says: 'Not in front of visitors', and adds in a threatening tone: 'You know *what-what*'.¹⁴ Nevertheless, his occasional cueing does index a degree of ambivalence on his part. When he engaged with this class in a far more difficult Shakespeare lesson the following year (when they were in grade 12) the 'chorus' effect was not evident. In this class, Mr Bathaka had to do most of the talking. A group of four students answered his questions while the rest furiously annotated their texts (field-notes, 12d, March 1999).

My description of the 'chorus' feature in Mr Bathaka's classes illustrates the danger of making general statements and assumptions about features of classroom discourse. As I have shown, there are important differences in the form and function of the 'chorus' in the two teachers' classes. These can only be understood within the context of the interaction, the teachers' relationships with their students and their conceptual frameworks. Nevertheless, I found it far easier to describe the effect of the 'chorus' than to explain why it was so prevalent in Mr Bathaka's 11d class.¹⁵ It did

seem to me that the 'chorus' was symptomatic of a general disciplinary problem. They flouted his instructions by not completing homework or not conforming to his requirements. Mr Bathaka's problems with discipline were not confined to the 11d class. In all four of his English classes, students often did preparation for other teachers in his classes. Many of his requests and assertions, especially his sarcasm, were responded to with open insolence (see appendices 5; 7 and 8 for many examples throughout). It is possible that students were more outspoken because of Mr Bathaka's relative youth. The same students 'behaved' in their Biology class, which was taught by a senior member of staff. Similarly, the 12a class who were so co-operative with Mrs Mabandla, were outspoken and loud with their relatively young Biology teacher. Certainly, as mentioned earlier, Mrs Mabandla attributed her lack of disciplinary problems to the Xhosa tradition of respect for older people.

Of all the teachers I observed, Mr Bathaka was the only one who would say that he felt unsure of an answer and would recheck and come back to them.¹⁶ In an authoritarian teaching environment, this may have made him vulnerable. It could also be argued that students thought they were responding (as a group) to his injunction to them to be 'critical thinkers' and to 'challenge': 'always ask "why?". If [Bathaka] says that it is wrong, you ask "why is it wrong?"' (11d, August 1998). Mr Bathaka's definition of argument may have played a role. In the 'euphemism' lesson he describes argument as: 'a verbal war, a cha, cha, cha. It's when people are actually giving each other. I'm emptying my mind' (turn 83). This definition may in itself account for why students respond in such an outspoken manner. Responding as a group serves the dual purpose of defending their marks and preserving 'face' by not exposing the individual. The students generally maintain their position as a group *via*

the 'chorus' response. But even though he constantly invites them to, they fail to argue through their positions as individuals. As mentioned earlier (in 5.4.2.), when they were forced to act as individuals in their literature 'research' presentations, the same students were barely audible and seemed tense and vulnerable. Nunan (1996) writes that teachers expend enormous energy 'maintaining control over the flow of events' (p. 46). Mr Bathaka wishes to give his students a voice, but in reaction to behaviour exhibited by the class, his talk centres on crowd control.

5.7.3.3. Individual participation.

On average, 4-7 individuals participate in Mr Bathaka's classes. Students respond with a single word, a phrase, or as short a sentence as is possible. Even though they must have as much or more difficulty than I do following Mr Bathaka's convoluted explanations, students do not request clarification. Thus, the same students who declared their desire to be proficient in English in order to secure their future (in the dialogues discussed in chapter 4, section 4.2.) are reticent in class, speaking only in Xhosa or as part of a 'chorus'. Mr Bathaka did solicit individual participation *via* a ritual (see descriptions in appendix 7, after turn 39 and appendix 8, before turn 1) where he would nominate an individual to write the correct answer on the board. That person would then pass the chalk to another student of their choice. Mr Bathaka said that this had the effect of eliciting participation from weaker students because students generally handed the chalk to someone 'more mediocre' than themselves (Interview G).

5.7.3.4. Comparison of level of discussion.

Mr Bathaka demanded a higher level of participation from the 11a group. Whilst teaching prefixes to that group (appendix 8) he attempted to get students to formulate the rules for the formation of the prefixes. He would pause frequently waiting for them to think through an answer. The problem though is that, to my knowledge, there are no rules for many of the constructions and none were offered by the textbooks I checked. After students had spent a long time guessing, Mr Bathaka often left them without any final feedback. The students did not question this. Mr Bathaka circumvented my efforts to get him to explain (to me) the answers he had in mind. Although the students were as noisy as 11d, Mr Bathaka did not seem to mind as much, reasoning that: 'they get out of hand easily but they supplement that with their performance' (Interview G).

5.7.4. The lesson content.

On a number of occasions I found that, like the students, I disagreed with Mr Bathaka's answers. The disagreement is less important than the issues that it raises about teaching language in a decontextualised manner; about prescription; and about the issues of 'appropriate' uses of English referred to earlier (in sections 5.2. and 5.4.3). I will use three examples from the class to illustrate. Question ix (in Appendix 6) reads:

If we want someone to repeat what they have said, we should say:
A. What? B. Come again? C. I beg your pardon?

Mr Bathaka's answer is "I beg your pardon" which I would regard as a rather antiquated, possibly British form. Mr Bathaka gives a long explanation, which is quite hard to follow:

67. Mr B: How about C? (·) *noise*. 'I beg your pardon' [the answer to the question]. Ssh, perhaps this goes with authority. Perhaps when talking to you or addressing students would say to you 'come again?' [said very softly]. Perhaps it goes with authority. Perhaps there's some argument around English, that is, English people from England. When they want to talk or they want to talk about weather, they say: 'isn't it a nice day?' Necessarily the person isn't really talking about weather to talk about weather. Or a person may start by saying: 'what a hot day for a winter season?' And you would say 'Yes, yes I agree and then you start a conversation. Or when there is an uncomfortable silence in the midst or in the middle of the conversation, then someone says: 'isn't it warm today compared to the other day or the days which have gone by? And then let's say your boss has left a door open. Do you say: 'close the door'? Or do you comment about the weather or do you start by saying: 'it's quite chilly in here'? [the last statement pronounced in imitation of an upper class white South African accent] (·)

68. SS: *giggles*

69. Necessarily. You are replying to your boss. You could say: 'would you mind closing the door?' But he is a person in authority. Do you agree? Perhaps, the argument that says: 'come again?' is based on those kind of arguments. But it is not. When someone is saying something but you did not hear that person, you say: 'excuse me?' or 'I beg your pardon?' or you say 'sorry?' I you say: 'what?' It is very rude. It is actually very rude.

It is interesting that in order to justify his choice in this and several other instances, Mr Bathaka provides a context in which he elaborates on situation, purpose, and speaker identity. He also uses accent and intonation. His explanation highlights the limitations of expecting students to answer decontextualised questions. Presumably they too had envisaged scenarios when they answered the questions. Mr Bathaka has a quite specific notion of what is considered appropriate – 'come again' would be perfectly acceptable to me in some contexts but in his view, it is 'rude'. To his credit, he concedes that there are preferable options such as 'excuse me?' and 'sorry?' but these options were not available to the students who were required to circle one of the three choices. Mr Bathaka is operating with quite specific (perhaps upper class British) cultural norms, which are not made accessible to the students.

A further problem raised by this question (and several others in the exercise) is that I do not think it is an example of euphemism. The classic definition of euphemism in Fowler's dictionary of Modern English usage is that it is 'a substitute for blunt or disagreeable truth'. Euphemism is a figure of speech that employs indirectness to disguise the 'real' nature of something. The example given here is not hiding any truth. It requires an appropriately polite form of address. But politeness is not necessarily euphemistic. Earlier in the lesson, when he is trying to provide an explanation for 'euphemism', Mr Bathaka tells the students: '... we are trying to be very polite and educated nè? We are trying to move away from being rude and crude. Alright?' (turn 12). This statement seems to indicate that he has conflated language etiquette with euphemism. Implied in this notion is also a value judgement that associates politeness and euphemism with being educated, and rudeness with being uneducated.¹⁷ On a number of occasions, he uses a soft tone and upper class accent for the answers he regards as appropriately euphemistic and a loud, brash one for those considered inappropriate (see turns 61; 67, 69). In his explanation to the students, Mr Bathaka may also be conflating circumlocution with euphemism when he refers to the British habit of talking about the weather as a substitute for raising the issue at stake. Here euphemism becomes a value to aspire to rather than just situationally appropriate speech. It is interesting that Mr Bathaka chooses British examples – he may well be associating 'Englishness' with being 'polite and educated'.

Another interesting example is number xi, which reads:

That man is rather (overweight/obese/fat).

The students shout out 'overweight' (which is also my choice) but Mr Bathaka's answer to this is 'obese' and his explanation is that:

76 ...Obese is a sympathetic word that would refer to a fat person. If you say to a fat person 'you are overweight', you are not being considerate. Did you understand me? In this instance we are not talking about being rude or what. But you are not being considerate. You are not considering the feelings of that other person. Maybe that person has become obese or fat not because of their own liking. And maybe he hates being referred to as overweight or fat. Especially if it's the ladies huh?

Mr Bathaka distorts what little context exists in the example. Firstly, the speaker is referring to someone in the third person and is not addressing the remark directly to someone who is regarded as 'fat'. Secondly, the remark is about a man and not a woman. Obesity is a Western clinical definition that refers to someone whose weight problem is defined as an illness. In my view, to call someone 'obese' is a harsher judgement than 'overweight', which suggests a minor, more easily remediable problem. But I consider both remarks harsh, and can think of more nuanced ways in which to hint that someone is 'fat'. The appropriate phrase would depend on context and perhaps even on cultural norms, attitudes to the body and Western medicine. Mr Bathaka's distinction between being 'rude' and 'not considerate' is also vague.

The third example is number xiv:

I (request you to/demand that you/would like you to) leave now.

Mr Bathaka's answer is 'I request you to leave' because he says that it carries more force than "I would like you to leave" but is 'less crude' than 'I demand that you leave'. This is another instance in which Mr Bathaka has to construct a context in order to justify his answer. Again, I could just as easily envisage alternative scenarios. In this instance Mr Bathaka concedes that he may be wrong and says that he will consult the textbook. The problem remains though that, like Mrs Mabandla, he believes there is only one 'right' answer in what is clearly an area where meaning-making depends on context. He fixes language into static, idealized forms (Fairclough

1995). In this respect, several applied linguists have critiqued the tendency of communicative curricula to become no more than 'extended phrase books' (Johnson 1983, p. 45). Widdowson (1991) writes:

It is perfectly possible to treat notions and functions as items to be learned in the same way as structures, as pieces of knowledge to be put in store without any necessary implication for actual use as natural behavior. If a methodology, a set of classroom techniques, is focused on teaching knowledge in the abstract, and directs all learner activity to that end, then it will fail to realize the communicative possibilities within a notional/functional syllabus. (p. 159; see also Wilkins 1981)

My differences with Mr Bathaka's answers foreground the fact that judgement about what is considered 'appropriate' or 'inappropriate' is not solely dependent on context, audience and purpose, nor on language variety as the 1995 syllabus would have us believe. In every instance, he elects what I would regard as the most formal register. His choices are laden with value judgements about what is acceptable in which context. That his students disagree about being indirect (turns 29-61) and do not want to pretend to enjoy something that they found boring, is at odds with his notion of how one behaves in polite society, and so is disregarded by him (turns 29-61). He can only explain his choices by envisioning a context, and in some cases deploying stereotypes. However, he shows no awareness that the lack of such a background or of shared prejudices may have caused problems for his students, or that they may view his contexts differently. In this respect Saville-Troike (1996) writes that:

... the content of what a speaker needs to know depends on the social context in which he or she will be using the language and the purposes he or she will have for doing so. From this perspective, native language norms in many cases constitute an inappropriate target for instruction.... (p. 363)

Cultural differences may account for the different ways in which people use language.

What is appropriate in the native speaker norms of a language may pose problems for

L2 speakers who have been socialised into different codes. It is interesting that Mr Bathaka seems unaware of this, despite the fact that he is an ESL speaker from a similar cultural background to his students.

5.7.5. Comparison with Mr Van Wyk's language classes.

Mr Van Wyk also taught lessons which focussed explicitly on language idiom and grammar, but he did so in the context of students' content lessons. For example, in one lesson, he returns the 12a students' "Othello" tests, and spends the class discussing common errors of grammar, style and idiom, using examples from the students' writing. He deploys an extensive code system to indicate the nature of students' errors as he marks. This system is explained to the class and they then have to revise with a view to becoming more reflexive. Mr Van Wyk's students handed in written work once or twice a week and he regularly gave this kind of detailed feedback in writing. In this class, he reminds the students that, to improve their writing, they need to read extensively to develop sensitivity to the idiom of the language, and that they need to use dictionaries. As always, he also reminds them that: 'it's very important to write correctly. You will lose lots of marks in the examinations if you just write and don't care about it' (field-notes, February 1999).

Even though his motivation is instrumental, and the daily focus on "Othello", somewhat tedious, Mr Van Wyk's approach is likely to have more effect because (a) it addresses common ESL errors but also addresses individual students' difficulties; (b) students obtain direct, regular and immediate feedback verbally and in writing; (c) students are provided with the opportunity to reflect on their errors in writing; and (d) the exercise is embedded in the context of their work on "Othello."

Mr Bathaka's lessons focus students' attention on language structure. He tries to make conceptual links with their Xhosa grammar and to encourage students not to 'think in pockets or as entities away from each other' (turn 88, appendix 8). He shows awareness that students need more than functional literacy in English - that they should be given opportunities to be creative, to research, to argue and to become critical thinkers - but his decontextualised lessons do not foster this critical literacy. As with Mrs Mabandla and many other communicative language teachers (see Vinjevoid and Taylor 1999 and Weideman 2001), there is a mismatch between the desire to promote active learning and actual teaching practice. Either because of a lack of feedback or because Mr Bathaka's explanations are so convoluted, students are often left without any foundation upon which to build either their grammatical or sociolinguistic competence. Second language research suggests that error feedback is crucial but that 'it must be sustained over a period of time, and it must be focussed on something learners are actually capable of learning' (Lightbown 2000, p. 446). Mr Bathaka's lessons show no evidence of a systematic programme to build proficiency. As in Mrs Mabandla's classes, they have few opportunities to practise either in the form of writing or speaking.

PART FIVE: Explanation and analysis of the discourses of the English classroom.

5.8. Introduction.

Thus far in this thesis, I have described and interpreted (a) the historical and contemporary politics of English and English teaching in South Africa; (b) the policy and local context in which English is used, taught and learnt at Mziwethu Senior

Secondary School; (c) students' and teachers' attitudes to, and constructions of English use, their school and its environment, and of teaching and learning; and (d) the form and content of English classroom discourses. In the process, I have highlighted a range of contradictions between what teachers and students say about English and their actual discourse practices, and have illustrated contradictions within the official discourses of the English curriculum.

However, as I outlined in chapters two and three, a critical approach to applied linguistics has to go beyond describing *what* is said and *how* language is used. In order to fully understand the contradictions between what people say and do, the relationships between the speech context (in this case the English classroom) and the power relations of the institutional and wider social context have to be explained. This section analyses the dialectic between the views and practices of the individuals in my study, and the social structure.

5.8.1. 'Thirty facts for thirty marks': classroom discourse and the literacy of the matriculation examination.

It is clear from the data described in chapters four and five that many factors influence the nature of classroom discourse practices. These range from effects of school culture, school language policy, the syllabus, the constraints of space, time and class size, to teacher- and students' notions of learning, as well as their attitudes to the subject, each other and the school. But my data show that at a senior level, the matriculation examinations play *the* major role in structuring classroom discourse practices at both Mziwethu and Ilitha.

This is not surprising given the examination-driven nature of the South African education system. Schools are measured by their matriculation results. As discussed in chapter two, in the new South Africa education and literacy are viewed as the key to social and economic development. There is considerable pressure on the education authorities and the Minister of Education to prove that previously disadvantaged schools are the beneficiaries of redress, and that learners from these schools will be in a position to access jobs and higher education. The matriculation results are used as a tangible measure of educational success. Chisholm (1999) argues that the fact that the results have continued to be used as such a measure, even though they are unreliable and cannot be used for the purpose of analysing the quality of the system, shows that the results are, above all, a political tool (see also Jansen 1999). Chisholm (1999) argues that the examination plays a role 'in the national psyche as a symbol of national failure and well-being' (p. 7). The publication of the results in the newspapers is traditionally accompanied by a celebration of those students, teachers and schools who have achieved outstanding results. There are merit award incentives for excellent students, and schools that achieve significant improvement are rewarded with resources. Publication is also always accompanied by public outcry about the poor performance of former D.E.T. schools: what Chisholm (1999) characterises as 'the shame and blame roundabout' (p.7).

A recent development is that schools with poor results are identified in the media and publicly censured with the approval of the minister of education (Pretorius 2000). In the early days of the 'new' South Africa, blame for failure was located in the Apartheid system. Now that more resources have been allocated to previously disadvantaged schools and they continue to perform badly, the burden of achieving

matriculation success is transferred to schools, and in turn to teachers who are (as shown in chapter four) increasingly blamed for the fact that former D.E.T. schools continue to perform badly despite their increase in resources. In chapter four I showed that students measure their teachers by whether they 'finish' the syllabus, and teach the literacy of answering matriculation papers. It seems that the examination evaluates teachers as much as their students.

The pressure of the matriculation examination is significantly increased by the fact that they are written in English, an additional language for all students and most teachers in former D.E.T. schools. At both Mziwethu and Ilitha, students and teachers report that, in the junior classes, English is hardly used and students have little access to using the language outside of the classroom. Students are thus strongly dependent on teachers for mediation, even at a senior level. As my observations show and students report, senior classes take place mainly in Xhosa and teachers use code-mixing to convey their subject matter orally. But they 'scope', that is, circumscribe the information that their students need to be able to reproduce in English in order to pass the examinations. 'Scope' is achieved through summaries, worksheets and revision of past examination papers. In 'content' subjects, like History and Biology, this literacy practice precludes any need to engage with the readings themselves, or engage in writing where they would have to explore concepts and develop argument.

Thus, what students are being taught is a highly limited discourse competence that may serve the instrumental purpose of passing the matriculation examination; but which has little transferable value, given that they are likely to forget the facts they learn. At both schools, many teachers encourage their students to take their subjects

on the 'standard' rather than the more cognitively demanding 'higher' grade. This practice, which excludes students from university education, is encouraged by the education authorities because it increases the overall matriculation pass rate. Attention to the less cognitively demanding material in the syllabus is thus condoned.

The official discourse emanating from the education department with regard to English as a subject is contradictory. As part of the move to 'progressive' pedagogies, the English syllabus advocates student-centred, exploratory learning. The syllabus emphasises oral communication and a move away from knowledge of language system and from an engagement with literature as a discipline. The education department's guideline documents reveal that the matriculation examination rewards oral communication and functional writing forms. In the face of the pressure of an evaluation that values 'banking' of facts, it is inevitable that teachers will choose functional rather than student-centred process discourse. Even teachers like Mr Van Wyk and Mr Nyembe, who have the education and training to teach creatively and at a cognitively demanding level, consciously choose to disregard the 'progressive' discourse of the syllabus in favour of instrumental 'drilling'.

Mrs Mabandla and Mr Bathaka do not see the contradiction between the discourses of the syllabus and the matriculation examinations. In their desire to do the best for their students, they (unconsciously) attempt to reconcile contradictory goals. They believe in student-centred pedagogy but place themselves at the centre of classroom activity, asking questions and vetting answers. They believe that lively, oral interaction is a signifier of cognitive engagement - 'active learning'. Asking questions rather than direct telling, creates the illusion of an inquiry-driven practice

and, in Mrs Mabandla's case, the 'chorus' simulates active participation. However, even though both teachers tell their students that they encourage 'argument', their questions are seldom exploratory or analytical in nature, and the goal of classroom talk is always the search for a single, 'correct' answer. 'Reading on the line', knowledge of facts and memory are rewarded, even though the teachers believe that their practice has moved away from rote-learning and 'scope'.¹⁸ In both cases, this mismatch between the teachers' stated aims and their practices suggests that the teachers do not have the necessary resources to promote a different practice.

Meta-talk about the language system and about how texts are constructed is absent or vague. Rather than teaching 'generalisable and transferable language features', the teachers value 'situation specific everyday explanations' (Ludwig and Hershell 1995, p. 105) that are judged relevant. What the teachers regard as 'commonsense' is given weight. Students are left with a strong sense of what is socially and culturally acceptable behaviour, but without the metalinguistic tools to explore and critique other texts. Through Mrs Mabandla's emphasis on 'performance' and her respect for student opinion, some students do 'acquire' conversational fluency in English and confidence, but the literacy they 'learn' is functional, situation-specific and, as with their 'content' subjects, likely to be transient. Students thus have little or no opportunity to reflect and process at a cognitively demanding level in English either in oral or written form. The discourse practices of the English classroom are incompatible with the need to use the language at cognitively demanding levels in other subjects or, as Mpho shows, in the discipline of English at tertiary level.

Yet whilst it is true that the matriculation structure robs teachers of agency in terms of what and how they teach, teachers are not merely passive victims overdetermined by structure. The data reveal that teachers co-opt the impending matriculation examination as a form of discipline that advances their power in the classroom and secures student co-operation. This is particularly evident in a school such as Mziwethu where discipline in the school as a whole has broken down. Mrs Mabandla uses it to contract students into her 'English only' policy in the classroom. In Mr Bathaka's case, the forthcoming matriculation examination gains him co-operation from the students who were so undisciplined in grade 11. At Ilitha, the daily reminders, dire prophesies and tests lock students into compliance, evidenced in their silent filling in of worksheets and test preparation.

The matriculation examination is deployed as a reason for restricting literacy practices. Senior teachers, as well as the students, attribute blame to the junior teachers for the 'backlog' in students' conceptual knowledge and for their lack of proficiency in English. In Mr Van Wyk's case, this is the reason given for why he is 'forced' to 'drill' students. All the teachers repeatedly emphasised that it was not possible to engage in innovative, creative teaching practices at grade 12 level; and therefore encouraged me to observe grade 11 practices. But at grade 11 level, I saw a dress rehearsal for the matriculation year with the new emphasis on continuous assessment determining classroom discourse practices.

In the act of training for the examination, teachers and students share a common value system. A measure of this is the anger expressed by both the 12a and 12c students (in chapter 4, sections 4.5. and 4.6.3.) at teachers who break the contract

by not teaching matriculation literacy. It is only the university students – Mpho, Siphon and Thulani - who, faced with the cognitively-demanding, context-reduced nature of university study, can see the limitations of their school discourse practices.

5.8.2. 'The teachers go with the students who are going': classroom discourse and student identity:

Teachers' classroom discourse practices delimit subject positions for the students. Both Mrs Mabandla and Mr Bathaka engage with their students on a personal level, compared to the distanced interaction at the other school. Nevertheless, my description and analysis has shown that classroom interaction is limited to a few individual students, and classroom practice is strongly differentiated on the basis of teachers' classification of the ability of the class. Teachers seldom nominate individuals or ask them to restructure or clarify when there is a communication breakdown. Only the 'going' students in Mrs Mabandla's 11a/12a class initiate discussion or ask for clarification. Those students who assert themselves as individuals by being well-behaved, responsible achievers, who are seen to be 'going', are recognised and paid attention. They are also the students who obtain individual recognition and praise from Mrs Mabandla for their talents and who consciously practise their English outside of class. Yet even these students are never challenged to engage in precise analytical modes of thought and literacy production. Mr Bathaka tries to encourage his 11a class to think inductively; but his own limitations in terms of knowledge of the English language system, as well as his difficulty in maintaining discipline, undermine his efforts. His role in furthering the interests of individual 'going' students is enacted through the choir rather than in the English classroom.

In the classes I observed, the majority of students remain nameless, labelled as 'passive'. In the English classes students remain silent, shout noisily (in Mr Bathaka's classes) or preserve 'face' through 'chorusing'. The threat of losing the oral marks in grade 12 is the only direct motivation for these students to participate individually in classroom discussion. And, because of the lack of extended writing at Mziwethu, they seldom obtain individual attention *via* that route. Large classes enable students to disappear into a group identity that is difficult for teachers to challenge, a situation which is worse in the junior classes where the class sizes are bigger. This is reinforced by the culture of the school, which does little to challenge that 'passivity' or motivate students. As I showed in chapter four, teachers are often absent from class and show little commitment to the school and the students. Mrs Mabandla and Mr Bathaka are dedicated teachers, but their teaching methodology does not provide incentive for these students to be self-motivated and self-reliant, since the students know that they have only to wait, and the solution will be provided in the form of 'scope'.

Even though (as shown in chapter four) many of Mr Bathaka's students envisage a future outside of the township and see English as a commodity, a means to success and empowerment, they attempt to subvert the discourse of the English classroom, choosing the safer option of conformity to the dominant discourse of their peers. Speaking in a second language is always difficult. As Mark says, to speak English aloud in class is to risk humiliation and derision. The 12a 'going' students are prepared to take that risk under the protection of Mrs Mabandla and are marked as 'Model Cs', aspiring to 'white' norms and values; this, despite the fact that many of the students' processes of identification in the wider student body are located in western, particularly, American popular culture.

An additional factor in this context is that the complex power relations of the township filter into the classroom and censor what may be said and by whom. As I showed in chapter four, to speak inappropriately, by (for example) attributing blame for the vigilante or gang violence, is to risk injury or death. Teachers are also forced by the volatile situation in the township, and the context of gang culture in the school, to be wary of what they say and do and to whom. The authority relations of the school are in part subject to the power relations of the township. The boundaries of time and space at the school are constantly invaded by events in the township, or by a lack of responsibility and commitment from staff. For the students, there are few teachers who act as role models, who enforce discipline, or who provide meaningful alternatives to the dominant discourses of violence, crime and materialism in the township and in the popular media.

Thus classroom identities and relations are determined not only by teachers, but by the discourse of peers and the community outside. Mrs Mabandla's desire to create an emotionally safe space where her students feel comfortable, and Mr Bathaka's battle to have his students challenge him, cannot be viewed in isolation from the unstable environment of the school and township described in chapter four. Students choose whether or not to participate in these classrooms and teachers are wary of forcing them. In the act of deciding how and when they insert themselves into classroom discourse, students make choices about how they identify but that identity is located in and constrained by their social context. Students are subject to the twin pulls of transcending the boundaries of the township and home culture through education and English, and the physically more dangerous but more familiar, less

intellectually and emotionally risky option of maintaining the boundaries of community and culture. 'Culture' is equated with ethnicity and ethnicity is deployed as a 'positional construct' (Rampton 1998, p.5). It is a stable entity whose authenticity and symbolic value cannot be questioned and is a reliable, comfortable fallback position that cannot easily be called into question by one's peers or outsiders. To assert that you are 'going' by participating in classroom discourse in English is to risk losing 'face' through public failure. To maintain that you are staying true to 'culture' in these circumstances is to clothe yourself in the protective blanket of ethnicity.

Teachers and students hold a view of English that is congruent with the construction in the curriculum. English is conceived of as a 'working tool' (Ndebele 1987, p. 233) to fulfil an instrumental goal. Nevertheless it is clear from classroom discourse and from everyday cultural practices that the language is not a neutral tool. As in many other postcolonial contexts, it is conflated with 'being educated' and associated with discourses of empowerment, wealth and progress. However, the notion that 'with English you can go everywhere' may be true of some contexts, but not for the schools in my study. The very fact of learning the language in a functional manner contributes to constraining students' futures, to reinforcing 'the instrumentalization of people as units of labour' (Ndebele 1987, p. 14). As Bernstein (1990) points out, the kind of vocationalism which has become characteristic of new syllabi appears to offer the working class an opportunity by requiring less, but, in doing so, 'closes off their personal and occupational possibilities' (p. 87).

Notes:

¹ I wanted to analyse both language and literature classes. Language and literature each count a third of the total marks in the examination, with the oral component making up the rest. I have made this particular selection because I have a representative sample – I observed more literature classes taught by Mrs Mabandla and more language classes taught by Mr Bathaka.

² I have reviewed the Western Cape ESL matriculation examination papers from 1997-1999, the period of my data collection.

³ It is due to be reintroduced in the 2001 examination.

⁴ I asked Mrs Mabandla's permission to narrate this very personal story.

⁵ Mr Van Wyk and Mr Nyembe were also able to articulate a coherent teaching philosophy. This is interesting because in their earlier research on D.E.T. schools, Simons (1986) and Walker (1996) both write of the inability of the participants in their studies to do so.

⁶ The rule he derived is that if a labial or bilabial (b; ph; f; m and v) precedes a noun stem, the prefix is form 'im' (Maseko, *personal communication* March 2001); see appendix 8, turn 83.

⁷ At both schools all students were entered on the higher grade for English. However, as mentioned in chapter four, students took many of their other subjects on the standard grade. Mrs Mabandla viewed the English standard grade examination as equivalent to studying the subject as a third language. She thought that only students in rural areas enrolled on the standard grade (field-notes, October 1997). As mentioned in chapter four, a large percentage of Ilitha students are from rural Eastern Cape.

⁸ This was a typical feature of both the 'language' and 'content' classes (see Nunan 1996 who also makes this observation).

⁹ Although Chick describes it as a peculiarly South African practice, the chorus feature has also been noted in ESL classrooms in Japan, Sénégal, Tanzania and Indonesia (see Coleman 1996 and Qorro 1999).

¹⁰ It is interesting that whereas Mr Van Wyk and Mr Nyembe classify all their students as 'passive' and attribute this quality to cultural background (section 5.5), Mrs Mabandla and Mr Bathaka differentiate between their students on the basis of their perception of intelligence.

¹¹ It is not clear when the story was written; but, according to Eilersen (1995), Bessie Head's biographer, it was ready for publication in 1969 (p.158).

¹² The concern to attach a racial classification is not surprising given South Africa's history and was also evident in Mr Bathaka and Mr Van Wyk's "Othello" lessons.

¹³ This term is used to refer to teachers' focus on logistics and issues of classroom management (see Bloome 1994 and Street 1995).

¹⁴ Because of Mr Bathaka's resistance to the chorus, I found it easier to ask him about it than Mrs Mabandla, who seemed to solicit it unconsciously.

¹⁵ A definite weakness here is my failure to interview these students. At the time I thought that I was simply using the grade 11 data as a comparative basis for the matriculation class. It was only during the analysis stage that I realised the value of the data in its own right.

¹⁶ However, he only ever asked my opinion once, whereas Mrs Mabandla and Mr Siko would regularly seek my advice (outside of class).

¹⁷ In the "Two Women" class, Mrs Mabandla equates intelligence with being educated (appendix 4, turn 47).

¹⁸ Many writers have commented on how teachers use the rhetoric of learner-centred pedagogies but still practice teacher-centred pedagogies (see Edwards and Westgate 1994; Canagarajah 1999 and Pile and Smyth, quoted in Taylor and Vinjevid 1999).

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations.

6.1. Introduction.

This final chapter explores the implications of my research findings, and makes practical recommendations for (a) policy decisions and developmental initiatives with regard to the language of learning and teaching in schools and the English curriculum and (b) my own practice as an academic development practitioner in the tertiary context.

Critical applied linguists like Kumaravadivelu (1999) and Norton (2000) have stressed the importance of exploring the implications of research findings for intervention and change. In doing so, I am aware that, although my choice of an ethnographic study has yielded thick description and explanation, the size of my sample precludes generalised statements about large-scale intervention. Yet my data * v B have highlighted the complexity of language attitudes and practices when these are considered in their full social, cultural and educational context. The data have yielded insights that help me explain many of the attitudes and discourse practices that I have observed in my classes at U.C.T., and which have been alluded to by other researchers of former D.E.T. schools. This is the strength of ethnography; its potential to help make connections through comparison. I assume that since the language, social and policy conditions in my study are typical of many former D.E.T. schools, it will be possible for other researchers, teachers and policy-makers to make similar connections. The recommendations that I make below are made in the spirit of exploring alternatives and stimulating debate and further research.

6.2. Language policy, curriculum and school development.

6.2.1. Introduction.

In chapter two, I established that an extensive body of research has shown that:

- The language learning process is not just cognitive, it is also psychological and social. Language development cannot be viewed separately from motivation, attitudes, patterns of language use, input, the general learning conditions and the broader social and economic environment;
- Language is central to learning, and cognitive processes generally work best through the medium of the home language;
- In order to use a language in cognitively demanding, context reduced situations (that is, for academic purposes) students need to develop cognitive academic language proficiency in that language;
- Literacy skills are context specific and students have to be mediated into subject-specific discourses;
- Ideally, this mediation should combine 'acquisition' (to facilitate fluency/ 'performance') and 'learning' (to facilitate meta-knowledge and critique).

In recent years it has generally been agreed that South African students need to be at least bilingual, and that they need proficiency in English (Alexander 1999b and PANSALB 1999). To this end the "Language-in-Education" policy (Department of Education 1997a) advocates maintaining home language(s) 'while providing access to and effective acquisition of additional languages' (p. 5). Nevertheless, as I showed in chapter two, official documents, as well as articles emerging from PANSALB members, in effect downplay the value of English and label those who desire the language as assimilated or colonised (PANSALB 1999, Alexander 1999a and 1999b and Heugh 2000).

When I started my fieldwork, I was convinced by the South African research and policy arguments that schooling should take place primarily through the medium of the home language. But my data have made me view the situation in a more nuanced manner and recognise that students should have an opportunity to develop

basic interpersonal communication and cognitive academic language proficiency skills in their home language *and* English. The learners in my study, and in other recent studies (Vinjevold 1999 and Vesely 2000), are highly motivated to be proficient in English. Moreover, it is clear that there is little evidence of a meaningful political will in South Africa to transform the major institutions of society to become multilingual. With the demise of Afrikaans as the second official language, English has become hegemonic. The ambivalence expressed by the learners in my study relates directly to the complex power relationships of their social context that constrain their choices and, by extension, their life chances. Their motivation to learn and use English is intimately connected to the ways in which they identify in relation to youth culture and the environment of the school and township, as well as to how they envisage their futures. The poverty, violence and division of the township environment presents competing claims on identity formation, affecting how students define themselves in relation to English. They exhibit a strong sense of loyalty to the Xhosa language and Xhosa traditions. Home culture is like an elderly grandparent - precious, and familiar and therefore to be cherished and respected. But like a grandparent, it is also regarded as old-fashioned and sometimes inhibiting.

Knowing English is conflated with being educated. This is not surprising, as being educated in English holds the possibility of access to resources and independence. Thus English is viewed by the students as the language of their future: and this future is constructed away from home, outside of the unstable township culture. The students know that, despite political rhetoric to the contrary, without English they will 'go nowhere'; that they will not have access to the major institutions and resources in the society. The choice of English is 'historically pre-determined

pragmatism' (Ndebele 1987, p. 3). To label the students as assimilated for making such a choice is to underestimate the conscious, strategic choices they make as they position and reposition themselves in relation to the conflicting discourses in their environment. It assumes that individuals do not act as agents in constructing subject positions for themselves and that identity is unitary and fixed, rather than multiple and fluid.

If, as countless theorists point out, identity is central to learning, we should not be ignoring the needs and desires expressed by the students. Policy development needs to engage with contexts of use and power relations. We need to understand how people use language and why they make certain language choices. We also need to engage with teachers', parents' and learners' perceptions about language if we are to convince them of the importance of home language instruction, particularly in the early years. This is what Street and Lea (1998) call a 'practices' approach to literacy, and (I would add) language (p. 158). It takes into account how people use literacy in order to ascertain the manner in which their contextual and cultural understandings may be incorporated into, or even used to reshape mainstream institutional practices. As Baker (quoted in Adebija, 1994) points out:

Attempting language shift by language planning, language policy and the provision of human and material resources can all come to nothing if attitudes are not favourable to change. Language engineering can flourish or fail according to the attitudes of the community. Having a favourable attitude to the subject of language attitudes becomes important in bilingual policy and practice. (p. 21)

6.2.2. The English curriculum.

In chapter five I showed that although the English syllabus does advocate student-centred, more exploratory and cognitively-demanding forms of learning, the reductionism of the examinations overdetermines classroom practice. This is the case even when teachers believe that they are cultivating an exploratory, student-centred discourse. At senior levels the structure of the matriculation examination determines both the form and content of classroom practice. The emphasis on basic interpersonal skills, and instrumental writing forms, contradicts the students' needs to use English at cognitively demanding levels in their other subjects.

Granville *et al* (1998) point out that the fact that present policy downplays access to English prevents a planned and effective mode of access to the language. English has been reduced to a 'working tool', learnt for the purposes of basic conversational exchange. The consequence is that at present students leave school 'with a less than full competence in English (the language of power) and an inflated view of its importance and value' (Granville *et al* 1998, p.257).

The likelihood is, moreover, that English will remain the language of learning and teaching at senior levels; and the English curriculum needs to foster a meta-knowledge for critical analysis of texts across the curriculum. Critical analysis of texts entails 'reading between the lines'; asking who, how and why. It is an engagement with choices of genre, lexicon, tone, character, sequencing etc. made by a particular writer, and requires an understanding of socio-historical context, a comparison of other texts of similar genre and period, and an understanding of how texts are consumed and produced. This social analysis of texts opens the way for a focus on

critical debate and for the development of skills of argumentation through writing. As I argued in chapter five, literary study also has the potential to stimulate the imagination by extending the boundaries of experience and challenging students to interpret and make connections through engagement with the metaphoric layer of the text.

The draft revised curriculum statement for grades 1-9 (Department of Education 2001) appears to take a critical approach and to value creative and imaginative engagement with texts. It also emphasises the need to focus explicitly on the language system. But the reduction of the study of language and literature in the new curriculum proposals (Department of Education 1997b and Department of Education 2001) to 'behaviourist outcomes' (Jansen 1997 and Christie 1999) has the potential to further entrench narrow vocationalism. Jansen (1997) ascribes the origins of "Curriculum 2005" to the competency models associated with vocational education in the United Kingdom and with trends in Australia and New Zealand. The review of the first few years of "Curriculum 2005" similarly argues that 'for those who did not have access to an enabling curriculum, the curriculum continues as a narrow expression of social goals to enskill for work alone rather than also creating fully-rounded human beings' (Department of Education 2000, p. 28). Since the curriculum and assessment systems for grades 10-12 have not been developed for the new curriculum, I cannot comment on its likely effects. However, as I have shown, the form and content of assessment practices have, and will continue to have, a major effect on the nature of teaching and learning.

6.2.3. Language across the curriculum.

The language subject curriculum cannot in itself fulfil students' literacy requirements across the curriculum. As Gee (1990) argues, literacy is multiple and context specific: '[t]here is no such thing as "reading" or "writing", only reading or writing *something*' (his emphasis, p. xviii). In order to become literate in the discourses of their disciplines, students have to grapple with the concepts and the language of the subject through mediated reading and writing. In order to ensure that students develop appropriate cognitive academic language proficiency skills to use language across the curriculum, we need to shift the discussion away from the either/or focus on language medium choice as per the Vinjevoild debate (discussed in chapter 2, section 2.4.2.3.) in order to develop local level school language practices that will facilitate a coherent and planned approach to language development across the curriculum that uses the available language resources of the school and takes language perceptions and attitudes into account.

School language policy cannot be considered separately from the human and material resources of the school, from the curriculum and from the motivation and perceptions of the school community. Prescriptive national policies about which subject should be taught in which language will simply be ignored on a grassroots level (as they have been since the inception of 'Bantu' education) causing teachers to engage in the covert, idiosyncratic practices described in chapters two and four. Instead, teachers need to work together to decide what is most appropriate in terms of students' language and conceptual ability at each level of study.

Assessment practices need to be reviewed so that the continuous assessment process and the high-stakes examinations (such as the matriculation examination) measure students' progress in developing cognitive academic language proficiency. The matriculation examination has been acknowledged as problematic by a number of writers (Wickham 1997, Department of Education 1998, Chisholm 1999 and Jansen 1999). Clearly concerted research and policy development is required in this area.

At present the language medium practices vary considerably from classroom to classroom; and students have to adapt to their teachers' personal preferences and notions of appropriateness. As my data show (and many other studies suggest) teachers speak almost exclusively in the home language whilst expecting students to read and write in English. Teachers need to identify when, how and why they use code-switching or the home language; and to establish which practices are appropriate at particular stages in students' learning. In this manner the home language and code-switching may be used as a tool for learning to scaffold concepts (orally and in written form), rather than as a compensatory mechanism or as a disciplinary measure.¹

The new curriculum proposals (Department of Education 1997b and Department of Education 2001) advocate 'language across the curriculum'. However, the concept of 'language across the curriculum' and the centrality of language for learning in the disciplines are mentioned only in the languages' learning area. The role of 'communication skills' is acknowledged in the descriptions or purposes and outcomes in some learning areas, notably Mathematics, Science, Social Science and Technology; but the statements are vague about the specific functions of language in these learning areas. There is no acknowledgment in these learning areas of the fact

that the majority of students may be studying through the medium of an additional language. The fact that the draft revised curriculum statement (Department of Education 2001) has in a large measure shifted away from the earlier emphasis on integrated learning (Department of Education 1997b) towards more defined subject areas, will make it harder for teachers to work across disciplines.

Until there is a recognition that language, and particularly writing, is central to learning (especially in a context such as ours where students are using their second language at cognitively demanding levels) teachers will continue to conceive of language as a problem located solely within the domain of language teachers. On the contrary, 'language across the curriculum' programmes require co-operation among teachers in all learning areas, and therefore have to be implemented at a wider school level. Content subject teachers will have to be convinced that writing is not a time-wasting, marking-intensive exercise. One has to demonstrate the value of daily low stakes 'writing to learn' exercises that will enable their students to reflect, to discover connections and to identify problems, as well as show how self-assessment and peer review may be used for low stakes writing in large classes.

6.2.4. School development.

The proposals that have been made above all presuppose that teachers have the necessary resources to implement a language for learning programme, whereas my data suggests that this is not necessarily the case. Two years ago, Jonathan Jansen, a prominent education academic and outspoken critic of "Curriculum 2005", suggested in a television debate that all schools should be closed for a year so that teachers could

be properly trained. His suggestion may be extreme, but what it highlights is the dire need for whole school development and for immersion programmes for teachers.

In the current process of curriculum reform, teachers have been angered and confused by the manner in which they have been inducted into the process: through single workshops which focussed on the terminology of the new curriculum (Christie 1999 and Vinjevold 1999 and Department of Education 2000), and by the top-down development and implementation of policy (Christie 1999). The problems of teachers' struggles with the conceptual and literacy demands of their subjects, teaching methodology and the major issue of the culture of learning at the schools will not be addressed by *ad hoc* workshops, threats against teachers from officials and politicians or a change in the language of learning and teaching.

To effect meaningful change, the interventions that are made have to be at an individual school level and at subject level, and they have to be systemic and sustained. Most importantly, decisions have to be made *together* with teachers as part of a process of rebuilding their identity as valued professionals. Their literacy practices and the teaching context have to be acknowledged and taken into account.

The importance of teacher identity and agency seems to have been recognised in some recent school development initiatives. Davidoff (2000), the director of a non-governmental organisation in Cape Town, writes of a collaborative project with the department to develop individual schools:

Most interventions in terms of classroom-based or focussed support require, in the first instance, teachers' desire to learn. We saw very clearly that this desire was either fostered or diminished by the ways in which the school functioned and the ways in which the leadership of the school took instructional practice

seriously.... Ultimately the challenge is to provide an environment where teachers are able and willing to take responsibility for their own learning as a way of improving classroom practice. (pp. 4-5)

This model is evident in the approach of the Management for Learning Project at U.C.T., which works at the level of subject and whole school development and which is implementing a 'writing across the curriculum' programme led by teachers. In a similar vein, Christie (1998) writes of the need to regenerate schools by building a sense of agency and responsibility at school level, and providing the necessary support to ensure that workable administrative and organisational structures are put into place to ensure the daily smooth running of the institution. If it is to be successful, we have to accept that the programme of rebuilding our schools will be a slow, developmental process. The notion that schools will become more efficient simply by improving management structures (as evidenced in Taylor 2001) is short-sighted.

6.3. The tertiary environment.

6.3.1. Introduction.

As outlined in chapter one, I was initially motivated to conduct this research by my desire to understand why it is that students from D.E.T. schools struggle with English and with coming to terms with the academic literacy demands of the university. I was frustrated by the extent to which the lack of qualitative research means that we conceptualise the school to university transition on the basis of anecdotal evidence or on research based entirely on university students' concepts of their past education. I hoped that my research would inform my own discourse practices as I attempt to socialise students into the norms and values of the Humanities faculty, and into the disciplinary culture of the English Department.

Indeed, my research findings have enabled me to understand the identities and social meanings that students bring to the university. In this section I reflect on the implications of my research findings for access to the university as well as my own teaching practices.

6.3.2. Access.

Using evidence from student essays, I have previously written about the affective dimension of the transition that students have to make from the impoverished township or rural environment to the beautiful, well-resourced institution nestled on the side of Table Mountain (Kapp 1998). I know that, even though the U.C.T. student population is now over fifty percent black, there is enough in the architecture, codes and rituals of the institution and in the accent, level of fluency and variety of English spoken, to mark students coming from Mziwethu or Ilitha as 'different'. Yet I could only fully appreciate the extent of the privilege after I had experienced the crowded, noisy, dangerous and chaotic environment of Mziwethu. I constantly found myself wondering how students from this environment ever succeeded at U.C.T. Little wonder then that the 'going' students in Mrs Mabandla's classes had not even contemplated U.C.T. as an option and did not know of its Alternative Admissions Research Programme² or its well-established academic and financial support structures. They had been led to believe that a practical, technical education would necessarily advance their chances of future employment whereas a 'theoretical' university degree would not.

When I began asking the students whom I teach at U.C.T. why many of them had made long journeys to come to U.C.T rather than attend institutions in their

neighbourhood, I found that many had done so because they had been encouraged by a teacher who knew the institution's reputation or because they knew a past student who had similarly recommended the institution. But because of the complex racial politics of Cape Town (described in chapters three and four) and U.C.T.'s reputation as an 'elite' institution, this kind of mentoring does not exist in the Western Cape. A further issue is that Mrs Mabandla's 'going' students did not all qualify for matriculation exemption, because they had been encouraged to take their subjects on the standard grade.

In a context where fewer students from former D.E.T. schools are entering university every year, the issues raised above highlight the need for a closer connection between academic institutions and their neighbouring schools in disadvantaged areas, both in terms of school development and in terms of contact with individual learners. School learners need to feel that the university is a place where they can succeed; and one way to achieve that may be by using senior university students from disadvantaged school backgrounds to act as peer mentors to groups of students. This could be done formally through study groups, or more informally through extra-mural activity such as soccer or contact between choirs.

6.3.3. Academic literacy teaching.

In chapter two, I reflected on how the New Literacy Studies theorists, the Genre theorists and Critical Language Awareness theorists, had influenced the approach to academic literacy teaching at U.C.T. My research has confirmed that our combined focus on acquisition and making explicit the discourse practices of the discipline is crucial. We need to provide opportunities for practice whilst developing a

metalanguage with which to engage with the literacy requirements of the disciplines. In the “Language in the Humanities” course for example, my colleagues and I devote an enormous amount of time to showing students that they are joining a conversation: that they have to engage with the arguments of other theorists and find their voices within the discourses of their disciplines. The skills we teach are located in real disciplinary contexts. By drawing our content from contemporary debates on gender, culture, language and identity, we simultaneously explore key concepts in the social sciences and help students express and explore the affective dimension of the transition to university. The emphasis on debate and comparing different points of view is important given the students’ background of rote-learning. It compels students to work out where they stand alongside the other voices in the academic conversation, and also enables them to see the academic community as a site of contestation and difference (Street and Lea 1998).

However, both this research, and my exposure to the teaching methods at the University of Massachusetts (Amherst),³ have shown me that we need to find more ways in which to help students develop identities as writers; that they need to discover the value of using writing as a tool for exploration and reflection. Although our students produce drafts of their essays, they have little opportunity on a daily basis for low stakes writing, writing which is not necessarily assessed but is used to reflect on their own positions and to work through difficult concepts. Low stakes writing may also be an important way to help students work through the barrier of writing produced by the oral culture of schooling. We use exploratory talk in small groups quite extensively in our classes and, although this is important in terms of building confidence, scaffolding concepts and facilitating debate, I now see that to some

students who do not participate actively this experience may be similar to the oral culture of school. Getting students to write before they speak will challenge them to participate more actively and, to use writing as a tool for thinking.

My research also explains the difficulties language and literature students have with understanding the notion of textual representation. It highlights the need for more explicit teaching of close, critical analysis of primary texts in their contexts, with particular reference to point of view, tone and the use of metaphor.

6.3.4. The language of learning and teaching.

As part of the process of facilitating students' transition from school to university, my colleagues and I in the Academic Development Programme are now also developing mechanisms to facilitate a process whereby students can access difficult concepts through use of their home languages both in the classroom, and through the development of glossaries and translation of essay topics. Whilst we realise that students ultimately have to be taught the language and discourse of power in the institution, we believe that use of the home language can provide an important access tool at the first-year level and can also play an affirming role for students. This position challenges the university's hitherto "English only" approach (Mashigoane 2001).

6.5.5. Broadening the conversation.

One of the most important consequences of this research for me is probably also the least tangible. My time at Mziwethu and Ilitha has enabled me to open up a conversation with my students about their schooling that was not possible before. In

my teaching, I name and analyse language practices and attitudes and instrumental learning practices such as 'scope'. This enables me to articulate with students' school literacies and to establish what reading and writing habits they have to change and develop. Whereas previously I would allow individuals to remain silent in class if they chose, I now find ways of ensuring that they participate and feel that they are contributing to the debate. My research has thus enabled me to show students that I have empathy with their struggles, but it has also given me a place from where to stand in order to challenge the affective and cognitive boundaries that they inadvertently erect. In turn, the students constantly alert me to the areas where generalisation is not possible, highlighting the need for similar research, particularly in rural areas.

The research process has enabled me to traverse a few of the boundaries that are the legacy of the Apartheid system, and also to perceive the multiple challenges that face our educational system. It has convinced me that the developmental challenges that lie ahead cannot be solved quickly through implementation of policies that seem 'progressive' or that have worked elsewhere. The solutions have to be context-specific; and they need to take into account the hopes, desires and practices of ordinary people.

If it is generally acknowledged that English is our *lingua franca*, that it is highly desired, and that it is indeed the language of power, we have a responsibility to ensure that those for whom it is an additional language are not placed in a position where they are unable to participate fully in the society because their access has been restricted by inappropriate policy and consequent curricula. Not to provide this access

is, in the long run, merely to reinforce existing social and economic inequality, whatever may be our intentions.

Notes:

¹ A study by Setati *et al* (2000) provides excellent examples of the problems and possibilities encountered in their teacher training programme and evaluation.

² This programme administers a placement test which tests students potential to succeed at the university, and allows an alternative access route to the matriculation examination.

³ My department has an exchange agreement with the English Department at University of Massachusetts. In the first semester of 2000, Kim Costino, a graduate student from that university, co-taught with me on the "Language in the Humanities" course at U.C.T. We have documented the similarities and differences in our approaches in Costino and Kapp (2001)

Bibliography.

Books, Articles, Reviews and Government Documents.

- Abrahams, M. 1997. (Non) Collaborative Space in South African Schools: A Comparative Perspective. Paper presented at the Kenton Conference, Hermanus, Cape Town.
- Achebe, C. 1975. Morning Yet on Creation Day. London: Heinemann.
- Adegbija, E. 1994. Language Attitudes in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Sociolinguistic Overview. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Alexander, N. 1989. Language Policy and National Unity in South Africa/Azania. Cape Town: Buchu Books.
- Alexander, N. 1999a. An African Renaissance without African Languages. *Social Dynamics* 25,1: 1-12.
- Alexander, N. 1999b. English Unassailable but Unattainable: The Dilemma of language policy in South African Education. Project for the study of alternative education in South Africa, Occasional Papers no. 3, University of Cape Town.
- Allright, D. and Bailey, K. 1991. Focus on the Language Classroom. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Adendorff, R. 1996. The functions of code switching among high school teachers and students in Kwazulu and implications for teacher education. In Bailey and Nunan: 388-406.
- Adendorff, R. 1999. A Critical Microethnographic Investigation of the Role of News-Time in the Acquisition of Literacy in Pre-Democratic South Africa. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Natal.
- Angélil-Carter, S.; Bond, D.; Paxton, M. and Thesen, L. (eds.). 1994. Language in Academic Development. Cape Town: University of Cape Town.
- Angélil-Carter, S. (ed.). 1998. Access to Success: Academic literacy in higher education. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press.
- Appel, R. and Mütysken, P. 1993. Language Contact and Bilingualism. London: Edward Arnold.
- Austin, R. 1993. An ethnographic investigation into English across the curriculum with particular reference to first-year primary History and Geography at Teacher Training College Level. Unpublished Masters Dissertation, University of Cape Town.
- Bailey, K. and Nunan, D. (eds.). 1996. Voices from the Language Classroom: Qualitative Research in second language education. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
- Bak, N. (ed.). 1998. Going for the Gap: Reconstituting the Educational Realm. Cape Town: Kenton/Juta
- Bakhtin, M. (Holquist, M. ed. and transl.). 1981. The Dialogic Imagination. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Bank, L. 1997. The Social Life of Paraffin: Gender, Domesticity and the Politics of Value in a South African Township. In P. McAllistir (ed.). Culture and the Commonplace. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press: 157-180.
- Barkhuizen, G. 1998. Discovering learners' perceptions of ESL classroom teaching/learning activities in a South African context. *Tesol Quarterly* 32, 1: 85-107.

- Barton, D. 1994. Literacy. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Barton, D., Hamilton, M. and Ivani, R. (eds.). 2000. Situated Literacies: Reading and Writing in Context. Routledge: London.
- Barton, D. and Hamilton, M. 2000. Literacy practices. In Barton *et al*: 7-15.
- Bell, J. 1995. Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Bernstein, B. 1990. The Structuring of Pedagogic Discourse Volume iv: Class, Codes and Control. London and New York: Routledge.
- Bernstein, B. 1996. Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity: Theory, Research and Critique. London: Taylor and Francis.
- Bhabha, H. 1984. Of mimicry and man: The ambivalence of colonial discourse. *October* 28: 125-133.
- Bloch, C. 2000. Literacy in the early years: Teaching and learning in multilingual early childhood classrooms. Project for the study of alternative education in South Africa, Occasional Papers, no. 1, University of Cape Town.
- Blommaert, J. 1996. Language Planning as a Discourse on Language and Society: The Linguistic Ideology of a Scholarly Tradition. *Language Problems and Language Planning* 20: 199-222.
- Blommaert, J. 1997. Workshopping: Notes on professional vision in discourse analysis. APIL 91 (Antwerp papers in Linguistics). Wilrijk: UIA-GER and Online publication: <http://africa.rug.ac.be>.
- Blommaert, J. 1999. Language in Education in post-colonial Africa: trends and problems. Paper presented at International conference: Language in education in post-colonial societies, City University of Hong Kong.
- Blommaert, J. and Bulcaen, C. 2000. Critical Discourse Analysis. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 29: 447-466.
- Bloome, D. 1994. Reading as a social process in a middle school classroom. In Graddoll *et al*: 100-130.
- Bock, M. 1998. Teaching Grammar in Context. In Angélil-Carter 1988: 53-65.
- Bourdieu, P. (Raymond, G. and Adamson, M. transl.). 1991. Language and symbolic power. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bot, M. 2000. An Analysis of the 1999 Senior Certificate Examination. *Edusource* 28:1-8.
- Brouard, A.; Wilkinson, L. and Stein, P. 1999. 'Literacy is all around us': Literacy, Ethnography and Curriculum 2005 in three Johannesburg classrooms. *SAJALS* 7,1: 1-26.
- Buthelezi, Q. 1995. South African Black English: lexical and syntactic characteristics. In Mesthrie: 242-250.
- Cameron, D., Fraser, E., Harvey, P., Rampton, B., and Richardson, K. (eds.). 1992. Researching Language: Issues of Power and Method. London: Routledge.
- Canagarajah, A. 1999. Resisting Linguistic Imperialism in English Teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Candlin, C. 1984. Syllabus Design as a Critical Process. In C. Brumfit (ed.). General English Syllabus Design. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Cazden, C. 1988. The Language of Teaching and Learning. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Celce-Murcia, M.; Dörnyei, Z. and Thurrell, S. 1997. Direct Approaches in L2 Instruction: A Turning Point in Communicative Language Teaching? *Tesol Quarterly* 31, 1: 141-152.
- Census 1996. Central Statistics Bureau: Pretoria.

- Chang, H. 1992. Adolescent Life and Ethos: An Ethnography of a U.S. High School. London: Falmer Press.
- Chaudron, C. 1995. Second Language Classrooms: Research on teaching and learning. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chick, J. K. 1985. The interactional accomplishment of discrimination in South Africa. *Language in Society*. 14, 3: 229-326.
- Chick, J. K. 1996. Safe-talk: Collusion in Apartheid Education. In Coleman: 21-39.
- Christie, P. 1998. Schools as (Dis)Organisations: the 'breakdown of the culture of learning and teaching' in South African schools. *Cambridge Journal of Education* 28, 3: 283-300.
- Christie, P. 1999. OBE and Unfolding Policy Trajectories: Lessons to be Learned. In J. Jansen and P. Christie (eds.). Changing Curriculum: Studies on Outcomes-based Education in South Africa. Cape Town: Juta: 279-292.
- Clark, J. 1993. An ethnographic investigation into the development and trialing of more accessible text materials for L2 teaching and learning in Physical Science. Unpublished Masters Dissertation, University of Cape Town.
- Clifford, J. and Marcus, G. 1986. The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Coleman, J. 1992. The School Years. London: Routledge.
- Coleman, H. 1996. Autonomy and ideology in the English language classroom. In H. Coleman (ed.). Society and the Language Classroom. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1-15.
- Cooper, B. (ed.). 1995. Nations. Cape Town: Maskew Miller/Longman.
- Cope, W. and Kalantzis, M. (eds.). 1993. The Literacies of Power and the Powers of Literacy. London: Falmer Press.
- Costino, K. and Kapp, R. 2001. Stretching across boundaries: A cross-national dialogue about writing and identity in the United States and South Africa. Paper presented at the College, Composition and Communication Conference in Denver.
- Crouch, L. and Mabogoane, T. 1997. Aspects of Internal Efficiency Indicators in South African Schools: Analysis of Historical and Current Data. *Edusource* 19: 4-28.
- Cummins, J. and Swain, M. 1986. Bilingualism in Education. London: Longman.
- Cummins, J. 1984. Bilingualism and Special Education: Aspects of Theory, Research and Practice. London: Longman.
- Cummins, J. 1996. Negotiating Identities: Education for Empowerment in a Diverse Society. Ontario: California Association for Bilingual Education.
- Davis, K. 1995. Qualitative Theory and Methods in Applied Linguistics Research. *Tesol Quarterly* 29,3: 427-454.
- Davidoff, S. 2000. Systemic Transformation in Education: Bringing the Cultural Dimension into the Restructuring Process. Paper presented at the Kenton Conference, eBhayi, Eastern Cape.
- Davis, K. 1995. Qualitative Theory and Methods in Applied Linguistics Research. *Tesol Quarterly* 29,3: 427-454.
- Delpit, L. 1995. Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom. New York: The New Press.
- De Klerk, V. 2000. To be Xhosa or not to be Xhosa ... that is the question. Paper presented at the First International Conference on Linguistics in Southern Africa, University of Cape Town.

- Department of Education. 1997a. Language-in-Education Policy. *Government Gazette No. 18546*, 19 December: 5-7.
- Department of Education. 1997b. Curriculum 2005. *Government Gazette No. 1805*, 6 June: 5-45.
- Department of Education. 1998. Investigation into the Senior Certificate. Report to the Minister of Education.
- Department of Education. 2000. A South African Curriculum for the Twenty First Century. Report to the Minister of Education.
- Department of Education. 2001. Draft Revised Curriculum Statement. Report to the Minister of Education.
- Desai, Z. and van der Merwe, P. 1998. Accommodating diversity in an increasingly global era: reconciling the tension between English and African languages in education policy in South Africa. In W. Morrow and K. King (eds.). Vision and Reality. UCT Press: Cape Town: 244-254.
- Edwards, A. and Westgate, D. 1994. Investigating Classroom Talk. London: Falmer Press.
- Eilersen, G. 1995. Bessie Head: Thunder Behind Her Ears. Cape Town: David Philip.
- Ellis, R. 1987. Using the English Medium in African Schools. In D. Young (ed.). Bridging the Gap between Theory and Practice in English Second Language Teaching: Essays in Honour of L. W. Lanham. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman: 82-99.
- Erickson, F. and Mohatt, G. 1982. Cultural Organisation and Participation Structures in Two Classrooms of Indian Students. In Spindler: 132-175.
- Fairclough, N. 1989. Language and Power. London: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (ed.). 1992. Critical Language Awareness. Longman, London.
- Fairclough, N. 1995. Discourse Analysis. London and New York: Longman: 233-252.
- Fairclough, N. 1995/6. Discourse across Disciplines: Discourse Analysis in Researching Social Change. *Aila Review* 12: 3-17.
- Fairclough, N. 1996. Discourse and Social Change. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Foucault, M. (Sheridan Smith, A. transl.). 1970. The Order of Things: An Archaeology of Human Sciences. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (Sheridan Smith, A. transl.). 1972. Archaeology of Knowledge. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (Sheridan Smith, A. transl.). 1984. Discipline and Punish: the birth of the prison. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Fowler, H. 1965. A dictionary of Modern English Usage. Oxford at the Clarendon Press.
- Gardiner, H. 1992. Surprisingly Disciplined Squads. In Norman: 186-195.
- Gardner, R. 1982. Language Attitudes and Language Learning. In E. Ryan and H. Giles (eds.). Attitudes towards Language Variation. London: Edward Arnold: 132-147.
- Gee, J. 1990. Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses. London: Falmer Press.
- Gee, J. 2000. The New Literacy Studies: from 'socially situated' to the work of the social. In Barton *et al*: 180-196.
- Geertz, C. 1973. The Interpretation of Cultures. New York: Basic Books.
- Goffman, E. 1967. Interaction Ritual: Essays in Face-to-Face Behaviour. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company.
- Gough, D. 1994. Myths of Multilingualism: Demography and Democracy. *Bua* 9, 3: 9-11.

- Gough, D. 1996. Black English in South Africa. In V. De Klerk (ed.). Varieties of English Around the World: Focus on South Africa. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company: 53-78.
- Graddol, D., Maybin, J. and Stierer, B. (eds.). 1994. Researching Language and Literacy in Social Context. Clevedon: Open University Press and Multilingual Matters.
- Gramsci, A. (Hoare, Q. and Nowell Smith, G. ed. and transl.). 1971. Selections from the prison notebooks. London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Granville, S.; Janks, H.; Mphahlele, M.; Reed, Y. and Watson, P. 1998. English With or Without G(u)ilt: A Position Paper on Language in Education Policy for South Africa. *Language and Education* 12: 254-272.
- Gwala, M. 1984. Writing as a Cultural Weapon. In M. Daymond, J. Jacobs, M. Lenta (eds.). Momentum: On Recent South African Writing. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press: 37-53.
- Gumperz, J. 1986. The Social Construction of Literacy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hammersley, M. 1993. Controversies in Classroom Research. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Hammersley, M. 1994. Introducing Ethnography. In Graddol *et al*: 1-17.
- Hammersley, M. 1998. What's Wrong with Ethnography? London: Routledge.
- Hansen, J. 1997. A comparative documentary analysis of English Second Language Matriculation Papers (1994 – 1996) within the context of the shift from a segregated to a unitary education system. Unpublished Masters Dissertation, University of Cape Town.
- Hartley, A., Visser, M., and Sheppard, C. 1998. The Condition of Primary and Secondary Education in the Western Cape (1995/6). Pretoria: HSRC.
- Hartshorne, K. 1995. Language Policy in African Education: a background to the future. In Mesthrie: 306-318.
- Hartshorne, K. 1999. The Making of Education Policy. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harvey, P. 1992. Bilingualism in the Peruvian Andes. In Cameron *et al*: 65-89.
- Heath, S. 1983. Ways with Words. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Henderson, P. 1999. Living with Fragility: Children in New Crossroads. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Cape Town.
- Herrington, A. 1993. Reflections on Empirical Research: Examining some ties between theory and action. In L. Odell (ed.). Theory and Practice in the Teaching of Writing: Rethinking the Discipline. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press: 40-70.
- Herrington, A. and Curtis, M. 2000. Persons in Process: Four Stories of Writing and Personal Development in College. Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Heugh, K., Siegrühn, A. and Plüddemann, P. (eds.). 1995. Multilingual Education for South Africa. Johannesburg: Heinemann.
- Heugh, K. 1995. Disabling and Enabling: Implications of Language Policy Trends in South Africa. In Mesthrie: 329-350.
- Heugh, K. 2000. The Case Against Bilingual and Multilingual Education in South Africa. Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa, Occasional Papers, Series, no.6, University Of Cape Town.

- Hibbert, L. 1994. Access to English for Learning in D.E.T. higher primary schools in the Western Cape. Unpublished Masters Dissertation, University of Cape Town.
- Hibbert, L. 1995. Facilitating access to English for Xhosa-speaking pupils in black township primary schools around Cape Town, South Africa. *Per Linguam* 11,2: 1-14.
- Hirson, B. 1979. Year of Fire. Year of Ash – The Sowet Revolt: Roots of Revolution? London: Zed Press.
- Hitchcock, G. and Hughes, D. 1989. Research and The Teacher: A Qualitative Introduction to School-based Research. London: Routledge.
- Hoadley, U. 1998. For Better or Worse: School choice in a South African working class context. Paper presented at Kenton-SASE conference, Kei-Mouth, Eastern Cape.
- Holliday, A. 1994. Appropriate Methodology and Social Context. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hornberger, N. 1994. Ethnography. In A. Cumming (ed.), *Alternatives in Tesol Research: Descriptive, Interpretative and Ideological Orientations*. *Tesol Quarterly* 28,4: 688-689.
- Hymes, D. 1989. Foundations in Sociolinguistics: an ethnographic approach. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania.
- Hymes, D. 1971. Sociolinguistics and the Ethnography of Speaking. In E. Ardner (ed.), Social Anthropology and Language. London: Tavistock: 47-93.
- Hymes, D. 1972. On Communicative Competence. In J. Pride and J. Holmes (eds.) Sociolinguistics. Harmondsworth: Penguin: 269-293.
- Hymes, D. 1996. Ethnography, Linguistics, Narrative Inequality: Towards an Understanding of Voice. London: Taylor and Francis.
- Hyslop, J. 1999. The Classroom Struggle: Policy and Resistance 1940-1990. Pietermaritzberg: University of Natal Press.
- Jacklin, H. 1998. School Governance and Financing under Apartheid: Towards a spatialised account. In Bak: 95-198.
- Janks, H. (ed.). 1992a. Critical Language Awareness, books 1-6. Johannesburg: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Janks, H. 1992b. Critical language awareness and people's English. *SAJALS* 1,2: 64-76.
- Jansen, J. 1997. Can Policy Learn? Reflections on 'Why OBE will fail'. Paper presented to Seminar on OBE, University of Witwatersrand.
- Jeffrey, C. 1993. Standards in South African English. *English Academy Review* 10: 14-25.
- Johnson, D. 1996. Shakespeare and South Africa. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Johnson, K. 1983. Syllabus Design: Possible Future Trends. In K. Johnson and D. Porter (eds.). Perspectives in Communicative Language Teaching. London: Academic Press: 47-57.
- Kachru, B. 1990. World Englishes and Applied Linguistics. *World Englishes* 9,1: 3-20.
- Kapp, R. 1998. Language, Culture and Politics: The case for multilingualism in tutorials. In Angélie-Carter: 21-34.
- Kapp, R. 2000. 'With English you can go everywhere'. An Analysis of the role and status of English at a former DET school. *Journal of Education* 25: 227-259.
- Katz, E. 1995. Narrative Paths in the Academic Kraal. *AD Dialogues* 4: 65-94.

- Krashen, S. 1982. Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Kress, G. 1989. Linguistic Processes in Sociocultural Practice. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kress, G. 1996. Representational resources and the production of subjectivity: Questions for the theoretical development of critical discourse analysis in a multicultural society. In C. Caldas-Coulthard and M. Coulthard (eds.). Texts and Practices: Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis. London: Routledge: 15-31.
- Kruss, G. 1997. Educational Restructuring in South Africa at Provincial Level: The Case of the Western Cape. In P. Kalloway, G. Kruss, G. Donn and A. Fataar (eds.). Education after Apartheid: South African Education in Transition. Cape Town: UCT Press: 86-108.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. 1999. Critical Classroom Discourse Analysis. *Tesol Quarterly* 33, 3: 453-484.
- Language Plan Task Group (LANGTAG). 1996. Towards a National Language Plan for South Africa. Report to the Minister of Arts and Culture.
- Le Compte, M. and Preissle, J. 1993. Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research. San Diego: Academic Press.
- Le Page, K. and Tabouret-Keller, A. 1985. Acts of identity: Creole-based approaches to language and identity. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lea, M. and Street, B. 1998. Student Writing in Higher Education: An Academic Literacies Approach. *Studies in Higher Education* 23,2: 158-179.
- Leibowitz, B. and Mohamed, Y. (eds.). 2000. Routes to Writing in Southern Africa. Cape Town: Silk Road International Publishers.
- Lewis, C. and Bot, M. 1998. Provincialisation of Education: A Review (May-October 1998), *Edusource* 23:1-16.
- Lightbown, P. 2000. Anniversary Article: Classroom SLA Research and Second Language Teaching. In *Applied Linguistics* 21,4: 431-462.
- Long, M. and Sato, C. 1983. Classroom Foreigner Talk Discourse: Forms and Functions of Teachers' Questions. In H. Seliger and M. Long (eds.). Classroom Oriented Research in SLA. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House.
- Loomba, A. 1998. Colonialism/postcolonialism. New York: Routledge.
- Ludwig, C. and Hershell, P. 1995. School Community Literacy Practices: Analysis of Classroom and Home Talk using systemic functional linguistic theory. In P. Freebody, C. Ludwig and S. Gunn (eds.). Everyday Practices in and out of schools in low economic urban communities. Vol. 2. Canberra City: Department of Education and Training: 3-162.
- Luke, A. 1996. Text and Discourse in Education: An Introduction to Critical Discourse Analysis. *Review of Research in Education* 21: 3-48.
- MacDonald, C. 1990. Crossing the Threshold into Standard Three. In Report of the Threshold Project. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.
- MacDonald, C. and Burroughs, E. 1991. Eager to Talk. Learn and Think: Bilingual Education Policy in South Africa. Cape Town: Maskew Miller.
- Magona, S. 1990. To My Children's Children. Cape Town: David Philip.
- Makhubela, D. 1978. An Analysis of Bantu Education in the Western Cape. Unpublished Honours Dissertation, University of Cape Town.
- Makoni, S. 1997. Linguistic Imperialism: Old Wine in New Bottles. *SAALA Communique*, June Newsletter of the South African Association of Applied Linguistics: 13-15.

- Malherbe, E. 1943. The Bilingual School: A study of Bilingualism in South Africa. Johannesburg: Central News Agency.
- Malherbe, E. 1977. Education in South Africa. Volume 2: 1923-1975. Cape Town: Juta.
- Martin, D. 1997. Towards a New Multilingual Language Policy in Education in South Africa: Different approaches to meet different needs. *Educational Review* 49:129-139.
- Martin-Jones, M. and Romaine, S. 1986. Semilingualism: A Half-Baked Theory of Communicative Competence. *Applied Linguistics* 7,1: 26-38.
- Mashigoane, M. 2001. Translating Essay Topics into Home Languages for ESL undergraduates at the University of Cape Town. Paper presented at the 5th International Language Conference, Bloemfontein.
- Maybin, J. 2000. The New Literacy Studies: context, intertextuality and discourse. In Barton *et al*: 197-209.
- McCormick, K. 1994. Language Policy Issues in South Africa. Paper presented at the Sociolinguistics Symposium, Lancaster University.
- McGroarty, M. 1996. Language Attitudes, Motivation and Standards. In McKay and Hornberger: 3-46.
- McKay, L. and Hornberger, N. (eds.). Sociolinguistics and Language Teaching. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press:
- Melrose, R. 1995. The Communicative Syllabus: A Systemic-Functional Approach to Language Teaching. London: Pinter.
- Mercer, N. 1992. Talk for Teaching-and-Learning. In Norman: 215-223.
- Mesthrie, R. (ed.). 1995. Language and Social History: Studies in South African Sociolinguistics. Cape Town: David Philip.
- Meyer, D. 1995. Medium of Instruction in formerly black secondary schools. Paper presented at the South African Applied Linguistics Association, Stellenbosch.
- Miall, D. and Kuiken, D. 1994. Beyond Text Theory: Understanding Literary Response. *Discourse Processes* 17: 337-352.
- Mills, J. 1983. Health, healing and dis-ease in a South African township. Unpublished Masters Dissertation, University of Cape Town.
- Mitchell, R. 1996. Current Trends in L2 Research. *SAJALS* 4, 2:1-14.
- Moerman, M. 1988. Talking Culture: Ethnography and Conversation Analysis. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Morgan, B. 1997. Identity and intonation: Linking dynamic processes in an ESL classroom. *Tesol Quarterly* 31, 3: 431-450.
- Moss, G. 2001. On literacy and the social organisation of knowledge inside and outside school. Paper presented at Virtual Seminar 2, <http://education.leeds.ac.uk>.
- Muthwa-Kuen, B. 1996. A post-Apartheid framework: preparing teachers of English as a second language for South Africa's historically black secondary schools. Unpublished Masters Dissertation, Simon Fraser University, Canada.
- National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI). 1992. Language. Cape Town: NECC/Oxford University Press.
- Ndebele, N. 1987. The English language and social change in South Africa. *English Academy Review* 4: 1-16.
- Nespor, J. 1991. The construction of school knowledge: A case study. In C. Mitchell and K. Weiler (eds.). Rewriting Literacy: Culture and the Discourse of the Other. Connecticut: Bergin and Garvey: 169-188.

- Ngcokoto, L. 1989. Gugulethu – a township is created, youth cultures emerge 1959-1986. Unpublished Honours Dissertation, University of Cape Town.
- Ngugi wa Thiong'o 1986. Decolonizing the Mind: The politics of language in African literature. London: James Currey.
- Norman, K. (ed.). 1992. Thinking Voices: The Work of the National Oracy Project. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Norton, B. 1995a. Language Learning, Social Identity, and Immigrant Women. *Tesol Quarterly* 29,1: 9-31.
- Norton, B. 1995b. The Theory of Methodology in Qualitative Research. *Tesol Quarterly* 29, 2: 569-576.
- Norton, B. 1997. Language, Identity and the Ownership of English. *Tesol Quarterly* 31, 3: 409-430.
- Norton, B. 2000. Identity and Language learning: Gender, Ethnicity and Educational Language. London: Longman.
- Ntete, S. 1998. Case studies of second language learners who excel at writing in English. Unpublished Masters' Dissertation, Rhodes University.
- Nunan, D. 1993. Research Methods in Language Learning. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nunan, D. 1996. Hidden Voices: insiders' perspectives on classroom interaction. In Bailey and Nunan: 41-56.
- Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB). 1999. PANSALB's position on the promotion of multilingualism in South Africa: A draft discussion document. *Government Gazette No. 20098*, 28 May: 53-64.
- Pennycook, A. 1994a. Incommensurable Discourses? *Applied Linguistics* 15:117-138.
- Pennycook, A. 1994b. The Cultural Politics of English as an International Language. London: Longman.
- Pennycook, A. 1998. English and the Discourses of Colonialism. London: Routledge.
- Pennycook, A. 1999. Introduction: Critical Approaches to Tesol. *Tesol Quarterly* 33: 329-347.
- Pennycook, A. 2000. The Social Politics and the Cultural Politics of Language Classrooms. In J. Hall and W. Eggington (eds.). The Sociopolitics of English Language Teaching. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters: 89-103.
- Phillipson, R. 1992. Linguistic Imperialism. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Pica, T. 1987. Second-language acquisition, social interaction, and the classroom. *Applied Linguistics* 8, 1: 1-21.
- Plüddemann, P., Mati, X. and Mahlalela-Thusi, B. 2000. Problems and Possibilities in Multilingual Classrooms in the Western Cape. Project for the study of alternative education in South Africa, Occasional Papers, no. 6, University of Cape Town.
- Prinsloo, M. and Breier, M. 1996. The Social Uses of Literacy: Theory and Practice in Contemporary South Africa. Cape Town: Sached Books and John Benjamins.
- Qorro, M. 1999. A qualitative study on the teaching and learning of writing in English in Tanzania secondary schools in relation to the writing requirements of tertiary education. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Dar es Salaam.
- Ramphela, M. 1998. A Bed Called Home: Life in the Migrant Labour Hostels of Cape Town. Cape Town: David Philip.
- Rampton, B. 1988. A non-educational view of ESL in Britain. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 9, 6: 503-529.

- Rampton, B. 1995. Crossing: Language and Ethnicity Among Adolescents. London: Longman.
- Ramanathan, V. and Atkinson, D. 1999. Ethnographic approaches and methods in L2 writing research: A critical guide and review. *Applied Linguistics* 20: 44-70.
- Reid, J. 1982. English Literature in South African Senior Schools: a critique of set books. Cape Town: Centre For African Studies, University of Cape Town.
- Romaine, S. 1984. The Language of Children and Adolescents: The Acquisition of Communicative Competence. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Said, E. 1978. Orientalism. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Satyo, S. 1992. A Response to Neville Alexander's Essay: Language Policy and National Unity in South Africa/ Azania. *Southern African Journal of Applied Linguistics* 1, 1: 41-50.
- Saville-Troike, M. 1997. The Ethnography of Communication. In McKay and Hornberger: 351-382.
- Scollon, R. 1995. From Sentences to Discourses, Ethnography to Ethnographic: Conflicting Trends in Tesol Research. *Tesol Quarterly* 29, 2: 381-383.
- Scribner, S. and Cole, M. 1981. The Psychology of Literacy. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Sepamla, S. 1982. The Black Writer in South Africa Today: Problems and Dilemmas. In M. Chapman (ed.). Soweto Poetry. Johannesburg: McGraw-Hill: 115-121.
- Setati, M.; Adler, J.; Bapoo, A.; Reed, Y. 2000. Incomplete journeys: codeswitching and other language practices in Mathematics, Science and English language classrooms in South Africa. Paper presented at the South African Applied Linguistics Association, Stellenbosch.
- Shamim, F. 1996. In or out of the action zone: location as a feature of interaction in large ESL classes in Pakistan. In Bailey and Nunan: 123-144.
- Shindler, J. 1998. An Analysis of the 1997 Standard 10 Examination Results. *Edusource* 20: 1-6.
- Shindler, J. and Bot, M. 1999. An Analysis of the 1998 Standard 10 Examination Results. *Edusource* 24: 4-9.
- Simons, R. 1986. Classroom Communication and Schooling: A case study of teaching and learning in a secondary school in Soweto. Unpublished Masters Dissertation, University of Cape Town.
- Sinclair, J. and Coulthard, R. 1975. Towards an Analysis of Classroom Discourse. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Skehan, P. 1993. Individual Differences in Second-language learning. London: Edward Arnold.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, T. 1995. Multilingualism for All. Lisse, The Netherlands: Swets and Zeitlinger.
- Sonntag, S. 2001. Language Politics in Democratic Transitions: A Comparative Study of South Africa and Nepal. Paper presented at the African Studies conference, Stanford University.
- Soudien, C. 1998a. "Our School is not Coloured": Struggling with identity at City Central, Cape Town, South Africa. In Bak: 95-108.
- Soudien, C. 1998b. Teachers responses during the transition from segregated to Apartheid Education: Lessons for the present. Paper presented at Kenton-SASE Conference, Kei-mouth, Eastern Cape.
- Spindler, G. (ed.) 1982. Doing the Ethnography of Schooling: Educational Anthropology in Action. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

- Spivak, G. 1985. Can the subaltern speak? Speculations on widow-sacrifice. *Wedge 7*: 120-130.
- Sridhar, S. 1994. A reality check for SLA theories. *Tesol Quarterly*, 28,4: 800-805.
- Street, B. 1993. The Implications of the New Literacy Studies for the New South Africa. *JLS 9*, 2: 13-30.
- Street, B. 1995. Social Literacies. London: Longman
- Street, B. and Street, J. 1995. The Schooling of Literacy. In B. Street 1995: 106-131.
- Street, B. 1997. The Implications of the 'New Literacy Studies' for Literacy Education. *English in Education 13*, 3: 45-52.
- Street, B. 2001. Response to Gemma Moss: Literacy and the social organisation of knowledge in and outside school. Paper presented at Virtual Seminar 2, <http://education.leeds.ac.uk>.
- Stubbs, M. 1990. Language in Education. In N. Collinge (ed.). An Encyclopaedia of Language. London: Routledge: 551-589.
- Taylor, G., Beasley, V., Bock, H., Clanchy, J. and Nightingale, P. (eds.). 1988. Literacy by Degrees. Milton Keynes: Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.
- Taylor, N. and Vinjevoold, P. (eds.). 1999. Getting Learning Right. Johannesburg: Joint Education Trust.
- Taylor, N. 1999. Curriculum 2005: Finding a balance between school and everyday knowledges. In Taylor and Vinjevoold: 105-130.
- Taylor, N. 2001. Outcomes, Effort and Values in Schooling. Paper presented at New Millenium Business Conference, Wits University.
- Taylor, R. 1989. Black youth, role models and the social construction of identity. In R. Jones (ed.). Black Adolescents. Berkeley: Cobb and Henry: 155-174.
- Thesen, L. 1997. Voices, Discourse and Transition: In Search of New Categories in EAP. *Tesol Quarterly* 31,3: 487-511.
- Titlestad, P. 1993. President's Address, delivered at the Annual General Meeting, 11 September 1993. *English Academy Review* 10: 191-197.
- Tollefson, J. 1991. Planning Language, Planning Inequality. London and New York: Longman.
- Tsui, A. 1996. Reticence and anxiety in second-language learning. In Bailey and Nunan: 145-167.
- Vesely, R. 2000. Multilingual Environments for Survival: The Impact of English on Grade 10 Xhosa-speaking students in Cape Town. Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa, Occasional Papers no.3, University of Cape Town.
- Vinjevoold, P. 1999. Language Issues in South African Classrooms. In Taylor and Vinjevoold: 205-226.
- Volbrecht, T. 1993. Developing Academic Literacies: The English Special Project. *AD Dialogues 1*: 107-132.
- Van Lier, L. 1988. The Classroom and the Language Learner. London: Longman.
- Vulliamy, G., Lewin, K. and Stephens, D. 1990. Doing Educational Research in Developing Countries. London: Falmer Press.
- Walker, M. 1996. Images of Professional Development. Pretoria: HSRC.
- Walters, B. 1996. An Ethnographic study of a black South African High School with special reference to Mathematics classrooms. Unpublished Masters Dissertation, University of Cape Town.

- Weideman, A. 2001. The Old and the New: Reconsidering Eclecticism in Language Teaching. Paper presented at The South African Applied Linguistics Association Conference, Grahamstown.
- Wells, G. 1992. The Centrality of Talk in Education. In Norman: 283-310.
- Western Cape Education Department (WCED). 1995a. Interim Syllabus for English Second Language: Standard 8 to Standard 10.
- Western Cape Education Department (WCED). 1995b. Junior and Secondary Courses: English First and Second Language: Evaluation.
- Western Cape Education Department (WCED). 1997. Untitled guideline document to Matriculation Teachers.
- Wickham, S. 1997. Power and Identity in Theory-Practice relationships: An exploration of teachers' work through qualitative research. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban.
- Wickham, S. and Versfeld, R. 1998. What is the relationship between classroom materials and good teaching practices? Paper presented at Tenth World Congress of Comparative Education, University of Cape Town.
- Widdowson, H. 1991. Aspects of Language Teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Widdowson, H. 1998. The Theory and Practice of Critical Discourse Analysis. *Applied Linguistics* 19, 1: 136-151.
- Widdowson, H. 2000. On the Limitations of Linguistics Applied. *Applied Linguistics* 21,1: 3-25.
- Wildsmith-Cromarty, R. 2000. Communicative Language Teaching. In M. Inglis; C. Thomson and A. Macdonald (eds). Language in Learning and Teaching (LILT). Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press: 146-154.
- Wilkins, D. 1981. Notional Syllabuses Revisited. *Applied Linguistics* 2, 1: 83-89.
- Wilkins, D. 1983. Some issues in Communicative Language Teaching and their relevance to the teaching of languages in secondary schools. In K. Johnson and D. Porter, (eds.). Perspectives in Communicative Language Teaching. London: Academic Press, Inc.: 23-43.
- Wilcox, K. 1982. Ethnography as a Methodology and its Application to the Study of Schooling: A Review. In Spindler: 256-488.
- Wodak, R. 1995. Critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis. In J. Verschueren, J. Östman and J. Blommaert (eds.). Handbook of Pragmatics: Manual. Amsterdam: John Benjamins: 204-210.
- Wolcott, H. 1982. Mirrors, Models, and Monitors: Educational Adaptations of Ethnographic Innovation. In Spindler: 69-95.
- Woods, P. 1996. Researching the Art of Teaching: ethnography for educational use. London: Routledge.
- Worden, N. 1994. The Making of Modern South Africa: Conquest, Segregation and Apartheid. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Yeld, N. 2001. Assessment, Equity and Language of Learning: Key Issues for Higher Education Selection in South Africa. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Cape Town.
- Young, D. 1995. The Role and Status of the First Language in Education in a Multilingual Society. In Heugh *et al*: 63-70.
- Young, D. 2001. Why "Applied Language Studies" and not "Applied Linguistics"? Aspects of the evolution of Applied Language Studies in South Africa since the 1960s and into the new millennium – a personal view. In E. Ridge, S.

Makoni and S. Ridge (eds.). Freedom and Discipline in Applied Linguistics from South Africa. New Delhi: Bahri Publications: 221-262.

Newspaper articles.

- Anonymous. Unemployment is now the lot of most trialists, The Cape Times, 15 October 1997.
- Asmal, K. Why it is so important for every South African to be able to read and write. The Cape Times, 9 September 1999.
- Bavuma, V. This is sjambok justice. Cape Argus, 21 August 1998.
- Botha, A. Where blackboards have bullet holes. Cape Argus, 1 April 1998.
- Chisolm, L. The shame and blame roundabout. The Sunday Independent, 10 January 1999.
- Damon, J. and Mokwena, M. Angry Citizens Strike Back. The Cape Times, 19 August 1998.
- Fakier, Y. Tough-talking at 'brave' summit. The Cape Times, 14 September 1998.
- Frankel, L. Let's have English – spoken properly. The Cape Times, 30 October 1996.
- Grootman, E. Schoolboy's death unites Guguletu. The Cape Times, 4 September 1998.
- Khumalo, S. Teachers lashed at conference for poor performance. The Sowetan, 8 September 1998.
- Heard, J. Crime cripples clinic for mums. The Sunday Times, 16 August 1998.
- Hofmeyr, J. Money alone will not make our schooling go round. The Sunday Times, 25 October 1998.
- Jansen, J. Against: There are better alternatives. The Teacher, February 1999.
- Lund, T. Schoolboys dump books for life of gangsterism. The Cape Times, 16 September 1998.
- Mabaso, T. 'Gangsta' war hits Cape Townships. Saturday Argus, 23/4 August 1997.
- Ntabazalila, E. and Mokwena, M. Events that changed anger into action. The Cape Times, 21 September 1998.
- Ntabazalila, E. Why a community is taking an eye for an eye. The Cape Times, 24 August 1998.
- Oosthuizen, K. Poor diction spoils Chekov play. Cape Argus, 15 September 1999.
- Paton, C. Allies give educators a caning. The Sunday Times, 13 September 1998.
- Pretorius, C. At the wrong end of the stick. The Sunday Times, 5 April 1998.
- Pretorius, C. Schools gripped by fear. The Sunday Times, 31 January 1999.
- Pretorius, C. The best and worst of our schools. The Sunday Times, 16 January 2000.
- Singh, P. Illiteracy close to 40% - minister. The Cape Times, 8 September 1999.
- Sylvester, E. S.A. kids are not making the grade. The Star, 14 January 2001.
- Van der Merwe, J. Cape Town reading project spreads the word. Cape Argus, 7 September 2001.
- Zille, H. Poor quality of classroom delivery. The Cape Times, 18 September 1998.
- Zwane, S. Students shun African languages. The Sunday Times, 4 March 2001.

Interviews.

- A. Mrs Mabandla, 29 October 1998.
- B. Mrs Mabandla, 3 November 1998.
- C. Grade 12a group, 15 September 1998.
- D. Mpho, 13 October 1998.
- E. Mpho, 13 November 1998.
- F. Siphon and Thulani, 14 November 1998.
- G. Mr Bathaka, 3 November 1998.
- H. Mr Van Wyk, 20 March 2000.
- I. Mr Nyembe, 23 June 2000.

Appendices.

Appendix 1:

Transcription Conventions.

SS	several students responding together.
S1; S2 etc	student identified, but not by name.
S	an unknown student.
(•)	brief pause that is noticeable, but too short to measure.
(secs/mins)	measured pause.
{ }	overlapping speech.
'	rising tone.
<u>underlining</u>	underlining indicates phonological prominence such as stress or marked pitch movement.
<i>italics</i>	italics indicate a Xhosa or South African colloquial expression or transcription of a sound.
[]	transcriber's clarifying explanation, commentary or explanation of non-verbal gesture.
()	unintelligible on the tape.
numbers	numbers are used to designate turns.
...	words omitted.

Appendix 2:

Dialogue Title for grade 11 November 1998 examination.

School boycotts and demonstrations resulted in the arrest of many young children. In 1976 children took to the streets protesting against the use of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction. The medium of instruction in township schools is English. Thabang and Sandiswa are debating the issue.

Thabang: I still maintain we should be taught in our mother-tongue.

Sandiswa: I think not. English makes everything easy and understandable.

[students had to continue the debate after these opening lines provided by Mr Bathaka. His choice to frame the context in terms of the struggle against Afrikaans is interesting].

Appendix 3:

11a English, Lesson on "Property", 27/10/97.

1. Mrs M: I'm going to write about two questions on the board and I'm going to give you about five minutes to quickly discuss them in your groups, to get us, to get a discussion going. [Writes questions.] 'Who or what do you think is called 'Property' in the story' and 'Do you think the title is appropriate? Give a reason for your answer.' (2mins, 10secs.). Okay, there are the three questions. (10 mins.)
2. Mrs M: Who or what do you think is called 'Property' in the story?
3. S1: Mbuya's mother.
4. Mrs M: Mbuya's mother. They say Mbuya's mother. We'll come back to that. Okay.
5. S2: The man who is married to the woman.
6. Mrs M: The man who is married to the woman. Any other responses? You say it is a man, it is a man or a woman?
7. S4: A woman married to the man.
8. Mrs M: She says 'Property', 'Property' is the woman married to the man. Yes.
9. S5: The young wife.
10. Mrs M: The young wife. Okay so they have Mbuya's mother, the young wife. Any other responses? Yes Loyiso.
11. Loyiso: The young wife.
12. Mrs M: You said the young wife. Mark, is it the man or the woman?
13. Mark: The woman.
14. Mrs M: Babalwa.
15. Babalwa: The young wife.
16. Mrs M: So all the responses are correct. Okay, all these responses are correct to the story. It is the wife, okay. Whatever you call her, Mbuya's mother or the young wife or the woman married to the man. Alright [South African colloquial expression for 'all right']. (·) Do you think the title is appropriate? Yes.
17. S2: Yes.
18. Mrs M: She says yes. But it does not end there because you have to give a reason for your answer. But for the time being we take your 'yes'. Any other, any other group says 'no the title is not appropriate'?
19. SS: Yes miss.
20. Mrs M: Okay, you said the title is not appropriate. Okay, give a reason for your answer (·) So yes or no accordingly but you are going to give a reason. If you say 'yes', you give us a reason, if you say 'no' you give us a reason. Okay, let's get it from you. Why do you say 'no the title is not a-appropriate'?
21. S4: ()
22. S5: What did she say?
23. Mrs M: She says, she says no it is not appropriate because a person cannot be somebody else's property. He does not belong to him.
24. S3: But she is married to him.
25. Mrs M: But she is married to him. How can she not belong to him? That is their argument. What do you say to that? Okay, think about it. So you [pointing to a group] said yes, not so? She said 'yes the title is appropriate'. Give a reason for your answer.

26. S2: ()
27. Mrs M: Speak a bit louder please.
28. S2: The woman must do all the work.
29. Mrs M: She says because the woman must do all the work, fetch firewood and do other chores. Now does that make her their property?
30. SS: No.
31. S6: No {one
32. Mrs M: {Speak louder
33. S6: No one should be the property another one.
34. Mrs M: No one should be the property of another one. So he doesn't agree, Loyiso.
35. Loyiso: We say 'yes' miss. Because the man did pay for that, for that wife. And if they pay for that thing, that thing belongs to him. Because they have not married the for true love, they had married in their custom. So then in that way the wife did belong to that man because the man had put some money.
36. Mrs M: In other words, she is bought. That is Loyiso's response. The fact that she is bought, there is a price involved. It means that she is his property. What does the class say to that?
37. *indistinct mummings*
38. Mrs M: Do you agree?
39. S7: Yes.
40. Mrs M: So which means the title is appropriate. This woman has got to be a husband's property. Is that what you agree to?
41. *mumbling.*
42. Loyiso: If you paid miss.
43. Mrs M: Okay, we'll have Luleka then Babalwa.
44. Luleka: If she is bought, then she is not his property. If she is unhappy, she can leave.
45. Mrs M: So what are you saying there?
46. Luleka: She can leave.
47. Mrs M: So she's got a chance. If she doesn't like to be his property, she can just simply get out of the marriage? Babalwa.
48. Babalwa: If you read the story, you see it is in the olden days. In the olden days, the woman is the property of the man. In the olden days. And so it's about the laws of the olden days.
49. Mrs M: So then it means that the man would be justified according to the laws of the olden days. That's interesting. Yes Mark.
50. Mark: My group does not agree that the woman is the property. Because even though she wants to divorce (·) if she doesn't want to be a property, let us just look at that case, if she doesn't want to be a property. It doesn't count in my opinion if she divorces her wife because in my opinion if she divorces I think at that time she even if she divorces the man, she is still the property of the man.
51. Mrs M: So do you agree with Luleka?
52. Mark: No, I just wanted to correct her, what she was going to say.
53. Mrs M: Okay, any more responses? Okay, anymore? Okay, Babalwa made a point here, eh, saying that after she has read the whole story, she found out that this happened in the olden days where things were were done differently from the way they are done today, so then she understand the story in the context of the olden days whether although it may not apply, if I quote you correctly,

although it may not apply to the present day situation, but in the olden days er context then she says she ah understands why. (2 secs.) Okay, let's look at the way, okay now using the background and our understanding of the story as we have read it, let's look at the way the two now taking Baba, ah Babalwa's point further, looking at the way the two people met, that is this wo, this man and the woman, the way that they have met and then look at today's context of a marriage, what happens when there's going to be a marriage, who is involved, and things like that. Okay, let's look at how these two people met. Yes um Siyabonga.

54. Siyabonga: In the story, eh, the one who arranged the marriage was the uncle of the man.
55. Mrs M: Do we all agree?
56. SS: Yes miss [*in a long drawl*].
57. Mrs M: Okay, does it still happen that way today. Even if we are not married, but at least we see these things happening around us, not so?
58. SS: Yes.
59. Mrs M: Does it still happen that way for an uncle arranging marriage for-for a couple? Does it still happen that way?
60. SS: No.
61. Mrs M: Alright, so now, okay, alright, so in the olden days marriages were arranged by an uncle or another experienced person, so the two people would just meet thereafter. But today, we know that the two people are the ones that are involved not só?
62. SS: Yes.
63. Mrs M: Before the other parties would be involved. So we see the difference here between the olden days okay and eh today. That's point number one. And now people also mentioned a price that this man has bought, has paid a price for the woman. (·) Do we all agree?
64. SS: Yes miss.
65. Mrs M: Okay, does that still apply today, for a woman to be bought, for a price to be paid for a woman?
66. SS: Yes.
67. S6: It depends.
68. Mrs M: Depends.
69. S: Sometimes a it happens, not always.
70. Mrs M: Okay depends on the two families or how much (·) Okay would perhaps, now why would a family ask for a higher price for their daughter? Okay anyone who can answer that, he says it depends on the price that a family would ask for their daughter meaning then that there's no fixed price, so why would a perhaps a higher price for a certain family and a perhaps a lower price. It is, ah not very good terms, these are not very good terms to use. Yes, Loyiso.
71. Loyiso: It is because the family has raised their daughter from the start and they have paid for all their schooling and her matric till she graduates and therefore she has got knowledge and they have taught her some manners to do the man's work, that's why the man can't say because they have paid for everything and the man has to accept it. She's got a responsibility to be a wife.
72. Mrs M: Okay. Any other comments? Good Loyiso. Any other comments? Any other contributions? (3 secs) Why are you so quiet today? Did you have too much to eat over lunch time?

73. SS: Yes *laughter*.
74. Mrs M: Mm. Anyway. Yes.
75. Siyabonga: Sometimes the family ()
76. Mrs M: But so, watch out girls, girls watch out. Siyabonga is saying, parents who care about the happiness of their daughters, they don't ask that much. What they're concerned with, they're concerned with the happiness of their daughter, not the price. So watch out, he might be working his way over something.
77. *laughter*.
78. Mrs M: What do we call this price in, er in, in our language, what do we call this price?
79. SS: Lobola.
80. Mrs M: okay, ...*lobola*, okay, okay, it's called *lobola* (·) Alright um, but now, from my own experience, *lobola* had to be paid because those days when it started, people thought that if a man pays *lobola*, then that man is going to look after their daughter very well. He's going to value her because he has given something towards her. It's like if somebody gives you a-a pair of shoes, you're not going to look a very well after that pair of shoes as you'd look after a pair of shoes that you bought yourself where you have gone to, to do a casual (·) over weekends, sacrificed everything, you work over week-ends, you work over the holidays and then you get that bit of money and you buy yourself something. You are going to value that more than what you have been given by somebody else. So those days they wanted to secure, so there was a-a spice of truth in what um, um, Siyabonga was saying about the happiness of their daughter, because he would um look after that daughter very well because at least he has paid something towards her. But er then again if people did not pay *lobola*, they would take her today and tomorrow they would chuck her out and take another one. But one cow is not child's play. You cannot keep on paying cows to all these families every day so that was also a reason to want her and keep her, and perhaps live happily ever after. But anyway, just a brief understanding of the whole concept. Okay, let's look at the story... Now this, this young woman, they could not have a relationship with the young man, did they?
81. SS: No.
82. Mrs M: Did they know each other?
83. SS: No.
84. Mrs M: They could not go out together, did they?
85. SS: No.
86. Mrs M: So, that is what happened in those days. They would look for a girl where they are not ah very poor. Okay where at least there are cows and beans in that particular home, in terms of cattle and sheep and things like that. So they would look at a home like that and that daughter would then get married into their family. So, this daughter knows about wealth. Okay. She does not come from a poor home. Not meaning that girls that come from poor homes did not marry, but they would target certain homes where they are well off, so that if something goes wrong here then the young wife can go home and get more cows and oxen to come and plough the fields, and so on, and so, so they will arrange them then like that. But now when we look at this one here, we find that the man, this particular man was different from other men. Okay, could you perhaps er, try to remember, how different was he in the way that he

treated his wife? Now this couple here in "Property", the man was somewhat different from other men in the way that he looked at his wife, or the way he treated his wife. Yes, Mark.

87. Mark: He saw his wife like a 'grass that's swaying in the summer wind.'
88. Mrs M: What?
89. Mark: He saw his wife like a 'grass that's swaying in the summer wind'.
90. Mrs M: Now how would you try to explain that?
91. Mark: () but there's, there's no way that he can communicate with his wife because (·)
92. Mrs M: Was he just admiring his wife, or does it mean that he did not communicate with his wife? Do you want to answer this Loyiso?
93. Loyiso: I think that, I think um
94. Mrs M: Can you go to that expression of the wife swaying like a grass, that expression? What do you understand by that?
95. Loyiso: I think that the wife was, was beautiful so the man was admiring.
96. Mrs M: So, he was admiring the beauty of his wife. Do we agree or disagree? (·) You agree? [nodding to a student]. Well, you are in the same group, so you have to agree. Yes, Siyabonga.
97. Siyabonga: The story, the story says the man admires his wife. It's because he did not agree with beating.
98. Mrs M: Okay, but what about the wife? How does he view his wife? Did you come across in the story where it says that he treated his wife differently from the norm, from the way wives are supposed to be treated by their husbands (·) in those days? Don't you remember something it says somewhere where it says that? Yes Siyabonga.
99. Siyabonga: He didn't treated his wife like a slave.
100. Mrs M: A slave. Did he treat her like a slave?
101. Siyabonga: He did not treat his wife as a slave because he asked if she was tired.
102. Mrs M: So would you ask your slave if he or she were tired?
103. SS: No
104. Mrs M: So we see from that he did not, er, treat his wife as a slave. Loyiso.
105. *Silence*
106. Mrs M: Did you have your hand up?
107. Loyiso: No.
108. Mrs M: I'm sure you did. No? Just forgotten what you were going to say? (·) Okay, okay. Let's put it this way. Now would you describe, okay Mark.
109. Mark: Sorry miss, in the connection of the point, you can quote on page 176.
110. Mrs M: On page 176?
111. Mark: Yes, miss, page 176. Line about 10. No, miss, this paragraph, the second sentence: 'But these beatings were profit, profit'
112. Mrs M: 'profitable'.
113. Mark: 'profitable to the purchased slave's family. The slave ran home...'. It says the slave ran home. How can we say she is not treated like a slave?
114. Mrs M: Now is this slave refer to the wife, this particular wife (·)
115. SS: Yes miss.
116. Mrs M: or does it refer to other wives generally? Yes?
117. *Muffled mumbles.*
118. Siyabonga: It says here that this man was not um like other men who um beat their wives. But this man did not beat her.

119. Mrs M: That is why right from the beginning I wanted to know how? Okay didn't you come across where it says this man, this man did not treat his wife the way other men treated their wives. Okay this is what I wanted to come out. But others were treated like slaves, but this particular one, I don't think, I don't think that he wanted her to be treated like a slave. Okay. Er Loyiso.
120. Loyiso: Nothing miss.
121. Mrs M: But you had your hand up. What were you going to comment on what we are saying?
122. Loyiso: It's very difficult because is Mark and Siyabonga. I don't know what they are disagreeing on.
123. Mrs M: About what?
124. Loyiso: About the slave.
125. Mrs M: Mark said that the wife was treated like a slave on page 136. Was it page 136?
126. SS: Yes miss.
127. Mrs M: where it says something about a slave running home. And then I wanted to know whether that refers to wives generally, or this specific one. Because I wanted to know the, the relationship between this man and his wife, the one here in "Property", the one in question, if you could comment on that (·) Okay, well, somebody mentioned beating, mentioned beating, yes. Was it you? Okay. Could you read that sentence again? Read it out loudly please.
128. S4: 'But these beatings were profitable to the purchased slave's family. The slave ran home and the condition was that its family be made richer by one beast'.
129. Mrs M: Alright, now who can explain this? How do you understand these beatings? Where are the other people? (3 secs) What's happening to you here? Nandi did you read the story?
130. Nandi: Yes miss.
131. Mrs M: But why? (·) Why are you so dead?
132. *Noise*
133. Mrs M: Okay, now. The slave ran home and the condition of return was that the family should give one beast. Now who is the slave? Who is the slave? Loyiso?
134. Loyiso: The wife miss.
135. Mrs M: The wife, alright, right so. Now why would the family of the wife be richer by one beast if the family, I mean if the wife was beaten? How would the family gain from it?
136. Phumla: Okay, the wife would run home and the man would pay one beast.
137. Mrs M: Okay, do you understand that?
138. SS: Yes miss.
139. Mrs M: Alright, now how would the family would feel about the beating? Do you think they would like their daughter to be beaten more often or less often if everytime she's beaten, they're going to be a beast richer? So, which, which one do you think they would prefer? The daughter to be beaten or () Loyiso.
140. Loyiso: They're going to prefer her to be more beating.
141. Mrs M: They prefer more beating.
142. SS: Yes miss.
143. *laughter.*

144. Mrs M: It's logical a, it's logical, it's logical not so? If everytime their daughter gets beaten, they get a beast, that would be a cow, the more beatings, the more cows.
145. *loud noise and laughter.*
146. Mrs M: Yes Loyiso.
147. Loyiso: It's even said here that the family was overjoyed when the wife was beaten by the man.
148. Mrs M: I told you, everytime the daughter is beaten they would be overjoyed. It means an extra ox in the, in the kraal.
149. *laughter.*
150. Mrs M: We even have a term for it. What is the term called in Xhosa? When the daughter is going to be kept at home till a beast is paid by the in-laws, have you ever heard it?
151. SS: *ukuthelekwa*
152. Mrs M: So it is something that has been practised. Okay, if your, your husband beats you, your parents will keep you. If he comes to say sorry, he cannot just say sorry. He cannot use the word sorry. He's got to give a beast. Okay, everytime he beats you, the woman has to go home. That is what happens. Alright, what else can we say?
153. Loyiso: Miss, about that point that you disagreed to that the wife was not a slave. Could we perhaps agree that that the wife was a slave?
154. Mrs M: But this particular one? Because my question was on wives generally were regarded as slaves by their husbands and their in laws, but I wanted to know, this particular one was he, was she regarded as a slave by her husband?
155. SS: *softly*: No.
156. Mrs M: And there are some interesting things that you could look for to, to support that statement that he did not regard her as a slave. Right. Well now one more thing is, is that, um, even the way that he looked at her, there is a point that we did not um discuss fully about the swaying but somebody said that he was admiring her beauty. But how? Did the wife um did she seem flattered? Did she welcome the fact that her husband was admiring her beauty?
157. SS: No.
158. Mrs M: What did she think about that? Yes, what did she think about that?
159. Babalwa: She thought that she married a mad man.
160. Mrs M: She thought that she married a mad man? Why? Why was that so, Loyiso?
161. Loyiso: She thought there was something strange about the man when she looked at her wife?
162. Mrs M: When, when?
163. Loyiso: When she looked at her wife.
164. Mrs M: When he, okay, when he looked at his wife. What was it?
165. Loyiso: There was something strange when he looked at her and he smiled 'a half smile'.
166. *laughter.*
167. Mrs M: Okay. Let's hear what Phumla says.
168. Phumla: She always dropped her eyes because she could not understand.
169. Mrs M: She was embarrassed. She could not understand. Why was that so? If you were married wouldn't you like your husband to love you, to look at you in a different way that he looked at other people?

170. SS: yes.

171. Mrs M: But why, why does this particular wife think that the husband is mad when he showed his admiration? Siyabonga.

172. Siyabonga: Because this young man, he had paid *lobola*.

173. Mrs M: She was surprised because it was something that was acceptable. It was acceptable that a woman be treated like a slave. And now this particular man was not like other men. Okay. He treated his wife like a human being. But now the human being does not seem to appreciate it. Because she's not used to the situation. It was something that was acceptable. It was a norm that a wife should be a slave to that family where she was married to the husband, the mother-in-law, do the chores, not be appreciated, no beauty, no nothing, just work, work, work and perhaps bearing children and that's all. So she couldn't understand why this man did not treat her like other men treated their women so she thought there was something wrong with him and then trouble started there. So I think we need more reading on this, because you don't seem to have read er enough. So take down these questions, take down these questions.

Appendix 4:

12a English, Lesson on "Two Women", 6/8/98.

[Mrs Mabandla writes the following on the board: 1. The weather. 2. Intelligence/education. 3. Fear. 4. The Man. 5. Satyagraba.]

1. Mrs M: You know about Satyagraba [meaning *Satyagraha*, pronounced incorrectly, possibly because of the use of italics in the book]. You know by now that it is non-violence. But now we are looking at the role that she has about that Satyagraba. Okay what role does it play in the story and the situation that she finds herself in? But before we get to that, I think um Rochelle would want you to tell and answer because we didn't get an answer in the other class. What was in the bag that the black woman had? What was in the bag?
2. SS: *indistinct mumbles*
3. Mrs M: One at a time. Siyabonga, Siyabonga.
4. Siyabonga: An unpublished manuscript.
5. Mrs M: Okay, an unpublished manuscript. But what did the black woman tell the white woman that it was? Okay, Thabo. (·) What did she tell the white woman was in the in the bag?
6. Thabo: She said it was a tampon.
7. *laughter*
8. Mrs M: She said it was a (·)
9. S1: Sanitary pad.
10. Mrs M: Okay, so why, of all the things she could have chosen, why do you think she chose to tell her that?
11. Phumla: She thought that it was the best thing to think of. She wouldn't want to see that book.
12. Mrs M: So her manuscript would be safe if she mentioned that. Alright, okay, so have you got an answer now? [addressed to Rochelle]
13. *students laugh*
14. Mrs M: Okay, let's look at the weather. Quickly, let's look at the weather. What kind of weather was there?
15. SS: {It was hot.
16. SS: {dry
17. Mrs M: It is (·) hot (·) dry (·) dusty
18. SS: Yes miss
19. Mrs M: Now, okay, that is the description that we are given in the story. But now we want to look at the significance of this weather, of this weather, it's what kind of weather, the role it plays in the story. Why did she choose the weather to be like that? Why is it important for the weather to be like that in the story? Thabo?
20. Thabo: So that can er, er, if she can choose, when it's hot then she knows that ()
21. Mrs M: Now does anybody else want to take that further, what Thabo has just said, or perhaps rephrase what he is saying explaining a little further. Babalwa.

22. Babalwa: If the weather was not hot the story wouldn't go further so that they wouldn't need to ask for water and then the man goes for water and gives water.
23. Mrs M: Okay, which so which means that that dry er hot, dry weather played a very important role because it is responsible for them being thirsty and particularly the captor drinking water because she was dry because she was hot and that enables the black woman to be able to escape. You all agree?
24. SS: Yes miss.
25. Busi: I was going to say if it is was hot, um the white woman um shouldn't have died. She wouldn't have asked for something to drink to the stranger.
26. Mrs M: Okay, so more or less the same thing, so, Loyiso.
27. Loyiso: Also if the weather was not like that, the white lady wouldn't be out there and she wouldn't have see her if it was raining then she wouldn't be outside and see her.
28. Siyabonga: It it was raining, the white woman () wouldn't ride the car because the road was mud.
29. Mrs M: So, she wouldn't have gone and then what she perhaps would have done, what would she have done because she really wanted to do something about this intruder? What do you think would have happened if it was raining or if she had caught the black woman trying to sneak the fence but now could not drive and go for help? How else could she have contacted the authorities?
30. Mark: Miss, it depends on the weather miss, there was a phone but if there was a phone, she could call up the police.
31. Mrs M: Alright, so er if she had a telephone she could have called the police or the authorities to come and actually fetch the intruder. Yes Luleka.
32. Luleka: There were no children in the road. I think that the daredevils liked the rainy days because they want to skid in the roads miss.
33. Mrs M: They want to race yes one another?
34. Luleka: Yes miss.
35. Mrs M: Okay, they want to skid and do all these things in the mud road?
36. Luleka: Yes miss.
37. Mrs M: So perhaps then if it were raining, the daredevils will be there and they might have okay in the story, in the story again, the black woman tells of particular people who would be driving on the roads there, particular people. She mentions particular people who would er motorists or drivers who would be on the road in the area. What kind of drivers would be there apart from the daredevils, like the residents of that area?
38. *mumbles*
39. Mrs M: Okay, one at a time, let's hear from this group.
40. S2: The farmers and the soldiers.
41. Mrs M: The farmers and the soldiers, not so?
42. SS: Yes miss.
43. Mrs M: So, now, would there be hope if a motorist approached, would there be hope for the black woman?
44. SS: No.
45. Mrs M: Otherwise it would be in favour of (·)
46. SS: The white woman
47. Mrs M: The white woman, because they would do something about the situation. So I think we've got quite a few points there about the importance of the weather (·) that particular weather. So it was chosen for a purpose, so that

- the the story would succeed. Alright, anymore, anybody want to say something about the weather? Okay. Intelligence. Intelligence which has got to do with a bit of education. Intelligence. Does it play a role here in this particular story? Loyiso.
48. Loyiso: Yes it does miss because when they stop () and then while the lady's car was stuck and then there's something like that the radiator cap was take by the black woman. And then later and the white woman was so surprised to see that the black woman she knows about cars.
 49. Okay good, anymore? Okay Thabo, then Mark.
 50. Thabo: [makes a lengthy contribution which is drowned out by a passing truck]
 51. Mrs M: Perhaps it's because of the truck, I couldn't quite get the connection there. But anyway thank you. Mark then Sindiwe.
 52. Mark: I can say something about communication because if the black woman did not know what the white woman was saying, there would be no communication.
 53. Mrs M: There would be no communication between them. Who is then there?
 54. Mark: The white woman and the black man.
 55. Mrs M: And the black woman.
 56. Mark: And the black woman
 57. Mrs M: There wouldn't be communication?
 58. Mark: Yes miss, because at the time when the white man asked, she pointed to the bag.
 59. Mrs M: Do you think she couldn't speak, she couldn't communicate verbally? Is that why she pointed at what was in there? Or did she want to say (·) 'in there'(·). Couldn't she or didn't she want to? (·) Okay, let's think about this. Sindiwe, do you want to add to that one, or clarify that one? Or is this something different to what
 60. Sindiwe: Something different.
 61. Mrs M: Okay, who wants to add to what Mark just said? Okay Siyabonga.
 62. Siyabonga: The black woman was educated. If she was not educated, she couldn't communicate with her.
 63. Mrs M: Okay, was that the communication you were talking about?
 64. SS: Yes miss.
 65. Mrs M: But I thought you said they couldn't communicate. Isn't that what you were saying?
 66. Mark: No miss, you misunderstood me.
 67. Mrs M: Oh sorry.
 68. *laughter*
 69. Mrs M: Okay, oh Barbara.
 70. SS: [loud protests] No, miss, miss.
 71. Mrs M: Óh! There are so many hands. I don't know which way to go. Okay, Nandi, Barbara and Luleka.
 72. Nandi: I would say the black woman was trying to show the white woman she has read the stories. She was trying to convince the white woman that she can also, she can also know how to communicate with whites.
 73. Mrs M: Okay, she was not as bad as she thought she was. Okay Barbara.
 74. Barbara: I was going to say that but to add that she was like she tried to show how much she was educated.

75. Mrs M: Okay, that she had read quite a lot of books, and about farming: 'so at least we have that little bit in common. I'm also interested in farming because I've read these books that have got to do with farming'. Er Anna
76. SS: *loud protests*{*Ah miss*.
77. SS {no.
78. Mrs M: [addressing Luleka] Oh, I thought Barbara said it was the same and she pointed at you. I thought you had the same point.
79. Luleka: No. I think the black woman was too clever because she stole the um lid of um water gauge so that the car cannot go too far.
80. Mrs M: So what was she hoping to achieve by doing that?
81. Luleka: Um so that the white woman ()
82. Babalwa: uh-huh, so that the white woman wouldn't go find help.
83. Mrs M: Oh, so she was trying to prevent the white woman from going to find help. She was trying to buy time. Okay, perhaps some kind person would come and help her out of that situation. Anna.
84. Anna: I think that the black woman was well-educated because she thought that 'very well' when the white woman said to her that she will fetch the guerrillas, the black woman thought that Louis Botha was a guerrilla too so the white woman was not well-educated. When she asked her about Europe, so the white woman said 'what Europe, I have no connection with Europe'. So the black woman know more of the white woman.
85. Mrs M: Okay, very good. Before I choose that hand, any other hand that I'm ignoring? Okay? Siyabonga.
86. Siyabonga: The black woman wrote a book so she was educated.
87. Mrs M: Very good point. She is about to be published, Thabo.
88. Thabo: ()
89. Mrs M: Okay, that also shows intelligence. She was quick to think of something that would perhaps get her out of that situation. Okay, let's look at fear. Does fear play a role in this um, does it feature anywhere in the short story?
90. Mark: Yes miss.
91. Mrs M: Good, Mark.
92. Mark: At the place where the black woman says 'let us go for help, go to the villagers and ask them' and the white woman says 'no'.
93. Mrs M: Okay, so she was frightened that the villagers might do something to her.
94. Mark: She was frightened.
95. Mrs M: Alright, that's one. Mandisa.
96. Mandisa: She was frightened when she didn't want to say to her she thought the black woman would put poisoned her. So she was afraid of her.
97. Mrs M: She was afraid of?
98. Mandisa: The black man
99. Mrs M: The one who was with her?
100. Mandisa: Yes (*softly*).
101. Mrs M: I don't know whether I (·) [to a student who has her hand up] Do you want to say what she is saying?
102. [student shakes her head]
103. Mrs M: No. Alright, let's leave that point.
104. Phumla: I think she's trying to say um the white woman was afraid of the black woman. She was, she she did not trust her. Instead she trusted a stranger.

- Like um she asked something to drink to the stranger. She asked the stranger to to give her something to drink, to go and fetch for her something to drink. So I think she was afraid of her. She did not trust her at all. I think so. I don't know whether I'm right or wrong.
105. Mrs M: Well (·) alright before we get there, let's have Loyiso, Siyabonga and Constance.
106. Loyiso: (·)
107. Mrs M: Okay, I think that was the darkness. Alright good. Okay the order was (·)
108. Babalwa: The white woman captured the black woman. She was afraid of the black man. She did not trust the black woman. She decided to handcuff her and take a rifle because she feared her.
109. Mrs M: Okay, otherwise, if she were not armed then she would not trust the black woman.
110. Siyabonga: I think that the reason that the white {woman
111. Mrs M: {Speak louder
112. Siyabonga: The reason that the white woman did not trust the black woman was that she could be dangerous.
113. Mrs M: Okay, that could also be dangerous especially when she was a freedom fighter, a guerrilla. Okay, who else, what was the order again? Okay, Constance.
114. Constance: The white woman was afraid when they saw a black man running in front of them and they call on the man and the man pretend that he didn't see them. And the black woman asked 'why didn't you fire the gun?' and the white woman replied 'I can't handle both of you'. She was afraid that the maybe the man is sympathetic to the black woman.
115. Mrs M: Okay. Mark.
116. Mark: Covered miss.
117. Mrs M: Okay, anymore on that one? Okay. The man. Did the man play an important role in the story?
118. SS: Yes miss.
119. Mrs M: If so, what was the role that he played? What was the role Siyabonga?
120. Siyabonga: He is the one who poisoned the white woman.
121. Mrs Mabandla: He is the one who poisoned the white woman and by poisoning the white woman, what was the result? [addressing a student who is doing other work]. Mongezi leave those. I haven't heard your voice.
122. *loud laughter from the class.*
123. Mrs M: Do you agree that this man played an important role in the story. You agree?
124. Mongezi: No.
125. You don't agree. Okay, why don't you agree?
126. *silence*
127. Mrs M: You must have been fast asleep.
128. *laughter*
129. Mrs M: Yes Busi. Okay let's have her, she hasn't had a chance yet.
130. Busi: I think the black man helped the black woman.
131. Mrs M: How? How did he manage to do it? Okay he poisoned the white woman. Did he take a spoon, pour poison and give it to her in her drink? How did she poison the white woman?

132. Busi: He drugged the water, put something in the water.
133. Mrs M: Okay, so this man played an important role in the story also. Satyagraba. We all know what that means, not so, alright? Okay, so it was important in the story?
134. SS: Yes.
135. Mrs M: Okay, so where can we place that non-violent or passive resistance in the story? Where is it happening in the story, the non-violent, passive resistance? Loyiso.
136. Loyiso: It's when they were, they were sitting down and the white woman maybe sent the man with a message and then then the black woman thought maybe she should beat her but she couldn't do it.
137. Mrs M: Okay, so she was not a violent person. Siyabonga.
138. Siyabonga: I think that the black woman she was, she did not carry a rifle.
139. Mrs M: Okay, we are looking at this non-violent, passive resistance. We are looking at where it features in the book. We are looking for evidence of that. So Loyiso decided for example here, that the woman felt like taking a big, a big rock and hit the woman but she could not bring herself to do that because it is not in her nature to hurt another human being. So which means she is following that ah policy of non-violence and passive resistance. She would rather write a book and tell people what is happening, what apartheid is doing to people in South Africa rather than take a pistol or a gun and shoot another human being physically. Alright, so now um yesterday I think I mentioned who is the person who followed that policy of non-violence and passive resistance (·) who was that person?
140. SS: {Ghandi
141. SS: {Ghandi miss. *Laughter*.
142. Mrs M: What nationality was Ghandi?
143. SS: Indian, Indian.
144. Mrs M: So here we keep on referring to a black woman and a white woman. So what nationality do you think was this black woman?
145. SS: {*mumbles*
146. SS: {African
147. SS: No, no.
148. Mark: A kind of mix.
149. Thabo: African.
150. Mrs M: So when you say African mix. What does that mean?
151. Thabo: African Indian.
152. Mark: I think she was a mix.
153. Mrs M: Okay, so if you put all those ingredients together, what do you get?
154. *laughter*.
155. Mrs M: You have Indian and African languages all mixed together. So what could that be? What languages is going to come from that? Miss.
156. Luleka: I think she was just an educated.
157. SS: But which nationality?
158. Phumla: Nationality? I think she's an Indian.
159. Mrs M: Okay, okay, why?
160. Babalwa: I think she's a black Indian.
161. Mrs B: So?
162. Loyiso: His {father
163. Mrs M: {her, her

164. *laughter.*
165. Loyiso: Her father was Indian and then taken to South Africa and so, so she practises Satyagraha so she's Indian.
166. Mrs M: So now, we know that it is not just a black lady, she is an Indian lady not so? But she is classified black because she is not white, not so? Alright. Now I want us to find evidence from the story, from the story is that the writer was looking back at events that had taken place a long time ago. What she is writing about here, these two women. It is something that took place a long time ago. Now I want to find, to quote from the short story evidence to that effect. I am saying to you. She is writing about events that took place a long time ago. And now later on she is looking back at her own life and she is telling us and she has written this short story. So now I want you to find evidence. And now I want you to quote from the story. (·) Okay, Phumla has found it.
167. Phumla: Page 105, third paragraph. 'I thought about Nelson Mandela accepting imprisonment for himself, refusing to accept release while others are oppressed, and by so doing gathering the force of the whole world around him. That was soul force. But I could not relate that to this situation. Each time I looked round, the woman lurched forward, the rifle hurt the small of my back, and I had to move on.' I think um it refers to the, to the past.
168. Mrs M: To the past? Yes it does, it is the past tense. But there is, I want us to find a quotation where it is specifically telling us that she was that it has happened long ago and she was looking back and recalling events what had happened. Okay, let's keep looking. Apart from it's being written in the past tense, let's try and find a more specific quotation that actually tells us (·) that she was looking back at events that have taken place long ago. (41 secs). Let's see who's going to get there first. Babalwa.
169. Babalwa: Page 107, last paragraph. 'She had not learnt her history. "Louis Botha was a guerrilla! So was Smuts! Meisie!' I muttered.'
170. Mrs M: No that's just a reference. She's just referring. She's referring to other guerrillas of her kind. This white woman is calling her guerrilla, forgetting that her own kind has also been guerrillas. So she does not know her history. Okay, keep on, keep on hunting. Try and find a quotation that she is um looking at events that took place long ago. Try to quote that (·) that it happened long ago and she was now trying to recall (·) what had happened. (30 secs). Five o' clock, we'll still be here if you have not found that (20 secs). Nosipho have you found it?
171. Nosipho: No miss.
172. Luleka: *softly* Miss ()
173. Mrs M: You usually read out very clearly but you were just mumbling and I just couldn't hear. Perhaps you are not sure.
174. Luleka: *giggles* Okay, page 105. 'In my naïve way I was still provocative. "I've read *The Story of an African Farm*," I said tentatively, "*Out of Africa – even African Farm*," I muttered hopefully'.
175. Mrs M: Keep on looking.
176. Loyiso: Please repeat the question.
177. Mrs M: The question?
178. Loyiso: Yes.
179. Mrs M: Okay, listen very carefully. I'm saying, now I'm saying to you that this story here seems to be referring to events that had taken place long ago in

- the years that she is relating that story. Now from the story, try to quote where she actually tells us that this had happened long ago and now she is looking back at what had happened then. So I want you to quote from the story.
180. Mark: Page 104, second paragraph miss.
181. Mrs M: Page 104?
182. Mark: Yes miss. Second paragraph. “There are no women freedom fighters – in the world” she asked, unnerving me with the notion I was a freedom fighter. My situation became slightly more precarious.’
183. Mrs M: No, thank you for trying. Still not that one. Keep on looking. Thabo. If you had read better, you might have come across that one. Yes Thabo.
184. Loyiso: The page that you are looking for, do you have it?
185. Mrs M: Yes I have it. I’m just looking for another one.
186. Loyiso: So which page is it?
187. Mrs M: I’m not going to tell you.
188. Luleka: You are not going to tell us the page?
189. Mrs M: No, I want you to find it. I am not going to tell you anything. Now I’m looking for another one that I’m going to ask you after you’ve given me this one so that you stay here till 5 o’ clock. No Maths today, English. Are you people looking? It’s there in front of you, it’s going to swallow you.
190. Constance: Page 104. “Ho-nestly! I’m only trying to leave the country without a passport. Doesn’t everyone .. these days?”
191. Mrs M: Repeat what you are saying.
192. Constance: “Ho-nestly! I’m only trying to leave the country without a passport. Doesn’t everyone .. these days?”
193. Mrs M: Does that tell us anything about the time then? Does it? “I’m only trying to leave the country without a passport”. Passport. Don’t people carry passports now in the present time?
194. SS: No.
195. Mrs M: IDs [identity documents]. Can you go to England just carrying ID?
196. SS: No.
197. Mrs M: No, so people carried passports then and they still carry passports today. (20 secs). Have you given up looking?
198. SS: No, no.
199. Funiwe: Page 104.
200. Mrs M: Whereabout? [student points] Okay read it.
201. Funiwe: ‘Her accent was not hard to place – English speaking South African. Not the Cape, not the Cape, something of a drawl in the way she spoke. I plumped for Natal. Natal gave me hope.’
202. Mrs M: Is there anything here that tells us when this happened? (.) Are there specific words that connect this with something that happened long ago which she is trying to recall looking back on events which took place? Funiwe do you have an idea? Khaya.
202. Khaya: Third paragraph.
203. Mrs M: Third paragraph.
204. Khaya: (.)
205. Mrs M: Still not that one. I will tell Rochelle when we have left the classroom. And this is going to be your homework. You will go and find out that expression.
206. *Noisy protests.*
207. Mrs M: Okay, two more and then it becomes homework.

208. Loyiso: Page 111, second paragraph.
209. Mrs M: Second paragraph.
210. Loyiso: 'I was young and cocksure'.
211. Mrs M: 'I was young and cocksure'. So she is still young now?
212. SS: No.
213. Mrs M: Okay, good. [the rest of the period, approximately six minutes, is spent discussing students' future career plans. Mrs Mabandla asks Siyabonga, Loyiso and Babalwa to explain what their plans are. Then Mark sings a song at the request of Mrs Mabandla.]

Appendix 5:

11d English, Extract from lesson on 'euphemism' and 'common second-language errors', 10/3/98.

[Mr Bathaka hands out an exercise (Appendix 6).]

1. Mr B: If you look at question 1 of this, if you look at question 1 of this, some of the questions in this, we'll be using what we call euphemism. Do you remember euphemism from when we did figures of speech at the beginning of the year? Do you remember it?
2. SS: Yes
3. Mr B: Alright. At some other stages we'll be looking at euphemism, at some other stages we'll be looking at more palatable, more easily accepted ways of saying things. Things like if you want someone to move out. Do you say 'get out' or do you say 'could you please get out' [said softly] or do you say 'this is my space and that's very uncomfortable for me?' How do you say it without sounding rude? These questions will have more or less that kind of thing. Can you look at the questions and make your own choices? For those people who missed the take home test, they should pay special attention on this because this will be in lieu of or instead of (·) those people who didn't write the take home test for whatever reasons medical or whatever was reported to me, pay attention to this. They must do this and submit it now. No, I'm no longer interested in that one. I can only mark it so that you can see where you stand. But I've given back the others, the other books that are already marked so you would roughly have the idea which is the right or the wrong answer. Yes sir?
4. S1: I haven't got my book.
5. Mr B: You didn't receive your book and that is not your problem is it? [said sarcastically].
6. S2: (·)
7. Mr B: It was not correctly marked. That is something different. I'm sure we'll argue about that later. Yes?
8. S3: Sorry sir, the time is going on.
9. Mr B: Yes, they're wasting our time. Very good mam, very good.
10. SS: [women students] *giggles*
11. S4: Can we write on the worksheet?
12. Mr B: Yes, by all means. You can circle the correct answer or write it where there is space provided. [addressing a student] you know I hate it. Pencils are for drawing or marking. Ink is for writing. [the students do the exercise for about 15 minutes. Mr Bathaka leaves the room briefly to quieten the 11b class next door. He returns and has a private conversation with a student who he believes has been playing truant. Mr Bathaka interrupts them after about 10 minutes]. Nowadays it is a crime to say to someone, to refer to someone who is a little below my height, to say 'he is short' (·) It is a crime (·) You say to that person, he is challenged. Even if you refer to people that are, who you would normally refer to as an 'invalid' [pronounced by Mr Bathaka as *in-val'd*, meaning without validity] or as cripples, even to refer to them as even to refer to them as disabled, becomes a crime. You say they are challenged, *né*? Question 2 we are trying to be very polite and educated *né*. We are trying to move away from being rude and crude. Alright? (·) Which reminds me, when I

- was a student someone asked (·) There was a stage when a question was asked, when someone says 'excuse me, you say in response, excused. When someone says pardon me, or I beg your pardon, you say in response, pardoned. What do you say when someone says sorry? Do you say 'sorryed'?
13. SS: *subdued laughter*
 14. Mr B: Do you say 'sorryed'?
 15. SS: No [students continue to work for another 5 minutes].
 16. Mr B: Can we start with question 2 please?
 17. SS: No, no *laughter*
 18. Mr B: Are you done? Alright, while I respect creativity, while I respect creativity, I asked you to circle the correct answer didn't I?
 19. SS: Yes.
 20. Mr B: Ladies and gentlemen, that was an instruction. Well instructions are given not to be broken, but to be followed. I gave you an instruction that you should circle the correct answer. Did you circle the correct answers?
 21. SS: {yes
 22. SS: {no
 23. S5: I underlined.
 24. Mr B: And in your view, there's no difference between circling and underlining?
 25. S5: No sir.
 26. SS: *loud laughter*
 27. Mr B: You sometimes you fail not because you, you are stupid, but sometimes you fail because you do not follow instructions. Did you know that?
 28. SS: Yes.
 29. Mr B: At some stage you will be told to ignore a particular question and look at the other question and you say, 'no, this is easy and you do that question that you are told not to write. Because you did not follow instructions. But this was not a lesson about instructions. But instructions have to be followed. Okay, start with question 2, start with question 2 please. Should be interesting how you answer this question, how you negotiated them. [reads the question] 'If we admit we didn't enjoy an outing we should say'?
 30. SS: It was boring.
 31. Mr B: Can we have one at a time?
 32. S4: It was boring.
 33. Mr B: It was boring.
 34. SS: [loud sounds of to indicate distaste] {*uugh, uugh*
 35. SS: {*ewe* [the Xhosa word for yes]}
 36. S6: It was awful
 37. Mr B: It was awful. Okay, let's say your boyfriend or girlfriend took you out. Your boyfriend or girlfriend took you out to a movie (·) *loud noise* he enjoys comedy. He takes you to a comedy. Do you say it was boring?
 38. SS: { Yes
 39. {Yes, it was boring
 40. Mr B: Sssh, ssh. I must tell you that is rude.
 41. SS: {Yes
 42. {No
 43. Mr B: Can you look at the other one, 'It could have been better'.
 44. SS: No, no.

45. No is not an argument. Can you come with an argument?
46. S4: It was boring.
47. Mr B: It was boring?
48. S4: Yes, I did not enjoy it.
49. S7: If you don't like it, you say it was boring.
50. Mr B: If you don't like it, you say it was boring? You don't pretend?
51. SS: No.
52. S7: You pretend as if you enjoy it.
53. SS: Yes, yes.
54. Mr B: [to a student who is talking] I do not recognise you miss. If you wanted to say you lift your hand. If you wanted to say, you lift your hand so that you can have your argument. Alright, you were saying. Sir?
55. S8: If you don't like something, you say it is boring, you don't say it is nice.
56. SS: *shouts and giggles*
57. Mr B: Please, this is not, this is not a congregation, a church congregation where we say Amen Hallelujah.
58. SS: *loud laughter*
59. Mr B: Can we hold our horses? We want some arguments. This is not a yes or no booth.
60. SS: *loud laughter*
61. Mr B: Alright. He's saying, if you don't like something, you say it is boring, plain out. You're not being considerate here. Someone has used his or her money to take you out and he enjoys what he takes you to and you say it is boring?
62. SS: *laughter and talking*
63. Mr B: Alright, alright sshh, alright. Let's look at the next question please. 'If we want someone to repeat what they said, we should say'?
64. SS: (*indistinct shouted answers*)
65. Mr B: One at a time.
66. S2: Come again?
67. Mr B: How about A? (·) *noise*. 'I beg your pardon' [the answer to the question]. Ssh, perhaps this goes with authority. Perhaps when talking to you or addressing students would say to you 'come again?' [said very softly]. Perhaps it goes with authority. Perhaps there's some argument around English, that is, English people from England. When they want to talk or they want to talk about weather, they say: 'isn't it a nice day?' Necessarily the person isn't really talking about weather to talk about weather. Or a person may start by saying: 'what a hot day for a winter season?' And you would say 'Yes, yes I agree and then you start a conversation. Or when there is an uncomfortable silence in the midst or in the middle of the conversation, then someone says: 'isn't it warm today compared to the other day or the days which have gone by? And then let's say your boss has left a door open. Do you say: 'close the door'? Or do you comment about the weather or do you start by saying: 'it's quite chilly in here'? [the last statement pronounced in imitation of an upper class white South African accent]
68. SS: *giggles*
69. Necessarily. You are replying to your boss. You could say: 'would you mind closing the door?' But he is a person in authority. Do you agree? Perhaps, the argument that says: 'come again?' is based on those kind of arguments. But it is not. When someone is saying something but you did not hear that person,

you say: 'excuse me?' or 'I beg your pardon?' or you say 'sorry?' I you say: 'what?' It is very rude. It is actually very rude. [Mr Bathaka is interrupted by a student with a message. He moves onto the next question] 'If we want someone to let us have something we should say: "I want it!" 'Please could I have it', 'Give it to me.' [the last answer said in a tone of command] (·)

70. SS: 'Please could I have it'?

71. Mr B: A resounding chorus *né? Noise*. Please hold it. Please hold your horses. 'That man is rather overweight, obese, fat'?

72. SS: overweight, overweight

73. Mr B: Can I have one at a time. Not in front of visitors. You know *what-what* [a Southern African expression, used to denote a mutually known concept, similar to blah, blah. Mr Bathaka uses a threatening tone].

74. S2: Overweight.

75. SS: *laughter*

76. Mr B: A minute please, a minute please. Your memory here is a little too short. Don't you agree? Because we spoke about this sometime in the first semester. In fact I had almost these three words. I made reference to these three words. 'He is rather obese'. Obese is a sympathetic word that would refer to a fat person. If you say to a fat person: 'you are overweight', you are not being considerate. Did you understand me? In this instance we are not talking about being rude or what. But you are not being considerate. You are not considering the feelings of that other person. Maybe that person has become obese or fat not because of his own liking. And maybe he hates being referred to as overweight or fat. Especially if it's the ladies huh?

77. SS: *giggles*

78. Mr B: Ladies are overly concerned about their weight. Do you agree ladies?

79. SS: Yes [from female students].

80. Mr B: Can we move on? 'I think they have hád'

81. SS: {argument

82. SS: {disagreement

83. Mr B: Disagreement, disagreement, sounds more like it. Argument is a verbal war, a cha, cha, cha. It's when people are actually giving each other. I'm emptying my mind, I'm emptying my, you see when they are actually giving each other verbally. But when you have a disagreement, you are underscoring your own argument, you are underscoring, perhaps a () for all we know. [moves on to next question] 'Your son doesn't mix well with other boys; he seems to be?

84. SS: shy, sh-y, shy-y [the last two drawn out].

85. Okay, okay, we are getting out of hand now. Number 14, 'I request you to/demand that you/would like you to leave now'.

86. SS: {Like you to, like you to

87. SS: {Request you to

88. Mr B: Alright, let's have it this way this time. This person is invading your space. You want to make sure that this person gets the message very clearly. But at the same time, do you want to be rude to this person. You don't want to stoop to his level. Maybe this person is (·) did I say his level? His or her level. You do not want to stoop that low *né?* But you at the very same time, you want to get a message across. You say I request you or I would like you to?

89. SS: {request

90. SS: {would like, like

91. Mr B: I don't think you would say 'I request' (·) *noise*. Can we pay attention here. In this instance, I don't think that request would carry much weight. It does not have to be 100% correct. But I don't think 'I request you to leave' would carry much weight. The person is stepping on your toes, he is breathing on your neck. He is uncomfortably very close and then you are telling this person to give you some space. If you say 'I request you to leave' that is too humble, that is too humble for a demand. 'I think I would like you to leave', 'I think I would like you to leave' makes a statement, but is less rude and crude than I demand you to leave.
92. S4: I would like you to leave.
93. Mr B: Oh you agree with me?
94. SS: {Yes
95. SS: {No
96. Mr B: Hold it fellows. I am going to consult the book from which I got this and see how they view it. If they view it differently from how I view it, then a benefit of doubt will be given to you. Alright, let's move on. 'She asked him where he had put the newspaper and he replied "use your eyes"/ "over there"/ "look for it".'
97. SS: {Over there
98. SS: {Use your eyes [the siren sounds, marking the end of the period]
99. Alright guys, I'm sure we can steal the next teacher's time till he or she comes. [Mr B proceeds to the next section and completes 2 questions of the next exercise.]

Appendix 6:

11d English, Exercise on 'euphemism'.

NAME : CLASS :

QUESTION 2

- viii) If we admit we didn't enjoy an outing we should say:
A. It could have been better. B. It was awful.
C. It was boring.
- ix) If we want someone to repeat what they said, we should say:
A. What? B. Come again? C. I beg your pardon?
- x) If we want someone to let us have something we should say:
A. I want it! B. Please could I have it? C. Give it to me.
- xi) That man is rather (overweight/obese/fat).
- xii) I think they have had (a row/an argument/a disagreement).
- xiii) Your son doesn't mix well with other boys; he seems to be
(cowardly/shy/ frightened).
- xiv) I (request you to/demand that you/would like you to) leave
now.
- xv) She asked him where he had put the newspaper and he replied
("use your eyes"/"over there"/"look for it").

11d English, Exercise on 'Common second language errors'.

- p. If I _____ you, I'd catch a bus.
A. was B. am C. be D. were
- q. Television _____ stay at home.
A. makes me to B. makes me C. make me to D. make me
- r. You will buy it, _____?
A. won't you B. will you C. is it D. shan't you
- s. I'll give it to _____ will take care of it.
A. who B. them C. whoever D. whichever
- t. We often end a letter by writing _____ before our names.
A. Your's sincerely B. Yours' sincerely C. Yours sincerely D. Yours Sincerely
- u. He makes me _____ him with his homework every night.
A. to help B. help C. helping D. helped
- v. Although she has _____ of children she visits her old mother every day.
A. a lot B. much C. a great deal D. many
- w. She has worn _____ since she was small.
A. spectacle B. a spectacle C. glass D. glasses
- x. It is a pity that _____ people heard the excellent speech.
A. the few B. such few C. so few D. a few
- y. If you find the money you _____ hand it in to the Principal.
A. had better B. would better C. rather D. would sooner
- z. He accused me of telling a lie but I _____
A. rejected B. refused C. denied D. denied it
- A. My young sister enjoys going to school _____.
A. to much B. too much C. much D. very much

Appendix 7:

11d English, Extract from lesson on affixes, 27/8/98.

1. Mr B: Let's look at the exercise we were doing yesterday. If you were here yesterday, you would know stuff about submission. What we did was prefixes. I wanted 'before war'. The answer would be (·)
2. S1: After war.
3. Mr B: No, no. I want a prefix 'before war' (·) *noise*. Edwin are you thinking of something? Something that is before. I mean a prefix. *noise*
4. Thomas: unwar.
5. SS: Pre-war.
6. Mr B: Pre-war, why didn't you say so? Pre-war would be before war *né*? But after war. Thank you for knowing that 'pre' means before. Thanks you for knowing that 'pre' means before. After war, I mean any prefix for after war? Anyone please? (·) Alright, when you pass your matric, you will do some courses at the technikon. They are called *dis*, *dis* matric courses huh? (·) Alright. It doesn't look like anyone knows. (·) Alright [moves on to next question] what about the example of school, 'before school'.
7. SS: Pre-school.
8. Mr B: Okay, 'pre-school'. Someone is saying 'unschooled'.
9. SS: *Loud laughter*
10. Mr B: You know better?
11. SS: No sir.
12. Mr B: Because you wrote 'unschooled' in your books, so you are no better than she is. Perfect'.
13. S2: Imperfect.
14. Mr B: Imperfect. Those people who use pencil for writing, they know it's against the rules. You do not write in pencil. You draw with your pencil. You write in ink. You write whatever colour. That is why I use whatever colour in marking your work. Because if you do not have a blue pen, by all means if you have a red pen. But please write in ink. 'Credible'.
15. SS: Incredible.
16. Mr B: One at a time.
17. SS: {Incredible.
18. Mr B: {one at a time.
19. Mr B: It's not 'un'.
20. SS: 'In'.
21. Mr B: You want to argue? No?
22. *giggles*
23. Mr B: Guys, I'm a conductor *né*? I conduct the school choir. But the principle is that I do not conduct the school choir during school hours. I conduct the school choir *after*
24. SS: hours.
25. Mr B: I conduct the school choir after hours and this is during school hours. So what I mean is do not speak. We want one person at a time so that we can make sense of what is being said. [Moves on to next question] 'South Africa'? Not too many of you got this one right. This should be in favour of South Africa. Right, in favour of South Africa (·) Alright. Why don't we say against South Africa? Perhaps you know that one. Perhaps you know that one. We've got something

about against in other things. In favour of South Africa. Can we have some suggestions? Where is my choir now?

26. SS: *giggles*
27. Mr B: Not even soloists? Someone who is in favour of South Africa, is (·) South Africa.
28. S2: (·)
29. Mr B: No. I want a prefix that is in favour of South Africa. Someone is (·) South Africa. You're going to say that, you said it straight out (·). Come on folks. (3 secs) Alright. The person is pro South Africa, in favour of. Apartheid, someone who is against Apartheid, someone who is against drugs, someone who is against aids (·)
30. S: anti. *softly*
31. Mr B: You were saying 'anti'. I don't know who was saying it. [moves on to the next question] 'believable'.
32. SS: Unbelievable.
33. Mr B: There comes my chorus, that is right, unbelievable chorus. [moves to the next question]
34. SS: {non-examinable.
35. SS: {unexaminable.
36. Mr B: What?
37. SS: {non-examinable.
38. SS: {unexaminable.
39. Mr B: It's not non-examinable. Even if I marked that I made a mistake. Okay, are you ready for affixes? [Mr Bathaka writes up the exercise on the board:

Affixes	Root words	New words
il	regular	
im	primary	
ir	calculated	
re	worthy	
mis	graduated [spelling mistake]	
pro	legal	
pre	decent	
post	moral	
in	paint	
un	fitness	

Students go up to the board to match root and affix. After a student has completed an answer, he/she has to nominate another student by passing the chalk to him/her. Mr Bathaka questions the class while they do so.]

40. What about number 1?

41. SS: Irregular.

42. Mr B: What?

43. SS: Irregular.

[continues to work through 'affix' exercise in the same question/answer form]

Appendix 8:

11a English, Lesson on Affixes, 27/8/98.

[Mr Bathaka writes up the exercise on the board:

Affixes	Root words	New words
il	regular	
im	primary	
ir	calculated	
re	worthy	
mis	graduated [spelling mistake]	
pro	legal	
pre	decent	
post	moral	
in	paint	
un	fitness	

Students go up to the board to match root and affix. Mr Bathaka questions the class while they do so.]

1. Mr B: Give it [the chalk] to any person, anyone. Are we getting the next person on the board? That person is supposed to be up and about. Vusi would you care to perhaps explain - why did you put 'ir' as a prefix?
2. SS: oooh
3. S: Why not?
4. Mr B.: Perhaps why not? Perhaps a better answer would be 'why not'? Maybe there are rules. Maybe there are no rules. Could you tell us why you put an 'ir' before regular? You see you are frowning so it must mean there must be a rule that governs that. Perhaps there is er a rule. Can you think of any reason why Vusi put an 'ir' before regular and not a 'un' for instance?
5. S: Because it's like that.
6. *loud laughter*
7. Come on (·) give me, give me good reasons. No, it should not go (·) something is not black and it's white (·) No (·) What about [points to the affix 'mis' on the board]?
8. *loud noises of protest from student* {Hayi [no]}
9. Mr B: {alright, alright, One at a time. We are still discussing irregular. Sssh. Khumo. can you think of any reason why they are putting 'ir'?
10. Khumo: *Hayi khona, hayi khona* [Xhosa meaning 'no, but']
11. *noise.*
12. Mr B: Sssh. We are still looking for a reason why they put 'ir'. Come on folks -
13. *loud noises*
14. Mr B: Edwin, Thando can you give a reason. You have your hand up in the sky.
15. *muttering, laughter.*
16. Mr B: Say something. Why 'ir' before regular? There's another interesting one, moral, why immoral?
17. *noise*
18. Mr B: *Hayi khona, hayi khona, hayi khona* man. You are making noise now unnecessarily. *more noise* Alright (·) where's a dictionary (·) Where is a

- dictionary? Where is the chalk? [Pause of 4 minutes while students continue to go up to the board and write down answers? Then a student writes 'reworthy'].
19. S: [shouts] *Hayi. Ifanakalo* [a South African pidgin language drawn largely from Zulu and English and used by white managers to communicate with workers. Generally judged negatively by black people].
 20. *loud, derisive laughter. Poing, poing* [students gesture and imitate the sound of a quiz gong].
 21. Mr B: unfitness. Let's look at pro-fitness - is this right?
 22. S: *Andiyas* [Xhosa, meaning 'I don't know']
 23. Mr B: Is this a Xhosa period?
 24. S: We don't know.
 25. Mr B: Come on people. I'm very serious. Thuli, I'm not sure what you're trying to do.
 26. Thuli: {No sir *mumbles*}
 27. Mr B: *louder* {I'm not sure what you're trying to do}. I'm not sure. {Thuli you are still saying. Thuli. Alright, I have three sets of words, respective, repairable; then interpret, understand; then possible, mobilise. Do you, can you think of any reason why I put them together, I mean as a set of words? Alright this is in the context of the prefix exercise that you have just been dealing with. Alright. Now asking the question that will make you understand what I'm looking for. You don't understand what I want. No, I'm saying I've put here 3 sets of words. The same sets of words. So it means there's some commonality around those words if I put them together in the context of the prefixes that we've just been doing (·) in the context of what we've just been doing.
 28. *mumbles*
 29. Please, please think aloud miss, think aloud. Say what you are thinking but think aloud.
 30. S: If you want to form the opposite of words like irrespective and irreparable.
 31. That's what I was looking for. Say if you look at these words if you want to form the opposite, an antonym of that word - you'd say irrespective, irreparable. We have regular, that's the word given, and if you put the prefix 'ir', do you see any commonality around those words? Can you formulate any rule or law? - Yes mam?
 32. S: You use 'ir' to form the opposite.
 33. Mr B: The prefix to form an antonym would be 'ir'. Does that follow every word? Does that follow that every word that starts with 're' will take an 'ir'.
 34. S: Think so.
 35. Mr B: huh?
 36. S: Think so?
 37. Mr B: Irrespective, irreparable. Can you think of any other word that starts with an 're'?
 38. S: Reproduce.
 39. Mr B: Reproduce. Then an opposite for reproduce would be irreproducible.
 40. *loud laughter*
 41. Mr B: Responsible, responsible would be irresponsible. Okay I will take that but obviously, there are almost always exceptions to every rule and then reproducible. Let's say, let's take it in that form. Would it be irreproducible? Huh?
 42. S: *Hayi*.
 43. Mr B: I've never seen, I've never heard of a word like that. I wouldn't really want to put my head on a block and say there's nothing like that. People should know

- that words or a language is still undergoing what we call evolution, day in day out, out of the words that have been there even before we were here. Do you understand? [Nods from students]. Let us do interpret and understand. Do you have any words? Let us look at these two words interpret and understand. If you wanted to form an antonym from these two words, what would you say?
44. S: misunderstand, misinterpret.
 45. Mr B: Misunderstand and misinterpret. Can you think of any other words with 'mis'? Okay let's formulate the rule from these words interpret and understand. Could you formulate the rules? Interpret and understand. Could you formulate the rules? No we'll still have to check if the rule holds for all the words *blah, blah, blah*, as we have just demonstrated. Interpret and understand is there any commonality between these two words. Interpret and understand.
 46. S: They start with vowels.
 47. Mr B: They start with vowels.
 48. S: What about calculate? We didn't have a vowel.
 49. Mr B: We didn't have a vowel. There are other words that start with other words. I mean other vowels. We have here miscalculate. Can you think of other words which take 'mis'?
 50. S: Mislead.
 51. S: Misfortune.
 52. Mr B: Misfortune, mislead or misled. So our rule doesn't look very tidy here. We have words like misfortune. There was another one.
 53. S: Misuse.
 54. Mr B: Misuse. Well, this one follows our rule. Are there any other words which would take a 'mis'.
 55. Miscarriage.
 56. Mr B: Miscarriage.
 57. *laughter*
 58. S: Take.
 59. Mr B: *wryly* 'Take' for instance.
 60. SS: *laughter. Mistake. shouted by several students*
 61. Mr B: Alright. Is there anything common around those words? Except for use, use follows the rule. But what about lead, carriage (·) huh? (·) There doesn't seem to be any way out here, is there? (·) Mislead, misfortune, misuse, miscarriage, mistake. *Noise*
 62. S: They are all verbs.
 63. Mr B: They are all verbs (·). I'm not so sure about fortune.
 64. S: We are so sure.
 65. Mr B: Perhaps you take in your argument, perhaps you take fortune as the exception to the rule (·) *né*. There unfortunately is an exception to that rule. They are not all verbs. Carriage is not a verb.
 66. S: They end with 'e'.
 67. Mr B: They end with 'e' except for lead [misinterpret has been spelt on the board with a 'e' at the end]. Huh?
 68. S: Except, always except.
 69. Mr B: Alright (·) they end with 'e', but not all of them, what about lead, what about understand? There doesn't seem to be any fixed rules except the first one. Almost all the vowels as we said, almost all the vowels we have used 'interpret, understand, use' start with 'mis'. Have you noticed that?
 70. SS: Yes.

71. Think of some more words that start with a vowel and perhaps see if the rule applies (·) Can you think of other words like interpret and understand. Alright, why don't we put a pause here? We know that we're having a very huge task which has to be still unravelled. Alright why don't we do possible and mobilise.
72. S: Impossible immobilise.
73. Mr B: Impossible.
74. SS: Immobilise.
75. Mr B: Can we formulate the rule here? Impossible and immobilise (·) *noise* Can you think of a rule here.
76. S: They end with 'e'.
77. Mr B: They?
78. S: They end with 'e'.
79. Mr B: I don't think 'e' has anything to do with it. I agree they all end with 'e' but I don't think 'e' has influenced it in anyway. Is there any commonality (·) except for 'e'.
80. S: They don't start with a vowel.
81. Mr B: They don't start with a vowel. Now come on, there are only about 5 vowels and the 25 other letters are consonants. Hey? Is there any? Alright, Okay, can I refer you to your Xhosa linguistics. 'Im' plus 'bila' becomes what? Class nine. *Noise*. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter.
82. SS: *Hayi*.
83. Mr B: In Xhosa I know, I think it's class nine, we have class of nouns. *Loud noise* Ssh, can you pay some attention please. We have, we have the prefix of class nine is 'im' but immediately we get in front of these sounds, these are called labial sounds, it changes its form to 'im'. I know you have done this a week or two ago. The commonality here is, I want people to challenge, in my view the 'im' here, just like class nine of nouns, the prefix there is supposed to be 'in' but because of the influence of the labial sound, the bilabial sound, it changes to [ɸ] [designating the sound]. We do not have a situation in Xhosa where we have 'in' followed by a labial sound. I think even in English this is subject to some discussion. You do not have a situation where you have 'in' followed by 'b' or 'p' or 'm' for that matter. For instance you have material. It will be immaterial. If you put a prefix before an existing word *nè*, not a word that is actually a word like innate. Innate is actually a word in itself. Are you comfortable with my explanation or do you want to challenge it?
84. S: We don't know how to challenge it.
85. Mr B: Someone. Okay, did you notice the commonality. Do we have other words that start with 'im'?
86. S: Immigration.
87. S: Impermeable.
88. Mr B: Impermeable as in biology. No that is not biology, that is English, that is your problem, you think in pockets or as entities away from each other, but actually they relate. Biology is English. Are you still here?
89. *giggles from female students*.
90. Mr B: What about imagine.
91. SS: gine, gine, imagine.
92. Mr B: Ja, that one holds. Do we have other words with labial sounds? Do we have any words that start with 'b'?
93. *mumbles*
94. You are moving way out, you are a little bit way out.

95. S: bomb.

96. Mr B: Then what is that going to be? Imbomb?

97. S: Believable.

98. S: No unbelievable.

99. Mr B: Okay, can I see your books. Can I see how far you have got. He goes around the room checking the students' books for the remainder of the period.